



**Seventh National Report to the
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity:
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern
Ireland**

February 2026



UK Government



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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We have used Copilot Chat to help support the production of the target and goal summary text. We have verified the accuracy of the target and goal summary text and take full responsibility for their contents.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to JNCC at: Communications@jncc.gov.uk

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Annex I Template for the seventh and eighth national reports

Section I. Brief overview of the process of preparation of the report

Country name	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)
National authorities responsible for the preparation and submission of the report	The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
Contact person	Ian Mitchell / Rebecca Lowe
Contact details	Ian.Mitchell@jncc.gov.uk / Rebecca.Lowe@jncc.gov.uk
Briefly describe the process followed for the preparation of the present report. Responses may include the following: • Coordination mechanisms and methodology for data collection and validation employed, if applicable, as well as key challenges encountered. • Consultations undertaken at various levels for preparing the present report, involving and engaging various stakeholders and considering national circumstances, including by using a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.	
In the UK, biodiversity policy is devolved to the Governments of Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, while in England, it remains the responsibility of the UK Government. Biodiversity conservation in the 14 UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) and three Crown Dependencies (CDs) is primarily the responsibility of the respective Government of that Territory or Dependency, with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) being extended to six OTs: the British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; the Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; St Helena, Ascension & Tristan da Cunha; South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands and and three CDs: Bailiwick of Jersey; Guernsey and the Isle of Man. Through the Blueprint for Halting and Reversing Biodiversity Loss: the UK's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2030, the UK – working collectively across the four countries and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) – commits to 23 UK National Targets which are fully aligned with the 23 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) targets. These UK targets and a selection of the individual commitments from the four countries and UKOTs and CDs that will help meet these targets are published on the CBD Online Reporting Tool. The UK has reported actions and progress against each of the 23 UK National Targets in the 7th National Report (7NR) at the UK level, for each of the four countries of the UK, and where relevant for the UKOTs and CDs.	

Due to the devolved nature of biodiversity policy in the UK, the production of the UK's 7NR was prepared by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). JNCC coordinated contributions to the report on behalf of the four countries of the UK, as well as the UKOTs and CDs. JNCC is the statutory advisor on nature conservation for all four countries of the UK and provides technical advice and support on nature conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity to the UKOTs and CDs. Coordination of input from relevant UK other government departments was led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to ensure that the report reflects a whole-of-government approach and includes relevant action and progress across government.

The UK began developing its 7NR in September 2024. A "Task and Finish Group" was established to steer production of the 7NR, comprised of representatives from Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the UK Government. JNCC served as the secretariat for this group. The UKOTs and CDs contributed to the development of the 7NR through regular email communication, webinars, and online training sessions organised by JNCC. Reporting in a devolved setting has presented several challenges, such as reporting progress at the UK-level when data are often collected at the individual country level. Coordinating a whole-UK response also took a lot of time and resource.

Views of non-governmental stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), farmers and fisheries groups, and youth were gathered through a stakeholder call for evidence process on the UK's current level of progress in implementing the targets as well as key challenges and any opportunities or solutions to address them. This process ran from 4 August to 12 September 2025. Out of 79 organisations contacted, the following eight responded: Wildlife & Countryside Link (England), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF), Finance for Biodiversity Foundation - UK Policy Subgroup, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, St Helena National Trust and Global Youth Biodiversity Network UK (GYBN UK). They provided assessments on the UK's current level of progress in implementing the UK national targets, together with their views on key challenges, solutions and opportunities. Responses from stakeholders were considered in the drafting of the UK 7th National Report if sufficient supporting evidence and sources were provided.

The UK is fortunate in having a large amount of information about its biodiversity, collected across a broad spread of species and habitats both by professionals and by expert volunteers. This information provides an essential source of evidence for reporting biodiversity change and the impact of policies and actions to conserve biodiversity. The [UK Biodiversity Indicators](#) are dependent on a wide variety of data, provided by government, research bodies, and the voluntary sector – in total nearly 100 organisations are involved. The presentation and assessment of the indicators have been verified by the data providers, and the production and editing of the indicators have been overseen by government statisticians. The UK undertook significant efforts to update its UK Biodiversity Indicators in 2024-2025 for the purpose of reporting progress against the goals and targets of the KMGBF. The most up to date indicators are used in this 7NR. Despite being a data-rich country, the UK has found it challenging to ensure all applicable Headline Indicators were ready for use by February 2026. Of the 27 Headline Indicators of the KMGBF, the UK has developed and published 19, with 2 still in development. The remaining 6 indicators either lack an agreed global methodology or are not considered relevant to a UK context.

The UK does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities (IPLCs) as understood under the CBD. For this reason, the UK has not reported against components of targets which refer to IPLCs within the UK. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the KMGBF, recognising the important roles and contributions of IPLCs as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

The individual contributions from the devolved governments, the UK Government, and UKOTs and CDs, along with the latest UK Biodiversity Indicators were compiled by JNCC and summarised into UK-level assessments of progress. The draft report went through several iterations of review. The final report was agreed and signed off by the four countries of the UK before being submitted to the CBD.

Section II. Status of the revised or updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

1.	Has your country revised or updated its NBSAP in alignment with the Framework?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress If the answer is “no” or “in progress”, please indicate the expected date of completion of the revision or updating of the NBSAP: _____
2.	Did your country involve and engage stakeholders in revising or updating its NBSAP?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ If the answer is “yes”, please select among the following (drop-down menu): ○ ~~Indigenous peoples and local communities~~ ○ Women ○ Youth ○ Local and subnational government ○ Private sector ○ Other stakeholders (please provide a list) • General public • Non-governmental organisations • General stakeholders (e.g. farmers, landowners, etc.) Note: The UK NBSAP pulls together various strategies from across the four countries of the UK and the UK OTCDs, to which CBD has been extended. Stakeholders were engaged in developing these strategies.
3.	Has your country's revised or updated NBSAP been adopted as a policy or a legal instrument, and/or integrated into other strategies?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐ Other If the answer is “no”, please indicate the expected date of adoption: _____

4.	If the answer to question 3 is “yes”, indicate how your country’s revised or updated NBSAP has been adopted.	☒ Adopted through legislation or otherwise by parliament ☐ Adopted by the Council of Ministers, the Office of the President or of the Prime Minister, or an equivalent body ☒ Adopted by the Ministry of the Environment or another sectoral ministry ☐ Integrated into the poverty reduction strategy, sustainable development strategy, national development plan or another related strategy or plan ☒ Other (please specify) Integrated into other domestic biodiversity strategies and into internationally agreed biodiversity strategies and policies
5.	Briefly describe the national biodiversity monitoring system and how it tracks progress in the implementation of the NBSAP.	Biodiversity across the UK is monitored and reported through the UK Biodiversity Indicators, many of which are underpinned by National Monitoring Schemes (e.g. the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and the Breeding Bird Survey). Updates to the UK Biodiversity Indicators compendium are published annually. The UK Biodiversity Indicators are dependent on a wide variety of data, provided by government, research bodies, and the voluntary sector. As Official Statistics, the presentation and assessment of the indicators have been verified by the data providers, and the production and editing of the indicators have been overseen by government statisticians. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) has worked alongside Defra and the Devolved Governments and Country Nature Conservation Bodies to review the previous suite of UK Biodiversity Indicators (UKBI), in addition to other national indicators against the KMGBF goals, targets and headline indicators to update or propose a new set of UKBIs to report progress towards the KMGBF goals and targets. The revised set of UKBIs is based on the latest guidance published on indicator methodologies for KMGBF reporting, with advice on indicator development also provided by the UK Biodiversity Indicators Steering Group¹ and other experts. The latest update to the UKBIs was published in December 2025 and included within this 7NR.

¹ The UK Biodiversity Indicators Steering Group is chaired by Defra and includes experts from the four countries of the UK, Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) as well as representatives from non-governmental organisations. The group is coordinated by JNCC and has three core functions: (i) to review and develop UK biodiversity indicators, (ii) to oversee the publication of UK biodiversity indicators and (iii) to provide advice to the Four Countries Biodiversity Group on biodiversity indicator related matters including alignment with international commitments such as those set out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) for reporting to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Section III. Assessment of progress towards national targets

Please use the following templates to report on progress in the implementation of your country's national targets and revised or updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan in alignment with the Framework. In cases where no national target is linked with one or more related global targets, it is suggested that countries report directly on progress contributing towards the global targets.

Target 1	
National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target) UK Target 1 Plan and manage all areas to address land and sea use change and reduce biodiversity loss The UK will ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.¹	
1.	Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target Summary of actions taken The UK has a variety of planning legislation and policies in place to manage the use of land and sea within the four countries of the UK. All four countries have a planning system in which national and local policies on planning are required to be set out in formal development plans. For example, the UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS) was published in March 2011. The MPS is the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment across the UK. The Devolved Governments of Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales (See Section I) each have their own strategies and policies with similar remits to the UK MPS. Additionally, the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have their own planning systems and policies delineating and regulating their territories.

¹ The United Kingdom does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities, as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Target 1

The UK and the UKOTs and CDs dedicate resources towards the development of many spatial planning processes across different governments to ensure biodiversity inclusive planning is undertaken. Across the UK and the UKOTs and CDs, a participatory approach has been taken to ensure multiple voices are heard in terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine planning processes. Work continues to be funded to identify areas of high biodiversity importance so that further measures can be established to aid in conservation and protection. Additional work is needed to effectively implement these plans to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance close to zero by 2030, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity.

Regarding the main actions under Target 1:

Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change

The UK has a variety of planning legislation and policies in place to manage the use of land and sea within the four countries of the UK. All four countries have a planning system in which national and local policies on planning are required to be set out in formal development plans.

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 provides a comprehensive framework for managing the UK's marine environment by establishing a new system for marine planning and licensing, creating the Marine Management Organisation, and allowing for the designation of Marine Conservation Zones. It also created the England Coast Path and a new public right of access to the English coast, and revised rules for managing fisheries and protecting marine and freshwater fish. In Scotland, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 was implemented alongside the separate Marine (Scotland) Act (2010), which together established a system for marine planning, sustainable development, and the protection of marine and coastal areas, and includes the ability to designate marine protected areas (MPAs).

The UK Marine Plan Policy Statement (MPS) was published in March 2011. The MPS is the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment across the UK. The UK has begun establishing Marine Plans in all UK seas, in line with the objectives of the MPS. In English waters, inshore and offshore regions are divided into 11 Marine Plan sub-areas. The East Marine Plans were published in April 2014, the South Marine Plans in July 2018 and the Northeast, Southeast, Southwest and Northwest Marine Plans were published in June 2021. The process for replacing the 2014 East Marine Plans is currently underway. Further, the Marine Works (EIA) Regulations (2007) mandates in England that developers of certain types and sizes of marine works that have the potential for significant environmental impacts must submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before a decision is made on their marine licence. In Scotland's waters, the National Marine Plan (NMP) sets out strategic policies for the sustainable development of Scotland's marine resources out to 200 nautical miles. An updated plan (NMP2) is in development and aims to address the global climate and nature crises, by carefully managing increased competition for space and resources in the marine environment. In Northern Ireland, the [draft Marine Plan](#) was consulted on in 2018 and is due to be published by the end of 2025. Marine licensing falls under part 4 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, while marine EIAs fall under the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. A [similar plan](#) has been published in Wales.

The UK recognises spatial opportunities and conflicting priorities within the marine environment. The UK Government's Marine Spatial Prioritisation programme has generated lots of useful insights about the scale of pressures in English waters and the trade-offs needed. The UK is now exploring how

Target 1

to approach these difficult trade-offs and how government can help industries to better co-locate. In addition, the Offshore Wind Environment Improvement Package will help facilitate deployment of offshore wind while maintaining high levels of environmental protection.

The UK is continuing with its ambitious programme of Fisheries Management Plans (FMP). FMPs are evidence-based plans that aim to deliver sustainable fisheries for current and future generations. They are being developed with the fishing sector and other stakeholders and will deliver their statutory duties as set out in the UK Fisheries Act 2020 and Joint Fisheries Statement. FMPs are a provision of the Act that will support the fisheries objectives and the sustainable management of stocks.

In addition, the UK is a member of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, under which the UK has committed to having a sustainable ocean plan in place by 2027. Development of the plan is currently in the scoping phase.

In the UK, all areas of land are under a spatial planning system, which is responsible for local development. In England and Wales, the principal legislation is the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and in Scotland the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The planning system balances demands for development of land to provide benefits for the economy, society and the environment. Most development is consented under the above legislation and is decided by local planning authorities, guided by local development plans and national policies.

There is a separate process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). In England and Wales, the Planning Act 2008 legislated that major infrastructure projects covering energy, transport, water, waste and business development would be reviewed and decided nationally rather than by an individual local planning authority. For example, for projects in England the decision maker is the relevant Secretary of State. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for making NSIP decisions on water, wastewater, and hazardous waste projects.

In England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, each country's national planning is guided by their respective National Planning Framework. These high-level policies capture many different policy areas but also provide guidance for biodiversity management. For example, in Scotland, the [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) sets out spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy and this has an important contribution to make towards addressing the global biodiversity crisis. Further, the [Developing with Nature](#) guidance sets out a number of common measures to enhance biodiversity. It should be used alongside the local development plan and any guidance the planning authority may have prepared.

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 introduced a system of strategic planning for England, including Spatial Development Strategies (SDS), which will ensure we can meet housing needs, deliver strategic infrastructure, grow the economy and improve the environment and climate resilience. The model for strategic planning is based on the SDS that has been in place in London for over 20 years. SDSs will set the context for local plans, which will have to be in "general conformity" with the relevant strategic plan.

In England, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are being developed and implemented, bringing together local partners to agree priorities and propose practical actions in areas where they would have the most benefit for nature recovery and the wider environment. A consultation on land use in England was published in January 2025, which will inform the publication of a Land Use Framework. The Framework will support spatial plans for energy and housing and address the challenges faced by communities, businesses, developers, landowners and farmers, as they adapt to a changing

Target 1

climate and to new societal demands. It will align incentives to encourage land management that delivers on multiple objectives, including for food security, nature and climate.

England and Wales have both begun to implement laws and policies that require development to facilitate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) respectively. In England, this new condition means that new developments must provide a 10% gain for biodiversity, and that where it is not possible to deliver the net gain on-site, off-site habitat creation or restoration is required.

Wales adopted a national development framework in 2021, called Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, which included a policy framework for achieving better outcomes for biodiversity, ecosystem resilience and climate change adaptation and mitigation through the planning system. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) was updated in 2024 to strengthen policy on NBB by requiring the submission of green infrastructure statements for all development proposals. Together, Future Wales and PPW form the national framework for the preparation of strategic and local development plans.

In Northern Ireland, most terrestrial planning decisions are administered at district council level with councils adhering to an overarching Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), which contains regional planning policy and provides proportionate policy protections for designated sites, protected species, priority habitats and species and other local nature conservation interests. The protections afforded to designated sites and protected species align with legislative protection levels. The SPPS must be considered when councils are developing their Local Development Plans (LDPs) and plans must be consistent with the SPPS. Once adopted, the LDPs will replace existing Planning Policy Statements, however the SPPS will remain in effect.

Other key legislation related to spatial planning and the environment include:

- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, which is the primary legislation concerning wildlife protection in England, Scotland and Wales, covering wildlife protection, nature conservation, public rights of way, and the countryside. It protects wild birds, their eggs and nests, as well as other listed wild animals and plants from being killed, taken, disturbed or sold. The Act also allows for the designation of protected areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997, applying to England and Wales, which protect important hedgerows in the countryside by requiring a notification procedure before removal. Local planning authorities can prevent removal or require replacement of the hedgerow. Removal without this process is a criminal offence.
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, applying to England and Wales, which grants the public the right to access “open country”, which includes mapped mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land, for recreation, such as walking, running, sightseeing and birdwatching, whilst adhering to the Countryside Code. The Act also amended laws on public rights of way, regulated certain vehicle off-road use and strengthened nature conservation laws.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, applying to England and Wales, which includes a “biodiversity duty” strengthened under the Environment Act 2021 for public authorities, which legally requires them to consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in delivery of their functions.

Target 1

- The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 mandate environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for certain development projects in England. These regulations require EIAs for projects that are of a certain type or meet certain criteria where their location, size, or characteristics are likely to cause significant environmental effects.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 ensure that UK environmental protections stemming from the EU's Habitats and Birds Directives continue following EU Exit. They include the establishment of a UK-wide network of protected sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)), retain assessment requirements for any plan or project that could impact a protected site, specifically addressing the protection of offshore marine sites, and introduce reporting requirements on the UK Government's progress in meeting habitat and species conservation objectives.

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 establishes a new Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) in England that will help restore protected habitats and species. Under the new approach, Natural England will work with public bodies, environmental organisations, private markets and developers to create an Environmental Delivery Plan (EDP) for specific areas, outlining conservation measures that address one or more impacts of development on protected sites and species. Where an EDP is in place, developers can make a payment into the NRF rather than implementing individual mitigation measures. Natural England will pool these payments to deliver improvements at a larger scale – for example, cleaning rivers, restoring wetlands and creating accessible green spaces through land-use change where communities can enjoy nature. An overall improvement test will ensure that when making an EDP, the Secretary of State has confidence that the proposed measures will materially outweigh the negative effect of development. The first EDPs launching in 2026 will focus on addressing nutrient pollution. UK environmental assessment regimes, including the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, inform decision-makers and the public of the likely significant environmental effects arising from a project or plan/programme. These regimes require consideration of effects on biodiversity and other environmental factors, as well as consideration and description of how any impacts may be avoided or mitigated.

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 forms the legal basis for EIAs and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) in Scotland. Public bodies and private companies operating in a public character, such as utility companies, are required to assess, consult on, and monitor the likely impacts their plans, programmes and strategies will have on the environment. SEAs help to better protect the environment, aim to ensure that any development is sustainable, and increases opportunities for public participation in decision-making.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is the consultation body for SEAs and provides formal comment on the accompanying Sustainability Appraisals and associated Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRAs). Sustainability Appraisals are carried out alongside development of the Northern Ireland LDPs, informing the plan and providing environmental assessment as the plan develops.

The [UK Overseas Territories biodiversity strategy](#), published in November 2025, promotes participatory and integrated spatial planning that embeds biodiversity considerations across land and marine environments. It encourages inclusive governance by involving local communities, governments, and stakeholders in planning processes through the delivery of technical training in priority areas such as monitoring, evaluation and spatial planning. The strategy prioritises biodiversity-inclusive approaches to development, ensuring that planning frameworks address ecosystem resilience and climate adaptation alongside economic needs. It also strengthens effective management through the expansion and improved governance of

Target 1

protected area networks and advocates adaptive management to respond to land and sea use pressures. By integrating land-sea planning and monitoring habitat change, the strategy aims to reduce cumulative impacts and maintain ecological connectivity, ensuring that all areas are managed in ways that safeguard biodiversity and support sustainable development.

Of the UKOTs and CDs, the [Isle of Man](#), [Bailiwick of Jersey](#), [Falkland Islands](#), [Cayman Islands](#), and Gibraltar are all guided by their respective island planning policies. The Cayman Islands is in the process of developing an update to its National Development Plan to modernise this national planning document for the first time in 28 years.

The Falkland Islands Environment Strategy 2021–2040 sets out actions to “consider, manage, and minimise the impact of economic activities and development on the environment, taking a long-term strategic approach that considers future generations and incorporates environmental assessment”. Under the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, an EIA is a requirement for any development thought to impact on the local environment. The planning officer decides whether an EIA is necessary for a development following a consultation with the Environment Department. This can include developments as small as the erection of small buildings near known valuable habitat through to large developments for resource extraction.

The [Jersey Marine Spatial Plan](#), published in 2024, will ensure the different users of the marine environment interact with it in a sustainable manner.

The [Isle of Man Strategic Plan](#) (terrestrial planning policy) is currently being [reviewed](#) and will include a policy for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) that the Isle of Man Government are currently consulting on. The actions within the Isle of Man’s Biodiversity Strategy 2015–2025 are currently being reviewed, and if there is agreement to include BNG, the application of Environment Policy 4 of the current Strategic Plan would effectively be amended to require BNG.

The Isle of Man Government has also produced [guidance](#) to improve the consideration of wildlife issues within planning applications. Similarly, guidance has been published on [impacts on trees](#). In addition, since 2020, ecological consultancy services have been developed on the island, providing Preliminary Ecological Assessments and EIAs for development applications, through people who know the Manx ecology and legislation. Under the Marine Infrastructure Management Act, secondary legislation has been passed to bring the legislation into practical effect and require EIAs for the controlled marine activities.

In Gibraltar, the [Town Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2019](#) ensure that environmental considerations are fully integrated into the planning process for certain types of development. A new development plan for Gibraltar is being prepared, which will be published in 2026 and will include policies to preserve Gibraltar’s natural environment. The [Nature Protection Act](#) sets out a requirement for an HRA to be applied to all land use plans to assess the potential effect of a plan on the conservation objectives of European Sites including SACs, SPAs and Ramsar Sites.

From a marine perspective, Gibraltar has established [conservation objectives](#) for the Southern Waters SAC/SPA, and the [Gibraltar Marine Reserve Management Plan](#) provides the framework to extend the protection of habitats and species to the entirety of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW). The [Marine Protection Regulations 2014](#) build on the provisions of the Nature Protection Act 1991 and provide additional legislative requirements such as licensing fishing, scuba diving, cetacean tour and sports fishing operators within the entirety of the BGTW.

Target 1

Ensure that spatial planning/management processes bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030

The UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) commits the UK countries to targets aimed at achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in their seas by minimising impacts from human activities on marine ecosystems. The UKMS covers the extent of the marine waters over which the UK exercises jurisdiction. For example, in England, nearly 60% of the 181 MPAs have management measures in place to protect features from damaging fishing activity, including byelaws in 2022 in the first four offshore sites, which ban bottom-towed gear over sensitive habitats, and a further 13 sites are protected by the 2024 Marine Protected Areas Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw. In June 2025, a consultation was launched proposing plans to ban bottom trawling over sensitive habitats within a further 41 MPAs, covering 30,000 square kilometres of England's waters. The consultation closed on 29 September 2025, and the Marine Management Organisation is now carefully considering all responses received before making any decisions.

In October 2025, prohibitions on fishing activity were put in place within 20 MPAs within Scottish offshore waters (i.e. beyond 12 nautical miles).

In Wales, there are 139 MPAs covering both benthic habitat and mobile species. Various byelaws are in place in Welsh waters, restricting activities, for example, in the seas around Skomer island, where a restriction on bottom towed gear is in place. For the wider network, management measures are considered where the needs of the feature require active interventions. Recently published condition assessments focussing on the wholly Welsh inshore MPAs concluded that fishing activity was not considered a pressure leading to features not being in a favourable condition. In addition, to support further development and implementation of marine planning in Wales, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has worked with the Welsh Government to produce maps showing environmental considerations. The maps, now available on [DataMap Wales](#), bring together data for birds, marine mammals, seabed habitats and fish so that new development proposals can better take them into account at an early stage of planning. Wales has also updated the Planning Policy Wales to afford SSSIs stronger protection and to ensure that new development achieves NBB.

[The Marine Protected Areas \(Prohibited methods of fishing\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#), introduced in January 2023, prohibit the use of demersal mobile gear (and in some sites the use of static fishing gear) in nine MPAs in the Northern Ireland inshore region.

The UK has begun development of the UK Wetland Inventory, which will provide robust data that can underpin future actions to protect these vital habitats. It is likely to be completed by 2028.

The Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme is delivering a nationwide survey of England's land, freshwater assets and coast, mapping the location, extent and condition of our ecosystems. NCEA will produce an integrated baseline assessment of England's natural capital and ecosystems by the end of the programme in 2028/2029. The programme is enabling a natural capital approach to policy and decision-making by generating a 'whole system' picture of the state of our natural environment, which is not currently possible from existing fragmented data, enabling us to move to a more complete view at both a regional and national level. Outputs from the NCEA include the National habitat maps to aid delivery of the LNRs, the Living England habitat map, updated Priority Habitat Inventories, the Trees outside Woodland map and the England Peat map. These products are all available on an Open Government Licence and are publicly accessible. NCEA products will enable the private sector, central and local governments, and third sector to understand the condition of our ecosystems and put nature at the heart of decision making. The NCEA 'Find Natural Capital Data' public search service launched in summer 2025 and provides a single digital location to search for NCEA data alongside over 8,000 natural capital relevant datasets from various sources. The three-year marine NCEA programme was completed in March 2025. This delivered

Target 1

evidence, tools and guidance to integrate natural capital approaches into policy and decision making for marine and coastal environments. Programme data are discoverable through the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network and project reports can be found by searching for “ME45” at the [Defra Science Search](#).

The new England Peat Map marks a significant advancement in national peatland data infrastructure. It is the first national-scale dataset to model the extent, depth, condition, and surface features of peat and peaty soils across England. It integrates satellite imagery, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), field surveys, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) modelling to produce a comprehensive spatial representation of peatland characteristics. Key successes of the map include its national coverage, technological innovation, and collaborative data integration. As a modelled product, it provides probabilistic estimates rather than definitive site-level data.

We are investing in a further improvement programme to produce an enhanced national peat extent and depth model, with a specific focus on better representing lowland peat areas. This will involve exploring a hybrid mapping and modelling approach that uses high quality mapping data where available and models the remaining peat resource elsewhere. We will create UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory compatible outputs that will be used to provide annual estimates of emissions and integrate and publish the restoration register as a data layer.

In Scotland, NatureScot’s advice on peatland restoration to achieve biodiversity compensation and enhancement is contained in its guidance on [Advising on peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitats in development management](#) (June 2023). This document will evolve as additional information and evidence informs our understanding, including additional outputs from the Peat Expert Advisory Group and development of a Scottish biodiversity metric.

Wales has also developed Area Statements as a key tool under Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to support the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales. They are developed and maintained by NRW and are designed to translate national policy into place based local action. There are seven [Area Statements](#) covering hugely diverse parts of Wales. The [Wales Environmental Information Portal](#) is designed to communicate the evidence base behind the area statements. This, for example, includes the mapping of resilient ecological networks in a growing number of areas to help local stakeholders and decision makers build action for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience into their activities.

Northern Ireland, through the development of living maps, has created a tool to better identify and direct better management and protection of areas of high ecological integrity.

On the Isle of Man, [Biodiversity Action Plans \(BAPs\)](#) have been developed for a suite of marine and terrestrial species and habitats. Some examples of the actions these plans have enforced are as follows:

- The Waxcap Grasslands BAP involved updating a checklist of fungi occurring on the Isle of Man and has been delivered by the Isle of Man Fungus Group and funded by Culture Vannin.
- The Atlantic Salmon BAP has involved activities that raised awareness of the status of and threats to Atlantic Salmon among the relevant sectors, competent authorities, and the general public. This work has improved scientific communication and information exchange between bodies such as the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the OSPAR Convention), the Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM), and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS).

Target 1		
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved	Summary of progress towards the target The UK has several pieces of legislation that aim to ensure all areas of land and sea are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning. All land areas in the UK operate under statutory planning systems, and each country's national planning is guided by their respective National Planning Framework. These high-level policies capture many different policy areas but also provide guidance for biodiversity management. England and Wales have both begun to implement laws that require development to facilitate Biodiversity Net Gain and net benefits for biodiversity respectively. In England, Local Nature Recovery Strategies are being developed and implemented, with 24 of 48 strategies now completed by December 2025, and Planning Policy Wales was updated in 2024 to strengthen net benefit for biodiversity policy by requiring the submission of green infrastructure statements for all development proposals. In Scotland, the National Planning Framework 4 sets out spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. In Northern Ireland most terrestrial planning decisions are administered at district council level in adherence to an overarching Planning Policy Statement. The UK Marine Policy Statement is the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment across the UK, with Marine Plans published in all countries and some currently undergoing review. The UK Marine Strategy commits the UK countries to targets aimed at achieving Good Environmental Status in their seas by minimising impacts from human activities on marine ecosystems. Nearly 60% of England's 181 marine protected areas (MPAs) now have management measures restricting damaging fishing gear, and in June 2025, consultation closed on banning bottom trawling in an additional 41 MPAs covering 30,000 square kilometres. Scotland introduced prohibitions in 20 offshore MPAs in October 2025, with its MPA network now including 247 sites (including 233 designated for conservation purposes), covering 37% of its seas. Wales manages 139 MPAs with targeted byelaws, and Northern Ireland and UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) maintain similar frameworks. Despite all these measures, biodiversity continues to decline. Most assessed ecosystems are classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable, and only 24% of land is covered by natural ecosystems. Furthermore, implementation gaps persist, particularly in monitoring effectiveness and addressing conflicting land-use priorities. Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 1:

Target 1

Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change

The UK has legislation in place that ensures that all areas of land and sea are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning or effective management processes that address land-use and sea-use change and plans in the UK are created using a participatory process.

In November 2024, England published a [review](#) of the effectiveness of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for protecting ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees from loss and deterioration caused by development. The review highlighted that, although the NPPF provides strong protections for ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in policy, this is not resulting in protection in practice. As a result of this review, and with input from stakeholders, England has developed a set of recommendations, which it is now working on to help bridge the gap between policy and implementation.

Ensure that spatial planning/management processes bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030

Two new Headline Indicators were published in the UK in December 2025:

- Headline Indicator A.1: Red List of Ecosystems – the overall indicator value in 2025, based on the subset of ecosystem types currently assessed, is 0.54, where a score of 0 indicates that all ecosystems included have collapsed and a score of 1 indicates that all ecosystems included are classified as being of Least Concern. Of the 20 ecosystems assessed, 17 are currently considered to be either Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable. It should be noted that 28 ecosystems were not assessed in this iteration, and the inclusion of more ecosystems will impact the average score.
- Headline Indicator A.2: Extent of natural ecosystems – in 2025, the extent of natural ecosystems was assessed as 24% of terrestrial ecosystems and 100% of marine ecosystems, leading to a combined extent of 81%. The percentage figure for marine is considerably greater than for terrestrial, given that the marine environment is entirely covered by relatively natural ecosystems, in contrast to the terrestrial part of the UK where natural ecosystems are less abundant.

In 2024, the UK Marine Strategy assessment showed that overall levels of physical disturbance, physical loss, and changes to the condition of benthic habitats are similar to those of 2019 and are above those needed to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES)². However, in some areas there have been improvements: in the Southern and Northern Celtic Sea, physical disturbance from fisheries using mobile bottom-contacting gears has reduced and now 68% of broad scale benthic habitats are achieving GES.

² Good Environmental Status (GES) is defined by the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) through eleven descriptors. These describe the state of the marine environment, such as conserving biodiversity or food webs. They also describe anthropogenic pressures on the marine environment such as commercial fisheries, or pollutants such as marine litter, contaminants, or the input of energy. The use of this descriptor on environmental status was applied in the UK whilst a part of the EU, and its use has remained with caveats since the UK's exit out of the EU.

Target 1

The UK has commenced work on a National Wetland Inventory expected to be available in 2026 in support of the Ramsar Convention, which will provide a publicly accessible digital repository of information on UK wetlands and enable a better understanding of the status of sites across the UK. The inventory will incorporate data layers for several wetland-related habitats, thereby supporting the delivery of net zero targets, carbon budget planning and the development and application of nature-based solutions for the effective restoration, conservation, and wise use of wetlands.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) were introduced through the Environment Act 2021. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has appointed 48 responsible authorities to lead on the preparation of a local nature recovery strategy for their area. Together, these 48 strategy areas cover the whole of England. Each LNRS will agree priorities for nature recovery and wider environmental improvement and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. As of December 2025, 24 LNRSs have so far been completed and published. The expectation is that all 48 LNRSs will be published over the following few months. Please see the case study below for further details on LNRSs and the benefits they will provide for nature recovery.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requires developments to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity, compared to pre-development conditions. It became mandatory in England in early 2024 under the Environment Act 2021. BNG can be delivered on-site, off-site, or via statutory credits (as a last resort). It encourages developers to minimise impacts through site design, reducing BNG costs. Off-site BNG supports the growth of private finance for nature recovery and is globally recognised as a pioneering approach to supporting investment into nature. BNG is due to be rolled out to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects from May 2026.

Wales has produced three State of Natural Resources Reports since 2016. These have informed seven area statements—six covering land and one covering the marine environment – published by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in 2019. NRW uses these area statements to target national and local action and to prioritise partnership working. They are also used to support other planning processes such as well-being planning. Area statements are reviewed and kept up-to-date locally.

NRW has begun mapping Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs) in some of its area statements to better understand how these networks can be integrated into wider landscapes. RENs provide a landscape-scale approach for managing habitat networks to improve resilience and maintain and enhance biodiversity. They are intended to shape how landscape features are managed and to support co-operation between stakeholders to achieve multiple environmental and socio-economic benefits.

Further, in Wales, progress has been made in mapping [Marine Strategic Resource Areas](#). This work has involved technical workshops with stakeholders to identify future marine planning priorities and refine baseline resource maps. These maps are available on the Wales Marine Planning Portal.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

The main challenges to implementation for the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) include a lack of spatial data, capacity and resource constraints, and gaps in legislation.

Target 1

The health of UK waters within the North East Atlantic is threatened by a complex and growing mix of direct and indirect impacts from human activities. The ocean does not respect regional or international boundaries, so to achieve the UK's vision it is essential to work together with our regional ocean partners to set common goals, standards and methodologies for assessing whether the goals have been achieved. The UK does this through participating in the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-east Atlantic (the 'OSPAR Convention'). By doing so, the UK can influence the direction of policies to protect the marine environment across the North-East Atlantic. OSPAR Convention decisions and recommendations are conceived in expert groups where there is significant input from UK experts. These recommendations move upwards through committees where we discuss and negotiate with other Contracting Parties to achieve outcomes for the region.

Assessments of the state of the UK's seas depend critically on the extent and sufficiency of the available evidence. Marine research and monitoring vary hugely in spatial and temporal coverage. In some cases, there are robust data with full quality assurance and internationally recognised standards, while, in other cases data are less robust or provide only a partial picture and it is necessary to use scientific expert judgement to reach an estimation of the likely status.

Many of the UK Marine Strategy assessments are based on expert judgement or a combination of expert judgement and a range of state and pressure indicators. Some of the assessments carry low confidence because of a lack of knowledge, data and assessment tools. Consequently, assessments of Good Environmental Status vary in quality and levels of confidence. Since assessment results provide a basis for decision-making and management, it is important to describe the uncertainty associated with any assessment-related statement.

Spatial data required for mapping and planning are often held by a range of organisations and may vary in availability, accessibility and quality. These issues can be time-intensive to resolve. The comparability of data used at different scales can also be a challenge, for example, work towards a UK Wetland Inventory encountered challenges with synthesising the Ramsar and domestic wetland classifications. In the Falkland Islands, the breadth of baseline data available to support decision-making is limited. While several species groups such as birds and marine mammals are well documented, other species groups are data deficient. These include many of the Falkland Islands' native and endemic plant species, other marine species, invertebrates, fungi, lichen, and bryophytes. As such, it can be difficult to determine the full ecological importance of areas in the Falkland Islands and to make appropriate assessments in the event of any land- or sea-use changes. While some information is reflected within the [Falkland Islands Data Portal](#), this data can often be of poor resolution or outdated. Difficulties in funding data collection and monitoring also represent key challenges for Gibraltar.

In the Cayman Islands, conflicts between priorities for the environment and priorities for development and agricultural present the greatest challenges to holistic spatial planning.

Resource constraints have been a key barrier to multiple governments progressing at the pace needed. In England, the [Local Government Association](#) has raised concerns that only a third of local authorities have access to their own in-house ecologist, which would make it difficult to resource biodiversity actions, while in some UK Overseas Territories, planning and environment departments can have as little as one member of staff needing to deal with all consideration of developments and their impacts on biodiversity.

In some of the UKOTs and CDs, there is no legislation that covers all aspects of biodiversity. For example, in the Bailiwick of Jersey, there is currently nothing within the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002 or the Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2021 that explicitly promotes sustainable development in zones

Target 1

adjacent to protected areas, any more than in other non-protected areas. There is also a need to develop a holistic, evidence-based freshwater spatial plan. Issues include the high expense of weir removals, the maintenance or development of fish passes, and difficulties managing the collaboration of landowners, stakeholders, government bodies and non-governmental organisations on each project.

In the Falkland Islands, the extent of the protection provided to flora and fauna by legislation is limited. The primary legislation that dictates these protections is the Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance 1999 and the Marine Mammals Ordinance 1992. Most protections outlined are limited in scope and could be improved to better inform the decision-making process. This legislation has not been reviewed since its inception and requires amendments to better reflect known species distributions and newly discovered species.

4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)³

Headline Indicator A.1: Red List of Ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Red List of Ecosystems)

Table 1. Summary breakdown of Red List Ecosystem assessment results

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Red List of Ecosystems](#)

Threat category	Total ecosystems within category
Ecosystems assessed as Critically Endangered	2
Ecosystems assessed as Endangered	7
Ecosystems assessed as Vulnerable	8
Ecosystems assessed as Near Threatened	1
Ecosystems assessed as Least Concern	2
Ecosystems not assessed	28

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator measures the average risk of ecosystem collapse across natural and semi-natural ecosystems in the UK. It is based on Red List Ecosystem (RLE) assessments to assess the risk of collapse of individual ecosystems, carried out at UK level.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Red List of Ecosystems](#)

Table 1:

The overall Red List of Ecosystems value in 2025, based on the subset of ecosystem types currently assessed, is 0.54. A score of 0 indicates that all

³ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

Target 1

ecosystems included have collapsed. A score of 1 indicates that all ecosystems included are classified as being of least concern.

The summary breakdown of Red List Ecosystem [assessment](#) results so far is presented in the table on the left.

Headline Indicator A.2: Extent of natural ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent of Natural Ecosystems)

Table 1: UK land and sea areas covered by natural ecosystems

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent of natural ecosystems](#)

	Total area (ha)	Percentage of sea/land
UK terrestrial ecosystems	5,885,239	24%
UK marine ecosystems	73,010,200	100%
UK terrestrial and marine ecosystems combined	78,895,439	81%

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator shows the extent of natural ecosystems in the UK both on land and at sea. It includes a wide range of natural and semi-natural ecosystems that are considered to be of importance for nature conservation.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent of natural ecosystems](#)

Table 1:

These are net values that do not double count overlapping areas covered by more than one component ecosystem type. The percentage cover of terrestrial ecosystems is based on the UK land area being 242,495 km².

The landward limit of marine ecosystems is based on the mean-high water mark and the overall extent is based on the area of the UK Exclusive

Target 1		
		Economic Zone (EEZ), as specified in the Metadata Factsheet for Indicator A.2 Extent of natural ecosystems – note that this does not include the entirety of the UK continental shelf. Further details are included in the Technical Documentation.
	Headline Indicator 1.1: Percentage of land and sea area covered by biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☒ No data available. Please explain why: As the methodology for this Headline Indicator is not yet operational, this indicator has not been used in this report. ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁴ 1.b Number of countries using participatory, integrated and biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance close to zero by 2030. 1.1(a) Are all areas of your country under biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning or effective management processes that: (a) Address land-use (terrestrial) change? (d) Fully	Comments (optional): _____

⁴ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

Target 1

	1.1(b) Are all areas of your country under integrated and biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning or effective management processes that: (b) Address land-use (inland water) change? (d) Fully 1.1(c) Are all areas of your country under integrated and biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning or effective management processes that: (c) Address sea-use (coastal and marine) change? (d) Fully 1.2 If the answer to any of the questions in 1.1 is not “No”, were the plans created using a participatory process? Yes: (a) For terrestrial spatial planning (b) For inland water planning (c) For coastal and marine spatial planning	
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed England's Local Nature Recovery Strategies Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) were introduced through the Environment Act 2021. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has appointed 48 responsible authorities to lead on preparing a local nature recovery strategy for their area. Together these 48 strategy areas cover the whole of England with no gaps or overlaps. Each LNRS will agree priorities for nature recovery and wider environmental improvement and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. Responsible authorities are required to work with local partners in preparing their strategy – involving public bodies, voluntary groups and landowners and managers to draw on their expertise and to give them a say in the strategy for their area. Furthermore, all LNRSs must go through public	

Target 1

consultation to ensure that everyone can contribute to the strategy for their area. The strategies are built on evidence, with data supplied by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and its arm's length bodies supplemented by data provided by local partners. This data then informs a stepwise participatory decision-making process to establish what the environmental issues are in the strategy area, what the strategy is seeking to improve, how and where.

The actions proposed in LNRs are intended to help meet local, national and international nature recovery goals, and, through the inclusion of nature-based solutions, also help meet ambitions for improvement of the wider environment. For example, they may include creation of habitat between two existing protected sites to improve connectivity and the ability of species to move within the landscape, or planting of native woodland on steep ground in flood-prone river catchments, for biodiversity, flood and climate mitigation benefits.

Landowners and managers are encouraged, supported and incentivised to take the action proposed on their land by their LNRs. The requirement for relevant planning applications to demonstrate a Biodiversity Net Gain was introduced alongside LNRs in the Environment Act 2021 and the two policies are designed to work closely together. Where habitat is created or improved as proposed by the LNRs, there is an uplift in how many biodiversity units it generates to reflect its greater strategic significance, providing an important financial incentive for LNR delivery. The Environment Act 2021 also introduced a requirement that all public authorities must "have regard" to relevant LNRs as part of their duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, to encourage public landowners to support the delivery of nature recovery actions.

LNRs are also designed to work closely with the wider land use planning system in England. The Government issued Planning Practice Guidance in February 2025 to explain how LNRs should be used to inform plan making and planning decisions across the country. This enables the needs of nature recovery to be considered more effectively and transparently alongside other important land use needs.

The Government is continuing to explore what further encouragement and incentives might be provided to support delivery of the actions proposed in LNRs, and is seeking to bring together public, private and voluntary sectors to support strategies that they are helping to create. As of December 2025, 24 LNRs have so far been completed and published. The expectation is that all 48 LNRs will be published over the following few months. Published LNRs have been well received by local and national stakeholders, with recognition that the preparation process has strengthened and developed important local partnerships. Each LNR has been shaped by the responsible authority to reflect local circumstances and priorities, generating a wealth of experience that is being shared with areas still preparing their strategy. This experience will also inform how responsible authorities approach reviewing and republishing their strategies. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs must announce a periodic review every 3–10 years, to record what action has been taken and update what action is proposed.

Expansion of Marine Protected Areas through Marine Spatial Planning in Jersey

Call for a Marine Spatial Plan

Public and political pressure to increase the protection of marine habitats in Jersey, along with the need for an improved and holistic framework for Jersey marine resources, resulted in a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) being pursued. The decision was made at a political level in 2022 that an MSP for Jersey was needed and that a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) should be proposed as part of this MSP.

Target 1

Objectives

The MSP was built on the four pillars of Economy, Ecology, Culture and Society. It was designed to consider these elements in balance and the people and user groups that depend on the sea in this context. There was also a strong ecosystem-based approach to the MSP, with the understanding that Ecology underpins the three other pillars.

Stakeholders

A core element of the MSP from the outset was the need for it to be community-led. Stakeholders from a range of sectors were consulted through workshops prior to the first draft of the MSP being written. The purpose of these workshops was to understand what is valued and where it is valued in the marine landscape, what issues are currently experienced and where any potential user conflicts may be.

Evidence compilation

Underpinning the MSP are a series of evidence base documents which summarise many datasets pertaining to marine ecology, maritime activity and marine legislation and policy. The MSP concerns multiple sectors; recreation and tourism, energy and infrastructure, commercial and recreational fishing, the natural environment and cultural heritage. This required many government departments and external organisations to feed into the MSP. The resulting priorities for the MSP are ambitious, wide-ranging and informed. One of the key priorities concerned the MPA network, in which 27% of Jersey's territorial waters was proposed to be protected from mobile fishing gears.

Public consultation

The draft MSP was published in late 2024 and a public consultation period was open for 12 weeks to allow for comments from both the public of Jersey and stakeholders in neighbouring jurisdictions. The MSP was redrafted using the information provided during this time and a summary of the comments and actions resulting from them can be read in a separate consultation summary document.

Final MPA boundaries proposed and accepted

One of the biggest changes to the MSP following the consultation was the extent and shape of the proposed MPA boundary. Several areas of the MPA boundary were highlighted as being of high economic importance to a number of mobile gear vessels and so it was agreed to further research these zones prior to their inclusion in the core MPA boundary. Other areas were amended to improve the navigability of the MPA, some were changed to seasonal closures, and others have been agreed to be phased in to allow mobile gear vessels time to transition out of certain zones.

The final core MPA boundary to be protected at the earliest opportunity equates to 23% of Jersey's territorial waters, with a further 1% to be added by 2030 and another 4% of areas to be further researched before deciding on their inclusion, or not, within the MPA network. These MPAs will be protected from all mobile gear but will still allow static fishing and diving to continue. After five hours of debate across two days, the States of Jersey accepted the MPA network proposal.

Target 1

Habitats that will benefit from protection

The MPA network will safeguard internationally recognised habitats such as kelp forests, maerl beds and seagrass meadows, which are protected under agreements including OSPAR and Ramsar due to their biodiversity value and ecological importance. These habitats deliver critical ecosystem services, providing nursery and feeding grounds for marine life, storing carbon, stabilising sediments and supporting coastal resilience. In addition, the MSP identifies the need to safeguard other sensitive habitats, including infauna rich sediments, sand mason worm beds and shallow reefs, which are particularly biodiverse and vulnerable to damage from activities such as bottom trawling and dredging.

Progress so far

Since the acceptance and publication of the final MSP, work has begun on multiple areas of the MSP priorities, but the primary focus has been on the MPA network. The law for trawling, netting and dredging is in the process of being updated and the further research zones have been surveyed using a combination of visual surveys and grab sample surveys to better understand the extent and condition of the habitats, with a particular focus on maerl beds.

Next steps

The next steps are to report on the findings from the surveys in the further research zones and then finalise the coordinates for the MPA boundaries. The research report is to be completed by the end of 2025. Implementation of the MPA areas is expected for September 2026, with some areas held back for implementation at the start of 2030 due to high fisher dependency. Designation will be through the Trawling Netting and Dredging Regulations for the MPAs and a new regulation for the No Take Zone. An Economic Impact Assessment is also being conducted to evaluate the effects of the MPA network.

8. **Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 2

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 2

Ensure at least 30% of all degraded ecosystems are under effective restoration

The UK will ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

Action is underway across the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to restore degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems. This is being delivered through a wide range of measures, legislation and policies, and through financing mostly from government.

Restoration is being driven through statutory frameworks, national strategies, and long-term programmes that embed nature recovery into policy and planning. Across the UK, legally binding targets under the Environment Act 2021 and devolved biodiversity strategies provide the foundation for action, supported by major investment programmes and collaborative schemes that promote landscape-scale restoration. These include initiatives to restore priority habitats such as peatlands, woodlands, wetlands, and coastal ecosystems, alongside measures to improve ecological connectivity and resilience.

Marine restoration is being advanced through spatial planning and protection, fisheries management reforms, and projects targeting blue carbon habitats and benthic recovery. UK Overseas Territories are pursuing locally tailored strategies, combining habitat restoration with species recovery and sustainable resource management.

Delivery of restoration activities is underpinned by partnerships between governments, landowners, non-governmental organisations, and communities, with growing emphasis on nature-based solutions and blended finance to secure long-term outcomes. There are also initiatives, such as the development of a Saltmarsh Code, which seek to encourage investment from the private sector towards restoration activities.

While progress is evident, challenges remain in scaling up restoration, addressing competing land-use priorities, and ensuring sufficient capacity and resources to meet the 2030 ambition.

Regarding the main action under Target 2:

Target 2

Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration

Across the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) there are a variety of mechanisms being used to deliver restoration goals through management measures, spatial planning and research.

England has set ambitious legally binding targets under the Environment Act 2021, which will drive action to support Target 2. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25) sets new interim targets for the statutory Environment Act 2021 targets. These include:

- To restore or create over 500,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites by 31 December 2042, and the EIP25 interim target to restore or create a total of 250,000 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside of protected sites by December 2030.
- To ensure that at least 70% of protected features in [marine protected areas](#) (MPAs) are in favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in recovering condition (see Target 3), and the EIP25 interim target to make sure at least 49% of MPA protected features are in favourable condition and at least 46% in recovering condition by December 2030.
- To increase tree canopy and woodland cover to at least 16.5% of total land area in England by 2050, and the EIP25 interim target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover by 0.33% of England's land area by December 2030 (equivalent to a net increase of 43,000 ha).

Furthermore, through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, there is a strengthened duty on relevant authorities who must now 'seek to further' the purposes of Protected Landscapes.

To deliver measures required to reach these targets in England, the Government is making the largest investment into nature in history, with over £7 billion to be directed into nature's recovery. This includes environmental farming schemes (£5.9 billion), tree planting (£816 million) and delivering peat outcomes, including peatland restoration (£85 million). These will make a significant contribution to Environment Act 2021 and statutory net zero targets, including improving the quality of water, air, and spaces for wildlife so biodiversity can thrive, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Under the farming schemes, this includes £1.8 billion in 2025/2026 for Environmental Land Management schemes to accelerate the transition to a more resilient and sustainable farming sector (see Target 10 for further details of this scheme). Countryside Stewardship schemes provide financial incentives for foresters, farmers and land managers for more locally targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats, including woodlands and water courses. In addition, Landscape Recovery (LR) schemes support landowners and managers who want to take a large-scale, collaborative, long-term approach to producing environmental and climate services on their land. It will facilitate and fund ambitious projects through bespoke, 20+ year agreements.

The LR scheme involves a publicly funded project development phase, which takes around two years, and a project implementation phase, which will last 20 years (or longer) and will be funded through a blend of public and private funding. The four main distinguishing features of the scheme are:

1. Large-scale projects: the scheme is designed to deliver outcomes that require collaborative action across a big area, such as restoring ecological or hydrological function across a landscape.

Target 2

2. Long-term public funding (for example, for 20 years or longer): the scheme will support outcomes that take a long time to deliver, such as peatland restoration, river restoration, woodland management, or habitat restoration.
3. Bespoke agreements: the scheme can fund activities that contribute to priority outcomes but are specific to the locality, which would otherwise be difficult to facilitate through other schemes.
4. Blended funding: the features above and the provision of development funding should enable projects to attract private investment into nature.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Natural England invested £7.4 million over 2022/2023 to 2024/2025 to initiate 12 landscape-scale Nature Recovery Projects (NRPs) across the country. Covering over 319,480 ha, these projects were designed to encourage collaborative action for nature recovery at scale, aimed at restoring entire ecosystems. In [2021](#), [2022](#) and [2023](#), NRPs have targeted action for nature recovery through locally led partnerships that encourage innovation, sharing knowledge and resources. Now that the three-year dedicated funding programme is complete, 2025/2026 will see the work undertaken by NRPs transition into 'business as usual' as we continue and extend the drive for nature recovery across the country and prepare for the delivery of [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) (LNRS). Further detail about the achievements of the NRPs is available in a [Natural England blog](#) on Nature Recovery Projects.

Legislative and regulatory measures have also been introduced to support habitat restoration, including action to implement the provisions of the Environment Act 2021. The Environment Act 2021 introduced a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' which requires public authorities who operate in England to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. Public authorities are required to report by January 2026 on the policies, objectives and actions they will implement and deliver to comply with their biodiversity duty. In 2023, 48 local authorities were appointed as the 'responsible authority' to lead the preparation of the LNRSs for their area. These plans will target nature recovery actions in locations where they are most needed and provide the best environmental outcomes.

The new Nature Restoration Fund established under the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 will help restore protected habitats and species in England via Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs). Natural England will prepare EDPs for specific areas, outlining conservation measures that address one or more impacts of development on protected sites and species. An overall improvement test will ensure that when making an EDP, the Secretary of State has confidence that the proposed measures will materially outweigh the negative effect of development. The first EDPs will be launched in 2026.

In Scotland, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy sets out the ambition to restore nature by 2045, including a series of six-year rolling delivery plans that include a comprehensive set of cross-sectoral actions, and a proposed Natural Environment Bill that will include the introduction of statutory nature recovery targets. Since 2021, the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund has provided nearly £40 million for habitat restoration and protection of native species. In Scotland, a financial commitment of £250 million over 10 years to restore 250,000 ha of degraded peat by 2030 remains a priority through the [Peatland ACTION programme](#). As part of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, NatureScot and Scottish Government have developed a suite of indicators to monitor and evaluate progress. These cover the marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Wales published its 30by30 framework in 2025. The framework embeds principles of ecological, connectivity, and resilience, and promotes inclusive governance by engaging landowners, communities, and stakeholders. The Welsh Government, through its Nature Networks Programme, has provided £9 million in match funding for the Natural Resources Wales (NRW)-led Four Rivers for LIFE project to help restore the ecological condition of the Teifi,

Target 2

Cleddau, Tywi, and Usk rivers, all of which are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). This investment directly supports delivery of Target 2. To facilitate strategic restoration planning in Wales, spatial Nature Networks maps have been developed to help prioritise future restoration efforts. These maps, alongside national and site-level evidence, will inform the identification of further restoration priorities and contribute to the effective area-based conservation required under Target 3.

Wales is also implementing two key schemes in preparation for its Sustainable Farming Scheme: (1) the Integrated Natural Resources Scheme (INRS) and (2) Ffermio Bro: Farming in Designated Landscapes. These schemes promote collaborative, landscape-scale restoration of degraded ecosystems across terrestrial, inland water, and coastal areas. INRS supports partnerships between farmers, land managers, and other stakeholders to deliver nature-based solutions such as peatland restoration, woodland creation, hedgerow and boundary restoration, wetland enhancement, and invasive species removal. Ffermio Bro focuses on designated landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes), enabling farmers to work with management bodies to restore habitats and improve ecosystem connectivity. Both schemes embed the principles of Sustainable Land Management and provide capital and revenue funding to support on-farm restoration actions, knowledge transfer, and community engagement.

Restoration measures in Northern Ireland include restoration of vulnerable peatlands, review of protected sites and the implementation of SAC management plans. Adaptive management measures will aim to improve the condition of protected sites, for example, in the context of the potential role of MPAs as a nature-based solution for biodiversity recovery and climate change. A comprehensive plan to restore the ecology of Lough Neagh – one of Northern Ireland's most important natural resources – is underway. Species measures are also contributing to ecological restoration

On the Isle of Man, the [Agri-Environment Initiatives Grant Scheme](#) has funded the creation of ponds, hedges and tree planting on farmland, with the aim of restoring or enhancing biodiversity features on farms, and the Soil Health Initiative provides a payment to support farmers to promote soil health and flourishing biodiversity on the farm. The restoration of old mine sites is progressing to prevent toxic runoff from an upland mine spoil area affecting the linked river ecosystem, whilst also protecting associated rare plants, such as lead moss. At two sites where weir works were proposed, these were replaced with rock ramps to benefit migratory fish such as Atlantic Salmon, and volunteers have opened a fish passage over another weir. There is an Atlantic Salmon Biodiversity Action Plan, and restocking in the Glass and Laxey River systems took place in May 2025.

The Environment Department of the Falkland Islands Government is the primary funding source for restoration throughout the archipelago. This includes improving terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem integrity under its Environment Strategy 2021-2040 and undertaking prioritised restoration projects on government-owned land holdings as set out in the Islands Plan 2022-2026. Actions are reflected within both public and private restoration initiatives, for example through revegetation works of areas of degraded Tussac along coastal ecosystems. There is also an [Environmental Studies Budget](#) (approximately £170,000 in 2024/2025) for which landowners can apply to cover the costs of restoration works on private land, such as erosion control measures and land recovery. Private landowners such as Falklands Conservation also undertake restoration of degraded terrestrial habitat within their landholdings.

In Gibraltar, the Gibraltar Nature Reserve Management Plan recognises the importance of restoration and management activities to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions. Historically significant restoration projects include the Eastside Sand Slopes, which were converted into a water catchment area in the early 1900s and then removed and habitat restored in the 1990s. The sand slopes now contain two EU-listed habitat types and are regularly surveyed by the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society.

Target 2

Between 2022 and 2025, 1,420 ha of land and sea has been brought under ecological management across the UK Overseas Territories under projects funded through Defra's Darwin Plus programme.

Further details of actions to restore particular terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems are provided below. Restoration projects in terrestrial and inland water ecosystems in the UK and the UKOTs and CDs include a focus on woodland and peatland.

Woodland creation and restoration

In 2024, a Tree Planting Taskforce was launched to support UK-wide plans to plant millions more trees across the UK. The UK's Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) was set up in 2020 to co-deliver nature restoration and associated ecosystem services. The NCF is boosting tree planting to help meet net zero targets, reversing the decline in nature, improving water quality, and supporting job creation and economic growth. The NCF has been extended to March 2026.

There was a significant uplift in payments under the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) in 2024. EWCO offers farmers and land managers more targeted tree-planting incentives and encourages tree-planting in the most suitable locations. Alongside this, a new Woodland Creation Fast Track initiative was launched to speed up tree-planting rates. In England, three new National Forests will be created during 2025/2026 to 2029/2030. The first of these – the Western Forest (announced in March 2025) – was the first new national forest in 30 years and will stretch from the Cotswolds to the Mendips. The second National Forest was confirmed for the Oxford-Cambridge corridor (announced in November 2025), and a competition will launch in early 2026 to determine the third National Forest's location in the Midlands or North of England.

A Trees Action Plan for England will be published in 2026 to set out how Defra will work in partnership with the tree planting and forestry sector to achieve the new 2030 interim tree canopy and woodland cover target and improve the resilience and condition of trees and woodland, while delivering multiple benefits for nature, climate, people and the economy.

Scotland has a programme of ecosystem restoration. It includes using spatial evidence to identify and facilitate six exemplar large-scale landscape restoration partnership projects with significant woodland components by 2025. For each project, management structures will be established, and restoration work will be progressing by 2030.

Various actions are underway to restore temperate rainforests. Defra is currently undertaking research in England to identify future temperate rainforest zones and understand species colonisation through modelling and field data collection, supporting the expansion and resilience of temperate rainforests in the UK under climate change. Scotland's strategic approach aims to improve the condition of temperate rainforests so that they can regenerate and increase in area, whilst providing benefits to communities. The Manx Wildlife Trust has acquired 43 ha at [Creg-y-Cowin](#) for restoration to temperate rainforest in the Isle of Man. Tree planting schemes have been undertaken by private landowners across large areas to enhance biodiversity.

In 2022, the Cayman Islands National Tree Planting Programme was established to plant native fruit trees in urban and community spaces.

Peatland restoration

Peatland restoration is a high priority across the UK.

Target 2

In England, by 2030, Defra will invest £85 million to restore and manage peatlands, including support for water infrastructure, peatland restoration and trials of farming on higher water tables, including paludiculture.

In Scotland, under the [Peatland ACTION](#) programme, £250 million has been committed over 10 years to restore 250,000 ha of degraded peat by 2030. To date over 51,000 ha of previously damaged peatland have benefitted directly from restoration under the programme.

The Welsh Government launched its National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP) in 2020, aiming to restore a minimum of 3,000 ha. This programme prioritises action across the main areas of peatland damage for the combined benefit of biodiversity, decarbonisation and other ecosystem services. Efforts have been led by NRW, with tools like the Wales Peatland Data Portal used to track progress. NPAP has been complemented by other peatland projects including those funded through EU LIFE, National Parks, Heritage Lottery and landowners.

In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is providing oversight to the Special EU Programmes Body's PEACEPLUS projects, delivering against investment area 5.1: Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience. The investment of €40 million to the successful projects, PEAT+ and PeacePlus Nature, will focus on peatland restoration and restoring priority species across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. To date, peatland restoration activity has taken place on approximately 2,250 ha across Northern Ireland.

On the Isle of Man, the [Manx Peat Partnership](#) has been set up to restore an initial 500 ha by March 2026 and a further 2,700 ha over five years. The Slieau Mooir plantation Forest to Bog Project has been established to restore a felled upland plantation to bog.

Marine and coastal ecosystem restoration

While restoration policy is devolved, some action is underway across the UK to support the restoration of estuarine, coastal and marine habitats.

At the UK level, the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership (UKBCEP) has been established to progress the evidence base on blue carbon habitats in UK waters. In 2023, it published an Evidence Needs Statement showing the UK's ambition to fill critical evidence gaps to better understand and restore vital blue carbon habitats. In 2025, the UKBCEP launched its [new website](#), including its new Blue Carbon Projects Directory, which, with the help of academics, non-governmental organisations and government bodies, will capture for the first time, ongoing and historic blue carbon research from across the UK. This in turn will help facilitate better alignment between organisations and improve our understanding of the evidence gaps.

Private sector investment in saltmarsh restoration is being encouraged via UK funding to develop the Saltmarsh Code, which will enable saltmarsh carbon reductions to be marketed and traded as a carbon offset.

In 2024 in England, a £2.5 million EU-funded five-year project 'Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed' (ReMEDIES) concluded. The programme was established to protect and restore seabed habitats from their unfavourable condition across five SACs in Southern England. An AfterLIFE plan has been developed to continue the work of ReMEDIES through various other projects now ongoing including Solent Seascape, Plymouth Marine National Park and Transforming the Thames. The Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef initiative aims to reverse centuries of decline of estuarine and coastal habitats in England by removing barriers to restoration of seagrass meadows, saltmarsh and native oyster reefs, and restoring at least 15% of our priority habitat along the English coast by 2043.

Target 2

To enable recovery and restoration of damaged seabed habitat, byelaws have been introduced to prevent damaging fishing activity (the use of bottom towed gear) within specific areas in England and the Isle of Man. In 2024, a byelaw was established to prohibit the use of bottom towed gear in specific areas across 13 English offshore MPAs, covering a combined area of nearly 4,000 square kilometres. In 2022, byelaws were introduced to prohibit the use of damaging fishing gear in four MPAs; and 10.8% of the Manx Territorial Sea (approximately 4,000 square kilometres) is now protected from damaging fishing activities through MPA designations. Additionally, in 2021, a voluntary no anchor zone was introduced in Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone to support the site's conservation objectives. In 2023, the first three Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs): Allonby Bay, North-East of Farnes Deep and Dolphin Head) in England were designated with the highest level of protection for marine habitats and species. The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has consulted on two proposed byelaws, one to prohibit all commercial and recreational fishing across all three HPMAs and one to prohibit anchoring within Allonby Bay HPMAs. Decisions on these proposed HPMAs byelaws will be taken in due course. In June 2025, a consultation was launched on plans to ban bottom trawling in a further 41 MPAs, covering 30,000 square kilometres of England's waters. The consultation closed on 29 September 2025, and the MMO is now carefully considering all responses received before making any decisions.

A [Marine and Coastal Restoration Plan for Scotland](#) was published in 2025. The plan sets out actions to support and accelerate marine and coastal restoration in Scotland. The Scottish Marine Environmental Enforcement Fund helps to bridge the nature-finance gap through accepting voluntary contributions from those interested in the health of Scotland's seas and strategically redistributing the donations through grants.

In Wales, Project Seagrass received £248,008 from the Welsh Government through round three of the Nature Networks Fund to support the project on Facilitating Accelerated Nature Networks for Seagrass. This represents a significant boost for the long-term recovery of seagrass, which is a key habitat known to store and sequester carbon, as well as improving biodiversity in South Wales. The project has investigated sites along the South and West Wales coastline to trial suitable areas for restoration projects. It aims to create a joined-up strategy of seagrass restoration and conservation action for South Wales across the Severn Estuary, Pembrokeshire Marine and Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SACs. It will trial innovative techniques for both native species of UK seagrass: common eelgrass and dwarf eelgrass. The project also emphasises the importance of engaging with local communities.

Oyster restoration projects are also underway at sites in North and South Wales. In Conwy Bay, the Wild Oysters Project laid 2,000 native oysters on scallop shell and limestone gravel cultch to try and create oyster habitat. In October 2025, 50,000 native oysters were deployed into the Daugleddau Estuary in Pembrokeshire as part of the Natur am Byth! Project.

The Nature Networks programme also resulted in several marine projects delivered by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). A total of nine projects are currently being delivered over the next five years. These include:

1. Restoring seabird populations on rat free islands.
2. Understanding why our benthic habitats and species are in decline and management implementation for recovery.
3. Condition assessments for marine species and habitat features (Severn and Dee SACs) and marine site of special scientific interest assessments.
4. Production of guidance and protocols for derelict vessel removal at wider Wales level and expansion of marine litter workstreams (e.g. catchment marine litter pilot, subtidal litter, etc.).

Target 2

5. Biosecurity plan implementation, wider invasive non-native species prevention and management.
6. Understanding the impacts of coastal squeeze (viability of accommodation space, MPA boundary changes, opportunities for resilience building).
7. Maintaining and monitoring the saltmarsh restoration polders project established in 2024.
8. Addressing water quality and MPA feature condition (saltmarsh overgrazing) on the Loughor and Burry Inlet catchment.
9. Investigating the impacts of landfill sites on MPAs.

Through the Water Capital Programme, NRW is also delivering a project to improve water quality impacts relating to diffuse agricultural sources in MPAs, via tree planting, fencing, river restoration and livestock water provision.

In Northern Ireland, multiple marine recovery policies are under development and consultations have been completed on a Blue Carbon Action Plan, a reviewed Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Strategy and on Conservation Strategies and Action Plans for seabirds and elasmobranchs (sharks and rays). The Northern Ireland [Blue Carbon Action Plan 2025-2030](#) includes actions to prioritise blue carbon habitats for management, restoration and management. Funding for native oyster restoration is also being progressed.

The Northern Island inshore MPA network currently consists of 48 MPAs, accounting for 38% of the inshore region area. Within the MPA Strategy, there are actions related to restoration and management to improve the ecological coherence of the MPA network and deliver on Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland targets. Furthermore, there is a specific action on co-development with partners on funding schemes to support restoration projects. The Department aims to develop and implement management plans for the existing MPAs, applying an adaptive management framework. Where a feature is in unfavourable condition, management measures will be explored with the aim to return to favourable condition. Offshore, fisheries management measures introduced in 2023 prohibit bottom trawling and have introduced management for static gear in nine inshore MPAs, and a suite of Fisheries Management Plans is also under development.

In the Isle of Man, the [Blue Carbon Project](#) includes surveys to assess blue carbon resource and rates of sequestration, and a report and action plan for its conservation are due to be published in 2026.

In the Bailiwick of Jersey, six Areas of Special Protection have been established for the protection of offshore reefs and to reduce pressure during periods of increased visitor pressure on breeding behaviour of certain species. Jersey's [Marine Spatial Plan](#) (MSP) will be implemented across 2026 to 2030 to work towards 30by30 targets, and there is an overall aim to increase the extent of protected fisheries areas under effective restoration. Also in Jersey, the [Birds of the Edge](#) project is creating a seabird sanctuary by eliminating predators and promoting the breeding of Puffins and auks, and various areas of coastal restoration using conservation grazing are in place.

The Cayman Islands Climate Change Policy approved in 2024 includes strategies focused on coral reef restoration building upon existing research programmes, and the restoration of wetlands. The Cayman Islands' Department of Environment established a Coral Spawning Lab in 2023. The Lab will aim to develop corals resistant to emerging/novel diseases and climate change. It will out-plant healthy specimens onto local reefs to replace some of the many corals lost to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in recent years.

Target 2

	In Gibraltar, the Darwin Plus Local-funded project, with the Nautilus Project, seeks to restore seagrass meadows within the British Gibraltar Territorial Waters. The Gibraltar Climate Change Strategy also recognises the importance of nature-based solutions like these.	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target Progress on the restoration of degraded ecosystems is being made across the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, but the rate of progress varies by ecosystem type and location, and more work is needed to understand how current actions contribute to achieving the target coverage and intended outcome. In England, since January 2023, action has been taken across 38,877 ha to create or restore wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites, with delivery focused on grasslands, woodlands, peatlands, and arable margins. Woodland creation in England is accelerating: 5,765 ha of new woodland were planted in 2024/2025 (alongside 888,000 trees outside woodland), reflecting a 27% increase on the previous year. Peatland restoration is also advancing, with 11,615 ha of peatland brought into active restoration through the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme since 2023. Scotland's Peatland ACTION programme has restored over 51,000 ha to date, supported by a £250 million commitment to restore 250,000 ha by 2030. Wales has restored 3,000 ha of peatland and improved habitat across a further 4,000 ha, safeguarding 1.6 million tonnes of stored carbon. Progress in restoring degraded marine ecosystems includes byelaws protecting 4,000 square kilometres of English offshore MPAs from damaging fishing gear and consultations on banning bottom trawling in an additional 30,000 square kilometres. The Isle of Man has placed 10.8% of its territorial sea under effective restoration, while Gibraltar and the Cayman Islands are advancing seagrass and coral recovery projects. Although numerous restoration actions are currently underway, their outcomes will take time to materialise due to inherent lag periods. At present, the effectiveness of these efforts and their contribution to enhancing biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, as well as ecological integrity and connectivity remains uncertain. Further, challenges remain in scaling up restoration, addressing competing land-use priorities, and ensuring sufficient capacity and resources to meet the 2030 ambition. Regarding progress in the main area under Target 2:	

Target 2

Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration

Despite the many actions taken towards restoration, more work is needed to understand how current actions contribute to achieving the target coverage (30% under effective restoration) and intended outcome (enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity). The indicator on ecosystem restoration (Headline Indicator 2.1) is currently under development and, once baselines are calculated, will help fill some of the information gaps.

In May 2025, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Natural England published an [evidence report](#) setting out analysis undertaken in March 2025 to produce a metric to inform reporting of progress towards the Environment Act 2021 habitat target in England. This collated data from multiple contributing delivery mechanisms for analysis to avoid double counting of areas where multiple delivery mechanisms may have been used. The metric indicates that since 30 January 2023, there are 38,877 ha where action has been or is being taken that is reasonably expected to create or restore wildlife-rich habitats outside of protected sites. The evidence report includes a breakdown of delivery by habitat type, showing greatest delivery has been of wildlife-rich arable field margins, wildlife-rich wood pasture and parkland, wildlife-rich grasslands, wildlife-rich woodlands, and wildlife-rich peatlands. The reported metric is not fully comprehensive; the reported figure does not represent all action taken to create and restore habitat since the habitat target came into effect, as robust delivery data are not yet available from all delivery mechanisms. Progress towards the target will be delivered through various delivery mechanisms, including Landscape Recovery (LR) schemes and the Species Survival Fund (SSF).

Thirty-four projects in the second round of LR, involving over 700 farmers and land managers working with their communities to support over 200,000 ha across England, were announced in May 2023. The first round of LR took forward 22 projects that collectively aim to restore over 600 km of rivers and target the conservation of over 260 flagship species such as water vole, lapwing, and great crested newt. Round 2 launched in spring 2023, with 34 projects focused on net zero and biodiversity being awarded development grants. The first two projects from Round 1 of the scheme have now completed the necessary assurance process, signed their agreements, and are ready to start work on the ground.

The SSF is a two-year nature recovery programme that is investing £25 million in 20 projects across England. The programme was designed to make early progress towards the Government's statutory targets for species abundance and the restoration and creation of wildlife-rich habitats. Defra commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme in July 2024 to follow SSF's progress, see how it is contributing to these targets, and to understand what lessons we can learn to inform our future nature recovery work. Key findings of the interim evaluation cover the first year of delivery, from April 2024 to April 2025, and show that the projects are delivering the programmes priorities and are motivated to restore and create habitats that connect people with nature. It also shows:

- 6,138 trees were planted, 1,059 habitat and species surveys took place, and 454 habitat improvement actions have been completed, including seeding native wildflowers and installing winter shelters for small mammals.
- Projects have sufficient resources to carry out species and habitat surveys to monitor the effectiveness of activities.

Target 2

Work is in progress across Scotland to restore, regenerate and connect ecosystems and habitats, including, for example, ambitious woodland creation and peatland restoration programmes.

In Wales, good progress has been made in restoring significant areas of habitat, particularly for peat, which shows the value of delivering this as a specific habitat-based programme. Other restoration work in Wales has also been achieved through smaller woodland, saltmarsh and sand dune restoration projects. Wales is developing its approach to ecosystem restoration alongside the work of its three 30by30 Biodiversity Deep Dive expert groups. They have produced national Nature Networks maps for Target 3 that will be used alongside other national and site level evidence to bring forward further potential areas for restoration. The Welsh Government Nature Networks Programme has already contributed £9 million of match funding towards the Natural Resources Wales-led Four Rivers for LIFE project, to help restore the condition of the Teifi, Cleddau, Tywi, and Usk rivers, all of which are designated as Special Areas of Conservation. Initial work has been undertaken in relation to these measures. For example, funding for peatland and oyster restoration is being progressed.

The first window of the Integrated Natural Resources Scheme in Wales has allocated at least £10.5 million over 3.5 years to support collaborative projects, with grants ranging from £250,000 to £1 million. These projects aim to deliver a wide range of restoration actions including rewetting wetlands, enhancing riparian and upland habitats, restoring traditional boundaries, and implementing natural flood risk management. The Ffermio Bro scheme has launched with £1.4 million in capital and £450,000 in revenue funding for 2025/2026, supporting farmers in designated landscapes to undertake restoration activities aligned with Sustainable Land Management objectives. Early outcomes include strengthened partnerships between farmers and landscape bodies, improved access to nature, and the potential for enhanced biodiversity through targeted habitat restoration. These schemes are also building capacity through training programmes and the deployment of dedicated advisers, laying the groundwork for scaling up restoration efforts in future funding windows.

In Northern Ireland, initial work has been undertaken in relation to restoration measures. For example, funding for peatland and oyster restoration is being progressed, with the latter having pilot projects in several marinas.

In the Isle of Man, there has been significant progress on opening rivers to improve habitat connectivity for migratory fish. The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture has been improving historical dilapidated weirs alongside the Department of Infrastructure through replacement with [rock ramps](#), which provide 24-hour access for fish passage. This work has been carried out by small [volunteer groups](#) who are working to improve existing fish passes, as work is restricted by limited resources. This work has been developed through guidance and advice from the [River Restoration Centre](#) and the Institute for [Fisheries Management UK](#).

In the Falkland Islands, although restoration is currently underway, quantifiable progress towards the target of 30% is not currently possible. Examples of success include the restoration of Stanley Common and several Tussac islands, including a National Nature Reserve, through ongoing Tussac revegetation over the past several years, through both government and private-led initiatives.

Further details of progress made to restore particular terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems are provided below. Restoration projects in terrestrial and inland water ecosystems in the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) include a focus on woodland and peatland.

Target 2

Woodland creation and restoration

More than 13,400 ha of woodland has been planted in England since March 2022, with planting rates increasing year-on-year from 2020/2021. In 2024/2025, 5,765 ha of new woodland was planted in England, of which 5,450 ha received government funding, mostly through the Nature for Climate Fund (NCF). In addition, 888,000 trees were planted outside woodland, equivalent to 1,399 ha of new canopy, bringing the total area of tree canopy established and numbers of trees planted to 7,164 ha and 10.4 million trees, respectively. Of the woodland created in 2024/2025, 88% was broadleaf woodland, with the remaining 12% conifer. Woodland planting rates in the year 2024/2025 were 27% higher than in 2023/2024 and 156% higher than those achieved in 2021/2022, reflecting the success of the NCF in kickstarting efforts to achieve the long-term statutory target to achieve at least 16.5% tree and woodland cover by 2050 and the new Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 interim target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover by 0.33% of England's land area by December 2030 (equivalent to a net increase of 43,000 ha).

Scotland has an ambitious woodland creation programme. It has implemented its [strategic approach](#) for Scotland's rainforest, which aims to improve its condition and health so that it can regenerate and expand whilst providing benefits to communities. The current 11 focus projects cover 300,000 ha and include almost 40% of Scotland's remaining core rainforest. These projects have the potential to establish appropriate grazing levels over more than 220,000 ha, clear more than 18,000 ha of rhododendron, restore more than 5,000 ha of plantation on ancient woodlands and expand core rainforest areas by 10,000 ha. The work is still in its early stages – about half of the projects are in the initial stages of delivery, with the rest still in development. Of the 11 projects, the three most recently adopted, all in 2025, are community-led. This significant change demonstrates the development of a "rainforest movement". It is vital to make sure that these communities, and others wanting to set up rainforest restoration projects, are adequately supported and resourced to carry out the work.

Wales has ambitious woodland creation targets with generous incentives offered through our Woodland Creation Grants. The provisional woodland statistics from Forest Research show that in the 2024/2025 planting season, 960 ha of woodland was created in Wales. The new Sustainable Farming Scheme will further encourage tree planting by requiring all farmers joining the scheme to plant a minimum of 0.1 ha of trees by the end of 2028, and further funding will be available to incentivise this.

The Isle of Man Woodland Trust has [planted 45,925 trees](#) on private land to create a woodland since 2020.

Peatland Restoration

Defra's target for peatland restoration is to restore 280,000 ha of peatlands by 2050. Restoration is currently funded via the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NCPGS), and once this ends, it will be primarily funded through Environmental Land Management schemes such as Landscape Recovery and Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier. Through the NCPGS, active restoration management began on 5,606 ha of peatlands in England in 2024/2025, with works ongoing on a further 8,600 ha. Therefore, the NCPGS was active on 14,206 ha of peatlands in England during 2024/2025. In 2023, a total area of 3,818 ha of peat in National Landscapes was committed for restoration under the NCPGS. This figure rose to 4,276 ha in 2024, representing an increase of 458 ha. There was a more substantial commitment within National Parks, with 11,437 ha in 2023 increasing to 13,550 ha in 2024 – an annual rise of 2,113 ha. Combined, the total area of peatland committed for restoration across all Protected Landscapes under the Scheme reached 15,255 ha in 2023 and increased to 17,826 ha in 2024. This represents an overall increase of 2,571 ha over the one-year period. As of 2025, National Parks contain the largest area of peatland, highlighting the significant role National Parks play in conserving deep peat resources.

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Scotland has an ambitious peatland restoration programme. Peatland ACTION remains a priority, with a financial commitment of £250 million over ten years to restore 250,000 ha of degraded peat by 2030. The programme has restored over 51,000 ha to date.

In Wales, the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP), up to the end of the 2024/2025 financial year, has received £11.6 million of funding from the Welsh Government to progress peatland restoration across Wales, involving around 20 external partners. By 2024, the programme had restored 3,000 ha of peatland and improved the habitat across a further 4,000 ha, safeguarding 1.6 million tonnes of stored carbon and reducing emissions by an estimated 8,000 t/CO₂e per year. NPAP has been complemented by other peatland projects including those funded through EU LIFE, National Parks, Heritage Lottery and landowners. Collectively, these have delivered restoration activity across a further 1,000 ha since 2020. The Welsh Government has tripled peatland restoration targets from 600 to 1,800 ha per annum and will be increasing the delivery capacity of NPAP so that by 2030, the programme will be delivering at a scale capable of reaching the net zero 2050 target of 45,000 ha of peatland restored.

There has been significant progress on peatland restoration in the uplands on the Isle of Man. The Manx Peat Partnership, set up to restore an initial 500 ha by March 2026, is currently restoring approximately 300 ha of the most degraded peatland.

Marine and coastal ecosystem restoration

Through the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership, partners have worked together to establish a working group addressing the gaps that prevent the inclusion of coastal wetlands in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHGI). This working group has overseen the Defra-funded UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology roadmap for potential inclusion of coastal wetlands in the UK GHGI that was published in January 2025.

Around the English coast, good progress has been made. To date, 40% of England's seas are covered by [marine protected areas](#) (MPAs) and 60% of these MPAs are already protected by byelaws that restrict the use of damaging fishing gear. Compliance with the byelaws has generally been high. Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee are developing an MPA monitoring strategy to assess progress towards meeting the statutory target to ensure that 70% of designated features in MPAs are in favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in recovering condition, and the 2030 interim target to make sure at least 49% of MPA protected features are in favourable condition and at least 46% in recovering condition by December 2030. This includes assessing whether the necessary management measures are in place. The current estimate is that 44% of England's protected marine features are in favourable condition.

Across the Isles of Scilly, Fal & Helford, Plymouth Sound & Estuaries, Solent Maritime and Essex Estuaries SACs, the '[Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed](#)' project planted 8 ha of subtidal seagrass, engaged with over 4,800 children through education programmes and outdoor events, installed 17 Advanced Mooring Systems for boat users and 24 marker buoys, established three Voluntary No Anchor Zones, and published the Green Guide to Anchoring and Moorings, which provides practical advice for boat users, with over 5,500 copies distributed.

The Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef partnership has produced a set of tools and guidance to help support partners with restoration activities, including a set of restoration principles, practical habitat restoration handbooks for seagrass, saltmarsh and native oyster restoration, a handbook for restoring estuarine and coastal habitats with dredged sediment, and a set of restoration potential maps providing a high-level, national scale overview of sites where successful restoration may be possible. The initiative continues to develop a habitat restoration platform that can be used by anyone seeking to learn about, deliver, fund and benefit from habitat restoration in the UK. Project delivery to achieve the restoration ambition is now

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underway. An ongoing pipeline of over 60 partnership projects has been developed, some of which are now being delivered year on year, with funding from the Government, restoring examples of all three priority habitats.

In Wales, Project Seagrass received £248,008 from the Welsh Government through round three of the Nature Networks Fund to support the Facilitating Accelerated Nature Networks for Seagrass project, which represents a significant boost for the long-term recovery of seagrass – a key habitat known to store and sequester carbon as well as improving biodiversity – in South Wales. Saltmarsh restoration in Wales has also been underway through the development of polders that enclose 8.8 ha of mudflat and saltmarsh habitat that will be restored.

In the Isle of Man, there has been significant progress in the assessment of blue carbon reserves and the sustainable management of marine habitats. In response to areas of the Manx Territorial Sea being amongst the most heavily dredged commercial fishing grounds in the Eastern Atlantic, introduction of a Long-Term Management Plan for scallop fishing in 2022 and the Isle of Man Fisheries Statement 2024 has fundamentally reduced overall fishing effort and sought to improve the supporting environment, fishery recruitment processes and the sustainability of the fisheries. Management measures have improved overall stock biomass to a 30-year high. Degraded benthic habitats, primarily fishery-related, have also been partially restored. The removal of bottom towed fishing gears, and introducing management of the highest degrading risks via the Marine Nature Reserve byelaws, mean that [10.8% of the Manx Territorial Sea](#) (approx. 4,000 square kilometres) area is under effective restoration. There has been an expansion of eelgrass in Laxey Bay, Ramsey Bay and [Port Erin Bay](#) Marine Nature Reserves and there have been similar restorative effects observed in voluntary closed areas, such as in [East Douglas Experimental Area](#).

The Cayman Islands' Department of Environment established a Coral Spawning Lab in 2023 to develop corals resistant to emerging/novel diseases and climate change with the aim of out-planting healthy specimens onto local reefs to replace some of the many corals lost to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in recent years.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Challenges that need to be overcome to reach this target include addressing competing societal demands and priorities, moving beyond protected sites to habitat-based restoration, and connecting ecosystems across and between rural, urban and peri-urban landscapes.

Some of the challenges are practical or logistical. In England, fully comprehensive data for assessing progress against the England statutory target to restore or create more than 500,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat by 2042 is not yet available. Drawing the details together held across multiple organisations is challenging but a process is currently in development.

Other challenges in delivering restoration include competing societal demands and priorities, such as in addressing climate change. In England, the commitment to a significant expansion of offshore wind to achieve net zero will likely create additional pressure on the marine protected area (MPA) network and its designated features. Where offshore wind developments cause unavoidable adverse impacts on protected features, developers must provide environmental compensation. For benthic features, the designation of new MPAs or the extension of existing MPAs is intended to deliver

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strategic ecological compensation. Similarly, in the Bailiwick of Jersey, economic impact management for the Marine Spatial Plan MPA area is a challenge.

Another example is in the Isle of Man, where there are multiple competing stakeholder groups depending on access to the resources and space within its relatively small area of Territorial Sea. The introduction of measures to restore degraded marine ecosystems (closely linked to Target 3 through the designation of additional statutory protected areas as Marine Nature Reserves) may have impacts upon local and UK commercial interests. If restorative measures are not properly designed and developed it could lead to a net-negative outcome for biodiversity, by, for example, displacing fishing effort into adjacent areas and increasing anthropogenic impacts in 'unprotected' areas. In the Isle of Man, a considered and inclusive approach is used, with co-management as appropriate.

In England, tree-planting schemes are demand-led and therefore there is a risk they might not receive enough applications or plant enough trees due to land use competition and the economics of woodland creation not being favourable enough for landowners or managers. Also, the supply of resources such as workforce capacity and skills, or supply of saplings and seed, needs to keep pace with required tree planting rates. Delivery partners also need long-term certainty to commit to supplying the necessary resources (people and capital) to build up future tree planting pipelines. To address these challenges, the forestry grant landscape is being simplified, with offers being made as attractive and stable as possible, and new opportunities to develop skills, qualifications and careers are being developed. Further investment in UK nursery and seed sector supply chains is occurring to boost tree seed and sapling supply, and the development of long-term private finance opportunities to support tree planting and woodland creation is being encouraged. The Nature for Climate Fund evidence programme and regular lessons learned exercises are used to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of tree planting delivery mechanisms and further increase their uptake.

In Scotland, it is acknowledged that ecosystems need to be ecologically connected across and between rural, urban and peri-urban landscapes, and this will require changes to the way green and blue spaces are planned and managed in urban areas to further support ecological restoration.

In Wales, except for peat, most restoration activity has focused on or around existing protected sites to achieve their effective management and contribute towards delivery of Target 3. However, to achieve more progress in this area, future work would need to move towards a series of habitat-based programmes to help better prioritise, deliver and monitor progress, which will need further resourcing.

Key challenges in delivering collaborative schemes in Wales (the Integrated Natural Resources Scheme (INRS) and Ffermio Bro) include securing multi-annual commitments, avoiding duplication with other Sustainable Farming Scheme layers, and ensuring sufficient budget and staffing to support collaborative projects. Legal complexities, financial constraints, and the need for expert facilitation have also emerged as barriers. To address these, future INRS windows will be recalibrated to incorporate lessons learned, including exploring outcome-based payments and refining support mechanisms. Ffermio Bro aims to double its funding in 2026 to 2028 and expand its reach by testing targeted nature recovery approaches and enhancing coordination among designated landscape bodies. Continued integration with other schemes such as Nature Networks and Local Nature Partnerships will be essential to ensure ecological connectivity and long-term sustainability of restoration efforts.

In Northern Ireland, funding is a key challenge to many of the restoration measures being considered, together with the availability of staffing resources for managing projects and ensuring their progress.

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The Isle of Man has understood the need to identify its degraded freshwater habitats (via a Freshwater Spatial Plan) and describe and quantify the ecosystem services that have been diminished or lost as a result. There is a need to design, resource and implement restoration campaigns (i.e. active management) with associated monitoring to assess effectiveness.

Meeting Target 2 presents a significant challenge for the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), many of which face widespread habitat degradation from invasive species, climate change, and historical land use. Ensuring that 30% of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine ecosystems are under restoration by 2030 will require sustained investment, technical support, and long-term capacity building. Given the remoteness and the unique ecology of many UKOTs, locally tailored restoration is required to enhance biodiversity and restore ecosystem services.

In the Cayman Islands, there is a lack of available land for terrestrial restoration projects, more resources are needed for maintaining and protecting trees that have been planted, and long-term funding for tree planting initiatives is lacking.

In agricultural areas in the Falkland Islands, private land ownership and animal husbandry are issues creating a significant barrier to widespread restoration and reversal of ecological degradation, where the extent of sheep farming is likely to continue to degrade the landscape. It is estimated that the rate of degradation/erosion of Tussac still far outpaces the rate of restoration. Amending available finance opportunities may help in this regard, for example, through a broadening of the Environmental Studies Budget grant to facilitate restoration at a greater scale, and through the land recovery scheme, which may further incentivise private landowners to undertake restoration works within their landholdings.

In the Falkland Islands, there is no centralised repository for data on what land recovery has occurred, particularly among private landowners, and there is no requirement for private landowners or other organisations (such as conservation charities) to report on self-funded restoration work. A lack of fundamental baseline data on what qualifies as 'degraded' ecosystems is a significant barrier for determining overall progress towards this target. Complex land ownership issues, with nearly 70% of land holdings within the Falkland Islands held privately, also limit the opportunity to undertake further ecosystem surveys.

In Gibraltar, challenges include a lack of funding and resources for ongoing monitoring and a lack of baseline data on the extent of degraded habitats. Competing priorities such as housing or development, and bunkering and other commercial activities within the marine environment, are also a challenge.

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4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) ⁵ Headline Indicator 2.1: Area under restoration (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area under restoration)	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☒ No data available. Please explain why: This indicator is still under development within the UK. ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator ⁶	Comments (optional): _____
6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed Scotland's Rainforest How has it become degraded? European temperate rainforest is concentrated on the Atlantic coastlines of Britain, Ireland and Norway. The greatest and most diverse area is found on Scotland's west coast, but it is highly fragmented and faces many threats including high herbivore impact, non-native invasive species, climate change and tree disease. In addition, much has been underplanted with commercial conifers; these are known as Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).	

⁵ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

⁶ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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Who are the stakeholders?

The Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest (ASR) is a [partnership](#) of more than 20 organisations, including public sector, private landowners, environmental non-governmental organisations and community trusts. It was formed to enable collaborative action against the threats to Scotland's rainforest.

What actions (social and physical) have been taken?

The ASR aims to restore all of Scotland's rainforest by 2045, primarily by removing invasive non-native species (especially *Rhododendron ponticum*), reducing herbivore impacts and restoring PAWS, while at the same time doubling its size by expanding and connecting rainforest fragments.

Three main principles are essential to effective restoration: work must be (1) landscape-scale, (2) long-term and (3) community-centric. The ASR has adopted 11 "Focus Projects" that meet these criteria. They are locally autonomous projects led by ASR partners, supported by the ASR as required, and working collaboratively to share experience.

The ASR has developed community engagement guidance, which will help project leaders to involve communities fully from the beginning, and ensure the social and economic benefits of rainforest restoration are fully realised. This maximises the chance that work will continue after the main funding phase has finished.

The ASR is increasingly working with other people and organisations for mutual benefit, on issues such as blending private and public finance, and developing guidelines to monitor the impact of work on the ground.

What were the barriers (social and physical) and how were they overcome?

Restoring Scotland's rainforest requires long-term commitment and substantial funding, working over multiple landholdings within the sparsely-populated areas of Scotland's west coast. Barriers, and work to overcome them, include:

- Initial lack of awareness of the habitat: before the ASR launched its strategy in 2021, few people knew that Scotland had rainforest or recognised its importance. A targeted communications strategy, co-ordinated by a dedicated staff member, has helped partners to align their messaging and use consistent language. As a result, Scotland's rainforest is one of the most talked about habitats in Scotland today.
- Uncertainty over how best to manage rainforest: the ASR has developed rainforest management guidance, and a dedicated staff member provides a programme of training events and bespoke advice to Focus Projects.
- Capacity within local communities for managing rainforest: [Our Rainforest Futures](#), an £8 million project running over seven years, will mobilise, train and equip people with the skills and knowledge to be guardians and advocates for Scotland's rainforest. This will bring jobs and skills into often-fragile west coast communities, ensuring that they gain economic, social and well-being benefits from the rainforest.
- Funding: several ASR partner organisations are working together to develop solutions to the need for long-term, substantial funding. They are exploring the use of natural capital finance and more collaborative fundraising, working towards a bespoke Rainforest Restoration Fund which could be blended with public funds to support all ASR Focus Projects.

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- Conflicting management objectives amongst neighbouring land managers: the ASR was integral in setting up the [Common Ground Forum](#), a network of organisations and individuals that are committed to a more collaborative approach to deer management. This Forum is starting to break down the conflict that has existed between players in the upland deer management sector for decades, to enable sustainable deer management.

What has been the progress made so far?

The current 11 Focus Projects cover 300,000 ha and include almost 40% of Scotland's remaining core rainforest. These projects have the potential to establish appropriate grazing levels over more than 220,000 ha, clear more than 18,000 ha of rhododendron, restore more than 5,000 ha of PAWS and expand core rainforest areas by 10,000 ha. The work is still in its early stages – about half of the projects are in the initial stages of delivery, the rest are still in development.

Of the 11 Focus Projects, the three most recently adopted, all in 2025, are community-led. This significant change demonstrates the development of a "rainforest movement". It is vital to make sure that these communities, and others wanting to set up rainforest restoration projects, are adequately supported and resourced to carry out the work.

What are the next steps?

To achieve the vision of full ecological restoration of Scotland's rainforest by 2045, it is estimated that about 30 ASR Focus Projects in total will be needed. The main barrier at present is long-term, substantial funding and capacity in rainforest communities, both of which are being addressed through ASR projects. It is paramount that ASR stays strong, unified and credible, and continues to extend its reach to organisations and businesses with common objectives, to enable effective collaborative working.

What is the wider applicability of this project?

As a result of this collaborative effort, temperate rainforest is now one of the most talked about habitats in Scotland, and interest in its restoration and expansion continues to increase. While the project's aim remains ambitious and challenging, significant progress to enable action on the ground has occurred in a relatively short timescale, and the ASR has become recognised as a strong, effective and credible partnership to deliver rainforest restoration. It is now being used as a model for bringing together stakeholders to develop partnerships to work on other ecosystems and environmental issues.

The Falkland Islands

While the Falkland Islands possess near-pristine marine ecosystems, the terrestrial land area is in a markedly poorer state. It is estimated that 92.3% of the land area of the islands is used for agriculture, primarily for sheep farming, which has had significant impacts on the condition of these ecosystems ([State of the Environment Report, 2020](#)). Overgrazing has led to a destabilisation of native vegetation communities, making them vulnerable to the erosive effects of wind. Climate change has further exacerbated these impacts, leading to widespread erosion across large areas of the archipelago. One community that has been significantly affected is coastal Tussac (*Poa flabellate*). In the past, much of the coastline of the Falkland Islands would have been covered in dense near monocultures of Tussac, with estimates suggesting the habitat extended inland by up to

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400 m in places. In a pristine condition, these Tussac pedestals (known locally as 'bogs') can be up to 3.5 m tall and provide critical habitat for a variety of biodiversity including pinniped mammals, burrow-nesting seabirds, passerines, and invertebrates. Additionally, they may play a significant role in carbon sequestration through peat formation with recorded depths on pristine islands of up to 13 m ([Beauchêne Island](#)).

However, since the advent of widespread grazing, this cover has been reduced by approximately 80% throughout the archipelago. On the two main islands of East and West Falkland, the reduction is thought to be nearly 99%, with Tussac largely confined to remote outlying islands without a history of grazing ([see Falkland Conservation Leaflet](#)). The removal of this coastal barrier has resulted in these areas being particularly vulnerable to erosion, with significant impacts on biodiversity and carbon sequestration. In addition, the mobilisation of large quantities of eroded peat and soil to coastal marine ecosystems is likely to have a negative impact on water quality and habitat condition, albeit one that is currently poorly understood ([see Guest, 2024](#)). While some areas will eventually revegetate, recovery is often limited and prone to failure due to continued grazing, the impacts of climate change, recolonisation by invasive plant species, and wildfire. Even with a complete cessation of grazing, the damage is often too great and, in the most severe areas, all that remains are flats of black granular peat devoid of vegetation. Indeed, some areas have been free of grazing for nearly a century and have yet to recover naturally.

One such island is the Falkland Island Government (FIG)-owned Middle Island National Nature Reserve (NNR), a small 150 ha island in King George Bay, West Falkland. While designated as an NNR, the island is also notable as being additionally designated as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). The island had previously been grazed by sheep and cattle until the 1930s, after which it was destocked and designated as an NNR in 1966. While some natural recovery has occurred, this has been hindered by occasional wildfires, and a remnant 4 ha flat of bare peat remains. While currently a relatively small proportion of the total area of the island, these remnant areas of erosion remain detrimental to the condition of the surrounding habitats. Once the granular peat becomes liberated through wind action, these aeolian deposits can smother surrounding vegetation and advance the erosion front further inland. The identically named Middle Island, a Falklands Conservation (FC)-owned island located at the entrance to Choiseul Sound, East Falkland, illustrates this phenomenon ([see FC Information Sheet](#)). Notable for its status as an Important Plant Area (IPA) and KBA, it was similarly intensively grazed and burnt with a cessation of these activities occurring in 1994. While the biodiversity has demonstrated remarkable resilience, particularly endemic and native flora, only a small amount of original Tussac remained, with large areas of bare peat spreading along much of the northern coastline. This erosion threatened the status of the IPA and the rare and endemic plant species recorded on the island.

The FIG Environment Department and FC, alongside specialist contractors and volunteers, have undertaken restoration of these Tussac habitats on these islands. This is conducted through the planting of tillers, rhizomatous plugs sourced from mature Tussac bogs locally or from other islands to infill the eroding areas. The FC leaflet previously linked to in this case study offers excellent guidance on the appropriate techniques for Tussac revegetation that are widely used in restoration works throughout the archipelago. On the FIG-owned Middle Island NNR, restoration has been undertaken utilising a phased approach, with areas revisited in subsequent years to monitor the successes and failures, and infill accordingly. The bare eroding peat was restored successfully over the course of three years from 2023 to 2025. This required the planting of nearly 24,000 tillers, creating a closely spaced network of young Tussac bogs that will consolidate the eroding soil and, once mature, provide habitat for numerous species. In the instance of the FC-owned Middle Island, restoration has been ongoing since 2020, with recent planting being undertaken as of April 2025. While the FIG-owned Middle Island NNR is unlikely to require further remediation at this point, the FC-owned Middle Island is an ongoing project and demonstrates the commitment required to restore these vital habitats.

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Throughout the Falkland Islands, restoration takes many different forms. While the examples detailed above illustrate government and non-governmental organisation initiatives to restore habitat, it is worth noting that private landowners, many of them farmers, have taken significant steps towards restoring their own landholdings for the betterment of biodiversity. While some of this is supported through FIG grants such as the [Environmental Studies Budget](#), much has been undertaken out of their own pocket to improve the land areas and reduce degradation.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

Target 3

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 3

Effectively conserve and manage at least 30% of land and 30% of ocean ('30by30')

The UK will ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognising indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognising and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories⁷.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have taken steps to develop frameworks and plans that will lead to greater coverage and improved management of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in terrestrial and inland water areas, and marine and coastal areas by 2030. This includes progressing commitments under national strategies and legislation such as the Environment Act 2021 and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 in England, Scotland's 30by30 Framework and Nature Networks approach, and Wales' 30by30 Framework and Nature Networks Programme. The UK strongly championed the global commitment to protect at least 30% of the land and at least 30% of the ocean by 2030 at CBD COP15, including through the UK-led [Global Ocean Alliance](#).

Marine protection is being strengthened through the designation of Highly Protected Marine Areas in England, expansion of marine protected area (MPA) networks across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and enhanced management measures such as byelaws restricting damaging fishing gear. UK Overseas Territories are expanding terrestrial and marine protections through initiatives like the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Blue Belt Programme. The Blue Belt Programme provides sustained support for the management, enforcement, and scientific monitoring of MPAs and OECMs. It also contributes to advancing understanding of the effectiveness of existing marine protection.

⁷ The United Kingdom does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Target 3

These measures aim to secure ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas integrated into wider landscapes and seascapes.

Regarding the main actions under Target 3:

By 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures

In England, in late 2024, the Government published its vision and criteria for conserving 30% of land area, setting out how the target will be met in England and providing a clear and consistent standard for land contributing towards 30by30. This has created a comprehensive framework to ensure 30by30 areas are effectively conserved and managed. Piloting of the 30by30 assessment and reporting progress is continuing. An ambitious 30by30 action plan is under development, alongside guidance to aid assessment and reporting of protected land that contributes towards the target. The Government's commitment to progressing 30by30 in England is enshrined within the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25). The EIP25 also sets out an interim target to ensure that by December 2030 50% of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) features have actions on track to achieve favourable condition.

The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan set a target of 25 new or extended National Nature Reserve (NNR) declarations in England by March 2028, to be part of 'The King's Series'. Natural England has so far declared or extended 12 NNRs, with a further three expected to be declared in 2026. There are currently 224 NNRs covering roughly 116,000 ha. The Environment Act 2021 also provides Natural England the authority to implement a Protected Site Strategy, providing a proactive, place-based approach rooted in evidence, to restore the ecological health of protected sites and tackle the underlying causes of environmental degradation. Since 2021, Natural England has been delivering work across five pilot sites. During 2025/2026 they will be expanding implementation to additional areas where there are sites in poor condition, particularly where these present a barrier to new development.

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 amends the duty on relevant authorities in respect of their functions that affect land in National Parks and National Landscapes in England. Relevant authorities must now "seek to further" the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. The Government has published [guidance](#) on the Protected Landscapes duty to ensure public bodies operating in these areas, including water companies, are delivering better environmental outcomes by working together with Protected Landscape organisations.

In January 2024, the Government published the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, which sets out how Protected Landscapes in England are expected to contribute to relevant statutory Environment Act 2021 targets and EIP25 objectives. These targets are now incorporated into National Park and National Landscape Management Plans and are driving improvements in protected areas in England.

Under the Environment Act 2021, England has set a legally binding target to create or restore 500,000 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside of protected sites by 2042. Areas of wildlife-rich habitat created or restored in pursuit of this target also count towards achievement of the 30by30 conservation target if the necessary protections are in place to sustain long-term biodiversity outcomes.

In Scotland, protected areas cover around 18% of the land. These consist of designated sites such as SSSIs, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Special Protected Areas (SPAs). The Scottish Government's 2020 [Statement of Intent on Biodiversity](#) outlined the commitment to protect at least

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30% of Scotland's land and sea for nature by 2030 and commissioned NatureScot to develop and publish a [30by30 Framework](#) and implementation plan for terrestrial delivery of 30by30 in Scotland. This project has been developed alongside the Nature Networks Framework and is key in the delivery of the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#) and contributing to the wider Environmental Strategy.

Scotland has taken a [co-design approach](#), with a [number of 30by30 workshops](#) and a public consultation in 2023. This led to the development of a [Framework](#) to deliver this target. The framework includes the vision, key principles, criteria, and approaches for protection, designation, governance, monitoring and management, as well as policy linkages. The goal of the Framework is to produce more effective area-based conservation, delivering greater improvements for nature across better-connected areas. In September 2025, NatureScot recognised their first four [Nature30](#) sites using criteria based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidance for OECMs.

In October 2022, Wales reported on the recommendations of its [biodiversity deep dive](#) focussing on protecting at least 30% of the land and 30% of the sea by 2030. Since then, Wales has been working through these recommendations and, in collaboration with expert groups, is developing ways to improve protected sites so that they are better, bigger and more effectively connected. This includes supporting the identification and development of OECMs – called 'Naturfa sites' in Wales. Wales is exploring a pipeline approach, enabling candidate sites to be supported and improved until they meet the full criteria for recognition. In 2025, the Welsh Government published its [30by30 Framework for Wales](#), outlining its overall approach and articulating the criteria for areas contributing to the target.

To strengthen delivery, Wales is expanding its Nature Networks Programme to help improve the condition and connectivity of protected sites and make them more resilient to climate change. Since 2022, £54 million has been allocated to the Nature Networks Fund to improve the condition and effective management of terrestrial and marine protected sites. Investment has been guided by Nature Network mapping, which identifies priority ecological networks between sites. An evaluation of the Nature Networks Programme is expected in 2025.

To support collaborative partnership approaches at the local level, the Welsh Government is investing in Local Nature Partnerships (LNP), which bring together organisations, businesses and communities to take collective action on local priorities. LNPs will play a key role in identifying potential Naturfa sites, engaging stakeholders, and raising awareness of their value.

Wales is also developing a programme of work to maximise delivery within designated landscapes and establish a robust monitoring framework. Further, Wales will support a series of exemplar sites across a range of semi-natural habitats to demonstrate effective action to halt biodiversity loss and aid nature recovery. These exemplar sites, alongside the recognition of additional Naturfa sites, will contribute, together with Welsh protected sites, to achieving the 30by30 target.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs is currently finalising the Living Map of Northern Ireland project to map priority habitats and key areas for biodiversity, and current and potential areas that would be relevant to 30by30.

The Isle of Man has made progress towards 30by30 on land, which is tracked in the [Nature Recovery Network](#) for terrestrial/freshwater areas (note, Manx National Heritage land, Protected Woodlands and permanent agri-environment habitats have not at this time been included).

The Falkland Islands Environment Strategy (2021–2040) includes strategic objectives and actions that directly support the achievement of this target, including, to establish additional NNRs and to develop an action plan to manage land and water. Additionally, the Islands Plan 2022–2026 includes a

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key action to improve protected areas (NNRs), with initial steps to identify existing nature reserves and potential sites as protected areas on Falkland Islands Government and Falkland Land Holdings land, and to establish NNRs with management plans.

The Falkland Islands have two primary pieces of legislation that govern the establishment of protected areas to meet the actions listed above. These include the [Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance 1999](#) and the [National Parks Ordinance 1998](#). Prior to this, protected areas were designated using the Wild Animals and Birds Protection Ordinance (1964). The current network comprises 19 NNRs encompassing a range of habitats across the archipelago. There is an ongoing project to designate further protected areas, fulfilling key actions outlined in the Islands Plan 2022–2026.

The Gibraltar Nature Reserve, which includes the initial Upper Rock component designated in 1991, was last extended in 2019. Since 2013, an additional 2.44 square kilometres forms part of the Reserve. The total amount of terrestrial protected areas under the Nature Protection Act 1991 now equates to 36.4% of Gibraltar's total land area.

By 2030 at least 30 per cent of marine areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas

Under the Environment Act 2021, England has set a legally binding target requiring at least 70% of protected features in marine protected areas (MPAs) to be in a favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in recovering condition, and the EIP25 includes an interim target to make sure at least 49% of MPA protected features are in favourable condition and at least 46% in recovering condition by December 2030.

In June 2022, byelaws were introduced that prohibited the use of damaging fishing gear within sensitive areas of four MPAs in England. In March 2024, a new byelaw protecting features in an area of almost 4,000 square kilometres of the sea from damaging fishing activity was introduced in England. The byelaw prohibits the use of bottom towed gear in specific areas within 13 English offshore MPAs that contain valuable reef and rocky habitats. In June 2025, a consultation was launched, proposing plans to ban bottom trawling over sensitive habitats within a further 41 MPAs, covering 30,000 square kilometres of England's waters. The consultation closed on 29 September 2025, and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is now carefully considering all responses received before making any decisions.

In July 2023, the first three Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) were designated in English waters. These sites are designated with the highest levels of protection and aim to allow full recovery of the marine ecosystem within the site to a natural state. The MMO has consulted on two proposed byelaws, one to prohibit all commercial and recreational fishing across all three HPMAs and one to prohibit anchoring within Allonby Bay HPMAs. Decision on these proposed HPMAs byelaws will be taken in due course.

Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) are developing an MPA monitoring strategy for England to assess progress towards meeting the statutory MPA target, including whether the necessary management measures are in place.

In Scotland, a network of 247 MPAs now covers around 37% of the inshore and offshore waters. These have been designated for nature conservation (233 of the 247 MPAs), research and to protect heritage areas and historic sites. Each MPA has its own objectives that describe what the site is trying to achieve. The [Scottish Marine Protected Areas \(MPA\): monitoring strategy](#) will demonstrate whether these objectives are being achieved. The

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Scottish Government has consulted on proposals for 20 offshore MPAs in 2024, following extensive engagement with the fishing industry, environmental non-governmental organisations and coastal communities.

In Wales, the Marine Protected Area Network Management Framework 2018–2023 sets out current and future management plans to improve the condition of the network. It explains that the main tool for managing the network is the well-established regulatory system, which includes the marine licensing process (currently under consultation) and fisheries management. It also highlights the work already underway to improve the management and condition of the network and its protected features. A review of the Framework is currently underway with a view to publishing in 2026. More widely, the Welsh Government is seeking to designate further Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). Currently, potential MCZs are being identified within six areas of search. The sites will focus on benthic features, with a consultation planned in late 2026.

In Northern Ireland, 38% of the inshore is designated as an MPA, as per the [Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland](#). In 2023, [Fisheries Regulations](#) were introduced in nine inshore MPAs, to limit and/or remove damaging activities from the MPAs in a step towards restoration of the features of these sites. A consultation was completed in 2024 on a review of the Northern Ireland MPA Strategy. The 2014-2019 Strategy focused on establishing and designating the Northern Ireland MPA network, with the new Strategy, due for publication by the end of 2025, moving to elaborate on the monitoring and management of the network required to achieve the conservation objectives of each site, thereby achieving and maintaining favourable condition for our most special and vulnerable species, habitats and geological features.

In the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan was developed and passed by the States Assembly in October 2024. Objectives include an extensive MPA network that will protect key shallow marine habitats from mobile gear fishing. Following implementation, the MPA network will cover 23% of Jersey's Territorial Sea (the current MPA network covers 6.5%). Implementation will run between 2026 and 2030.

The Cayman Islands joined the UK's Blue Belt Programme in 2023, which includes exploring options for enhanced management of offshore natural resources, potentially including offshore MPAs. In September 2024, the Cayman Islands passed the Cayman Islands Climate Change Policy, which includes a specific strategy to expand the terrestrial Protected Areas system in line with the UK's 30by30 commitment, ensuring that the Central Mangrove Wetland has protection. In 2021, regulations were announced that would expand the network of MPAs in the Cayman Islands. Currently, nearly half of the Cayman Islands' shallow coastal waters are designated as 'no take' zones. The changes significantly enhanced the protection afforded to marine life within the various zones between the shore and 150 ft water depth. Additionally, the Department of Education launched a mobile app that enables users to check their location to see if they are within an MPA and which restrictions apply to activity in their location.

Within Gibraltar's marine environment, 58 square kilometres, equating to 66.7% of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, is a protected area. Including other environmental conservation measures such as dolphin protection zones and no anchoring zones, 89.1% of Gibraltar's waters are covered. Both the marine and terrestrial SPAs and SACs are designated as European Emerald Network Sites under the Bern Convention, affording them one of the highest levels of regional protection afforded to a nature reserve. The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) and the Governance Act 2023 provide targets for the long term conservation status of marine and terrestrial habitats.

The UK has developed the [K4 Indicator on the extent and condition of terrestrial and marine protected areas in the UK Overseas Territories](#), which is part of the Environmental Indicator Framework, monitored by JNCC and funded through the Darwin Plus programme.

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Internationally, the UK has taken action to support international implementation of this target through a range of approaches, including monitoring and partnerships.

The UK has also supported the [High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People](#) (HAC N&P) by acting as the Ocean Champion on the Steering Committee. Through this role, the UK has been actively assisting the secretariat of the HAC N&P to support coalition members committed to the 30by30 target, working in partnership with the UK-led [Global Ocean Alliance](#).

The UK has been a supportive actor in the negotiations of the agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (the 'BBNJ Agreement'), which was adopted by consensus at the United Nations (UN) in June 2023. The UK Government introduced legislation on 10 September 2025 to enable the UK to implement its obligations under the BBNJ Agreement and move towards ratification. Following the passing of the BBNJ Bill, further secondary legislation will be required before the BBNJ Agreement can be ratified by the UK. Further, the UK worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat to support smaller countries with their work to implement the BBNJ Agreement and has commissioned research, [published](#) in June 2025, to develop a shortlist of potential area-based management tools, including MPAs, that could be proposed once the BBNJ Agreement is in force.

Assessing management effectiveness of protected areas

Development of indicators of management effectiveness will be critical to tracking progress and securing ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protection. The UK has developed a new indicator on the Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA; National Indicator 3.a), adapted from the OSPAR MPA management status reporting. The MEPCA indicator metrics are derived from four key questions:

- Is information on the protected or conserved area (PCA) for management available?
- Are management measures being implemented for the PCA to achieve its outcomes for conservation?
- Does monitoring take place which helps to assess progress towards achieving conservation outcomes?
- Is the PCA achieving its conservation outcomes?

A confidence score is associated with the level of confidence in the final question. Based on the answers to the questions, an overall score is derived and a threshold applied to determine whether management is classed as effective.

2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved

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3. Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved

Summary of progress towards the target

In the UK, in 2025, 36 million ha of land and sea is protected through national and international designations. During 1950 to 2010, there was a steady increase in the extent of protected areas, and during 2010 to 2020, there was a rapid and substantial expansion in the extent of marine protected areas (MPAs).

On land, 2.6 million ha are designated as protected sites in 2025, which represents just 10.6% of the UK terrestrial area. Of the six UK Overseas Territories that are party to the CBD, four – Gibraltar, St Helena, Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands – have already designated over 30% of their land area, and the entirety of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands is a protected site.

At sea, MPAs now cover 33.8 million ha or 38.2% of UK inshore and offshore waters as of 2025. In the UK Overseas Territories, Gibraltar, St Helena, Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and Ascension have designated 90-100% of their marine areas.

The effectiveness of UK MPAs has been assessed using the new Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA) indicator, which shows that 52% currently pass the threshold for effective management, indicating adequate progress toward achieving conservation objectives. However, these results are considerably lower than what would be required for 30% of the UK's seas to be managed effectively.

Regarding progress in improving the condition of protected sites across the four countries of the UK, in 2025:

- 62% of Areas or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (A/SSSIs) (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) are in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering. Whilst there is no trend available for the whole of the UK, the proportion has changed from 67% in 2005 to 75% in 2021 for Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 59% of Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) are in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering. This has decreased from 62% in 2024 and there has been little change from 2005 (57% in 2005).
- 66% of Special Protected Areas (SPAs) (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) are in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering. There was no change from 2024 (66%) yet there has been a decrease from 81% in 2005.

England has transitioned to a feature-based assessment system, which enhances accuracy but limits comparability with historical data.

Marine progress includes the designation of Highly Protected Marine Areas and byelaws restricting damaging fishing gear, contributing to improved ecological outcomes.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 3:

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By 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures

On land, 2.6 million ha are designated as protected sites in 2025, which represents just 10.6% of the UK terrestrial area (Headline Indicator 3.1). This is considerably lower than the 30% target, following a decision by the four countries of the UK to remove National Parks and other landscape designations from the data used for 30by30 indicators, as not all areas within these designations meet the criteria for Target 3.

In England, under an initial indicative [review](#), 7.1% of land is currently assessed as contributing to the 30% target. This indicative figure includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition, plus additional areas beyond SSSIs (public woodland under favourable management for biodiversity, and National Nature Reserves). As of January 2026, 33% of SSSI features had an up-to-date condition assessment and 24% of features had actions on track to achieve favourable status.

In Scotland, currently [18.2% of land is formally designated](#), meaning there is a need to protect approximately 990,000 additional ha for nature, through a combination of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and formal protected area designations. So far, in Scotland, four OECMs have been designated at 3,730 ha, which is 0.05% of Scotland's land area. NatureScot is moving forward on delivering OECMs in Scotland following development of the 30by30 Framework, co-designed with over 300 stakeholders from over 100 organisations, and the recent Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan consultation. As of 2025, 75.2% of Scotland's natural features on protected nature sites are either in, or recovering towards, a favourable condition. This figure represents a 3.8% increase since the baseline in 2005.

In Northern Ireland, approximately 9% of the terrestrial environment is a protected area, and management plans and habitat maps for 40 terrestrial and freshwater Special Areas of Conservation have been published. These plans set out the conservation measures required to achieve favourable condition and inform effective management for these key areas for biodiversity.

At present, 28 Sites of Special Ecological Interest and 22 Sites of Special Geological Interest have been designated in the Bailiwick of Jersey. The total area covered is 548 ha (equating to about 5% of Jersey's land area; National Indicator 3.f), and includes key habitats such as wetlands, woodland, hedgerows, maritime heath, coastal sand dunes and grassland. Only about 20% of Jersey's key semi-natural habitats are protected by Natural Site of Special Interest (SSIs) designation, so a large area of critical natural habitat remains unprotected. Three new ecological SSIs, covering 17 ha, were added along the coast of St Ouen's Bay at the beginning of 2020. In addition, the island has designated the Jersey National Park which aims to protect, conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage within its 2,145 ha designated area.

On the Isle of Man, since 2020, a further 195.63 ha of land has been protected via statutory designation as Areas of Special Scientific Interest, bringing the total land in statutory nature conservation protection to 2,495 ha, representing 4.26% of land area down to the low water mark and 4.36% of land area down to the high-water mark. The total area of land protected for nature or covered by OECMs is 11,700 ha, representing 20.45% of the Island, down to the high-water mark. The Isle of Man's progress towards 30by30 on land is tracked in the Nature Recovery Network (note, Manx National Heritage land, Protected Woodlands and permanent agri-environment habitats have not at this time been included).

The UK has developed the [K4 Indicator on the extent and condition of terrestrial and marine protected areas in the UK Overseas Territories \(National Indicator 3.e\)](#), which is part of the Environmental Indicator Framework, monitored by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and funded

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through the Darwin Plus programme. Of the six UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) that are party to the CBD, four – Gibraltar, St Helena, Tristan da Cunha, and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands – have already designated over 30% of their land area, and the entirety of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands is a protected site (National Indicator 3.e).

To date, there has been limited progress towards this target in the Falkland Islands, although there are current efforts to expand a protected area network. Currently, terrestrial protections fall far short of the target, with only [2.9% of the terrestrial land area](#) included within National Nature Reserves (NNRs; National Indicator 3.e). Many of the NNRs are designated agricultural land with little to no action taken toward effective conservation or management to ensure positive biodiversity and ecosystem function outcomes.

Gibraltar has achieved the 30by30 target and efforts are now focused on ensuring that all sites remain in favourable condition.

By 2030 at least 30 per cent of marine areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas

In 2025, marine protected areas (MPAs) now cover 33.8 million ha or 38.2% of UK inshore and offshore waters (Headline Indicator 3.1).

In England, 40% of seas are covered by MPAs and 60% of these MPAs are protected by byelaws that restrict the use of damaging fishing gear. The current estimate is that [44% of English MPA protected features are in favourable condition](#).

In Scotland, since 2018, the MPA network has continued to grow, with 17 new MPAs designated since 2018 and three existing MPAs extended – two to afford increased protection to seabirds and one for seabed habitats. These include Red Rocks and Longay MPA, which has been designated to protect a flapper skate egg nursery. Scotland's MPA network now covers 37% of Scottish seas.

The Welsh MPA network currently includes 139 MPAs, covering 69% of the inshore area and approximately 50% of the entire Welsh marine zone. According to indicative condition assessments conducted in [2018](#), approximately 48% of Welsh MPAs were considered to be in a favourable condition. Further comprehensive condition assessments are currently being conducted by Natural Resources Wales and are expected to be published in [2025](#).

In Northern Ireland, [38% of the inshore marine area is designated as a MPA](#).

Statistics from 2022 show that the Bailiwick of Jersey has designated 6.5% (153 square kilometres) of its Territorial Sea as a MPA (National Indicator 3.f), which is nearly double that in 2013.

The Isle of Man has designated 10.85% of its Territorial Sea as a MPA (National Indicator 3.g).

Of the six UKOTs that are party to CBD, five – Gibraltar, St Helena, Tristan da Cunha, Ascension, and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Island – have designated 90–100% of their marine areas (National Indicator 3.e).

Regarding marine environments in the Falkland Islands, there has been progress towards the creation of Marine Managed Areas that would protect 15% of the marine environment. However, this is still within a consultation phase, and yet there is no quantifiable protection of marine areas within the Falkland Islands.

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The Blue Belt Programme underpins the protection of over 4 million square kilometres of ocean across the Atlantic, Pacific, and Southern Oceans.

Assessing management effectiveness of protected areas

Of the 375 MPAs assessed using the MEPCA indicator, 52% currently pass the threshold for effective management (National Indicator 3.a), indicating adequate progress toward achieving conservation objectives. However, passing the threshold does not mean all necessary management and monitoring actions are complete. Further work may be required to strengthen monitoring and management to improve scores and ensure conservation outcomes, or more time allowed for well managed sites to meet conservation outcomes. The remaining 48% of sites require additional actions to enhance management and monitoring and improve the assessment score. These results reflect assessments at the level of individual designations, and some MPAs may overlap spatially with others. It should be noted that the current MEPCA indicator generates the number of MPAs that are managed effectively and not the area that they cover. However, the UK is currently exploring how these results can be converted to area-based effectiveness scores for future reporting.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Across the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs), key challenges identified to achieving this target include funding cycles, resource constraints, competing demands on areas, land ownership, outdated legislation, and control of invasive species. Long term commitments are needed to secure 30by30, which does not align with funding cycles in the UK. In addition, a formal commitment to these timescales could be a barrier to private landowners/managers and farmer buy-in.

In England, bringing protected sites into favourable condition, to support their contribution to 30by30, continues to be a challenge, with key pressures being land management, pollution, recreational disturbance, invasive species and climate change. Natural England works with land managers to identify actions that can help restore sites, working towards the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 interim target for 50% of SSSIs to have actions on track to improve the condition of protected sites.

Multiple countries in the UK and the UKOTs and CDs cite that resource constraints significantly hinder progress towards this target. This is due to the need for continuous flows of money to finance the work that goes into designating areas, developing plans and management measures for them, and then monitoring sites to ensure the areas are protected. To address this, Wales has been exploring innovative and private finance, as well as working with the other UK countries on approaches to assess the condition and effective management of protected areas. Competing demands are an increasing challenge in designating and conserving areas in the UK and in the UKOTs and CDs. In England, the Government's green energy mission will likely create additional pressure on the marine protected area (MPA) network and its designated features through the development of green energy in MPAs. To achieve net zero, the government is committed to a significant expansion of offshore wind. This will likely create additional pressure on the MPA network and its designated features. Where offshore wind developments cause unavoidable adverse impacts on protected features, environmental compensation must be secured.

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In Scotland, [invasive species are the main reason for natural features being in unfavourable condition](#), representing 21.3% of all negative pressures, which is stable from last year. This category includes both native species such as bracken or nettles, and non-native species such as rhododendron or Japanese knotweed. The second largest negative pressure on natural features is overgrazing (17.8% of negative pressures) by wild herbivores, farm livestock or a combination of both. In Wales, nutrient enrichment is considered a major pressure affecting the condition of many terrestrial, freshwater, and marine protected sites. Monitoring and skills gaps further compound the challenge, as inadequate data on site condition and biodiversity trends make it difficult to track progress and adapt strategies. Additionally, competing land uses place further strain on efforts to maintain and restore ecological integrity.

The Isle of Man Territorial Sea is a relatively small area, with multiple competing stakeholder groups depending on access to resources and space. As such, the introduction of measures to restore degraded marine ecosystems and additional statutory protected areas (Marine Nature Reserves) may have impacts upon local and UK commercial interests, and if not properly designed and developed, could lead to a net-negative outcome for biodiversity by displacing (for example) fishing effort into adjacent areas and increasing anthropogenic impacts in 'unprotected' areas.

Land ownership is a key challenge in the UK and in the UKOTs and CDs. The Cayman Islands continue to face challenges due to high land prices that impact the government's ability to purchase land for conservation. There is a lack of buy-in for the concept of conservation agreements that allow landowners to retain ownership of their property while contributing to national conservation targets. In addition, recent court cases between the National Conservation Council and the Central Planning Authority highlight continuing tensions between habitat/species conservation and physical development.

Similarly, in the Falkland Islands, while the legal framework is broadly in place to support the designation of effective protected areas, designation across the terrestrial areas is challenging due to the configuration of land ownership throughout the islands. Many areas of conservation importance are within private ownership, and the Falkland Islands currently lacks effective means to establish protections within these areas. There are limited incentives for private landowners to designate areas of conservation importance and manage them effectively within their land holdings. Given the reliance on animal husbandry, both economically and culturally, many private landowners are unwilling to designate large areas of their landholdings. To maintain profitable sheep flocks, landowners rely on vast areas of landscape for grazing.

The Falkland Islands also identified that their current network of National Nature Reserve (NNRs) is based on outdated legislation and therefore lacks effective protections. The majority of NNRs within the current network were designated prior to the 1999 Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance, meaning that protections were generally only extended to animals, specifically birds, rather than habitats or ecosystems.

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4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁸

Headline Indicator 3.1: Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas)

Table 1: Assessment of change in extent of UK protected areas.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Part B: Total extent of protected areas: on land	Long term	1950 to 2025	Improving
Part B: Total extent of protected areas: on land	Short term	2020 to 2025	Little or no overall change
Part B: Total extent of protected areas: at sea	Long term	1950 to 2025	Improving
Part B: Total extent of protected areas: at sea	Short term	2020 to 2025	Little or no overall change

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator shows the extent of protected areas on land and at sea in the UK and other effective area-based conservation measures recognised on land in Scotland. Data presented here reflect the UK's contribution to this target.

The data for this indicator can be downloaded from [JNCC's Resource Hub](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1:

The boundary between protected areas on land and at sea is mean high water (mean high water springs in Scotland). Coastal sites in the indicator are split between 'on land' and 'at sea' if they cross the mean high-water mark. At sea extent includes offshore marine protected areas out

⁸ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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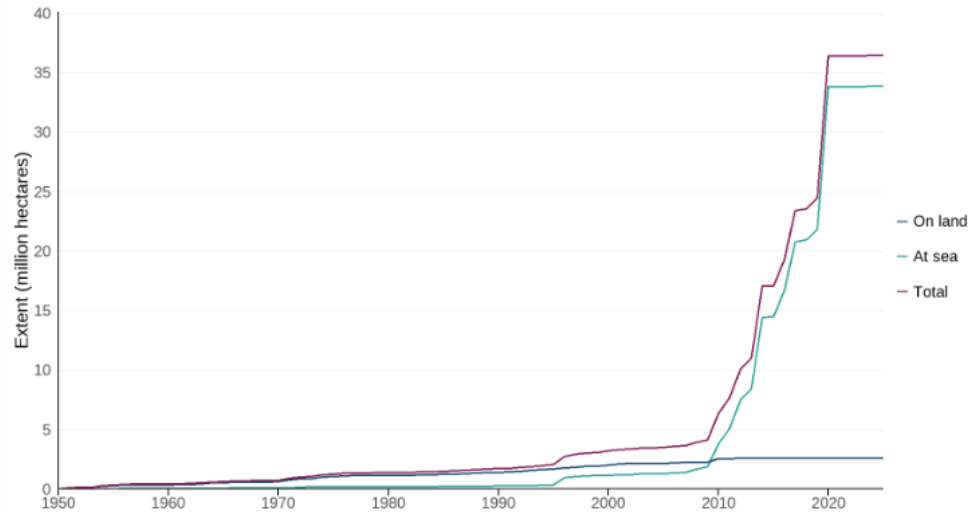


Figure 1: Total area of formally protected sites: on land and at sea, 1950 to 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Table 2: Extent and percentage cover of protected areas by country, 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Country	On land (M Ha)	On Land (%)	At sea (M Ha)	At sea (%)
England	0.85	6.5%	9.29	40.3%
Scotland	1.39	17.6%	22.76	36.9%
Wales	0.23	10.9%	1.55	50.3%
Northern Ireland	0.14	9.8%	0.24	35.6%
United Kingdom	2.60	10.6%	33.84	38.2%

to the limit of the UK Continental Shelf. The area of UK sea is calculated at 88.543 million ha.

Extent is based on the following site designations: Areas of Special Scientific Interest (Northern Ireland), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England, Scotland and Wales), National Nature Reserves, Marine Conservation Zones, Highly Protected Marine Areas, Nature Conservation marine protected areas, Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Table 2:

The boundary between protected areas on land and at sea is mean high water (mean high water springs in Scotland). Coastal sites in the indicator are split between 'on land' and 'at sea' if they cross the mean high-water mark. At sea extent includes offshore marine protected areas out to the limit of the UK Continental Shelf. The area of UK sea is calculated at 88.543 million ha.

Extent is based on the following site designations: Areas of Special Scientific Interest (Northern Ireland), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England, Scotland and Wales), National Nature Reserves, Marine Conservation Zones, Highly Protected Marine Areas, Nature Conservation marine protected areas, Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Table 3:

The number and coverage of other effective area-based conservation measures recognised on land in Scotland is based on the criteria defined in the [30by30 Framework](#) and [Nature30 criteria](#).

Data are not currently available for England, Wales or Northern Ireland. These will be added once these data become available.

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Table 3: Number and coverage of other effective area-based conservation measures recognised on land in Scotland, 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Number of sites	Coverage (ha)	Percentage
4	3,730	0.05%

5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁹

Comments (optional): _____

6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)

National Indicator 3.a: Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

The MEPCA indicator has been developed based on the existing qualitative OSPAR management status four question approach. It is a framework indicator capable of absorbing existing protected area / other effective area-based conservation measures effectiveness data where they exist or can make a new assessment, for a streamlined assessment approach. Importantly, the indicator draws focus to the delivery of conservation outcomes, as a proxy for understanding management effectiveness. With the above elements in mind, the

⁹ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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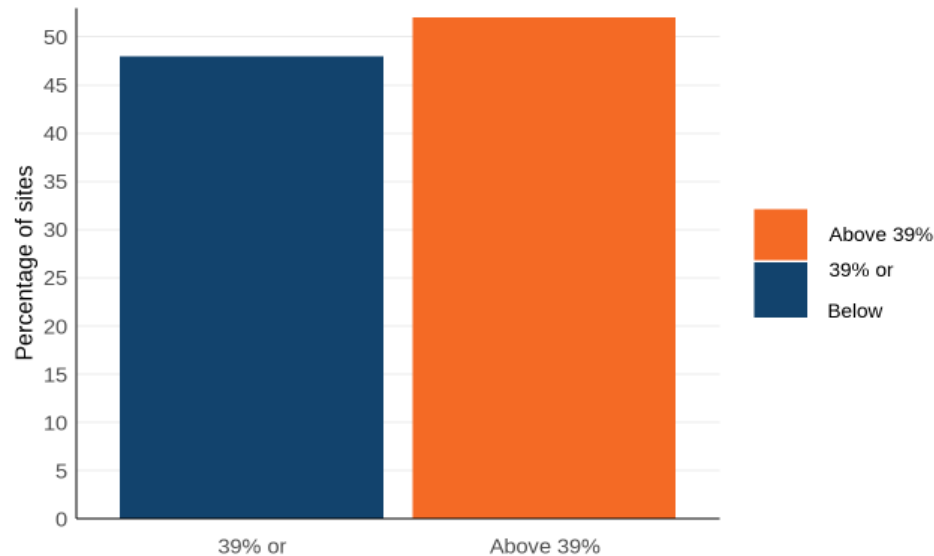


Figure 1: Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA): the percentage of sites which have passed the MEPCA indicator threshold of 39%. Sites above the 39% threshold (in orange) are considered to be moving towards achieving their conservation outcomes; sites below the 39% threshold (in blue) are not considered to be effectively managed and are not yet moving towards the conservation outcomes of the site.

Source: [Joint Nature Conservation Committee \(JNCC\) – Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas \(MEPCA\)](#)

indicator is considered relatively simple, easy to understand, and flexible, so that it is globally applicable.

Source: [Joint Nature Conservation Committee \(JNCC\) – Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas \(MEPCA\)](#)

National Indicator 3.b: The proportion of Areas or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (A/SSSIs) in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

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Table 1: Assessment of change in condition of UK protected areas.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Part D: Condition of A/SSSIs	Long term	2005 to 2025	Insufficient or no comparable data
Part D: Condition of A/SSSIs	Short term	2020 to 2025	Insufficient or no comparable data

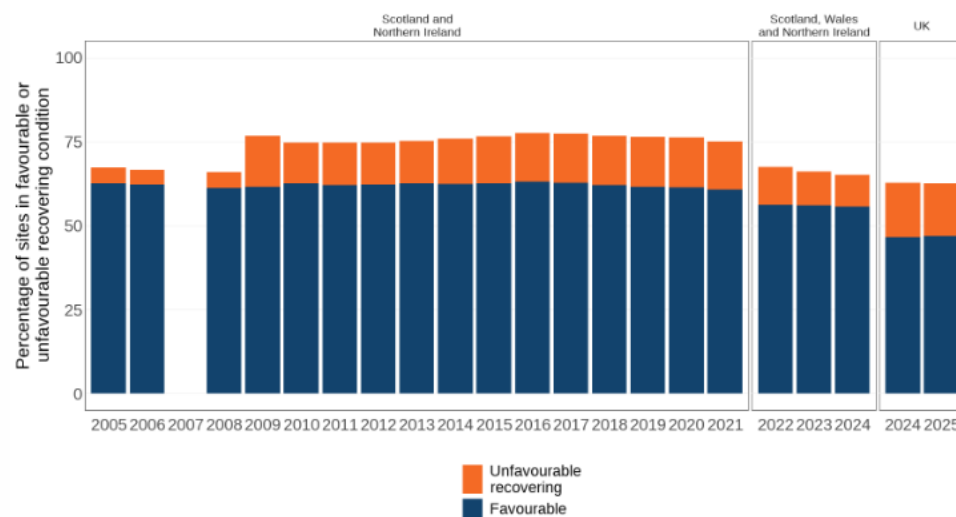


Figure 1: Cumulative proportion of Areas of Special Scientific Interest (Northern Ireland) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest Scotland, (Wales (from 2022) and England (from 2024)) in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable-recovering' condition, 2005 to 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Comments:

This indicator reflects the effectiveness of conservation management on formally protected land. Currently the only data available is the condition status of features within Areas/Sites of Special Scientific Interest (A/SSSI). Features are the species or habitats for which the sites have been designated.

The data for this indicator can be downloaded from [JNCC's Resource Hub](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1:

Figures from all countries are based on number of features.

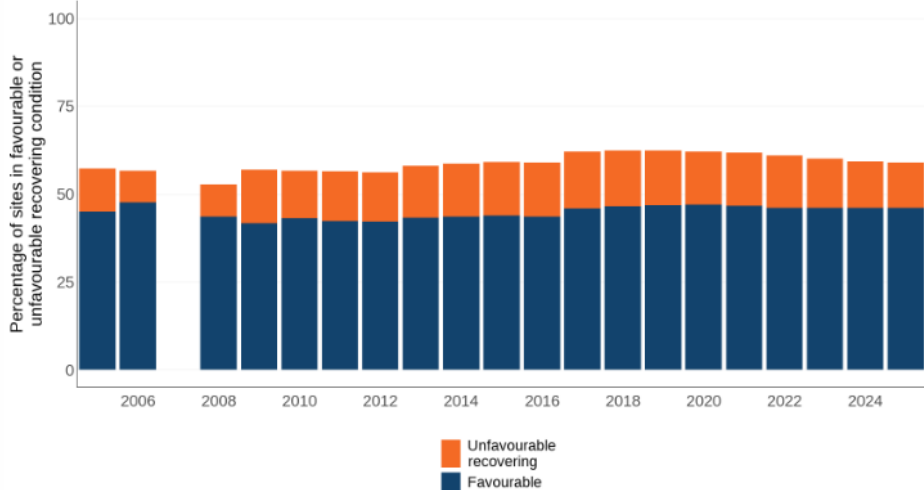
Based on data to the end of March, except in 2006 and 2008, when data are to end of December. Data were not collated in 2007.

Imputation has been used to calculate the breakdown between favourable and unfavourable-recovering for Northern Ireland for the years 2009 to 2011.

Figures exclude condition of Areas/Sites of Special Scientific Interest notified for geological features only.

The data from Wales include new information which has only been available from 2022.

Target 3

		Natural England previously reported data based on area. From 2023 onwards, assessments are conducted based on the number of features. Historical data for Natural England is not comparable and has not been included in these figures. The 2022, 2023 and 2024 results have been corrected since the 2024 publication of this indicator.
	National Indicator 3.c: The proportion of SACs in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering (UK Biodiversity Indicator – extent and condition of protected areas)  Figure 1: Cumulative proportion of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable-recovering' condition, 2005 to 2025. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator reflects the effectiveness of conservation management on formally protected land. Currently the only data available is the condition status of features within Areas/Sites of Special Scientific Interest (A/SSSI). Features are the species or habitats for which the sites have been designated. The data for this indicator can be downloaded from JNCC's Resource Hub. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas Figure 1: Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland figures based on number of features. Figures not available for Northern Ireland (2020) and Wales (2021). Values have been carried forward from 2019 (Northern Ireland) and 2020 (Wales).

Target 3

		Natural England has implemented improved quality assurance procedures which underpin the data for England, leading to delays that have prevented us from updating these data in 2025. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Natural England are working together to resolve the issues as quickly as possible. Based on data to the end of March, except in 2006 and 2008, when data are to end of December. Data were not collated in 2007. Imputation has been used to calculate the breakdown between favourable and unfavourable-recovering for Northern Ireland for the years 2009 to 2011, and for Wales for the years 2008 to 2012. Includes coastal and inshore but not offshore sites.
	National Indicator 3.d: The proportion of SPAs in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator reflects the effectiveness of conservation management on formally protected land. Currently the only data available is the condition status of features within Areas/Sites of Special Scientific Interest (A/SSSI). Features are the species or habitats for which the sites have been designated. The data for this indicator can be downloaded from JNCC's Resource Hub.

Target 3

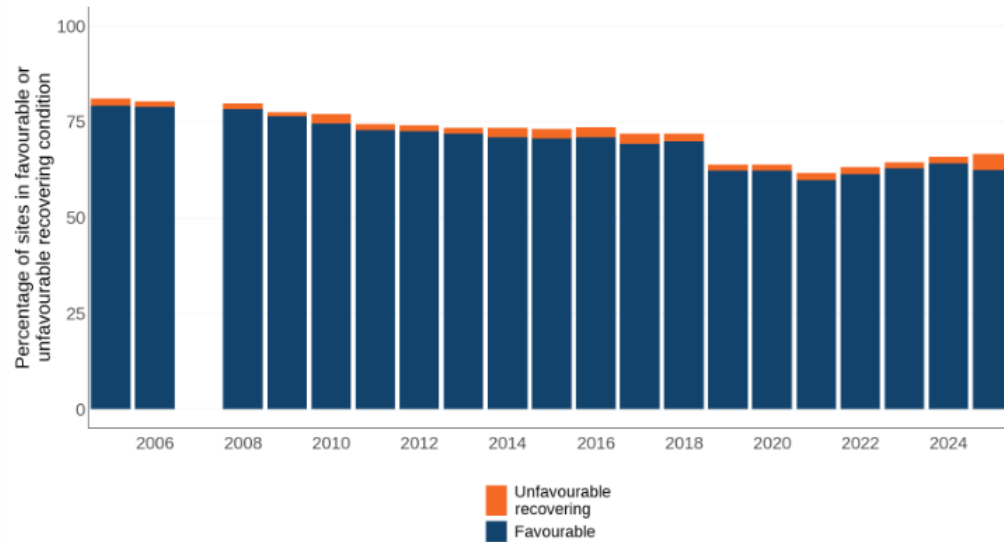


Figure 1: Cumulative proportion of Special Protection Areas (SPA) in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable-recovering' condition, 2005 to 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas](#)

Figure 1:

Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland figures based on number of features.

Figures not available for Northern Ireland (2020) and Wales (2021). Values have been carried forward from 2019 (Northern Ireland) and 2020 (Wales).

Natural England has implemented improved quality assurance procedures which underpin the data for England, leading to delays that have prevented us from updating these data in 2025. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Natural England are working together to resolve the issues as quickly as possible.

Based on data to the end of March, except in 2006 and 2008, when data are to end of December. Data were not collated in 2007.

The figures for December 2006 were calculated by imputation based on the figures in March 2005 and December 2008 for England, as a breakdown was not provided.

Includes coastal and inshore but not offshore sites.

National Indicator 3.e: Disaggregated data from Environmental Indicator Framework Indicator K4: Extent and condition of terrestrial and marine protected areas in the UK Overseas Territories

Source: [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) - Environmental Indicator Framework – K4 – Extent and condition of terrestrial and marine protected areas in the UK Overseas Territories](#)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

Target 3

		An interim indicator is presented here that shows the extent of protected areas and OECMs across the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs). Development of the condition aspect of this indicator is continuing, exploring options for assessing marine and terrestrial protected area condition and using 6 UKOTs as case studies. Information on how the data have been obtained and how the statistics have been calculated is available in JNCC Report Number 792. Detailed statistics, including a breakdown of protected area coverage for each UKOT, is available on the JNCC website. Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) - Environmental Indicator Framework – K4 – Extent and condition of terrestrial and marine protected areas in the UK Overseas Territories
	National indicator 3.f: Extent of land and sea protected in Jersey Area of land protected as ecological and geological Sites of Special Interest (hectares) Source: Bailiwick of Jersey Government - Bailiwick of Jersey's area of land protected as ecological and geological Sites of Special Interest Source: Bailiwick of Jersey Government - Bailiwick of Jersey's coverage of marine protected areas	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: Area of land protected as ecological and geological Sites of Special Interest (hectares) This indicator covers the extent in hectares of protected areas above the mean high-water level (where geological and ecological sites coincide, the land area is only counted once).

Target 3		
		Source: Bailiwick of Jersey Government - Bailiwick of Jersey's area of land protected as ecological and geological Sites of Special Interest Coverage in square kilometres of marine protected areas Source: Bailiwick of Jersey Government - Bailiwick of Jersey's coverage of marine protected areas
	National Indicator 3.g: Extent of land and sea protected in the Isle of Man Source: Isle of Man Government - the Isle of Man Area of land protected through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) Source: Isle of Man Government - the Isle of Man Area of sea protected through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: Source: Isle of Man Government - the Isle of Man Area of land protected through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) Source: Isle of Man Government - the Isle of Man Area of sea protected through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) The mapping layer provided on the Isle of Man Government website also provides links to documents on each site.

Target 3

7. **Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed**

England – Dothill and Shawbirch Local Nature Reserve

The [Dothill and Shawbirch Local Nature Reserve](#) (LNR) is in Telford, Shropshire in England. The reserve is owned and managed by Telford & Wrekin Council, in partnership with the Friends of Dothill and Shawbirch volunteer group. The total size of the reserve is 54 ha, supporting varied and rich habitats such as ponds, woodland and grassland.

The LNR is managed for the purpose of conserving the habitats and species contained in the area, and ecological monitoring indicates that the management is effectively conserving these habitats and species. There is management in place to ensure that additional objectives for community access and education do not compromise conservation outcomes.

Dothill LNR was declared in 2016 and extended to form Dothill and Shawbirch LNR in 2023. The LNR extension increased the protection of green space valued by the community in Shawbirch. Areas were identified with good connectivity to the original site and with potential to increase biodiversity. The extension has brought active nature conservation closer to more communities and increased the designated area dedicated to enhancing biodiversity. Prior to the designation as a LNR, part of the site was a designated Local Wildlife Site and managed for conservation purposes. Other areas now designated as part of the reserve were previously agricultural land, mostly used for grazing pasture, and now are being managed to increase biodiversity and abundance of species. The site is also identified as an important green space forming part of the Telford and Wrekin Green Network, designated in The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2020–2040.

Dothill and Shawbirch LNR forms an important part of the 'Green Network' of over 2,900 ha designated through the urban area of Telford. Connecting to other green spaces and LNRs allows the reserve to contribute to wider nature conservation projects through Telford and beyond.

Management plan

The reserve is covered by a management plan that is reviewed every five years. The current plan will be reviewed in 2028 and includes a specific objective to maintain the balance of habitats and increase species diversity within the reserve. The LNR management plans are written largely as non-prescriptive 'guidance' documents but contain some specific actions. Given the number of sites managed by the authority, sometimes work must be reactive, and funding can be varied between sites. Building flexibility within the plans, while outlining all activities under a nature conservation umbrella means that conservation expectations can be met without over-committing. This also enables adaptive management as priorities may change over the time period of the plan. Overall, two years into the five years of its management plan, the objectives for Dothill and Shawbirch LNR are being delivered through both council and voluntary led projects.

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Volunteer involvement

Management is supported by the Friends of Dothill and Shawbirch volunteer group. Quarterly site 'walk-about' and formal meetings take place with members of the group, council officers and local councillors. Working in partnership enables more effective management of the site and efficient use of resources.

The 'friends of' group is an independent entity within the Telford Green Spaces Partnership but is guided and trained by council officers in their work. Volunteer work parties, events and surveys are all organised by the group, with council support where requested. Additional funding resources are sought by the group to bolster their management efforts and pursue the delivery of the management plan. Engaging the community with green spaces creates a sense of ownership of the nature reserve, which in turn benefits management and the care taken by visitors.

Recent activities carried out on the site with support of the 'friends of' group include scrub management, pond restoration and wetland creation.

Ecological Monitoring

Regular ecological monitoring takes place across the site, including targeted species and vegetation surveys. This monitoring is used to understand management effectiveness and inform future management. Monitoring of species composition within meadow areas of the reserve informs management of those areas, with recent interventions including the plug planting of wildflower species and clearance of scrub by the 'friends of' group.

Water quality

Monitoring of ponds and other waterbodies in particular is a focus at Dothill and Shawbirch, both in terms of species and water quality. Larger waterbodies such as Tee Lake are monitored for their water quality, fish stocks and for any algae growth, among other things. Monitoring of these factors helps with management of the amenity value of these waterbodies as well as the biodiversity benefits they deliver.

The Beanhill brook runs through the western section of the reserve and volunteer water quality monitoring is carried out on the brook in partnership with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water. Where evidence of poor water quality has been found, the volunteer group has followed up investigations with the Environment Agency and visited adjacent landowners to discuss the quality of water flowing through the nature reserve.

Development

Nearby major development projects have provided funding for management plan delivery to ensure site resilience through their planning obligations. Already, this funding has allowed the volunteer group to purchase new equipment, new hedgerows to be planted and a meadow creation project to begin on an area of the reserve previously agriculturally improved. The site also benefits from the Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing scheme, with four ponds at the site managed through this scheme, previously administered by the council and now overseen by Natural England. The ponds are monitored annually and funding held for management and future interventions where needed.

Target 3

The Friends of Dothill and Shawbirch group also provide ‘eyes on the ground’ to monitor these ponds for litter, contamination and general water level. With changing weather patterns, the water level is becoming more of a concern at certain ponds in the reserve, and this is an example of where new management considerations have been identified in addition to those outlined at the writing of the latest management plan.

Dothill and Shawbirch LNR is an example of an area that is likely to meet the 30by30 criteria in England, although it should be noted that as the reporting process is under development, this area is not currently included in the reported figures. The site highlights the important role that local communities can play in supporting effective management of protected areas, and the potential for conservation outcomes to be delivered alongside access and recreation.



Photo: Dothill and Shawbirch Local Nature Reserve (image courtesy of Ben Holloway).

Western Irish Sea Mud Belt: Overview of Fisheries and Conservation Management and Research

The Western Irish Sea Mud Belt (WISMB) has been classed under the EU Nature Identification Scheme (EUNIS) as “offshore circalittoral muds with seapens and burrowing megafaunal communities”. The most recent OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR) noted that the WISMB was one of the most severely impacted locations regarding disturbance by benthic mobile fishing gear.

The mud belt supports a lucrative fishery for the Norwegian Lobster also known as Dublin Bay prawn (*Nephrops norvegicus*). For the purposes of fisheries management, the prawn fishery around Ireland has been subdivided and the WISMB constitutes part of the International Council for the

Target 3

Exploration of the Sea (ICES) functional unit 15, which supports a fleet of approximately 100 vessels and has an annual value of around £12 million. The landings of Norwegian lobster from the WISMB have traditionally been fished via otter trawl gear, including twin rig and multi-rig arrangements. These methods of fishing, whilst efficient at collecting prawns are also destructive to the sea floor, disturbing vulnerable habitats and species as well as being responsible for large volumes of non-targeted fishery bycatch. The latest OSPAR QSR has highlighted the impact of this fishery upon the vulnerable habitats found within the WISMB.

The use of heavy mobile benthic fishing gear on marine muds has also recently been implicated in the release of sedimentary carbon deposits. The WISMB is known to be a significant carbon sink. In 2022, the Isle of Man Government began a blue carbon research assessment of marine habitats in the Manx Territorial Sea. Alongside the blue carbon research, the Isle of Man Government's Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) along with the Manx Fish Producers Organisation sought to trial an environmentally sustainable low-impact creel caught fishery for the Norwegian lobster.

The DEFA funded several initiatives with research partners from the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton, and Bangor and Swansea Universities of Wales. An audit was conducted of the sedimentary carbon from the top 10 cm of sediment from multiple locations within the WISMB during 2022 to 2024. The results indicate that the mud belt has an organic carbon density in the top 10 cm of sediment of between 3–14 MgC Ha⁻¹. This equates to a burial of approximately 7% of the total carbon emissions produced by the Isle of Man annually. To facilitate research into blue carbon habitats and their role in mitigating the effects of climate change, DEFA introduced new measures in 2024 that aimed to protect approximately 210 km² of seabed habitat characterised mainly by soft mud habitats (recognised by OSPAR as highly degraded). These new measures were started in 2024 by way of fishing license conditions, and three areas were closed to benthic mobile fishing gear and designated as Blue Carbon Experimental Research Zones (BCERZ) or conservation areas (see figure 1). The two conservation areas known as 'West of Targets Area' and 'Southwest Area' lie adjacent to two UK marine protected areas (MPAs) known as 'South Rigg' and 'Queenie Corner' respectively. A decision on the future of these closed areas is due at the end of 2026, following completion of the research. That decision may be delayed pending the development of a Marine Spatial Plan, which will consider areas of particular importance to biodiversity in the Isle of Man Territorial Sea.

The designation of the three BCERZs and conservation areas also enabled the trial of the creel fishery where licensed vessels can fish within the conservation areas for Norwegian prawns using creels only. The designation of the conservation areas and removal of bottom towed gear also ensured there were no gear conflicts between potters and trawlers. The Manx creel fishery was allocated 100 tonnes for the first year of fishing increasing to 250 tonnes in year three. The fishery is still in its infancy and DEFA, and associated research partners are monitoring its development.

The BCERZ 'Bradda' is essentially a temporary no-take zone where neither bottom trawled nor potted gear is allowed. These prohibitions were set in place for research purposes. This research will investigate the effects of bottom towed mobile gear upon carbon sequestration and release from muddy sediments. Initial results of this program are expected in summer 2026.

The Isle of Man is the world's first whole jurisdiction designated as an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and it achieved this designation in 2016. Biosphere reserves are 'learning places for sustainable development'. The ethos of the UNESCO Biosphere program is to use interdisciplinary approaches to understand and manage often competing interactions between social, economic and environmental systems whilst maintaining and encouraging biodiversity targets.

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The combined fisheries management and marine conservation outcomes from the Manx Blue Carbon Project demonstrate how these often-competing interactions can be managed to prevent biodiversity loss whilst mitigating against fisheries loss.

Useful Links

<https://www.unesco.org/en/mab/wnbr/about>

<https://www.biosphere.im/>

<https://www.netzero.im/our-programme/manx-blue-carbon-project/>

https://www.gov.im/media/1384855/iomfs-clean-_compressed.pdf

Marine protected areas in the Cayman Islands

The Cayman Islands has long been celebrated for its stunning marine ecosystems, a foundation for both the local economy and the Caymanian cultural identity. However, like many coastal nations, the islands have faced the growing challenge of protecting these vital resources from the pressures of overfishing, environmental degradation and climate change. The previous system of Marine Parks, while a step in the right direction, was no longer sufficient to secure the long-term health of the islands' coral reefs and fish populations.

To combat these potential damages, the Cayman Islands Government embarked on a plan to expand its marine protected areas (MPAs) following a research and public consultation programme funded by a grant from the Darwin Initiative. The goal of this initiative was to create a more robust and comprehensive system of Marine Parks that would not only conserve critical habitat but also help replenish and retain local fish stocks and ensure the sustainability of the fishing and dive tourism industries. The expansion of the MPAs was given cabinet approval in March 2019, increasing the Cayman Islands' coastal protection from 14% to 48%. These regulations represented a profound shift in the approach to marine management in the Cayman Islands. The expansion involved a redesign of the entire MPA network, introducing new classifications to more effectively manage the marine environment. Previously consisting of areas designated as Marine Park Zones and Environmental Zones, the network was expanded to include Marine Reserve Zones, Replenishment Zones, and No-Fishing Zones, amongst others. This new framework provides greater protection for a wider range of habitats, from shallow reefs to deep-water aggregation sites for culturally and commercially important species.

In 2021, the aforementioned regulations were gazetted to expand the network of MPAs in the Cayman Islands, resulting in the cementation of the increased protections. Currently, nearly half of the Islands' shallow coastal waters are designated as 'no-take zones'. The changes significantly enhanced the protection afforded to marine life within the various zones between the shore and 150 ft water depth. 'No diving' areas were extended to Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, where none had previously existed. Additionally, the Department of Environment launched a mobile app that enables users to check their location to see if they are within an MPA and which restrictions apply to activity in their location.

Following these accomplishments, the Cayman Islands joined the UK's Blue Belt Programme in September 2023, which is an ongoing programme that will include exploring options for enhanced management of offshore natural resources, potentially including offshore MPAs. In September 2024,

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the Cayman Islands passed the Cayman Islands Climate Change Policy, which includes a specific strategy to expand the terrestrial protected areas system in line with the United Kingdom's 30by30 commitment, ensuring that the Central Mangrove Wetland has protection.

The conservation benefits of the expansion are expected to be comprehensive. The primary aim is to protect key breeding grounds and habitats for vulnerable species, such as the critically endangered Nassau grouper. By safeguarding the entire ecosystem, including crucial nurseries and foraging areas, the new regulations are designed to allow populations of marine species to recover and spread into surrounding areas, benefiting local fishers in the long term.

Ultimately, the expansion of the Cayman Islands' Marine Parks serves as a powerful case study in proactive conservation, demonstrating that strategic and collaborative action can help to secure the health of the environment, economic prosperity, and cultural identity for generations to come.

Useful Links:

<https://conservation.reefcause.com/cayman-islands-expand-protected-areas/>

<https://doe.ky/caymans-marine-parks-system-expanded-enhanced/>

<https://www.caymancompass.com/2021/03/15/marine-park-expansion-gazetted-2-years-after-cabinet-approval/>

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 4

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 4

Halt species extinction, protect genetic diversity and manage human-wildlife conflicts

The UK will ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimise human-wildlife conflict for co-existence.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target.

Summary of actions taken

The UK's action to achieve Target 4 is underpinned by legislation and strategies across the UK.

National legislation in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, referred to here collectively as the 'Habitats and Species Regulations' (e.g. [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)), protect valuable habitats and species, particularly those of European importance. The Habitats and Species Regulations cover terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and inshore environments out to 12 nautical miles. Offshore marine areas beyond 12 nautical miles, encompassing the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone and the UK continental shelf, are protected by the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). All these regulations offer protection by designating Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas and by setting out rules for their management and protection. The regulations also outline protections for certain wild animals and plants included in the regulation's schedules, including prohibitions on deliberate capture, killing, or disturbance. Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated and afforded a high level of statutory protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA 1981) in England, Wales and Scotland. These provisions are designed to ensure that the site features such as rare plants and animals are managed appropriately in view of their national interest. The WCA 1981 also protects birds, other animals and plants from persecution. In Northern Ireland, the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (2011) introduces a statutory biodiversity duty for public bodies and strengthens protection for priority species and habitats. The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 enables designation of Areas of Special Scientific Interest, which protect habitats critical to threatened species. The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 provides legal protection for wild animals, birds, and plants; includes offences for killing, disturbing, or damaging habitats of protected species. The Marine Act (NI) 2013 enables the designation of Marine Conservation Zones to safeguard vulnerable or unique species and habitats of national importance in the Northern Ireland inshore region.

In the marine environment, in addition to provisions in the Habitats and Species Regulations and Offshore Regulations mentioned above, the UK is also working to achieve Target 4 through enacting the Fisheries Act (2020). Together the provisions in this legislation will make a positive contribution to the achievement of the Good Environmental Status targets for cetaceans, seals, birds, fish, food webs and benthic and pelagic habitats in the UK

Target 4

Marine Strategy. Funding has also been provided for conservation projects and for land management which delivers benefits for nature. In the UK Overseas Territories, conservation plans have shown results including the successful reintroduction of native species. Work is also ongoing to maintain the genetic diversity of the UK's domestic and wild species and to manage human-wildlife conflicts.

Regarding the main actions under Target 4:

Ensure urgent management actions to halt human-induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk

The UK is committed to achieving effective conservation and recovery of threatened species and has published strategies that set out how this will be achieved. Legislation and policy such as the Habitats and Species Regulations (see above) have been established across the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) to protect threatened species.

In UK inshore and offshore waters, the Fisheries Act 2020 sustainably manages marine species through establishing sustainability and precautionary measures. The UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) includes ambitious targets to achieve Good Environmental Status including for marine mammals, marine birds, and sensitive fish species, while other measures under the UKMS, such as reducing marine litter and contaminants, will also benefit conservation of marine species. The establishment of marine protected areas (MPA) and highly protected marine areas (HPMA) contributes to effective management measures for marine species. Further, the [UK Cetacean Conservation Strategy](#), published December 2025, aims to address and improve our understanding of key pressures on dolphin and porpoise populations, including bycatch, entanglement, cumulative noise impacts, pollutants, plastics, and biotoxins, thereby improving their conservation status.

England has set ambitious legally binding targets under the Environment Act 2021, which will drive action to support Target 4. These include:

- To halt the decline of species abundance by 2030, followed by increasing species abundance so that, by 2042, species abundance is greater than in 2022, and at least 10% greater than in 2030.
- To improve the Red List Index for England for species extinction by 2042 compared to 2022 levels.
- To restore or create over 500,000 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites by 31 December 2042.

The Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25) sets new interim targets for the statutory Environment Act 2021 targets:

- To restore or create a total of 250,000 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside of protected sites by December 2030.
- By December 2030, 50% of SSSI features to have actions on track to achieve favourable condition.
- By December 2030, double the number of farms providing sufficient year-round resources for farm wildlife, compared with 2025.
- To reduce the rate of establishment of invasive non-native species by at least 50% by December 2030, compared to 2000 levels.

The EIP25 and associated [statutory species targets within the Environment Act 2021 target delivery plan](#) and interim target delivery plans set out the steps the Government will take to deliver these targets.

A key delivery lever for the statutory biodiversity targets is the Environmental Land Management schemes in England, which pay farmers and land managers to deliver environmental outcomes alongside food production. Landscape Recovery (LR) schemes support landowners and managers who

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want to take a large-scale, collaborative, long-term approach to producing environmental and climate services on their land. It will facilitate and fund ambitious projects through bespoke, more than 20-year agreements. The LR projects in Round 1 expect to restore over 600 kilometres of rivers and support the recovery of more than 250 species, including fish, amphibians such as toads and newts, and waterfowl, as well as a controlled reintroduction of beavers.

Additionally, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)'s Species Recovery Programme provides funding to support the conservation and recovery of threatened species in England. Defra have invested £28.2 million between April 2023 and March 2025, and an additional £4 million in 2025/2026 in projects targeted at the recovery of threatened species. Projects have delivered recovery actions for more than 600 species. These include the Wiltshire Chalk Partnership's Chalk Species Revival project, which aims to build a stronger understanding of how to recover target species in fragmented calcareous landscapes and deliver action for marsh fritillary, large blue, adonis blue, Duke of Burgundy and wart-biter bush cricket. Further, between March 2024 and March 2026, £25 million was also allocated to 20 projects through the Species Survival Fund, aiming to boost habitat quality and quantity.

To help prioritise and target future action for threatened species recovery in England, the Threatened Species Recovery Action Project (TSRA) ran until August 2025. The project identified which species are most in need of recovery in England and the specific actions required to progress their recovery. In doing so, the project aimed to inform species conservation priorities nationally and guide the development of future recovery projects. Led by Natural England, TSRA resulted from a large and diverse partnership of governmental and non-governmental organisations, involving over 80 specialists from across the environmental sector. The project evaluated over 1,900 species, spanning terrestrial, freshwater and marine groups. These were selected from those species listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, Regionally Extinct, or Extinct in the Wild in the Great Britain Red Lists, and from the [list of species of principal importance in England](#) published under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Actions were planned only for species considered high priorities for species-focussed measures in England, determined by expert evaluation against two criteria. This approach aimed to identify the most important next steps to progress species along their recovery curves.

In England, Defra and Natural England are working together to develop a delivery plan for recovering terrestrial birds in England. The Threatened Bird Recovery Plan will set out recommendations, which if implemented, would reverse the declines in bird populations in England and reduce the overall risk of extinction by 2042 (helping to meet the England Species Extinction Target). Through the Plan, Defra intends to bring together a comprehensive, coherent set of conservation actions in a thematic approach for threatened terrestrial birds. Further, the Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations, which came into force in 2024, include measures to protect nesting birds through a ban on hedgerow cutting from 1 March to 31 August (inclusive).

Furthermore, the English Seabird Conservation and Recovery Pathway (ESCaRP, 2024) provides the core evidence base and framework for further measures to address pressures and threats faced by seabirds in England. In 2025, Defra established a Seabird Conservation Coordination Group, bringing together government policy advisors, land managers, technical experts and academics, to provide representative cross-sector coordination on the prioritisation and delivery of conservation actions identified in the ESCaRP. The initiative has identified actions to reduce human pressures and their impacts that are currently driving the declines in seabird populations in the UK and elsewhere in the north-east Atlantic.

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In England, the Environment Agency (EA) manages both Atlantic salmon stocks and the European eel population, which are listed as [Endangered](#) (Great Britain subpopulation) and [Critically Endangered](#) respectively on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The EA implements a range of measures to conserve salmon in line with guidance from the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) and carries out the management actions in the Eel Management Plans to protect eels.

In Scotland, the [Species on the Edge](#) programme is a partnership of NatureScot and seven nature conservation charities, all dedicated to protecting 37 of Scotland's rarest and most vulnerable coastal and island species. Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, it works with communities and landowners across Scotland and will run from 2023 to 2027. Early successes include increased numbers of small blue butterflies in the Scottish Highlands, building on earlier work by the non-governmental organisation Butterfly Conservation and land managers across the region. It is an outstanding example of partnership working to restore biodiversity.

The Scottish Government in collaboration with partners developed and published the Scottish Seabird Conservation Action Plan in 2025, setting out a series of priority actions for building seabird resilience and focusing collaborative seabird conservation action. It was published in 2025, with implementation now underway.

Progress has been made in the revision of the [Scottish Biodiversity List](#) of species and habitats that Ministers consider to be of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland. By identifying the species and habitats that are of the highest priority for biodiversity conservation, the Scottish Biodiversity List helps public bodies apply their [biodiversity duty](#). NatureScot and environmental non-governmental organisations have collated data on species vulnerability in Scotland into the Species at Risk database. This work provides an evidence-based link between vulnerable species, known pressures driving decline and their ecosystems, and is a strong foundation for prioritising species based on the risk of extirpation or extinction of endemics.

Wales aims to reverse biodiversity decline by 2030 and achieve species and ecosystem recovery by 2050. The Welsh Government has updated the list of species and habitats of principal importance for conservation under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Wales continues to report against national milestones, aiming to improve the status of species and ecosystems. The Natur am Byth partnership has supported the recovery of endangered species, including the reintroduction of the Rosy Saxifrage, which was last seen in Wales in 1962. Other successes include the propagation of the UK's only colony of upright apple moss and the restoration of native oyster beds in Pembrokeshire. Under the Action Plan for Pollinators, Wales has implemented initiatives to benefit pollinators such as the bee friendly scheme and through the Nature Networks Fund is supporting a range of projects allowing some of our most endangered species to thrive such as curlew. The Sustainable Farming Scheme will further support farmers to undertake targeted actions to benefit a range of species at both farm and landscape scales.

In Northern Ireland, Conservation Management Plans and habitat maps have been published for 40 terrestrial and freshwater Special Areas of Conservation to guide habitat protection and management. Alongside this, an Elasmobranch Conservation Strategy and a Seabird Conservation Strategy and action plan are currently being updated following the public consultation in 2024 and are due for publication in Spring 2026.

Gibraltar has successfully conducted several reintroduction programmes for species previously extinct on the Rock, including the red fox, wild rabbits and the Barbary partridge (see case study). An enhanced rewilding programme is planned in Gibraltar to include the lesser kestrel, little owl and the ocellated lizard. The programme to artificially propagate and re-populate the endemic Gibraltar campion (*Silene tomentosa*) will be expanded

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with a new propagation facility created at Tovey Cottage Field Centre in addition to the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens. The Environmental Governance Act (Gibraltar) also includes a species abundance target for 2030 which requires that the overall species abundance index on 31st December 2030 shows that the decline in the abundance of species has been halted.

In Jersey the Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2021 allows the creation of Areas of Special Protection to protect breeding birds at six offshore sites. The Isle of Man has Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) in place for key species such as European eel and Atlantic salmon and is also progressing the development of further BAPs.

In the Cayman Islands, Species Conservation Plans have been developed for various species, including sea turtles, seabirds, and native plant species like *Agalinis kingsii* and *Verbesina caymanensis*. The National Trust continues its breeding and release program for the Endangered Grand Cayman blue iguana. An ex-situ breeding program for endangered plant species is ongoing at the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park, with a focus on endemic orchids and native tree species.

The Falkland Islands Environment Strategy 2021–2040 and the Islands Plan 2022–2026 include the strategic goal to ‘protect and enhance our biodiversity (ecosystem integrity), reducing its loss through tackling threats’. Predator control programmes are in place to support species recovery, including the re-establishment of the Cobb’s wren. The Islands also conduct plant conservation through the identification of Important Plant Areas and propagates rare native species like Falklands Nassauvia. Research efforts on the sei whale have led to the establishment of a Key Biodiversity Area to protect this species and its marine habitat.

Internationally, the UK is a Contracting Party to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, whose governing body is the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which regulates the conduct of commercial and aboriginal subsistence whaling by Contracting Parties. The UK is the current Chair of the Conservation Committee which considers a wide range of cetacean conservation issues such as bycatch and entanglement, ship strikes, pollution and climate change.

The UK continues to drive international action to conserve and restore Atlantic salmon stocks through the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO). The UK also continues to drive international action to ensure fisheries for tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean are managed sustainably through the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). This includes efforts to ensure that target stocks like bluefin tuna are kept at sustainable levels as well as to manage the impacts on bycatch species (including sharks and seabirds) and wider ecosystems.

Effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence

There are a range of awareness-raising initiatives implemented by the UK Government and the Devolved Governments to reduce impacts on marine wildlife from human disturbance. These include:

- Give Seals Space
- the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code
- the Welsh Regional Codes (for example, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Gwynedd marine codes)

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- Operation Seabird
- the Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code

England will continue to implement wildlife management policy that balances the needs of wildlife with the needs of residents and businesses. For example, licences are required where there are plans to disturb or remove certain species of wildlife, and our approach to wildlife licensing is derived from conditions and concepts embedded in domestic wildlife legislation and international conventions, including that licensed action must not have an adverse effect on the conservation status of any species. Furthermore, wildlife management activity should not be carried out using techniques that cause unnecessary suffering. In the first instance of wildlife conflicts, legal non-lethal measures should be considered. Only if these fail, are impractical or deemed ineffective, should available legal lethal options be considered.

Great Crested Newts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In England, mitigation licenses are required for developers to carry out work that impacts Great Crested Newts that would otherwise be illegal. The volume of licenses required for development caused delays in the planning process for new developments. Natural England's District Level Licensing scheme (DLL) was designed as an alternative, enabling developers to make a conservation payment to fulfil requirements for a licence with no further obligations. Natural England uses these payments to create offsite mitigation ponds for Great Crested Newts. DLL provides a quicker regulatory process, cost savings, and reduced delays.

In 2021, the Scottish Government announced a change in policy to actively promote translocation to support the expansion of the beaver population. Beaver can cause damage, for example to agriculture, and NatureScot are working with a wide range of stakeholders to co-produce guidance to minimise human-beaver conflicts. This approach underpinned the 2024 translocation of beaver to the Cairngorms National Park.

In Wales, a strategic approach is being undertaken to promote the managed reintroduction of beavers. As well as introducing legislation to protect wild populations, it is setting up a forum with a range of representatives to minimise any potential conflicts with the approach being adopted.

The Government of Jersey, alongside stakeholders, undertakes public campaigns to influence public behaviour and build understanding to minimise impacts on the island's wildlife, for example, encouraging responsible dog ownership around overwintering shorebirds and to build appreciation and respectful behaviour in the countryside. The Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2021 allows the creation of [Areas of Special Protection](#), and six offshore sites use these powers to protect breeding birds by cordoning off areas and prohibiting activities likely to cause disturbance, such as drones, firearms, speeding, or noise.

In the Cayman Islands, the introduction of wildlife handling guidelines has resulted in better wildlife handling by tour guides, residents and visitors.

In Gibraltar, human-wildlife interactions are managed in several ways. In respect of bats and birds, surveys are required before any development works can take place to ensure no disturbance of existing nests/habitats. Provision of bird and bat boxes in new developments is also required. Within the Nature Reserve in Gibraltar, interactions with the Barbary Macaque are controlled by the Macaque Management Team. Tour guides have received appropriate training and local non-governmental organisation Monkey Talks carries out macaque educational encounters which seek to give visitors a better understanding of these wild animals and how to interact with them safely and respectfully. At sea, the Cetacean Protocol is in force to ensure minimum distances from animals in the British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, which is an important migratory corridor.

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Maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild species to maintain their adaptive potential

In 2023, the fifth edition of the UK Forestry Standard was published, setting out updated guidance for woodland creation and management activity in England. Following a transition period of 12 months, this standard has applied since 1 October 2024. The UK has submitted to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the report: [State of the UK Forest Genetic Resources](#) (2024), which sets out a detailed assessment of action being taken in the UK on understanding, conserving (in situ and ex situ) and use of UK Forest Genetic Resources. A UK Forest Genetic Resources Group was set up in 2025 to address opportunities and challenges to better understand, conserve and utilise UK forest genetic diversity, as identified in the report. The group will provide oversight, facilitate information exchange and deliver technical advice and co-ordination, to inform government policies and support delivery of resilient woodlands and forests across the UK.

In Scotland, existing and emerging threats and pressures are being managed through the development of Gene Conservation Units (GCU). GCUs are part of a Europe-wide network of specially conserved forests and are giving Scotland's native trees the best chance of responding to climate change and disease – making them fitter for the future. Following registration of the first UK site in the Scottish Highlands, the project has now rolled out to England and Wales. Scotland has also identified a list of target species of animals, plants and fungi of particular importance for Scotland and developed a [genetic diversity scorecard](#) for each, assessing their genetic diversity and any associated risks. The species were chosen for their conservation or cultural value, importance for food and medicines or because they provide crucial ecosystem services such as carbon storage.

In Wales, the Forest Resilience Guide 3 – Managing the genetic diversity of Welsh woodlands gives recommendations to support compliance with the UK Forestry Standard, the benchmark for sustainable forest management across the UK.

Maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential

The UK publishes an annual [National Breed Inventory](#) to monitor population numbers and trends of UK livestock and equine breeds. The [Breeds at Risk](#) and [Native Breeds at Risk](#) lists were updated and published in summer 2025 using data from the National Breed Inventory to identify the most at-risk breeds. These lists ensure that conservation efforts and support are effectively targeted, based on the most recent population trends, helping to safeguard genetic diversity for long-term sustainability.

In England, actions taken towards supporting the conservation of genetic biodiversity include two projects, commencing in 2023 and finishing in 2027, to develop a crop wild relative and landrace inventory, which will provide the evidence base to inform how we can actively conserve these important genetic resources.

2. Indicate the current level of progress towards the target

- ☐ On track to achieve target
- ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate
- ☐ No significant progress
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ Achieved

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3. Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved:

Summary of progress towards the target

Action being taken to protect and conserve species has led to the improved status of some species in both the marine and terrestrial environments, demonstrating that management actions can aid recovery. While the overall risk of extinction of species in the UK shows a slight decrease, the overall trend in status for many wild species in the UK is declining or not improving. The abundance of species that are prioritised for conservation action decreased on average by 62% since 1970, indicating a clear deteriorating trend long-term (1970-2023). In the short (2018-2023) and medium (2013-2023) term, the indicator, which includes 251 of 2,890 priority species, has shown little to no change. This is because there is now an equal proportion of species that are increasing (41%) in abundance as those that are declining (41%). This compares with the long-term trend where only 24% of species increased in abundance, but 51% had declined.

Some progress is being made to effectively manage human-wildlife interactions and to minimise the likelihood of human-wildlife conflict. There have been efforts across some parts of the UK to raise awareness among the public and with landowners of the importance of protecting certain species and habitat and the legal protection they are afforded. Further, in England, through District Level Licensing, 3,770 new or restored ponds have been funded by developers in offsite locations (as of March 2025), which have not only increased pond habitat across the country but have provided opportunities to increase the range and distribution of the Great Crested Newt.

Regarding genetic diversity, 64% of assessed wild species are meeting the minimum population size threshold considered necessary for maintaining genetic diversity, and in local breeds, there has been little to no change in the proportion classified as being at risk. Among the native breeds at-risk, several groups are experiencing declines in effective population size, especially over the most recent five years.

Despite good progress being made towards this target, it is difficult to assess whether the actions currently being taken are enough to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species, due to the inherent lag time in species recovery.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 4:

Ensure urgent management actions to halt human-induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk

The latest UK Red List Index value is 0.97353 in 2024. The Red List index value can range from 1 (all species are categorised as Least Concern) to 0 (all species are categorised as Extinct). The indicator shows an increase in the index value from 0.97285 in 2005 to 0.97353 in 2024, indicating a very slight improving trend (Headline Indicator A.3), however, this is not deemed statistically significant and further this indicator represents the trend in global extinction risk of species that occur in the UK, so may not accurately reflect UK progress.

The abundance of UK priority species - those that are targeted for conservation and protection - has declined on average by 62% between 1970 and 2023, indicating a clear deteriorating trend long-term (1970-2023), however, the indicator (National Indicator 4.a), which includes 251 of 2,890 priority species, has shown little to no overall change in the short-term (2018-2023) and medium-term (2013-2023). This is because there is now an equal

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proportion of species that are increasing (41%) in abundance as those that are declining (41%). This compares with the long-term trend where only 24% of species increased in abundance, but 51% had declined.

The [Red List Index for England](#) (National Indicator 4.c) was published in 2022 and will track changes in the national extinction risk faced by 8,259 terrestrial and freshwater species native to England. Currently, data is only available for the baseline year, 2022. The aggregate value of the Red List Index for England for 2022 was 0.9070. Butterflies, birds, amphibians and reptiles had the lowest Red List Index values (highest extinction risk) of 0.7387, 0.7448 and 0.7692 respectively, while hoverflies, millipedes, centipedes and woodlice, and water bugs had the highest values (lowest extinction risk) of 0.9747, 0.9689 and 0.9651, respectively. This indicator also tracks the percentage of species in the 2022 baseline Red List Index for England by category of extinction risk. In 2022, 1.8% of species native to England were either Extinct (in Great Britain), Regionally Extinct, Extinct in the Wild or Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct), 12% were in one of the three threatened categories (1.9% Critically Endangered, 3.7% Endangered and 6.4% Vulnerable) and a further 6% were Near Threatened. The remaining 80% of England's native species were categorised as Least Concern in this assessment.

By 2023, the index of change in the relative abundance of species in England (National Indicator 4.b) had declined to around 67% of its baseline value in 1970, with most of these changes taking place in the last three decades of the 20th century. More recently, between 2018 and 2023, the relative abundance index showed no meaningful change over the latest five years for which data is available.

Species monitoring has shown that, in some cases, action being taken to protect and conserve species has led to increases in specific species in both the marine and terrestrial environment. However, it is difficult to assess whether the actions currently being taken are enough to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species due to the inherent lag time in species recovery which can, in some cases, take decades.

The UK's [National Bat Monitoring Programme](#) suggests that legal protection of bats has enabled slow signs of recovery in some species.

In the UK, grey seal abundance and distribution has [continued to increase](#), whilst harbour seals remain in a state of decline.

Regarding marine birds, the overall picture is one of decline driven by a wide range of pressures and exacerbated by the sustained outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Analysis of the Greater North Sea and Celtic Seas regions shows that the abundance of non-breeding marine birds has declined, with abundance in the Greater North Sea dropping below the target threshold. However, of the five functional feeding groups of marine birds assessed in the latest update under the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS), water column and grazing feeding marine birds were both classed as having met Good Environmental Status thresholds. Progress has also been made to reduce the threat from invasive mammals at important marine bird island breeding sites in the UK. The target of risk reduction from invasive mammalian predators in island seabird colonies has been met, as risks were reduced compared to the previous assessment (2019). Of the 42 assessed Special Protection Areas across the UK, 34 had improved biosecurity measures since [the last assessment](#).

There is limited data to assess the status of many cetacean species across the UK, and bycatch is a significant contributor to their poorer status. The latest [UKMS assessment](#) has shown that UK coastal bottlenose dolphin populations that were able to be assessed are stable or increasing, while harbour porpoise distribution has shifted southwards within the Greater North Sea.

The [State of Nature](#) report 2023 suggests that significant further action is needed to stop the decline of many species.

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Within England, work is underway to enable us better monitor delivery and prioritise actions that will lead to long-term conservation and increase and recovery of species. Natural England published an annual report in 2024 summarising early findings from the Agri-Environment Scheme Monitoring & Evaluation Programme. This showed that eco-friendly farming practices led to a 25% increase in breeding bird populations and benefited other wildlife such as butterflies and bees.

In Wales, the Natur am Byth programme has delivered favourable habitat management for target species across 250 ha over a total of 23 sites. This has been achieved either through direct management delivered by staff, contractors and volunteers, or through management undertaken by landowners themselves following advice from staff or through new management agreements led by a non-governmental organisation within the Natur am Byth partnership. The installation of new assets such as fencing or stock handling infrastructure has resulted in the favourable management of an additional 214,122 ha across the programme.

In the Cayman Islands, Species Conservation Plans allow for increased protections of critical habitat for species, enabling the National Conservation Council to implement effective protections without the need to purchase land for conservation. Invasive species management is resulting in increased populations of Critically Endangered endemic Sister Islands Rock Iguanas in Little Cayman.

Between 2022 and 2025, 78 new or improved habitat management plans have been made available and endorsed in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) because of projects funded through Defra's Darwin Plus programme.

Effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence

Progress is being made to effectively manage human-wildlife interactions and to minimise the likelihood of human-wildlife conflict. There have been efforts across some parts of the UK to raise awareness among the public and with landowners of the importance of protecting certain species and habitat and the legal protection they are afforded.

In England, through District Level Licensing, 3,770 new or restored newt ponds have been funded by developers in offsite locations (as of March 2025). These compensation ponds, situated in areas likely to be favoured by Great Crested Newts, have not only increased pond habitat across the country but have provided opportunities to increase the range and distribution of the species.

In Wales, human-wildlife interactions have been targeted with over 1,257 nature connectedness events or training activities to date, run by the 10 partner organisations in Natur am Byth (Jul 2023–Jun 2025). This has resulted in the participation of 32,547 people across Wales, furthering their understanding of the importance of rare wildlife on their doorstep and ability to act for nature.

In the Cayman Islands, the introduction of wildlife handling guidelines has resulted in better wildlife handling by tour guides, residents and visitors.

Maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild species to maintain their adaptive potential

Headline Indicator A.4, which assesses the proportion of populations within species with an effective population size larger than 500, shows that of the 43 UK species assessed, 64% meet this minimum size threshold considered necessary for maintaining genetic diversity.

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Scotland has identified a list of target species of particular importance for Scotland and developed a [genetic diversity scorecard](#) for each, assessing their genetic diversity and any associated risks. The species were chosen for their conservation or cultural value, importance for food and medicines or because they provide crucial ecosystem services such as carbon storage. The scorecard covered the genetic health of 26 wild species including fungi, plants and animals. Of these, 14 species were classed as being at negligible genetic risk; eight species were classed as being at moderate risk, with effective mitigation in place for five of these; and four species were classed as being at risk of severe genetic problems. The assessment considered threats and mitigation to reduce or prevent genetic diversity loss.

Maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential

There has been little to no change in the proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk as a percentage of local breeds with known level of extinction risk (Component Indicator 4.CT.4). Results have increased slightly from 87% in 2000 to 89% in 2025. For the native breeds of goats, pigs, horses, sheep and cattle that are considered to be at risk, their average effective population sizes (calculated between 2000 and 2024) were each above 50 (National Indicator 4.e), the figure set by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation as a threshold for concern. However, in 2024, among the Native Breeds at Risk, two goat breeds, four horse breeds, and two cattle breeds had an effective population size of 50 or less; no sheep or pig breeds fell into this category. There has been no reported UK extinction of any breeds of goats, pigs, horses, sheep or cattle since 1973.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation:

Summary of key challenges

Progress towards this target (and the species elements of Goal A) requires effective action on all the other targets of the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as made clear by International Union for Conservation on Nature (IUCN)'s [Global Species Action Plan](#). In the UK, the [Office for Environmental Protection](#) in 2025 made the following four recommendations:

1. Focus on the rapid and effective implementation of major initiatives, primarily nature-friendly farming,
2. Maximise the contribution of protected sites for nature,
3. Speed up action in the marine environment, and
4. Set out clear mechanisms for reconciling competing demands for use of land and sea.

Determining the risk status of UK livestock breeds entails gathering data from a diverse range of breeds and species, which presents challenges in data consistency and availability. Defra engages with its independent experts (the UK Genetics for Livestock and Equines Committee) to enhance data collection methods that are fit for purpose. In 2025, data collection processes were adjusted for certain species to improve coverage, for example, enabling hill sheep societies – who face unique challenges in data reporting – to submit census data. These adaptations aim to ensure a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of breed populations, supporting better-informed conservation support.

A challenge to assessing the state of UK seas is the critical dependence on the extent and sufficiency of the available evidence. Marine research and monitoring vary hugely in their spatial and temporal coverage. In some cases, there are robust data with full quality assurance and internationally

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recognised standards, while in other cases, data are less robust or provide only a partial picture, and it is necessary to use scientific expert judgement to reach an estimation of the likely status. There are data challenges in relation to harbour seals; the species' abundance is declining in north-east Scotland and there has been a more recent sustained decline in south-east England. Although they are stable on the west coast of Scotland, their status in other parts of the Celtic Seas remains uncertain.

There are also difficulties around building a detailed picture of the extent of the impacts caused by single-point events, such as the outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in 2021–2023, and the auk and shag wrecks in 2021 and 2023.

Challenges with supporting fish communities include the international nature of Total Allowable Catches, which are subject to negotiations through annual fisheries consultations with the EU and other coastal states. The UK cannot achieve the targets in the marine environment unilaterally and will require international cooperation. The recovery of fish communities is also affected by biological and climatic conditions, which are beyond the control of fisheries managers.

A challenge faced by the Natur am Byth partnership in Wales has been caution from landowners around entering new management agreements that benefit target species, due to concerns that doing so could affect their entry into other payment schemes. Other challenges have been inflationary pressures on programme staff salaries and contractor costs, plus the pressure of fast paced delivery on staff during a compressed delivery phase of only four years.

In Jersey, many of the Areas of Special Protection are in areas frequented by boat users and others for leisure. As these people come from both France and Jersey, effective management requires liaison and education in both countries. People also enter offshore areas where daily surveillance is not possible, hence the government in Jersey mainly relies on notifications of transgressions from the concerned public. Dog ownership in Jersey has increased considerably in recent years, with commercial dog walking companies becoming established. The Policing of Parks Regulations prohibit dogs on leads on the beaches during the summer months. This pushes dog walkers to inland sites, many of which are protected Sites of Special Interest, where they may cause disturbance to native species.

There is a significant lack of capacity across the UKOTs to carry out International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List assessments, despite many UKOTs being home to high levels of endemism and globally threatened biodiversity. In most territories, there are limited in-country taxonomic experts, data deficiencies, and few resources to conduct the necessary field assessments, threat analyses, and peer-reviewed evaluations required for IUCN Red List submissions. As a result, many species remain unassessed or rely on outdated listings. Further support is required for preliminary Red List assessments, training of local personnel, and regular updating of assessments. Building this capacity would not only strengthen conservation planning and international reporting but would also ensure that threatened species in the UKOTs receive the recognition and protection they urgently require.

For example, in the Falkland Islands, knowledge of which species are threatened is very limited. The only taxonomic group for which the territory has national Red List data is vascular plants. Within this group, there are 35 species that have not been assessed globally for the IUCN Red List. Further, many seabird species lack robust baseline data to determine their conservation status, which makes it difficult to determine whether a species is threatened and therefore to determine the extent of management actions required to halt declines. Further surveys, particularly those which investigate unassessed taxonomic groups, are required.

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	In contrast, St Helena has made significant progress in carrying out Red List assessments for its unique flora and fauna, thanks to collaborative efforts between local conservation organisations, government departments, and international partners. The island, known for its high levels of endemism, has undertaken targeted species assessments, particularly for invertebrates, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. Support from the IUCN and UK-based institutions has enabled capacity building and training for local staff, contributing to the finalisation of Red List assessments for several species. However, ongoing challenges remain, including the need for updated assessments, improved data for lesser-known taxa, and sustained funding to maintain momentum. Continued investment in Red List work is essential to guide conservation priorities, secure funding, and raise awareness of the urgent need to protect St Helena's globally important biodiversity. Another challenge faced in the Falkland Islands is delays in receiving cabinet decisions, which can slow down action. In Gibraltar, limited funding and resources to properly monitor baseline data are a challenge.	
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)¹ Headline Indicator A.3: Red List Index (Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 15.5.1 – Red List Index) Source: SDG Indicator Database	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator is published for the UK as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 15.5.1 and can be viewed on the UN Statistics page for the UK. Source: SDG Indicator Database
	Headline Indicator A.4: Proportion of populations within species with an effective population size greater than 500 (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Genetic diversity of wild species)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments:

¹ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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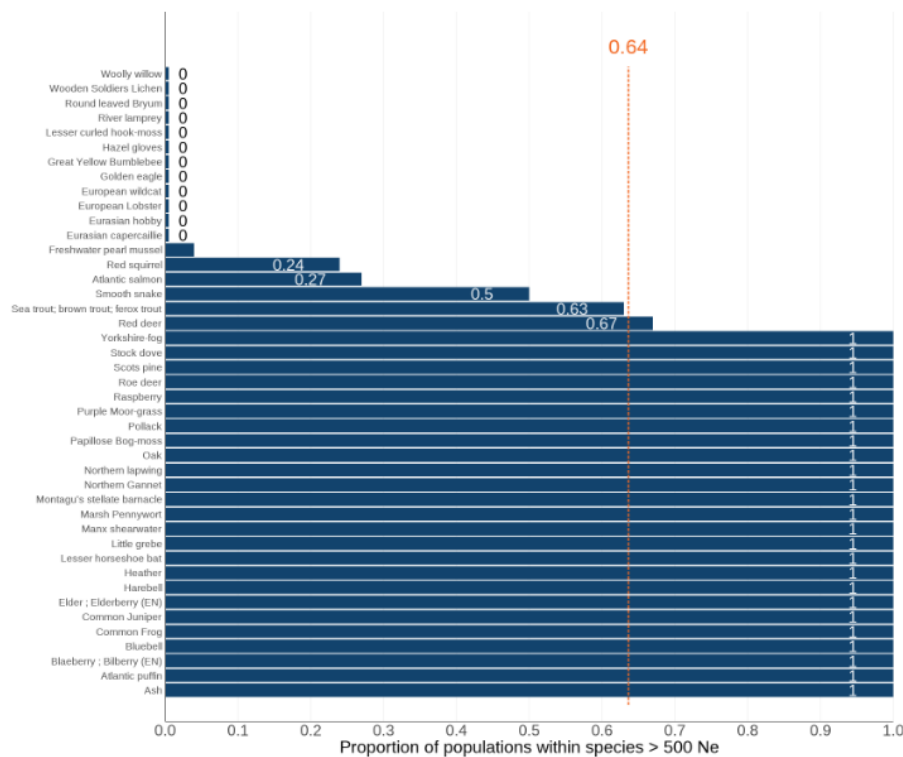


Figure 1: Assessing genetic viability: Species-level proportion of populations with an effective population size (N_e) above 500.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Genetic diversity of wild species](#)

This indicator brings together information on effective population sizes for a range of UK species, and aggregates this to a representative average value for the proportion of populations exceeding an effective population size of 500.

Data for this indicator comes from a range of sources and expert elicitation, as convened and supported by [SEFARI \(Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutes\)](#), [Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh](#), [NatureScot](#), [University of Edinburgh](#), and [Royal Botanic Gardens Kew](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Genetic diversity of wild species](#)

Figure 1:

This figure presents the total proportion of populations within the included species (see [Technical Annex](#)) which have greater than 500 individuals.

This data is aggregated by species, and then a final average taken across all species assessed for this indicator, indicated by the vertical orange line and label.

Some species have an N_e of 0 and are indicated by very short bars at the top of this figure; similarly other species have an N_e of 1 and are indicated by full width bars.

There are 43 UK species assessed within this indicator. An average proportion of 0.64 (or 64%) of their populations have an effective population size above the important threshold of $N_e = 500$.

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5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator²	Comments (optional): _____																
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 4.a: Status of priority species: relative abundance Table 1: Assessment of change of the relative abundance of priority species Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of priority species: relative abundance <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Measure</th> <th>Assessment</th> <th>Time period</th> <th>Result</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Priority species</td> <td>Long term</td> <td>1970 to 2023</td> <td>Deteriorating</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Priority species</td> <td>Medium term</td> <td>2013 to 2023</td> <td>Little or no overall change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Priority species</td> <td>Short term</td> <td>2018 to 2023</td> <td>Little or no overall change</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result	Priority species	Long term	1970 to 2023	Deteriorating	Priority species	Medium term	2013 to 2023	Little or no overall change	Priority species	Short term	2018 to 2023	Little or no overall change	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator shows the average change in the relative abundance of 251 out of 2,890 priority species in the UK for which data are available. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of priority species: relative abundance Table 1: The long-term assessment was made by comparing the 95% credible interval (CI) of the final year with the starting value of the indicator. As the credible interval around the final indicator value of 38 (95% CI: 33, 45) is entirely below the starting value (100), the time series was assessed as decreasing. The same approach was applied to the most recent five-year (2018 to 2023) period to assess the short-term change. As the credible interval for the most recent year (2023, 95% CI: 33, 45) spanned the value for five years previous (2018, 39) the indicator is assessed as no significant change.
Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result															
Priority species	Long term	1970 to 2023	Deteriorating															
Priority species	Medium term	2013 to 2023	Little or no overall change															
Priority species	Short term	2018 to 2023	Little or no overall change															

² See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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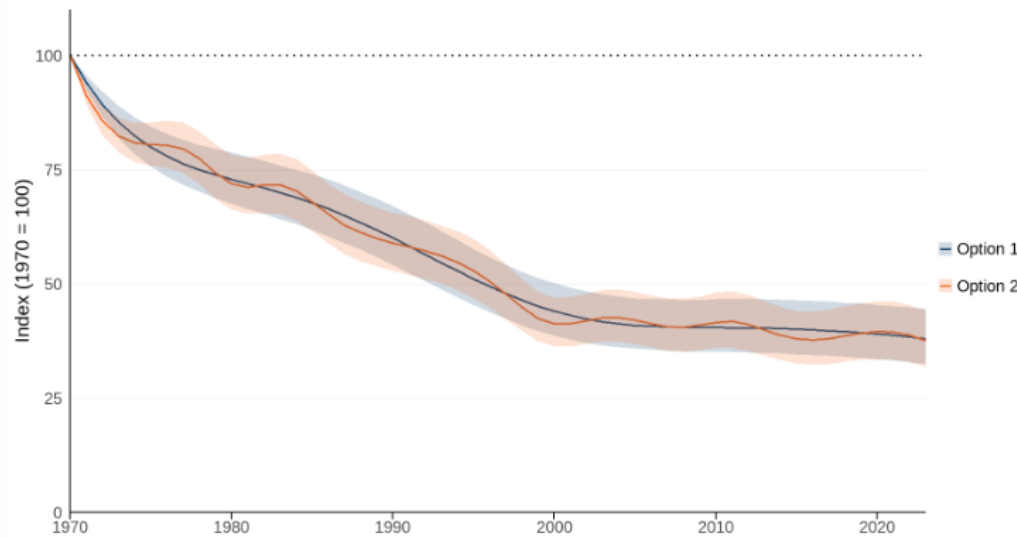


Figure 1. Change in the relative abundance of 251 priority species in the UK, 1970 to 2023.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of priority species: relative abundance](#)

Figure 1:

Figure 1 shows the two options for the smoothed trend (solid line) with their 95% credible intervals (shaded area). See discussion of smoothing in the [caveats and limitations](#) section of the main release.

Index values represent change from the baseline value in 1970, the credible interval widens as the index gets further from the 1970 value and confidence in the estimate of change relative to the baseline falls.

The credible intervals capture the variation in trends across species, but not uncertainty in the underlying species abundance indices. Furthermore, they do not capture uncertainty associated with the spatial locations of sample points, nor about the degree to which the species represent wider biodiversity.

All species in the indicator are present on one or more of the country priority species lists (Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 – Section 41 (England), Environment (Wales) Act 2016 section 7, Northern Ireland Priority Species List, Scottish Biodiversity List).

Figure 2:

Figure 2 shows the percentage of species within the indicator that have increased (weakly or strongly), decreased (weakly or strongly) or shown little change in abundance based on set thresholds of change (see [Technical annex](#) for more detail).

Due to rounding, the data labels may not sum exactly to 100%.

Target 4

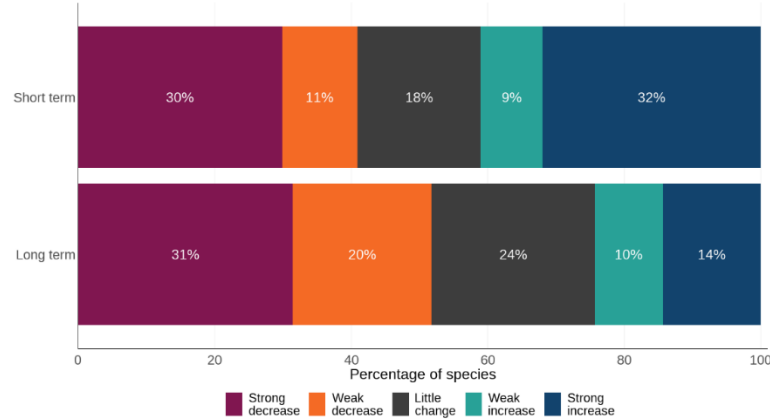


Figure 2: Long-term and short-term changes in 251 priority species' abundance trends for in the UK, 1970 to 2023

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of priority species: relative abundance](#)

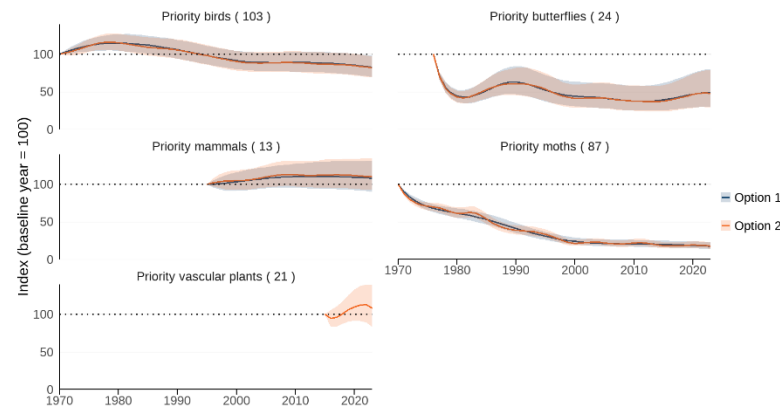


Figure 3: Change in relative species abundance by taxonomic group, 1970 to 2023

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of priority species: relative abundance](#)

Figure 3:

Figure 3 shows the two options for the smoothed trend (solid line) together with their 95% credible intervals (shaded area) for each of the four taxonomic groups included in the composite indicator (see discussion of smoothing in the [Caveats and limitations](#) section of the main release).

Index values represent change from the baseline value for each group. The credible interval widens as the index gets further from the baseline value and confidence in the estimate of change relative to the baseline falls.

The credible intervals capture the variation in trends across species, but not uncertainty in the underlying species abundance indices. Furthermore, they do not capture uncertainty associated with the spatial locations of sample points, nor about the degree to which the species represent wider biodiversity.

The 251 species included in the indicator are present on one or more of the country priority species lists (Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 – Section 41 (England), Environment (Wales) Act 2016 section 7, Northern Ireland Priority Species List, Scottish Biodiversity List).

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6.	National Indicator 4.b: Relative abundance and/or distribution of species (England) (Environmental Indicator Framework Indicator D4) Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Environmental Indicator Framework – D4 – Relative Abundance and/or distribution of species (England)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator will use regularly collected data to track changes in relative abundance and/or distribution of species which are characteristic of different broad habitats in England including birds, bats, butterflies, moths, other invertebrates, and plants. This indicator is an official statistic in development and has been published in order to facilitate user involvement in its development. Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Environmental Indicator Framework – D4 – Relative Abundance and/or distribution of species (England)
	National Indicator 4.c: Conservation status of our native species (England) (Environmental Indicator Framework Indicator D5) Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Environmental Indicator Framework – D5 – Conservation status of our native species (England)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator will track changes in the national extinction risk faced by terrestrial and freshwater species.

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		The IUCN red-listing process is a globally accepted methodology for assessing species extinction risk at global and regional (including national) scales. Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Environmental Indicator Framework – D5 – Conservation status of our native species (England)
	National Indicator 4.d: Genetic diversity indicator for wild species (Scotland) Source: NatureScot – Genetic diversity indicator for wild species (Scotland)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: The Scorecard of Genetic Diversity in Wild Species was initially developed in Scotland to assess the threats and the conservation actions in place. It was first published in 2020 and has been updated and expanded to include marine species as well as a greater variety of terrestrial animals, plants and fungi. Source: NatureScot – Genetic diversity indicator for wild species (Scotland)
	National Indicator 4.e: Animal genetic resources – effective population size of Native Breeds at Risk (UK Biodiversity Indicator: Animal genetic resources – effective population size of Native Breeds at Risk)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator shows the change in the average effective population sizes for breeds of goats, pigs, horses, sheep and cattle classified by the UK Farm

Target 4

Table 1: Assessment of change of effective population size of Native Breeds at Risk

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Animal genetic resources – effective population size of native breeds at risk](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Goat breeds	Long term	2004 to 2024	Little or no overall change
Goat breeds	Short term	2019 to 2024	Deteriorating
Pig breeds	Long term	2000 to 2024	Deteriorating
Pig breeds	Short term	2019 to 2024	Deteriorating
Horse breeds	Long term	2000 to 2024	Deteriorating
Horse breeds	Short term	2019 to 2024	Little or no overall change
Sheep breeds	Long term	2000 to 2024	Improving
Sheep breeds	Short term	2019 to 2024	Deteriorating
Cattle breeds	Long term	2000 to 2024	Improving
Cattle breeds	Short term	2019 to 2024	Little or no overall change

Animal Genetic Resources Committee as Native Breeds at Risk (NBAR).

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Animal genetic resources – effective population size of native breeds at risk](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 5% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1:

The indicator includes breeds that are classed as Native Breeds at Risk (NBAR) in the breed inventory published in 2025. Changes in NBAR status during the time series have not been factored into the selection of breeds that are included in each year.

This year's indicator differs from previous publications due to updates to the Farm Animal Genetic Resources inventory. These include 2024 inventory data, estimated breeding female populations for 2025, and some revisions to earlier years, based on data from breed societies.

The dotted black line shows effective population size (Ne) equal to 50; the level set by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation as a threshold for concern.

Target 4

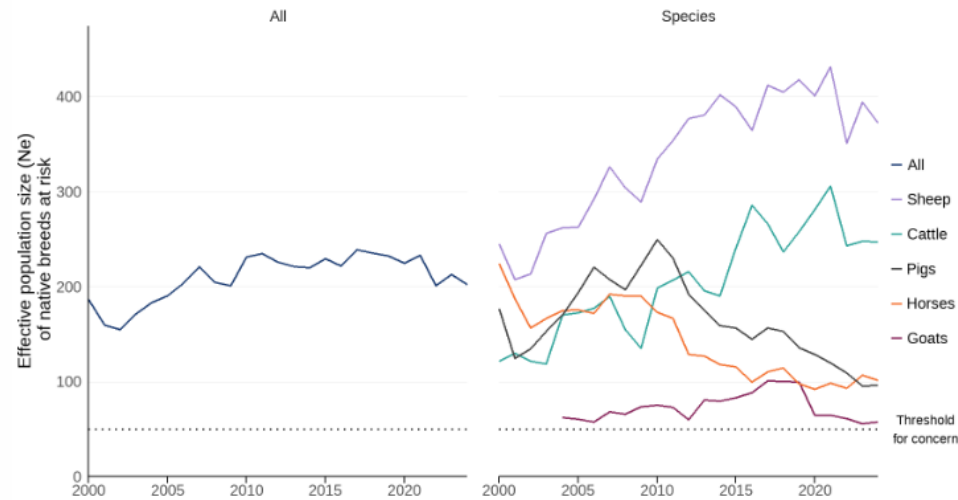


Figure 1: Average effective population size (Ne) of All Native Breeds at Risk, 2000 to 2024

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Animal genetic resources – effective population size of native breeds at risk](#)

Figure 2:

The indicator includes breeds that are classed as NBAR in the breed inventory published in 2025. Changes in NBAR status during the time series have not been factored into the selection of breeds that are included in each year.

Target 4

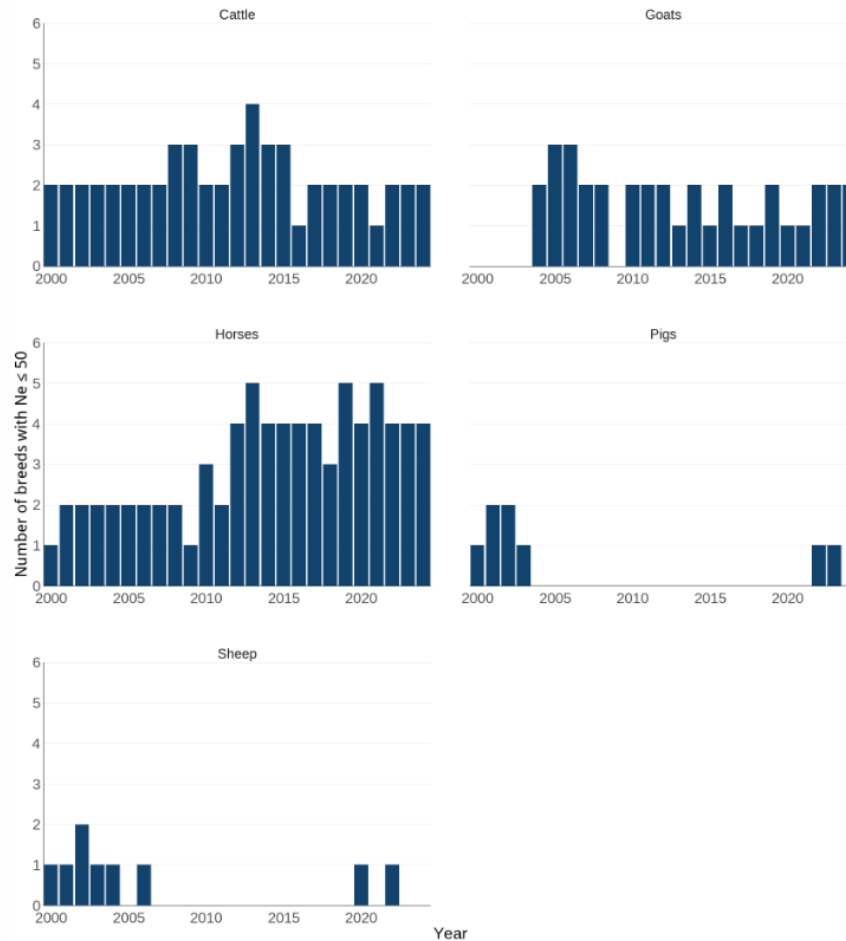


Figure 2: Number of Native Breeds at Risk breeds with Ne less than or equal to 50 within the overall trends, 2000 to 2024.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Animal genetic resources – effective population size of native breeds at risk](#)

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Component Indicator 4.CT.4: Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not at risk or at unknown level of risk of extinction (Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 2.5.2)

Source: [United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - SDG Country Profiles](#)

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

The indicator presents the percentage of livestock breeds classified as being at risk of extinctions at a certain moment in time, as well as the trends for those percentages.

Data for the UK is entered into the [Domestic Animal Diversity - Information System \(DAD-IS\)](#) system by DEFRA. Raw data is available from the [UK farm animal genetic resources \(FAnGR\) - breed inventory](#).

Source: [United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - SDG Country Profiles](#)

7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed.

Reversing Extinction in Wales – Rosy Saxifrage Reintroduction

In 2024, Wales marked a significant milestone in species recovery with the successful reintroduction of the Rosy Saxifrage (*Saxifraga rosacea*), a mountain plant last recorded in the wild in 1962. This achievement was led by Plantlife under the Natur am Byth programme, a collaborative initiative involving Natural Resources Wales in partnership with nine environmental charities, landowners, and volunteers. The reintroduction was made possible by locating and propagating plants from original genetic strains held in private collections, with careful planning and permissions secured from landowners. The species is now flowering near its historical habitat in Eryri (Snowdonia), symbolising a broader commitment to reversing biodiversity loss.

The Rosy Saxifrage's extinction was primarily driven by over-collection during the Victorian era and atmospheric pollution, which degraded its nutrient-sensitive mountain habitat. Its return represents not only ecological restoration but also cultural redress, acknowledging the historical exploitation of Wales' landscapes.

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This case study forms part of the wider implementation of UK Target 4, which aims to halt species decline and restore biodiversity through targeted action. The Natur am Byth programme has to-date delivered favourable habitat management across 375 ha at 35 sites, plus surveys and monitoring of rare species at many other sites. These outcomes were achieved through direct capital works and landowner-led initiatives supported by expert advice and new management agreements. Additionally, infrastructure improvements such as fencing and stock handling systems have extended favourable management to over 214,000 ha, with further data collection planned for marine assets in 2025.

Public engagement has been a cornerstone of the programme. Between July 2023 and June 2025, over 1,200 nature-connectedness events and training activities were delivered, reaching more than 32,500 participants across Wales. These efforts have strengthened public understanding of rare species and empowered communities to take action for nature.

Despite these successes, several challenges have emerged. Landowner caution regarding new management agreements – due to concerns about eligibility for other payment schemes – has slowed uptake in some areas. Inflationary pressures have impacted staff salaries and contractor costs, while the compressed four-year delivery timeline has placed significant demands on programme staff.

Nonetheless, the Natur am Byth programme exemplifies a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to biodiversity recovery supported by funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Welsh Government and charitable donors. It integrates scientific expertise, policy frameworks, and community involvement to deliver tangible outcomes. The Rosy Saxifrage reintroduction, in particular, highlights the potential for reversing extinction through coordinated action and long-term commitment.

Continued collaboration, adaptive funding mechanisms, and sustained public engagement will be essential to build on these achievements and ensure lasting impact for Wales' biodiversity.

Gibraltar – Barbary Partridge re-population programme

Background

The Barbary Partridge (*Alectoris barbara*) is widely regarded as Gibraltar's national bird. While it is primarily a North African species, Gibraltar stands as the only location on mainland Europe where this bird is found in the wild.

Favouring open scrub habitats, the Barbary Partridge faced a sharp decline in numbers during the early 2000s. Pressures contributing to this drop included disturbance, intense predation by feral cats and, more significantly, habitat degradation. Overgrowth of dense vegetation in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve encroached on the open ground and low scrub, which is essential for nesting and foraging for these birds.

Re-population

As part of the government's commitment to safeguard the population of Barbary Partridge in Gibraltar, the Department of the Environment launched a series of targeted conservation initiatives. Over two years, habitat restoration efforts cleared overgrown areas to recreate a more suitable environment. This was followed by the successful importation of more than 270 birds from a specialised breeding facility in northern Morocco in

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	2014. The project was made possible through close collaboration between the Department of the Environment and Moroccan authorities, with key meetings led by Minister for the Environment, Professor John Cortes, in Rabat. These imported partridges played a pivotal role in the species' re-establishment in Gibraltar. A robust monitoring programme – jointly led by the Department of the Environment and the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society (GONHS) – continues to track the success of the initiative. In parallel, the Gibraltar Nature Reserve Management Team constructed dedicated breeding and release facilities, which remain active today. From 2024 onward, further enhancements and new release sites are planned to strengthen the long-term sustainability of this iconic bird.
8.	Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

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National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 5

Ensure sustainable, safe and legal use, harvesting and trade of wild species

The UK will ensure that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimising impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities³.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target.

Summary of actions taken

The UK has implemented a comprehensive framework to ensure the sustainable, safe, and legal use of wild species through a combination of legislation, policy frameworks and international cooperation. Key measures include the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which regulate the take, sale and exchange of certain species and the use of certain methods of take.

A UK-wide Joint Fisheries Statement, published in November 2022 by the UK Government and the Devolved Governments, is driving progress in sustainable fisheries management with a requirement to publish 43 evidence-based Fisheries Management Plans, of which 11 are already published.

Other relevant legislation in the UK includes the Ivory Act 2018, the Shark Fins Act 2023 and The Eel Regulations 2009. Additionally, timber entering the UK must be legally harvested, and regulations prohibit the placing of illegally harvested timber and timber products on the UK market.

Internationally, the UK is a Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In the UK, CITES provisions are implemented by various regulations collectively referred to as the Wildlife Trade Regulations (WTRs). The UK is also member to several other relevant international agreements, including the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and five Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). As a Contracting Party to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, the UK plays a central role in the International Whaling Commission (IWC), including upholding the global moratorium on commercial whaling.

³ The United Kingdom does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

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Regarding the main actions under Target 5:

Ensure that the use and harvesting of wild species is sustainable, preventing overexploitation

In Great Britain, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA 1981) regulates the taking of birds and other animals including through establishing close seasons and regulating methods of take, which in some cases can help avoid non-target species. All wild birds are protected under the WCA 1981, with a few limited exceptions: Schedule 2 lists around 20 species of wild bird that can be legally shot outside of their close season. The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 also prohibits the take of certain species and the use of certain methods of take. In Scotland, legislation such as the Natural Environment Bill (Scotland) and the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024 support the sustainability of wild harvest and the management of deer is principally regulated by the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996. Equivalent provisions for Northern Ireland are contained within the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 supports the sustainability of wild harvest by making it an offence to interfere with certain wild species unless a license is obtained and regulates close seasons and methods of take, which in some cases can help to avoid non-target species.

The [UK Fisheries Act 2020](#) provides a comprehensive regulatory framework for managing fishing activity sustainably. A UK-wide [Joint Fisheries Statement](#) (JFS), published in November 2022 by the UK Government and the Devolved Governments, sets out how the objectives of the Fisheries Act will be achieved, including a requirement to publish [43](#) Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs). FMPs are evidence-based action plans developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders to deliver sustainable fisheries. Joint Welsh and English Bass and King Scallop FMPs were published in 2023, with priority actions supporting sustainable management and application of biodiversity-friendly practices. In Wales, the Fishing Permit (Wales) Order 2021 and Cockle Fishing Management and Permit (Wales) Order 2024 brought these fisheries under evidence-based adaptive management regimes. The first JFS three-year report is due to be published in spring 2026, reporting on the extent to which the policies in the JFS have been implemented. Further, the [UK Marine Strategy](#) (UKMS) commits the UK to targets to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) relating to fishing mortality rate and spawning stock biomass.

Stock assessments, quotas, size limits, certification schemes, fisheries closures and gear restrictions are used within the UK to support sustainability. For example, in 2024, the UK and Scottish Governments announced the closure of fishing for sandeels in Scottish and English waters to increase the availability of sandeels and thereby increase the resilience of marine species that rely on them. Scotland plans to introduce fisheries closures to protect Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in offshore waters outside of marine protected areas (MPAs). England will extend the requirements for Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) to all fishing vessels operating in English waters in 2026 to improve England's ability to control, enforce and manage fishing activity. Scotland has made Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) a requirement for vessels fishing for scallops in Scottish waters, and from 7 March 2026 REM will be a requirement for pelagic vessels in Scottish waters. England is also working on the implementation of REM. In 2022 Wales was the first part of the UK to introduce iVMS for under 12 m vessels fishing in the Welsh zone.

In 2020, Natural Resources Wales launched a salmon and sea trout plan of action (PoA) for Wales to support the sustainable management and recovery of vulnerable stocks. Ongoing actions include monitoring and assessments of returning adult stock and juvenile spatial distribution and trends in all major rivers in Wales, with the evidence used to support exploitation management decisions. This PoA is currently being updated to reflect

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our recent salmon stressor assessment and our obligations to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) to address the top three stressors in our 2026–2032 Conservation Commitment Report.

UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have developed strategies for managing the harvest of wild species:

- The Isle of Man Fisheries Statement (2024) provides a framework for the management and regulation of wild species harvesting and is regulated by the development of long-term management plans, which are enforced proactively, including using new and developing technologies. The Isle of Man's voluntary closed areas have demonstrated positive effects on stock biomass, and its regulations include the Recreational Sea Fishing (Bass) Regulations 2016, which restrict harvest of Bass, and a requirement to release caught European Eels.
- The Cayman Islands base decisions regarding close seasons and catch limits on comprehensive field research and have introduced handling guidelines for stingrays and starfish that ensure that the use of these wild species for tourism is sustainable and safe.
- Gibraltar's Marine Protection Regulations 2014 set out catch limits, minimum species sizes and licensing requirements for fishing, and its Tuna Preservation Regulations restrict the catch of Bluefin Tuna.
- Tristan da Cunha's community manages a Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)-certified lobster fishery within one of the world's largest Marine Protection Zones, integrating traditional stewardship with ecosystem-based approaches to avoid overexploitation.
- In the Falklands, fisheries for species such as Toothfish and squid are governed by science-led quota systems, strict licensing, and bycatch mitigation strategies, and actions such as annual reviews of Toothfish MSC status support the fishing industry in attaining accreditation for key exports.
- Jersey, in partnership with French fishers, jointly holds an MSC certification for its lobster fishery.
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands have a fisheries management regime based on data, precautionary stock assessments and policies for illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- Supported by Darwin Plus funding, FisherFolkFirst has been developing biodiversity stewardship among fishers in Turks and Caicos through outreach and education. Their latest project aims to enhance protection for spawning aggregations of reef fishes by developing their non-extractive value through responsible eco-tourism and ensuring that small-scale fishing communities share in those benefits.

Internationally, the UK is a member of several relevant international agreements, including the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), the Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.

In the [North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission](#) (NEAFC), the UK was instrumental in achieving measures to ban directed fishing of Porbeagle and Orange Roughy. The UK advocates internationally for transparency to strengthen measures to deter IUU fishing, including engaging through the IUU Fishing Action Alliance and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on beneficial ownership and transparency. The UK successfully secured strengthened measures to help combat IUU fishing at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) in 2024. The UK is working to

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further improve management of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and other related species through participation in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), as well as improving management of North Atlantic Salmon internationally through NASCO.

Ensure that the use and harvesting of wild species is sustainable, minimising impacts on non-target species and ecosystems

Through the [UK Marine Strategy](#) (UKMS), the UK is committed to targets to achieve GES by ensuring the long-term viability of seal, cetacean and marine bird populations is not threatened by incidental bycatch, including actions relevant to reducing ghost nets and other fishing litter that impact non-target species. The UKMS also has targets to ensure that loss of sensitive, fragile or important habitats caused by human activities is prevented and where feasible reversed, and that the extent of habitat types adversely affected by physical disturbance caused by human activity should be minimised.

In the UK, the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) contribute to GES for these habitats and targets. In England, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is assessing the impact of fishing activity, including bycatch, on MPAs designated for highly mobile species such as harbour porpoise. In Scotland, additional protection for Priority Marine Features (PMFs) to complement the MPA network is being implemented to protect the 11 PMFs most vulnerable to bottom contacting fishing gear outside of MPAs. Wales is finalising the structured evaluation of potential fishing gear interactions with features of MPAs through the [Assessing Welsh Fishing Activities](#) programme. Recent condition reports on the extensive MPA network (139 sites), covering 50% of the Welsh zone and 69% of inshore waters, indicate fishing is not adversely affecting Special Area of Conservation features at wholly inshore/non-transboundary sites. In Northern Ireland, in 2023, [Fisheries Regulations](#) were introduced in nine inshore MPAs, to limit and/or remove damaging activities from the MPAs.

Through the [UK Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative](#), published in 2022, fisheries policy authorities have set out policy objectives and potential actions to meet the Fisheries Act 2020 ecosystem objective that 'incidental catches of sensitive marine species are minimised and, where possible, eliminated', including cetaceans, seabirds, seals and elasmobranchs. Each fisheries policy authority is responsible for setting out how they will act on bycatch, such as through implementation plans. Defra is developing a seabird bycatch action plan for England, aiming for publication in 2026.

The UK [Clean Catch](#) research and development programme is being expanded to develop innovative bycatch mitigation technologies, and updated guidance has been issued by the MMO to support compliance with Marine Mammal Reporting licence conditions for bycatch. The Bycatch Monitoring Programme is expanding and improving data collection on bycatch of sensitive species. The current programme includes annual reports of bycatch estimates for harbour porpoise, common dolphin and grey seal, with records of observed bycaught endangered threatened and protected species. Work was contracted in August 2024 to develop regional bycatch risk prioritisation frameworks to provide quantitative and spatial information on bycatch risk per region for marine sensitive species. This work includes an evidence assessment and synthesis of bycatch mitigation interventions for these species. The objective is to deliver a more coordinated approach to monitoring and minimising bycatch of sensitive marine species.

The UK recognises that while moorland shoot management for red grouse can provide incidental benefits for some species of conservation concern, particularly ground nesting waders such as golden plover and curlew, it can also lead to an overall loss of biodiversity due to changes in species assemblage composition and overall ecosystem structure and function. There is evidence of a link between moorland shoot management and habitat degradation and wildlife crimes, particularly through heather burning and moorland drainage, and illegal persecution of birds of prey. While the Government has no plans to ban driven grouse shooting, it is vital that wildlife and habitats are protected and that the law is respected by those involved in the activity. The

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Government will continue to work to ensure a sustainable, mutually beneficial relationship between grouse shooting and conservation. In Scotland, the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024 supports the sustainability of grouse shooting.

Within the Isle of Man, financial support from government for fisheries diversification reduces impacts on non-target species, for example by supporting scallop and *Nephrops* potting to reduce bycatch and seabed impacts. Improvements made to Guernsey's Animal Welfare Ordinance in 2025 have restricted the use of indiscriminate trapping methods to minimise the impact of hunting on non-target species.

Internationally, within tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), the UK has negotiated a prohibition on the retention of endangered rays at ICCAT in 2023, and pushed for measures to protect other shark species, as well as being a leading voice in bycatch mitigation for vulnerable seabirds.

Ensure that the use and harvesting of wild species is safe, reducing the risk of pathogen spillover

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland enacted prohibitions on the use of lead shot over wetlands between 1999 and 2009 to protect waterbirds from the impact of poisoning by lead shot, but they vary in the definitions used and in application. In December 2024, the Health and Safety Executive published their [Final Opinion](#) proposing new restrictions on the supply and outdoor uses of lead in ammunition in England, Scotland and Wales. Following this recommendation, in June 2025 the government announced [new measures](#) that will ban shot containing more than 1% lead and bullets with a lead content of more than 3% by weight and will ensure a consistent approach across England, Scotland and Wales. Legislation implementing these measures is planned to come into force in 2026, with a transition period of three years for most uses of lead ammunition. These restrictions will stop lead from contaminating soil and leaching into rivers when guns are discharged, minimising pollution entering ecosystems and minimising its impact on people, species and ecosystems.

In 2022 and 2024, the UK Government published risk assessments on the spread of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 to wild birds from captive-reared [pheasants](#) and [mallards](#) released for shooting in Great Britain. Since 2021, releases of gamebirds (pheasants and red-legged partridges) in protected areas, or within 500 m of their boundary, have been regulated in England. In 2023, Natural England announced further restrictions on releases on or near to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for wild birds, to reduce the risk from HPAI. When the virus persists into the summer and risks to wild birds remains high, licensed release on or within 500 m of SPAs is severely curtailed.

Ensure that the trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal

The UK is a Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In the UK, CITES provisions are implemented by various regulations collectively referred to as the Wildlife Trade Regulations (WTRs). The relevant regulations include assimilated law that applies in Great Britain, EU law that applies to Northern Ireland, and UK domestic regulations that apply to both Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Domestic CITES-implementing legislation in Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands was formally recognised by the CITES Secretariat on 23 August 2023 as fully meeting the requirements of the Convention, confirming that the necessary legislative frameworks are in place to ensure legal and sustainable trade in specimens of CITES-listed species.

In September 2025, Defra published a consultation on proposals to amend the assimilated UK WTRs. WTR reform aims to ensure legislation is clear, proportionate, and fit for purpose to protect wildlife and support sustainable trade. These reforms reflect recommendations from the Corry Review,

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which calls for regulations that deliver effective outcomes for both economic growth and nature recovery. The proposals aim to improve targeting of compliance burdens on industry to facilitate sustainable and legitimate trade in line with the aims of CITES, whilst strengthening conservation outcomes. This includes ensuring the regime is delivering strong protections for species at risk from over-exploitation and illegal trade, and that it provides appropriate tools to enforce against violations.

The UK employs stringent border controls to prevent illegal trade in CITES-listed species. These include document checks and inspections at the 36 CITES designated Ports of Entry/Exit. Any imports of CITES listed specimens that try to enter Great Britain through a non-designated port/airport or do not have the correct CITES paperwork are seized by the UK Border Force. The UK monitors and regulates imports and (re-)exports of CITES-listed specimens through a strict licensing system administered by the Animal and Plant Health Agency. This includes the preparation of robust 'non-detriment findings' by the UK's Scientific Authorities to ensure that trade will not have a detrimental impact on the survival of species in the wild, and an assessment that trade is legal.

The National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCUC) is a specialized police unit dedicated to tackling wildlife crime across the UK, including offences related to CITES. The NWCUC helps prevent and detect crimes against wildlife by obtaining and disseminating intelligence and directly assisting law enforcers in their investigations and works closely with other enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute illegal trade. In 2025–2026, Defra provided £424,000 funding to the Unit and supported SASA (Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture) to develop and refine a DNA test for peregrine falcon parentage and hybridisation, as well as maintaining the corresponding database with samples from wild nests across the UK. Examples of recent operations included Operation Tantallon in 2023, which focussed on the wild taking and illegal trade of peregrine falcons, and the annual UK contribution to Operation Thunder, an intensive international operation to target the criminal networks behind wildlife crime. Separately, Defra has agreed with Natural England's recommendation that a 'presumption against' is taken against applications from falconers and aviculturist for licensed 'wild take' of raptor chicks from nests. Under existing law, this practice has been approved by licence in the past, but this revised approach makes wild take highly unlikely.

Through the UK's membership of CITES, the UK contributes towards the protection of approximately 40,900 species of endangered plants and animals from unsustainable international trade. In 2024, the UK contributed £100,000 and technical expertise to a [CITES technical workshop](#) on 'Non-detriment findings for specimens of CITES Appendix-II species taken from areas beyond national jurisdiction'. The UK led the successful adoption of proposals at CITES COP20 (November–December 2025) to provide additional protections for gulper shark species and to agree how CITES can ensure that any trade in fungi is sustainable and legal.

UK legislation that regulates the trade of certain species includes the Ivory Act 2018, the Shark Fins Act 2023 and The Eel Regulations 2009. The Ivory Act 2018 received Royal Assent on 20 December 2018 and came into force on 6 June 2022, banning dealing in elephant ivory. The Act was extended to four additional species: common hippopotamus, narwhal, sperm whale, and killer whale on 28 January 2025. The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 also prohibits the sale and exchange of certain species. Additionally, timber entering the UK must be legally harvested, and regulations prohibit the placing of illegally harvested timber and timber products on the UK market.

Target 5

	Applying the ecosystem approach An ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management is enshrined within the UK Fisheries Act 2020 as ‘an approach which ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) and does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes.’ Scotland’s fisheries management strategy adopts an ecosystems-based approach to minimise and, where possible reverse, the negative impacts of fishing on marine species, habitats and ecosystems. The design and structure of FMPs means they will seek to follow an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management to ensure that the effects of fishing activities on the marine environment are considered and minimised through appropriate management measures. In the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the UK is a key voice in applying an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, taking a scientific lead in reviewing the vulnerable marine ecosystems in the regulatory area. In 2023–2024, the UK commissioned a global stocktake on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and an appraisal of a range of global case studies to provide best practice recommendations and evaluation of how EAFM can support implementation of Target 5 globally.
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target ☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved: Summary of progress towards the target The UK has made measurable progress towards ensuring sustainable use of wild species, particularly in fisheries. Nearly three quarters of UK quota fish stocks are now harvested sustainably, and the proportion of stocks at full reproductive capacity has increased over time albeit with little to no change in the short-term. Eleven Fisheries Management Plans have been published in England, with further plans being developed across the UK and UK Overseas Territories, where successes include Marine Stewardship Council-certified fisheries and the recovery of Nassau grouper in the Cayman Islands. Enforcement against illegal trade has strengthened, with 207 convictions and over £840,000 in penalties in 2024–25, alongside hundreds of seizures of wildlife products under CITES. Evidence suggests a ban on lead ammunition will prevent an estimated 7,000 tonnes of toxic metal entering ecosystems annually, reducing risks to over one million birds. However, bycatch of marine mammals and birds remains a major challenge, and broader application of ecosystem-based management is needed to maintain prey availability for predators. Progress has been made, however there are notable gaps in terrestrial and freshwater management and systematic monitoring of wild bird harvests. Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 5:

Target 5

Ensure that the use and harvesting of wild species is sustainable, preventing overexploitation

The sustainability of fishing in UK waters appears to be improving. Of those UK quota-fish stocks (including Norway lobster) for which we have data, 73% were being harvested sustainably (fished at or below FMSY) at the most recent assessment in 2020, an increase of 52% since 1990 (Headline Indicator 5.1). Overall, a positive trend towards a greater proportion of stocks fished sustainably is evident in both the long-term (1990-2020) and short-term (2015-2020). However, 23% of stocks lack the data necessary to determine if they are being harvested sustainably, although this proportion is decreasing.

The proportion of UK quota fish stocks fished within safe biological limits in 2020 was 58%, an increase from 28% in 1990 (National Indicator 5.a). Trend data demonstrates an improving trend in the long-term (1990-2020) with little to no overall change seen in the short-term (2015-2020), and 3.5% of UK quota fish stocks have a high risk of reproductive impairment in the long-term (1990-2020), with 16% having a stock spawning biomass below that required to maintain sustainable yields.

Commercially exploited fish and shellfish continue to make progress toward achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) across UK waters, with [the latest assessment](#) for the period 2016–2021 showing that 42% of marine quota fish stocks and 11% of non-quota shellfish stocks have achieved GES, an increase of 9% and 6% respectively since the last assessment for 2012–2015. In England, the percentage of total allowable catches that have maximum sustainable yield advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea has increased from 47% in 2021 to 52% in 2024. Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) will be a key tool in supporting this progress in line with the ecosystem objective. However, broader application of ecosystem-based fisheries management is needed to maintain prey availability for marine predators such as seabirds.

To date, England has published 11 of 43 FMPs, with a further four due to be published before the end of 2026. Published plans include the King Scallop and Bass FMPs produced jointly by England and Wales in 2023. The Scottish Government is leading on the development of 21 joint UK FMPs, covering some of our most valuable northern stocks of finfish species, to be published by the end of 2026. Northern Ireland is leading the preparation of two joint FMPs covering pelagic and demersal species in the Irish Sea, with publication planned for 2026. Northern Ireland and Wales are developing several other plans covering only their waters, over a longer timescale.

In 2023 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Natural England carried out a review of the protection afforded to terrestrial wild bird species to ensure that shooting is sustainable and does not undermine their recovery. The review concluded that we should provide greater protection for a small number of these species by removing three from the Schedule entirely and extending the close seasons for two more. Defra will consult on making these changes in due course.

In Scotland, the [Natural Environment \(Scotland\) bill](#), which was passed by the Scottish Parliament in January 2026, seeks to reflect public interest in deer management and take into account the values and needs of society as a whole. It aims to ensure that deer management policy takes account of the cumulative impact of deer across Scotland and the impact that the populations may have on, for example, biodiversity and carbon emissions (both regionally and nationally).

Target 5

The UK has implemented key international instruments to support tackling Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing wherever it occurs, particularly through the Port State Measures Agreement, to prevent illegally caught fish being consumed in the UK. The UK operates a catch documentation scheme whereby information regarding the species, weights and details of the catching vessel is required for import into the UK.

In the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies:

- The Isle of Man has published a Long-term Management Plan for King Scallop and there has been an improvement in the sustainability rating for Manx King Scallop fishery ([now rated 3](#)), while other species ratings have been maintained. The Isle of Man fishery for the Queen Scallop has the best rating by the Marine Conservation Society (MSC) of any rated fishery for this species in the British Isles.
- As a result of concerted evidence-based conservation, the nassau grouper spawning aggregation in the Cayman Islands has increased over time and is currently [the largest identified Nassau grouper aggregation in the world](#).
- The Falkland Islands extensively monitors fish stocks to determine stock status and its Toothfish fishery is MSC certified.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that Gibraltar's fish stocks are recovering.

Ensure that the use and harvesting of wild species is sustainable, minimising impacts on non-target species and ecosystems

The current available evidence indicates that challenges remain in reducing marine mammal bycatch. A [2022 assessment](#) by OSPAR concluded that bycatch is a significant pressure affecting marine mammal populations in the North East Atlantic, including in the Greater North Sea and Celtic Seas. Bycatch estimates for harbour porpoise and common dolphin exceeded thresholds, though those for grey seal did not (National Indicator 5.b).

Bycatch of marine birds in fishing gear remains an ongoing problem in the North East Atlantic, affecting several species, with the OSPAR Quality Status Report 2023 identifying bycatch as a continuing pressure facing marine birds. Preliminary estimates from the [Bycatch Monitoring Programme](#) indicate that bycatch from UK vessels in longline, gillnet and midwater trawl fisheries may account for annual mortalities in the order of a few thousand birds, of several species, with fulmar and cormorant being the most likely to experience population-level impacts. However, the estimates have high uncertainty, in part because sample sizes are small and are possibly unrepresentative of the fleet. While annual bycatch of guillemot was estimated at between 1,800 and 3,300 individuals, mainly in static net fisheries, this is thought to have relatively little population-level impact. Updated and improved estimates from the Scottish longline fishery indicated that between 1,000 and 2,000 Fulmars were bycaught annually over the past two decades, lower than previous estimates of around 4,500 annually, which were based on a smaller, less representative dataset. The population impact of this updated estimate has not been investigated.

The UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) assessment of physical disturbance on benthic habitats from fisheries using mobile bottom-contacting gears indicates that most broad scale habitats in the Greater North Sea sub-region did not achieve GES across all assessment units (National Indicator 5.c). In contrast, over 68% of broad scale habitats in the Celtic Seas sub-region met GES. For OSPAR Threatened and/or Declining (T&D) habitats, between 43% and 60% achieved GES. However, in both the Northern and Southern Celtic Seas, at least half of the T&D habitats failed to reach GES. This resulted in the indicator not meeting GES overall for the Celtic Seas.

Target 5

Ensure that the use and harvesting of wild species is safe, reducing the risk of pathogen spillover

Evidence suggests that the recently announced ban on the use of lead shot will prevent the release of an estimated 7,000 tonnes of the toxic metal into fields, forests and wetlands each year. This ban will protect wildlife and non-target species, as up to 100,000 wildfowl die from lead poisoning annually, with birds often confusing the scattered shot for grit and consuming it. Evidence from the Health and Safety Executive shows lead poses a risk to at least one million birds over the coming decades if usage continues at its current rate, while around 40,000 birds of prey such as red kites and white-tailed eagles are at risk from ingesting lead through carrion.

The UK Government has taken action to reduce the risk of disease spread from released game birds and Mallards to wild birds, including introducing biosecurity measures across Great Britain, and regulating releases in and around protected areas.

Ensure that the trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal

In 2024–2025, the National Wildlife Crime Unit conducted 892 investigative support jobs, which resulted in 207 convictions, total financial penalties of over £840,000 and custodial sentences totalling 48 years. As a result of Operational Tantallon, two offenders pled guilty at court in December 2024 and received sentences of unpaid work. The operation also strengthened partnership work with overseas counterparts including Europol, as reflected in the number of Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) messages sent from the UK to Europol regarding wildlife crime rising from 12 in 2022 to 57 in 2023. In October 2023, as part of Operation Thunder, Border Force officers made 145 seizures containing thousands of wildlife products for which trade is banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), including clothes and accessories made from snakeskin and turtle shell, ivory products, as well as consumer health products containing cactus, orchid, crocodile blood and caviar. The team also found 53 live birds across three different seizures. As part of Operation Thunder in 2024, the UK Border Force made 217 CITES seizures, including live plants, a range of beauty products containing caviar and cactus extracts, a quantity of bear bile, and clothes and accessories containing animal skins.

Applying the ecosystem approach

The UKMS applies an ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities. In doing so, the Strategy seeks to keep the collective pressure of human activities within levels compatible with the achievement of GES. The design and structure of FMPs means they incorporate an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management to ensure that the effects of fishing activities on the marine environment are considered and minimised through appropriate management measures.

Target 5

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation:

Summary of key challenges

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is hard to detect and therefore challenging to tackle. The difficulties around the monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing vessels can hinder our ability to generate the necessary data to identify all cases of IUU fishing. Similarly, fisheries bycatch is also difficult to monitor. Remote electronic monitoring (REM) is increasingly being used, both to monitor bycatch and for wider fisheries monitoring and will significantly increase capability. The Joint Fisheries Statement 2022 commits the fisheries policy authorities to consider their approach to fisheries monitoring, including the use of technologies such as vessel monitoring systems and REM. In some parts of the UK, REM is in place, and UK authorities are also exploring tailored REM solutions guided by Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) development.

Furthermore, a lack of data presents a challenge to the sustainable management of fisheries. FMPs require up-to-date science and evidence to assess the status of data-deficient stocks for policy development and implementation, which can be resource intensive. In Wales, for scallop and bass FMP implementation, evidence plans have been produced and prioritised for delivery within existing budgets and staff capacity. However, the delivery of the ambitious suite of 43 FMPs is being progressed and prioritised in line with statutory timelines, with the key aim of improving the management of fisheries across UK waters. The plans will identify science and evidence needs and build on any deficits over time.

There is also [a lack of comprehensive data](#) on the harvesting of waterbirds to ensure sustainable levels are reached and maintained. Several waterbird species that can be hunted legally in the UK are listed in the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), to which the UK is a Contracting Party. As such, the UK has an obligation to ensure that any use of these species is sustainable. Currently, those shooting waterbirds, voluntarily record some data on waterbirds harvested, but there is no systematic, mandatory, or enforceable system to collect this information. New data collection methods or improvements to the data will require cooperation with the shooting community.

In the Isle of Man, any consideration of developing new fisheries to reduce reliance and pressure on species with established fisheries has been found to present numerous challenges, including the need for initial investment, skills training, avoidance of competition with existing fisheries, and market development. Stakeholder input, together with resources and management support provided by the Government, have been used to help overcome these issues.

Wider pressures on wild species, such as increasing human population and increased demand, as well as climate change, make harvesting species sustainably more difficult. For example, in the Cayman Islands, the increased frequency and severity of coral bleaching and coral disease outbreaks and the decline of coral reef structure and integrity impacts marine species harvested by humans ([Cayman Islands Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022](#)).

Target 5

4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁴

Headline Indicator 5.1: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits)

Table 1: Assessment of change in the percentage of stocks harvested sustainably in the UK.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested sustainably in the UK](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Percentage of fish stocks harvested sustainably	Long term	1990 to 2020	Improving
Percentage of fish stocks harvested sustainably	Short term	2015 to 2020	Improving

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator shows the percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest harvested sustainably, in or below acceptable mortality range (F_{MSY} range).

The UK biodiversity indicator for sustainable fisheries derives from the [UK Marine Strategy Good Environmental Status assessment for commercially exploited fish and shellfish D3](#) categorising the sustainability of stocks against maximum sustainable yield (MSY) thresholds and uses quota-fish stock assessments data.

The data for this indicator can be downloaded from [JNCC's Resource Hub](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested sustainably in the UK](#)

Table 1:

The long-term and short-term assessments have been made by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) by assessing change in the fitted LOESS smoothed trend for each measure. The assessments are

⁴ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

Target 5

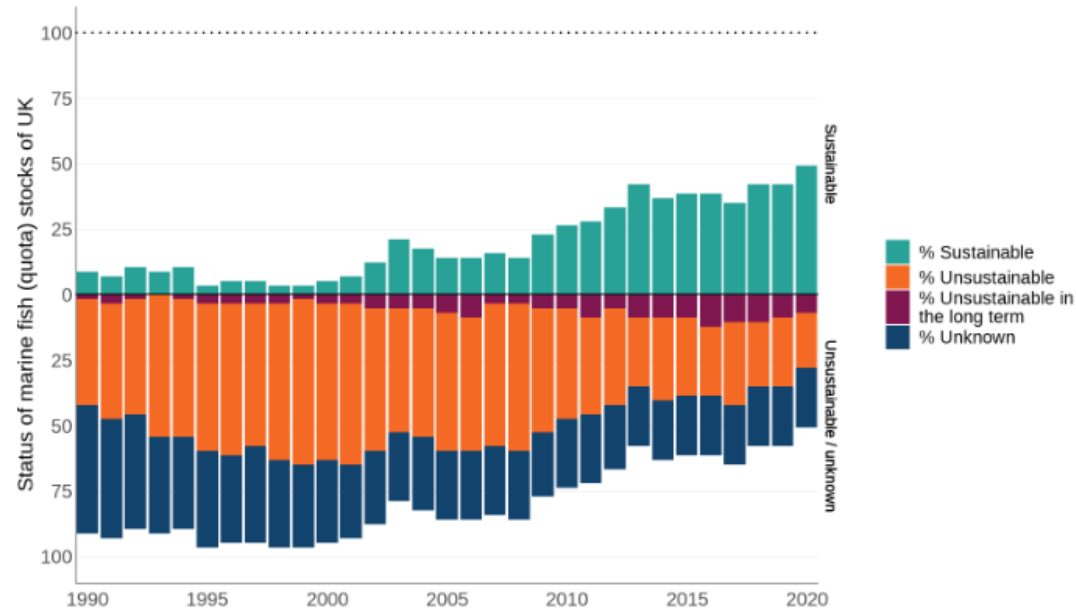


Figure 1. Percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest harvested sustainably, 1990 to 2020.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested sustainably in the UK](#)

made by applying a 3% rule of thumb to each measure separately. The arithmetic mean of the first three years of the data series is compared with the last point to determine the assessment for the long-term trend, and an arithmetic mean of the year five years back in the time series and the year either side calculated to compare with the last point to assess the short-term trend. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1:

The percentage of fish stocks harvested sustainably relates to the percentage of stocks relative to the level capable of producing Maximum Sustainable Yield (FMSY). Increasing the proportion of stocks fished at or below the fishing mortality target FMSY increases the sustainability of the fishery. This UK biodiversity indicator for sustainable fisheries considers quota fish stocks from a group of 20 species in 57 stocks for which there are estimates available for fishing mortality, together with MSY reference points for fishing mortality (FMSY) that allow the sustainability of the stocks to be evaluated.

5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁵

5.b Number of countries with legal instruments or other policy frameworks for regulating trade in wild species

Comments (optional): _____

⁵ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

Target 5

5.1 Does your country have legal instruments or other policy frameworks to regulate trade in wild species? (Select all that apply) Yes: (a) For terrestrial species (b) For freshwater species (c) For marine species (d) For international trade													
6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 5.a: Percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest with biomass at levels which maintain full reproductive capacity (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits) Table 1: Assessment of change in the percentage of stocks harvested sustainably and at full reproductive capacity in the UK. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Measure</th> <th>Assessment</th> <th>Time period</th> <th>Result</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Biomass of stocks at full reproductive capacity</td> <td>Long term</td> <td>1990 to 2020</td> <td>Improving</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Biomass of stocks at full reproductive capacity</td> <td>Short term</td> <td>2015 to 2020</td> <td>Little or no overall change</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result	Biomass of stocks at full reproductive capacity	Long term	1990 to 2020	Improving	Biomass of stocks at full reproductive capacity	Short term	2015 to 2020	Little or no overall change	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator shows the percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest with biomass at levels which maintain full reproductive capacity. The UK biodiversity indicator for sustainable fisheries derives from the UK Marine Strategy Good Environmental Status assessment for commercially exploited fish and shellfish D3 categorising the sustainability of stocks against maximum sustainable yield (MSY) thresholds and uses quota-fish stock assessments data. The data for this indicator can be downloaded from here: JNCC's Resource Hub. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits
Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result										
Biomass of stocks at full reproductive capacity	Long term	1990 to 2020	Improving										
Biomass of stocks at full reproductive capacity	Short term	2015 to 2020	Little or no overall change										

Target 5

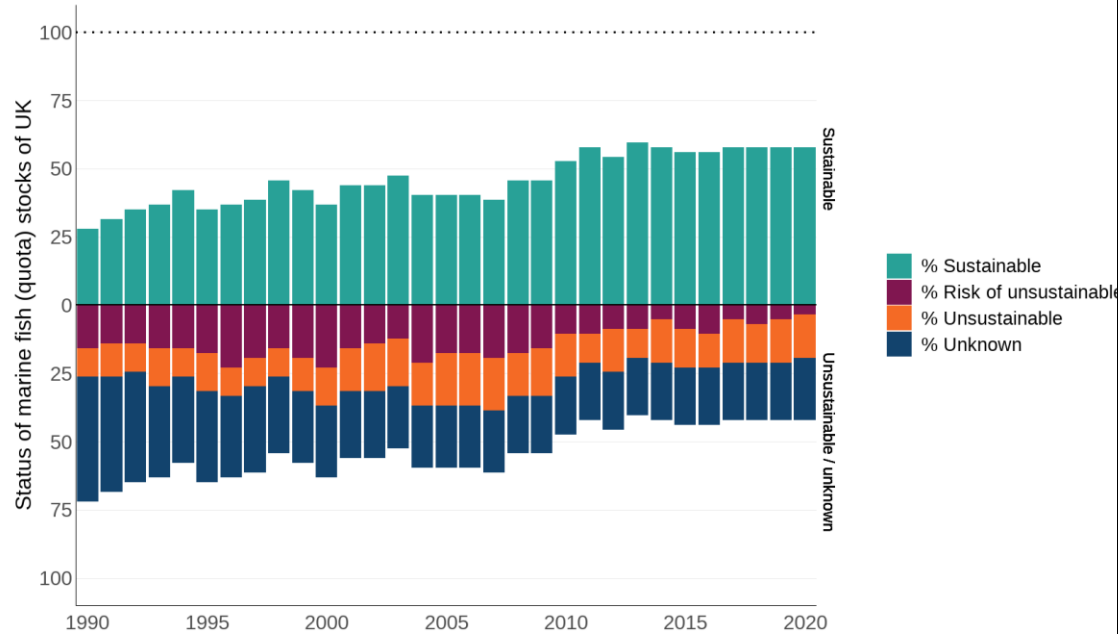


Figure 1: Percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest with biomass at levels which maintain full reproductive capacity, 1990 to 2020.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits](#)

Table 1:

The long-term and short-term assessments have been made by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) by assessing change in the fitted LOESS smoothed trend for each measure. The assessments are made by applying a 3% rule of thumb to each measure separately. The arithmetic mean of the first three years of the data series is compared with the last point to determine the assessment for the long-term trend, and an arithmetic mean of the year five years back in the time series and the year either side calculated to compare with the last point to assess the short-term trend. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1:

The percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest with biomass at levels which maintain full reproductive capacity refers to trends in the spawning stock biomass of stocks of UK interest with respect to safe biological limits. Safe biological limits are where the biomass is above the level capable of producing Maximum Sustainable Yield ($MSY B_{trigger}$). Increasing the proportion of stocks with spawning stock biomass (SSB) at or above $MSY B_{trigger}$ increases the sustainability of the fishery. This UK biodiversity indicator for sustainable fisheries considers quota fish stocks from a group of 20 species in 57 stocks for which there are estimates available for spawning stock biomass (SSB), together with SSB ($MSY B_{trigger}$) that allow the sustainability of the stocks to be evaluated.

Target 5

	National Indicator 5.b: OSPAR Marine Mammal Bycatch (M6) Source: OSPAR Assessment Portal	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This OSPAR indicator assessment has been further developed since the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment 2017 which assessed harbour porpoise, to now include common dolphin and grey seal. A candidate indicator has also been piloted, extending the assessment into Region I for harbour porpoise and grey seal. Source: OSPAR Assessment Portal
	National Indicator 5.c: Extent of Physical Disturbance to Benthic Habitats: Fisheries with mobile bottom-contacting gears Source: UK Marine Online Assessment Tool	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This analysis used outputs from the most recent assessment of the OSPAR Indicator “Extent of Physical Disturbance to Benthic Habitats: Fisheries with mobile bottom-contacting gears” (BH3a) to assess Good Environmental Status (GES) for reporting against Part 1 of the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) in 2024. Source: UK Marine Online Assessment Tool

Target 5

7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

Isle of Man King Scallop fishery

The Isle of Man King Scallop fishery, targeting *Pecten maximus*, is the primary and most economically important fishery within the island's territorial waters. It has been managed through a collaborative approach involving the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA), the Isle of Man Scallop Management Board and Bangor University. The fishery is economically significant – valued at around £3 million per annum – and has undergone substantial reform in recent years to ensure its long-term sustainability and profitability.

Long-Term Management Plan

One of the most significant initiatives, and the culmination of over a decade of progress, has been the development of the Isle of Man King Scallop Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP), implemented in June 2022. The LTMP provides a strategic framework for sustainable scallop fishing and outlines biological, ecological, and socio-economic objectives, emphasizing the use of strong supporting scientific data, ecosystem-based management, the precautionary principle and adaptive governance.

Key features include:

- Zonal Management: the fishery is divided into 0–3 nautical mile (nm) and 3–12 nm zones, with stricter controls in the inner zone.
- Closed Area Management: based on annual survey results, restricted or closed area management is applied to protect larval supply and high-density areas of recruits and post-recruits.
- Effort Control: measures include vessel licensing, gear restrictions such as dredge width and tooth spacing, and curfews.
- Output Control: this includes restricting total allowable catch (TAC), daily catch limits and applying a minimum landing size (110 mm).
- Monitoring and Data Collection: mandatory vessel monitoring systems regardless of vessel size, daily catch returns, and scientific surveys underpinning evidence-based decision-making.
- Marine Nature Reserves: integrating with conservation areas to protect habitats and biodiversity.

A full summary of Isle of Man King Scallop management measures can be found here: [IOM 2024 King Scallop Stock Survey Report](#)

Capacity reduction programme

Linked to LTMP implementation, and to address overcapacity and improve stock sustainability, DEFA introduced a capacity reduction programme in 2022. This required vessels to demonstrate a minimum track record of landings to retain access rights and limited the number of vessels eligible for Specific Fishery Authorisations (species-specific licences, for example, for scallops).

Target 5

Grandfather Rights policy

Also linked to LTMP implementation, some vessels retained historic access to the fishery under "Grandfather Rights", despite not meeting current licensing criteria. In 2022, DEFA announced the termination of these rights, effective before the 2024/2025 season. This action ensured broadly equivalent fishing capacity for participants in the fishery and reinforced the principle that access should be based on recent, demonstrable participation in the fishery.

Scientific survey reports (2021–2024)

Annual stock surveys coordinated by Bangor University provide critical insights into scallop population dynamics. Two main surveys are conducted. The R.V. Prince Madog Survey (Bangor University), conducted since 1992, is a long-term, fixed-site survey assessing broad trends. The Industry Survey, conducted since 2019, is a fine-scale, stratified survey using commercial vessels with data compatible with, and augmenting, the main Bangor survey.

Recent annual survey findings and trends and fishery summary

2021 findings:

- Both recruit (< 95 mm) and post-recruit (> 95 mm) indices showed recovery after declines in previous years.
- No survey was conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19, affecting trend continuity and resulting in an uncertain TAC (provisionally agreed at 2,049 tonnes).
- Management advice emphasized precautionary approaches, including in-season monitoring and spatial monitoring/management.
- 54 vessels participated in the 2021/2022 fishery, with 73% of the TAC fished.

2022 findings:

- Overall recruit indices increased slightly, although post-recruit indices declined slightly.
- TAC was calculated using International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Category 3 methods and was adopted as unchanged from 2021/2022 (i.e. 2,049 tonnes).
- Recommendations included continued in-season reviews and adaptive spatial closures.
- 48 vessels participated in the 2022/2023 fishery, with 87% of the TAC fished.

2023 findings:

- Positive trends in both recruit and post-recruit indices.
- TAC was calculated using ICES Category 3 methods and allowed for an increase of 20% on actual 2022/2023 landings (i.e. a TAC of 2,179 tonnes).

Target 5

- Landings per unit effort (LPUE) were among the highest in recent years.
- The fishery showed signs of recovery, attributed to effective management and industry cooperation.
- 48 vessels participated in the 2023/2024 fishery, with 90% of the TAC fished.

2024 findings:

- Continued improvement in stock indicators.
- TAC was calculated using ICES Category 3 methods and allowed for an increase of 20% on actual 2023/2024 landings (i.e. a TAC of 2,352 tonnes).
- The fishery maintained a cautious but optimistic outlook based on improving trends, with adaptive management based on real-time data.
- 44 vessels participated in the 2024/2025 fishery, with 97.3% of the TAC fished.

Conclusions

The Isle of Man King Scallop fishery has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, guided by science, stakeholder collaboration, and robust policy frameworks. The LTMP, fleet/capacity reduction, and removal of legacy access rights have collectively strengthened the fishery's sustainability. Scientific surveys between 2021 and 2024 indicate a generally positive trajectory in stock health, validating the island's adaptive and precautionary management approach. The fishery continues to be managed using a collaborative, responsive approach including weekly Scallop Management Board assessments of LPUE and fishing intensity for each ground, which helps to protect stock and limit seabed damage. Overall, in recent years, the fishery has shown improved catch rates for effort spent, increased daily catch limits and TAC based on improving stock assessments, and a greater capacity to balance economic and biological considerations and needs of fishers.

Sources and further information

[IOM Long Term Management Plan for King Scallop](#)

[IOM LTMP 2022 Capacity Reduction Programme](#)

[IOM LTMP 2022 Grandfather Rights \(Offshore Vessels\) Termination](#)

[IOM 2021 King Scallop Stock Survey Report](#)

[IOM 2022 King Scallop Stock Survey Report](#)

[IOM 2023 King Scallop Stock Survey Report](#)

[IOM 2024 King Scallop Stock Survey Report](#)

Target 5

Cayman Islands – Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in Grand Cayman

Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) is a new highly aggressive and deadly coral disease that appeared on Florida's reefs in 2014 and has now spread to several countries in the Caribbean. It was first identified in the Cayman Islands in June 2020. Researchers have been unable to determine the cause and method of transmission. Evidence suggests that it is a bacterial pathogen that is transmitted by touch and water circulation. However, new findings suggest a viral pathogen may be disrupting the coral-zooxanthellae symbiosis. There is presently no known cure for this disease.

The arrival of SCTLD in the Cayman Islands presented a critical threat to the nation's vibrant marine ecosystems, having the potential to severely impact the Islands' dive tourism product and marine ecosystem health. This case study examines the disease's rapid spread across Grand Cayman and the swift, coordinated response by the Cayman Islands Department of Environment (DoE), as well as the local diving and scientific communities.

In June 2020, SCTLD was first detected in Grand Cayman at Penny's Arch, a dive site off Rum Point in North Side, Grand Cayman. The disease, which is known for its rapid progression and wide host range (affecting over 20 species of stony corals), began to spread aggressively. The DoE confirmed that the disease spread in both directions from the initial site, moving along the coast of Grand Cayman.

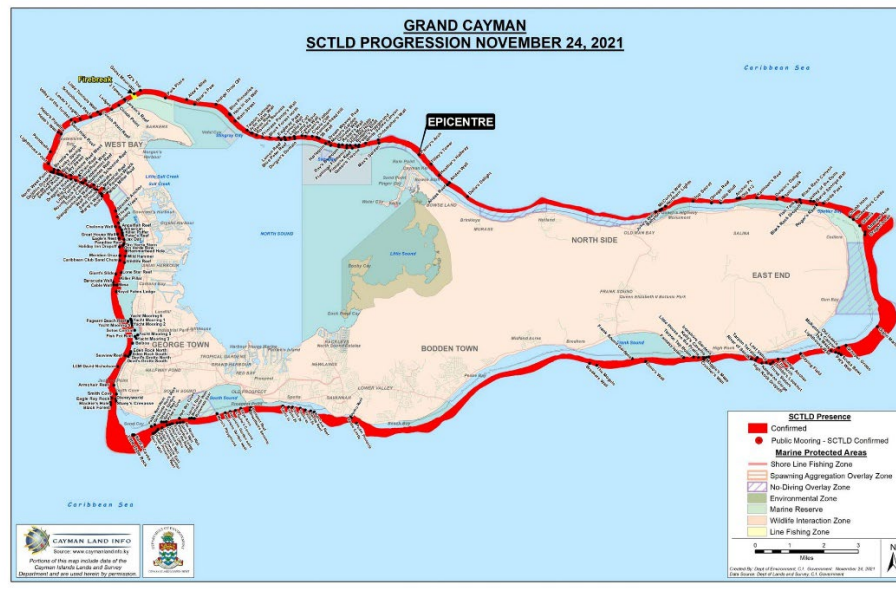


Figure: SCTLD progression on Grand Cayman (November 24, 2021). Map source <https://doe.ky/marine/sctld/>, © Department of Environment, Cayman Islands Government.

Target 5

The progression was relentless. Within a year and a half, the disease had encircled the entire island. By December 2021, the DoE confirmed that even the previously unaffected areas, including the popular dive and tourism sites along Seven Mile Beach and Spotts, had been impacted. This rapid and complete spread across the entire Grand Cayman coast highlighted the highly infectious nature of SCTLD and the urgency of the situation.

Recognising the severity of the threat, the DoE, in partnership with the local watersports and diving community, launched a multi-faceted response in order to combat the disease. The initial steps were focused on public awareness and collaboration, hosting multiple meetings with local stakeholders. In October 2020, just a few months after the first sighting, the DoE held meetings with watersports and dive operators to inform the industry about the disease and its symptoms (which include rapid loss of coral tissue, leaving behind a bare white skeleton) and to enlist their help in monitoring and reporting.

A key part of the strategy was to request that dive operators avoid affected sites, which helps to slow the potential for human-assisted spread of the disease through dive equipment. The DoE also established clear channels for reporting new sightings, including a dedicated email address, an online reporting tool, and an emergency hotline.

The response team implemented a managed "firebreak" strategy, a measure to contain the disease's spread, but the disease's ferocity eventually overwhelmed these efforts. The DoE continued to hold update meetings with the diving industry to ensure everyone was aware of the disease's progression. Furthermore, they continue to recommend that all divers and snorkelers follow National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration disinfecting protocols to minimise the risk of spreading the disease.

SCTLD in Grand Cayman provides a powerful example of a public-private conservation effort in the face of an existential threat. While the disease's rapid spread was devastating, the proactive and collaborative response by the DoE and the local community demonstrated a strong commitment to marine conservation. The swift communication, public engagement, and implementation of monitoring and reporting systems are critical components of any successful response to an environmental crisis. The ongoing efforts to manage and mitigate the impact of SCTLD will be vital for the long-term survival of Grand Cayman's coral reefs.

Useful Links:

<https://doe.ky/marine/sctld/>

<https://www.caymancompass.com/2021/12/21/stony-coral-disease-spreads-to-encompass-entire-grand-cayman-coast/>

8. **Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 6

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 6

Reduce the introduction of invasive alien species by 50% and minimise their impact

The UK will eliminate, minimise, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50% by 2030, and eradicating or controlling invasive alien species, especially in priority sites, such as islands.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target.

Summary of actions taken

The UK has taken significant steps to reduce the spread and minimise the impacts of invasive non-native species (INNS)⁶ within the UK and in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs). In England, Scotland and Wales, there has been joint effort through the Great Britain (GB) Non-Native Species Secretariat and the GB Non-Native Species Inspectorate. Work in GB has been coordinated under the GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy. In Northern Ireland, there remains coordination with the Republic of Ireland through the Windsor Framework (i.e. alignment with EU Directives) to work jointly to reduce the spread and impact of invasive species. Through EU Regulation 1143/2014, Northern Ireland has introduced management measures for 11 widely spread species in Northern Ireland that appear on the EU list of INNS.

In the UKOTs and CDs, most of which are islands with high numbers of threatened endemic species, concerted efforts have been made to reduce the threat posed by invasive species. This includes action in some territories, such as the Falkland Islands and the Cayman Islands, to eradicate INNS to protect endemic species. For example, the Falkland Islands has undertaken extensive eradication of introduced carnivores - specifically cats, rats, and mice - which had impacted numbers of endemic and native birds on the island.

Regarding the main actions under Target 6:

⁶ [Invasive Non-native Species \(INNS\)](#) is used throughout this report because it is also used widely across the UK in various strategies and measures. INNS is the equivalent of 'invasive alien species' as used in Target 6, and of 'non-indigenous species' as used in the UK Marine Strategy. A 'non-native species' refers to a species intentionally or unintentionally introduced outside its native range by human actions. An 'invasive non-native species' (INNS) is any non-native animal or plant that can spread, causing damage to the environment, the economy, our health, or the way we live.

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Identify and manage pathways of the introduction of alien species

The UK acceded to the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) in 2022 and implemented its requirements [through the Merchant Shipping \(Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments\) Regulations 2022](#), helping to reduce the spread of invasive species. The BWMC is considered a Pathway Action Plan (PAP) for the priority pathway it seeks to address.

Work on pathways has been coordinated across Great Britain (GB) under the GB Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) Strategy. A comprehensive analysis of pathways of introduction and spread, carried out in 2019, identified 36 pathways of introduction, with seven considered to be key priorities for initial PAPs. These priority pathways are: hull fouling, horticulture escapes, contaminants of ornamental plants, ballast water, stowaways on fishing equipment, zoo or botanic garden escapes, and pet escapes. GB administrations, government agencies and key delivery partners have subsequently worked to develop PAPs covering these seven key pathways. In GB, drafts of five PAPs - covering boating, recreational angling, horticulture, zoos and pets - were issued for consultation in June 2025 to seek views and further input ahead of their final publication. These PAPs lay out best-practice guidance with key actions for government administrations, government agencies, businesses, non-governmental organisations, recreational clubs and individuals to help guide resources and behaviour in the right direction. Actions include raising awareness, for example by displaying signage and providing information to user groups; implementing and improving biosecurity measures, for example by providing facilities to wash down equipment after water sports; and promoting best practice amongst industry and user groups. Following the consultation, a GB-wide government response was published in December 2025. Working groups for each PAP are progressing the actions relevant to that pathway.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has brought forward a rapid response contingency plan for Asian hornet and is currently developing PAPs for six priority pathways to combat the introduction and spread of INNS.

Collaboration between Jersey and Guernsey has led to the development of an INNS horizon scanning and risk assessment process for both marine and terrestrial species. Factsheets are being produced for use as public engagement, education and awareness tools. Biannual monitoring for marine INNS has also been implemented, and conversations with the Ports of Jersey regarding INNS surveillance and training of staff and relevant stakeholders have begun.

In 2023, three large scale risk assessments were undertaken jointly by the Governments of Jersey and Guernsey in a 'Biosecure Bailiwick' approach, which identified and ranked:

- (1) 186 invasive species that are currently established in the terrestrial and freshwater environments of Jersey
- (2) 143 invasive species that are currently established in the marine environment of Jersey
- (3) 118 high risk species "horizon scanned" to be capable of becoming established in Jersey in the near future.

The States of Guernsey have adopted an INNS action plan that prioritises the prevention of introduction and establishment of INNS. Marine pathways have been identified as a particular priority due to the increased difficulty in management of INNS in the marine environment.

Gibraltar has adopted a multi-faceted approach to monitoring and controlling INNS across both the terrestrial and marine environments. A biosecurity gap analysis in 2017 identified weaknesses – no border controls or dedicated biosecurity facilities – leading to strengthened surveillance and public

Target 6

awareness. A pathway analysis in 2018 was followed by horizon-scanning workshops in 2019 and 2023 that identified dozens of high-risk species (over 50 marine and 230 terrestrial), assessed their invasion likelihood and potential impacts, and drafted action plans for pathways like ballast water, hull fouling, and goods movement. Although the BWMC has not yet been officially extended to Gibraltar, officials are progressing with this extension. In practice, [Gibraltar has proactively aligned its marine policy and operational guidance](#) with the Convention's standards.

Prevent the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species

Legislation and guidance is in place across the UK to reduce the risk of introductions of INNS. In England and Wales, the [Invasive Alien Species \(Enforcement and Permitting\) Order 2019](#) aims to prevent and minimise the impact of the introduction and spread of a restricted list of high priority species. The Scottish Government introduced a code of practice on Non-Native Species in 2012, and relevant bodies can set out measures to control or eradicate INNS through voluntary Species Control Agreements and mandatory Species Control Orders.

Through the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS), the UK is committed to targets relating to minimising the number of newly introduced marine INNS. Current management measures focus on the prevention of INNS introductions, including through pathway management and biosecurity, via mechanisms such as biosecurity campaigns, toolkits and plans, as well as codes of practice and relevant legislations.

Measures to remove invasive mammals on important island marine bird colonies are successfully contributing to the achievement of Good Environmental Status for the UKMS indicator for presence of non-native mammals on seabird islands across the UK. This is largely due to the work of the Biosecurity for LIFE project and subsequent regional AfterLIFE plans across Scotland, England and Wales. These regional legacy initiatives are overseen by the Seabird Island Biosecurity Programme, chaired by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Efforts are underway in GB to prevent introductions and establishments of INNS through the implementation of the GB INNS Strategy. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 has set an interim target in England to reduce the rate of establishment of INNS by at least 50% by December 2030, compared to 2000 levels. Interim targets have been put in place to keep us on track to meet the statutory long-term targets for England in the Environment Act 2021, however the INNS interim target also directly supports the delivery of Target 6.

Horizon scanning takes place every six years (most recently completed in 2025) to create a list of species that require increased vigilance. These species will be given greater scrutiny by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which could lead to actions such as listing, prioritisation for eradication or other preventative measures.

Defra funds the GB Non-native Species Information Portal (GB-NNSIP), a database and reporting tool that provides access to distribution data for over 3,000 non-native species in GB, along with additional information such as their place of origin, date of introduction and methods of introduction. The Portal supports a range of critical activities in GB, including horizon scanning; early detection; monitoring of incursions; surveillance and public engagement. The GB-NNSIP also provides an alert system to detect high priority INNS, which then triggers the implementation of contingency plans designed to rapidly eradicate INNS where feasible. The establishment of the GB-NNSIP has enabled the development of an alert system for Asian (Yellow Legged) Hornet, including the Asian Hornet Watch app. This allows the public to quickly and easily report sightings to aid rapid eradication, which has been successful every year since it was initiated.

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Across Great Britain, public awareness raising has been important to support measures to prevent the introduction and establishment of INNS. Nationwide campaigns such as Check-Clean Dry and Be Plant Wise have been promoted, as well as increasing the capacity of officers to identify and control the Asian Hornet.

In Scotland, a key aim is to raise public awareness of the impacts of INNS and embed INNS biosecurity practice across industries and recreational activities linked to the most important pathways of introduction and spread. Changes in awareness are measured among Partners including NatureScot, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

As part of the GB INNS Strategy, Wales has been working to reduce the number of establishments of INNS by at least 50% by 2030, compared to levels seen in 2000. The Welsh Government is contributing funding to the GB Non-Native Species Inspectorate to undertake enforcement and awareness raising activities in Wales. The Welsh Plant Health Surveillance Network is a ground-breaking Welsh Government-funded project designed to monitor native and invasive pests and pathogens that can pose a threat to the health of plants and trees across Wales. Insect and spore traps installed at strategic woodland sites will allow recording of presence and/or abundance of insects and fungal spores. The Sentinel Site network comprises 22 parks and gardens across Wales, located in each local authority region. They are important monitoring sites acting as an early warning system for plant pests and diseases, forming a surveillance network.

In the marine environment, Wales is developing a series of action plans for its marine protected area network to tackle the introduction and spread of marine INNS. There will be species action plans, PAPs, site level biosecurity actions plans and an overarching national action plan. More widely, under the Welsh National Marine Plan, proposals must demonstrate how they avoid or minimise the risk of introducing and spreading INNS and, where necessary, outline biosafety measures. Through the Biosecurity for LIFE project, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) have introduced 'Jinx' the biosecurity dog, which is based on Ramsey Island and is responsible for INNS detection on the key seabird islands off Wales.

Northern Ireland is developing species action plans, PAPs and biosecurity protocols for aquaculture movements to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of INNS. On Rathlin Island, in Northern Ireland the LIFERaft project, launched in 2021, aims to eradicate invasive non-native rats and ferrets, which will protect the nationally important assemblage of seabirds in the Special Protection Area and enable wider species recovery. Early signs of success include recent confirmation of breeding Manx Shearwaters, with several pairs successfully raising a chick in 2025. This is the first record of breeding in decades.

On the Isle of Man, there have been several efforts to increase awareness of INNS to support identification and rapid reaction.

In the Bailiwick of Jersey, a biosecurity framework is in place detailing the main components of a successful biosecurity strategy to limit and control the existing and potential impacts of INNS. Approximately 25 species on the Bailiwick of Jersey are under some form of long-term management, and systems are in place to evaluate reports of potentially invasive species, assess their likely impacts, evaluate the feasibility of control, and react appropriately. The invasive species team on the Bailiwick of Jersey has begun implementing the findings of its large-scale risk assessment and is developing species contingency plans for 118 high-risk species. A key element of INNS control in the Bailiwick of Jersey is raising public awareness through participation in the GB Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS) Invasive Species Week, monthly publication of information on invasive species in the local press, and the production of public facing factsheets. A Top Ten Red Alert List has also been developed to raise awareness of INNS with the general public and to encourage reporting.

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Guernsey has produced a Marine Biosecurity Plan, which makes recommendations on the policy, legislation and infrastructure requirements to manage marine pathways, such as commercial shipping, recreational boating, aquaculture and fisheries. A Marine Biosecurity Guidance document has also been published, which highlights best practice for marine related industries and marine users to help reduce the introduction and onward spread of marine INNS.

New techniques for the detection of INNS have been piloted in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs). Highly trained dogs, working with their handlers, can detect a variety of invasive species – including plants, invertebrates and rodents – by scent, via traces such as seeds, droppings and hairs. These dogs have been successfully used to detect traces of rodents on vessels and cargo bound for South Georgia.

Darwin Plus is funding a £2.5 million project (ref. DPSTR001), led by RSPB, to strengthen at-border biosecurity across the Caribbean UKOTs over four years. This will be achieved by enhancing biosecurity legislation, increasing effective inter-agency working, improving at-border biosecurity infrastructure and facilities and increasing in-territory agency capacity, thereby improving regional capacity to prevent and respond to INNS incursions.

The Cayman Islands has recently passed the National Conservation (Alien Species) Regulations 2022, marking a key step by the government in strengthening efforts to manage invasive species. These regulations introduce a prohibited species list, outline the distinctions between domestic and feral animals, and further define the procedures and allowable actions to control feral animals and other alien species to reduce the threat to our native species.

Eradicate or control invasive alien species, especially on priority sites, such as islands

In September 2025, the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) led an exercise to determine which species could be prioritised for eradication in GB. This exercise, supported by several scientific and technical experts, reviewed the potential to eradicate established species as well as the top 50 horizon scanning species. This has led to the development of a prioritised list by the GB NNSS.

England, Scotland and Wales have begun implementing INNS management measures guided by the [GB INNS Strategy](#). In England, work has been undertaken by twelve Local Action Groups to reduce the risks and impacts associated with INNS in specific areas. Scotland has begun implementing the Scottish Plan for INNS Surveillance, Prevention and Control, which includes securing wider support measures to ensure long term effective INNS removal at scale. The Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) project works with government, agencies and voluntary organisations to find innovative methods for controlling INNS, following a source to sea strategy. In 2023, the WaREN project published its Invasive Species Toolkit, which aims to support volunteer action to tackle invasive species in Wales. The toolkit includes necessary resources such as information on best practice management, project planning, biosecurity, and awareness raising.

England and Wales are funding research to investigate the scope for biological control of invasive, non-native aquatic and riverside weeds, including floating pennywort, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and Australian swamp stonecrop. The biocontrol project forms an important part of the national management strategy, aimed at coordinating approaches to tackle floating pennywort more effectively across catchments.

Also in Wales, Natural Resources Wales are attempting to put in place long-term management measures for topmouth gudgeon at sites in South Wales. Traditional eradication methods, such as chemical piscicides, have proven challenging due to environmental concerns and site characteristics. Consequently, alternative control strategies are now being trialled using native predatory fish as biocontrol agents. This new approach will provide a

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significant advancement in understanding feeding interactions in freshwater ecosystems, informing the future management of freshwater resources in Wales and beyond.

A newly established invasive species team on the Bailiwick of Jersey has conducted a large-scale risk assessment that identified and ranked invasive species established in terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments on and around the islands. Management feasibility studies are being developed for the top 30 highest impact established INNS. These studies will identify which species can be eradicated from the island and which will require long term control. Species management plans are being developed for the most feasible management strategy identified for each INNS. Management actions continue to control several high-impact established INNS.

On the Falkland Islands, the Environment Strategy 2021–2040 and the Islands Plan 2022–2026 both provide strategic objectives relating to the prevention of introduction and management of invasive species on the island. Extensive eradication of introduced carnivores, specifically cats, rats, and mice, is undertaken throughout the territory. Introduced carnivores are widespread throughout the main islands and many of the smaller surrounding islands within the archipelago. This has led to a decline in many native and endemic species of birds, such as cobbs wren (*Troglodytes cobbi*). Therefore, eradication has been largely targeted and prioritised for outlying islands with good potential for recolonisation of native species and that are unlikely to be re-invaded by carnivores. These eradication efforts have been supported both through the government's Environmental Studies Budget and by private entities. Eradication efforts, particularly for rats, have been undertaken on over 100 islands throughout the archipelago.

Further, Darwin Plus is funding a £3 million project (ref. DPSTR002), led by RSPB, to remove invasive mammals from New Island in the Falkland Islands over four years. New Island is globally important, supporting millions of seabirds including the world's largest slender-billed prion colony. The removal of invasive species will allow the reintroduction of lost endemic species and the restoration of natural habitats.

The [Gibraltar Nature Reserve Management Plan](#) sets out an alien and invasive species control programme for different areas of the reserve. The Gibraltar Nature Reserve Management Team carries out systematic removal of these species. Of particular concern are *Acacia cyclops*, *Carpobrotus edulis* and *Agave* species. In the marine environment, Gibraltar carries out targeted removals of invasive species such as *Rugulopteryx okamurae* from the coastline.

A project on St Helena has successfully tested and established control methods for invertebrate INNS with the aim of supporting the recovery of endemic invertebrate populations and the re-establishment of their associated ecosystem functions.

2. Indicate the current level of progress towards the target

- ☐ On track to achieve target
- ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate
- ☐ No significant progress
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ Achieved

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3. Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved:

Summary of progress towards the target

The UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have made progress in increasing the understanding of the risks and management of specific invasive species. The number of invasive non-native species (INNS) established in Great Britain (GB) has been increasing since 1969 when records began. As of 2024, there are 14 freshwater, 30 marine, and 64 terrestrial invasive species established in or along 10% of GB's land area or coastline. The rate of establishment shows little or no overall change over time and is estimated to be approximately 3 species establishments per year. The increasing prevalence of INNS in GB places increased pressure on native biodiversity in freshwater, terrestrial and marine (coastal) habitats.

Measures and regulations to prevent the introduction and establishment of invasive alien species are partially in place across the UK and the UKOTs and CDs. Pathway management has advanced through the implementation of the Merchant Shipping (Ballast Water) Regulations 2022, and draft Pathway Action Plans for boating, angling, horticulture, zoos, and pets are in progress. The threat from invasive mammals at important marine bird island breeding sites in the UK has been reduced.

Many efforts have been made across the UK and the UKOTs and CDs to eradicate and control invasive species already established. Six UK-level eradication programmes are underway, and a South American weevil is undergoing field trials as a biocontrol agent for floating pennywort across a range of sites in England. UK Overseas Territories have achieved notable successes, such as reducing Green Iguana populations in the Cayman Islands from 1.3 million in 2018 to 244,189 in 2024.

Overall, progress is positive but early detection and eradication remain key challenges.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 6:

Identify and manage pathways of the introduction of alien species

The UK has developed the voluntary Recreational Boating Pathway Action Plan (PAP) and is implementing the Merchant Shipping (Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments) Regulations 2022 which will support in the management of pathways for invasive species. As part of the GB Non-native Species Strategy, PAPs are published in draft and working groups have been established to deliver the actions set out in each plan. Actions are being progressed by the working groups. An additional PAP has been developed, for exotic pets, which has been identified as a key pathway in GB. Further, the Non-Native Species Information Portal, which provides access to distribution data for over 3000 non-native species in GB, also provides additional information such as place or origin, date of introduction and methods of introduction.

Prevent the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species

In 2023, there were 3,343 non-native species, 2,074 of which are classified as established (reproducing in the wild). Invasive alien species are establishing in Great Britain at a rate of approximately 3 per year; this rate is stable and has not changed significantly over time (Headline Indicator 6.1). However, the number of invasive non-native species (INNS) established in or along 10% or more of GB's land area or coastline has increased since

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1969 when records began, with 108 species established in 10% of GB land area or coastline in 2024 thereby showing a deteriorating trend for freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems (National Indicator 6.a).

According to the latest [UK Marine Strategy assessment](#), the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) with respect to non-indigenous species (NIS) is uncertain for both the Celtic Seas and the Greater North Sea. This is due to data limitations and a lack of comprehensive NIS monitoring in UK waters. In UK waters, GES in relation to NIS was assessed through two indicators: 'trends in new records of NIS introduced by human activities' (i.e. newly recorded NIS – an OSPAR common indicator) and 'the number of new populations of established invasive NIS' (i.e. NIS spread – a UK-only indicator). The NIS spread was assessed for the first time. The UK assessment time frame spanned 2003 to 2020, representing three six-year assessment periods. Data for UK waters for each indicator were collated from multiple sources and reviewed by experts to represent the UK Marine Strategy Spatial remit (i.e. including coastal waters but excluding transitional waters).

Progress has been made in reducing the threat from invasive mammals at important marine bird island breeding sites in the UK. The target to reduce the risk of invasive mammalian predators to island seabird colonies has been met, as risks were reduced compared to the previous assessment (2019). Of the 42 assessed Special Protection Areas across the UK, 34 had improved biosecurity measures since the [last assessment](#).

In GB, the Invasive Non-Native Species Inspectorate was established and conducted 1,378 inspections between 2023 and 2024. It determined that non-compliance with respect to invasive species legislation across all key sectors is at 11%.

GB [maintains a robust preventative regime against Asian Hornet](#). Rapid detection and interception – supported by GB-NNSIP powered Asian Hornet reporting app, together with the work of the general public, bee keeping associations and government agencies – has prevented this species from establishing in GB.

Eradicate or control invasive alien species, especially on priority sites, such as islands

GB continues to fund means for tackling INNS, such as the GB Non-native Species Information Portal (GB-NNSIP), which provides access to distribution data for non-native species in GB, together with additional information such as place of origin, date of introduction and methods of introduction. This is linked with an online alerts system that enables surveillance of priority INNS and new non-native species.

Six INNS eradication programmes are ongoing at a UK level. The aim is that a minimum of four of these – ruddy duck, acrobat ant, monk parakeet and *Baccharis halimifolia* – will be completed before 2030.

In England, there has been notable progress in work to control floating pennywort. For example, a South American weevil is undergoing field trials as a biocontrol agent for floating pennywort across a range of sites in England. In 2023, there was successful weevil overwintering across three sites, and in 2024, weevils were found persisting on floating pennywort populations at 12 sites. Where weevils have overwintered for several years and multiple generations have been supported, impact and spread on the target plant has been notable.

There have also been successes in the Bailiwick of Jersey's control programme for the Asian Hornet. Since 2017, the Asian Hornet Species Management Plan has delivered a robust control programme response and has limited numbers of nests in Jersey significantly, with numbers detected

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and destroyed in 2023 (339 nests) and 2024 (262 nests). If there had not been a control programme, nest numbers, with their attendant impacts, may have reached more than 1,000.

On the Cayman Islands, the Green Iguana control programme is in effect on all three islands. As a result of [coordinated, research-based efforts](#), the invasive alien green iguana population has been reduced significantly, with the population declining from a high of 1,319,939 in 2018 to 244,189 as of 2024. Annual monitoring of abundance and distribution is carried out on the largest Green Iguana population on Grand Cayman to inform the adaptive management strategy, intended to control the population at low levels to reduce the negative impacts on the environment at a reasonable ongoing cost (National Indicator 6.b). Feral cat and rat control programmes are enacted in selected areas of high ecological value. There is ongoing investigation into the potential for feral cat eradication throughout Little Cayman to protect native species. Feral cat removal has [resulted in improved hatchling viability for brown boobies \(National Indicator 6.b\) and native iguanas](#). In Little Cayman, this control work has significantly reduced the take of juvenile rock iguanas by feral cats. Some 87% of the feral cat population has been removed in Little Cayman, and as a result the Sister Islands Rock Iguana population on the island has tripled in two years.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

A key challenge to reducing the impacts of invasive non-native species (INNS) is ensuring detection when they first arrive and preventing or tracking their spread and establishment. Delays in detecting new INNS are common and mean that species may not be reported until after they have become established in the wild. Understanding these delays to detection is complex and dependent on factors like monitoring effort and ease of species identification. Measuring changes in establishment over time also requires accurate, up-to-date assessments of species' establishment status. Limited data on the status of individual species, and the large number of species to consider, means this can be challenging. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has commissioned ongoing projects to develop methods to model the establishment of INNS in Great Britain over time, as approaches for ongoing review of the establishment status of species. In the marine environment, improvements in detection have been made, but there is a lack of comprehensive INNS monitoring throughout UK waters.

Proximity to other countries means organisms can be blown to or can swim to the UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. Climate change poses an additional challenge, as warming temperatures allow non-native species to expand their range into new areas.

Ensuring high-level political will to tackle invasive alien species and securing funding is also a challenge. The Jersey Biosecurity team works with politicians to educate them as part of an ongoing process but has lost out on funding due to financial pressures in other areas of government. Opposition to lethal control methods can also present a challenge to eradicating non-native species.

Though projects to eliminate established invasive species have been successful, they are often expensive. For example, the Cayman Islands Invasive Green Iguana Control programme, initiated in 2018, has cost more than US \$13 million to date to remove more than 1.6 million invasive iguanas. On South Georgia, the total cost for the large-scale rodent eradication from the island was approximately £7.5 million.

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On the Falkland Islands, the threat of invasive species becoming established is increasing due to rising tourism, with marine INNS arriving on cruise ships that dock in Stanley Harbour. In addition, despite the availability of guidance, there is limited government policy aimed at eliminating, minimising, reducing, and/or mitigating the impacts of invasive species on biodiversity. Existing policies are generally aimed at customs and agricultural health rather than biodiversity. The development of a biosecurity strategy for the Falkland Islands should support a shift towards more effective management of invasive species.

4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁷

Headline Indicator 6.1: Rate of invasive alien species establishment (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species)

Table 1: Assessment of change in the rate of invasive alien species establishment.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Rate of establishment	Long term	1920 to 2022	Little or no overall change
Rate of establishment	Short term	2017 to 2022	Little or no overall change

- ☒ Use national data set
☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator tracks the rate of invasive alien species establishments since 1920.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

Table 1:

Analysis of the underlying long-term trends for pressure from invasive species is carried out by the data providers; see [Assessing Indicators](#).

Both long-term and short-term assessments of change are shown for the measure on the rate of invasive alien species establishment, as this is based on annual data. The long-term assessment was made by comparing the 95%

⁷ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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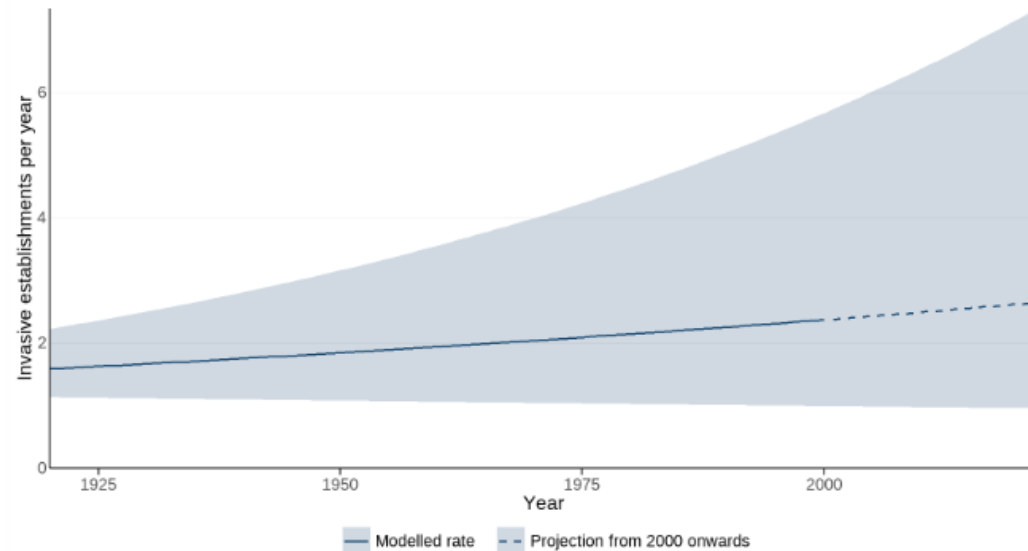


Figure 1. Modelled rate of invasive alien species establishment, 1920 to 2022, with projection (hashed line) from 2000 onwards

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

confidence interval (CI) of the final year with the starting value of rates of invasive species establishment. As the starting value (1.59) of the time series is within the confidence intervals for the final indicator value at the end of the time series (95% CI: 0.95, 7.34), the time series was assessed as showing little or no overall change over the long term.

The same approach was applied to the most recent five-year (2017 to 2022) period to assess the short-term change. As the starting value for the time period (2.58) is within the confidence intervals for the most recent year (2022, 95% CI: 0.95, 7.34), the indicator is assessed as showing little or no overall change in the short term.

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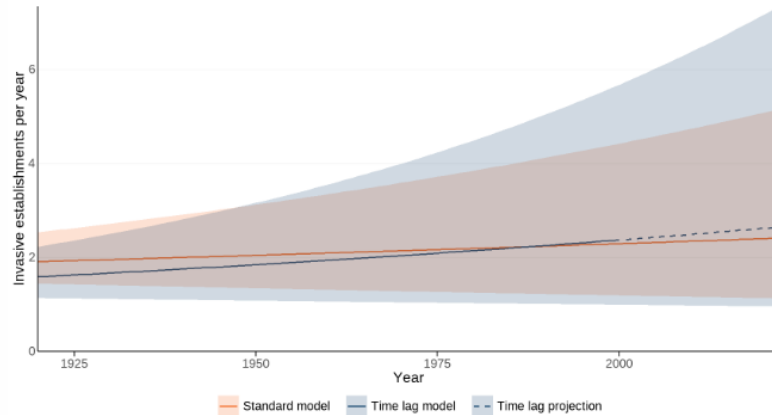


Figure 2. Rate of invasive alien species establishment, 1920 to 2022

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

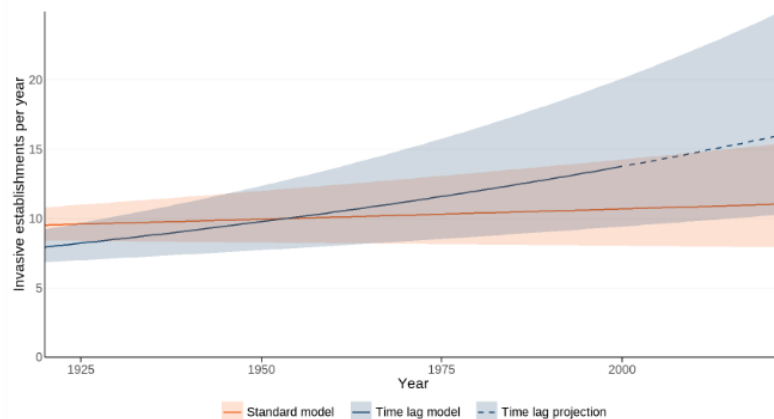


Figure 3. Rate of alien species establishment, 1920 to 2022.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

Figure 1:

This model is designed to account for the effect of lags in detection and recording in the latter years of the time series.

This model includes data for the years 1920-2000 only; later years are extrapolated from this trend and displayed as a hashed line.

A comparison of multiple models has demonstrated that this approach gives the most accurate assessment of the trend.

The shaded area shows the extent of the 95% confidence intervals of the model.

Figures 2 and 3:

Modelling approaches are from Solow and Costello (2004).

To increase accuracy, neither of the above models assume constant rates of detection or establishment; both are allowed to vary with time. The Solow & Costello method assumes that the probability of detecting an alien species increases (exponentially) with years since it has been introduced. This approach does not use any actual data on survey effort.

The lag model is designed to account for the effect of potential time lags in detection and recording in the latter years of the time series.

The lag model includes data for the years 1920-2000 only; later years are extrapolated from this trend.

Target 6		
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁸ Binary Indicator 6.b: Number of countries adopting relevant regulations, processes and measures to reduce the impact of invasive alien species 6.1 Does your country have regulations and processes empowering relevant institutions to implement the measures necessary for a reduction in the introduction and impact of invasive alien species? Partially 6.2 Does your country have measures in place for preventing the introduction and establishment of invasive alien species? Partially 6.3 Does your country have measures in place for eradicating or controlling invasive alien species? Partially	Comments (optional): _____
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 6.a: Number of invasive non-native species established in or along 10% or more of Great Britain's land area or coastline (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator has measures that track the net total number of invasive non-native species established across 10% or more of the land area of Great Britain, or along 10% or more of the extent of its coastline. Species that have

⁸ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

Target 6

Table 1: Assessment of change of the cumulative net total number of invasive non-native species established in or along 10% or more of Great Britain's land area or coastline.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Freshwater	Long term	1969 to 2024	Deteriorating
Marine (coastal)	Long term	1969 to 2024	Deteriorating
Terrestrial	Long term	1969 to 2024	Deteriorating

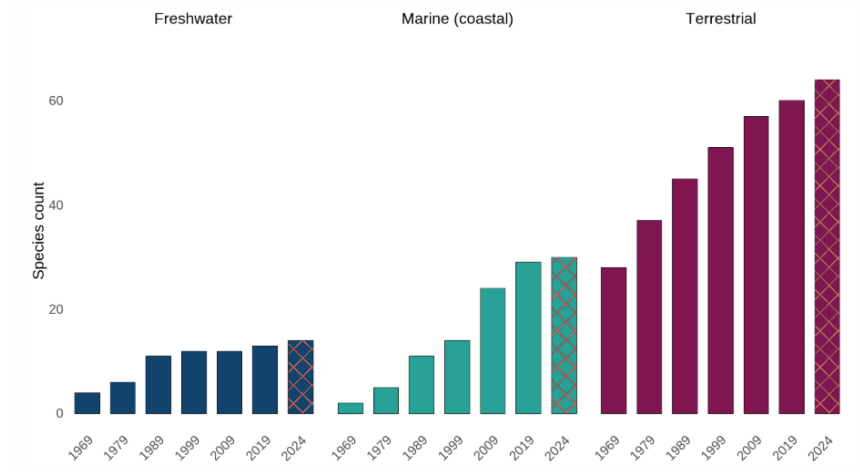


Figure 1. Number of invasive non-native species established in or along 10% or more of Great Britain's land area or coastline, 1969 to 2024

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

arrived since 1500 are included within this indicator.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

Table 1:

Analysis of the underlying long-term trends for pressure from invasive species is carried out by the data providers; see [Assessing Indicators](#). The first measure on the number of establishments on land area and coastline show a count of invasive species for each decade, unlike the majority of other indicators that report annually. Therefore, it is only possible to assess long-term trends as there are insufficient data to establish trends over shorter time periods.

Figure 1:

Each data point reported for this measure represents the count of invasive non-native species for the preceding 10 years rather than annual data, i.e., the data point for 1969 relates to the count of invasive species present in the period 1960 to 1969.

The 2024 data point covers a shorter time period (2020 – 2024) than the previous data points. This partial decade is indicated on the figure with a hashed pattern.

Target 6

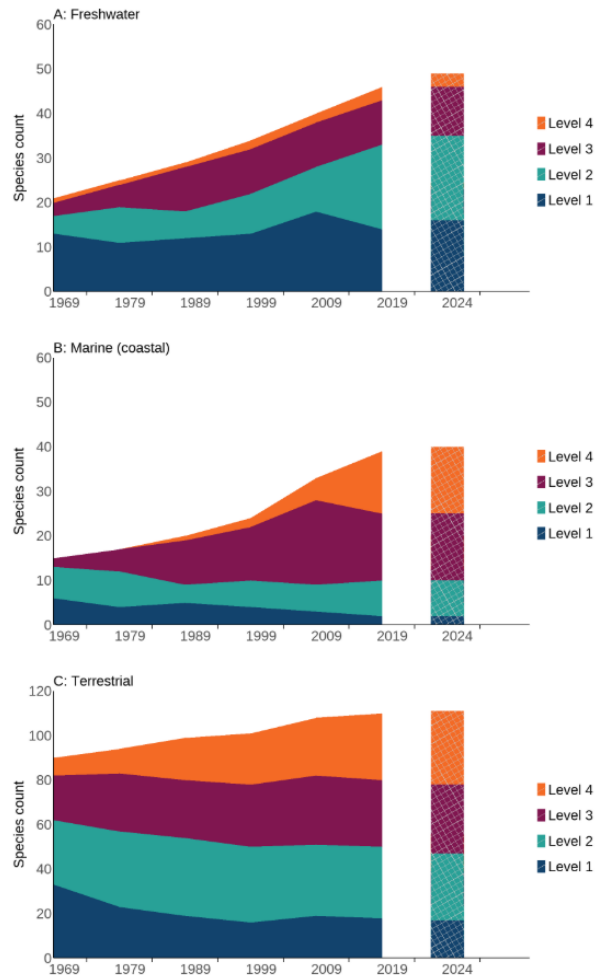


Figure 2. Changes in the extent of invasive non-native species in freshwater (A), marine (coastal) (B), and terrestrial (C) environments of Great Britain, 1969 to 2024.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species](#)

Figures 2a-c:

Each data point reported for this indicator represents the count of invasive non-native species for the preceding 10 years, i.e., the data point for 1969 relates to the count of invasive species present in the period 1960 to 1969.

The 2024 data point covers a shorter time period (2020 – 2024) than the previous data points. This partial decade is indicated on the figure with a hashed pattern.

Extent levels are defined as follows: Level 1 - not or scarcely established, Level 2 - established but still generally absent or at most occasional, Level 3 - established and frequent in part of the territory, Level 4 – widespread.

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6.b: The effect of control measures for invasive non-native species on the Cayman Islands.

Total population size estimates for Green Iguanas in Grand Cayman 2014 – 2025

Source: [Cayman Islands Government – Green Iguana](#)

Non-native invasive predator control on brown booby breeding on Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands

Source: [Cayman Islands Government – Brown Booby](#)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

Green Iguana

The Cayman Islands green iguana Culling Program, starting in October 2018, has removed over 1.6 million green iguanas from Grand Cayman to date; but eradication was assessed as unfeasible for this population. Instead, ongoing adaptive management of the culling program is necessary to manage the population at low levels to reduce the negative impacts on the environment at a reasonable ongoing cost. To inform this adaptive management strategy, the Department of Environment surveys the green iguana population on Grand Cayman every year to estimate population size and distribution across the island.

Source: [Cayman Islands Government – Green Iguana](#)

Brown Booby

Non-native invasive predator control on brown booby breeding on Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands

Source: [Cayman Islands Government – Brown Booby](#)

Target 6

7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

Asian Hornet Management and Control

The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) originates from the tropical regions of southeast Asia and is known to be an aggressive predator of honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) and other insects. In 2004, the species was unintentionally introduced into France, from where it quickly spread to other countries in Europe including Spain and Belgium. Due to concerns that the species would reach mainland Great Britain (GB), a [risk assessment](#) was commissioned in 2011.

Based on the risk assessment, it was concluded: (i) there are multiple pathways by which Asian hornet can enter GB; (ii) the arrival of Asian hornet in GB is highly likely, with low uncertainty; and (iii) if Asian hornet were to arrive in GB, it is very likely to spread and establish, with low uncertainty.

An initial [response plan](#) was developed, which was replaced by a pest specific contingency plan in 2017. This sets out how the government will respond if Asian hornets are detected in GB. The plan is regularly reviewed and updated.

Early identification and destruction of nests is the most effective means of control for Asian hornets. This is vital for preventing this species becoming established in GB. The aims and objectives of the contingency plan are to protect insects and particularly pollinators such as the honeybee from the Asian hornet by:

- detecting its presence as soon as possible;
- intercepting and preventing establishment;
- eradicating any outbreak if considered practicable;
- containing and controlling an outbreak, if field evidence suggests that it is well established in a defined but limited geographical area;
- establishing long-term management where eradication and control is no longer possible due to the number and extent of outbreaks; and
- aiding the beekeeping industry, pest controllers and local authorities in the form of training on pest and disease control.

Contingency action is delivered by the Animal and Plant Health Agency's National Bee Unit (NBU). Since the NBU first took action in 2016, the contingency plan has been deployed every year against incursions of Asian hornets. These actions have been successful to date and Asian hornet is not considered to be established in GB. The key elements of the contingency response are described in more detail below.

Early identification and reporting

The importance of citizen scientists and members of the public for recognising and identifying invasive non-native species (INNS) has long been recognised in the UK. As part of the early plan, a web-based alert system was developed for Asian hornet. Following the first incursion of Asian hornet in

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GB in 2016, a phone app alert system ([Asian Hornet Watch](#)) was developed, which the public can use to quickly report sightings. This recognises the importance of a whole-of-society approach to tackling INNS.

Triaging reports

Encouraging the public to report can lead to high numbers of alerts. As people struggle to correctly identify insect species, it is essential that reports are triaged by experts to determine if they are credible and require further investigation. Credible sightings are sent to the NBU, who follow up on the ground. If foraging hornets are present, the NBU will track them to find and destroy any nests that are present. The NBU have fine-tuned the response and often find the nest within a few days of the original sighting.

Scientific support

The contingency response is supported by scientific analysis provided by Fera Science Ltd (Fera). This includes formal confirmation of single hornet samples, dissection of nests and genotype analysis. The results indicate whether nests have reached maturity and potentially released mated queens that can overwinter and build nests in the following year. This informs field plans for sites where enhanced monitoring should be carried out the following year. The genotype analysis is used to assess relatedness, for example to determine whether a nest is related to a nest that was destroyed in the previous year. This provides evidence to help determine whether eradication efforts should continue.

Links with other sections of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

This case study demonstrates links with other cross-cutting sections of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including:

- Raising awareness and encouraging anyone who thinks they may have seen an Asian hornet to report it, together with an effective method of triaging these reports. In 2024, a total of 29,611 reports were received, leading to the detection and destruction of 24 nests. High reporting effort is particularly important when there are low numbers of nests.
- Use of innovation to support the contingency response. This includes the Asian Hornet Watch App developed to allow members of the public to report sightings together with a photo and a location. The NBU uses ArcGIS to plot line-of-sight measurements of flying hornets and track them back to a nest. This is much more effective than paper-based plotting and can be viewed by all of the ground staff.
- Engaged members of the public. Beekeepers are particularly concerned about Asian hornets arriving and establishing in GB. Beekeepers have organised themselves into active groups and provide valuable support by awareness raising (they hold an Asian hornet week in September), helping members of the public correctly identify Asian hornet, and by monitoring Asian hornet.

Conclusion

The contingency action has been successfully deployed to prevent establishment of Asian hornet for almost 10 years. Between 2016 and 2022, the NBU found and destroyed between one and four nests per year. In 2023, there was a large increase in the number of Asian Hornet nests found in GB and the NBU located and destroyed 72 nests, the majority of which were in southern England. The NBU continued to take contingency action against Asian hornet in 2024, with a total of 24 nests being destroyed, removed and sent for analysis. The results indicated that at two separate sites, Asian

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	hornets had bred and overwintered in GB in 2023. This is the first evidence of Asian hornets breeding in GB but is not considered to indicate that Asian hornets are established in GB.
8.	Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

Target 7

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 7

Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity

The UK will reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including:

- (a) by reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use;
- (b) by reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half, including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and
- (c) by preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK is taking comprehensive action to reduce pollution risks and the negative impacts of pollution on biodiversity, including progressing commitments made under national strategies and legislation, such as the UK Marine Strategy and UK Best Available Techniques, as well as through international conventions such as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), the Stockholm Convention, the Minamata Convention, the London Convention and the London Protocol.

The UK remains committed to improving air quality, with air quality policy frameworks being developed and implemented across all four countries. To reduce nutrient pollution, the Environment Act 2021 set a legally binding target to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038. For pesticides, the UK Pesticides National Action Plan (2025) and agri-environment schemes promote the sustainable use of pesticides to minimise impacts on the environment and human health, while supporting food security and managing pests and pesticide resistance effectively. The UK Government and Devolved Governments remain committed to seeking to eliminate the use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), in line with commitments under the Stockholm Convention. Further, the production and use of additional persistent organic pollutants (POPs) have been prohibited in Great Britain. A ban on shot containing more than 1% lead and bullets with a lead content of more than 3% in Great Britain will prevent the release of an estimated 7,000 tonnes of the toxic metal into fields, forests and wetlands each year.

Measures to reduce single-use plastics have been introduced across the UK. A UK-wide ban on wet wipes containing plastic was announced in 2024 and a UK-wide ban on single-use vapes was introduced from 1 June 2025.

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Further, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has delivered a programme of work to improve understanding and management of noise pollution. This includes new measures in 2025 to reduce underwater noise in the marine environment from two of the loudest noise sources: the installation of offshore wind turbines and the clearance of unexploded ordnance from the seabed.

Regarding the main actions under Target 7:

Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services considering cumulative effects

Efforts to reduce pollution are embedded in policies and strategies across the UK. Through the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS), the UK is committed to targets to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) relating to eutrophication, contaminants and their effects on marine life, the occurrence and effect of significant acute pollution events, marine litter and noise pollution. The UK has also implemented actions to comply with the OSPAR Convention and the London Convention and Protocol (LCLP) on the dumping of waste and other matter at sea, which prohibit the dumping of waste apart from listed waste that requires assessment, permitting and reporting, to prevent marine pollution. The rollout of [UK Best Available Techniques \(UK BAT\)](#) provides a coherent and predictable regulatory framework for reducing emissions from large industry, and the four countries of the UK each have legislation requiring the permitting of industrial installations to protect the environment and human health. In England, the [Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 \(EIP25\)](#) sets out actions and commitments to reduce pollution. The [Biodiversity: Delivery Plan 2024 to 2030](#) has committed Scotland to improving water and air quality and undertaking water management measures to enhance biodiversity and reduce negative impacts. In Wales, the Natural Resources Policy is being reviewed and will include actions to reduce the pollution pressures impacting biodiversity and ecosystems.

Regarding air pollution, the UK remains committed to improving air quality across all four countries. Under a new interim target, set in the EIP25, population exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) will be cut by 30% by 2030, compared to 2018 levels. In addition a new interim maximum PM2.5 concentration target of 10 micrograms per cubic metre to be achieved by 2030 has been set. In July 2025, the government published [Fit for the Future: 10-Year Health Plan for England](#), outlining key commitments to reduce emissions and raise awareness of the health impacts of air pollution in England. The government provided £1.45 million in the 2024/2025 financial year to support the development and implementation of measures that address nitrogen dioxide (NO2) exceedances as quickly as possible, helping to protect public health. The Air Quality Hub was relaunched in August 2024 with improved navigation and updated content, to further support local authorities, and in October 2024, interim planning guidance on PM2.5 was published on the UK Air Information Resource (AIR), offering direction on how to incorporate Environment Act 2021 targets to achieve an annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms per cubic metre or below by 2040, and a 35% reduction in average population exposure by 2040, into planning decisions. Additionally, in 2025, the government consulted on reforms to permitting in the industrial and energy sectors, aiming to create a simplified, future-ready regulatory framework.

In 2021, the Scottish Government published [Cleaner Air for Scotland 2](#), an air quality policy framework for the following five years and a series of actions to deliver air quality improvements. It builds on the original Cleaner Air for Scotland, which set 40 actions, 36 of which were completed, and the remaining four carried over into the new framework. Scotland has also developed innovative [indicators using bryophytes and lichens](#) to assess impacts of nitrogen pollution.

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The Welsh Government published its National Air Quality Strategy (the Clean Air Plan for Wales) in 2020, which sets out their ambitions and actions to improve air quality and reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health, biodiversity, the natural environment and the economy. A key commitment in the Strategy was to introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales. This has been delivered through the introduction of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024, which includes powers and duties on Welsh Ministers to set legally binding air quality targets in Wales, including for fine particulate matter, and a long-term target for one of the pollutants listed in the Act. These collective actions provide a strong mechanism to deliver the Welsh Government's long-term ambitions for clean air and associated public health and environmental outcomes. Northern Ireland is in the process of developing a Clean Air strategy and is legally required by the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 to include a target to improve air quality in each Climate Action Plan to help achieve the five-yearly carbon budget.

Gibraltar has been operating a robust air quality monitoring and management programme since 2005.

Regarding underwater noise pollution in the marine environment, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has delivered a programme of work to improve understanding and management of noise, including introducing new measures in 2025 to reduce marine noise from two of the loudest noise sources: offshore wind construction and the clearance of unexploded ordnance from the seabed. The [Marine Noise Policy Paper](#) outlines progress to date and next steps. The revised [Unexploded Ordnance \(UXO\) Clearance Joint Position Statement](#) outlines the collective position of the UK Government, Devolved Governments, regulators and statutory nature conservation bodies on the use of low noise methods of clearing UXOs for commercial marine developments. In 2025, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee published [Marine Mammal Mitigation Guidelines](#) to reduce the risk of injury to marine mammals from the detonation of UXOs. The UK is also contributing to the development of the OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Underwater Noise, which will set out a series of national and collective actions to reduce noise pollution.

[The Falkland Islands Environment Strategy \(2021–2040\)](#) aims to reduce pollution via stronger waste and pollution control measures. The Cayman Islands' recently approved Climate Change Policy includes a commitment to develop comprehensive legislation and regulations for the control and prevention of air, water and land pollution, and a strategy to adopt the use of sustainable refrigerant alternatives. The Cayman Islands is also considering developing a water quality monitoring programme, including for ship-borne emissions, under the Blue Belt Programme. Gibraltar's 25 Year Environment Plan introduces low emission zones and extended bans on single use plastics that will serve to lower pollution levels across Gibraltar and reduce stress on ecosystems.

The UK Government continues to provide support to developing countries to address pollution through Official Development Assistance programmes, including the Environmental Pollution Programme (EPP) and the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP). The EPP has delivered projects to help countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia deliver low-cost and financially sustainable solutions to tackling pollution challenges, delivering outcomes on poverty and health whilst reducing adverse environmental impacts. The OCP (closing March 2026) is supporting developing countries with proactive contingency planning and capacity building to prevent, and be better prepared to respond to, marine pollution and oil spill incidents (see case study).

Reduce excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use

The UK is working to reduce nutrient pollution, focusing particularly on nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment runoff from agriculture. In England, this includes a legally binding target under the Environment Act 2021 to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water

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environment by at least 40% by 2038, compared to a 2018 baseline and an interim target of a 12% reduction by December 2030 as set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25). Measures to help achieve this target include funding innovation in nutrient management, promoting better agricultural practices such as slurry management, revising farming rules for water, working to ensure water regulations are simple and effective, and increasing funding for farm inspections. Reducing land-based pollutant loads will lower concentrations in waterbodies.

Water is a top priority for the UK Government. The Environmental Targets (Water) (England) Regulations 2023 include a statutory target to reduce phosphorus loadings in treated wastewater by 80% by the end of 2038 from a 2020 baseline, with an interim target to reduce phosphorus loadings from treated wastewater by 55% by December 2030 against a 2020 baseline, as set out in the EIP25. Reduced phosphorus loadings, driven by upgrades at wastewater treatment facilities, will contribute to reduced nutrient loads and a healthier freshwater water environment. A programme of 936 phosphorus improvement schemes at treatment facilities commenced in 2020 and is due for completion by April 2028. Additionally, Ofwat's final determinations from the last five-yearly price review (PR24) set out a package of expenditure for the regulated water companies of £104 billion from 2025 to 2030, including £4.795 billion to reduce phosphorus pollution by upgrading wastewater treatment works. In January 2026, the Government published a White Paper laying out plans to reform the water sector and the wider water system. The White Paper sets out our investment programme for stopping pollution, including £11 billion over the next five years for storm overflow investments in England, and nearly £5 billion for upgrades at wastewater treatments works to remove phosphorous. These are part of a wider investment programme to tackle the harm caused by spills by 2050, at an estimated cost of £60 billion, which will lead to 15,000 km of rivers being improved or protected. Further, the Water Environment Improvement Fund spent £8.4 million in 2023/2024 and £11.5 million in 2024/2025 on projects to boost tree planting, habitat restoration and flood management.

Efforts in England to reduce ammonia emissions from agriculture are progressing. By 2029, regulation will be streamlined and integrated to support this goal. Farmers and land managers are being supported through initiatives such as Catchment Sensitive Farming, and capital grants for low-emission equipment and infrastructure, including slurry storage covers, low-emissions spreaders and slurry scrapers. In 2024, England also saw the launch of the industry-led '[Red Tractor Urea Standard](#)' aimed at reducing ammonia emissions from urea fertilisers. This was complemented by the Fertiliser Advisers Certification and Training Scheme, which supports farm advisers in promoting best practices. The effectiveness of these measures is being monitored, with further regulation to be introduced if necessary.

The Welsh Government is providing guidance and financial support to farmers to implement the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021. These Regulations, which came into force in 2025, will prevent and reduce agricultural pollution through improved nutrient management planning, controls on nutrient application, and requirements for manure and silage storage and management infrastructure. Phosphorus limits have been introduced, tightened or confirmed for 162 water company water discharge permits within the catchments of Welsh rivers designated as Special Areas of Conservation, and in 2024/25, Natural Resources Wales benefitted from additional Welsh Government funding of £16 million (to NRW and the Mining Remediation Authority) to support water quality improvement programmes, including a range of catchment-based and remediation approaches to help improve water quality.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is revising its Nutrient Management Programme and has introduced the [Soil Nutrient Health Scheme](#). With an investment of £37 million over four years, the scheme is designed to test soil nutrient levels across approximately 700,000 fields to help farmers optimize their nutrient applications, improve soil health and enhance farm profitability while minimizing environmental impact. By optimizing nutrient use, the Soil Nutrient Health Scheme helps reduce nutrient run-off into water bodies, contributing to

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better water quality and supporting climate change commitments. The Sustainable Catchment Programme facilitates partnership working with farmers across key catchment areas to deliver water quality and restoration. Northern Ireland is also in the process of developing an Ammonia Strategy, and a [Lough Neagh Action Plan](#) has been published to address the impact of nutrient pollution in the Lough Neagh area.

In Jersey, involvement of farmers in assurance schemes and targeted government payments have resulted in better fertiliser application methods, crop rotation, and farm practices (e.g. cover crops, GPS spraying, phosphate-free fertilisers). A joint government and farming industry Action for Cleaner Water Group has been meeting since 2015 to develop solutions to water pollution.

The Isle of Man has introduced water quality standards through the [Water Pollution \(Standards and Objectives\) Scheme 2020](#).

Reduce the overall risk from pesticides by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods

The [UK Pesticides National Action Plan](#), published in March 2025, promotes the sustainable use of pesticides to minimise impacts on the environment and human health, while supporting food security and managing pests and pesticide resistance effectively.

In England, farmers are being incentivised to reduce pesticide use through initiatives like the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS), which encourage integrated pest management (IPM) approaches and reduce pesticide runoff. The Catchment Sensitive Farming elements of the CSS have been extended to the whole of England and funding increased to £15 million per year. Since 2024, farmers have also been paid to use precision application techniques to minimise herbicide use. New UK guidance was published in 2024 to support increased use of IPM for farmers. In June 2025, Integrated Weed Management guidance was made accessible to all amenity managers in the UK. This includes a template to help amenity managers effectively plan how to adopt a range of IPM methods.

The Welsh Government is supporting a transition away from conventional chemical use, focusing on alternative methods and adopting IPM techniques to control pests, weeds and diseases. The Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme will include measures to encourage the use of IPM approaches.

In Northern Ireland, Farm Sustainability Standards are being developed that include measures to manage and mitigate pesticide pollution and its impact on waterways and habitats. IPM plans are being advocated to support this.

Jersey's Action for Cleaner Water Group screens new pesticides before they may be used on the island.

Reduce the overall risk from highly hazardous chemicals by at least half

Regarding hazardous chemicals, the UK Government and Devolved Governments remain committed to seeking to eliminate the use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), in line with commitments under the [Stockholm Convention](#). The UK has updated legislation and regulatory guidance regarding persistent organic pollutants (POPs), including placing restrictions on specific POP substances, and is working with partners to reduce levels entering the environment. Through legislative updates in 2023 and 2025, the production and use of additional POP substances has been prohibited in Great Britain. The UK Government also intends to introduce restrictions on further POP substances following their listing under the Stockholm Convention.

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The 'Rationale for Prioritising Substances in the UK REACH Work Programme: 2025 to 2026' policy paper set out the UK's strategic approach to the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH) regulations. Notably, we are seeking to draw more from regulatory decision-making in other jurisdictions, and this should enable new protections to be applied more quickly, more efficiently, and in a way which is more aligned with our closest trading partners. Action on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) has initially focused on PFAS risks from industrial uses, firefighting foams, and drinking water, with work on agricultural pathways now starting. The PFAS Plan, which will be published in 2026, will set out the UK's approach to minimising the harmful effects of PFAS, including through the transition to safer alternatives. This includes a range of regulatory and non-regulatory interventions, measures and initiatives with specific actions and delivery milestones. The ongoing public consultation on proposals for potential restrictions on PFAS in firefighting foams under UK REACH (open until February 2026) will provide further evidence to assess whether to strengthen controls and ensure coordinated measures to reduce emissions.

[New measures announced by the UK Government in June 2025](#) will ban shot containing more than 1% lead and bullets with a lead content of more than 3% by weight in Great Britain. Beyond limited exemptions, these types of ammunition will no longer be sold to the public. The ban will prevent the release of an estimated 7,000 tonnes of the toxic metal into fields, forests and wetlands each year.

The UK Government has met our commitment to restrict the manufacture, import and export of additional mercury added products in line with the requirements of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, through domestic legislation that came into force on 23 December 2025. The updated Process Guidance Note for operators of crematoria, which was published on 4 December 2025, will extend the use of mercury abatement (flue gas) technology to the remaining minority of unabated crematoria, significantly reducing emissions of airborne mercury pollution from the sector.

Work towards eliminating plastic pollution

Across the UK, measures are being taken to prevent and reduce plastic pollution, including targeting some of the items that are most commonly found in the environment. The UK develops and implements actions under the OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter and participates in monitoring programmes to assess regional trends in marine litter. Through the UKMS, the UK is committed to targets to achieve Good Environmental Status, including targets for marine litter.

Measures to reduce single-use plastics (SUPs) have been introduced across the UK. A UK-wide ban on wet wipes containing plastic was announced in 2024 with an 18-month transition period, and a UK-wide ban on single-use vapes, including single-use plastic vapes, was introduced from 1 June 2025. England has introduced further bans and restrictions on SUPs such as expanded and foamed extruded polystyrene takeaway food and drink containers, balloon sticks, and cutlery, which took effect in 2023. Wales introduced the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023, which bans several commonly littered SUP products and provides Welsh Ministers with powers to introduce bans on other products. Subsequently, Wales has introduced a ban on the supply of wet wipes through the Environmental Protection (Single-use plastic products) (Wet Wipes) (Wales) Regulations 2025, which will come into force on 18 December 2026. DAERA are developing a Plastic Pollution Plan for Northern Ireland that collates the targets in existing policies and strategies and identifies the actions and activities that will contribute to eliminating unnecessary plastic from the land and seas. These include the implementation of a Plastic Reduction Action Plan, the removal of SUPs from the Government Estate and the introduction of the EU Single Use Plastic Directive, which will remove the 10 most commonly littered SUP items from Northern Ireland.

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	The Isle of Man has undertaken significant efforts to reduce the use of SUPs, including through the Climate Change (Single Use Plastics) Regulations 2022 and schemes to reduce plastic use and litter by government and communities (particularly the fishing community). In the Cayman Islands, steps are being taken to ban selected SUPs through amendments to legislation. The Falkland Islands has removed plastic straws and installed water chillers in government buildings. The Ascension Island Government Conservation team collected 39.2 kg of marine debris over a weekend in 2024, with these beach-cleans becoming a norm.	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK has made some progress towards this target. Air quality has improved, with acid deposition exceeding critical loads in 44% of sensitive habitats in 2021, compared to 66% in 2003, and nitrogen deposition falling from 94% to 84% over the same period. In UK freshwater systems, 33% of terrestrial water bodies were in high or good ecological status in 2024, with the percentage showing little or no overall change since 2009. In the marine environment, 95% of UK coastal and shelf areas had largely met Good Environmental Status (GES) for reducing the impacts of nitrogen enrichment from land run-off. However, GES has not been fully met for reducing levels of contaminants in the marine environment. The amount of hazardous waste generated per capita across the UK remained fairly stable between 2010 and 2018. More positively, the proportion of hazardous waste treated by being deposited onto or into land, had reduced from 66% to 40%. Pressure on 10 key taxonomic groups from pesticides has substantially declined since 2008, though may be increasing since 2020 (interim results). Work to eliminate plastic pollution shows mixed results. The single-use plastic bag charge in England reduced carrier bag sales by 98% and UK Plastic Pact members have cut the amount of problematic plastic sold by 55% since 2018. Marine litter levels remain high, although there are indications of reduction. There have been statistically significant decreases in beach litter (including plastic) observed in the Greater North Sea and in the Celtic Seas, which include UK coasts, although there is a slight increasing trend in probability that hauls in the Greater North Sea contain litter between 2012 and 2019. Despite the positive progress described above, considerable challenges remain, particularly in fully addressing plastic pollution, pesticide risk and excess nutrients and tackling marine underwater noise pollution. Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 7:	

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Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services considering cumulative effects

The [percentage of UK terrestrial water bodies in high or good ecological status](#) showed little or no overall change from 2009 to 2024, with 33% assessed as being in high or good ecological status in 2024 (National Indicator 7.c). Ecological status assessments in freshwater systems are based on levels of heavy metals, pesticides and nutrients alongside other quality elements.

There have been some improvements in air quality. In 2021, acid deposition exceeded critical loads in 44% of the UK area of sensitive terrestrial habitats, compared to 66% in 2003 (National Indicator 7.b). According to an [assessment](#) by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in 2024, the short-term trend between 2016 and 2021 showed an 18% decrease in the area affected by acidity. The same datasets showed that in 2021, nitrogen deposition exceeded the critical load for eutrophication in 84% of sensitive habitats, compared with 94% in 2003. In the short-term, the area where nitrogen deposition exceeded the critical load showed a 9% decrease between 2016 and 2021. Based on these figures, the habitat areas at risk from acid and nitrogen deposition have declined over the longer term (2003 to 2021), but a large proportion of habitat area still exceeds critical loads. Furthermore, it should be noted that reducing deposition below the critical loads does not necessarily mean that ecosystems will recover immediately, as there can be a time-lag before the chemical environment and the flora and fauna recover. In Scotland, an indicator on bryophyte nitrogen (National Indicator 7.d) suggests that the impacts of nitrogen pollution on habitats has been declining since the late 1990s in line with declines in actual nitrogen pollution.

In England, most air pollutants have decreased over the most recent five-year period of available data. Progress has been made towards the Environment Act 2021 fine particulate matter (PM2.5) targets and there has been good progress towards meeting the National Emissions Ceilings Regulations 2018 for four out of five air pollutants.

Regarding marine noise pollution, [indicators for impulsive and continuous noise](#) show an increasing trend, suggesting our seas are becoming noisier. However, the environmental status for underwater noise in waters is uncertain as threshold values for Good Environmental Status (GES) have yet to be defined.

In the Isle of Man, annual [river quality reports](#) find that most monitoring points have shown excellent or good status for both chemical and biological testing, and that air quality has been found to be [good](#). Gibraltar's air quality has shown a marked improvement, with levels of numerous contaminants dropping significantly since monitoring was initiated in 2005, and its water quality along coastal areas and beaches generally meets GES.

Reduce excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use

In the marine environment, the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) Assessment (2025) found that the UK [has largely met Good Environmental Status \(GES\) for eutrophication](#), with 95% of UK coastal, shelf, and oceanic areas achieving GES (National Indicator 7.a), however, noting that the 2018 UKMS assessments concluded there were a small number of eutrophication problems remaining in coastal and estuarine waters with limited water circulation – (representing 0.03% of the total UK Exclusive Economic Zone, and 0.41% of estuarine and coastal waters. The UK currently does not record the necessary data to report on Headline Indicator 7.1, 'Index of coastal eutrophication potential'. However, work is planned or ongoing in the UK and internationally to address this, and a lot of data relevant to eutrophication is recorded. The UK intends to report this indicator within the UK Biodiversity Indicator suite in the future.

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[In England in 2022](#), 92% of rivers achieved good status for ammonia and 45% achieved good status for phosphorus. The Welsh Government has reviewed the effectiveness of the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 in reducing pollution and identified 23 recommendations that will be implemented in full. The recommendations include improvements to nutrient management planning in relation to phosphorus and soil protection measures. In Northern Ireland, the development of the revised Nutrients Action Programme and the revised Ammonia Strategy is ongoing, with a view to publish both in 2026. The actions in the Lough Neagh Action Plan are being delivered through a range of policy interventions. [Nitrate levels in surface water and ground water in Jersey](#) have gradually declined (National Indicator 7.e), and for the 11th year running, full compliance has been met with the nitrate standard in drinking water (50 mg/l).

Reducing the overall risk from pesticides by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods

The new Headline Indicator 7.2 on Aggregated Total Applied Toxicity is a method to determine the pressure from pesticides on a range of taxonomic groups over time. In the UK, at the time of writing, full guidance on methods for this headline indicator has not been published, with several aspects of the approach followed in the UK still under discussion. The UK has chosen to publish the exploratory methods as a demonstration of the possibilities and limitations of the outline guidance available at this stage. The interim results show that pressure on 10 key taxonomic groups increased from 1990 until around 2008, and since then, toxicity pressure has substantially declined, although there is some suggestion of an increasing trend since 2020. If the methods used for this indicator are confirmed, these results suggest that there has been good progress towards the target of reducing the risk from pesticides by at least half.

In England, as of March 2025, there are 49,000 businesses with agri-environment schemes (both the Sustainable Farming Incentive and Countryside Stewardship) in place. Just over a million hectares (approximately 10% of the total utilised agricultural area) across 20,000 farms are undertaking at least one of the four revenue options specifically targeted towards integrated pest management, including 9,200 farms signed up to the insecticide-free action. In Scotland, estimated pesticide application per hectare to [vegetable crops in 2023](#) was 17% higher than in 2021, but remained 27% lower compared to 2019, with pesticides applied to 90% of the vegetable crop area. Use of pesticides in Scottish [arable crops and potato stores](#) in 2022 remained broadly similar to levels used in 2018 and 2022. In Northern Ireland, the Farm Sustainability Standards are planned to be introduced in 2026. In Jersey, restrictions on the pesticides that can be used in specific catchments have resulted in pesticide detections in water being reduced considerably.

Reduce the overall risk from highly hazardous chemicals by at least half

All indicators in the UK Marine Strategy's [latest assessment](#) (2025) relating to contaminants in the marine environment, excluding the metals mercury, cadmium, lead and two persistent pollutants in biota and sediments, have achieved or partially achieved the GES threshold, which means that GES has not been fully met for contaminants. This is broadly consistent with the previous 2019 assessment; however, more stringent environmental threshold values have been used for mercury in the 2025 assessment.

The [amount of hazardous waste generated per capita](#) across the UK remained fairly stable between 2010 and 2018, though the proportion treated by being deposited onto or into land reduced from 66% to 40%. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has produced a [Multimedia Emissions Inventory](#), which shows that the amount of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in use in equipment in the UK has decreased by

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96.4% from 2000 to 2023. Destruction rates have reduced from 500 tonnes per annum in 2000 to below 150 tonnes per annum from 2010 onwards, as the scale of the stockpile decreases. In England, compliance measures have resulted in a significant increase in the destruction of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in waste, and amendments to legislation have increased the number of restricted POPs and waste limits that should ensure destruction of POPs in waste.

Work towards eliminating plastic pollution

Progress in reducing plastic pollution has been mixed. In the marine and coastal environment, whilst GES has not yet been achieved for marine litter (National Indicator 7.f), there have been statistically significant decreases in beach litter (including plastic) observed in the Greater North Sea and in the Celtic Seas, which include UK coasts, although there is a slight increasing trend in probability that hauls in the Greater North Sea contain litter between 2012 and 2019. There has also been a significant decrease in plastic particles found in the stomachs of Northern Fulmars in the Greater North Sea, which can act as an indicator for floating marine litter, for the period 2009 – 2018. However, OSPAR's indicator on plastic particles in fulmar stomachs show that currently 51% of beached North Sea fulmars have more than 0.1 grams of plastics in their stomachs, exceeding the required OSPAR threshold of 10%.

Single-use plastics are commonly found in terrestrial and marine litter monitoring. The introduction of the single-use plastic carrier bag charge in 2015 in England has led the number of plastic carrier bags sold by the main retailers to [fall by almost 98%](#), and since 2018, UK Plastic Pact members have reduced the weight of problematic and unnecessary plastic items sold by 55% from 2018. In Scotland, the total amount of [waste](#) generated from all sources decreased by 15% from 2011 to 2022 and recycling rates for waste have increased to 57% overall and 62% for household, business and public service waste. Development of a Plastic Pollution Plan for Northern Ireland is in progress, and a draft has been developed for consultation.

In June 2025, OSPAR Contracting Parties agreed a legally binding measure to prevent and reduce polystyrene pollution in the marine environment, by banning the use of new pontoons and buoys that are made from polystyrene and not coated in a hard coating to prevent fragmentation. This measure has been developed and adopted under the Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter. Parties now have three years to implement measures to meet the obligations in the decision and Defra is working with the Devolved Governments to evaluate policy options.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Many types of pollution are transboundary, making them difficult for any single country to tackle. Regarding plastic pollution, the UK is calling for an ambitious and effective international agreement to end plastic pollution by 2040, that tackles the full life cycle of plastics and promotes a circular economy. There are also challenges associated with understanding the sources, transport, pathways and fate of marine plastic pollution. This makes the prioritisation of policy action difficult.

Parts of the UK face challenges around implementation of legislative or regulatory controls, such as enforcement of the single use plastics (SUPs) ban in Gibraltar or having limited policy or legislation through which to enforce change. Since SUPs are widely used, there are significant behaviour change

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	interventions required alongside the restriction of unnecessary products. Ensuring the availability of sustainable and reusable alternatives is another major challenge to phasing out SUPs, whilst disposal of plastics collected during beach cleans is a challenge for small island territories. Challenges remain in filling data gaps, with limited capacity in the public and private sectors. Recent increases in the cost of laboratory consumables have exacerbated this issue in the Isle of Man. Data gaps in the Falkland Islands make it impossible to monitor progress in reducing pollution of various types, and in Gibraltar there is a lack of data on marine litter and noise pollution. Feedback from farming representatives in the four-yearly review of the Control of Agriculture Regulations in Wales highlighted that regulatory complexity is a significant challenge for many farms and a significant cause of stress, with associated impacts on compliance. While there may be scope to make the regulations more proportionate to the risks, thereby reducing some complexity, the alternative approaches requested by the agricultural sector – including alternatives to the closed periods and 170 kg nitrogen application limit, as well as other review recommendations such as additional soil protection measures and the inclusion of phosphorus within nutrient management planning – are likely to increase overall complexity. In Northern Ireland, the introduction of a revised Nutrients Action Plan and some elements of the Ammonia Strategy require a programme of stakeholder engagement. In Jersey, a key challenge in addressing nitrate pollution is persuading farmers to work together to share solutions. Efforts have been made to develop trust, which has resulted in farmers identifying improvements themselves. A realisation that farming sustainably with limited impact on water quality could enable farms to market their produce to UK and international supermarkets led to them signing up to assurance schemes, particularly the Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) Marque. The government has developed a rural support scheme that recognises and rewards rural businesses for the delivery of environmental and public gain, rather than on area farmed, as a further incentive.
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁹ Headline Indicator 7.1 Index of coastal eutrophication potential (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Index of coastal eutrophication potential) ☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☒ No data available. Please explain why: In common with many countries, the UK currently does not record the necessary data to report the specific measure required by this Index of coastal eutrophication potential. However, work is planned or ongoing in the UK and internationally to address this, and a lot of data relevant to eutrophication is recorded. The UK intends to

⁹ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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report this indicator within the UK Biodiversity Indicator suite in the future.

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional):

Headline Indicator 7.2 Aggregated total applied toxicity (ATAT)¹⁰ (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Aggregated Total Applied Toxicity)

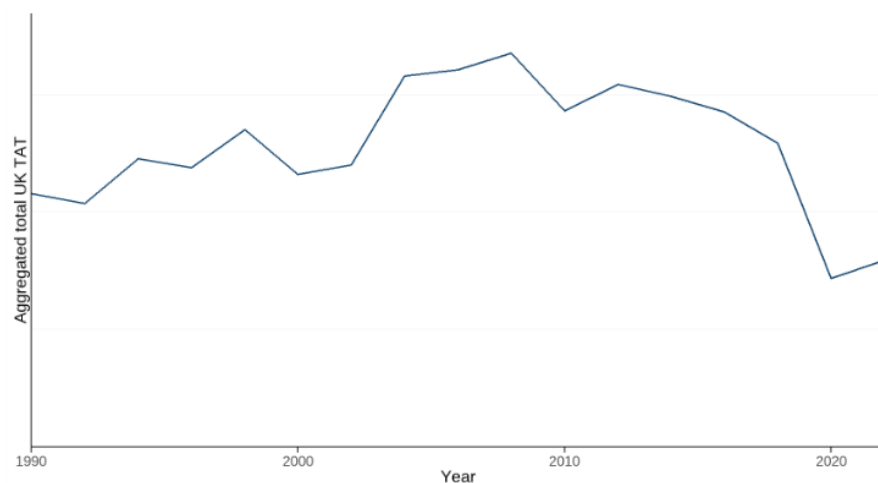


Figure 1: Normalised Aggregated Total Applied Toxicity (ATAT) for UK arable crops, 1990 to 2022.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Aggregated total applied toxicity \(ATAT\)](#)

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

At the time of production, full guidance on methods for this Headline Indicator has not been published, with several aspects of the approach followed here under discussion. The UK has chosen to publish the following exploratory methods as a demonstration of the possibilities and limitations of the outline guidance available at this stage. This indicator will be further developed as appropriate when additional guidance becomes available.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Aggregated total applied toxicity \(ATAT\)](#)

¹⁰ Parties may choose to report on pesticide environment concentration and/or aggregated total applied toxicity headline indicator, depending on the availability of methodology and in accordance with their national circumstances and technical capacities.

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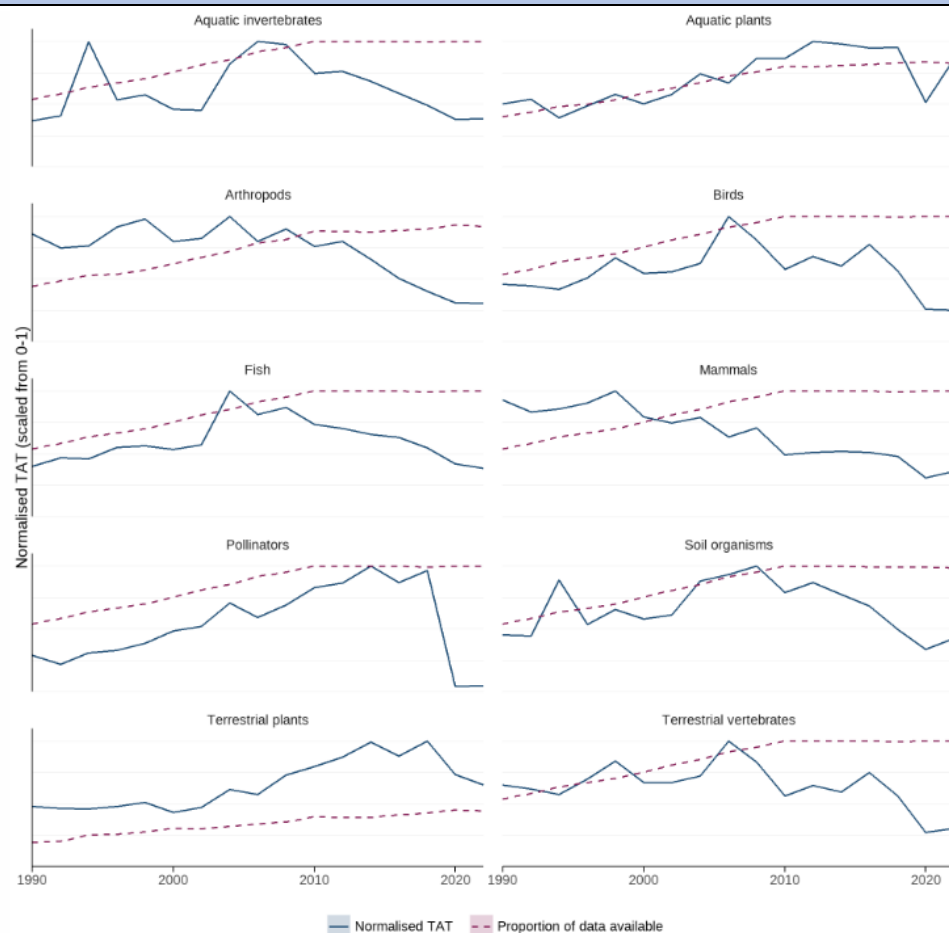


Figure 2: Normalised Total Applied Toxicity (TAT), by taxonomic group, for UK arable crops, 1990 to 2022, including uncertainty.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Aggregated total applied toxicity \(ATAT\)](#)

Figure 1:

Total Applied Toxicity (TAT) is calculated from the mass of active substances applied in a year combined with a measure of their hazard.

Due to the method to calculate this time series, the data is unitless and best presented as change over time.

This overall time series is aggregated from the ten taxonomic TATs shown in Figure 2.

Data coverage for the Regulatory Threshold Levels (RTLs) of pesticide active substances, and therefore the proportion of substances included in the indicator, varies across the time series. Figure 2 shows this data availability at the time of indicator production across the time series for each taxonomic group.

Figure 2:

TAT values are generated for these ten taxonomic groups.

Due to the method to calculate these time series, the data is unitless and best presented as change over time.

The data for these taxonomic groups has been normalised and are presented as the proportion of each yearly value compared with the maximum for that group, to allow a comparison between these groups.

Uncertainty in these measures is represented by the dark red hashed line, which shows the completeness of the RTL data used for the

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		calculation and represents the proportion of RTLs which have been generated for that taxonomic group. These lines demonstrate that RTL data is more complete for the recent years in the time series.
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator¹¹	Comments (optional): _____
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 7.a: The extent to which Good Environmental Status has been achieved for eutrophication (D5) Source: UK Marine Online Assessment Tool – The extent to which Good Environmental Status has been achieved for eutrophication (D5)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: Reporting is based on the OSPAR common indicators (2015-2020) reported for the Eutrophication Thematic Assessment report under the OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023, alongside outcomes of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (now known as Water Environment Regulations (WER) for England and Wales only) assessments for coastal waterbodies (2014-2019). There are three indicators overall; multi-metric (for WER/WFD) and chlorophyll 'a' concentration (for OSPAR); dissolved oxygen levels; and winter dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) levels. There are other eutrophication indicators not considered here, but that

¹¹ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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should be for future assessments.

Source: [UK Marine Online Assessment Tool – The extent to which Good Environmental Status has been achieved for eutrophication \(D5\)](#)

National Indicator 7.b: Air pollution: area affected by acidity and area affected by nitrogen (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Air pollution: area affected by acidity and area affected by nitrogen)

Table 1: Assessment of change in the area of sensitive terrestrial UK habitat exceeding critical loads.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Air pollution affected by acidity and area affected by nitrogen](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Area affected by acidity	Long term	2003 to 2021	Improving
Area affected by acidity	Short term	2016 to 2021	Improving
Area affected by nitrogen	Long term	2003 to 2021	Improving
Area affected by nitrogen	Short term	2016 to 2021	Improving

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator shows the proportion of sensitive habitat that is affected by two major impacts of air pollution: acidification; and the excessive richness of nitrogen (eutrophication).

The data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile on the [JNCC's Resource Hub](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Air pollution affected by acidity and area affected by nitrogen](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average.

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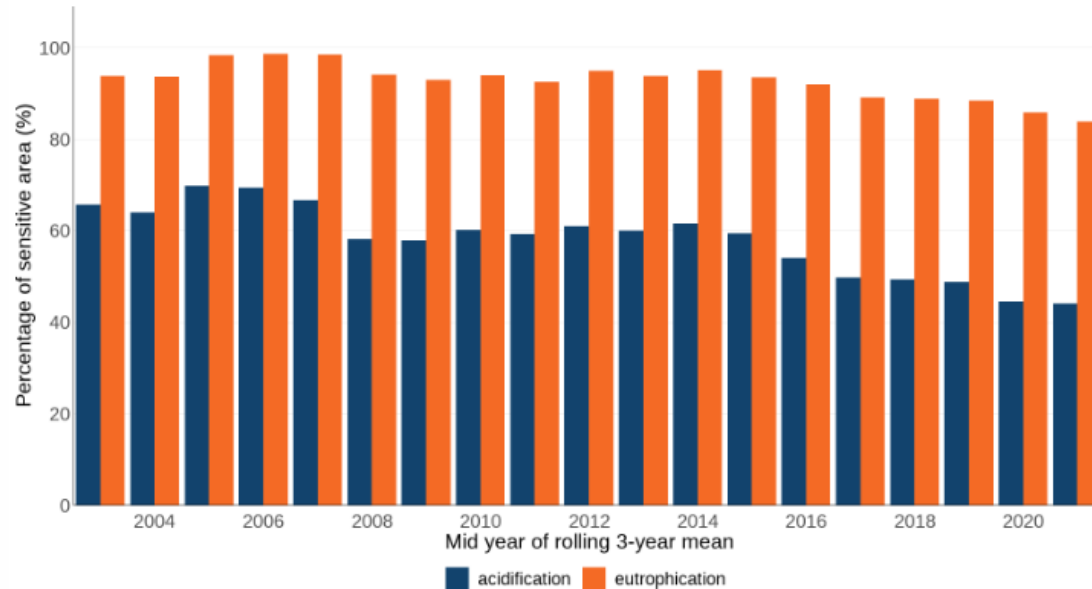


Figure 1: Percentage area of sensitive terrestrial UK habitats exceeding critical loads for acidification and eutrophication, in the UK, 2003 to 2021

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Air pollution affected by acidity and area affected by nitrogen](#)

Figure 1:

Each bar represents a rolling three-year average of deposition data. To reduce the effects of year-to-year variation in meteorology, exceedance statistics are reported as the mean of three years of data. In Figure 3, time periods are referred to using the middle year of the three. For example, “2020” means the period 2019 to 2021.

National Indicator 7.c: Surface water status (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status, SDG Indicator 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality)

Table: Assessment of change in the percentage of UK surface water bodies in ‘High’ or ‘Good’ ecological status over the long term and short term to 2024.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status](#)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator shows the percentage of surface water bodies in each ecological status classification and assesses the change in the percentage of water bodies in the UK awarded

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Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Percentage of UK surface water bodies in 'High' or 'Good' ecological status	Long term	2009 to 2024	Little or no overall change
Percentage of UK surface water bodies in 'High' or 'Good' ecological status	Short term	2019 to 2024	Little or no overall change

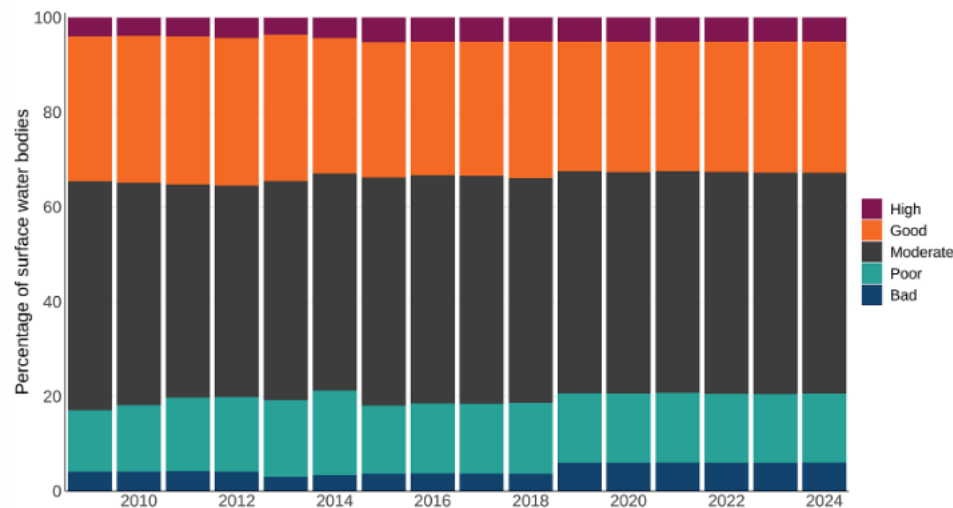


Figure 1: Status classification of UK surface water bodies under the Water Framework Directive, 2009 to 2024

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status](#)

a good or high surface water status classification under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2017 Regulations. Around 10,000 water body assessments are included in the indicator each year: including rivers, canals, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters.

This year's update includes revisions to the time series data to correct errors found in the England, Scotland and Wales data.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1:

Based on numbers of surface water bodies classified under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Includes rivers, canals (Northern Ireland does not report on canals), lakes, estuaries and coastal water bodies.

A water body is a management unit, as defined by the relevant authorities.

Water bodies that are heavily modified or artificial are included in this indicator alongside natural water bodies. Heavily modified or artificial water bodies are

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classified as good, moderate, poor or bad 'ecological potential'. Results have been combined; for example, the number of water bodies with a high-status classification has been added to the number of heavily modified or artificial water bodies with high ecological potential.

The results published each year relate to data reported in that year under the WFD; data reported in a given year relate to data collected over the previous year (for Scotland) and previous three-year period (for England, Wales and Northern Ireland). This indicator was updated in 2024 with new data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. To calculate totals for the 2024 data point, the most recent classification data available at the time of publication was: 2023 (cycle 3) for Scotland; 2024 (cycle 3) for Northern Ireland; 2024 (cycle 3) for Wales and 2019 (cycle 2) for England. Classifications are valid until they are next assessed; therefore, for years where a country does not report, their latest available data are carried forward.

The percentage of water bodies in each status classification has been calculated based on the total number of water bodies assessed in each year.

The total number of assessments varies slightly from year to year (see Table 2).

This year's update includes revisions to the time series data to correct errors found in the England, Scotland and Wales data.

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	National Indicator 7.d: Bryophyte nitrogen in Scotland Source: Scotland's Environment – Bryophyte nitrogen in Scotland	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator has been created by linking bryophyte (moss and liverwort) records in the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) to information on the habitat preferences of the different species from BRYOATT. Source: Scotland's Environment – Bryophyte nitrogen in Scotland
	National Indicator 7.e: Nitrate levels in water in Jersey Source: Jersey Water 2024 Water Quality Report – Nitrate levels in water in Jersey	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: Source: Jersey Water 2024 Water Quality Report – Nitrate levels in water in Jersey
	National Indicator 7.f: The extent to which Good Environmental Status has been achieved for marine litter abundance, composition and trends of beach litter (D10) Source: UK Marine Online Assessment Tool – The extent to which Good Environmental Status has been achieved for marine litter abundance, composition and trends of beach litter (D10)	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Target 7

Comments:

To determine whether GES has been achieved for marine litter, three indicators are assessed against three criteria and targets. These indicators look to measure abundance and trends of litter found on beaches, trends in seafloor litter collected during annual ship-based surveys, and trends in litter found in fulmar stomachs. The latter is used as a proxy for floating litter on the sea surface.

Source: [UK Marine Online Assessment Tool – The extent to which Good Environmental Status has been achieved for marine litter abundance, composition and trends of beach litter \(D10\)](#)

7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Environmental Pollution Programme in Vietnam

Integrated pest management (IPM) approaches have become a central tool in helping farmers in Vietnam to transition toward more environmentally responsible methods while ensuring economic viability.

Research conducted as part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' [Environmental Pollution Programme \(EPP\)](#) revealed Vietnam's heavy reliance on pesticides. Initial findings showed that Vietnam applied an average of 16.2 kg of pesticides per hectare, far exceeding neighbouring countries such as Thailand (8.4 kg/ha), Cambodia (2.9 kg/ha) and Laos (0.1 kg/ha). These levels of use were having significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health. Interviews found that over 50% of farmers misused pesticides, often failing to read hazard labels, disregarding proper application techniques and neglecting personal protective equipment. These practices contributed to soil degradation, water contamination and declining pollinator populations whilst also restricting access to global markets due to excessive pesticide residues on crops.

In collaboration with Vietnamese agricultural institutions, the EPP launched the IPM training programme, promoting safer practices, reducing pesticide overuse and demonstrating their viability. The project facilitated formal and informal education, ensuring that farmers received not only technical training but could understand and share that knowledge with peers in their context. Through adopting IPM approaches, farmers involved in the initiative

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had lower pesticide costs through reduced use, improved crop quality and expanded market access, making sustainability a feasible long-term approach and reinforcing the idea that pollution reduction could be both an environmentally responsible and economically beneficial strategy.

Since the EPP's inception, significant strides have been made:

- 18,085 attendees have participated in workshops, broadening their understanding of sustainable farming techniques such as visual pest monitoring, weed management and compost application.
- Of the 18,085 attendees, 5,229 individual farmers have received direct IPM training, benefiting from hands-on education on pesticide reduction and soil health preservation.
- 22 educational sessions have engaged 1,381 participants, including farmers, students, local authorities and representatives of civil society organisations.

The adoption of IPM techniques has delivered tangible environmental benefits. Within the first year of implementation, pesticide use saw a significant decline – fungicide application in coffee farms dropped by 41% and pesticide use in tea farms fell by 48%. These reductions had positive outcomes for biodiversity protection, soil integrity preservation and water ecosystems.

Beyond direct pesticide and fungicide reduction, farmers are adopting biological pest control methods, such as natural predator introduction and crop rotation, which strengthen ecosystem resilience and ensure long-term biodiversity conservation.

The use of IPM techniques and reduction of reliance on pesticides has opened up new income opportunities, through crop diversification and biological pest control, for women and other marginalised groups in those rural areas. The IPM training has also targeted providing women with education in sustainable farming, financial literacy and leadership, empowering them to make informed decisions. It has also reduced health risks from pesticide exposure, which particularly impact on women, children and the elderly.

One of the most significant aspects of the initiative is its scalability and transboundary impact. Agricultural pollution extends beyond national borders, affecting regional ecosystems and global agricultural sustainability. Regional adoption is vital to address the transboundary nature of pesticide pollution, alongside the need for collaborative efforts to mitigate this risk at an international level. Similar IPM strategies are being adopted in China and Indonesia, signalling a broader shift toward sustainable farming across Southeast Asia.

Overall, the EPP has proven that sustainable agricultural practices can deliver both environmental and economic rewards. Through policy integration, capacity-building, and financial sustainability, the work on IPM aligns with global biodiversity goals, demonstrating how pesticide pollution reduction efforts can be successfully implemented at a regional level and expanded nationally. By continuing to support sustainable farming practices, reducing pesticide inputs and encouraging regional cooperation the EPP sets a precedent for future efforts to protect biodiversity, strengthen agricultural resilience and foster economic growth in ways that harmonise with environmental sustainability.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

Target 8

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 8

Minimise the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and build resilience

The UK will minimise the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimising negative impacts and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK has advanced a wide range of measures to mitigate climate change, with progress driven by legally binding commitments and strategic plans. As required by the Paris Agreement, the UK has set ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and at least 81% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels – excluding international aviation and shipping emissions. The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 made the UK the first country to introduce a legally binding, long-term emissions reduction target, and sets our commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050 in law. In addition, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have all put in place national climate change legislation.

The Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3), published in 2023, set out the actions that the Government and others will take to [adapt to the impacts of climate change](#) from 2023 to 2028. For England and reserved matters, NAP3 set out 18 goals to reduce risks to the natural environment and strengthen resilience. Actions focus on creating, restoring and connecting wildlife-rich habitats, reducing pressures such as pollution and climate change, and maintaining healthy ecosystems – woodlands, peatlands and marine habitats – that store carbon and support biodiversity. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission are ensuring new woodlands consider current and future climate conditions in design and species choice, including spatial targeting of woodland creation grants, integrating with the Land Use Framework.

In the marine environment, the UK supports research and monitoring through the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership and contributes to global efforts via the Ocean Acidification Observing Network. Devolved Governments and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are also acting. Through its Biodiversity Strategy, Scotland has committed to restoring and regenerating biodiversity by 2045 to ensure ecosystems adapt to climate change, while Wales updated its Climate Adaptation Strategy in 2024. The Isle of Man has completed a Climate Risk and Opportunities Assessment. The Cayman Islands adopted a Climate Change Policy for 2024–2050, setting out actions for adaptation and mitigation. In the Falkland Islands, the Environment Strategy 2021–2040 and a developing climate change adaptation and mitigation plan aim to minimise impacts and inform disaster risk reduction.

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The UK is advancing nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In England, the Nature for Climate Fund, extended to March 2026, supports woodland expansion and peatland restoration, and schemes such as the England Woodland Creation Offer incentivise woodland creation. Peatlands are restored and protected through an £85 million investment in peatland restoration by 2030 and strengthened moorland burning regulations. Environmental Land Management schemes are replacing area-based payments, with £5.9 billion committed to environmental farming schemes, and £25 million awarded to the Landscape Recovery scheme in 2023 to support nature restoration and sustainable food production. Natural flood management is being scaled up, supported by new evidence tools and a £300 million investment over 10 years to deliver flood defences that also benefit nature. Scotland has ambitious woodland and peatland programmes, including £250 million for peatland restoration by 2030 and a rainforest regeneration strategy. Wales combines woodland creation incentives with its Sustainable Farming Scheme and a National Peatland Action Programme. Northern Ireland is restoring peatlands through the Shared Island Initiative, aiming to restore 4,000 ha and cut emissions by 6,000 tonnes annually. Marine and coastal restoration is also a priority. The 'Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed' project concluded in 2024, protecting seagrass meadows and supporting carbon storage, with ongoing work through initiatives such as Solent Seascape and the 'Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef' initiative, which aims to restore 15% of priority coastal habitats by 2043.

The UK ensures climate action supports biodiversity through robust standards and planning processes. Renewable energy expansion under the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan includes mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain for solar projects and rigorous environmental assessments for onshore wind. Offshore wind growth and environmental protection is supported by the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package, which introduces Marine Recovery Funds, wider environmental compensatory measures for unavoidable impacts to Marine Protected Areas, and best practice standards to accelerate deployment while restoring marine ecosystems. UK Overseas Territories, such as the Falkland Islands, also integrate safeguards into climate strategies to minimise negative impacts.

Regarding the main actions under Target 8:

Minimise the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity, through mitigation

The UK has progressed multiple activities and measures that contribute to mitigating climate change. There has been progress on the development of strategies and delivery plans that contribute toward reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. In 2025, the UK submitted our 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution¹ (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which commits the UK to reducing all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 81% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This is an ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction target, covering all greenhouse gases, sectors and categories and aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5 °C, as set out in the Global Stocktake, agreed at UNFCCC COP28. In 2022, in response to the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact, the UK revisited our 2030 NDC to ensure it remains a fair and ambitious contribution

¹ The NDCs for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland encompasses emissions and removals from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK's NDCs also includes emissions and removals from the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies included within the UK's ratification of the Paris Agreement – this is currently the Bailiwick of Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man and Gibraltar.

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to global action on climate change. The target – to reduce all gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030 on 1990 levels (originally announced in December 2020) – remains in place.

The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 made the UK the first country to introduce a legally binding, long-term emissions reduction target. This sets our commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050 in law. The Act also requires the UK to set Carbon Budgets, which are five-year caps on emissions levels. They are cross-economy targets with the flexibility to deliver across sectors. Carbon budgets are set 12 years in advance. Carbon Budget 6 (2033–2037) was set in 2021 and the Carbon Budget 7 (2037–2042) level will need to be set by June 2026. The UK is currently in the fourth carbon budget, which runs from 2023 to 2027. As well as being covered by the Climate Change Act 2008, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have separate climate change legislation. In Northern Ireland, the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 has set a target of net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, with an interim target of at least a 48% reduction in net emissions by 2030. The Act also sets other sectoral targets, including some with deadlines of 2030. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 commits Scotland to reaching net zero emissions by 2045 and requires the Scottish Ministers to set five-year carbon budgets. In Wales, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 aims for net zero emissions by 2050 and mandates the Welsh Ministers to set carbon budgets and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

National and sector-specific strategies are in place to progress climate change mitigation across the four countries of the UK. Scotland has set forestry and agricultural sector targets to reduce sectoral impacts of climate change. Wales has continued to implement Net Zero Wales, which sets out their journey to achieve net zero by 2050. England's strategy for net zero rail by 2050 focuses on being more efficient with where electrification is delivered and considers both track and train in plans. All Protected Landscapes in England are incorporating ambitious targets into their management plans following publication of the Protected Landscape Targets and [Environmental Indicator Framework](#) in December 2025. This includes action on peat restoration and tree planting and achieving net zero.

The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan sets out the Government's commitment to deliver clean power by 2030 by accelerating the deployment of renewables, including offshore wind, onshore wind, and solar.

Transport is the UK's largest carbon emitting sector. Ending its reliance on fossil fuels with the rollout of clean technology and availability of clean energy at the scale and in the locations needed is vital to 'accelerate to net zero'. The Vehicle Emissions Trading Schemes Order, which creates the Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate, came into force in Great Britain on 3 January 2024 and applied to the UK (including Northern Ireland) from 1 January 2025. In April 2025, the Government noted that new cars sold between 2030 and 2035 would need to be hybrid or zero-emission; car manufacturers would also need to reduce their non-zero emission car CO₂ emissions by 10% compared to 2021 levels during this period. The Government is providing considerable support for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), including establishing the SAF Mandate, introducing the SAF Bill to implement a revenue certainty mechanism and provided £63 million funding for the 2025/2026 financial year to increase SAF production across the UK.

In the UK Crown Dependencies, a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 has been set in Guernsey, with an interim reduction target of 57% by 2030, relative to 1990 levels. The Government of Guernsey has committed to making this target legally binding. The Government of the Isle of Man has set targets to reduce emissions from the agriculture sector and has set up a project for farmers to calculate their farm emissions using a free online tool. The Land Management Framework, currently in development, will be a guidance tool to support decision-making on land use and management in line with the Isle of Man's net zero commitment. Since January 2025, public bodies in the Isle of Man are required to undertake a Climate Change Impact Assessment for all policy decisions, which helps them assess their proposals and activities for compliance with their climate

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change duties, including any biodiversity impacts. The Isle of Man also maintains one of the longest time-series in Europe for marine monitoring data back to 1904, including trends in ocean acidity.

In the UK Overseas Territories, the Cayman Islands Government approved the national [Climate Change Policy 2024–2050](#). This outlines 74 strategic actions, covering both adaptation and mitigation needs, to achieve the following goals: 1) become more resilient to climate change; 2) achieve a sustainable, low carbon economy; and 3) govern climate action fairly and transparently, with future generations in mind. The Gibraltar [Climate Change Act 2019](#) is the main legislative instrument to drive down emissions in Gibraltar. The [Climate Change Strategy](#) published in 2021 sets out short, medium and long term targets across the energy, transport and building sectors, as well as general cross cutting measures to deliver the legally binding emissions target of net zero by 2045.

Minimise the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience, through adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions

The UK has progressed multiple activities and measures that contribute to minimising the impacts on biodiversity of climate change through adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions. The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 requires the UK to report, as part of a five-year cycle, on its assessment of climate change risks facing the UK and its adaptation plans to address those risks. The UK Government's Third Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3), published in 2022, and Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3), published in 2023, cover those areas falling within scope of the UK Government's responsibilities in relation to England, and its non-devolved functions in relation to the rest of the UK. The independent assessment that will inform the Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment (due 2027) is due to be published by the Climate Change Committee this year (2026).

For England and reserved matters, NAP3 sets out 18 goals relevant to addressing the risks and opportunities to the natural environment from climate change and increasing its resilience and adaptation to a changing climate. Each goal is underpinned by a number of actions to ensure delivery, many of which are linked to the legally binding statutory biodiversity targets set in the Environment Act 2021, including the apex target to halt and reverse declines in species abundance, and to the actions set out in the [Environmental Improvement Plan 2025](#). In particular, NAP3 sets out the following goals to reduce the risk of climate change to terrestrial species and habitats: 1) to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030; 2) to protect 30% of land in England in a way that recognises and responds to climate change risks by 2030; and 3) to facilitate the movement and expansion of native species within the UK in response to climate change opportunities. To achieve the biodiversity goals in NAP3, the Government is taking action to create, restore and connect wildlife-rich habitats and ecosystem functions, including those most at risk from climate change, and to increase resilience of integrated landscapes. The Government will also reduce pressures on species including pollution and climate change and take targeted action to recover specific species. The Government is taking action to maintain and create healthy, naturally functioning habitats, including woodlands, peatlands and marine habitats, which will also store carbon securely and reduce greenhouse gas emissions whilst increasing biodiversity and increasing the resilience of these carbon stores for future climate conditions.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges temperate woodlands are facing, and trees can only help mitigate the impact of a changing climate if they are resilient. In 2023, Forest Research launched a [Climate Change Resilience Hub](#) with information and tools, particularly aimed at landowners, woodland managers and forestry practitioners, for managing and planting woodlands for the future. Landowners and woodland managers should

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actively manage, increase diversity and maintain tree health so they are fit for the future. The hub was funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and includes resources such as the Forestry Commission's climate adaptation guide for forest managers – the UK Forestry Standard Practice Guide: 'Adapting forest and woodland management to the changing climate'.

Through the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP), the UK is improving understanding of the impacts of climate change, including ocean acidification. Defra have funded MCCIP to undertake work to develop understanding of marine ecosystem impacts under projected future climate scenarios, helping to address risks in the CCRA3, implement NAP3, and beyond. Additional action includes supporting the sharing of ocean acidification monitoring data and information throughout the Northeast Atlantic via support for the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network.

In England, Defra and the Forestry Commission will ensure that new woodlands have current and future climate conditions considered in their design and species choice. This will include considering options for spatial targeting of woodland creation grants for resilient woodlands, integrating with the Land Use Framework. Grant applications for new woodland will be evaluated by 2030 to assess progress against this action. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy recognises that the global climate emergency and the nature emergency are twin reinforcing crises. Its vision is that "by 2045, Scotland will have restored and regenerated biodiversity across our land, freshwater and seas. Scottish natural environment, habitats, ecosystems and species, will be diverse, thriving, resilient and adapting to climate change." Wales published an update to their Climate Adaption Strategy in late 2024.

On the Isle of Man, a Climate Risk and Opportunities Assessment has been completed, which categorises the risks from the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, and an adaptation strategy is due to follow.

The Cayman Islands Government has approved the national [Climate Change Policy 2024–2050](#), which outlines 74 strategic actions, covering both adaptation and mitigation needs. In the Falkland Islands, the Environment Strategy 2021–2040 has been developed, outlining strategic objectives and actions to prevent and minimize the impacts of climate change. The development of the Falkland Islands climate change adaptation and mitigation plan has progressed, with data being gathered that can be used to inform mitigation, adaptation, and disaster reduction actions.

Internationally, the UK is a founding member of the International Partnership on MPAs, Biodiversity and Climate Change, an alliance of government agencies and organisations from across the world, working together to progress the evidence base around the role of marine protected areas (MPAs) and biodiversity in tackling climate change. The Partnership has recently supported the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with their Technical Report [Establishing Marine Protected Areas in a Changing Climate](#), which aims to inform the planning, design, and implementation of new and expanded protected and conserved areas at the community, national, and international levels. It focuses on why it is important to consider climate change in planning, and how new areas can be established in ways that build climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation. This guidance will help relevant government agencies and non-governmental organizations working towards the 30by30 target, with climate considerations for new MPAs, as well as the climate-adaptive management of existing MPAs.

Apply nature-based solutions and the ecosystems-based approach in minimising climate change/ocean acidification impacts and increasing resilience

The UK is taking a variety of actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts through nature-based solutions and the ecosystems-based approach.

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Trees are at the forefront of our plans to tackle the climate crisis. In 2024, a Tree Planting Taskforce was launched to support UK-wide plans to plant millions more trees across the UK. From May to August 2024, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) launched a consultation regarding Integrating Greenhouse Gas Removals into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), which considered inclusion of the Woodland Carbon Code as a nature-based greenhouse gas removal. Following this consultation and concerns raised by stakeholders, the ETS Authority has explored additional safeguards and assessed new evidence that suggests there is a strong case for integrating woodland in the UK ETS and it plans further engagement with stakeholders to discuss the evidence. The Authority has not yet decided on woodland inclusion. Defra is exploring a Woodland Carbon Purchase Fund to provide upfront payments for woodland carbon.

The UK has commenced work on a National Wetland Inventory expected to be available in 2026 in support of the Ramsar Convention, which will provide a publicly accessible digital repository of information on UK wetlands and enable a better understanding of the status of sites across the UK. The inventory will incorporate data layers on several wetland-related habitats, thereby supporting the delivery of net-zero targets, carbon budget planning and the development and application of nature-based solutions for the effective restoration, conservation, and wise use of wetlands.

The UK is supporting the development of a Saltmarsh Code, which will help drive investment flows from the private sector towards restoration of saltmarsh habitats. The code will initially operate as a carbon code – acting as a rigorous certification to enable saltmarsh carbon to be marketed and traded as a carbon offset. Increased saltmarsh habitat extent will support better mitigation and adaption to climate change on our coasts.

The [UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership](#) (UKBCEP) has been established to bring together science and policy experts from across the UK administrations to fill critical evidence gaps to better understand and restore vital blue carbon habitats, such as saltmarsh, seagrass, kelp, and marine sediments. In 2025, UKBCEP launched its new website, including its new Blue Carbon Projects Directory, which will capture ongoing and historic blue carbon research from across the UK. This in turn will help facilitate better alignment between organisations and improve our understanding of the evidence gaps. While restoration policy is devolved, some action is underway across the UK to support the restoration of estuarine, coastal and marine habitats.

The UK Government recently published the '[actions to jointly address climate change and biodiversity loss in England](#)' report, setting out how the government is delivering its key commitments on climate and nature in an integrated way, and the opportunities to further enhance an integrated approach.

In England, establishing more native broadleaf and mixed broadleaf and conifer woodlands will play an important role in contributing to statutory climate targets. Defra is supporting tree planting through carefully designed financial incentives. The Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) was set up in 2020 to co-deliver nature restoration and climate mitigation in England through expanding and enhancing woodland cover, as well as through restoring, protecting and better managing peatland. The NCF has been extended to March 2026. The [England Woodland Creation Offer](#) (EWCO) includes supplements that incentivise the creation and restoration of native woodland with high biodiversity potential, and for creating woodlands via natural regeneration. EWCO applicants could receive up to £10,200 per hectare to cover the eligible standard capital costs of woodland creation, such as buying and planting trees, plus up to an additional £12,700 when delivering wider benefits to society, including nature recovery. Funding to support the planning of high quality woodlands is available through the [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#).

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Scotland has an ambitious woodland creation programme. It has implemented its strategic approach for Scotland's rainforest, which aims to improve its condition and health so that it can regenerate and expand whilst providing benefits to communities. The current 11 focus projects cover 300,000 ha and include almost 40% of Scotland's remaining core rainforest. These projects have the potential to expand core rainforest areas by 10,000 ha. Wales also has ambitious woodland creation targets with generous incentives offered through Woodland Creation Grants. The new Sustainable Farming Scheme will further encourage tree planting by requiring all farmers joining the scheme to plant a minimum of 0.1 ha of trees by the end of 2028, and further funding will be available to incentivise this.

Peatland is a key habitat for biodiversity and for carbon capture. In England, by 2030, Defra will invest £85 million to restore and manage peatlands, including support for water infrastructure, peatland restoration and trials of farming on higher water tables, including paludiculture.

The new England Peat Map marks a significant advancement in national peatland data infrastructure. It is the first national-scale dataset to model the extent, depth, condition, and surface features of peat and peaty soils across England. It integrates satellite imagery, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), field surveys, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) modelling to produce a comprehensive spatial representation of peatland characteristics. Key successes of the map include its national coverage, technological innovation, and collaborative data integration. We are investing further improvements that will deliver an enhanced national peat extent and depth model, with a specific focus on improving the representation of lowland peat areas. We will explore a hybrid mapping-modelling approach to create UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory compatible outputs that will be used to provide annual estimates of emissions.

In September 2025, Defra amended the Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2021, to enhance the protection of English upland peatlands by expanding restrictions on burning practices while maintaining an effective licensing scheme. Key changes include extending coverage to Less Favoured Areas, lowering the peat depth threshold from 40cm to 30cm, and prohibiting burning on blanket bogs unless licensed under the revised grounds for application. The regulations align with broader climate and biodiversity goals and are supported by a new Heather and Grass Management Code to guide sustainable land management.

In Scotland, under the [Peatland ACTION programme](#), £250 million was committed over 10 years to restore 250,000 ha of degraded peat by 2030. In Wales, a National Peatland Action Programme has been established to drive peatland restoration. This programme prioritises action across the main areas of peatland damage for the combined benefit of biodiversity, decarbonisation and other ecosystem services. The programme is complemented by other peatland projects including those funded through EU LIFE, National Parks, Heritage Lottery and landowners. Northern Ireland published a [peatland strategy](#) in September 2025 to set the long-term vision for peatland protection, restoration and maintenance to 2040, and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has committed £8 million to deliver peatland restoration across Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency has partnered with National Parks and Wildlife Services in the Republic of Ireland (via the LIFE Integrated Project, 'Wild Atlantic Nature'), and NatureScot, on behalf of the Peatland ACTION Partnership in the Shared Island Initiative Peatland Programme. This cross-border peatlands restoration programme aims to reduce carbon emissions of 6,000 tonnes of carbon per year and restore 4,000 ha of blanket bog within and adjacent to protected sites across Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The partnership has provided £2.7 million to Northern Ireland's Peatland Challenge Fund, which will deliver 450 ha of on-the-ground restoration and restoration plans for 5,000 ha.

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In England, targeted Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes that incentivise farmers to deliver biodiversity and wider environment outcomes, including climate change mitigation, are replacing area-based payments. The Government is investing £5.9 billion in environmental farming schemes, including £1.8 billion in 2025/2026 for ELM, to accelerate the transition to a more resilient and sustainable farming sector (see Target 10 for further details of this scheme). Of the ELM schemes, Countryside Stewardship pays farmers, land managers and foresters to manage land in a way that protects, restores or enhances the environment and mitigates the effects of climate change. In 2023, the Landscape Recovery scheme awarded £25 million to support the development of projects focusing on nature restoration and sustainable food production across 200,000 ha, focusing on net zero, protected sites and wildlife-rich habitats. Similar schemes are being rolled out across Northern Ireland, such as the Farming with Nature scheme delivered under the Sustainable Agriculture Programme, which aims to transition to a more sustainable farming sector by implementing policies and strategies that benefit our climate and environment while supporting our economically and socially significant agri-food sector.

Scotland's [Vision for Agriculture and Agri Reform Route Map](#) sets out a Just Transition to regenerative and sustainable agriculture through a framework for supporting high quality food production; climate mitigation and adaptation; nature restoration; and wider rural development. In Wales, the Sustainable Farming Scheme aims to support Welsh farmers in producing food sustainably while addressing environmental challenges

The latest national flood risk assessment for England, published in 2024, shows an increase in flooding risk and forecasts further increases in flooding due to climate change. Natural flood management (NFM) is playing an increasingly prominent role in our approach to mitigating flood risk, providing wider benefits for environment and society such as carbon reduction, environmental enhancement, and improving water quality and water resources. The floods investment programme delivers a range of schemes, including NFM, alongside wider government investment such as the ELM schemes.

On 14 October 2025, following consultation, Defra announced major changes to its flood and coastal erosion funding policy for England. The reforms will make it quicker and easier to deliver the right flood defences in the right places by simplifying our funding rules. We will invest at least £300 million in NFM over 10 years – the highest figure to date for the floods programme. These changes will support projects that not only reduce flood risk but also deliver wider benefits to communities and nature.

In 2025, the Environment Agency published an update to the 'Working with Natural Processes Evidence Directory'. This enables policy makers and practitioners to access information that explains the benefits of NFM measures, helping to increase confidence in the evidence underpinning this innovative approach. The Environment Agency is also working to develop a NFM Benefits Tool to provide a nationally consistent way of assessing flood risk and wider benefits from NFM projects. This will help us to focus on developing NFM projects in locations where they can have greater flood risk benefits. The Environment Agency has published the high-level method and assumptions on which the tool is based.

In 2024 in England, a £2.5 million EU-funded five-year project, 'Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed' (ReMEDIES) concluded. The programme was established to protect and restore seabed habitats from their unfavourable condition across five Special Areas of Conservation in southern England. The project protected seagrass meadows, thereby enhancing their ability to store carbon. An AfterLIFE plan has been developed to continue the work of ReMEDIES through various other projects now ongoing, including Solent Seascape, Plymouth Marine National Park and Transforming the Thames. The 'Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef' (ReMeMaRe) initiative aims to reverse centuries of decline of estuarine and coastal habitats in England by removing barriers to the restoration of seagrass meadows, saltmarsh and native oyster reefs, and restoring at least 15% of our priority habitat along the English coast by 2043.

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Three Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) were designated in English waters in 2023 to protect the entire marine ecosystem within their boundaries and aim for full recovery to a natural state. The HPMAs designation process included consideration of climate related ecosystem services as part of the site selection criteria. These HPMAs protect a variety of important habitats and species, including those considered blue carbon habitats. Northern Ireland has also published the [Northern Ireland Blue Carbon Action Plan](#) in April 2025 and Scotland has published a [Scottish blue carbon action plan](#).

In Wales, Project Seagrass received £248,008 from the Welsh Government through round three of the Nature Networks Fund to support the project on Facilitating Accelerated Nature Networks for Seagrass (FANNS). This represents a significant boost for the long-term recovery of seagrass, which is a key habitat known to store and sequester carbon, as well as improving biodiversity in South Wales. The project aims to create a joined-up strategy of seagrass restoration and conservation action for South Wales across the Severn Estuary, Pembrokeshire Marine and Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries Special Areas of Conservation.

On the Isle of Man, the [Manx Peat Partnership](#) has been set up to restore an initial 500 ha by March 2026 and a further 2,700 ha over five years. The Manx Blue Carbon Project is taking an inclusive approach to looking after the island's blue carbon resources. Surveys have been carried out to assess the extent of these resources and their sequestration rates, and a resource map and conservation strategy are due to be published in 2025.

The Government of Jersey is developing a Tree Framework to capture and review all the tree-related activities undertaken across the island by government, private businesses and land owners, recognising that Jersey's trees have not been managed in a coordinated manner, have suffered significant effects recently from new pests and diseases, and may be undergoing stress due to climate change. The framework will record current activities, coordinate stakeholders, seek funding, promote biosecure local planting, and manage actions through a Geographic Information System (GIS) platform. It will embed best practice, such as resistant varieties and species mixes, onward management, and 'right tree, right place', to enhance Jersey's tree stock, its biodiversity, and carbon capture.

In Guernsey, the Government has agreed that its climate change policy should be closely linked to its Strategy for Nature, which recognises nature's role in mitigation and adaptation. The development of the island adaptation strategy will seek to utilise nature-based solutions to support other interventions. An assessment of blue carbon resources in Guernsey's waters, along with recommendations for their future management and optimisation, has been produced. Guernsey's recent net zero strategy outlines the important role of nature in sequestration, and the need for additional understanding in the marine environment.

In Gibraltar, a Darwin Plus Local-funded project, led by the Nautilus Project, seeks to restore seagrass meadows within the British Gibraltar Territorial Waters. The Gibraltar Climate Change Strategy also recognises the importance of nature-based solutions like these. The Falkland Islands' Environment Strategy 2021–2040 sets out objectives and actions to prevent and reduce climate change impacts, including increasing understanding of how native ecosystems can help mitigate and offset carbon emissions. In 2022, the Cayman Islands National Tree Planting Programme was established to plant native fruit trees in urban and community spaces.

Minimise negative impacts of climate action on biodiversity and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity

The UK is taking action to minimise the negative impacts of climate action on biodiversity, and to foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.

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A revised version of the UK Forestry Standard was published in 2023 and came into force in 2024. The UK Forestry Standard sets out how sustainable forest management should be delivered, including guidance on what tree and shrub species should be planted and where, to help deliver the full range of benefits possible from our trees and woodlands. The UKFS, along with other guidance and environmental regulations, ensures that all woodland creation does not only avoid harming native biodiversity or compromising other goals, but has clear benefits for the environment and climate. Compliance with the UKFS is a requirement for all new woodland receiving Government grants and where an opinion is sought under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations, which have been legislated in all four countries of the UK.

The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan sets out the Government's commitment to deliver clean power by 2030 by accelerating the deployment of renewables, including onshore wind, solar, and offshore wind. New energy infrastructure development can have impacts on the environment and wildlife, but the government is committed to ensuring that nature recovery is central to development, and at the heart of the clean energy mission.

The UK Government has committed to radically increasing onshore wind deployment across Great Britain to 27–29 GW by 2030. Onshore wind turbines can have local environmental impacts, both temporarily during construction (such as with noise disruption, soil displacement or air quality) or during operation. The government controls for this through the planning and consenting process, requiring extensive up-front surveying and for decision makers to ensure statutory Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) or Habitats Regulations Assessments are conducted as part of the planning determination. These assessments consider the likely impact on the environment and protected species and habitats. Should significant adverse impacts on species or habitats be predicted, developers must put in place measures to avoid, reduce, mitigate or compensate for these impacts. There are very few examples in the UK of poorly sited wind farms causing degradation to local environment and nature, with developers often committing to go further to create, restore and enhance habitats and the environment.

The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan sets out the need to deliver a significant expansion in offshore wind capacity of between 43–50 GW by 2030. The Government is implementing the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package (OWEIP), which will help accelerate offshore wind delivery whilst improving action to protect and restore the marine environment. The OWEIP will increase the options available to compensate for unavoidable impacts to Marine Protected Areas and introduce one or more Marine Recovery Funds to deliver these measures strategically, support investments in wildlife, develop best practice environmental standards for design and improve monitoring. Taken together, this package should reduce costs and speed up deployment of offshore wind whilst driving protection of the marine environment.

The UK Government's ambition is to rapidly accelerate solar deployment across Great Britain to 45–47 GW by 2030, with scope to exceed this, subject to system need. Large-scale solar projects are required to complete EIAs as part of their applications for planning permission. Smaller solar projects must demonstrate a net biodiversity gain of 10% compared to the site's previous use, and the Government plans to extend this requirement to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects from May 2026.

There is evidence that solar farms can improve biodiversity where installed on agricultural land. Well-designed and well managed solar farms can support a range of ecosystem services, including agriculture (sheep grazing, supporting pollinators species), regulating air quality, mitigating flood risk, creating new habitats and reducing carbon emissions. A new study by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the University of Cambridge found that solar farms effectively managed for nature in East Anglia were seen to have, hectare for hectare, up to three times as many birds, and the greatest variety of bird species, compared to surrounding arable farmland.

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	In England, the Government aims to minimise potential conflict between new woodland planting and the protection of open habitats and associated species through EIAs and the requirement for all woodland creation projects to comply with the UK Forestry Standard, including by avoiding planting on priority habitat, protecting priority species, and ensuring new woodland contributes to climate adaptation goals. The UK Forestry Standard is supported by comprehensive guidance on Planning New Woodland in England. In the Falkland Islands, the Environment Strategy 2021–2040 includes several strategic objectives and actions that aim to prevent or minimise the impacts of climate change, including consideration of the potential negative environmental effects of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK has made notable progress in addressing climate change impacts on biodiversity, primarily through significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The UK is the first major economy to halve its emissions – having cut them by 53% between 1990 and 2023, while also growing its economy by over 80%. The UK has overachieved its targets for Carbon Budgets 1–3, is projected to overachieve on Carbon Budget 4–5 and has recently published its plans to meet Carbon Budget 6. Policy frameworks such as the Climate Change Act 2008 underpin these efforts. The UK is strengthening biodiversity adaptation to climate change and ocean acidification through implementing the Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3). In October 2025, the government responded to the Climate Change Committee's progress report, committing to stronger adaptation objectives, including planning assumptions for minimum climate scenarios and measurable targets across 14 priority systems. These will inform the Fourth National Adaptation Programme, due in 2028. The UK is scaling up nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change and enhance resilience. It is estimated that from 1990 to 2023, forests in the UK have cumulatively stored the equivalent of 590 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (Mt CO₂e). Scotland and Wales continue ambitious woodland programmes, while peatland restoration is accelerating: 14,206 ha were actively managed in England in 2024/2025, Scotland has restored over 51,000 ha under Peatland ACTION, and Wales has safeguarded an estimated 2.2 million tonnes of carbon and reduced emissions by an estimated 8,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year through its Welsh National Peatland Action Programme. Environmental farming schemes are driving nature recovery and climate mitigation in England, with £5.9 billion committed, including £1.8 billion in 2025/2026 for environmental land management (ELM). £500	

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million will be allocated to the first tranche of projects coming through the Landscape Recovery scheme in England, and Round 2 in 2023 awarded a share of around £25 million to 34 projects focusing on net zero and biodiversity. Natural flood management is expanding in England, supported by a £300 million investment over 10 years and 38 projects. Coastal and marine restoration in England includes seagrass planting, saltmarsh and oyster reef recovery through initiatives such as the 'Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed' (ReMEDIES) project and the 'Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef' (ReMeMaRe) initiative. The Crown Dependencies are also active: the Isle of Man Woodland Trust has planted 45,925 trees since 2020 and has restored approximately 500 ha of peatland, while the Blue Carbon Project has advanced blue carbon mapping. Jersey planted 6,000 trees in winter 2024/2025. Across the UK Overseas Territories, 9,809 people gained improved climate and disaster resilience between 2022 and 2025 through projects funded under the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)'s Darwin Plus programme.

The UK is minimising negative impacts of climate action through implementing the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package to accelerate offshore wind while protecting marine biodiversity. In 2024, the first three strategic compensatory measures were approved to offset unavoidable impacts of offshore wind developments. In 2025, the UK Government established a Marine Recovery Fund for England and Wales to deliver strategic environmental compensation, and consulted on Environmental Compensatory Measure Reforms, which will be implemented in 2026.

However, gaps remain in monitoring resilience to ocean acidification and ensuring biodiversity protection alongside green infrastructure development. There is also a lack of information on progress being made to minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience. Overall, further work is needed to integrate adaptation and biodiversity safeguards into climate action at the scale required.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 8:

Minimise the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity, through mitigation

The UK has halved its greenhouse gas emissions since 1990. By 2023, UK greenhouse gas emissions had reduced by 53% since 1990, which included a 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions (National Indicator 8.a). Between 2022 and 2023, there was a 6% fall in CO₂ emissions and a 5% reduction in all greenhouse gas emissions. Between 2005 and 2023, there was a 32% reduction in emissions from UK National Landscapes and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and a 39% reduction in emissions from UK National Parks, largely resulting from lower fossil fuel use.

The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 requires the UK to set Carbon Budgets, which are five-year caps on emissions levels. The UK has overachieved its targets for Carbon Budgets 1–3, is projected to overachieve on Carbon Budget 4–5 and has recently published its plans to meet Carbon Budget 6. In October 2025, the Government published the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, which sets out how the UK will continue to reduce emissions in a way that lowers bills and secures good jobs, in line with the Climate Change Act. It details the policies and proposals that will enable Carbon Budgets 4–6 to be met, as well as keeping us on the path to our 2030 and 2035 Nationally Determined Contributions. Some proposals and policies within the package also support other environmental objectives, such as biodiversity, air quality and climate adaptation. Nature-based solutions, such as tree-planting and peatland restoration, are a key part of the pathway to reducing our emissions, while also supporting other environmental goals.

In 2024, the UK was the largest electric vehicle market in Europe and the third largest in the world. Electrification is the most widespread method of decarbonising the railway. As of 31 March 2024, 71% of all passenger train operator rolling stock was electric. Diesel vehicles made up 19%, and 10% of the passenger fleet was either bi-mode or locomotive hauled. Seven of the twenty-four passenger operators have a fully electric fleet. In June 2025,

Target 8

through the Modern Industrial Strategy, the Government announced up to £2.3 billion funding over ten years to extend the Aerospace Technology Institute, supporting the development of next-generation sustainable technologies.

The Isle of Man has made progress on the implementation of their Climate Change Act, making progress towards their Land Management Framework. The Government of the Isle of Man's project for farmers to calculate their farm emissions using a free online tool has engaged approximately 120 farm businesses so far.

Minimise the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience, through adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions

The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 requires the UK to report, as part of a five-year cycle, on its assessment of climate change risks facing the UK and its adaptation plans to address those risks. The UK Government's Third Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3), published in 2022, and Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3), published in 2023, cover those areas falling within scope of the UK Government's responsibilities in relation to England, and its non-devolved functions in relation to the rest of the UK. For England and reserved matters, NAP3 sets out 18 goals relevant to reducing the risk to the natural environment from climate change and increasing its resilience and adaptation to a changing climate.

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) published an [independent statutory report](#) assessing progress in implementing NAP3. Headline, cross-sector recommendations from the Committee included the need for stronger adaptation objectives and targets, and more robust monitoring, evaluation and learning. Within the land, nature and food chapter, recommendations included ensuring the Land Use Framework addresses trade-offs and co-benefits between mitigation, adaptation, nature recovery and food security, and ensuring the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25) is embedded throughout government departments responsible for its goals. The CCC's overarching advice was that neither policies nor implementation are sufficient when it comes to supporting the resilience of nature.

The UK Government [published a response](#) to the CCC report on October 29 2025, highlighting the progress that it has made over the past two years in building resilience to the impacts of climate change. In response to the CCC's recommendations, the UK Government has committed to exploring how stronger adaptation objectives can be set to improve preparedness for the impacts of climate change. This will include agreeing planning assumptions of a minimum climate scenario for which the Government should be preparing, and a timeframe, with guidance from the CCC. Defra is supporting departments across government to develop stronger objectives and delivery plans across the fourteen systems identified for the Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment. The National Adaptation Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework will be used to guide the development of objectives and plans for implementation. All details will be set out in the Fourth National Adaptation Programme, due in 2028.

The Forestry Commission published its [climate change adaptation reporting fourth round report](#) in 2024. This was part of the fourth round of the adaptation reporting powers under the Climate Change Act 2008.

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Apply nature-based solutions and the ecosystems-based approach in minimising climate change/ocean acidification impacts and increasing resilience

It is estimated that from 1990 to 2023, forests in the UK have cumulatively stored the equivalent of 590 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (Mt CO₂e) (National Indicator 8.b).

Defra is investing more than £2.7 billion a year in farming and nature recovery across England. This includes environmental farming schemes (£5.9 billion), tree planting (£816 million) and peatlands (£85 million), making a significant contribution to Environment Act targets, water quality and biodiversity.

Woodland creation in England is accelerating: provisional data shows that more than 13,400 ha of woodland has been planted in England since March 2022, with planting rates increasing year-on-year since 2020/2021. In 2024/2025, woodland creation in England was at its highest level since 2002/2003, at 5,765 ha. Planting of trees outside woodland has also increased, with 888,000 trees (equivalent to 1,399 ha) planted outside woodland in 2024/2025. This trend in the data indicates positive progress towards achieving the statutory target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover to at least 16.5% of all land in England by 31 December 2050 and the new EIP25 interim target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover by 0.33% of England's land area by December 2030 (equivalent to a net increase of 43,000 ha). A Trees Action Plan for England will be published in 2026 to set out how Defra will work in partnership with the tree planting and forestry sector to achieve the new 2030 interim tree canopy and woodland cover target and improve the resilience and condition of trees and woodland, while delivering multiple benefits for nature, climate, people and the economy. Scotland's strategic approach for Scotland's rainforest is still in its early stages – about half of the projects are in the initial stages of delivery and the rest are still in development. In Wales, provisional statistics from Forest Research show that in the 2024/2025 planting season, 960 ha of woodland was created.

Through the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NCPGS), active restoration began on 5,606 ha of peatlands in England in 2024/2025, with works ongoing on a further 8,600 ha, giving a total of 14,206 ha. In 2023, a total area of 3,818 ha of peat in National Landscapes was committed for restoration under the NCPGS. This figure rose to 4,276 ha in 2024, representing an increase of 458 ha. There was a more substantial commitment within National Parks, with 11,437 ha in 2023 increasing to 13,550 ha in 2024 – an annual rise of 2,113 ha. Combined, the total area of peatland committed for restoration across all Protected Landscapes under the Scheme reached 15,255 ha in 2023 and 17,826 ha in 2024, representing an increase of 2,571 ha over a year. As of 2025, National Parks contain the largest areas of peatland, highlighting the significant role they play in conserving deep peat resources.

In Scotland, under the [Peatland ACTION programme](#), £250 million was committed over 10 years to restore 250,000 ha of degraded peat by 2030. To date, over 51,000 ha of previously damaged peatland have benefitted directly from restoration under the programme. The Welsh National Peatland Action Programme has restored 3,600 ha of peatland, safeguarding an estimated 2.2 million tonnes of stored carbon and reducing emissions by an estimated 8,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year. In Northern Ireland, the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has committed £8 million through the DAERA Environment Fund Strategic Strand (2023–2028) to deliver peatland restoration across Northern Ireland.

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In England, targeted Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes that incentivise farmers to deliver biodiversity and wider environment outcomes, including climate change mitigation, are replacing area-based payments. The government is investing £5.9 billion in environmental farming schemes, including £1.8 billion in 2025/2026 for ELM, to accelerate the transition to a more resilient and sustainable farming sector. In 2023, the ELM Landscape Recovery scheme awarded £25 million to support the development of projects focusing on nature restoration and sustainable food production across 200,000 ha, focusing on net zero, protected sites and wildlife-rich habitats. The first round of Landscape Recovery schemes offered development funding to 22 projects that collectively aimed to restore over 600 km of rivers and targeted the conservation of over 260 flagship species. Round 2 launched in spring 2023, with 34 projects focused on net zero and biodiversity being awarded development grants. The first two projects from Round 1 of the scheme have now completed the necessary assurance process, signed their agreements, and are ready to start work on the ground.

On 14 October 2025, following consultation, Defra announced major changes to its flood and coastal erosion funding policy for England, including an investment of at least £300 million in natural flood management (NFM) over 10 years – the highest figure to date for the floods programme. These changes will support projects that not only reduce flood risk but also deliver wider benefits to communities and nature.

Defra and the Environment Agency are improving flood resilience through a £25 million NFM programme that is delivering 38 projects across England, including projects led by risk management authorities, catchment partnerships, and environmental non-governmental organisations (such as the National Trust, the Rivers Trusts and Wildlife Trusts) and community groups. There are also 15 Flood Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme projects that contain NFM measures.

Across England's Isles of Scilly, Fal and Helford, Plymouth Sound and Estuaries, Solent Maritime and Essex Estuaries Special Areas of Conservation, the '[Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed](#)' (ReMEDIES) project planted 8 ha of subtidal seagrass, engaged with over 4,800 children through education programmes and outdoor events, installed 17 advanced mooring systems for boat users and 24 marker buoys, established three Voluntary No Anchor Zones, and published the Green Guide to Anchoring and Moorings, which provides practical advice for boat users, with over 5,500 copies distributed.

The 'Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef' (ReMeMaRe) partnership has produced a set of tools and guidance to help support partners with restoration activities, including a set of restoration principles, practical habitat restoration handbooks for seagrass, saltmarsh and native oyster restoration, a handbook for restoring estuarine and coastal habitats with dredged sediment, and a set of restoration potential maps providing a high-level, national scale overview of sites where successful restoration may be possible. The initiative continues to develop a habitat restoration platform that can be used by anyone seeking to learn about, deliver, fund and benefit from habitat restoration in the UK. Project delivery to achieve the restoration ambition is now underway. An ongoing pipeline of over 60 partnership projects has been developed, some of which are now being delivered year on year, with funding from the Government, restoring examples of all three priority habitats.

On the Isle of Man, Phase 1 of the Blue Carbon Project is nearing completion, focusing on quantifying blue carbon habitat extent, assessing carbon storage potential, identifying threats, and establishing monitoring and restoration options. A Carbon Sequestration Plan is in development to identify opportunities to increase carbon accumulation and storage on land through nature-based solutions. The Isle of Man Woodland Trust has planted 45,925 trees on private land since 2020 to create a woodland, and has restored approximately 300 ha of peatland, while on the Bailiwick of Jersey, over the winter of 2024/2025, over 6,000 trees have been planted to contribute to carbon sequestration.

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Between 2022 and 2025, 9,809 people across the UK Overseas Territories gained improved climate and disaster resilience as a result of projects funded under Defra's Darwin Plus programme.

Minimise negative impacts of climate action on biodiversity and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity

The UK Government is implementing the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package (OWEIP) through secondary legislation and guidance, which will help accelerate offshore wind delivery whilst improving action to protect the marine environment. In 2024, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs approved the first three measures for a 'library' of ecologically robust and commercially feasible strategic compensatory measures to offset the impacts of offshore wind developments. The approved measures will support marine biodiversity by enabling conservation actions to be deployed and the unavoidable impacts of windfarms to be compensated for. In 2025, Defra consulted on elements of the OWEIP including setting up the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) and environmental compensatory measure reforms. The MRF, launched at the end of 2025, will streamline the process of finding and delivering compensation, and improve environmental outcomes. The environmental compensatory measures reforms will ensure that a wider range of environmental compensatory measures that benefit the UK marine protected area network can be used to speed up offshore wind deployment.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

The UK's main challenges to achieving Target 8 include stimulating green finance, reducing regulatory bureaucracy, inter-government department cooperation, funding, technical and staff capacity, encouraging behavioural change, and capacity building and convening partners. The UK has begun to implement key legislation and strategies for action to make progress against this target, but the challenges will only be overcome with substantial and wider integration with economic and societal goals and transformative change.

In recent years, the automotive industry has faced several supply chain challenges impacting on their zero-emissions vehicle production/sales plans, including geopolitical instability with the threat of export/import tariffs in markets that they operate in. Affordability is the main challenge to delivering on our commitment for net zero rail. The technologies and fuels needed to decarbonise aviation are still nascent, with significant uncertainties and barriers to commercial deployment, so we are supporting a range of measures to reduce emissions.

Tree planting schemes are a key climate change mitigation action in parts of the UK, but are demand-led, meaning there may not be enough applications to ensure the UK meets its targets. This is particularly challenging when landowners may have other, more economically favourable options for how they use their land. Other challenges include a potential lack of trained staff for growing and planting trees, meaning planting rates cannot keep pace with what is required, and an ongoing reliance on government funding. The Nature for Climate Fund evidence programme and regular lessons learned exercises are used to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of tree planting delivery mechanisms in England and further increase their uptake.

The current approach to securing environmental compensatory measures means offshore wind developers are constrained in the types of measures they can use to compensate for unavoidable impacts to protected sites. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has recently

Target 8

	consulted on environmental compensatory measures reforms to provide more flexibility and will implement the reforms through secondary legislation and guidance in 2026. In Wales, implementation of legislation and key strategies has begun to make progress against this target. However, the enormity of this challenge can only be dealt with incrementally with better integration with wider economic and societal goals. This requires transformative change. In the Falkland Islands, there are deficiencies in data on how biodiversity and ecosystems will respond to the impacts of climate change, which presents a challenge for progressing this target.
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)² ☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator³ 8.b Number of countries with policies to minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and to minimize negative and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity 8.1 Does your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan include actions to prevent or minimize the impacts of the following (select all that apply): Yes: (a) Climate Change (b) Ocean Acidification 8.2 Do your country's climate change policies address the impacts of climate change on biodiversity? Comments (optional): _____

² See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

³ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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Partially

8.3 Do your country's other policies address the impacts of climate change on biodiversity?

Partially

8.4 Do your country's other policies address the impacts of ocean acidification on biodiversity?

Partially

8.5 Are the impacts of climate change on biodiversity monitored and reported on?

Partially

8.6 Are the impact of ocean acidification on biodiversity monitored and reported on?

No

8.7 Do your country's policies or action plans on the impact of climate change and ocean acidification contain the following types of actions designed to increase biodiversity resilience or reduce impacts (select all that apply):

Yes:

(a) Mitigation

(b) Adaptation

(c) Disaster Risk Management

(d) Nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches

(e) Policies to minimize negative and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity

8.8 Are measures included in your country's policies or actions plans to minimize the negative impacts of climate actions on biodiversity?

Partially

8.9 Are measures included in your country's policies or actions plans to foster positive impacts of climate actions on biodiversity?

Partially

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6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)

National Indicator 8.a: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Statistics

Source: [Final UK greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 1990–2023, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments: _____

This report provides estimates of 1990-2023 UK territorial greenhouse gas emissions, meaning emissions occurring within the UK's borders. Figures for all years since 1990 have been revised since the last publication to incorporate methodological improvements and new data, so the estimates presented here supersede previous estimates. Greenhouse gas emissions are presented in carbon dioxide equivalent units (CO₂e) throughout this statistical release and cover seven greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃).

Source: [Final UK greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 1990–2023, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)

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National Indicator 8.b: Removal of greenhouse gases by UK forests (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Removal of greenhouse gases by UK forests)

Table 1. Cumulative net removals of greenhouse gases by UK forests.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Removal of Greenhouse Gases by UK Forests](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Cumulative net removals	Long term	1990 to 2023	Improving
Cumulative net removals	Short term	2018 to 2023	Improving

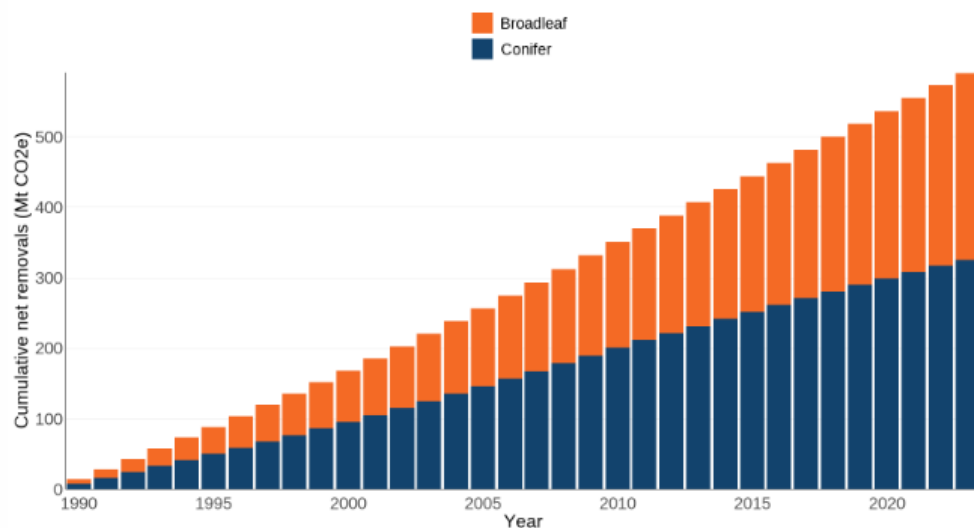


Figure 1. Cumulative net removals of greenhouse gases by UK forests, 1990 to 2023

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Removal of Greenhouse Gases by UK Forests](#)

- ☐ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator shows the cumulative net removal of GHGs from the atmosphere by UK forests since 1990. It is split between type of woodland (conifer and broadleaf). Showing GHG removals by type of woodland is interesting from a biodiversity perspective as it allows a clearer presentation of the contribution made to GHG removals by broadleaf woodland, most of which constitutes a [UK priority habitat](#).

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Removal of Greenhouse Gases by UK Forests](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing indicators](#).

Figure 1:

Estimated cumulative net removals of GHGs (carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O)) from the atmosphere by forests in the UK, expressed as million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (Mt CO₂e).

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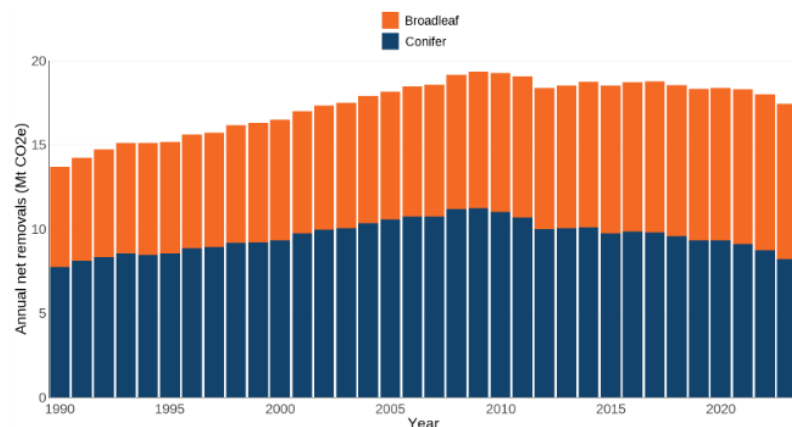


Figure 2. Annual net removals of greenhouse gases by UK forests, 1990 to 2023

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicators](#)

Revised in 2025 due to improvements in the CARBINE model and forest planting and harvesting statistics (see [‘Further detail’](#)).

The results presented here are therefore not directly comparable with those in previous publications.

Figure 2:

Estimated annual net removals of GHGs (carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O)) from the atmosphere by forests in the UK, expressed as million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (Mt CO₂e).

Revised in 2025 due to improvements in the CARBINE model and forest planting and harvesting statistics (see [‘Further detail’](#)).

The results presented here are therefore not directly comparable with those in previous publications.

7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

Seagrass and Blue Carbon in Scotland – The potential of seagrass

Seagrass is a key natural means of carbon capture. Estimates suggest carbon sequestration by seagrass is around five times [higher per hectare](#) than planted broadleaved native woodland. It also provides a nursery for a diverse array of marine species, improves water quality and acts a buffer against coastal erosion. As a result, it has been called the “rainforest of the seas”. However, it has suffered severe global declines, with some estimates of loss greater than 90%, compromising its ability to provide these ecosystem services. Scotland historically held a sizeable proportion of the UK’s seagrass beds and there are a number of projects aimed at restoring them around our coast.

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Current status

Seagrass is a feature of several marine protected areas and is afforded wider seas protection as a Priority Marine Feature. Alongside protection of existing sites and managing pressures to support recovery, there are opportunities to actively restore seagrass bed extent. This should take an evidence-based approach and a Seagrass Restoration Handbook aimed at practitioners is freely available alongside wider guidance.

Restoration

To date, over £2.4 million in Scotland has been made available for restoration schemes. These projects have focussed on securing multiple benefits and have been driven by local communities, with engagement and consultation with a variety of stakeholders. Work has already begun on two projects, Seawilding and Restoration Forth. Seawilding is a community-led marine habitat restoration project on the Scottish west coast that has restored 0.35 ha of subtidal seagrass habitat. Restoration Forth is a WWF-led partnership, supported by Project Seagrass with other organisations and local communities in the Firth of Forth, where seed planting is underway at three locations aiming to restore 4 ha of seagrass. Other community-led projects are carrying out baseline survey work in preparation for future seagrass planting over an area of 14 ha by 2028. Funding for these has come from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), delivered through the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund.

Evidence-based conservation

As part of the evidence base, genetic research is in progress to assist with identifying compatible seed sources. Understanding seagrass genetics is key to ensuring its resilience in the face of climate change and pathogens, such as seagrass wasting disease, which was a major driver of the plant's past global declines. As seagrasses can spread as clonal mats, having a diverse genetic base to begin with could give them the potential to adapt to these pressures.

This group of projects highlights the need for community involvement at every stage of planning and implementation and the importance of research to form a sound evidence base. It also shows that climate change mitigation can deliver multiple benefits to people and biodiversity.

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 9

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 9

Ensure management and use of wild species are sustainable to deliver benefits for people

The UK will ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities¹.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK has implemented a range of measures to ensure the sustainable management and use of wild species, with a strong focus on marine fisheries and recreational activities. This includes monitoring sustainable management and use of some wild species and the related benefits derived by people. Under the UK Marine Strategy, progress toward Good Environmental Status (GES) includes managing fishing mortality and spawning stock biomass. The Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement provide a comprehensive regulatory framework for sustainable fisheries, supported by 43 Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) developed collaboratively with stakeholders. Recreational fisheries have adapted to protect stocks while delivering social benefits, including a new catch-and-release bluefin tuna fishery and restrictions on sea bass retention. England's Fisheries and Seafood Scheme funds projects that deliver benefits to the seafood sector and marine environment. Wales has introduced adaptive management for whelk and cockle fisheries, and the Isle of Man developed low-impact pot fisheries for *Nephrops* and scallops. Freshwater fisheries are regulated under the Salmon and Freshwater Fishery Act 1975, requiring anglers to hold Environment Agency licences. National and local byelaws set restrictions on fishing methods and seasons.

On land, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 regulates the taking of birds and other animals in Great Britain, with protections for all wild birds except around 20 species that can be legally shot outside close seasons. Defra and Natural England are reviewing protections to ensure sustainability. A 2025 review recommended a presumption against granting wild take licences for falconry in England, except in exceptional cases. The British Quality Wild Venison Standard improves traceability and supports woodland management. Scotland embeds sustainable species management through its Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan, including targets for moorland management. Evidence programmes like the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment employ environmental DNA and AI-driven habitat mapping to strengthen species-level data and inform policy for sustainable use. Robust

¹ The United Kingdom does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Target 9

implementation of CITES across the UK, and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) ensures legal and sustainable wildlife trade.

Regarding the main action under Target 9:

Ensure that the management and use of wild species is sustainable for the social, economic and environmental benefits for people

The UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have a robust Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) implementation framework that facilitates legal and sustainable wildlife trade (see Target 5 for further details).

The UK is taking action in the marine environment, and through the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS), is committed to achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in targets relating to the fishing mortality rate and spawning stock biomass of populations of commercially exploited species. The UK Fisheries Act 2020 will make a positive contribution to the achievement of multiple GES targets by providing a comprehensive regulatory framework to managing fishing activity through a UK-wide Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) (published November 2022). The JFS sets out how the objectives of the UK Fisheries Act 2020 will be achieved, including a requirement to publish [43 Fisheries Management Plans](#) (FMPs). FMPs are evidence-based action plans, developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders, to deliver sustainable fisheries.

Permits are not needed for recreational sea fishing in the UK, except for bluefin tuna. To ensure sustainable stocks, there are national level restrictions on the number and size of sea bass that can be retained by recreational sea fishers, and there are local restrictions on where recreational sea fishing can take place, and which fish can be retained. A new catch-and-release recreational bluefin tuna fishery was opened in 2024, following the recovery of the Eastern bluefin tuna stocks, with the aim of maximising the enjoyment and social and economic benefits of recreational fishing, while minimising bluefin tuna mortality from fishing activity.

In England and Wales, the Salmon and Freshwater Fishery Act 1975 set the regulatory framework for the management of freshwater recreational fisheries. In England, freshwater recreational anglers must hold a valid Environment Agency (EA) rod fishing licence to fish in freshwater. To ensure fisheries are managed sustainably for social and environmental benefits, the EA administers both national and local byelaws which set restrictions on when, where, and how anglers can fish for various species. For example, salmon stocks are currently poor in England, so the EA have introduced mandatory catch and release on many rivers. The EA also enforce a coarse fish closed season, to reduce disturbances to coarse fish and protect vulnerable stocks during their peak spawning period.

In England, the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme funds projects that deliver benefits to the seafood sector and marine environment. This includes support for the design and implementation of conservation measures and the protection and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems. The scheme also ensures local voices are heard, supports biodiversity-based activities, and the work promotes transparent, evidence-based policy making.

In Wales, the Whelk Fishing Permit (Wales) Order 2021 and Cockle Fishing Management and Permit (Wales) Order 2024 introduced adaptive management regimes for these fisheries. This enables management to be varied in response to evidence about the stock and the environment to ensure long-term sustainability. The approach will ensure continued social and economic benefits for coastal communities in Wales.

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In Northern Ireland, a decision on the opening of the annual blue mussel seed fishery is based on annual stock assessment, invasive species assessment and the impact to protected habitats and species as well as the impacts to other fishing sectors (scallop/pot fishery) and the economic benefit to the Northern Ireland economy.

In the Isle of Man, the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture has worked with industry to support the development of two new pot fishery initiatives for Nephrops and scallops using low impact gears.

On land, in Great Britain, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) regulates the taking of birds and other animals including through establishing close seasons and regulating methods of take. All wild birds are protected under the WCA, except for around 20 wild bird species that can be legally shot outside of their close season for recreational purposes or food. Defra and Natural England are currently reviewing the protection for these species to ensure that the shooting of them is sustainable and does not undermine their recovery.

Gamekeepers and shoot owners observe a voluntary moratorium on shooting black grouse, and on shooting grey partridge unless there is a surplus, due to their poor conservation status. Well-managed red grouse shooting can be an important part of a local rural economy in the UK, providing direct and indirect employment. The UK Government will continue to work to ensure a sustainable, mutually beneficial relationship between grouse shooting and nature conservation.

Falconry has been practised in England since at least the 8th century. Natural England has a statutory responsibility, on behalf of Defra, for determining licence applications to take birds of prey from the wild for use in falconry and aviculture. Licences may only be granted on a selective basis and for a small number of birds, provided there are no satisfactory alternatives and no negative conservation impacts, and only small numbers of licences have been issued in recent years. In 2025, a review conducted by Natural England and endorsed by Defra concluded that taking birds of prey from the wild is not essential to the continued practice of falconry or aviculture in England and that there should be a presumption against the granting of future wild take licences, other than in exceptional circumstances.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, a working group comprising government, industry and stakeholder bodies has developed the British Quality Wild Venison Standard. This aims to increase the traceability of British wild venison, to ensure that a set of standards are met throughout the supply chain, to support consumer confidence and to increase sales of British wild venison. This will help manage impacts of wild deer on trees and woodlands, alongside a range of grant support.

In England, the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme is integrating remote sensing, field surveys, and citizen science data to enable better species data collection and to understand the pressures and conditions that drive species abundance. It is also gathering species-level data across terrestrial, freshwater, and woodland habitats on plant diversity and freshwater organisms. Innovative techniques like environmental DNA (e-DNA), acoustic monitoring, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven habitat mapping are used to assess ecosystem health and species distribution. These efforts contribute to a robust evidence base for environmental policy, conservation planning, and nature recovery, ensuring we invest in environmental reforms that deliver sustainable management of wild species and maximum benefits for nature and society.

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill embed sustainable management and use of wild species across all sectors, including through the development of sustainable fisheries. Progress is tracked through indicators such as the [Natural Capital Asset Index](#), which focuses on how well nature can contribute to people's well-being through a range of ecosystem services and ecosystem characteristics. The

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	Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030 includes targets to improve the management of moors used for grouse shooting, to prevent biodiversity loss.	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☐ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☒ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target Strong frameworks for sustainable use of wild species are in place, notably through the Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement. Sustainability indicators show improvement, with 42% of marine quota fish stocks and 11% of non-quota shellfish stocks achieving Good Environmental Status for 2016–2021. Recreational fisheries have been adapted to maximise benefits while protecting stocks, including a new catch-and-release bluefin tuna fishery and restrictions on sea bass retention. On land, the British Quality Wild Venison Standard supports rural economies and sustainable deer management. However, despite the actions taken so far, details of how they will deliver specific social, economic and cultural benefits remains limited, so overall progress is assessed as “Unknown”. Regarding progress in the main area under Target 9: Ensure that the management and use of wild species is sustainable for the social, economic and environmental benefits for people The sustainability of fishing in UK waters appears to be improving (see Target 5 for further detail), which should benefit the people that rely on fishing for their livelihood. Overall, commercially exploited fish and shellfish continue to make progress toward achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) across UK waters. After integrating the criteria for both commercial fish indicators (fishing pressure and reproductive capacity), our assessment (for the period 2016-2021) shows that 42% of marine quota fish stocks and 11% of non-quota shellfish stocks have achieved GES. This is an increase of 9% and 6% respectively. Further, following the conclusion of annual negotiations for fishing opportunities, Defra publishes a report detailing the sustainability outcomes of these negotiations. For 2024, for the total allowable catches (TACs) which have maximum sustainable yield advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, 52% of TACs were set in line with this advice, compared to 47% in 2021. In England and Wales, Bass and King Scallop FMPs have been prepared to comply with UK Ministers’ duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and to contribute to the well-being goals and objectives set under the Fisheries Act 2020 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Priority	

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actions in Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) are supporting sustainable management, including increasing research on the social, economic and cultural importance of these fisheries to show the benefits for local coastal communities in England and Wales.

A Long-Term Management Plan for the Isle of Man King Scallop Fishery has been in place since 2022, developed in the context of Isle of Man Fisheries Statement ('IOMFS'), which is an equivalent of the UK's Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS). In the Isle of Man, there has been demonstrated improvement in the sustainability ratings of both Manx king and queen scallops, which now have the best ratings of any rated wild fisheries for these species according to the Marine Conservation Society's Good Fish Guide. Other Manx species ratings have been maintained.

Shooting of game species in the UK provides [economic and social benefits](#). The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) are working towards the recovery of black grouse and grey partridge, with the black grouse subject to a species recovery plan, which includes the careful management of suitable habitats.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

The main barrier to assessing progress towards Target 9 is the lack of systematic evidence on benefits to people. This is because most interventions focus on the sustainability of species rather than measuring benefits to people. While frameworks and management plans exist, the measurement of socio-economic outcomes is not always sufficiently embedded. Where data exist on benefits, it is fragmented across sectors and challenging to integrate into biodiversity reporting. Developing robust evidence for Fisheries Management Plans and other management measures is resource-intensive, and capacity constraints – particularly in the UK Overseas Territories – limit delivery. These systemic gaps make it difficult to show how sustainable use translates into tangible benefits for people.

4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)² Headline Indicator 9.1: Benefits from the sustainable use of wild species	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☒ No data available. Please explain why: As the methodology for this Headline Indicator is not yet operational, this indicator has not been used in this report. ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional):

² See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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	Headline Indicator 9.2: Percentage of the population in traditional occupations	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☒ Not relevant. Please explain why: The UK does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity. Comments (optional):
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator³ 9.b Number of countries with policies to manage the use of wild species sustainably, providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, and to protect and encourage customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities 9.1 Does your country have legal instruments or other policy frameworks or administrative measures for the sustainable management and use of wild species? (c) Partially	Comments (optional): _____

³ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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9.2 Does your country monitor the sustainable management and use of wild species? (c) Partially 9.3 Does your country monitor the social, economic and environmental benefits derived from the use of wild species for people, in particular those in vulnerable situations and most dependent on biodiversity? (Select all that apply) If the answer is “fully” or “partially”, disaggregate by all relevant groups of people, as determined at the national level: (c) Partially: (a) Women and girls (b) Children and youth (c) People with disabilities. 9.4 Does your country have legal instruments or other policy frameworks to protect and encourage the customary sustainable use of biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, for example, the plan of action on customary sustainable use of biological diversity or other relevant initiatives? (e) Not applicable	
6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed Investigating the Impact of Fishing Gear on Seafloor Habitats Around South Georgia To protect fragile marine ecosystems, it is essential to understand how fishing gear affects the seafloor and its associated species and habitats – especially in remote and ecologically rich areas like South Georgia. One major concern is the potential damage to vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), which include deep-sea corals and sponges that demonstrate particularly high taxonomic diversity and provide habitat for a wide range of	

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species. These ecosystems can be disrupted by fishing gear, leading to changes in biodiversity, species composition, habitat structure and function, and even chemical processes in the ocean floor such as carbon storage.

Longline fishing, used to catch Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*), is considered less harmful than methods like bottom trawling because it causes less bycatch and physical damage. Whilst bottom trawling is prohibited in South Georgia, there is still limited research on how longlines affect the deep-sea environment - particularly in the Southern Ocean, where many species grow slowly and may take many years or decades to recover from disturbance. Relying on bycatch data alone to guide management decisions may not be enough to accurately assess potentially harmful fisheries-seabed interactions and safeguard these sensitive habitats.

To address this, the South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) Government, in collaboration with scientists from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and licensed fishing operators, and supported with funding through the UK's 'Blue Belt' programme, launched a research programme using underwater cameras attached to commercial longlines. Since 2018, every vessel in the fishery has deployed these deep-sea cameras across the full fishing area, spanning depths of 700 to 1,500 metres. Analysing footage from almost 1,000 deployments has helped scientists to map the seafloor, identify VMEs, and model where key species are likely to be found.

This research has revealed areas with high concentrations of VMEs and improved understanding of the environmental factors that shape their distribution. Based on these insights, the SGSSI Government is developing new management protocols to better protect the seafloor and its biodiversity. The project outputs have also been used to develop an interactive risk management tool that combines seafloor imagery with other data, such as fishing effort, gear loss, and wildlife interactions, to track and manage risks across the SGSSI marine protected area.

In addition, the findings have informed new "encounter protocols." These protocols help fishers respond appropriately when VMEs are found, including requirements to collect more imagery when vessels fish in potentially sensitive areas and for the SGSSI Government management actions to be adaptive to new data. Together, these efforts are helping ensure that SGSSI's fisheries remain sustainable while safeguarding its unique deep-sea ecosystems.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

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National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 10

Enhance biodiversity and ensure sustainable management of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry

The UK will ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity-friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches, contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems, and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK is taking action to ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably through legislation, policy, and financial incentives.

In England, area-based direct payments are being phased out and replaced with Environmental Land Management schemes, including Countryside Stewardship for habitat protection and soil and water health, the Sustainable Farming Incentive for practices such as integrated pest management and farmland wildlife support, and Landscape Recovery for large-scale collaborative projects. Wales has introduced the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023, requiring the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem resilience, and is developing the Sustainable Farming Scheme to deliver its objectives from 2026, alongside Rural Investment Schemes that promote sustainable agriculture. Scotland's Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024–2030 supports farmers and crofters in transitioning to sustainable practices through a new agricultural support system, while the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme has funded organic conversion since 2015. Northern Ireland's Environmental Farming Scheme and new Sustainable Agriculture Programme aim to reverse biodiversity decline through collaborative landscape-scale projects. The Isle of Man has updated its Agricultural Strategy and Agri-Environment Scheme to strengthen biodiversity commitments. Jersey rewards environmental benefits through its Rural Support Scheme and employs an Agri-Environment and Catchment Officer to address soil erosion and water quality, and Guernsey is providing additional support for dairy farming to encourage habitat protection and regenerative practices. The Cayman Islands promotes climate-smart agriculture through its Food and Nutrition Security Policy, and in the Falkland Islands, schemes such as the Responsible Wool Standard are widely adopted, with 80% of wool clip certified.

The UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are implementing strict regulatory frameworks and targeted initiatives to ensure aquaculture is sustainable and supports biodiversity. In England, aquaculture is authorised only where it poses no risk to protected sites, and projects such as "Ropes to Reef" are assessing the biodiversity contribution of aquaculture. Scotland operates a robust regulatory system and has set out long-

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term goals in its Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture, aiming for environment and biodiversity outcomes by 2045. Northern Ireland is introducing the Fisheries and Water Environment Bill to create a comprehensive licensing system for aquaculture. It also funds research through the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute to model ecosystem carrying capacity for shellfish aquaculture and assess sustainability, alongside projects like “Sustainable Algae”, which is researching ecosystem carrying capacity and potential scale of future algal culture development. In the Cayman Islands, aquaculture of Green Turtles for local consumption helps reduce pressure on wild populations.

The UK is taking several actions to ensure that fisheries are sustainable. Through the UK Marine Strategy, it is committed to achieving Good Environmental Status, which includes targets for fishing mortality rates and spawning stock biomass of commercially exploited species. The UK Fisheries Act 2020 supports these goals by providing a comprehensive regulatory framework for managing fishing activity. This is implemented through the UK-wide Joint Fisheries Statement published in 2022, which sets out how the objectives of the Act will be met, including a requirement to produce Fisheries Management Plans. These plans are evidence-based and developed collaboratively with the fishing sector and other stakeholders to deliver sustainable fisheries. In addition, Jersey has introduced a Marine Spatial Plan to ensure fish stocks are exploited within an ecologically sustainable marine context.

The UK is promoting sustainable forestry. All afforestation projects must follow the UK Forestry Standard. The UK Timber Procurement Policy ensures government timber purchases are legal and sustainable. The Timber in Construction Roadmap (2025) aims to increase safe, sustainable timber use in construction. In England, guidance and schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and the Sustainable Farming Incentive support sustainable woodland management and agroforestry. Wales is creating a National Forest through a network of sustainably managed sites. The Isle of Man is developing forest management plans.

Regarding the main actions under Target 10:

Ensure that areas under agriculture are managed sustainably

England is phasing out area-based direct payments and introducing Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes to incentivise environmentally sustainable farming. These schemes include the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme, which funds habitat protection and improvement, including actions to improve soil health and water quality; the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), which funds actions that support sustainable farming practices, such as integrated pest management and supporting farmland wildlife; and the Landscape Recovery (LR) scheme, which funds large-scale, long-term, collaborative environmental projects.

Sustainability is at the core of the [Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024 to 2030](#), which includes actions to help farmers and crofters transition to practices generating substantial regeneration in biodiversity, ecosystem and soil health, via a new agricultural support system. The Scottish Government’s [Agri-Environment Climate Scheme \(AECS\)](#) supports farmers to convert to organic production, with £37 million supporting more than 640 organic contracts since 2015.

In Wales, the [Agriculture \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) imposes a requirement to maintain and enhance ecosystem resilience and the resulting benefits. To meet some of these requirements, the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) is being developed to deliver the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 Sustainable Land

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Management objectives and will be launched in 2026. Rural Investment Schemes in Wales, such as Habitats Wales and Growing for the Environment, also promote sustainable agriculture and forestry.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Environmental Farming Scheme (Higher Level) delivers bespoke management for Northern Ireland's protected sites and priority habitats and species. A new Sustainable Agriculture Programme is being co-designed with industry and other stakeholders to improve environmental sustainability, productivity, resilience, and supply chain function. The Programme is being introduced in phases over the coming months and years and will provide options for all farm businesses in Northern Ireland. The Farming with Nature Package aims to support farmers to make substantial contributions to environmental improvements and sustainability. It will focus on reversing the trend in biodiversity decline through creating and restoring habitats and supporting species recovery, including through landscape-scale projects involving collaboration between farmers. [The Farm Sustainability \(Transitional Provisions\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2025](#) will provide powers to introduce the Farm Sustainability Transition Payment in 2025.

The Isle of Man has updated its [Agricultural Strategy](#), which includes an aim to '*maintain and enhance biodiversity and the environment, supporting the Biodiversity Strategy and the Areas of Special Scientific Interest*', and revised its [Agri-Environment Scheme handbook](#).

In Jersey, the [Rural Support Scheme](#) rewards environmental and social benefits, such as landscape management. The Jersey Government appointed an Agri-Environment & Catchment Officer in 2021 to improve Jersey's water bodies by identifying issues relating to field runoff/soil erosion and therefore working with the agricultural industry on remedial action and prevention. They also advise on good agricultural and environmental practices such as pesticide/fertiliser application complaints, noxious weeds, organic manure applications and the closed season for slurry spreading. All rural businesses in Jersey are [LEAF-accredited](#), and farmers are members of UK supermarket assurance schemes such as Red Tractor.

Guernsey has committed additional support for the local dairy industry that will reward the protection and enhancement of natural habitats and enable progression to regenerative farming practices.

[The Cayman Islands Food & Nutrition Security Policy \(2022–2036\)](#) focuses on poverty eradication, food security, and sustainable agriculture, promoting climate smart practices and the use of approved chemicals, and the Agro Park Development Plan aims to provide arable land to farmers for sustainable agricultural production, whilst ensuring that all farming is sustainable and avoids sensitive habitats.

The Responsible Wool Standard, which includes biodiversity and land management metrics, has been adopted in the Falkland Islands, with approximately 80% of wool clip produced within the Falkland Islands being certified.

Ensure that areas under aquaculture are managed sustainably

In England, aquaculture is strictly regulated to ensure it is carried out sustainably. Aquaculture activities will only be authorised if it can be demonstrated that they will not pose a risk to protected sites. The Government also provides funding to increase and better understand the biodiversity contribution of aquaculture, for example through the grant-funded "[Ropes to Reef](#)" project that aims to assess the ecosystem services and benefits of offshore mussel farming and the restoration of essential fish habitat, biodiversity and associated healthy fish stocks (biomass).

Scotland has a robust legislative and regulatory framework that provides the right balance between developing the fish farming sector and protecting the environment. All farms must meet strict guidelines to ensure that environmental impacts are assessed and managed safely. The Scottish

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Government's [Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture](#) outlines long-term goals for Scotland's finfish, shellfish and seaweed sectors and their supply chains. It sets outcomes to achieve by 2045 in areas including environment and biodiversity, consenting, community benefit, business, and health and welfare.

Northern Ireland is advancing the Fisheries and Water Environment Bill to establish a comprehensive licensing system for all aquaculture activities. This will include reviewing existing licences and conditions, ensuring aquaculture activities are strictly regulated and sustainable. DAERA funds the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to model ecosystem carrying capacity for existing marine shellfish aquaculture, assessing impacts and sustainability. All new marine shellfish aquaculture applications are assessed against ecosystem carrying capacity models. Other DAERA funded projects include "Sustainable Algae", which assesses ecosystem carrying capacity and the potential scale of future algal culture in Northern Ireland, and a Blue Mussel Spat Collection Pilot exploring alternative mussel seed sources for the bottom-grown mussel sector and testing their viability.

In the Cayman Islands, there is evidence that aquaculture of Green Turtles for local consumption reduces the demand for turtles taken from the wild.

Ensure that areas under fisheries are managed sustainably

Through the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS), the UK is committed to achieving Good Environmental Status (GES), including targets for the fishing mortality rate and spawning stock biomass of populations of commercially exploited species. The UK Fisheries Act 2020 will contribute to the achievement of multiple GES targets by providing a comprehensive regulatory framework to manage fishing activity through a UK-wide Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) 2022. The JFS sets out how the objectives of the UK Fisheries Act will be achieved, including a requirement to publish Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs). FMPs are evidence-based action plans, developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders, to deliver sustainable fisheries.

Jersey has developed a Marine Spatial Plan to work towards sustainable exploitation of fish stock within an ecologically sustainable marine context.

Further information on actions to ensure marine fisheries are managed sustainably can be found under Target 5 and Target 9.

Ensure that areas under forestry are managed sustainably

All UK afforestation projects must meet the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) to ensure trees are planted in the right place. Based on a UN-endorsed approach to sustainable forest management, the UKFS is mandatory for all publicly funded planting. The UK Timber Procurement Policy (TPP) requires all UK Government departments to prove the legality and sustainability of timber products they procure, both domestically and internationally. It sets the standards of legality and sustainability that need to be met and defines acceptable evidence to meet these requirements. The Timber in Construction Roadmap, published in 2025, sets out the opportunities and challenges for increasing the safe and sustainable use of timber in UK construction. This will strengthen the domestic timber industry and support sustainable construction with home grown wood.

In England, guidance has been provided to support woodland owners to manage their woodlands sustainably, including UKFS practice guides and a woodland wildlife toolkit. The 2020-2025 Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Fund (WiMFIF) has stimulated the development of new ideas to help improve the ecological condition of woodlands, and their resilience to climate change, via increased demand for homegrown wood and increased levels of woodland management.

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	Agri-environment schemes in England also support sustainable forestry. CS provides grants for woodland management planning, infrastructure and improvement, as well as deer and grey squirrel impact management. The expanded SFI, launched in 2024, includes new actions for the establishment of agroforestry on low sensitivity land used for arable, horticultural crops and grassland. Agroforestry is now part of the new CS Higher Tier scheme, which opened for invited applications in September 2025. Wales is developing a National Forest for Wales through woodland creation and management schemes to help deliver tree planting targets and contribute to net zero. The National Forest for Wales is a network of woodland sites that include the Welsh Government Woodland Estate and a range of woodlands across Wales, varying in size, ownership and purpose. Sites joining the network commit to managing their woodlands sustainably for future generations. The network facilitates and provides regular opportunities for learning, research and collaboration between the sites, supporting them to manage their woodlands sustainably and for the benefit of biodiversity. In the Isle of Man, plantations due for harvest are assessed to determine whether to replant commercially, replant with deciduous trees for recreation, biodiversity and climate benefits, or restore to another habitat such as upland heathland. Forest management plans are being developed.
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target ☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK has made progress in promoting sustainable management of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. The proportion of agricultural land under productive and sustainable management has slightly increased in 2021-2023, following little change from 2015 to 2020. Higher-level schemes have expanded steadily, covering 3.7 million ha in 2022, while entry-level schemes have declined due to closure for new applicants. Despite these improvements, biodiversity indicators remain concerning. Farmland bird populations have fallen by nearly two-thirds since 1970 and by 11% from 2019 to 2024. Farmland specialist butterflies have declined by 42% long-term (1990 to 2024) and 15% short-term (2014 to 2024), while generalist species have also decreased. Plant species in arable margins remain largely unchanged or slightly increasing and 89% of local livestock breeds remain at risk. Positive developments include Scotland's £37 million investment in organic farming since 2015 and England's significant uptake of Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes. In 2025/26, £1.8 billion was allocated to ELM, with over 70,000 agreements covering half of England's farmed land,

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with early evidence showing a 25% increase in breeding bird populations on farmland covered by ELM schemes, due to these biodiversity-friendly farming practices.

Progress has been made in improving the sustainability of aquaculture. In England, aquaculture is strictly regulated to ensure it is carried out sustainably. The Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture in Scotland, published in 2023 sets out the Scottish Government's long-term aspirations for the finfish, shellfish and seaweed farming sectors, and the wider aquaculture supply chain and Northern Ireland is advancing the Fisheries and Water Environment Bill to establish a comprehensive licensing system for all aquaculture activities.

Fisheries sustainability is improving. The proportion of UK quota fish stocks within safe biological limits rose from 28% in 1990 to 58% in 2020, and the percentage of UK quota-fish stocks harvested sustainably has increased from 9% in 1990 to 73% in 2020. However, commercial fishing continues to impact biodiversity through bycatch and seabed damage.

Forestry sustainability remains stable, with 1.44 million ha of certified woodland – around 44% of UK woodland area – remaining unchanged for two decades. A recent review of forest certification schemes under the UK Timber Procurement Policy led to the inclusion of the Grown in Britain scheme, which should make certification more accessible for smaller woodland owners and potentially increase uptake. In England, the expanded Sustainable Farming Incentive introduced agroforestry actions in 2024, delivering 900 ha by early 2025. Despite these measures, woodland bird populations have declined long-term (1970 to 2024), although they are showing signs of stabilising between 2019 and 2024, and woodland specialist butterflies continue to fall. Plant species abundance in woodland habitats has remained largely stable between 2015 and 2024.

Overall, actions are significant, but biodiversity recovery and socio-economic benefits remain constrained.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 10:

Ensure that areas under agriculture are managed sustainably

The proportion of UK agricultural land under productive and sustainable agriculture (Headline Indicator 10.1) has shown a slight increase in 2021-2023, marking progress after little change from 2015 to 2020.

Agri-environment schemes (e.g. Environmental Land Management (ELM)) require land managers, including farmers, to implement environmentally beneficial management and to demonstrate good environmental practice on their land. The higher-level or targeted agri-environment schemes promote environmental management aimed at conserving wildlife, maintaining and enhancing landscape quality and character, protecting the historic environment and natural resources, and promoting public access and understanding of the countryside. The area of land covered by higher-level or targeted agri-environment schemes has shown a general increase in the UK, demonstrating an improvement in the long term (1992-2022) and the short-term (2017-2022). In 2022, the total area of land in higher-level or targeted agri-environment agreements in the UK was 3.7 million ha: 2.3 million ha in England, 0.4 million ha in Wales, 0.9 million ha in Scotland, and 0.1 million ha in Northern Ireland (National Indicator 10.a) showing improving trends in the short-term (2017 to 2022) and long-term (1992 to 2022). The entry-level agri-environment schemes aim to encourage large numbers of land managers to implement simple and effective environmental management on their land. In 2022, the total area of land in entry-level agri-environment schemes in the UK was 1.4 million ha, all of which was in England. A downward trend from 2013 to 2021 resulted from schemes categorised as entry-level being closed for new applicants across England, Scotland, and Wales (National Indicator 10.a).

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Despite these improvements in management, farmland bird populations have shown a deterioration in both the long-term (1970 to 2024) and short-term (2019 to 2024). They have shown the greatest decline among all groups of birds, with populations decreasing by nearly two thirds since 1970 and 11% between 2019 to 2024 (National Indicator 10.b). The abundance of farmland habitat specialist butterflies in the UK has declined over the long term (1990 to 2024) by 42%. Over the short-term (2014 to 2024), their abundance has continued to decrease by 15%. Over the long-term (1990 to 2024), the abundance of farmland generalist butterflies in the UK has also declined by 21%. Over the short term (2014 to 2024), they have decreased by 7% (National Indicator 10.c). Plant species abundance in arable field margins, while fluctuating annually, remained largely unchanged or slightly increasing since 2015 (National Indicator 10.d). The proportion of local livestock breeds classified as being at risk of extinction has remained stable at 87% since 2000 (Component Indicator 4.CT.4).

Scotland's Agri-Environment Climate Scheme has invested £37 million since 2015 to support over 640 organic contracts. In England, there are encouraging signs that the uptake of the new ELM schemes is helping to conserve and restore biodiversity. In 2025/2026, £1.8 billion was allocated to ELM schemes in England, supporting actions like integrated pest management and large-scale habitat restoration. Over 70,000 ELM agreements, under the Sustainable Farming Initiative (SFI) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) schemes, now cover 50% of farmed land in England and involve more than half of England's farmers. Early findings from the Natural England [Agri-Env Evidence Annual Report 2023](#) indicated that biodiversity-friendly farming practices led to a 25% increase in breeding-bird populations and benefited other wildlife such as butterflies and bees.

Ensure that areas under aquaculture are managed sustainably

Progress has been made in improving the sustainability of Scotland's aquaculture. The Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture in Scotland, published in 2023 sets out the Scottish Government's long-term aspirations for the finfish, shellfish and seaweed farming sectors, and the wider aquaculture supply chain. Since the publication of the Vision the following progress has been made:

- Actions from the Wild Salmon Strategy Implementation Plan have been progressed including the implementation of a new Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) sea lice regulatory framework, and an updated Environmental Quality Standard for emamectin benzoate (medicine) will be introduced in June 2028.
- In response to the Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs and Islands Committee's Salmon Farming in Scotland inquiry, we committed to analysing mortality data to explore whether fish farms with persistent elevated mortality exist. The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands provided an update on this work in September and looks forward to providing a further update to Committee in March 2026.
- Funding has been made available for innovation through the Marine Fund Scotland, and the Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre has been funded to 2026. We are working with stakeholders to agree details for a new, independent entity to operate from April 2026.
- Work is underway to clarify the responsible authority for fish farm environmental discharges between 3-12 nautical miles. A public consultation on proposals to identify SEPA as the responsible authority for this activity closes on 16 December 2025.

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Ensure that areas under fisheries are managed sustainably

The sustainability of fishing in UK waters appears to be improving in relation to managing fish stocks. The proportion of UK quota fish stocks fished within safe biological limits has gradually increased from 28% in 1990 to 58% in 2020 (National Indicator 5.a) and the percentage of UK quota fish stocks harvested sustainably has increased from 9% in 1990 to 73% in 2020 (Headline Indicator 5.1).

However, commercial fishing in UK waters is having other impacts on biodiversity, including bycatch of non-target species and taxa (e.g. marine mammals, seabirds, non-commercial sharks and rays) as well as damage to the seabed and benthic habitats. Actions to reduce these impacts and the progress being made are reported under Target 5.

Ensure that areas under forestry are managed sustainably

Since the introduction of formal certification for UK woodlands in 1999, the amount of certified woodland has increased gradually year on year up to approximately 44% in 2007, where it has remained relatively stable since. In 2025, there were 1.44 million ha of certified woodland across the UK, representing almost 44% of the total woodland area (Headline Indicator 10.2).

In 2024/2025, Defra commissioned a review of the forest certification schemes that are approved under the UK Timber Procurement Policy (TPP) as evidence that timber supplied to government is from legal and sustainable sources, to ensure that they provide evidence of compliance. The reviewed schemes included the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification, the Forest Stewardship Council, and the Grown in Britain (GiB) scheme, which has been newly recognised in the TPP. The inclusion of the GiB scheme is expected to provide a more accessible forest certification scheme for smaller woodland owners and it is hoped that this will lead to a rise in the amount of certified woodland in the UK.

In England, an expanded SFI scheme with new actions for the establishment of agroforestry was launched in 2024, and 900 ha of agroforestry actions were delivered by January 2025.

Despite these efforts, woodland bird populations have declined by 32% in the UK since 1970. The rate of decline has been relatively continuous over most of this period although they are showing signs of stabilising between 2019 and 2024 (National Indicator 10.b). Woodland habitat specialist butterflies continued to show declines in the long-term (1990 to 2024) and short-term (2014 to 2024) (National Indicator 10.c). Between 2015 and 2024, plant species abundance in broadleaved woodland and hedges initially declined, fluctuated, then returned to the baseline level and exceeded it in 2024 (National Indicator 10.d).

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation:

Summary of key challenges

The UK and some UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have high population densities and competing demands for land, which brings challenges. For example, in both Jersey and the Cayman Islands there are challenges in farming close to urban areas, with farmers

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in the Cayman Islands being forced to relocate to the eastern part of the island, requiring primary habitat to be cleared for farming. The Cayman Islands Food & Nutrition Security Policy outlines the need for the Cayman Islands Government to set aside land for agriculture to limit the need for land clearance.

There are challenges in increasing the area of agricultural land which undergoes significant land-use change aware from farming for the restoration of nature due to difficulties in engaging stakeholders in ambitious actions. Inertia amongst some land managers to deliver ambitious ecosystem restoration stems from understandable concerns about impacts on local traditions and food production, the perceived financial risk, insufficient knowledge and skills needed to transition to nature restoration, and the complexity of the regulatory and funding landscape. In Wales, uncertainty around markets and future agricultural support has affected business planning and uptake of schemes, but the introduction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme in 2026 should bring more clarity. The Falkland Islands, where 93% of land is farmed, has also found it challenging to persuade landowners to take up sustainable practices.

In England, the Government is developing and testing approaches to address these barriers, considering the role of supply chains, private finance and alternative delivery methods such as regulation to improve delivery and reduce pressure on public finances. In 2026, the Government plans to publish the Farming Roadmap, which will set the course of farming in England for the next 25 years. The aim is to maintain food production, meet our environmental outcomes and deliver a thriving and profitable farming sector. It will set out how farming will, must and can evolve in response to changing markets, technologies, and environmental pressures - and how the Government will support that transition. It seeks to present an honest picture of the current realities in farming, while outlining how the system can adapt and evolve to meet future needs. The Government will continue to review and improve ELM schemes and optimise spending to maximise progress towards the objectives for nature and the environment set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025, while balancing other priorities. In the Falkland Islands, while there have been some improvements, additional financial incentives are necessary before broad-scale adoption of biodiversity-friendly practices can occur. The proposed Falkland Islands [Land Recovery Scheme](#) is a potential solution to this challenge that may provide the necessary innovation needed to drive change across the territory.

Alongside UK-wide challenges, Scotland faces climate change impacts in a system where soils are often less fertile than in other regions. Flooding, drought in a traditionally wet country, unseasonal weather, and risks from pests and diseases are all forecast to increase. Actions to enhance resilience to climate change are often complementary to biodiversity conservation but the economic situation can make implementation challenging.

Greater innovation, use of technology, and effective knowledge transfer are required to improve the sustainability of agriculture. However, the Cayman Islands faces challenges from an ageing farming community that favours traditional practices. There are also challenges from competition from imports produced with lower labour costs and weaker environmental standards, and the need to deliver products sustainably without making them prohibitively expensive.

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4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁴ Headline Indicator 10.1: Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture (in England) (Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 2.4.1) Source: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nation – Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 2.4.1 Proxy – Progress towards productive and sustainable agriculture	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: Data on the official Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 2.4.1 is currently scarce, as countries still build their capacity to adapt their agricultural surveys to collect the necessary information. As a provisional, stop-gap solution, the UN Statistical Commission has approved the use of a proxy for monitoring progress towards productive and sustainable agriculture, based on widely available national-level statistics. The proxy consists of seven sub-indicators capturing the three dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic and social) in the agricultural sphere and shall be used as a “practical interim solution” while FAO continues to work with countries “to strengthen capacity-building activities for the official indicator”. This indicator is currently only available for England, as no UK-wide data source is available. Source: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nation – Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 2.4.1 Proxy – Progress towards productive and sustainable agriculture

⁴ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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4. **Headline Indicator 10.2: Progress towards sustainable forest management (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of forestry land certified as sustainably managed, Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 15.2.1)**

Table 1: Assessment of change of area of UK woodland certified as sustainably managed.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of forestry land certified as sustainably managed](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Percentage of woodland certified	Long-term	2001 to 2025	Improving
Percentage of woodland certified	Short-term	2020 to 2025	Little or no overall change

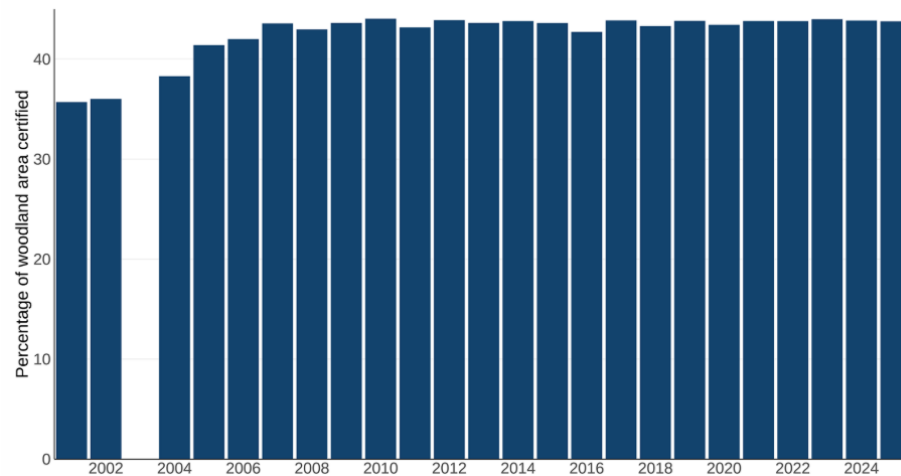


Figure 1: Percentage of woodland area certified as sustainably managed in the UK, 2001 to 2025

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of forestry land certified as sustainably managed](#)

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional):

This indicator shows the percentage of the woodland area in the UK that is certified against agreed environmental standards. Data for this indicator are sourced from the Forest Research [Forestry Statistics 2025](#) publication.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of forestry land certified as sustainably managed](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1:

All figures relate to data at 31 March each year, apart from 2001 (31 December) and 2002 (30 September), with regular data collection from 2004.

Figure 2:

Percentage labels have been rounded.

The percentage fall observed for Northern Ireland should be treated with caution as the data source for estimating the total woodland area in the country changed between 2011 and 2012.

Target 10

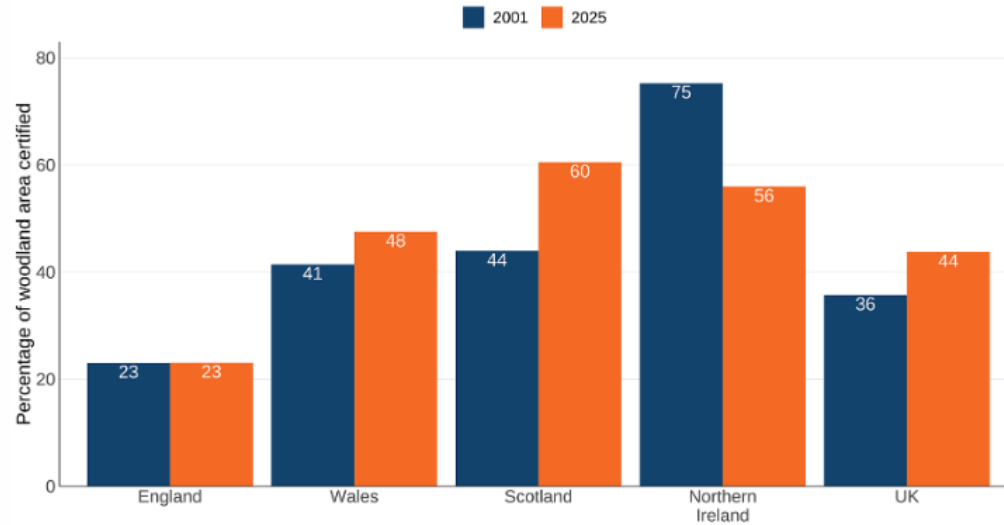


Figure 2: Percentage of UK woodland area certified as sustainably managed by country, 2001 and 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of forestry land certified as sustainably managed](#)

4. **Headline Indicator 5.1: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels**

UK Biodiversity Indicator - Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits](#)

See Target 5.

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional):

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits](#)

See Target 5.

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5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁵	Comments (optional): _____
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 5.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator - Percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest with biomass at levels which maintain full reproductive capacity. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits See Target 5.	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____ Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits See Target 5.
	Complementary Indicator 4.CT.4: Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not at risk or at unknown level of risk of extinction (Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 2.5.2) Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - SDG Country Profiles See Target 4.	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: _____ Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - SDG Country Profiles See Target 4.

⁵ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

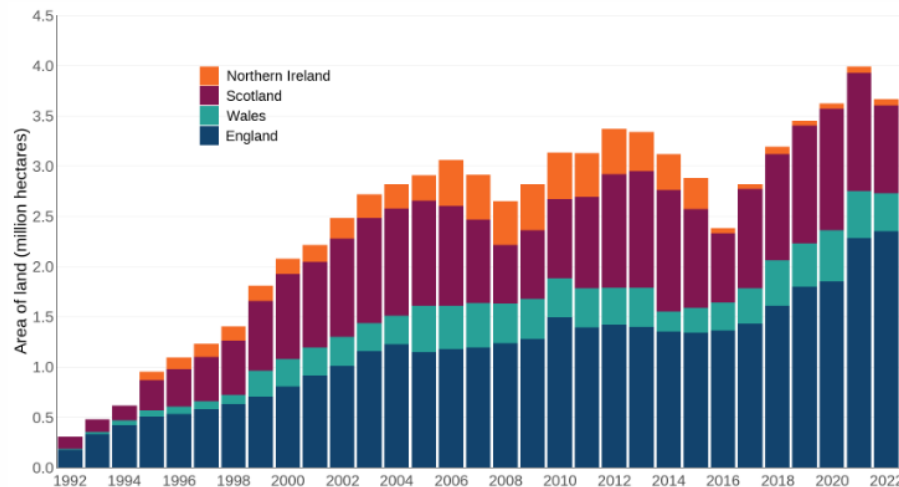
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National Indicator 10.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of land in agri-environment schemes

Table 1: Assessment of change of area of land under higher-level/targeted agri-environment schemes

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of land in agri-environment schemes](#)

Assessment	Time period	Result
Long-term	1992 to 2022	Improving
Short-term	2017 to 2022	Improving
Latest year	2021 to 2022	Decreased



☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional): _____

This indicator measures the area of land under agri-environment schemes categorised into two groups: higher-level/targeted and entry-level. Agri-environment schemes require land managers, including farmers, to implement environmentally beneficial management and to demonstrate good environmental practice on their land. The higher-level or targeted schemes promote environmental management aimed at: conserving wildlife; maintaining and enhancing landscape quality and character; protecting the historic environment and natural resources; and promoting public access and understanding of the countryside. The entry-level type schemes aim to encourage large numbers of land managers to implement simple and effective environmental management on their land.

Data is available in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of land in agri-environment schemes](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base

Target 10

Figure 1: Area of land covered by higher-level or targeted agri-environment schemes, 1992 to 2022.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of land in agri-environment schemes](#)

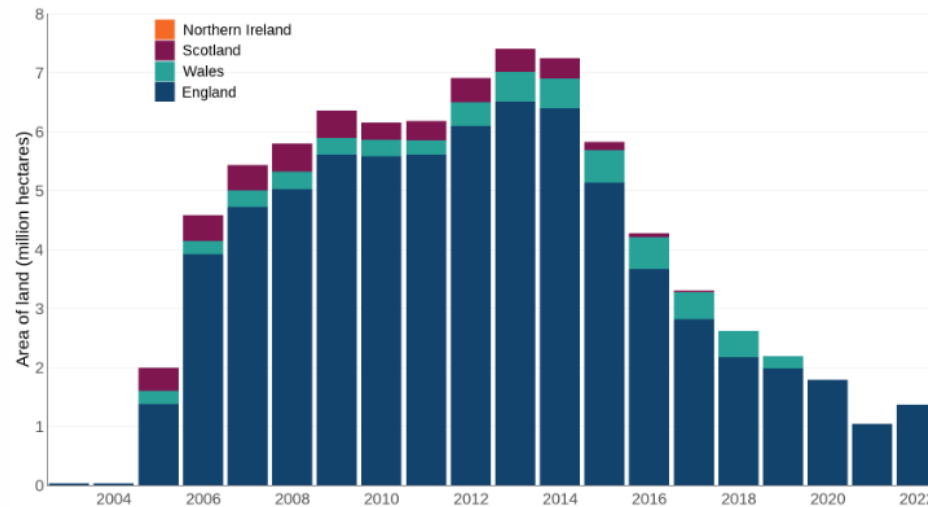


Figure 2: Area of land covered by entry-level type, whole farm agri-environment schemes, 2003 to 2022.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of land in agri-environment schemes](#)

years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

An assessment of entry-level schemes is not included for this indicator. From 2020, land is covered by only two schemes in this category (Sustainable Farming Incentive, SFI (including the 2021 pilot and SFI 2022); Entry Level Stewardship Scheme (including Upland Entry Level Scheme since 2010), ELS). ELS closed to new applicants in December 2014, and SFI piloted in 2021 before launching fully in 2022. As a result, there are not sufficient open schemes categorised as entry-level to provide a robust assessment of change. Therefore, we have only provided an assessment of the higher-level agri-environment schemes. Additionally, SFI's categorisation as an entry-level scheme is under review.

Figure 1:

The following schemes have been included as higher-level or targeted agri-environment schemes:

- England: Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA); Countryside Stewardship (CS); higher-level Stewardship (HLS) which includes Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) linked to HLS; new Countryside Stewardship (Higher Tier and Mid Tier – both contribute to Figure 1, from 2016).
- Scotland: ESA; Countryside Premium and Rural Stewardship; Rural Priorities; Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (from 2016).
- Wales: ESA; Tir Cymen; Tir Gofal; Glastir Advanced; and Decoupled Advanced (from 2016).

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- Northern Ireland: ESA; Countryside Management; and Environmental Farming Scheme (from 2017).

Figure 2:

The following schemes have been included as entry-level schemes:

- England: Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI); Entry Level Stewardship Scheme (including Upland Entry Level Scheme since 2010). ELS closed to new applicants in December 2014.
- Scotland: Land Management Contracts (previously Menu Scheme); Land Managers Options Schemes; Habitat Scheme. All of these schemes had closed to new applicants by 2014 or earlier with the last agreements recorded in 2017.
- Wales: Tir Cynnal; Glastir Entry. Tir Cynnal agreements were last recorded in 2013.

Entry-type schemes have less strict criteria for qualification than the higher-level schemes shown in the previous chart.

The area under ELS includes ELS, Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS), Uplands Entry Level Stewardship (UELS) from 2010, and HLS linked to ELS. Rotational options are not included in the data.

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National Indicator 10.b: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Birds of the wider countryside and at sea

Table 1. Assessment of change

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Birds of the wider countryside and sea](#)

Measure	Time period	Long-term trend	Short-term trend
All bird species	1970 to 2024	Deteriorating	Deteriorating
Farmland	1970 to 2024	Deteriorating	Deteriorating
Seabirds	1986 to 2024	Deteriorating	Deteriorating
Upland	1994 to 2024	Deteriorating	Little to no overall change
Wetland	1975 to 2024	Little to no overall change	Deteriorating
Wintering waterbirds	1975/1976 to 2023/2024	Improving	Little to no overall change
Woodland	1970 to 2024	Deteriorating	Little to no overall change

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional):

The indicator shows relative changes in the abundance of common native birds of farmland and woodland and of freshwater and marine habitats in the UK. The relative changes in abundances of birds presented here form an indicator for the UK and is derived from the [Wild bird populations in the UK and England, 1970 to 2023](#). The data for all-species of birds are presented here.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Birds of the wider countryside and sea](#)

Table 1:

Long-term and short-term assessments of the statistical significance of these changes are made using the smoothed data to 2024. Analysis of the underlying trends is undertaken by the data providers. 'Long-term' refers to an assessment of change since the earliest date for which data are available; this varies among indicators and among individual species. 'Short-term' refers to

Target 10

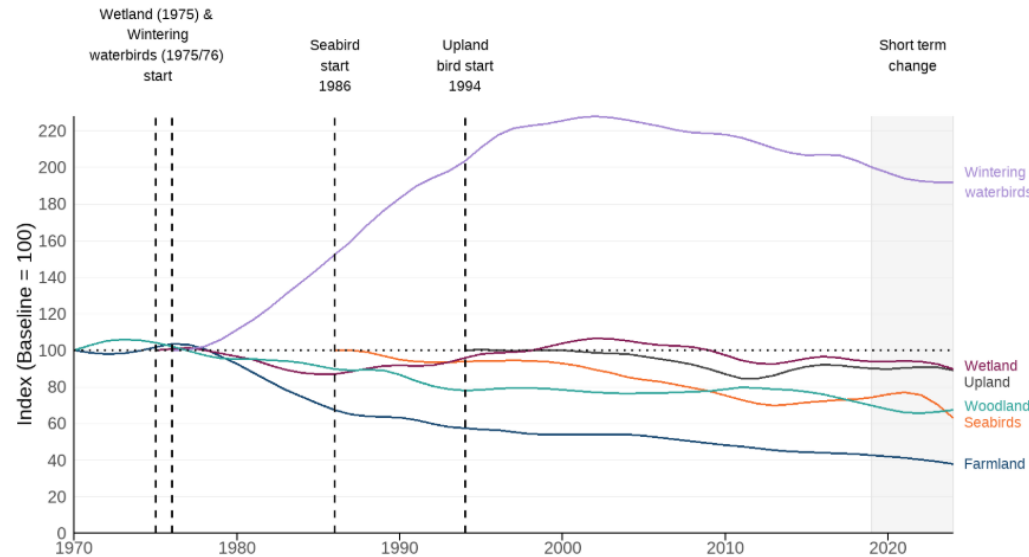


Figure 1: The indices of breeding and non-breeding bird populations by habitat, 1970 to 2024

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Birds of the wider countryside and sea](#)

an assessment of change over the latest five years for which data are available.

Figure 1:

The indicators are based on the aggregated population trends for each habitat.

Data for wintering waterbirds are collected over the winter which spans two years e.g. 1975/1976. These data are plotted here as a single year, taking the later part of the winter period e.g. 1975/1976 data is plotted at 1976 on the x axis.

The wintering waterbirds index focuses on bird species that over-winter in the UK, some of which may also breed here. All other habitat breakdowns focus on breeding birds.

National Indicator 10.c: UK Biodiversity Indicator - Insects of the wider countryside (butterflies)

Table 1: Assessment of change in butterfly populations

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Insects of the wider countryside \(butterflies\)](#)

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional):

This indicator covers three measures of annual butterfly population abundance in the UK. First, all-species of butterflies are analysed, which is further divided into indicators for 'habitat

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Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
All-species	Long-term	1976 to 2024	Deteriorating
All-species	Short-term	2014 to 2024	Deteriorating
Habitat specialist butterflies	Long-term	1990 to 2024	Deteriorating
Habitat specialist butterflies	Short-term	2014 to 2024	Little to no overall change
Generalist butterflies	Long-term	1990 to 2024	Little to no overall change
Generalist butterflies	Short-term	2014 to 2024	Little to no overall change
Farmland specialist butterflies	Long-term	1990 to 2024	Deteriorating
Farmland specialist butterflies	Short-term	2014 to 2024	Deteriorating
Woodland specialist butterflies	Long-term	1990 to 2024	Deteriorating
Woodland specialist butterflies	Short-term	2014 to 2024	Deteriorating

specialists' and 'generalist species' of butterflies. There are also individual indicators for 'farmland butterflies' and 'woodland butterflies'. These measures are also divided into indicators for habitat specialists and generalist species of butterflies. The data for all-species of butterflies are presented here. For more information on the individual butterfly population groupings, see source information.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Insects of the wider countryside \(butterflies\)](#)

Table 1:

Long-term and short-term assessments of the statistical significance of these changes are made using the smoothed data to 2024. Analysis of the underlying trends is performed by the data providers.

Figure 1:

The smoothed index is presented together with the 95% confidence interval (a measure of uncertainty) represented by the shaded area around the trend line.

Target 10

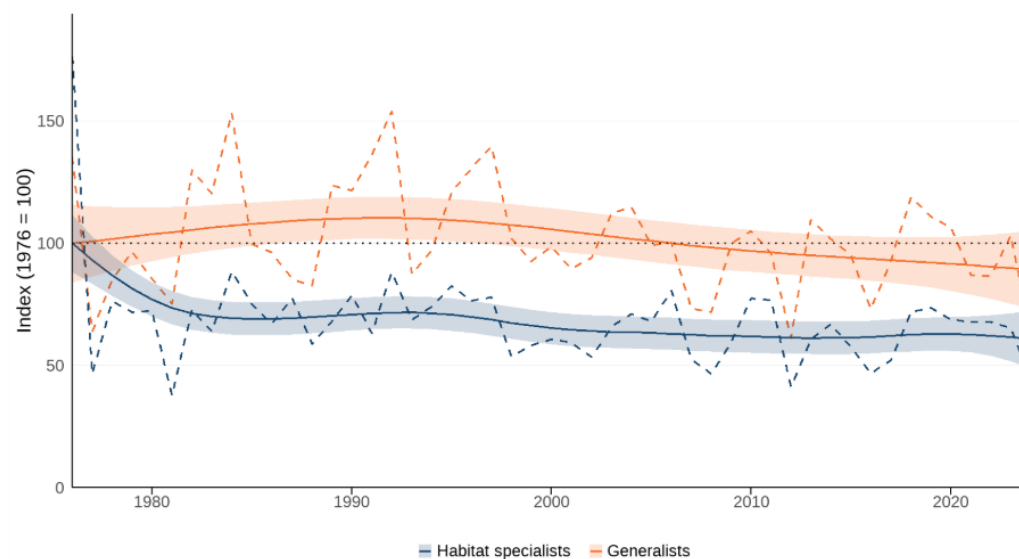


Figure 1. Trends for the abundance of habitat specialist (26 species) and generalist butterfly species (24 species) in the UK, 1976 to 2024

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Insects of the wider countryside \(butterflies\)](#)

National Indicator 10.d: UK Biodiversity Indicator - Plants of the wider countryside

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional):

This indicator measures change in the abundance of plant species considered indicative of good habitat condition in the UK, using modelled abundance data from National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) plots. Within each habitat plant

Target 10

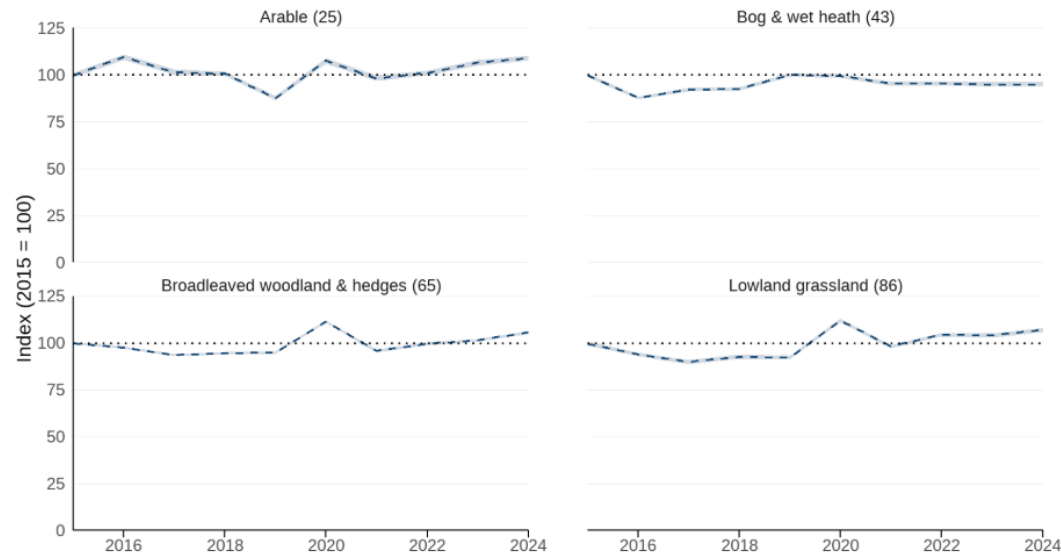


Figure 1. Abundance of plant species in four UK broad habitat types (2015 to 2024).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Plants of the wider countryside](#)

species abundance trends considered indicative of good condition are averaged to provide an indication of the habitat's current state.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Plants of the wider countryside](#)

Figure 1:

The line graphs show the unsmoothed trends (dashed line); the variation around the lines shown (the shaded area) is the standard deviation of 1,000 simulated trend indices calculated according to the method of Soldaat et al. (2017).

Abundance is measured as the average percentage area covered by a species within a plot, including zeros (i.e. absences).

The figures in brackets indicate the number of species or species aggregates currently included in the composite index for that particular habitat type.

The standard deviation represents model-based uncertainty and does not necessarily reflect bias in the underlying data relative to real world plant trends.

National Indicator 10.e: Official Statistics - Scottish Terrestrial Breeding Birds 1994 – 2023

Source: [NatureScot – Official Statistics – Terrestrial Breeding Birds – 1994-2023](#)

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

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☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional):

Terrestrial breeding bird populations are monitored primarily through the volunteer-led Breeding Bird Survey. Most of the sample is composed of randomly located 1km survey squares that are visited twice each breeding season (April to July).

Source: [NatureScot – Official Statistics – Terrestrial Breeding Birds – 1994-2023](#)

- 7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed.**

Farming and biodiversity in Scotland

The role of farming in nature conservation

Farming is the main land use in Scotland by area. There is a strong relationship between farming and nature. Land management practices can contribute to maintaining biodiversity but can also have negative impacts where practices are intensive. Farmers and crofters can receive support from a [range of schemes](#) administered by Scottish Government and NatureScot, such as Peatland Action, the Nature Restoration Fund, and schemes for Merlin, Geese, and Sea Eagles. The Agri-environment and Climate Scheme (AECS) represents Scotland's most important investment for securing environmental benefits from agricultural land (approximately £25–35 million per year).

Funding

Since its establishment in 2015, the AECS has committed a total of £339.9 million to 3,417 businesses to fund a range of activities that help to maintain and enhance our rich and varied natural environment. About 20% of Scotland's agricultural land is managed for biodiversity and climate change benefit under the scheme. Moving forwards, it is important to continue these efforts through future support to maintain progress towards meeting Target 10.

As part of the Scottish Government's Agricultural Reform Programme published in May 2025, there are plans to improve the sustainability of agricultural practices and to introduce Whole Farm Plans. As part of the latter, all farmers and crofters must complete at least two of five specified audits and plans for 2025/26 to be eligible to receive Basic Payment Scheme payments. One of these can be a Biodiversity Audit, which is a habitat map providing a baseline assessment of habitats and features on the farm or croft. This approach will help farmers and crofters to become more productive and profitable whilst helping to meet Scotland's climate and nature targets.

Target 10

Farming with Nature Programme

In addition to these schemes, NatureScot has a Farming with Nature Programme that supports farmers and crofters to enhance nature and tackle climate change while producing high quality food. It has four projects that are piloting tools that will help farmers and landowners to identify the habitats and biodiversity on their land and understand their condition, how they fit within the farm and landscape, and the potential benefits they can bring to their business. The programme's work will help inform delivery of the Scottish Government's Agricultural Reform Programme, which supports environmentally sustainable agriculture. The pilot project's findings will feed into the Scottish Government reforms to the agricultural support package, where at least half of all funding will be targeted towards increasing biodiversity and climate mitigation and adaptation.

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 11

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 11

Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people

The UK will restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as the regulation of air, water and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have taken some actions towards restoring, maintaining or enhancing nature's contributions to people, particularly around flooding, carbon sequestration and soil health. Further information is needed on how nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches in particular are being used within such actions.

Regarding the main action under Target 11:

Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches

Through the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS), plankton communities are an important part of marine ecosystem integrity, which underpins numerous critical marine ecosystem function and services. The UK is committed to ensuring that the structure, function, composition and abundance of plankton communities is not significantly adversely influenced by anthropogenic drivers. In July 2024, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) programme and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) launched the £14.8 million Resilient UK Coastal Communities and Seas. This provides grant funding to improve understanding of the resilience of UK coastal seas, coastal communities, and the natural capital these areas support. The mNCEA programme funded the following evidence gathering projects relevant to the UKMS Descriptor 1 (biological diversity) and Descriptor 4 (food webs):

- monthly inshore zooplankton sampling at around 20 waterbodies
- continuous zooplankton sampling at 2 existing smart buoy sites in the Thames and Liverpool Bay
- reinstatement of English offshore waters Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) routes

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- optimisation of all pelagic datasets (establishment of a working group, quality assurance and quality control of data sampling, data management and maintenance)

In England, several schemes have been set up to boost tree planting and support peatland restoration (through the Nature for Climate Fund), and incentivise farmers to deliver environmental, climate, and animal health and welfare outcomes alongside supporting viable businesses and maintaining food production at its current level through Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes. Further, targeted ELM schemes that incentivise farmers to deliver biodiversity and wider environment outcomes are replacing area-based payments. The Government is making the largest investment into nature in history, with over £7 billion to be directed into nature's recovery. This includes environmental farming schemes (£5.9 billion), tree planting (£816 million) and delivering peat outcomes, including peatland restoration (£85 million). These will make a significant contribution to Environment Act 2021 and statutory net zero targets, including improving the quality of water, air, and spaces for wildlife so biodiversity can thrive, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Under the farming schemes this includes £1.8 billion in 2025/2026 for ELM to accelerate the transition to a more resilient and sustainable farming sector (see Target 10 for further details of this scheme). The Government wants to incentivise land use that enhances biodiversity, reduces harmful subsidies, improves soil and water quality, increases carbon sequestration and contributes to climate change mitigation. There are three ELM Schemes: (1) the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme pays farmers, land managers and foresters to manage land in a way that protects, restores or enhances the environment and mitigates the effects of climate change; (2) the Landscape Recovery (LR) scheme awarded £25 million in 2023 to support the development of projects focusing on nature restoration and sustainable food production across 200,000 ha, focusing on net zero, protected sites and wildlife-rich habitats, and (3) the new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) actions for soils (no-till farming and multi-species spring-sown cover crops) were announced between 2023 to 2024, which focus on improving soil health, structure, organic matter and biology.

Pollinators are an essential part of our environment and play a crucial role in food production. Following the conclusion of England's National Pollinator Strategy in 2024, the Government will be designing and delivering a refreshed Pollinator Action Plan, that sits underneath the broader Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25), which will set out key priority actions for beneficial pollinators in England. The [UK Pesticides National Action Plan \(NAP\)](#) was published in March 2025. It promotes the sustainable use of pesticides to minimise impacts on the environment and human health, while supporting food security and managing pests and pesticide resistance effectively. In England, farmers are being incentivised to reduce pesticide use through initiatives like the SFI and the CS, which encourage integrated pest management (IPM) approaches and reduce pesticide runoff. IPM can include nature-based solutions (NbS), such as establishing flower-rich grass margins which can provide habitat for natural crop pest predators whilst supporting wild pollinators. The catchment sensitive farming elements of the CS have been extended to the whole of England and funding increased to £15 million per year. New UK guidance was published in 2024 to support increased use of IPM for farmers. In June 2025, integrated weed management guidance was made accessible to all amenity managers in the UK. This includes a template to help amenity managers effectively plan how to adopt a range of IPM methods. Further, the Health and Safety Executive published updated guidance for emergency authorisations of pesticides on 11 September 2025. These changes clarify and strengthen the existing guidance to make clear that anyone applying for an emergency authorisation to use a pesticide must take full account of the risks it poses to pollinators in their application. Defra will identify and assess legislative options to prevent future use of three neonicotinoid pesticides (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam) that are not authorised due to the threat they pose to pollinators.

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The Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) programme was launched in England in 2020 to boost tree planting and support peatland restoration to help put the UK on track to meet its net zero targets, reverse the decline in nature, improve water quality, and support job creation and economic growth. NCF delivery is supported by a series of tree planting grants/projects, including enabling activity to support forestry sector capacity. Recent activities include:

- In March 2024, a significant uplift to England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) payments was announced, to offer farmers and land managers more targeted tree-planting incentives and encourage tree planting in the most suitable locations. Alongside this, a new Woodland Creation Fast Track initiative was launched to speed-up tree planting rates.
- In January 2024, as part of an update to the Agricultural Transition Plan, actions to support in-field agroforestry across various tree densities were announced for introduction throughout 2024.
- In November 2024, a Tree Planting Taskforce was launched to support UK-wide plans to plant millions more trees across the UK.

In March 2025, the Government announced the creation of the first of three new national forests – the Western Forest – which will see at least 2,500 ha of new woodland planted across the West of England in the coming decades. In November 2025, a second new national forest was confirmed for the Oxford-Cambridge corridor. A competition will launch in early 2026 to determine the location of a third forest in the Midlands or North of England. Defra and the Forestry Commission will support land managers to increase the number of woodlands in England, within wildfire high-risk areas, that have wildfire management plans within woodland management plans by 2030 to mitigate the risk of this increasing climatic hazard.

Peatland is a key habitat for biodiversity and for carbon capture. In England, by 2030, Defra will invest £85 million to restore and manage peatlands, including support for water infrastructure, peatland restoration and trials of farming on higher water tables, including paludiculture. The new England peat map marks a significant advancement in national peatland data infrastructure. It is the first national-scale dataset to model the extent, depth, condition, and surface features of peat and peaty soils across England. It integrates satellite imagery, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), field surveys, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) modelling to produce a comprehensive spatial representation of peatland characteristics. Key successes of the map include its national coverage, technological innovation, and collaborative data integration. As a modelled product, it provides probabilistic estimates rather than definitive site-level data. England is investing in a further programme of improvement which will deliver an enhanced national peat extent and depth model, with a specific focus on improving the representation of lowland peat areas, explore a hybrid mapping-modelling approach using high quality mapping data where it exists and modelling the remaining peat resource comparing it to the purely modelling approach of the current new map, creating UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory compatible outputs which will be used to provide the annual estimates of emissions, and integrating and publishing the restoration register as a data layer.

The UK has commenced work on a national wetland inventory expected to be available in 2026 in support of the Ramsar Convention, which will provide a publicly accessible digital repository of information on UK wetlands and enable a better understanding of the status of sites across the UK. The inventory will incorporate data layers on several wetland-related habitats, thereby supporting the delivery of net zero targets, carbon budget planning and the development and application of NbS for the effective restoration, conservation, and wise use of wetlands.

Recognising the need to invest for the long-term, the UK Government has committed more than £10.5 billion into our flood and coastal erosion defences by 2035/36. The latest national flood risk assessment in England was published in 2024. It showed an increase in flooding risk and forecasts

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further increases in flooding due to climate change. Natural flood management (NFM) is playing an increasingly prominent approach to mitigating flood risk, providing wider benefits for environment and society such as carbon reduction, environmental enhancement, improving water quality and water resources. The floods investment programme delivers a range of schemes, including NFM, alongside wider government investment such as the ELM schemes. In February 2025, England's Environment Agency (EA) published an update to the 'Working with Natural Processes Evidence Directory'. This directory will provide policy makers and practitioners with access to information that explains the benefits of NFM measures, to increase our confidence in the evidence of this innovative approach. The EA is also working to develop a NFM benefits tool aimed at providing a nationally consistent way of assessing flood risk and wider benefits from NFM projects. This will help us to focus on developing NFM projects in locations where they can have greater flood risk benefits. The EA has [published](#) the high-level method and assumptions on which the tool is based. On 14 October 2025, following consultation, Defra announced major changes to its flood and coastal erosion funding policy. The reforms will make it quicker and easier to deliver the right flood defences in the right places by simplifying the rules around funding. At least £300 million will be invested in NFM over ten years – the highest figure to date for the floods programme. These changes will support projects that not only reduce flood risk but also deliver wider benefits to communities and nature.

The National Highways' Environmental Sustainability Strategy for England was published in May 2023. It includes an objective to help establish NbS as the first choice for environmental improvements. For National Highways, natural flood management in particular, provides benefits in terms of improving the resilience of roads to flooding, which could be exacerbated in the future due to climate change. In 2024 National Highways completed a spatial analysis to identify opportunities across the strategic road network (SRN) for NbS solutions to be implemented to deliver environmental benefits. This involved exploring and analysing the interactions that take place between key environmental datasets, and the SRN to highlight hotspots for potential intervention. Datasets included those associated with flood risk, carbon sequestering habitats, ecological designated sites, landscape designations, and water quality.

In Scotland the Biodiversity Strategy Action plan will engage and strengthen the connection between people and communities and nature. As well as community-led work to restore Scotland's Atlantic Rainforest (see Target 2), [the interim principles for responsible investment in natural capital](#) focus on benefits to communities, investors, land owners, public bodies and other stakeholders. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) recognises that NbS to climate change can also benefit biodiversity as shown by Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which act as well-connected breeding sites for wildlife ([Jehle et al. 2023](#)). The SBS aims to widen public awareness and increase understanding of the actions needed to protect and restore nature on land and sea. The SBS will also provide more opportunities for people to experience and care for nature, to improve their understanding of the role of nature in their daily lives. Many of these actions are scheduled for 2025 including the Making Space for Nature campaign and encouraging people's connection through local green spaces (SBS Action 28.2).

In the medium-term NatureScot are working with Scottish Government to explore opportunities to further develop Curriculum for Excellence nature-based resources and prepare new material on nature and NbS to be included in the new Learning for Sustainability portal by 2027. Nature positive developments and stewardship of public, community and private land are vital to ensure far more people are actively working for nature recovery and reaping the rewards. Embedding biodiversity and nature in curriculum development is essential. To fully inform key decision-making for climate-resilient and nature positive communities across Scotland, a widespread knowledge and awareness of what nature provides for people and society is needed. This should not be confined to a subset of science and scientists.

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In Wales, the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to maintain and enhance resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide to well-being. NRW will encourage good forest design and sustainable management that makes a positive contribution to the character and quality of the landscape, improves the biodiversity value of the forests, and secures wider benefits, such as flood risk management.

Wales has taken steps to improve outdated drainage systems across Wales, with an emphasis on sustainable, nature-based drainage in both urban and rural areas. This includes the commencement in Wales of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act (2010), from January 2019, to require SuDS in areas of development equal to or exceeding 100 square metres. This has increased their available green space and resilience to climate change. This unique statutory SuDS legislation has not only delivered over 6,500 developments future-proofed for climate change since January 2019 but has created cleaner and greener places to live and work with mandated maintenance of all new green infrastructure.

Wales has included catchment-based approaches and NbS in their management of water bodies through guidance for water utility companies. The use of NbS is actively promoted through Wales' Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management programme, with an additional fund available specifically for Natural Flood Management projects.

Wales is aiming to integrate NbS solutions into the planning and development of new transport related infrastructure promoting guidance and best practice to Local Authorities and urban planners to better design urban tree planting and plant species which maximise benefits by reducing people's exposure to air pollution.

The Local Places for Nature (LPfN) programme was established in Wales in 2020 to create 'nature on your doorstep'. The idea was to create areas that support nature within communities, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, thus encouraging a greater appreciation and value of nature. The programme delivers actions towards the commitment to create more green spaces as well as several measures to support this and wider biodiversity objectives. The programme is community-led, promoting local ownership and long-term stewardship of nature, which is essential for sustaining ecosystem services. It targets areas of deprivation, ensuring equitable access to nature's benefits and addressing environmental problems. The programme supports both small-scale and strategic restoration efforts with the goal of restoring, maintaining, and enhancing nature's contributions to people. This can be evidenced through the provision of ecosystem services; by embedding nature into everyday community life. The LPfN programme contributes in several key ways:

1. Provisioning Services

- Community food growing initiatives (e.g. edible gardens) provide direct access to fresh produce, improving food security and local resilience.
- These projects often occur in urban and peri-urban areas, especially in communities with limited access to nature.

2. Regulating Services

- Tree planting and green infrastructure help regulate air quality, mitigate urban heat, and manage stormwater, contributing to climate adaptation and resilience.
- Restored habitats support biodiversity, which in turn stabilises ecosystems and enhances their regulatory functions.

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3. Cultural Services

- The programme fosters mental health and social cohesion through nature-based activities, such as community gardening and volunteering.
- It enhances aesthetic and recreational value by transforming neglected spaces into vibrant green areas.

4. Supporting Services

- By restoring habitats and increasing biodiversity, LPfN strengthens the ecological foundations that support all other ecosystem services.
- The programme is currently being delivered through six schemes.

There are several other schemes to highlight in this area within Wales:

- Local Nature Partnership (LNP) Scheme. Delivery through the LNPs in each Local Authority and the three National Parks in Wales, currently managed by Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).
- Community Packages Scheme. Pre-paid packages are provided to small community groups to create nature gardens, and this is currently being delivered by Keep Wales Tidy.
- Breaking Barriers Scheme. Support is provided to underrepresented and hard to reach groups to help them engage and participate in nature-based activities. Previously operated by National Lottery Heritage Fund but now in a second iteration managed by Keep Wales Tidy.
- Coastal Capacity Building Scheme. Supports capacity building and collaboration in coastal areas to help foster sustainable growth and nature recovery.
- Coastal Coordinator Challenge Fund. Supports partnership working at the coast for the wider marine environment and to coordinate engagement across local coastal communities.
- National Forest Landscape Scheme. Funding provided to landscape projects to support collaboration and deliver the National Forest outcomes.
- One Voice Wales. Provides continued capacity building support and new training packages to Town and Community Councils to develop the capacity and confidence of local people to help develop project ideas and support delivery. Up until March 2025 expenditure across the programme totaled more than £66 million for projects in Wales. £15 million has been allocated to the programme for 2025/26 to continue to deliver the aims and objectives of the programme whilst also delivering on the Welsh Government's wider environmental objectives relating to biodiversity, nature restoration and the delivery of the 30by30 target, and Section 6 duties.

Furthermore, in Wales, £54 million has been invested in the Nature Networks Programme (NNP) improving the condition, connectivity and resilience of Wales' protected sites network whilst encouraging community engagement. Projects delivered through the Nature Networks Fund element of the NNP have been awarded funding through a competitive grant process, supporting projects that contribute to key Nature Recovery Action Plan outcomes – particularly those focused on reversing biodiversity loss, building adaptive capacity, and strengthening stakeholder and community engagement in conservation delivery. Many of these projects have directly contributed to improving the condition of the protected sites features whilst enhancing the coherence of Wales' protected sites network. The programme prioritises actions that benefit the features of the protected sites, including habitat

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restoration, species recovery, and improved site management. NRW's NNP funding is broadly split supporting a range of [marine](#), freshwater and [terrestrial](#) projects aimed at creating resilient ecological networks.

In Northern Ireland, wherever practicable, the use of NbS for climate change mitigation are legally mandated in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and should be included in proposals to meet the five-yearly carbon budget that builds towards reaching net zero by 2050. Proposals are required to be developed from across government and across a variety of sectors. Proposals for the first climate action plan include NbS such as strategic vegetation planting for flood and coastal defenses, woodland and forest creation and peatland restoration.

The Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy sets the long-term vision for peatland protection, restoration & maintenance to 2040, which will assist in mitigating against climate change.

The Northern Ireland Blue Carbon Action Plan was published in April 2025 and sets the long-term vision for protected, well-managed and enhanced blue carbon habitats by 2050, which will provide increased carbon capture and storage alongside wider ecosystem service benefits.

An [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) is in place which is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island of Ireland to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. Implementation is coordinated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

The Isle of Man has taken the following action to implement this target:

- Peatland restoration – improving water retention (natural flood management) and biodiversity. One of the earliest restoration sites is showing improved curlew breeding during a period when curlew are in decline internationally.
- Blue Carbon Strategy and Project in finalisation phase - including high level assessment of ecosystem services and management measures for habitat protection. This will raise the knowledge and awareness of marine carbon sequestration and enable actions to maintain or increase sequestration and avoid losses of carbon. A consultation is currently under way regarding the protection of expanding eelgrass beds.
- Developing a Land Management Framework to enable the future development of options for carbon sequestration on land.
- The National Strategy on Sea Defences, Flood and Coastal Erosion is under review. The top priority flood risk sites have been remediated via flood protection measures. While the National Strategy on Sea Defences, Flood and Coastal Erosion does not specifically refer to NbS, it recommends low-cost solutions working with nature through natural flood management measures should be adopted wherever possible as these have the potential to reduce flood risk elsewhere and can achieve biodiversity and carbon benefits as well as helping to adapt to climate change.

The Isle of Man provides a strong example of how innovative partnerships can deliver NbS with wide-reaching benefits. Through the UK Wildlife Trusts' collaboration with Aviva, private investment is supporting the restoration of temperate rainforests – enhancing carbon capture, air quality, biodiversity, and local livelihoods. This public-private partnership model demonstrates how strategic collaboration can unlock resources for long-term ecological restoration. Combined with broader efforts in land purchase and native forest restoration, such initiatives are positioning the Isle of Man as a leader in sustainable land management and climate resilience. [River quality reports](#) are published annually. Most of the monitoring points have shown excellent or good status for both chemical and biological testing. [Freshwater fish monitoring reports](#) are also published regularly. Marine monitoring has been further developed. The Isle of Man has participated in the OSPAR Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme for hazardous substances since

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2022 and some new monitoring devices have been fitted. There is [long-term marine monitoring programme](#) that has run from 1904 at Port Erin and 1954 from the Cypris station. [Air quality monitoring](#) has shown good air quality around the island.

In the Falkland Islands, habitat restoration is undertaken with the understanding that it will improve the condition of soil and combat soil erosion while also sequestering carbon and benefitting biodiversity, although these benefits to people have not been investigated thoroughly. The Environment Strategy 2021–2040 outlines the strategic objectives to ‘continue working towards integrating biodiversity (i.e., considerations of ecosystem integrity) across environmental and economic agendas, acknowledging that the integrity of ecosystems underpins the continued provision of all ecosystem goods and services for current and future generations’ and ‘to protect and enhance our biodiversity (ecosystem integrity), reducing its loss through tackling threats’. The main action that has been undertaken to address this target is through habitat restoration. As stated in Target 2, within the Falkland Islands Government, the Environment Department is currently the primary source of funding and restoration undertaken throughout the archipelago. The Environment Department undertakes restoration on government-owned land, predominantly through revegetation works of areas of degraded tussac along the coast. The department also oversees the allocation of the [Environmental Studies Budget \(ESB\)](#), a funding stream for which landowners can apply to cover the costs of restoration works on private land. The applications are generally centred around erosion control measures and land recovery including the erection of stock-proof fencing to reduce grazing pressure and revegetation of eroding habitats. The ESB varies with each fiscal year but in the past year, 2024/2025, approximately £170,000 was available for restoration and environmental projects. Overall, ecosystem services throughout the Falklands remain under-studied currently. While habitat restoration is undertaken with the understanding that it will improve the condition of soil and combat soil erosion while also sequestering carbon and benefitting biodiversity, these benefits have not been quantified thoroughly.

In 2019, the Cayman Islands introduced ecosystem-based natural capital accounting to enable the consideration of ecosystem services within national accounting and planning. The first set of (partial) natural capital accounts were published in 2020 and continue to be updated on an annual basis.

In Jersey, the Government monitors and regulates water quality and availability through the [Water Pollution \(Jersey\) Law 2000](#) and the [Water Resources \(Jersey\) Law 2007](#). Cooperation with agricultural industries is ongoing to maximise the benefits of cover crops to pollinators. An annual cover crop competition has commenced that recognises and rewards the value of these to soil texture and pollinators. The Government administers a [Pollinator Group](#) to promote the planting and benefit comprised of stakeholders.

Gibraltar recognises the range of values that trees provide, particularly within urban settings, and has a [robust legal framework](#) in place to protect trees. Any works to trees require a license from the Minister for the Environment and, in cases where trees must be removed, there is a legal obligation to replace each tree with two others. Gibraltar has a strong environmental education programme through which school children are taken to visit the nature reserve, spend time at the [Tovey Cottage interpretation centre](#) and connect with nature. Every year, over 600 children visit Tovey Cottage.

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2. Indicate the current level of progress towards the target

- ☐ On track to achieve target
☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate
☐ No significant progress
☐ Not applicable
☐ Unknown
☐ Achieved

3. Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved

Summary of progress towards the target

There is some evidence that actions being taken are leading to progress towards ensuring that nature's contributions to people are restored, maintained or enhanced by 2030.

The Headline Indicator (B.1 Services provided by ecosystems) shows an index of service flow value of 1.12 for the UK in 2022, relative to a baseline value of 1 in 2014. This represents a 12% increase in the value we obtain from ecosystem services since 2014.

In England, over £7 billion has been committed to nature recovery, including £1.8 billion for Environmental Land Management schemes in 2025/2026, which now cover 50% of farmed land (4.3 million ha) and as of April 2025, there are 885,000 ha of arable land farmed without insecticides, reducing harm to pollinators and improving soil health. Woodland creation reached 5,765 ha in 2024/2025 – the highest since 2002/2003 – alongside planting 888,000 trees outside woodlands. Peatland restoration under the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme actively managed 14,206 ha in 2024/2025, with commitments rising from 15,255 ha in 2023 to 17,826 ha in 2024 across Protected Landscapes. Natural flood management is scaling up in England, with £300 million allocated over ten years and 38 projects currently underway. Pollinator conservation is supported through integrated pest management and refreshing the Pollinator Action Plan. In Scotland campaigns such as NatureScot's Make Space for Nature initiative will continue to support people to encourage nature into their lives and reduce their impact on nature. In Wales, the Local Places for Nature programme, with £66 million invested, has created over 4,000 new or improved green spaces and pollinator sites and involving 15,000 volunteers since 2020. In Northern Ireland, the Soil Nutrient Health Scheme is the largest baseline soil sampling programme ever undertaken, with £37 million invested, and as of July 2024 over 280,000 fields have been tested for soil nutrients.

There is much progress in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies also, including private investment in supporting the restoration of temperate rainforests on the Isle of Man, £170,000 made available for restoration and environmental projects in the Falkland Islands and an annual cover crop competition has commenced in Jersey that recognises and rewards the value of these to soil texture and pollinators and encourages cooperation with agricultural industries to maximise the benefits of cover crops to pollinators.

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Ecosystem functions and services remain under pressure and more information on progress made is needed to ensure that nature's contributions to people are restored, maintained or enhanced by 2030 through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 11:

Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches

The Headline Indicator (B.1 Services provided by ecosystems) shows an index of service flow value of 1.12 for the UK in 2022, relative to a baseline value of 1 in 2014. This represents a 12% increase in the value we obtain from ecosystem services since 2014. Provisioning services increased by 17%, cultural services increased by 12%, and regulating services increased by 1% over this period. The biggest increase in provisioning services was largely driven by renewable electricity provision. This indicator is useful in highlighting the vast value of ecosystem services but requires careful interpretation. Further work is needed to assess the sustainability of service flows.

The environmental status for pelagic habitats in UK seas is uncertain. There is currently no suitable model for assessing Good Environmental Status (GES) for pelagic habitats. This results in lower confidence in the GES assessment. The UK's understanding of the structure, function, composition, and abundance of UK plankton communities has long been limited. However, recent improvements to assessment methods will allow monitoring for changes in the plankton community to continue and determine how these changes are linked to pressures in the marine environment.

The percentage of UK surface water bodies in high or good ecological status over the long-term (2009–2024) shows little to no overall change (National Indicator 7.c). In 2024, 33% of surface water bodies were assessed under the Water Framework Directive Regulations (WFD Regulations) as being in high or good ecological status, two percentage points higher than in 2009 and 1 percentage points higher than the figure of 32% reported in 2019. In 2024, 29% of rivers and canals, 26% of lakes and 75% of estuaries and coastal water bodies in the UK were in high or good ecological status.

There was an overall decrease in the distribution of pollinators in the UK from 1987 onwards (National Indicator 11.a). In 2024, the indicator showed a decrease of 23% compared to its value in 1980.

In England as of 1 April 2024, 35,100 Countryside Stewardship (CS) schemes were live and held by 34,100 farmers and land managers across England. Additionally, this means that there are 2,307,258 ha of mapped priority habitats in England, with around 46% of mapped priority habitats in an agri-environment or woodland management scheme.

In England, the first round of Landscape Recovery (LR) schemes offered development funding to 22 projects, which collectively aimed to restore over 600 km of rivers and targeted the conservation of over 260 flagship species such as water vole, lapwing, and great crested newt. The first two projects from Round 1 of the scheme have now completed the necessary assurance process, signed their agreements, and are ready to start work on the ground (see Case Study in Target 2 for more details). Round 2 launched in spring 2023 with 34 projects and Defra awarded £25 million to support nature and sustainable food production across 200,000 ha, focusing on net zero, protected sites and wildlife-rich habitats.

In England, between 2023 to 2024, new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) actions for soils (no-till farming and multi-species spring-sown cover crops) were announced which support soil health. As of 1 January 2025, there were over 70,000 live agri-environment scheme agreements, including over

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39,000 live SFI agreements. As of April 2025, there are 32,600 farming businesses in SFI and 50,000 farm businesses which are actively managing some land in agri-environment schemes. Overall, 50% (4.3 million ha) of farmed land in England is actively managed in schemes, and another 14% (1.3 million ha) covered by assessments and plans. As of April 2025, there are 885,000 ha of arable land farmed without insecticides reducing harm to pollinators and improving soil health, 330,000 ha of low input grassland managed sustainably helping to protect biodiversity and improve water quality, and 85,000 kilometres of hedgerows protected and restored providing essential habitats for wildlife. A soil health indicator is under development which will allow us to understand the performance of soil functions in terms of its actual and potential ability to contribute to delivering ecosystem services. Initially the ecosystem services being considered are climate regulation, water regulation, maintenance of biodiversity and food and fibre production potential. In 2024, Natural England published an annual report summarising early findings from the Agri-Environment Scheme Monitoring & Evaluation Programme. The programme is one of the ways through which evidence of the effectiveness and impact of agri-environment schemes within ELM schemes is gathered and delivered. These early findings indicated that eco-friendly farming practices led to a 25% increase in breeding bird populations and benefited other wildlife such as butterflies and bees.

Alongside this, Defra and the Environment Agency (EA) are improving flood resilience through a £25 million natural flood management (NFM) programme which is delivering 38 projects across England including projects led by risk management authorities, Rivers Trusts, catchment partnerships, and environmental non-governmental organisations (for example National Trust or Wildlife Trusts) and community groups. There are also 15 Flood Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP) projects which contain NFM measures.

In England the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), published in 2012, sets out the implementation mechanism for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The NPPF was revised in 2024, requiring all development with drainage impacts to provide SuDS. These systems should be appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed development. SuDS are designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls, combining a mixture of built and nature-based techniques to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. In June 2025, the Government introduced new [national standards](#), making clear that SuDS should be designed to cope with changing climatic conditions as well as delivering wider water infrastructure benefits in the form of flood prevention and storm overflow reduction, offering reuse opportunities, reducing run off, and helping to improve water quality, amenity, and biodiversity.

Defra continues to work with public and private sector land managers to develop wildfire management plans for 20,000 ha of habitat. This action will reduce the risk of wildfires impacting on social, economic and environmental assets across the chapter themes of the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3).

More than 13,400 ha of woodland has been planted in England since March 2022, with planting rates increasing year-on-year since 2020/2021. In 2024/2025, woodland creation in England was at the highest level since 2002/2003 at 5,765 ha. Planting of trees outside woodland has also increased, with 888,000 trees (equivalent to 1,399 ha) planted outside woodland in 2024/2025. This trend in the data indicates positive progress towards achieving the statutory target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover to at least 16.5% of all land in England by 31 December 2050.

Through the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NCPGS), active restoration management began on 5,606 ha of peatlands in England in 2024/2025, with works ongoing on a further 8,600 ha, where these began in a previous year. Therefore, the NCPGS was active on 14,206 ha of peatlands in England during 2024/2025 and currently provides the primary funding vehicle for peatland restoration in England.

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In 2023, a total area of 3,818 ha of peat in National Landscapes was committed for restoration under the NCPGS. This figure rose to 4,276 ha in 2024, representing an increase of 458 ha. There was a more substantial commitment within National Parks, with 11,437 ha in 2023 increasing to 13,550 ha in 2024 – an annual rise of 2,113 ha. Combined, the total area of peatland committed for restoration across all Protected Landscapes under the Scheme reached 15,255 ha in 2023 and increased to 17,826 ha in 2024. This represents an overall increase of 2,571 ha over the one-year period. As of 2025, National Parks contain the largest area of peatland, highlighting the significant role National Parks play in conserving deep peat resources.

To address the degradation of lowland peat, between 2024 and 2025 Defra funded 45 projects across pilot schemes delivering water infrastructure, paludiculture trials, and future water management plans. It has also continued to deliver the lowland peat research and development programme

In September 2025, Defra amended the Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2021, to enhance the protection of upland peatlands by expanding restrictions on burning practices while maintaining an effective licensing scheme. Key changes include extending coverage to Less Favoured Areas, lowering the peat depth threshold from 40 cm to 30 cm, prohibiting burning on blanket bogs unless licensed under the revised grounds for application. The regulations align with broader climate and biodiversity goals and are supported by a new Heather and Grass Management Code to guide sustainable land management.

Progress has also been made by National Highways in identifying opportunities across the strategic road network (SRN) for nature-based solutions (NbS) to be implemented to deliver environmental benefits. A spatial analysis that was conducted in 2024 identified several potential sites for action due to the high potential for NbS to deliver multiple benefits.

In Scotland, campaigns such as NatureScot's Make Space for Nature initiative will continue to support people to:

- encourage nature into our lives.
- provide water and homes for wildlife.
- plant hedgerows and creating gaps in fences.
- avoid using artificial grass, paving or decking.
- give our time for nature.
- undertake regular citizen science activity.
- join a conservation volunteer group.
- encourage positive action for nature by public and private sectors.
- reduce impact on nature, for example use only peat-free garden products, follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, take steps to reduce our carbon foot print each year.

As part of the [Natural Environment \(Scotland\) Bill](#) – currently before Scottish parliament – there are provisions to develop metrics and statutory targets to assess how people understand, benefit from and contribute to nature.

The Scotland [Natural Capital Asset Index](#) (NCAI) (National Indicator 11.b) is a composite index developed in Scotland to measure the capacity of its terrestrial ecosystems to provide benefits to people, such as materials, regulating services, and cultural benefits. It assesses the quantity and quality

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of various habitats, serving as a tool to track changes in nature's ability to support well-being over time. The most recent NCAI analysis indicates that while there has been slight improvement since 2000, the index has plateaued since a 2017 peak. Over the longer term there was a marked downward trend from 1950 to 1990, which shows that more need to be done to return to earlier levels.

In Wales, the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to maintain and enhance resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide to well-being. Wales has taken steps to improve outdated drainage systems across Wales, with an emphasis on sustainable, nature-based drainage in both urban and rural areas. Wales has introduced initiatives such as Local Places for Nature, Coastal and Marine partnership scheme and Nature Networks Programme (NNP) that focus on benefiting both nature and people.

Within the Local Places for Nature (LPfN) programme Wales is now seeing tangible benefits from earlier projects – for nature, communities, and local people. The programme has successfully engaged communities, delivering on our commitment to create green spaces. It has met most Programme for Government measures for green space creation across Wales' urban and residential areas. Since 2020, £66 million has been invested in LPfN schemes, creating over 4,000 new or improved green spaces and pollinator sites and involving 15,000 volunteers. This includes:

- More than 3,100 pollinator sites
- More than 1,100 community food growing sites
- More than 2,400 new or significantly improved green spaces
- 1,025 community orchards
- 110 therapeutic sensory gardens (with health charities and NHS Cymru)

A social impact evaluation is in its final stage, with an interim report published in June 2025 and the final due in November. A biodiversity impact evaluation is also being procured.

Now in its sixth year, LPfN currently operates through six schemes:

1. Community Packages – via Keep Wales Tidy (KWT), including development packages for larger groups.
2. Breaking Barriers – via KWT to address access to support for underrepresented communities.
3. Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) – in all Local Authorities and National Parks, managed by WCVA.
4. 'Legacy' Competitive Grants – via National Lottery Heritage Fund, focusing on deprived areas and marginalised communities.
5. Coastal & Marine Capacity Partnership – building nature networks and resilience in coastal regions.
6. National Forest Landscapes Scheme – supporting landscape-scale approaches to the National Forest for Wales.

A further strand provides revenue funding to One Voice Wales for capacity building in Town and Community Councils, including a dedicated LPfN coordinator. Delivery continues as planned for 2025/26. Contracts with WCVA and KWT, procured in April 2023, have been extended to October 2027.

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£54 million has been invested in the NNP improving the condition and connectivity and resilience of Wales' protected sites network whilst encouraging community engagement. Support is also being given to LNP, which coordinate and promote local action and community engagement by enhancing green spaces.

There are several projects in the Isle of Man in this area that are at an early stage of development, but the flood and coastal erosion strategy has resulted in the completion of its key projects and is now under review. The blue carbon work in the Isla of Man will be expanded from its developmental phase into the wider work of the Manx Government, over the coming year.

In the Falkland Islands ecosystem services are poorly understood throughout the Falkland Islands and therefore, not quantifiable in a way which would indicate progress towards the target, presently. However, monitoring, particularly regarding greenhouse gas emissions are being undertaken through the weather station and flux tower network within the islands. It is hoped that these will form the basis for determining the carbon sequestration potential within peatland soils. However, the remainder of ecosystem services are still, and likely to continue to be, poorly understood throughout the territory.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

The UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have faced challenges to achieving the target. For example, in England, analysis work identified many opportunities for implementing nature-based solutions (NbS) across the strategic road network (SRN), so there was a need to prioritise those identified as having the highest potential for nature-based solutions to deliver multiple benefits.

The environmental status for pelagic habitats in UK seas is uncertain. There is currently no suitable model for assessing Good Environmental Status (GES) for pelagic habitats, this results in lower confidence with any GES assessment and determining trends. The challenge is to understand what constitutes conditions not adversely impacted by human activities, so that improved status relative to previous assessments can be detected. Although we don't have a model for GES assessments for pelagic habitats, research continues to be funded to build on our knowledge and inform baselines.

For tree-planting schemes, challenges include that it is demand led, and therefore there is a risk schemes might not receive enough applications/plant enough trees due to land use competition and the economics of woodland creation not being favourable enough for landowners or managers; that workforce capacity and skills and nursery or seed supply cannot keep pace with required tree planting rates; that the target is very stretching and equates to increasing England's tree cover by approximately 210,000 ha: and that delivery partners need long term certainty to commit the necessary resources (people and capital) to build-up future tree planting pipelines. Challenges also include the impacts of climate change on planting, both in terms of increasing floods limiting autumn planting and increasing summer droughts impacting planting survival rates, and need for long-term management activity to improve tree and woodland resilience. To address these challenges, England is simplifying the forestry grant landscape and making offers as attractive and stable as possible; continuing work with the forestry industry to develop new educational routes and career opportunities, support new apprenticeships, skills and qualifications and invest in UK nursery and seed sector supply chains (including via innovation

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and technology) to boost tree seed and sapling supply; and is working across government and with industry partners to encourage the development of long-term private finance opportunities to support tree planting, woodland creation and woodland management. The Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) tree programme was set-up in 2020 to tackle these challenges and has a proven track record of delivery. England is using lessons learnt from ongoing evaluation of delivery of the NCF tree programme to ensure policy interventions are being targeted as effectively as possible.

Research regarding pro-environmental behaviour has identified several challenges in gaining engagement and uptake of Environment Land Management (ELM) schemes in England. This includes:

- A lack of intrinsic motivation amongst some land managers to deliver ambitious ecosystem restoration, due to concerns about the impact on local traditions and food production.
- A lack of knowledge and skills needed to transition to sustainable management.
- The complexity of the legacy regulatory and funding landscape,

Defra is developing and testing a range of approaches to address these barriers. Delivery of the Government's commitments relies on foresters, farmers and landowners voluntarily taking up and implementing actions which are incentivised by publicly funded programmes in ELM. Defra needs to ensure the model is sustainable, attractive and financially viable for both participants and the Government. Where this is not appropriate, delivery through these mechanisms may not be feasible enough to gain delivery at a sufficient scale. The Government will also consider the role of the supply chains, private finance and alternative delivery methods, such as regulation, to address low delivery progress and the impact on public finances.

In Scotland, only by helping people to understand the benefits from nature and their connectedness to it will biodiversity conservation achieve its goals. Addressing the so called indirect drivers of biodiversity loss identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has therefore been identified as a priority in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and in research commissioned by NatureScot ([Pakeman et al. 2023](#)). This will inform investment, both private and public. Work is also underway to update [Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index](#) which shows how well nature can contribute to people's well-being through a range of ecosystem services and ecosystem characteristics.

In Wales, resourcing has been a key barrier to moving forward in this area at the pace needed. Also, communicating and embedding this work across Welsh Government and wider society also remains a challenge. Wales are working on ways to better integrate this work and produce more tools and resources where they could add value. The Local Places for Nature (LPfN) programme's 5-year evaluation (published by Welsh Government in December 2025) concludes with a set of recommendations designed to inform future policy and programme management. These include targeting areas with low historical engagement to address geographic and social inequalities in access to nature; making the engagement of new participants an explicit programme objective to broaden the reach and impact of LPfN; strengthening local delivery through experienced community organisations to ensure projects are rooted in local knowledge and capacity; reinforcing behaviour change through continued engagement and visible impact to sustain pro-environmental habits; and strengthening monitoring and evaluation across the programme in association with other schemes such as Nature Networks and the developing pilot collaborative schemes to provide robust, independent evidence of outcomes and support ongoing learning. The recommendations emphasise the need for targeted outreach, sustained support for community actors, and ongoing investment in robust, independent monitoring and evaluation. Taken together, they provide a roadmap for maximising the long-term benefits, equity, and sustainability of the LPfN programme. Further, one aspect of the LPfN programme already advancing mitigations for some of these challenges links with Target 22 recognises a

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	challenge of providing access to these schemes for underrepresented groups. An overhaul of the Breaking Barriers Scheme is already showing some objective impact in engagement with underrepresented groups (such as black, minority ethnic, gypsy and traveller communities). A challenge still exists in determining the actual overall biodiversity impact within project areas. The LPfN programme was initially designed primarily to engage with communities and implement green spaces to where they live and work specifically for the socioeconomic, health and well-being benefits they provide. The scheme specific data being produced has intimated that whilst being small areas, the sheer number of sites, coupled with their ability to provide connective pockets that network across urban areas connecting the larger established green spaces and green belt have had a marked impact on biodiversity. This is especially seen in the change in management of municipal grassland sites. An independent biodiversity evaluation has been commissioned to retrospectively assess the impact across all the schemes of the LPfN Programme. In the Cayman Islands, challenges to ecosystem-based approaches include the need to balance development with preservation of ecosystem functions, nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, integrated watershed planning, etc., for people. There is a need for improved collaboration between the executive branch of government and the National Conservation Council. There remains some hesitation to conduct Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) prior to major infrastructure projects. Additionally, the intention to integrate the natural capital accounts with the national accounts has not yet been realised. In the Falkland Islands the main challenge is data deficiency on accounting for nature's contributions to people. Few projects within the territory have sought to quantify this and therefore these ecosystem services are poorly understood throughout the islands. Additional resources to encourage research into ecosystem services and their function throughout the territory are required to encourage quantifiable restoration, maintenance, and enhancement initiatives. In Gibraltar the main challenge is the difficulty in finding new areas for trees due to limited land space and services infrastructure.
4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁶ Headline Indicator B.1: Services provided by ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Services provided by ecosystems) Table 1: Indices of service flow values for the UK, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in 2022, relative to a baseline value of 1 in 2014. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Services provided by ecosystems	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____ This indicator shows the overall trend in key ecosystem services being provided in the UK. The trends are calculated from data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Natural Capital Accounts. Trends are disaggregated by three broad groupings of ecosystem

⁶ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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Ecosystem service group	UK index	England index	Scotland index	Wales index	Northern Ireland index
Overall	1.12	1.16	1.09	1.05	1.23
Provisioning	1.17	1.24	1.10	1.17	1.37
Regulating	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01
Cultural	1.12	1.14	1.16	0.83	1.15

service: provisioning services, such as agricultural biomass provision; regulating services, such as air pollution regulation; and cultural services, such as the health benefits from recreation. Trends are provided at UK level, as well as disaggregated to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The indicator focuses on flows of ecosystem services rather than natural capital assets (i.e. use each year as opposed to the overall amount available), in accordance with the [Convention on Biological Diversity's international guidance](#) for this indicator. In particular the indicator is focused on services particularly relevant to biodiversity (e.g. excluding the service of fossil fuel consumption). The indicator results provide a broad indication of change but should be viewed with consideration, bearing in mind the interpretation of ecosystem service trends is often complex and nuanced. The ONS natural capital accounts include further details on both ecosystem flows and natural capital assets for a wide range of services.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

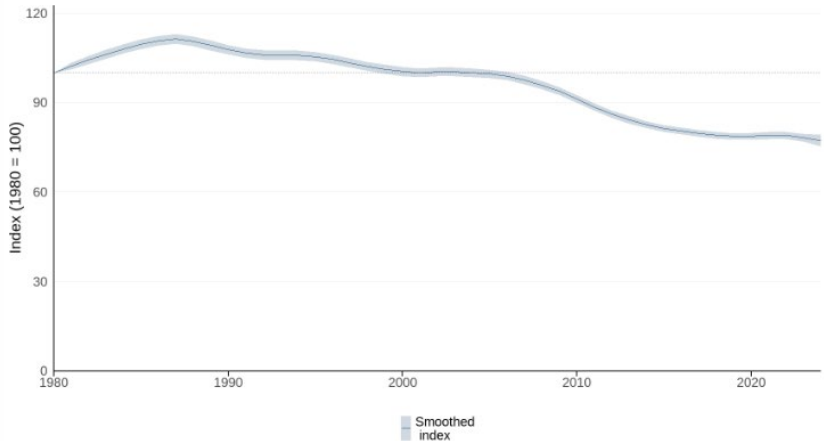
Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Services provided by ecosystems](#)

Table 1:

Ecosystem services included in 'Provisioning' are agricultural biomass provision, timber provision, wood fuel provision, water provision, and renewable electricity provision.

Ecosystem services included in 'Regulating' are air pollution regulation, and noise regulation.

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		Ecosystem services included in 'Cultural' are recreation (health benefits), and recreation and tourism (expenditure). Ecosystem services in the 'Overall' category include all the above listed services.
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator. ⁷	Comments (optional): _____
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 11.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of pollinating insects  Figure 1. Change in the distribution of 393 UK pollinators, 1980 to 2024 Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of pollinating insects	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____ This indicator reports changes in the distribution of some key pollinator groups (bees and hoverflies) in the UK. The indicator is based on 393 species (158 species of bee and 235 species of hoverfly), and measures change in the number of 1 kilometre grid squares across the UK in which they were recorded in any given year: this is referred to as the 'occupancy index'. Many insect species are involved in pollination, but bees and hoverflies are known to be important and are presented here as an indicator of overall pollinator trend. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of pollinating insects

⁷ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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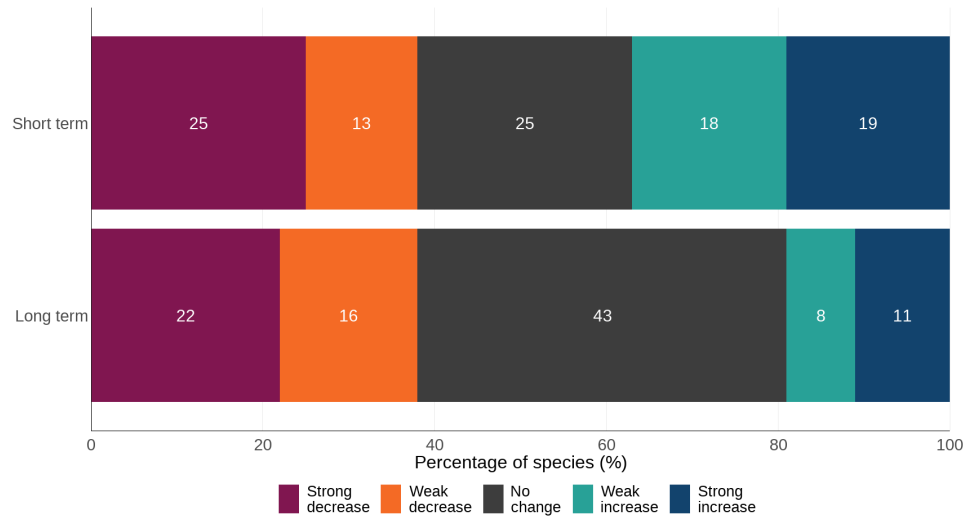


Figure 2: Long-term and short-term changes in individual species trends for 393 pollinators in the UK, 1980 to 2024.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of pollinating insects](#)

Figure 1:

The indicator includes 393 species (158 wild bee and 235 hoverfly species); the number of species can vary between years.

The line chart shows the smoothed composite indicator trend with variation around the line (shaded area) within which users can be 95% confident that the true value lies (credible interval).

Figure 2:

The bar chart shows the percentage of species within the indicator that have increased, decreased or shown little change in occupancy, based on thresholds of change (see Table 1 in the [Technical Annex](#)).

National Indicator 11.b: Scotland Natural Capital Asset Index

Source: [Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index](#)

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments (optional): _____

This indicator is a composite index published biennially, which tracks changes in the capacity of Scotland's terrestrial ecosystems to provide benefits

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		to people. Since 1950, natural capital has declined by around 15% from already historically depleted levels although it has been largely stable since around 2000. Source: Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index
6.	National Indicator 7.c: Surface water status UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status (SDG Indicator 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality) Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status See Target 7.	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____ Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status See Target 7.
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland encourages and promotes actions which are designed to help halt and reverse pollinator declines. It presents a good example of partnership working by drawing together many sectors of society and by helping pollinators has the additional impact of making our greenspaces and environment better for people and nature generally. Community groups A surge in citizen science and community-spirited work dovetails neatly with commitments made by Local Authorities to help tackle the challenges facing pollinators. There is an increasing awareness that when it comes to alleviating the pressures on our pollinators, sharing good practice is a key way forward. To this end, NatureScot (the Scottish Government's statutory nature conservation body) hosts annual conferences where subjects such as habitat creation, monitoring, and habitat management have featured heavily. These conferences typically look at projects both in Scotland and overseas to tap into the latest and best ideas being implemented to help pollinators. The role of local government	

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Our local authorities are to the forefront when it comes to helping our pollinators. An increasing move towards changing practices in the management of public greenspaces has seen increases in the uptake of reduced mowing and pollinator-friendly planting practices. The shift from amenity grassland to nature-friendly spaces is gaining momentum and this chimes with the aspirations behind our own Nature Networks drive at NatureScot. Galvanising local communities to follow suit in the management of their own individual green spaces is one particularly welcome outcome of Local Authority endeavours.

Towns and cities such as Falkirk, Stirling, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow now have systematic approaches to create bigger and better pollinator-friendly habitats. Projects such as Species on the Edge work beyond urban areas and help pollinators to recover in the geographic fringes of Scotland. As part of this, projects are underway with experienced partners such as Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife Scotland, Butterfly Conservation and the RSPB designed to help specific species such as the Great Yellow and Moss Carder bumblebees.

Partnership working

NatureScot has forged a partnership with Scottish Canals to promote pollinator-friendly approaches through attractive joint-signage at sites as prominent as the Falkirk Wheel and Kelpies. These information boards highlight how recognition and conservation of good habitat can deliver highly positive outcomes for our pollinators. In sharing information and advice in this visible public fashion, the intention is not only to promote good habitat *in situ*, but to encourage visitors to consider implementing pollinator-friendly management in their own communities and greenspaces.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust working through the Ayrshire Nectar Network has harnessed 'green hay' to make the most of existing meadows and save costs in creating new meadows. The creation of pollinator stepping-stones is important in working towards the aim of encouraging connectivity across Scotland. In addition, landscape-scale projects in the Scottish Borders and Aberdeen are benefiting from the financial support offered by Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, as did the Highland Council Meadow Mosaic project.

Evidence-based conservation

Support for the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) remains a key element of acquiring an evidence-based approach to understanding our pollinators. NatureScot views this scheme as an integral element to ensure actions are targeted to best effect. Thus, promoting both the 1 km-square surveys and Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT-Count) are regular actions taken by the pollinator team at NatureScot. Allied to the B-Lines and BeeWalks projects organised by Buglife Scotland and Bumblebee Conservation Trust there is good reason to be optimistic that we are steadily increasing our knowledge around pollinator distribution and trends.

Globally, our pollinators face many challenges ranging from habitat loss and fragmentation through to climate change and changes in land use. But with a suite of willing partners there is certainly a concerted effort to meet these challenges head-on.

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 12

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 12

Enhance green and blue spaces and urban planning for human health and well-being and biodiversity

The UK will significantly increase the area and quality, and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature, and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and to the provision of ecosystem functions and services.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK has made measurable progress towards Target 12 by expanding access to green and blue spaces and embedding biodiversity-inclusive urban planning. In England, the £33 million “Access for All Programme” has improved accessibility in Protected Landscapes, forests, and National Trails through path resurfacing, mobility equipment, and inclusive facilities. Over 2,500 miles of the King Charles III England Coast Path have been approved, with over 2,000 of those miles already open to the public, and nine new National River Walks are planned by 2026. The Nature Towns and Cities programme aims to help 5 million more people access nature and create 1 million opportunities for children to play outdoors. Wales’ Local Places for Nature programme has invested £66 million, creating over 4,000 green spaces, 730 pollinator sites, and 220 community food-growing sites, engaging 15,500 volunteers. Scotland has developed nature guidance published in support of the Scottish National Planning Framework 4. In Northern Ireland, 110 green and blue spaces are designated across towns and cities, including the 7-mile Comber Greenway – a traffic-free section of the National Cycle Network – which runs along the old Belfast-Comber railway line and is managed in a biodiversity-centred way, while the Isle of Man and Gibraltar have introduced Biodiversity Net Gain and green infrastructure policies.

Regarding the main actions under Target 12:

Significantly increase the area and quality, and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably

The £33 million ‘Access for All’ Programme in England has delivered projects in Protected Landscapes, national trails, forests, and the wider countryside to improve access to these green and blue spaces for all ages, backgrounds and abilities. The King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIECP), a new 2,700-mile National Trail around all of England’s coast, is continuing to open up the English coast to the public with over 2,000 of those miles already open to the public. Final proposals for the route of the KCIIECP have been published and establishment works will be completed

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to enable the official launch of the trail in early summer 2026. Work is also continuing to complete the designation of Wainwright's Coast to Coast route across the north of England as a National Trail. It is expected that the Coast-to-Coast National Trail will open in Spring 2026.

In England, Defra is planning to deliver nine new National River Walks across England, one in each region, to enhance access to nature where it is most needed, whilst promoting nature recovery and water quality improvements. In March 2025, a new national forest, the Western Forest, across Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset, was announced. The second new national forest will be located in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, with millions of trees planted in the years ahead. It is part of a landmark investment this Government is making in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, a region whose opportunities for growth it will help maximise. A third new national forest will be created in either the Midlands or North of England depending on the outcome of a competition set to run in 2026.

In August 2024, an official statistic in development was published on walkability within England to the nearest green space. In May 2025, this was followed by a statistic in development detailing walkability to the nearest blue space. This will be further built upon by plans to publish a combined access to green and blue space in England official statistic in development in Spring 2026. The data therein will underpin future access to nature improvements in England.

Work is also ongoing on an evaluation report of phase 2 of the Green Social Prescribing (GSP) programme, which will be published by spring 2026, and will build on findings from the previous evaluation and deepen understanding of value for money, data tracking through the GSP pathway, and explore sustainable funding options.

In England, Defra, Natural England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Trust have launched a new programme, Nature Towns and Cities. It will help millions more people enjoy time in nature close to home, in greener, thriving towns and cities by putting nature, green infrastructure and heritage at the heart of local decision-making, focusing on those areas that will benefit the most. Over the next 10 years Nature Towns and Cities' aim is to help 5 million more people enjoy better access to green and blue space close to home, and 1 million more children to be able to play in nature on their doorstep along with at least 30% of green and blue space network contributing to nature's recovery.

Scotland are in the process of engaging with stakeholders to develop a policy framework for nature networks (i.e., nationally important areas for biodiversity (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest)) and other sites of local importance for biodiversity (e.g. Local Nature Reserves) – as well as areas being restored for nature – and are developing an implementation toolbox to build guidance, expertise and advice to aid in the delivery of projects that contribute to a Nature Network. They will provide a range of opportunities for people, especially those in urban areas, to experience and connect with nature. Additionally, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy has a series of actions to enhance biodiversity in Scotland's urban green and blue spaces.

The green and blue spaces within and around Scotland's buildings and settlements – particularly in urban areas – provide important places for both people and nature, many of which can be enhanced for biodiversity. Scotland recently consulted on proposals to inform a legislative framework for managing rain and surface water, particularly in urban settings. The framework will support Scotland's Flood Resilience Strategy, which sets out a role for nature-based solutions (NbS) in helping to create flood resilient places across the country. Where NbS are implemented, it is with the intention of providing multiple benefits, including to biodiversity, e.g. providing the potential for urban habitat creation/restoration and connectivity, contribution to green and blue spaces, and Nature Networks. The role of NbS in providing climate resilience is further set out in the third Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3).

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In Northern Ireland, 110 green and blue spaces have been designated in towns and cities, and the local councils are working to deliver better access to nature within urban areas. For example, the Comber Greenway is a 7-mile traffic-free section of the National Cycle Network that runs along the old Belfast-Comber railway line and is managed and maintained in a biodiversity friendly way for the enjoyment of cyclists and pedestrians. Tree and vegetation planting along Comber Greenway has also been attributed with providing flood alleviation to local housing areas previously prone to regular flooding.

The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) for Northern Ireland commits that by 2028 all district council areas will have developed a Community Trail Network & Green/Blue Places Plan. Furthermore, that there will be an annual increase in households that have publicly accessible quality natural space more than 2 ha within 400 m and at least one site more than 20 ha in size within 2 km. This is intended to be delivered via an increase in grants to support development of new and improved outdoor recreation trails and accessible natural spaces, and programmes to encourage people to understand and sustainably use these places responsibly.

On the Isle of Man, there is approximately 8,000 ha of land open to public ramblage (14% of the Island's total area). This provides access to much of the Isle's upland heathland which includes Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) and Public Rights of Way network. The Isle of Man have developed partnerships which aim to improve human health and well-being and to connect with nature. One recent example is the *Connect Outdoors* social enterprise project at Dhoon Glen, a nature-based amenity which offers preventative and therapeutic approaches to improve the quality of life and well-being for the community. Residents of the Isle are encouraged to access the countryside and experience nature through self-guided walks leaflets, maps, books and other publications covering various aspects of local nature and Manx Landscapes.

The Gibraltar [25 Year Environment Plan](#) includes a chapter on creating healthy and sustainable cities, with a commitment to continue to provide green spaces throughout Gibraltar, providing new parks in the North and South districts and a green corridor along one of the main traffic thoroughfares. It also contains a commitment to include Biodiversity Net Gain within the planning process. A new Gibraltar Development Plan is currently being prepared which will incorporate these policies. The [Gibraltar National Park](#) was created in 2023 in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and natural and cultural heritage of the listed areas as well as promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of these areas by the public.

On the Cayman Islands, the National Tree Planting Programme has contributed to enhancement of existing community spaces.

Mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning

The UK has in place legislation that protects specific species and sites which is required for consideration by local planning authorities. In addition, some cities in England have created green infrastructure policies. England and Wales have both begun to implement laws that require development to facilitate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Net Benefits for Biodiversity (NBB) respectively. This new condition means that new developments must provide a 10% gain for biodiversity, and that where it is not possible to deliver the net gain on-site, developers will invest in off-site habitat creation and enhancement.

The England biodiversity duty is a general duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC). It was strengthened through the Environment Act 2021 in response to criticism that the existing duty was limited in terms of impact on action on biodiversity. While the strengthened duty does not allow for the prescription of specific actions that authorities must take to conserve and enhance biodiversity, it

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aims to address the identified shortcomings and drive meaningful action for nature recovery by embedding biodiversity considerations into the decision-making and actions of public authorities across England. This legislation has been accompanied by the Green Infrastructure Framework (GI Framework) and its Principles and Standards, which were launched in 2023. Together, they provide national guidance and evidence to local authorities and communities on mainstreaming biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, which supports the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The GI Framework helps to create and maintain nature rich, healthy, beautiful and climate adapted places, that provide networks of high-quality nature rich accessible green and blue spaces. Natural England has worked with over 90 local authorities to embed the GI Framework to achieve biodiversity-inclusive urban planning. It is also developing green infrastructure mapping summaries for at least 80 local authorities which provides easily digestible data on the green infrastructure provision, and access to nature, enabling a local authority to quickly understand where to target provision. This is a voluntary framework, and its Green Infrastructure Standards directly relate to Target 12. The GI Framework contains four Standards:

- i. Accessible Greenspace Standard – sets out criteria for size and proximity, quality, capacity and accessibility of green and blue space provision.
- ii. Urban Nature Recovery Standard - promotes an increase in the proportion of nature-rich urban green infrastructure, and an increase in Local Nature Reserves (the vast majority are in urban areas).
- iii. Urban Greening Factor (UGF) Standard - sets a target for the green cover in urban residential neighbourhoods. The UGF is a planning tool used to assess and improve the quality and quantity of green spaces in urban areas. It helps ensure that new developments incorporate green infrastructure, such as sustainable drainage feature, contributing to a more sustainable and biodiverse environment. The UGF is typically expressed as a target score, with different scores potentially applying to residential and commercial developments.
- iv. Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard - encourages local authorities to set a target scope for urban tree canopy cover across their areas, taking account of their baseline, context and opportunities.

Natural England is creating GI Standard indicators which will be used to measure progress over time and change detection.

The GI Framework is a core component of Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation which repositions green infrastructure (and nature) as vital for the long-term success and resilience of a town or city. Recently Birmingham was announced as the first Nature City along with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole as the first Nature Towns. A further 31 towns and cities are on the pathway to achieving accreditation.

In Scotland, every new transport and active travel infrastructure project will incorporate elements of blue-green infrastructure and seek opportunities for enhancing/expanding blue-green infrastructure. Scottish Government will work with social housing providers and the public and private sector to demonstrate how to manage residential, commercial and institutional green space in ways that have a positive effect for biodiversity.

In Wales, the Local Places for Nature (LPFN) programme was established in 2020 to create 'nature on your doorstep'. The idea was to create areas that support nature within communities, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, thus encouraging a greater appreciation and value of nature. The programme delivers actions towards the commitment to create more green spaces as well as several measures to support this and wider biodiversity objectives. The LPFN programme is now in its fourth year and includes the following deliverables relevant to Target 12:

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- Pre-paid Community Packages to allow small community groups to create wildlife gardens, currently delivered via Keep Wales Tidy (KWT), who also offer development packages to larger organisations within the same programme.
- A competitive grant scheme run via the National Lottery Heritage Fund focusing on areas of deprivation and the Breaking Barriers scheme building support to organisations to help work with disadvantaged and marginalised communities
- A new Coastal and Marine Capacity Partnership Scheme to create networks in coastal regions to enhance nature and build economic and social resilience.
- Wales' Nature Networks Fund which is a key element of our Nature Networks Programme which aims to improve the condition and connectivity of our protected sites also encourages capacity building and community engagement working in partnership with National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Wales also support One Voice Wales to provide continued capacity building support and new training packages to Town and Community Councils to develop the capacity and confidence of local people to help develop project ideas and support delivery.

On the Isle of Man, the Government Cabinet Office are undertaking preparatory work to inform future policy for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which became a mandatory requirement introduced in 2024. The first draft of Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) policy was published for public consultation in April 2025, together with draft planning policy statements relating to flood risk assessment and SuDS implementation. A new draft Strategic Plan is anticipated to be published by summer 2026 – setting out draft strategic policies for both SuDS and BNG. Cabinet Office recognise that SuDS and BNG are complementary policy principles. Once the new draft Strategic Plan is adopted by Cabinet Office and approved by Tynwald, strategic policy provision should be in place that will support the delivery of both policy aspects within future development. The Isle of Man, alongside their BNG Policy and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Policy, are currently developing a Land Management Framework that is aiming to be a multi-functioning land use framework.

2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target Across the four countries of the UK, there is data now being collected on the quality of blue and green space and further work beginning to investigate how these spaces are used and are beneficial for human well-being. The overall proportion of urban areas across Great Britain allocated to accessible green spaces is 4.3% while blue spaces account for 1.2%, making a total of 5.5% of urban areas allocated to these spaces (Headline Indicator 12.1).	

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However, no progress can be inferred from indicator results because there is currently only one datum point. Across the target elements, work has begun to incorporate more green and blue spaces and to monitor efforts and utilisation of the spaces better with different indicators across the four countries of the UK, but further data points in future years are needed to better assess if the UK will achieve this target for 2030.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 12:

Significantly increase the area and quality, and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably

The new Headline Indicator 12.1 shows that the overall proportion of urban areas across Great Britain allocated to accessible green spaces is 4.3% while blue spaces account for 1.2%, making a total of 5.5% of urban areas allocated to these spaces, however, no progress can be inferred from indicator results because there is currently only one datum point.

The Access for All Programme in England has delivered increases in accessibility across the Protected Landscapes (PLs), England's forests and National Trails. Projects to deliver this increase have included path resurfacing, purchase of accessible equipment such as e-bikes and off-road mobility scooters, and installation of accessible facilities such as changing places toilets and accessible play equipment. Further, over 2,500 miles have now been approved of the King Charles III England Coast Path, with over 2,000 miles already open.

Defra's cross-government green social prescribing programme (GSP) ran from October 2020 – March 2023 and was very successful, achieving around 8,500 referrals and demonstrating significant improvements in their mental health. This reduces pressure on the NHS and leads to a more productive workforce. There was a social return on investment of £2.42 for every £1 invested.

In England, the Government's Office for National Statistics' (ONS) accounts on the value of urban natural capital assets and the health benefits of green spaces have supported the policy rationale for improving access to green space, as part of the Natural England's National Green Infrastructure Framework (GI Framework). This supports local planning authorities and developers to consider green infrastructure in local plans. In England, [The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment \(NCEA\) programme](#) outputs are already enhancing decision-making and policy within Defra and its Arm's Length Bodies, as well as providing value to a wide range of users outside government, ensuring that investments in environmental reforms achieve maximum benefits for nature and society.

Studies in Scotland highlight the importance and popularity of spending time in nature. [Scotland's People and Nature Survey 2023/24](#) (National Indicator 12.a) found that 61% of people in Scotland normally visit the outdoors for leisure or recreation at least once a week, with around a quarter of visits taking place within towns or cities. 96% of people stated that they had either visited or passed through (e.g. on their way to work or shops) their local green space areas at least once during the last 12 months, with 70% normally doing so at least once a week. Frequency of use of green space was strongly related to how long it took to get there with more than double the proportion of people living within five minutes' walk of their local green space used it at least once a week, compared with people living more than half an hour away. This national indicator highlights the importance of having high-quality green and blue spaces close to where people live and work.

In Wales, since 2020, £66 million has been invested in Local Places for Nature (LPfN) schemes to create green spaces for nature or food growing in communities where people live and work. This has created more than 4,000 new or greatly improved green spaces involving 15,000 individual

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volunteers or communities, including more than 730 pollinator sites, more than 220 community food growing sites, 500 green spaces, 260 community orchards and 25 therapeutic sensory gardens delivered with health charities and NHS Cymru (National Indicator 12.b).

On the Bailiwick of Jersey, the percentage of land surface area that is classified as green space declined slightly between 2012 to 2022 (71.4% to 70.6%) (National Indicator 12.c).

On the Isle of Man, there are [18 National Glens](#) which are within walking distance of the Island's main residential areas - at least one of these Glens is within a 15-minute drive from every home, meaning access to nature is literally on residents' doorsteps.

Mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requires developments to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity, compared to pre-development conditions. It became mandatory in England in early 2024 under the Environment Act 2021.

BNG can be delivered on-site, off-site, or via statutory credits (as a last resort). It encourages developers to minimise impacts through site design, reducing BNG costs. Off-site BNG supports the growth of private finance for nature recovery and is globally recognised as a pioneering approach to supporting investment into nature. BNG is due to apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects from May 2026.

Natural England is supporting local authorities in embedding the GI Framework in their local plan and policies. To date, Natural England has engaged with over 90 local authorities, providing training and advice. This contributes to a target to engage with over 100 local authorities by 2030. Evaluation of the use of the GI Framework has shown that it is considered to be authoritative guidance, that it can help local authorities to implement the National Planning Policy Framework, and break down siloed working in local authorities.

In England, there have been several rounds of the Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) and Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) providing funding to local authorities, charities, community groups and other organisations to plant more trees. In England in 2024/2025, over 200,000 trees outside woodland were planted through the LATF and the UTCf, including in urban and peri-urban areas. Community engagement has been encouraged, with local residents, schools and environmental groups participating in the restoration of trees in areas outside woodlands (including along riverbanks, parks, beside roads and footpaths, and within vacant community spaces) and the planting of large trees in both urban and peri-urban areas. This funding has brought people from all socio-economic backgrounds closer to nature. In June 2025, the Government opened a new £1 million Trees Outside Woodland Fund for 2025/26. Administered by the Tree Council, the Fund offered grants of up to £40,000 for local authorities and larger charities to grow trees on land that is publicly accessible, or of benefit to the public.

An initial evaluation for the strengthened England biodiversity duty has been conducted. The report found many public authorities are planning to include biodiversity in their corporate reporting and/or in their business plans, with several authorities actively reviewing and updating existing policies and procedures to incorporate biodiversity considerations. This suggests early progress toward the policy goal of mainstreaming biodiversity across organisational functions. Going forward, there will be further assessment of how the duty is being implemented by public authorities. The first Biodiversity Reports under the duty will be produced by local authorities and local planning authorities in 2026. These will provide a better understanding of progress against Target 12 in England.

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In Scotland, [the Developing with Nature guidance](#) was published in support of the Scottish National Planning Framework 4. It aims to rebalance the planning system in favour of conserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity and promotes nature-based solutions, benefiting people and nature. By doing so it will contribute to better places that promote well-being, provide for healthier lifestyles, enable people to connect with nature, support greater attachment to place and can enhance the economic value attributed to development.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Resourcing and continued investment are key challenges for programmes to increase green space and blue space in the UK. For example, the 'Access for All' programme is a mainly capital investment-dependent programme which can present resourcing challenges for the delivery organisations to deliver. In addition, limited terrestrial land space, complexities in land ownership and competing demands are a challenge.

An initial evaluation highlighted some key challenges in raising awareness of the England biodiversity duty but also identified some good practice in implementing it.

In Wales, the key challenges remain regarding funding and resourcing both within policy teams and within collaborative partners and stakeholder organisations. Within the Local places for Nature programme challenges also include strengthening local delivery through experienced community organisations to ensure projects are rooted in local knowledge and capacity; reinforcing behaviour change through continued engagement and visible impact to sustain pro-environmental habits; and strengthening monitoring and evaluation across the programme and in association with other schemes such as Nature Networks and the developing pilot collaborative schemes to provide robust, independent evidence of outcomes and support ongoing learning.

In the Cayman Islands, challenges include political and development industry opposition to mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ensuring biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, including reluctance to enact effective incentives and disincentives to guide industry behaviours.

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4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁸

Headline Indicator 12.1: Green and blue space in built-up areas (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Green and blue space in built-up areas)

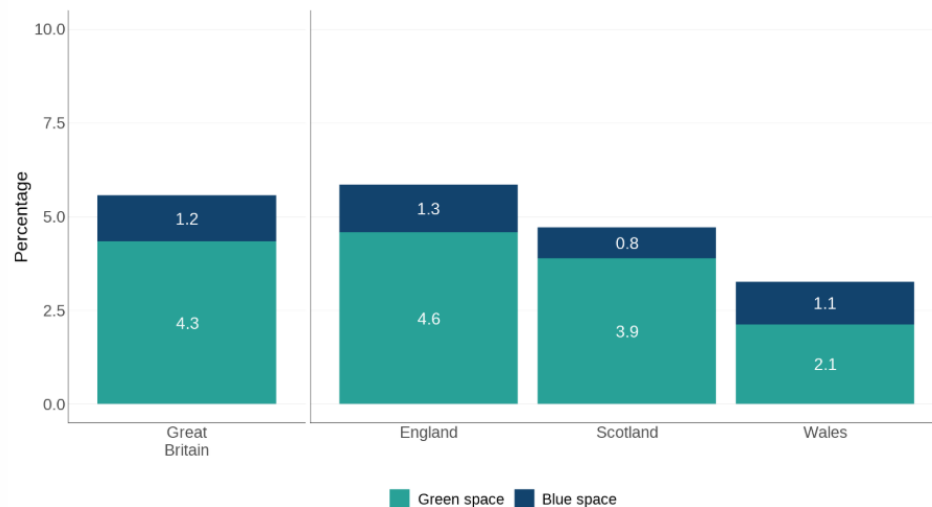


Figure 1. The proportion of the urban areas across Great Britain which is publicly accessible green and blue space.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Green and blue space in built-up areas](#)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments: _____

This indicator presents the average proportion of blue and accessible green spaces within urban areas within Great Britain.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Green and blue space in built-up areas](#)

Figure 1:

The left panel in this figure summarises green and blue space as the proportion of the total urban area of Great Britain.

The right panel disaggregates the data into England, Scotland and Wales and expresses the proportion of green and blue space as a proportion of each country's urban area.

Data for Northern Ireland is currently unavailable.

Table 1:

This table presents the total area in hectares of green and blue space.

⁸ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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Table 1. Summary of accessible green and blue space (ha).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Green and blue space in built-up areas](#)

Total extent	Blue space (ha)	Green space (ha)	Total urban extent (ha)
Great Britain	23,559	83,369	1,920,541
England	20,471	72,895	1,593,595
Scotland	1,656	7,777	200,201
Wales	1,432	2,698	126,745

Table 2. Areas of publicly accessible green space (ha).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Green and blue space in built-up areas](#)

Publicly accessible green space	Public parks and gardens (ha)	Playing fields (ha)	Cemetries (ha)	Religious grounds (ha)
Great Britain	46,665	25,678	6,896	4,130
England	41,198	22,292	5,972	3,433
Scotland	4,387	2,212	686	492
Wales	1,080	1,174	239	205

The data has been converted to percent of total urban extent for Figure 1.

Table 2:

This table presents a breakdown of the categories of accessible green space included in this indicator.

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5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁹ 12.b Number of countries with biodiversity-inclusive urban planning referring to green or blue urban spaces. 12.1 Does your country have urban areas under biodiversity-inclusive urban planning that incorporates the management of green or blue spaces for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity? (c) Partially 12.2 Does your country have urban areas under biodiversity-inclusive urban planning incorporating the management of green or blue spaces for ecosystem services and nature's contributions to people? (c) Partially	Comments (optional): _____
6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 12.a: Frequency of outdoor recreation visits in the outdoors in the last 12 months - Scotland People and Nature (SPANS) population survey Source: NatureScot –Scotland's People and Nature (SPANS) Survey 2023/24	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: Scotland's People and Nature Survey (SPANS) is a large-scale population survey that provides detailed data on how adults in Scotland use, value and enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature. Details on the survey methods used for SPANS 2023/2024 are provided in the SPANS technical report. Source: NatureScot –Scotland's People and Nature (SPANS) Survey 2023/24

⁹ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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	National Indicator 12.b: Local Places for Nature Scheme Wales Source: Welsh Government – Local Places for Nature Scheme Wales – Evaluation: 2020-2025 Final Report	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: The Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature (LPfN) programme seeks to support communities in creating 'nature on their doorsteps' and is delivered at different levels, from local authority area down to individual communities. Source: Welsh Government – Local Places for Nature Scheme Wales – Evaluation: 2020-2025 Final Report
	National Indicator 12.c: Bailiwick of Jersey's percentage of land surface area that is classified as green space Source: Government of Jersey – percentage of Jersey's surface area that is classified as green space	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator is developed from a model that combines aerial mapping of the Island with data from the planning process. The term green space combines two formal land use categories: land under cultivation; and natural environment. The latter includes woodlands, dunes, grassland, cliffs and shrub. This indicator divides the total amount of green space by Jersey's total land mass, excluding inland water (e.g. ponds, streams and reservoirs) and inter-tidal areas. Source: Government of Jersey – percentage of Jersey's surface area that is classified as green space

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7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

Dragonflies Den on the Isle of Man

Dragonflies Den is a collaborative initiative between Douglas City Council, Manx Wildlife Trust and Biosphere Isle of Man. The project launched in 2024 to replace *Douglas in Bloom*, a competition led by Douglas City Council to reward private and often ornamental gardens in Douglas. The idea to shift towards a more community and environmentally focused competition was that of Douglas City Council, who then invited Manx Wildlife Trust and Biosphere Isle of Man to be involved. Since its launch, there have been two rounds of the competition, with a third planned soon.

The inaugural *Dragonflies Den* competition was launched in early 2024, with registrations of interest required by March 2024. Two employees working in community engagement for Manx Wildlife Trust, then worked with the applicants to prepare their full application to present to the council. Projects applying for support through *Dragonflies Den* needed to fit certain criteria and be working towards at least one of the following goals: protecting or increasing biodiversity, helping to fight climate change or supporting pollinator insects. They also had to benefit the local community.

No limit was placed on the number of projects that could be successful, and in the first year *Dragonflies Den* supported five community projects. All successful applicants received a garden centre voucher, however the level of other support ranged significantly. One successful applicant was a Douglas city primary school, who wanted help creating a natural windbreak and shade for their playground. This modern school has a playground fully made of concrete, where children cross a car park and require a key to access green space. Exposed to the elements, the playground is too windy in the winter and is very hot in the summer. With no shade, the teachers hang up tarpaulin on the fence to keep the children cool. With the help of Douglas City Council and their tree stock, a community tree planting day was organised, with parents, pupils and teachers helping to plant climbers and trees that will go on to shield the playground.

Another successful applicant also had intentions of significantly changing the characteristics of a place. The Thie Ny Shee project aims to transform a 90 x 50 metre sized field into a haven for both people and wildlife. Since applying for *Dragonflies Den* this project has also gone on to succeed in another grant application and has now planted a 90 metre long hedgerow, a community orchard, several other native trees and are in the process of creating a pond. Through *Dragonflies Den* this project received some early support and advice, helping to build contacts and lead to other future successes.

These two projects required a larger amount of support compared to the other three successful applications, one of which, only wanted some wildflower seeds for their community garden. The last two projects, both received a donation of compost from the council as well as wildflower seeds and some planters. The organisers of *Dragonflies Den* have gone on to maintain a positive relationship with all the successful applicants with the employees working in community engagement for Manx Wildlife Trust, staying particularly in touch. Although *Dragonflies Den* specifically is only present in the Isle of Man, it closely corresponds with Team Wilder, a project being led by the Federation of Wildlife Trusts all over the British Isles that celebrates community led action.

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The second round of *Dragonflies Den* received far fewer applications, potentially due to the change in dates of when the project was advertised. Therefore, there were only two successful applicants, both being schools that are hoping to create more wildlife friendly playgrounds.

Although the wildlife conservation benefits may not be large scale, *Dragonflies Den* does promote the importance of green and biodiverse spaces in populated and urban areas. The connection between biodiversity and human health is celebrated with the project highlighting how environmental improvements will also be of benefit to the local community. *Dragonflies Den* aims to engage a range of audiences, particularly those who may not initially have such a strong connection to nature. Through local action that is community led, it's hoped that the sense of entitlement to green space and nature will grow encouraging more to get involved in nature's recovery.

Gibraltar – Green Transformation for Nature and Community

The site now known as Commonwealth Park has a deep layered history of utilitarian use. It was once a Naval Officers' Pavilion (which was locally known as N.O.P), and later served as a football pitch, coach park, and was the seasonal venue for Gibraltar's fair. Just before its green transformation, it functioned as a car park. While each of these uses reflected the evolving demands of urbanisation, none prioritised ecological value – until 2014, when the site was inaugurated as Commonwealth Park. With nearly 10,000 square metres of public park in central Gibraltar, the park offers a green haven, where both people and wildlife can thrive.

Biodiversity

Since its opening, there has been a resurgence of urban biodiversity in the area. Through planting, the creation of habitats and ecological design, the park welcomes a range of species:

- Pollinators such as a range of bee species are attracted by flowering plants, such as the Pride of Madeira (*Echium candicans*) a giant bugloss that is closely related enough to smaller, continental bugloss species that it's well adapted to native pollinators in addition to being spectacular in horticulture. Mediterranean flowers such as rockroses complement the park's value for pollinators.
- Bird species such as blackbirds, spotted flycatchers, blue tits, spotless starlings, white and grey wagtails, that now use the park for feeding or nesting.
- Plant life such as Mediterranean trees and plants that maximise biodiversity value and sustainable water usage, whilst providing habitat for wild plants such as brookweed (*Samolus valerandi*) and maidenhair fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) that grow around the pond's edge.

The inclusion of ponds and shaded areas has created microhabitats that support aquatic and moisture-loving plants, insects, amphibians, and koi carp. The park's water features also contribute to the park's cooling effect.

From Naval Grounds to Green Haven

Commonwealth Park significantly contributes to public well-being providing a natural setting that supports mental health, encourages physical activity, and fosters a sense of community.

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From an environmental perspective, the park offers a wide range of benefits beyond biodiversity – it assists with urban cooling and carbon capture. The vegetation in the park helps to reduce the heat island effect by absorbing carbon dioxide which also contributes to Gibraltar's climate change mitigation efforts.

A Model for Urban Renewal

This case study displays how urban land can be transformed into ecologically valuable spaces, showcasing that even in small countries like Gibraltar, there is always room for urban greening.

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 13

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 13

Ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources, digital sequence information and traditional knowledge

The UK will take effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures at all levels, as appropriate, to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilisation of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, and facilitating appropriate access to genetic resources, and by 2030, facilitating a significant increase of the benefits shared, in accordance with applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK has taken positive legal, policy and administrative measures to implement Target 13 and ensure fair and equitable benefit sharing from genetic resources and digital sequence information (DSI). As a Party to the Nagoya Protocol, the UK ensures compliance through our Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations, requiring UK users to demonstrate due diligence, prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms when using genetic resources from other countries. The UK has conducted a recent post-implementation review of these regulations to ensure effectiveness and continues to provide guidance and awareness-raising for research institutions and businesses. Domestically the UK has also established an industry liaison group, ensuring a formal structure is in place to work in partnership with businesses to progress effective ABS.

Internationally, the UK played a leading role in negotiating and operationalising the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism for DSI, including the establishment of the Cali Fund, and co-launched the Friends of the Cali Fund coalition to mobilise global support. The UK is also implementing the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) through new legislation and supports capacity-building initiatives for Small Island Developing States. In addition, the UK contributes to benefit sharing under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, maintaining major gene banks and making Annex I materials available for research and breeding under standard material transfer agreements.

Regarding the main actions under Target 13:

Target 13

Ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilisation of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources

As a Party to [the Nagoya Protocol](#), the UK will continue to effectively implement national Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) legislation for the use of genetic resources. Demonstration of UK implementation, including through the ABS regulations, is available on the [Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House](#). Further, the UK has established an industry liaison group, ensuring a formal structure is in place to work in partnership with businesses to progress effective ABS.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) undertakes regular awareness and capacity building work with UK stakeholders to ensure they have the knowledge and tools needed to share benefits. Both the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) and the National Focal Point (NFP) regularly engage with stakeholders at the national and international level on matters relating to the Compliance Regulations. Defra convenes a UK ABS Stakeholders' Forum providing information on compliance regulations and international developments in the ABS space. OPSS manage a LinkedIn group for UK ABS stakeholders that facilitates users of genetic resources to share questions and exchange views and experiences related to ABS. The group is open to all users and potential users of genetic resources as well as various other Nagoya Protocol and ABS stakeholders and currently has over 500 members. In addition to this between 2021 and 2025, OPSS and Defra carried out a total of four webinars and eight workshops to businesses, universities and other organisations on how to navigate the ABS landscape.

By 2030, facilitate a significant increase of the benefits shared, in accordance with applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments

Following an extensive intersessional process, and negotiations under the CBD Conference of Parties (COP), both co-chaired by the UK, Parties at CBD COP16 agreed the modalities for operationalising the multilateral benefit sharing mechanism for the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI), including a global fund – the Cali Fund. [Decision 16/2](#) outlines that all users of DSI under the multilateral mechanism should share benefits arising from its use in a fair and equitable manner. The UK will take measures to implement the decision on DSI, including by encouraging contributions from users of DSI to the Cali Fund in line with the modalities of the multilateral mechanism.

Following our commitment at the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, on 10 September 2025 the UK Government introduced legislation to enable the UK to meet its obligations under the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), so that we will be able to ratify. The UK supported a regional workshop for Caribbean Small Island Developing States on the BBNJ Agreement held in Belize in October 2024. The UK has also supported the BBNJ informal dialogues, to track process working toward the successful ratification and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, including an informal intersessional BBNJ retreat at the Greentree Estate in New York which enabled delegations to meet ahead of the BBNJ Preparatory Commission in April 2025. The UK is also supporting a second BBNJ retreat which will take place in February 2026 to support preparations for the third BBNJ Preparatory Commission in March 2026.

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	As a Party to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the UK will continue to maintain ex situ plant gene bank collections of Annex I materials which are made available for research, education and breeding purposes, and share benefits under the terms of the Treaty's standard material transfer agreements (SMTAs).	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☒ On track to achieve target ☐ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK has been a Party to the Nagoya Protocol since 2016 and has fully fulfilled its obligations by implementing a compliance mechanism: the UK Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations. These regulations apply to UK-based users of genetic resources and associated knowledge, accessed from other Parties to the Protocol. ABS regulations ensure agreement for use of genetic resources and information and that benefits are shared equitable. The UK played a key role in getting an agreement on a multilateral benefit sharing mechanism – the Cali Fund – by co-chairing an extensive intersessional process. The UK is now working with businesses to raise awareness of the Cali Fund and encourage contributions aligned with the agreed modalities. Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 13: Ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilisation of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources The UK has effective legal, administrative and policy measures in place to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The UK has been a Party to the Nagoya Protocol since 2016 and has fully fulfilled its obligations by implementing a compliance mechanism: the UK Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations. These regulations apply to UK-based users conducting research and development on genetic resources accessed from other Parties to the Protocol. They ensure UK users adhere to Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT). Full details on the regulation are available on the ABS Clearing-House. To ensure compliance, Defra has designated the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) within the Department for Business and Trade to oversee adherence by those entities in the UK that are conducting research and development on genetic resources as well as implementing capacity-	

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building measures to support fair and equitable benefit-sharing. For example, in 2025, OPSS held several webinars and awareness-raising events targeting academia, research institutions, and the private sector, including relevant emerging sectors such as engineering biology. These sessions helped stakeholders understand benefit-sharing options – both monetary and non-monetary, such as collaborative research – enabling organisations to agree mechanisms appropriate for their activities and enter into agreements more confidently.

Defra has undertaken two post-implementation reviews (PIR) of the UK ABS Regulations to understand the effectiveness of the legislation and what additional policy, administrative and capacity-building measures may be necessary since it entered fully into force in 2015. The second PIR was published in October 2025 and found that the UK Regulation remains effective and achieved its objectives regarding balancing the needs of users, providers and the UK as a Party to the Protocol. Based on the findings Defra will continue to support UK users in navigating the international aspects of the Protocol – seeking PIC and agreeing MAT and to comply with the Compliance Regulations regarding balancing the needs of users, providers and the UK as a Party to the Protocol.

Associated traditional knowledge (aTK) is covered in the UK ABS Regulations. This is applicable when traditional knowledge held by an indigenous or local community that is relevant for the utilisation of genetic resources and is as such described in the MAT applying to the utilisation of genetic resources is covered. Further, under the UK ABS Regulations, UK users of genetic resources are required to demonstrate due diligence to show that relevant country requirements have been met. Depending on the national measures that apply, the user may need to demonstrate PIC to access the genetic resource and agree MAT for undertaking research and development. These terms will also provide for benefit sharing, whether this is in monetary or non-monetary form, as well as addressing aTK associated with a genetic resource.

By 2030, facilitate a significant increase of the benefits shared, in accordance with applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments

The UK is committed to the implementation of the multilateral benefit sharing mechanism for the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources as agreed at CBD COP16. The UK Government is working closely with businesses to raise awareness of the Cali Fund and encourage voluntary contributions, and alongside Chile launched the Friends of the Cali Fund – a global coalition to support the effective implementation of the multilateral mechanism, including the global Fund.

The UK has been a member of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture since 2004 and is committed to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources as evidenced through its funding of three gene banks (UK vegetable gene bank, national fruit collection, and pea collection). All three gene banks make Annex I material available for research, education and breeding and share this material using standard material transfer agreements (SMTAs), to deliver against benefit sharing expectations of the Treaty.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

In the UK the key challenges encountered for this target are the identification of entities in scope of ABS Regulations.

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4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) ¹⁰	Headline Indicator C.1: Monetary benefits received in accordance with applicable internationally agreed access and benefit-sharing instruments	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☒ Not relevant. Please explain why: Although a Party to the Nagoya Protocol, the UK has chosen not to exercise sovereign rights for accessing its genetic resources under the Nagoya Protocol. There is no requirement to establish Prior Informed Consent (PIC) or negotiate Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) with the UK Government for any utilisation of UK genetic resources and therefore no requirement to share benefits back to the UK. Comments (optional): _____
	Headline Indicator C.2: Non-monetary benefits arising from applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☒ Not relevant. Please explain why: Although a Party to the Nagoya Protocol, the UK has chosen not to exercise sovereign rights for accessing its genetic resources under the Nagoya Protocol. There is no requirement to establish Prior Informed Consent (PIC) or negotiate Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) with the UK Government for any utilisation of UK genetic resources and therefore no requirement to share benefits back to the UK. Comments (optional): _____

¹⁰ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator¹¹

13.b Number of countries that have taken effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures at all levels, as appropriate, to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources

13.1 Does your country have effective legal, administrative and policy measures to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilization of genetic resources?

(d) Fully

13.2 Does your country have capacity-building measures to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilization of genetic resources?

(d) Fully

13.3 Has your country taken administrative, policy or legislative measures pursuant to the operationalization of the multilateral mechanism in decision 16/2?

(b) Under development

13.4 Do the measures mentioned in questions 13.1 and 13.2 include the utilization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources?

(a) Yes

13.5 Does your country monitor the monetary benefits received from the utilization of genetic resources and/or traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that were accessed from your country?

(e) Not applicable

13.6 Does your country monitor the non-monetary benefits received from the utilization of genetic resources and/or traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that were accessed from your country?

(e) Not applicable

Comments (optional): _____

¹¹ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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	13.7 Does your country have measures to ensure the fair and equitable benefit sharing arising from the utilization of genetic resources and/or traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that were accessed in another country? (d) Fully	
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed Defra – Cali Fund The UK Government is working closely with businesses across a range of sectors to raise awareness of the Cali Fund, its objectives, and how those businesses that may be considered in scope of the benefit sharing mechanism can engage and contribute. The Cali Fund aims to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI) and will play a central role in ensuring DSI held in publicly accessible databases remains open access, whilst also mobilising private sector finance for the conservation of biodiversity. The Cali Fund puts in place arrangements to facilitate the sharing of monetary benefits that arise from the use of DSI. Specifically, when large businesses benefit from the commercial use of DSI they are expected to contribute a proportion of their profit or revenue. The funds made available through the Cali Fund will support countries to deliver their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), with at least 50% of the funding allocated to indigenous peoples and local communities, recognising their central role in protecting nature. During Climate Week 2025, the UK Government hosted <i>Nature Action: Mobilising Frameworks and Finance</i> event. This high-level Ministerial event, attended by CEOs of prominent businesses and with attendance at a reception afterwards by His Majesty the King, sought to catalyse a systemic shift towards increasing nature-positive private investment, including direct investment in protection, sustainable use and restoration of nature. Showcasing practical tools and mechanisms that businesses can use to underpin investment the event provided a platform for participants to engage with the Cali Fund and demonstrate their leadership in the transition to a nature positive future. It provided a platform to recognise, promote and encourage benefit sharing approaches, including the implementation of the Cali Fund. The event directly contributes to the achievement of Target 13 as well as the wider mobilisation of finance under Target 19 which references benefit sharing mechanisms as a key tool to be applied. The event also provided a platform for the launch of the Friends of the Cali Fund, a high ambition coalition	

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of countries focused on the common objective of making a success of the Cali Fund. The central aim of the group is to provide assurances to business that there will not be duplicative expectations across both bilateral and multilateral benefit sharing mechanisms. Colombia, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway joined the UK and Chile as first supporters of the group of Friends and will work in partnership to develop its offer further.

In parallel to and following the event the UK Government is working closely with businesses across a range of sectors to raise awareness of the Cali Fund, its objectives, and how those businesses that are in scope of the benefit sharing mechanism can engage and contribute.



Photo: Minister for Nature Mary Creagh CBE MP speaking at the Nature Action event (image courtesy of Defra).

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 14

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 14

Integrate biodiversity in decision making at every level

The UK will ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty eradication strategies, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, national accounting, within and across all levels of government and across all sectors, in particular those with significant impacts on biodiversity, progressively aligning all relevant public and private activities, and fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of this framework.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

There have been considerable efforts across the UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to integrate biodiversity into local development and planning policies and legislation. Some parts of the UK have begun work investigating their natural capital to inform future decision-making. There have been actions taken to integrate biodiversity into different policy areas. In the area of poverty alleviation, more information is required from sectors which have a high impact and/or are dependent on biodiversity. Further work is needed to align all relevant public and private activities, fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Regarding the main actions under Target 14:

The UK's Office of National Statistics (ONS) have conducted work on the UK's natural capital, publishing [their latest assessment](#) in November 2024, and developed methods to estimate the depletion of UK natural capital assets. ONS accounts on the value of urban natural capital assets and the health benefits of green spaces have supported the policy rationale for improving access to green space and Natural England's National Green Infrastructure Framework, which supports local planning authorities and developers to consider green infrastructure in local plans.

The [Green Book](#) provides UK Government guidance on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects within the civil service. Building on the extensive guidance already provided for evaluating and monetising natural capital impacts, the UK Government has published updated supplementary guidance to the Green Book on 'Enabling a Natural Capital Approach', including additional [guidance on valuing biodiversity](#).

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is implementing a package of [Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement](#) measures to reduce delays to consenting UK offshore wind developments while maintaining high levels of environmental protection. As part of this, a Marine Recovery Fund for England and Wales was established in December 2025. Offshore wind developers can choose to pay into this fund to secure appropriate strategic compensatory measures.

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In England, the Environment Act 2021 introduced several requirements to support mainstreaming. A requirement for Ministers to have due regard to the [Environmental Principles Policy Statement](#) (EPPS), which came into force in 2023, aims to ensure that environmental considerations are at the heart of government policy making (see case study). A review of the approach to implementation, informed by [the report from the Office for Environmental Protection](#) (OEP), will conclude by November 2025, as set out in: [Government response to the OEP review of implementation of the duty to have due regard to the EPPS in England](#). A strengthened [Biodiversity Duty](#) means that public authorities in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through having regard to [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) (LNRs), which are being rolled out to agree priorities and propose practical actions in areas where they would have the most benefit for nature recovery. In June 2023, 48 local authorities were appointed as the 'responsible authority' to lead the preparation of the LNRs for their area. The first LNR was published by the West of England Combined Authority on 7th November 2024. As of December 2025, 24 LNRs have been completed and published. The expectation is that all 48 LNRs will be published over the following few months (see case study under Target 1 for more details). Each LNR will bring together local partners to agree priorities and propose practical actions in areas where they would have the most benefit for nature recovery and the wider environment. Further, the [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) (BNG) condition for new planning permissions in England, launched in 2024, means that new developments must provide a 10% gain for biodiversity. Where it is not possible to deliver the net gain on-site, developers will invest in off-site habitat creation and enhancement.

The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme collects data on the extent, condition and location of England's terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The marine NCEA programme, completed in March 2025, has delivered evidence, tools and guidance to integrate natural capital approaches into policy and decision making for marine and coastal environments. Terrestrial programme outputs are becoming available, with final outputs to be published by the end of 2028/2029.

In Scotland, mainstreaming of biodiversity is one of the core aims of the [Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030](#), which reaches across other areas of policy including education, planning and development, the economy, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#) also cuts across policy areas to put nature at the centre of a sustainable economy and thriving communities. [Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) stresses that a fair and equal society and a wealthier, greener economy are mutually reinforcing, highlighting opportunities for greener technologies and investments. It also emphasises the need to look beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to metrics of greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity. In 2023, Scottish Government published the [Scottish Natural Capital Accounts](#), which look at the extent of the seven terrestrial habitats in Scotland and three different elements of natural capital – the value of the assets, the annual flow of services that these assets provide, and the value of these annual services. [The Developing with Nature guidance](#), which was published in support of the Scottish National Planning Framework 4, brings biodiversity to the heart of planning decision making and links to the wider health agenda. Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity, and under the [Wildlife and Natural Environment \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#), public bodies in Scotland are required to produce a publicly available report on compliance with the Scottish Biodiversity Duty every three years. The [Natural Environment \(Scotland\) Bill](#) currently before Scottish Parliament will also include the development of statutory targets to improve the state of biodiversity. It is proposed that these targets will cover both measurement of biodiversity itself and how society benefits from and contributes to it. In 2020, the Scottish Government led the Edinburgh Process, which resulted in the [Edinburgh Declaration](#), a collective effort representing the high-level political objectives of subnational and local governments, and their aspirations for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). The Edinburgh Declaration continues to provide a focus towards a collective global effort for reducing biodiversity loss at the subnational level.

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In Wales, the Programme for Government commits the Welsh Government to embedding the climate and nature emergency into everything they do. Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems throughout all their functions, and report on compliance every three years. A Section 6 working group with members from a range of public authorities has been established to promote the Section 6 duty and highlight actions to maintain and enhance biodiversity through the sharing of good practice through presentations and discussions. Integrated Impact Assessments, which provide a framework for policy makers to consider new policies through the lens of statutory duties, include a biodiversity assessment to assess how policies can contribute to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and promoting the resilience of ecosystems. The [Nature Recovery Action Plan](#) (NRAP) guides Wales' nature policy and aims to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by putting nature at the heart of decision making. The objectives of the NRAP form a key part of the Section 6 biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty and are incorporated into guidance provided to public authorities to assist them in complying with the duty. NRAP was refreshed in 2020 and is currently being in the process of being updated.

Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) on addressing the nature emergency through the planning system was updated in 2023 and improves the integration of biodiversity into Welsh planning policy. It includes a stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure, with the submission of green infrastructure statements with planning applications. Further clarity is provided on securing net benefit for biodiversity through the application of the step wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures as a last resort, the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step, and the importance of strategic collaboration to identify larger scale opportunities for securing a net benefit.

The Welsh Government Biodiversity Taskforce, created in 2020, is raising awareness of biodiversity and improving its integration into all policy areas through actions such as training, provision of guidance and capacity building. Through the Taskforce, departments have produced biodiversity plans to help them incorporate biodiversity actions into their policy areas, and in 2023 the transport team published a [Nature Recovery Action Plan for the Strategic Road Network](#). Biodiversity considerations have also been integrated into PPW.

In Northern Ireland the [Wildlife and Natural Environment Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#) introduced a duty for every public body, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, particularly in relation to restoring and enhancing populations of flora and fauna and their habitats. The [Climate Change Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#) further promotes mainstreaming of biodiversity by setting the requirement that when developing sectoral plans and programmes to deliver any carbon budget, the potential impact on biodiversity must be taken into consideration, furthermore nature-based solutions must be adopted wherever practicable as part of those plans and programmes.

On the Isle of Man, the [Climate Change Act 2021](#) has integrated biodiversity into legislation and policy. It states that a public body in performing its duties must do so while 'protecting and enhancing biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services'. Since 1 January 2025, all public bodies are required to complete Climate Impact Assessments, which include consideration of biodiversity impacts, in situations when policy, strategy, project or funding decisions are to be made.

In the Bailiwick of Jersey, the [Bridging Island Plan 2022 to 2025](#) is the main consideration in all planning-related decision-making. Protecting Jersey's biodiversity and avoiding negative environmental impact are among the aims of the Plan, and development should aim to make a positive contribution

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	to sustainable development by enhancing local conditions to support wildlife. The Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2021 will support further implementation of biodiversity inclusive decision making. On the Cayman Islands, the National Conservation Act requires all public entities to consult on actions that may impact the environment, and the (partial) natural capital accounts are updated on an annual basis. The Falkland Islands are guided by the Environment Strategy 2021-2040, which includes actions to improve environmental assessment frameworks for land-based development, to promote and improve environmental standards for new builds, and to encourage adoption of environmentally friendly measures. In Gibraltar, The Environmental Governance Act 2023 requires the Minister for the Environment to prepare a policy statement on environmental principles, and contains a general duty for public authorities to consider what actions they can take to further the objective of the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The Town Planning Environmental Impact Regulations 2019 ensure that environmental considerations are fully integrated into the planning process for certain types of development, and the Nature Conservancy Council must be consulted on plans and projects that might impact nature reserves. The Gibraltar 25 Year Environment Plan includes an overarching goal to protect, conserve and enhance Gibraltar's natural capital and to ensure economic growth is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals. It recognises the importance of access to green spaces on mental and physical health and promotes the concept of ecotherapy. Internationally, the UK is collaborating with the other Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) to deliver the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES), which aim to achieve clean, biologically diverse and healthy, and productive and sustainably used seas, resilient to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification. The UK was heavily involved with the OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023, which evaluated the status of the North-East Atlantic, with UK experts leading a high proportion of the assessments.
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target ☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved: Summary of progress towards the target The UK has made progress in integrating biodiversity values into policies, planning, and national accounting. Significant steps toward achieving the target include mainstreaming biodiversity through legislation such as the Environment Act 2021, which introduced the Environmental Principles Policy

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Statement and strengthened the Biodiversity Duty, requiring public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. England's rollout of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) is advancing, with 24 strategies published by December 2025 and all 48 expected over the following few months. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), launched in 2024, mandates a 10% biodiversity gain for new developments in England. Economic valuation of nature is improving: the UK's natural capital asset value, excluding oil and gas, reached £1.64 trillion in 2022, with annual ecosystem service flows, excluding oil and gas, estimated at £47.6 billion in 2022. The Office for National Statistics has developed accounts for urban natural capital and health benefits of green spaces, supporting policy decisions. Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index shows long-term improvement since the 1990s, though this has plateaued since 2017. Wales has embedded biodiversity into all public authority functions through Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Despite these advances, integration into poverty eradication strategies and fiscal flows remains limited, and environmental economic accounting is not yet fully used to quantify the monetary and non-monetary values of biodiversity.

Overall, progress is tangible but fragmented, requiring accelerated action across sectors to align with the target.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 14:

The valuation of UK natural capital is an important indicator of the strategic importance of nature to the economy and society, supporting the case for policies that are aimed at advancing nature protection and enhancement. The overall asset value of (measured) UK natural capital stocks in 2022 was £1.64 trillion excluding oil and gas, including £1.34 trillion for England. Excluding oil and gas, the [UK's annual flow of services from natural capital in 2022](#) was £47.6 billion, including £37.1 billion for England.

The UK Government's recent update to the Green Book, which provides guidance on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects, is supporting government departments in appraising the impact of policies and projects on biodiversity, although it is difficult to assess the scale of impact. However, a [report from the Office for Environmental Protection](#) found several positive signs of early implementation of the legal duty for all Ministers of the Crown to have due regard to the Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS). The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) conducted a high-level early-stage review of the implementation of the EPPS, also concluding that good progress had been made in establishing processes and procedures, but identified a range of barriers to the successful implementation of the duty,

The UK Government's Office for National Statistics' (ONS) accounts on the value of urban natural capital assets and the health benefits of green spaces have supported the policy rationale for improving access to green space in England, as part of Natural England's National Green Infrastructure Framework. This supports local planning authorities and developers to consider green infrastructure in local plans. In England, [The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment \(NCEA\) programme](#) outputs are already enhancing decision-making and policy within Defra and its Arm's Length Bodies, as well as providing value to a wide range of users outside government, ensuring that investments in environmental reforms achieve maximum benefits for nature and society.

As part of the strengthened [Biodiversity Duty](#) requiring public authorities in England to consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity, Defra has published a [statement on the strengthened Biodiversity Duty](#), setting out Defra's consideration of actions to further conserve and enhance biodiversity across its functions, and the relevant policies and objectives to support delivery of these actions.

The [Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030](#), developed through consultation with Scottish Government policy teams, as well as agency, local authority and other delivery partners, covers many policy areas including planning and development, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, education, health

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and wellbeing, employment and skills development. The Plan includes priority actions to address Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) Target 14, including a) engaging and strengthening the connection between people and communities and nature, b) embedding biodiversity and nature in curriculum development, c) mainstreaming and integrating biodiversity policy across government and addressing unsustainable supply and demand to reduce biodiversity impacts, and d) addressing unsustainable supply and demand to reduce biodiversity impacts.

Scotland's Natural Capital Index (NCI) Asset (National Indicator 14.a) shows that historically, Scotland's natural capital deteriorated until the 1990s. Most habitats were declining during this period, especially bogs and grassland. Evidence from the NCI suggests the potential of Scotland's habitats to deliver ecosystem services has improved over the past 20 years and has now plateaued around its peak in 2017.

In Wales, the Section 6 duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which requires public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems throughout all their functions, has been a key driver of integrating biodiversity into the functions of public authorities operating in Wales. The duty requires all public authorities to publish a report on the actions they have taken every three years. Although not every public authority has complied with this requirement, the reports that have been published detail the many actions that have been taken to reverse the decline in biodiversity and embed biodiversity into decision making. To raise awareness of the duty and importance of biodiversity, several presentations and workshops have been delivered to a range of different audiences. There is also a Section 6 working group whose overarching aim is to support public authorities in taking actions that benefit biodiversity and assist them in implementing the duty.

The Welsh Government Biodiversity Taskforce was established in 2020 with funding of £500,000 per year. Activities funded so far have included a course on integrating biodiversity into development, a fellowship post, placements for PhD students, planning guidance for several specific Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and work to support stakeholder consultation and research in the development of new environmental legislation.

Defra, with the support of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), has published an updated [OT Biodiversity Strategy](#) in November 2025, developed in collaboration between the UK Government and the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) Governments. This strategy is the culmination of two years of extensive consultation led by the UK Government and its agencies with all 16 UKOT Governments and administrations, consulting in-territory, online and/or in the UK to set out the top priorities for nature to guide future, long-term investment. The strategy's development has been funded under Defra's Darwin Plus programme.

In Gibraltar, whilst biodiversity considerations are well embedded into the planning and development process, integration across other areas such as finance and health is still lacking and an area in which improvement will be made.

In the Falkland Islands, there has been limited progress toward this target. Environmental sustainability is a consideration within all Executive Council decisions; however, biodiversity is not consistently integrated into these decision-making processes and broader areas of policymaking.

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	Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation: Summary of key challenges The UK Government's Office for National Statistics (ONS) continues to assess the total asset value of natural capital in the UK. Data dependencies can limit the extent to which increased granularity can be achieved or the extent of the ecosystem services covered. This is because most input data on the extent and conditions of habitats are derived from multiple sources, including non-governmental organisations, academic studies, agencies, and government departments. The ONS has published information on the quality and methodology used for the natural capital accounts, detailing the strengths and limitations of the data, methods used and the data used. In Wales, resourcing has been a key barrier to moving forward mainstreaming at the pace needed. Communicating and embedding this work across government and wider society also remains a challenge. The Welsh Government is working on ways to better integrate this work. In the Cayman Islands, there is an ongoing challenge in maintaining sustainable capacity to conduct ecosystem accounting, and the studies needed to underpin the accounts remain partial, incomplete and often outdated.	
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)¹	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator² 14.b Number of countries integrating biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning, development processes, poverty eradication strategies and, as appropriate, national accounts, within and across all levels and across all sectors, and progressively aligning all relevant public and private activities and fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of the Framework	Comments (optional): _____

¹ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

² See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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	14.1 Does your country integrate biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning, development processes and poverty eradication strategies at all levels of government? Partially 14.2 Does your country use environmental economic accounting to quantify the monetary and non-monetary values of biodiversity? Partially 14.3 Does your country integrate biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, plans and strategies across all sectors in order to ensure their mainstreaming? Partially 14.4 Does your country have policies, regulations, strategies or plans in place to progressively align all relevant public and private activities with the goals and targets of the Framework? Partially 14.5 Are policies, regulations, strategies or plans in place to progressively align fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of the Framework? Partially	
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 14.a: Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index Source: Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: ____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: The Natural Capital Asset Index (NCAI) is a composite index which tracks changes in the capacity of Scotland's terrestrial ecosystems to provide benefits to people. It does not include the benefits from the marine environment (although a feasibility

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		study assessing whether this is possible was carried out in 2019). See indicator methods and further details can be found in the Natural Capital Asset Index 2025 summary. Source: Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index
	National Indicator 14.b: Ecosystem Service Flow and Asset Accounts in the Cayman Islands Source: Department for Environment, Cayman Islands Government. Results unpublished (contact JNCC for further information). Methods available in the Caribbean UKOTs 2020 Ecosystem Account Report.	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: Source: Department for Environment, Cayman Islands Government. Results unpublished. Results unpublished ((contact JNCC for further details). Methods available in the Caribbean UKOTs 2020 Ecosystem Account Report.
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed UK Environmental Principles Duty Context The UK Government has committed to being the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it was found. To make this happen, it is vital that the UK Government delivers a system that places environmental considerations, including those relating to biodiversity, at the heart of policymaking across government. This is the reason for the introduction of the environmental principles duty in the Environment Act 2021. The duty was brought into force in November 2023.	

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Environmental principles duty and its aims

The Environment Act 2021 places a legal duty on Ministers of the Crown to have 'due regard' to [the environmental principles policy statement](#) when making policy. The environmental principles duty aims to guide policymakers toward opportunities to protect and enhance the environment and preserve natural assets, all within the context of combatting biodiversity loss and building resilience to the effects of our changing climate.

The policy statement lists five environmental principles that ministers, and those developing policy on their behalf, must have 'due regard' to when making policy. The five principles in the policy statement are internationally recognised as successful benchmarks for environmental protection and enhancement. The statement sets out how ministers, and policymakers on their behalf, should interpret and proportionately apply the principles, so that they are used effectively to shape policy to protect the environment.

The five environmental principles are:

- integration
- prevention
- rectification at source
- polluter pays
- the precautionary principle

Application of the environmental principles duty

The environmental principles duty applies to government policymaking, with limited exemptions set out in the Environment Act 2021. In line with the policy statement, policymaking is broadly understood as an intended course of action designed to achieve an objective.

Examples of policymaking include:

- proposals that lead to legislation
- national policy statements, strategies and frameworks
- ministerial statements setting out the government's formal position on an issue

Policymakers should consider and use the environmental principles iteratively from the outset and during subsequent stages in policy development. Policies can affect the environment in a variety of ways, for example through pollution, CO₂ or other emissions and physical changes such as biodiversity or habitat loss. In line with the policy statement, policymakers should identify the potential environmental effects (positive or negative) of their policy and then use the environmental principles to inform and influence the design of the policy.

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The duty is not prescriptive in dictating the outcome of any application of the environmental principles when making policy. Instead, it aims to provide ministers, and those developing policy on their behalf, with the space to use the principles to enable and encourage innovation, ensuring that nature and the environment are proactively designed into the policymaking process.

Implementation and monitoring of the duty

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the lead UK Government department for the environmental principles duty. As the lead department, Defra is working closely with departments across the UK Government to support them in implementing the duty to have due regard to the environmental principles policy statement. This includes through developing training and advice and identifying and sharing best practice as we gain experience in implementation.

The Office for Environmental Protection, which aims to protect and improve the environment by holding the UK Government to account, published [a review of implementation of the environmental principles duty](#). Defra is also currently leading a high-level review of implementation of the duty, which will highlight best practice and review the effectiveness of the overall approach to implementation across government.

8. **Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

UK Target 15

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 15

Encourage and enable businesses to monitor, assess and disclose biodiversity-related risks to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity

The UK will take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions:

- a) regularly monitor, assess and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, including with requirements for all large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios;
- b) provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns;
- c) report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable;

in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK is developing and implementing a range of policies to help businesses reduce their negative impacts on biodiversity, promote sustainable consumption and comply with access and benefit-sharing measures. The UK has been a key actor in supporting the development of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, which empowers businesses with the risk management tools they need to monitor, assess, and disclose their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity. The UK also continues to implement the Nagoya Protocol. Additional steps are needed to enable businesses to make information available to consumers on the impacts of business practices on biodiversity so that people are empowered to make more informed decisions about their consumption patterns.

Regarding the main actions under Target 15, the UK is taking legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions to:

Regularly monitor, assess and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts

The UK Government is taking steps to ensure the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)'s International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) are reflected in UK policy and legislation. The UK Government recently consulted on UK versions of the ISSB Standards, known as UK [Sustainability Reporting Standards](#) (UK SRS), which will be made available for voluntary use in 2026. Use of UK SRS will enable market participants to

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better map, measure, manage and report on their sustainability risks, including nature-related risks, and to identify new products, market and investment opportunities, ensuring that sustainability claims stand up to scrutiny. Following publication of the final standards, the UK Government will consider whether to introduce requirements for economically significant entities to report against UK SRS, in the context of its Modernising Corporate Reporting Programme. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has introduced sustainability disclosure requirements for asset managers, including mandatory reporting on sustainability risks and opportunities. IFRS is referenced as a standard firms may use. We also expect the Financial Conduct Authority to consult on proposals to update its rules for listed companies to reference use of UK SRS. The UK has a process in place to assess future ISSB standards for their suitability for endorsement in the UK as they are developed.

Internationally, the UK Government has been one of the largest donors and supporters of the global, market-led [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#) (TNFD), contributing £5.6 million over 2021-2026. The TNFD publishes recommendations and guidance that enable organisations to assess, report, and act on their nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks, and opportunities. The TNFD is widely recognised as one of the main methods through which to operationalise Target 15. Through its funding, the UK is supporting the TNFD's work to encourage and enable voluntary market uptake of the TNFD recommendations across sectors and geographies and to support efforts to address the knowledge, capacity building, and data needs of market participants. The UK also supports the work of the TNFD in seeking to inform international standard-setter baselines on nature risk reporting, including the ISSB's standard setting work on nature (announced in November 2025).

In February 2026, the UK hosted the 12th Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-12). Before and during IPBES-12, the UK Government developed a parallel programme of engagement and events themed around business, finance and biodiversity, to further engage the private sector in support of delivering the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as raising awareness of the IPBES Business and Biodiversity assessment.

In Northern Ireland, businesses will be encouraged to further understand their impact and risks to biodiversity by undertaking a Business and Biodiversity Charter Mark, developed and delivered by [Business in the Community](#). Business in the Community have also added new questions specifically focused on biodiversity to the Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey. The Survey is a free benchmarking exercise that helps businesses to examine, review, compare and improve their environmental performance, and champions organisations who are demonstrating action. The new questions will encourage businesses to engage in staff training and awareness of biodiversity as well as collaboration with stakeholders.

The Isle of Man provides [Sustainable Mann](#), a series of training events, run annually, for businesses looking to get a grounding in sustainability, including biodiversity and business. Sustainable Mann also provides a [toolkit for businesses](#) to provide guidance on sustainability, and runs [annual awards](#) that highlight and celebrate organisations that have shown innovation and impact.

Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has been working on a standardised methodology for quantifying the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) footprint of food and drink products, with a view to this informing food eco-labelling policy development in the future. A recommended best practice methodology was published in July 2025 and is undergoing industry testing in 2025/2026. More specific and consistent product-level footprints will support agri-food businesses to better understand, compare and reduce the GHG emissions of specific products and help consumers

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	make more sustainable consumption choices. Defra's aim is to reach an agreed standard for product-level food and drink footprinting in the UK and to support alignment internationally. The UK is committed to introducing a mandatory labelling regime to make it easier for consumers to understand how to recycle packaging correctly. The approach is likely to be consistent across all four countries of the UK. In preparing these regulations, we will review the forthcoming European Union Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation Implementing Act on labelling (expected August 2026) and explore the potential for consistency across our approaches. It is therefore expected that our labelling requirements will come in during 2028. Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures As a Party to the Nagoya Protocol, the UK will continue to implement national Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) legislation. The UK has implemented regulations to ensure that UK-based users comply with the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) requirements they are subject to when they access genetic resources from other countries that are Parties to the Nagoya Protocol. These regulations place a requirement on UK users to share benefits where they have utilised a genetic resource from another Party and have entered into MAT. Further, UK users are required to submit due diligence declarations, and in doing so, must show compliance with the provider country's applicable ABS legislation or regulatory requirements. Full details of the UK's ABS regulations and compliance processes are available via the ABS Clearing-House.	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved: Summary of progress towards the target Since 2016, there has been an increase in the number of businesses that have published sustainability reports from 239 companies in 2016 to 492 in 2021. The number of companies reporting on disclosures of risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity increased by 31% in 2025. The total number of these companies reporting on their biodiversity risks, dependencies, and impacts in line with the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) recommendations in 2024 and 2025 combined is 83 with 47 companies adopting the framework in 2025, increasing from 36 the previous year. It is expected that all 36 adopters in 2024 would also be undertaking the TNFD-aligned reporting in 2025. Key actions include supporting the TNFD, to which the UK has contributed £5.6 million (2021–2026). The Financial Conduct Authority has introduced sustainability disclosure requirements for asset managers, and the UK Government is consulting on UK Sustainability Reporting Standards (UK SRS) for voluntary use from 2026. 3% of UK businesses monitored biodiversity risks in 2022, and ISO 14001 certifications covered 37% of medium and large	

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businesses in 2023. Consumer-focused measures, such as eco-labelling for food and drink, are in development, with mandatory recycling labelling expected by 2028. Compliance with Access and Benefit-Sharing regulations under the Nagoya Protocol continues. Overall, while frameworks and initiatives are emerging, progress remains insufficient to ensure large companies and financial institutions systematically reduce biodiversity impacts and align with sustainable production patterns.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 15, the UK is making the following progress in taking legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions to:

Regularly monitor, assess and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts

Since 2016, there has been an increase in the number of businesses that have published sustainability reports from 239 companies in 2016 to 492 in 2021 (Component Indicator 15.CT.1).

The number of companies reporting on disclosures of risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity (in line with the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) recommendations) increased by 31% in 2025 with 47 companies adopting the framework in 2025, increasing from 36 the previous year (Headline Indicator 15.1). At the TNFD's most recent adoption moment in Sao Paulo in November 2025, it was announced that there is now a total of 92 UK-based organisations that have committed to report in line with the TNFD recommendations (which includes reporting commitments for 2024, 2025 and 2026), out of a global total of 733. This means that UK organisations constitute 12.6% of the global adoption figure and represent the second highest national proportion of the TNFD adoption globally.

In 2022, the [Office for National Statistics's](#) Business Insights and Conditions Survey found that only 3% of UK businesses monitor nature and biodiversity risks. In 2023, the number of ISO 14001 certifications (internationally recognised standard for environmental management systems) in the UK as a proportion of the total number of medium and large businesses in the UK was 37%, having averaged around 26% during 2018-2020 and peaked at 42% in 2022 (National Indicator 15.b).

Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns

The number of companies publishing sustainability reports, doubled during 2016-2021, from 239 to 492 (Component Indicator 15.CT.1).

Through the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP), Defra has conducted engagement on eco-labelling across the food and drink sector. The feedback received helped Defra identify two fundamental data challenges that need to be addressed: 1) how to quantify product level environmental impacts accurately and 2) the insufficient availability and quality of data used to inform these assessments from product supply chains. Defra has commissioned research ([LED 4 Food project](#)) that will provide recommendations on how to standardise product level environmental footprinting.

Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures

Defra undertook a statutory post-implementation review (PIR) of the Nagoya Protocol (Compliance) Regulations, part of the UK Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) Regulations, to understand the current effectiveness of the legislation and whether any changes could be made to the implementation of the regulations, to reduce the burden on users of genetic resources and ultimately, support research, innovation and growth. The PIR, which was published in October 2025, found that the Compliance Regulations remain effective in achieving their objectives around balancing the needs of users,

UK Target 15

providers and users of genetic resources as well as the UK's obligations as a Party to the Protocol. Based on the findings, Defra will continue to support UK users in their compliance efforts, including where this involves interacting with other Party countries.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Businesses in the UK are currently facing challenges around their reporting burden. In response, the UK Government has announced the Modernising Corporate Reporting Programme to streamline the UK's corporate reporting requirements. The impact that any new requirements have on reporting burden is therefore a key consideration for the UK Government.

In addition, the outcome of international standard-setting on nature-related disclosures is not yet clear. Once further clarity is available, the UK Government will be able to make a more informed decision on the most jurisdictionally interoperable, institutionally efficient and investor-useful manner to integrate nature reporting in UK policy and regulatory architecture and facilitate and streamline the flow of robust, decision useful information between corporates, consumers and investors and capital markets.

4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)³

Headline Indicator 15.1: Number of companies reporting on disclosures of risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity (UK Biodiversity Indicator: Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts)

☐ Use national data set

☒ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator summarises the number of companies reporting their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts. In the UK, there is no single framework to which all applicable companies report and which covers all aspects of this indicator, and reporting is optional. The metadata for this headline indicator proposes using a number of high profile frameworks for reporting risks, dependencies, and impacts of business and biodiversity, and therefore this publication uses

³ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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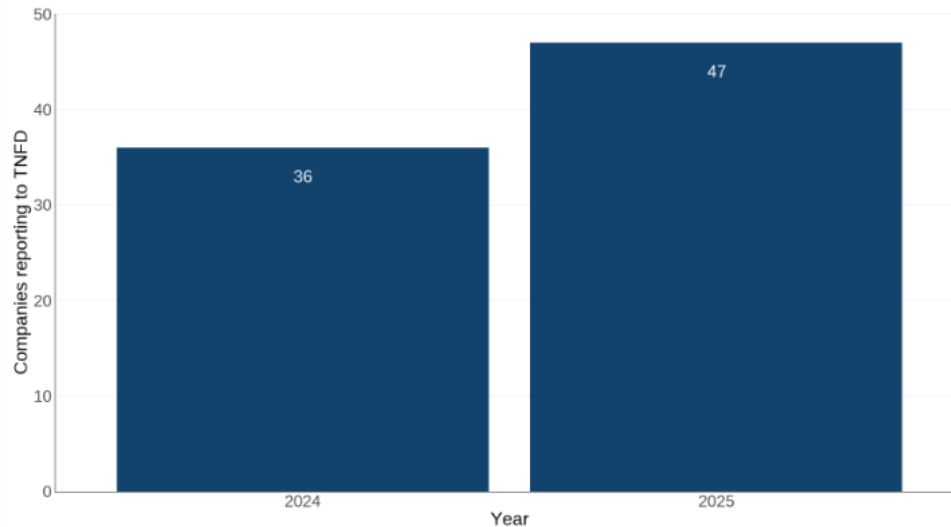


Figure 1: Companies making their first TNFD-aligned disclosures by year, 2024 to 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts](#)

data provided by the [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\)](#), with additional data and context from [CDP](#) (previously known as the Carbon Disclosure Project) and the [World Benchmarking Alliance \(WBA\)](#). Guidance for this indicator suggests including large companies (those with over 300 employees and / or £15 million in revenue and or £15 million in assets, see Technical Annex); however none of the reporting frameworks used here allow disaggregation in this way.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts](#)

Figure 1:

TNFD group companies as adopting the framework in 2024 (or earlier) or in 2025.

Financial years run from April to March; the 2024 year therefore runs from April 2023 to March 2024.

These data refer to companies defined as 'large' - see [Technical Annex](#).

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Table 1: Companies reporting to TNFD by sector, 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts](#)

Business type	Companies reporting
Corporate – Listed	34
Financial Institution or Services	28
Market Service Provider	8
Government Agency or Department	5
Other	4
Data Provider	2
Academic or Scientific Institution	1
Development Bank or Multilateral Financial Institution	1

5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁴

15.b Number of countries with legal, administrative or policy measures aimed at encouraging and enabling business and financial institutions, and in particular for large and transnational companies and financial institutions, to progressively reduce their negative impacts on biodiversity, increase their positive impacts, reduce their biodiversity-related risks and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production

Comments (optional): _____

⁴ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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	15.1 Has your country put in place legal, administrative or policy measures to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions monitor, assess and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios? Partially 15.2 Has your country put in place measures to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions provide relevant information to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns? Partially 15.3 Has your country put in place measures to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations? Under development 15.4 Has your country put in place measures to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions progressively reduce their negative impacts on biodiversity and increase their positive impacts? Partially 15.5 Does your country monitor whether negative impacts from business on biodiversity have progressively decreased? Partially	
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) National Indicator 15.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Integration of biodiversity considerations into business activity	☐ Use national data set ☒ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator shows the number of ISO (International Organization for Standardization)

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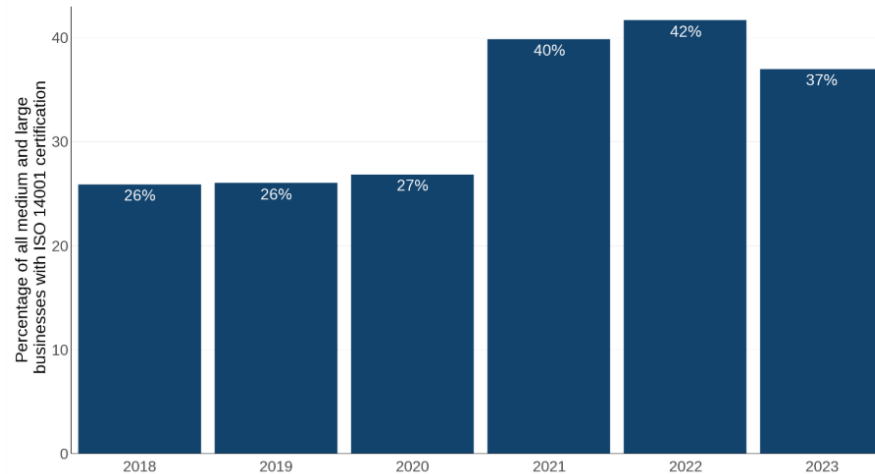


Figure 1: Number of ISO 14001 certifications in the UK as a proportion of the total number of medium and large businesses in the UK, from 2018 to 2023.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Integration of biodiversity considerations into business activity](#)

14001 certifications in the UK as a proportion of the total number of medium (50 to 249 employees) and large (at least 250 employees) businesses in the UK.

It is a proxy for the number of medium and large businesses in the UK that are taking steps to minimise their environmental impact as measured by the proportion of these businesses with ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) certification.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Integration of biodiversity considerations into business activity](#)

Figure 1:

Based on the total number of ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System) certifications in the UK on 31 December each year and the total number of medium and large businesses in the UK on 1 January of the following year.

‘Medium businesses’ are those that employ between 50 and 249 staff; ‘large businesses’ are those that employ at least 250 staff.

The UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) is appointed by the UK Government to accredit Certification Bodies for their competence, independence, and impartiality in issuing certifications such as ISO 14001. UKAS recently launched [UKAS CertCheck](#) - a free to use, publicly accessible database of all UKAS accredited certifications. Since 2021, it is mandatory for Certification Bodies to upload their certification data to CertCheck (who also provide

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this information to the ISO survey team) and as a result, the number of ISO 14001 certifications before 2021 was likely underreported. The increase seen from 2020 to 2021 is therefore due to an improvement in reporting, rather than a true increase in the proportion of businesses with ISO 14001 certification.

Component Indicator 15.CT.1: Number of companies publishing sustainability reports (UK Biodiversity Indicator - Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts, Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 12.6.1)

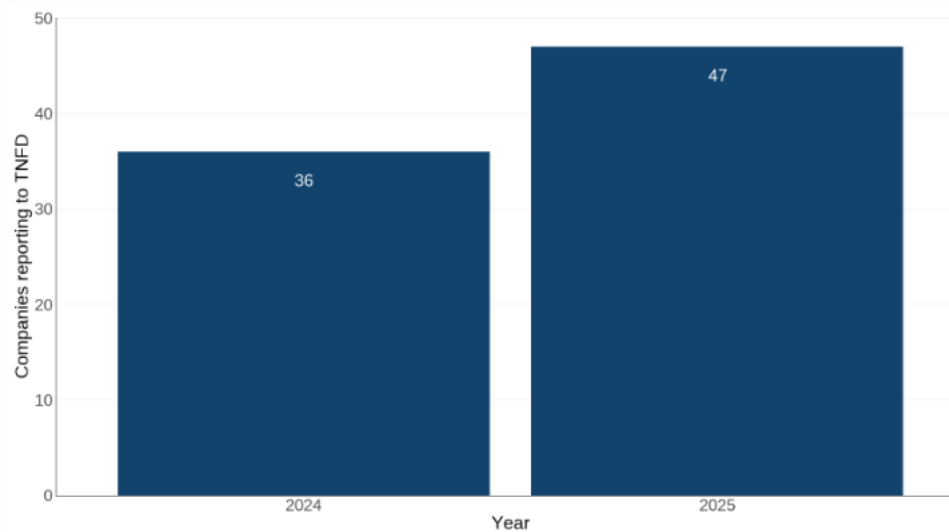


Figure 1: Companies making their first TNFD-aligned disclosures by year, 2024 to 2025

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts](#)

- ☐ Use national data set
- ☒ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator summarises the number of companies reporting their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts. In the UK, there is no single framework to which all applicable companies report and which covers all aspects of this indicator, and reporting is optional. The metadata for this headline indicator proposes using a number of high profile frameworks for reporting risks, dependencies, and impacts of business and biodiversity, and therefore this publication uses data provided by the [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\)](#). Guidance for this indicator suggests including large companies (those with over 300 employees and / or £15 million in revenue and or £15 million in assets, see Technical Annex); however none of the reporting

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frameworks used here allow disaggregation in this way.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts](#)

Figure 1:

TNFD group companies as adopting the framework in 2024 (or earlier) or in 2025.

Financial years run from April to March; the 2024 year therefore runs from April 2023 to March 2024.

These data refer to companies defined as 'large' - see Technical Annex.

- 7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed.**

Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) Initiative

The global, market-led, and science-based [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\)](#) was established in 2021. Following a two-year 'design and development' phase, it launched its nature-related risk management and disclosure recommendations and supporting guidance in September 2023. The TNFD recommendations empower organisations with the risk management tools they need to assess, report, and act on their nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks, and opportunities. By enabling organisations to make better informed decisions on nature-related issues around governance, strategy, risk management, and capital allocation, the TNFD contributes to the global goal of shifting financial flows towards nature-positive outcomes. The TNFD recommendations and guidance are relevant to all ecosystems, including marine, freshwater, and the terrestrial environment. Since its launch, the TNFD has been focused on encouraging and enabling voluntary market adoption across sectors and geographies, working with international standards bodies, raising awareness of nature as a strategic business issue, and supporting efforts to address the knowledge, capacity building, and data needs of market participants.

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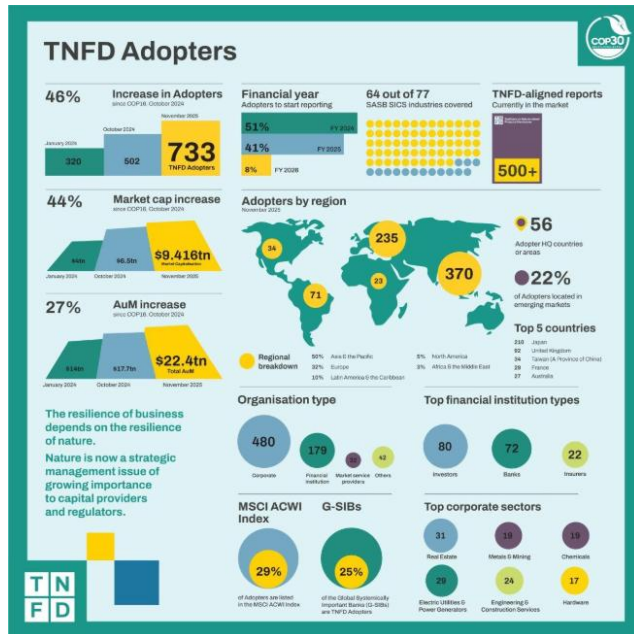


Figure. An overview of the TNFD Adopter data from those organisations that registered as adopters between September 2023 and October 2025, TNFD, 2025 (image source: <https://tnfd.global/engage/tnfd-adopters/>).

Examples of the TNFD's activities include:

- Producing [guidance](#) to support organisations on identifying and assessing nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks, and opportunities in their upstream and downstream value chains.
- Producing a [discussion paper](#) for the purpose of encouraging and enabling further market action on nature-related opportunities.
- Producing '[Recommendations for upgrading the nature data value chain for market participants](#)', which includes a blueprint for governing, funding, and operating a proposed Nature Data Public Facility (NDPF).
- Undertaking a comprehensive consultation with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), publishing [Guidance on IPLC engagement](#), and delivering IPLC Business Engagement training sessions.
- Collaborating with leading international organisations to ensure the work of the TNFD benefits from best-in-class scientific knowledge and existing market expertise.

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- Undertaking collaborative research to further strengthen the evidence base on the materiality of nature-related financial risks.
- Developing a range of resources to meet the strong demand for educational, training, and capacity building tools, and establishing an international coalition of learning and education partner organisations to deliver high quality interventions.

The TNFD's latest adoption moment in Sao Paulo in November 2025, the TNFD announced that 733 organisations from 56 jurisdictions, representing over US\$9.4 trillion in market capitalisation and US\$22.4 trillion in Assets under Management have now voluntarily committed to reporting on their nature-related issues in line with the TNFD recommendations.

UK's funding support for the work of the TNFD initiative

The UK Government has been instrumental in providing funding, stakeholder engagement, and political support to the TNFD initiative since its inception. The UK's funding contribution amounts to £5.6 million over 2021 – 2026. The development, launch, and subsequent market uptake of the TNFD recommendations represents a powerful example of translating UK green finance policy commitment into real world delivery with international market participation.

UK TNFD National Consultation Group

The UK Government has publicly encouraged UK businesses and financial institutions to engage with the TNFD recommendations and has provided specific funding support for the work of the [UK TNFD National Consultation Group](#) (UK CG), which is convened by the Green Finance Institute.

As of November 2025, the UK CG consists of 1,390 members and 680 institutions. The UK CG engages with financial institutions, corporates, civil society organisations, and public sector institutions in the UK to build awareness and capacity on nature and the TNFD, encourages voluntary market uptake of the TNFD recommendations, supports organisations to make an effective business case to Boards for TNFD-aligned reporting, acts as a central hub of support for institutions as they pilot the TNFD recommendations, and coordinates and collects feedback from UK organisations. The UK CG has a comprehensive strategy for engagement, including bilateral engagements, sector-based sessions, in-person events, webinars, online resources, in addition to regular digital communications.

The UK CG's sector-based sessions enable and facilitate UK institutions to discuss their approaches and experiences on the TNFD with their peers. These sessions can include presentations from group participants or external providers to provide a foundation for discussion. The UK CG has also hosted numerous events to build awareness and targeted advice on TNFD piloting and adoption. In-person events include a community-building event for Chief Sustainability Officers on developing organisational strategies for nature and a roundtable for Chief Financial Officers to explore the role of nature in strategy development and disclosure as a driver of business resilience and growth. Furthermore, the UK CG works closely with leading trade associations and membership organisations to ensure support for the implementation of the TNFD recommendations is provided through these platforms.

The UK CG has published a series of resources demonstrating how UK companies are implementing TNFD, including: [Taking TNFD to your Board](#), [TNFD First Steps by Sector](#), [UK Example TNFD Reports](#), [TNFD and CSRD](#), and [UK Policy on TNFD](#).

UK Target 15

The work of the UK CG has played a pivotal role in ensuring that the UK has one of the highest proportions of TNFD adopters globally, with 92 UK-based organisations publicly committing to report in line with the TNFD recommendations (as of November 2025). Prominent UK adopters include AstraZeneca, the BBC, Federated Hermes, Fidelity International, Landsec, Legal & General, Reckitt, Schroders, Severn Trent, United Utilities, Anglo American, PwC, Morrisons, The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, and Sainsbury's.

UK support for the [International Sustainability Standards Board](#) (ISSB)

In addition, the UK is working to ensure coherence in nature reporting, both within the UK and internationally. The UK is therefore pleased that the ISSB announced in November 2025 that it would commence standard setting work on nature-related risks and opportunities, drawing on the work of the TNFD. The UK Government has a framework in place to assess ISSB Standards for endorsement in the UK as they are developed.

8. **Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 16

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 16

Enable sustainable consumption choices to reduce waste and overconsumption

The UK will ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices, including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks, improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives, and by 2030, reduce the global footprint of consumption in an equitable manner, including through halving global food waste, significantly reducing overconsumption and substantially reducing waste generation, in order for all people to live well in harmony with Mother Earth⁵.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have taken a range of actions to enable sustainable consumption choices, including UK-wide bans on the sale of wet wipes containing plastic and on single-use vapes. Other legislation will come into force in the next 2-3 years that will introduce a UK-wide deposit return scheme and mandatory recycling labelling of products. There are national strategies and roadmaps for a circular economy in development across the UK. There are initiatives in progress throughout the UK and UKOTs and CDs that work with both producers and consumers to reduce single-use plastics (SUP), reduce food waste, reduce landfill waste, increase recycling and reuse rates and combat waste crime. There are also nationally led activities throughout the UK and UKOTs and CDs to educate and inform consumers.

Regarding the main actions under Target 16:

Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks

The UK Government introduced, in 2025, UK-wide bans on the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic and on single-use vapes, thereby encouraging a shift toward reusable, rechargeable alternatives.

The UK-wide Extended Producer Responsibility scheme went live in April 2025, under which packaging producers are made financially responsible for household packaging through to post-use stage. The scheme aims to reduce the amount of packaging used and using packaging that is easy to recycle.

The UK Government remains committed to a mandatory recycling labelling regime, which is expected to be operational during 2028. The approach is likely to be consistent across all four countries of the UK. Through the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP), the Department for Environment,

⁵ The United Kingdom does not recognise rights of nature or rights of Mother Earth. However, the UK in its international engagements acknowledges the existence of different value systems including, for those countries that recognise them, rights of nature and Mother Earth.

Target 16

Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has conducted engagement on eco-labelling across the food and drink sector. The feedback received helped Defra identify two fundamental data challenges that need to be addressed: 1) how to quantify product level environmental impacts accurately and 2) the insufficient availability and quality of data used to inform these assessments from product supply chains. Defra has commissioned research (LED 4 Food project) that will provide recommendations on how to standardise product level environmental foot-printing. The Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland aims to reduce litter, increase recycling rates and ensure high-quality recycled materials are available for drinks producers to reuse. The scheme is scheduled to launch in October 2027.

England has set an ambitious, legally binding target to reduce residual waste excluding major mineral wastes to no more than 287 kg per person by the end of 2042. This is supported by ambitious yet achievable interim targets in the revised Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25), including an interim target to reduce residual municipal food waste in England to no more than 64 kg per person by the end of 2029. This is roughly equivalent to a 50% reduction from 2019 levels.

In England, the Government is working with experts from industry, academia and civil society to develop a Circular Economy Growth Plan for England which will detail the interventions that the Government will make on a sector-by-sector basis to transition towards a circular economy where resources are kept in use for longer and waste is designed out. In England, bans and restrictions were introduced in 2023 on a range of polluting single-use plastic items including expanded polystyrene food and drinks containers, plastic cutlery, plastic balloon sticks and cotton buds, plastic straws and drink stirrers, and plastic food containers. In addition, the Government is taking significant steps to combat waste crime. A mandatory digital waste tracking system will modernise record-keeping and improve detection of illegal activities such as fly-tipping and illegal waste sites. Regarding digital waste tracking, England has committed to stakeholders to have a service in place from April 2026. Councils in England were allocated up to £295 million in capital funding from 2023 to 2025 to support the implementation of weekly food waste collections by 31 March 2026 when the legal requirement will come into force.

England's Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy provides businesses with guidance on managing surplus food and disposal of food waste. After food waste prevention, the priority in the hierarchy is the redistribution of surplus food, and the hierarchy includes the expectation that all businesses should have a plan for redistribution if surplus food arises. Through the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), England is backing the [UK Food and Drink Pact](#), which was launched in 2021 and includes over 190 signatories, who are committed to reducing food waste by 50% per capita by 2030. Through the UK Food and Drink Pact, England supports the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap (FWRR) which outlines the path for businesses to reduce food waste. This includes a Target, Measure, Act (TMA) approach whereby businesses set a target to identify, measure and act on food waste in their operations. In addition, Defra, with WRAP and the Food Standards Agency, has developed best practice guidance for the retail sector. This guidance assists retailers in helping consumers to purchase the right amount of food for their needs, store it properly, and make the most of what they buy.

In England, Defra will shortly publish a report that summarises existing standards and practices for product-level Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions footprinting and provides detailed recommendations for a best practice methodological approach for the agri-food sector. More specific and consistent product-level footprints will support businesses to better understand, compare and abate the GHG emissions of specific products and their value chain (scope 3 emissions), enabling them to make evidence-based decisions to reduce emissions through procurement and product reformulation. Reform of the carrier, broker, dealer regime will move it from a light-touch registration system into environmental permitting. Changes will make it harder for rogue operators to find work in the sector and easier for regulators to take action against criminals. Permit numbers will be

Target 16

displayed on advertising. This will allow the Environment Agency to carry out desktop compliance work and make it easier for people to identify legitimate services. Reform of the waste exemptions regime will remove three exemptions and tighten the conditions of seven others. The exemptions to be removed are for dismantling end-of-life vehicles, treating end-of-life tyres and the recovery of scrap metal. Greater recordkeeping requirements for all waste exemption holders will be introduced and limits and controls on how exemptions can be managed at one site imposed.

In Scotland, the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill 2024 was passed unanimously. This underlines Scotland's commitment to a sustainable, circular economy based on responsible consumption, production, and resource management. The Scottish Government's Environment Strategy provides the overarching framework for tackling many of the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss. It aims for a just transition to a net zero, Nature Positive Scotland with a circular economy through the [Circular Economy \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#), which requires the Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish a circular economy strategy; to make provision about circular economy targets; and to make provision about the reduction, recycling and management of waste. This commitment is also captured in the [Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030](#). The Product Stewardship Plan for Scotland sets out how the environmental impact of priority products will be tackled by 2025/2026. This includes developing an intervention plan to guide long-term work on household food waste reduction behaviour change by 2026/2027. Scotland has also developed effective options to implement mandatory reporting for food waste and surplus by businesses from 2025/2026 and has supported the development of a model for regional Scottish hubs and networks for the reuse of construction materials and assets from 2025-2027.

Wales has introduced the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) Act 2023, banning widely littered single-use plastic items and empowering Welsh Ministers to introduce further bans, such as those on wet wipes containing plastic. Waste will also be reduced in Wales through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) measures introduced in 2024. These will hold manufacturers accountable for the lifecycle of plastic products. Furthermore, Workplace Recycling Regulations came into force in 2024 which requires all workplaces to separate key recyclables. These actions aim to reduce waste and promote a circular economy by returning valuable materials to the economy rather than sending them to landfill or incineration. The Welsh Government's 'Beyond Recycling' strategy supports transition to a circular economy and increased resource efficiency. 'Beyond Recycling' includes support for businesses in Wales to reduce their carbon footprint and become more resource efficient. Wales has also committed to supporting businesses to become more resilient and sustainable through the [Green Growth Pledge](#). Through the "Wales Innovates" initiative, the Welsh Government is supporting innovation in recycling, resource efficiency, and product lifespan extension via the SMART Flexible Innovation Support and the circular economy fund. 'Beyond Recycling' is also supporting communities. The Welsh Government is leading work on repair and reuse, in partnership with local government, businesses and the voluntary and community sectors to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits that will come from a national repair and re-use culture in Wales. This includes a network of repair cafés across Wales supporting people to keep items in use longer by helping to repair them; reducing purchase of occasionally used consumer items through community-based 'Library of Things' where, for a modest amount, items can be hired rather than purchased; and supporting local authority and third sector repair and reuse hubs.

FareShare Cymru surplus edible food from across the supply chain from becoming waste. This food is provided to community groups across Wales, enabling them to access more affordable food alongside providing valuable community services. Welsh Government has provided grant funding to support the expansion and reach of this work since 2015. Wales has set ambitious targets to reduce edible food waste (against a 2006/2007 baseline) by 50% by 2025, and by 60% by 2030; and zero waste (including both biodegradable and non-biodegradable) to landfill by 2025. Welsh local authorities

Target 16

provide weekly food waste collections from households contributing to the significant reduction in food waste to landfill already seen. Furthermore, the Workplace Recycling Law which came into force in April 2024 requires separate collection of food waste from workplaces for recycling.

The Welsh Government has also put in place legislation, guidance and support for public sector organisations to encourage more sustainable procurement in the public sector. This includes the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 which places requirements on public bodies, including considering how resources can be used more sustainably, and specific requirements on major construction projects. and support for public sector organisations to encourage more sustainable procurement in the public sector. This includes the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 which places requirements on public bodies, including considering how resources can be used more sustainably, and specific requirements on major construction projects. Direct action is also being taken to reduce the environmental impact of waste collection from homes and businesses by supporting local authorities to expand the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in their collection fleets. The source segregated approach to recycling in Wales ensures that high-quality materials are captured that can be used by manufacturers to make supply chains more resilient, as well as more local.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has committed to developing a new waste management strategy for Northern Ireland and opened a public consultation in January 2026. As part of the development, DAERA have assessed and evaluated other strategies across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland's legislative requirements (such as meeting circular economy package targets), requirements of the Climate Change Act and collating policy information from across DAERA and the wider Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). The new waste management strategy will set the policy direction at a strategic level for the future management of resources and waste. Through implementing a range of actions and targets over the next six years, it is intended to futureproof resource and waste management in Northern Ireland to deliver circular economy and climate goals. The aim of the new strategy is to move waste up the hierarchy, retain as much valuable resources as possible within Northern Ireland and futureproof waste management to embed a circular economy and achieve net zero by 2050.

Reducing emissions in the waste management sector will be achieved through two key interventions in Northern Ireland. The first intervention is to reduce landfill emissions, through improvements to the separate collection of food waste from households, and a new proposal to divert biodegradable waste from landfill. The second intervention is to increase recycling rates and improve the quality of the material that is collected for recycling. To achieve this, there are two targets in place: (i) local authority collected waste must achieve a 65% recycling rate whilst landfill waste must be reduced to 10% or less by 2035, and (ii) to recycle at least 70% of waste by 2030. This is supported by two proposals to increase household recycling and the introduction of mandatory recycling for the commercial and industrial sectors.

DAERA have also delivered a range of successes over the past five years of its current waste prevention programme, including establishing a national reuse and repair organisation (Northern Ireland Resource Network) and promoting food redistribution. The programme has been reviewed and revised in consultation with stakeholders. It brings together interventions that will contribute to reducing waste (including food waste) and promotes reuse and repair to move towards a more circular economy.

To help tackle the problem of illegal waste practices in Northern Ireland, mandatory digital waste tracking will be introduced. This new system will replace existing outdated methods with a modern digital platform for recording waste movements, aiming to:

- Protect the environment by allowing regulators to better detect illegal activity and tackle waste crime.

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- Safeguard public health by ensuring waste is responsibly managed.
- Promote economic fairness by supporting compliant businesses.
- Advance the circular economy by improving resource recovery and recycling.

A Digital Waste Tracking project has been initiated with Phase 1, dealing with receiver sites, due to be operational in April 2026 and to become mandatory in October 2026. Phase 2, which will bring carriers and dealers on board is due to be operational from April 2027 (subject to funding agreement).

The Climate Action Plan has been publicly consulted on, and a final draft is being prepared for publication. Work is ongoing to develop and implement the waste sector proposals which aim for a 70% recycling rate by 2030, targeting reduced landfill reliance and enhanced circular economy principles to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Work on a proposal to divert all biodegradable waste from landfill by 2028 is ongoing. A draft Plastic Pollution Plan has been developed incorporating actions, activities, policies and legislative drivers currently taking place or planned that will contribute to the elimination of plastic pollution across Northern Ireland. This has been consulted on and is being prepared for final publication.

Certain provisions of the European Union Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) will also apply in Northern Ireland to expand the number of single use plastic items taken out of circulation and set ambitious reuse and recycling targets. The Single Use Plastic Reduction Action Plan (PRAP) was implemented across the Northern Ireland Government Estate. DAERA, in partnership with the Department of Finance (DoF), removed all unnecessary single-use plastic (SUP) from the Government Estate in 2021. Arm's Length Bodies were invited to set up a similar scheme. DAERA worked closely with Northern Ireland Councils in assisting them to reduce and remove SUP items across Council properties and has funded media campaigns to promote alternatives to SUP items across schools, businesses and the general public. By 2023 all actions in the PRAP had been implemented and the consumption of 'in-scope' single-use plastic items were prevented where possible, with any remaining items reduced or replaced with environmentally friendly alternatives.

In Jersey the [Carbon Neutral Roadmap](#) include policies that aim to help islanders to reduce their carbon emissions. Policy OE1 Promoting Low Carbon Lifestyles is focused on reducing scope 3 emissions which is particularly relevant to Jersey as the island imports most goods and services.

In the Isle of Man the "Biosphere Isle of Man" tool has been developed and is a key tool for the Isle of Man in looking through a window of sustainability and engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals. It has become a common reference point for leveraging environmental protection and benefits. Fisheries in the Isle of Man have also demonstrated improvement in sustainability ratings or have been maintained at a sustainable level.

In Gibraltar, the [25 Year Plan](#) includes overarching goals to turn Gibraltar into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy and to safeguard Gibraltar's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being so that they can live and prosper sustainably. It also includes specific commitments introducing legislation to reduce food waste and targets for the amount of municipal waste produced per capita. A ban on the importation of single use plastic items has been in place since 2019.

The Cayman Islands is also working towards sustainability through the Food & Nutrition Security Policy and the National Solid Waste Management Strategy, alongside ongoing efforts to limit the importation of certain single-use plastics. Reviews are ongoing to update the National Solid Waste

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Management Strategy and related policy with an emphasis over the next five years on diverting green waste and recyclables from the landfill through the development of necessary infrastructure and a National Recycling Policy.

Improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives

In England, Defra and WRAP launched campaigns such as Love Food Hate Waste, which aim to raise public awareness of food waste and offer advice on how to shop for, store and cook foods in ways that minimise waste. In Wales, the Welsh Government is leading work to promote repair and reuse, in partnership with local government, businesses, and the voluntary and community sectors to maximise the social, economic, and environmental benefits of a national repair and reuse culture in Wales. This work includes a network of repair cafés across the country, helping people extend the lifespan of their goods through repairs. It also encourages the reduction of less-often used consumer goods through community-based “Library of Things” programmes, where items can be hired for a small cost instead of being purchased. At a community level, FareShare Cymru prevent surplus edible food from across the supply chain from becoming waste. This food is provided to community groups across Wales, enabling them to access more affordable food alongside providing valuable community services.

In Northern Ireland, the Eco-Schools Green Flag, awarded to schools with high achievement in their efforts, is a recognised and respected eco-label for environmental education and performance. The [Eco-Schools Northern Ireland](#) programme is operated by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful – an environmental charity – and is supported by DAERA, all of the local councils and other organisations. All schools in Northern Ireland are now registered on the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland Programme.

Jersey’s Carbon Neutral Roadmap includes policies aimed at improving education and access to accurate information to support Islanders in reducing carbon emissions. This includes the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP26 Education Pledge, which focuses on high-quality climate education through schools and climate action plans. Other policies such as the Net Zero Network and low carbon lifestyles policies have delivered wide-ranging education efforts, including Carbon Literacy Training. The Government has also promoted food waste reduction through awareness campaigns and the provision of domestic food waste digesters, as well as introducing carbon labelling in cafes to encourage sustainable food choices. Further, Jersey has introduced carbon labelling for cafes to help Islanders choose more sustainable food options. Within Government establishments, such as the prison and hospital, the carbon emissions from menu choices has been baselined against the Planetary Health Diet and is being used to change menu options to offer lower carbon menus.

The Isle of Man Government is actively working with the Marine Conservation Society to ensure that its fisheries management measures support sustainability and inform consumer choices. The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) has also engaged with the Marine Stewardship Council to explore certification options for its fisheries.

In the Falkland Islands toothfish have been certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and this may assist some members of the public in making a sustainable consumption choice.

Gibraltar has a strong environmental education programme and has in the last two years been undertaking carbon literacy training for the education sector to equip teachers with the tools and knowledge to educate young people on the climate and ecological crises. The Education and Training Act was [amended in 2023](#) to include this duty.

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2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK has made good progress towards encouraging and enabling people to make sustainable consumption choices, including UK-wide bans on the sale of wet wipes containing plastic, single-use vapes, and bans and restrictions on a number of other single-use plastic items. Other legislation will come into force in the next 2-3 years that will introduce a UK-wide deposit return scheme and mandatory recycling labelling of products. There are national strategies and roadmaps for circular economy in development across the UK and UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UK OTs and CDs) in addition to initiatives that work with both producers and consumers to reduce single-use plastics (SUP), food waste and landfill waste as well as to increase recycling and reuse rates and combat waste crime. Where recent statistics exist, there is evidence that some of these measures are working already: • Total food waste in the UK declined by 18% during 2007-2021. • Redistributed food in UK went up by 18% between 2022 and 2023. • The provisional UK recycling rate for waste from households was 44.6% in 2023. The recycling rate for waste from households increased in the four countries of the UK in 2023. The recycling rate for England was 44.0% (provisional); 50.2% in Northern Ireland, 42.1% in Scotland, and 57.0% in Wales. • The UK Plastics Pact (UKPP), an industry coalition supported by the UK Government, has achieved significant progress in increasing sustainable use and reducing the footprint of consumption. Since 2018, Pact members have eliminated 99.9% of problematic single-use plastic items (with total household plastic packaging reduced by a weight equivalent to around 440 adult male blue whales); 71.6% of plastic packaging is now recyclable; 53% of plastic packaging is recycled or composted; and the average recycled content in plastic packaging has reached 28%. • The single-use carrier bag charge in England has led to a near 98% reduction in usage by main retailers since 2014. • England have installed a further 10,000 recycling points for vapes. • Scotland's total waste decreased by 50% during 2011-22.	

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- The introduction of plastic carrier bag charges in Northern Ireland in 2013 have raised £65 million for environmental programmes and removed 2.4 billion plastic bags from the environment.

However, the UK's consumption still has a large footprint worldwide although this does appear to be getting smaller. The UK's annual consumption of crops, cattle-related commodities and timber in 2023 was associated with an estimated 29,000 ha of agriculture-driven deforestation worldwide compared with 65,000 ha in 2005 showing an improving trend over time. The UK's impact on species extinctions is improving gradually over time according to new data within the LIFE (Land-cover change Impacts on Future Extinctions) indicator. There are ongoing nationally led activities throughout the UK and UKOTs and CDs to educate and inform consumers of their impact on the global footprint and how they can take steps to reduce it.

Despite these gains, overconsumption and waste generation persist and recycling rates remain stagnant at the UK level.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 16:

Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks

In the UK, the total amount of surplus food redistributed in 2023 was 191,000 tonnes, equating to nearly 456 million meals. Since 2022, there has been an increase of 15% in the amount distributed (around 25,000 additional tonnes compared to 2022). Between 2018 and 2021, food waste from retail and manufacturing decreased by 8.5% and 9.2%, respectively.

In England, the Simpler Recycling reforms will require the mandatory collection of food waste from all households and workplaces. This will ensure that food waste that cannot be prevented, is recycled through anaerobic digestion or composting, rather than going to landfill or incineration. The Environment Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25) has set an interim target for residual municipal food waste in the most recent full calendar year to not exceed 64 kg per capita (by December 2030). In 2023/2024, the tonnage of separately collected food waste from households in England sent for recycling was 501 thousand tonnes, an increase of 0.5 per cent from 499 thousand tonnes in 2022. In Scotland, in 2022, just under three-quarters of the household waste composted was vegetal waste (74.8%) with animal and mixed food waste making up the remainder (25.2%). The total tonnage of vegetal waste composted was 265,000 tonnes in 2022, a decrease of 16,000 tonnes (5.8%) from 2021 and a reduction of 49,000 tonnes (15.5%) from 2011. The increase in the proportion of animal and mixed food waste over time corresponds to the roll out of segregated food waste collections by urban local authorities. Vegetal waste includes both garden waste and some food waste as they are collected and composted together. [Food waste](#) remains an issue in Scotland and despite high public awareness of the importance of reducing waste, it has continued to rise against a 2013 baseline making up around 6% of Scotland's carbon emissions in 2021, the latest year for which figures are available. Additionally, [the total amount of waste generated](#) from all sources was 10.2 million tonnes in 2022. This is a decrease of 15% (1.8 million tonnes) since the 2011 baseline.

Wales has set ambitious targets to reduce food waste, including a 60% reduction by 2030 (compared to a 2006/2007 baseline), which is supported by household food waste collections in all local authorities in Wales and requirements on workplaces to recycle food waste. Wales' aim for zero waste (both biodegradable and non-biodegradable) to landfill by 2025, resulted with only 0.7% sent to landfill in 2024/2025. To support these goals, the

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Welsh Government is helping businesses and households reduce food waste and is encouraging the redistribution of edible surplus food. Furthermore, Wales' Workplace Recycling law, which came into effect in April 2024, requires workplaces to separately collect food waste for recycling.

Further progress to reduce waste in England is being made, with a further 10,000 recycling points for vapes having been introduced into retail establishments to ensure that when products reach the end of their life, they are appropriately collected and recycled.

In Wales, work on recycling as part of a broader approach to climate change is crucial in tackling the climate and nature emergency and the high rate of household recycling has already reduced Wales' emissions by around 400,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Direct action is also taken to reduce the environmental impact of waste collection from homes and businesses by supporting local authorities to expand the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in their collection fleets. There has also been a significant decrease in the proportion of waste disposed of via landfill – falling from 42.0% in 2012/2013 down to less than 1% (to 0.9%) in 2023/2024. In Northern Ireland, a review of the current Waste Prevention Programme “Stopping Waste in its Tracks” is currently underway with a view to bring forward actions that will push waste up the waste hierarchy as far as possible. An interim review has demonstrated several successful initiatives including the establishment of Northern Ireland's first Reuse & Repair Network (NIRN) which has grown from strength to strength and now partners with over 50 organisations. The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge Regulations (Northern Ireland) came into operation in 2013. The charge applies to all carrier bags, regardless of the material. To date the regulations have removed an estimated 2.4 billion bags from the environment. It has also generated over £65 million, which has been used to support additional environmental programmes and projects.

Improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives

There are ongoing nationally led activities to improve education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives, some of which are making measurable progress.

Through the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP), Defra has conducted engagement on eco-labelling across the food and drink sector. The feedback received helped Defra identify two fundamental data challenges that need to be addressed: 1) how to quantify product level environmental impacts accurately; and 2) the insufficient availability and quality of data used to inform these assessments from product supply chains. Defra has commissioned research ([LED 4 Food project](#)) that will provide recommendations on how to standardise product-level environmental footprinting.

In Wales, the Government is leading work to promote repair and reuse, in partnership with local government, businesses, and the voluntary and community sectors to maximise the social, economic, and environmental benefits of a national repair and reuse culture in Wales. At a community level, FareShare Cymru prevent surplus edible food from across the supply chain from becoming waste. This food is provided to community groups across Wales, enabling them to access more affordable food alongside providing valuable community services.

In Northern Ireland, the Eco Schools Programme educates children and young people on the importance of moving towards a more circular economy. All schools in Northern Ireland are now registered on the Eco-Schools Programme and 50% of schools have reached Green Flag status for the first time.

Carbon literacy training is being undertaken in Wales, Jersey and Gibraltar to equip teachers with the tools and knowledge to educate young people on the climate and ecological crises.

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Reduce the global footprint of consumption

The Global Environmental Impacts of Consumption (GEIC) indicator estimates the global environmental impacts of the UK's consumption of agricultural crop commodities, cattle-related commodities and timber commodities, using different metrics:

- The UK's annual consumption of crops, cattle-related commodities and timber in 2023 (the latest year for which data are available) was associated with an estimated 29,000 ha of agriculture-driven deforestation worldwide. This is compared with 65,000 ha in 2005, which was when the time series began, and 48,000 ha in 2018 (National Indicator 6.a).
- The Land-cover change Impacts on Future Extinctions (LIFE) metric provides estimates of changes in the expected number of global extinctions summed across species. This approach integrates information on species richness, rarity, and past habitat loss. A score of one is equivalent to one global extinction – summed across species. Annual UK consumption of crop commodities in 2023 was associated with an estimated 'LIFE score' of 3.3, compared with LIFE scores of 5.1 in 2005 and 3.7 in 2018 (National Indicator 6.b).

Wales has committed to use only its fair share of the world's resources by 2050. In 2023 Welsh Government and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) updated the calculations for the project on '[Understanding the Global Environmental Footprint and Impacts of Welsh Consumption](#)'. The project aimed to improve understanding of the global environmental footprint and impacts of commodities that are consumed within Wales, but that may be produced anywhere in the world. Understanding this is key to addressing both the climate and nature emergencies, and to meeting the requirements set out in Wales's Well-being of Future Generations Act. These calculations estimated Wales material footprint to be 33,554 thousand tonnes in 2019, or 10.73 tonnes per capita – with the 33,554 thousand tonnes making up 3.2% of the estimated UK total.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation:

Summary of key challenges

In England, household food waste remains a challenge due to the complexity of behaviour change required. Work is focused on engaging directly with citizens through consumer awareness campaigns, and on supporting retailers and food businesses in making sure their products help consumers to waste less food at home. This includes appropriate storage advice, packaging design, and how food is labelled.

The introduction of mandatory digital waste tracking requirements in England has been deferred from April 2025 to April 2026. This will ensure that the service meets the needs of diverse stakeholder groups and will allow England to carry out comprehensive user testing, as well as give industry sufficient time to prepare. Following a review of implementation options and assessment of international best practice, it has been shown that building the service incrementally in phases will help to ensure a stable, effective, and user-friendly service and provide users with sufficient time to transition.

The carrier broker dealer reforms and the waste exemptions reforms have suffered delays caused by competing priorities.

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	In England, the work on the Circular Economy Growth Plan recognises that the transition to a circular economy will require significant change and must include an appreciation for the barriers that currently exist for some circular and waste prevention behaviours. These form a key consideration in the co-design of the strategy. In Northern Ireland the development of the draft waste management strategy has suffered delays due to the need to complete several environmental assessments. Better awareness and an early focus on the completion of these assessments would not have been as detrimental to timelines. Previous iterations of the waste management strategy have not required these assessments to be complete. The Climate Action Plan (CAP) as a whole has suffered major delays and has missed legislative deadlines due to the sheer scale and nature of the CAP, combined with unrealistic timelines. Consideration of CAP 2 has begun at a much earlier stage than CAP 1 with the aim of avoiding these lengthy delays and providing a more structured approach to development. Specifically for the proposals within the waste sector CAP, implementation timelines are slipping due to the scale of reforms proposed and the lengthy approvals procedure (i.e. Ministerial clearance and Executive consideration), plus there was no sitting government in the first part of the mandate making progression slow and difficult. In the Falkland Islands the geography is not conducive to making sustainable consumer choices. Very few products can be locally sourced and many of them need to be imported from other countries. Often, choices of products, from materials to food, are based on feasibility of import rather than any sustainable criteria. It is difficult for Gibraltar to reduce certain types of waste (e.g. packaging waste) as all products are imported. Gibraltar is an affluent nation and encouraging lower levels of consumption requires education and mind set changes which are difficult to achieve.
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁶ ☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁷ 16.b Number of countries developing, adopting or implementing policy instruments aimed at encouraging and enabling people to make sustainable consumption choices Comments (optional): _____

⁶ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

⁷ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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16.1 Has your country established mechanisms, policy or legislative or regulatory frameworks aimed at supporting sustainable consumption?

(c) Partially

16.2 Has your country adopted mechanisms to improve awareness or education with regard to the impacts of consumption on biodiversity and access to relevant and accurate information or alternatives supporting sustainable consumption?

(c) Partially

16.3 Has your country adopted or implemented policy instruments aimed at encouraging and enabling people to make sustainable consumption choices, including by reducing food waste, overconsumption and waste generation?

(c) Partially

6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)

National Indicator 16.a: Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity / sustainable consumption (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity / sustainable consumption)

Table 1: Assessment of change of area of deforestation worldwide associated with UK consumption.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Area of deforestation	Long term	2005 to 2023	Improving
Area of deforestation	Short term	2018 to 2023	Improving

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator estimates the global environmental impacts of UK consumption of agricultural crop commodities (and additionally for some metrics, cattle-related and timber commodities), between 2005 and 2023.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity](#)

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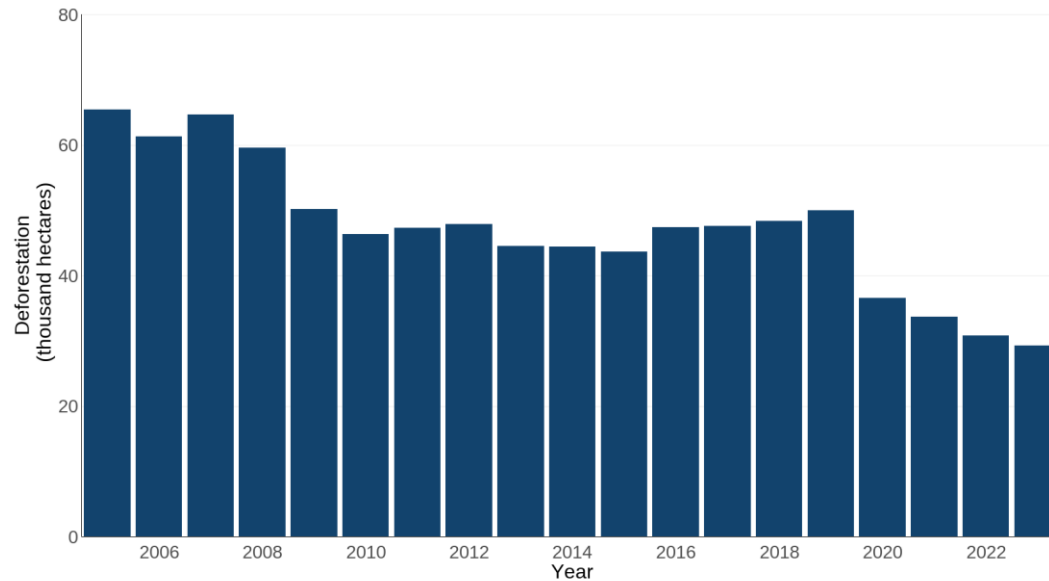


Figure 1: Area of deforestation worldwide associated with UK consumption annually, 2005 to 2023.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity](#)

Table 1:

Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb. Where possible, the base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#). The assessment of change method for this indicator is being kept under review.

Figure 1:

Estimates are for crop, cattle-related, and timber commodities only.

Deforestation refers to conversion of natural forest to any commodity production related land use (including plantation forestry). Felling and replanting of tree areas that are already plantation forests is not considered deforestation.

Note that the entire time series has been recalculated compared to the previous data release, to ensure consistency across the time series following updates to underlying data sources. This includes the FAO time series data, which is often updated with corrections or additions, and so the most recent version is downloaded for use each year. The underlying MRIO (multi-regional input-output) data comes from GLORIA (Global Resource Input-Output Assessment) in this year's release (EXIOBASE data were used in the 2024 release). See the [technical documentation](#) for further information.

Note that the quality scores of the underpinning deforestation data tend to be lower for more

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recent years. Confidence is typically higher for less recent data, given the availability of better data historically.

National Indicator 16.b: LIFE (Land cover change Impacts on Future Extinctions) score worldwide associated with UK consumption of crop commodities annually (UK Biodiversity Indicator - Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity / sustainable consumption)

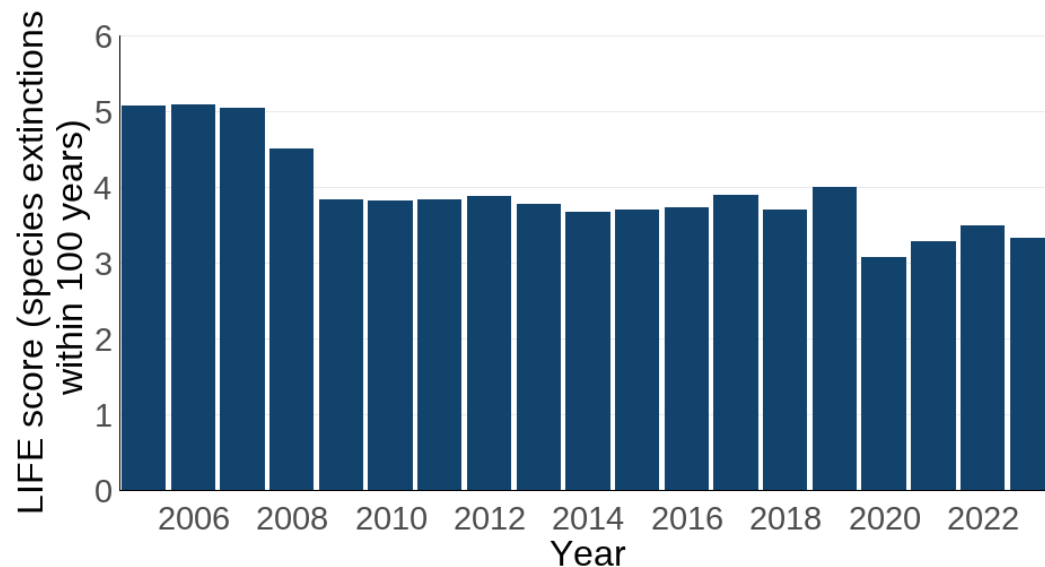


Figure 1: LIFE (Land cover change Impacts on Future Extinctions) score worldwide associated with UK consumption of crop commodities annually, 2005 to 2023.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – LIFE Score](#)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

The LIFE (Land-cover change Impacts on Future Extinctions) score is a metric that provides an estimate of the probability of extinction across about 30,000 terrestrial vertebrate species, using changes in their modelled area of habitat since pre-industrial times. The impact of changes in area of habitat are related to the proportion that has been already lost, so that per unit area losses in habitat will have the greatest impacts on extinction risk for those species which have faced the greatest losses of habitat. The metric provides an estimate of the number of species committed to extinction over approximately 100 years. A score of 1 is equivalent to one global extinction. Consequently, results show the sum of the UK's contribution to global extinctions across all the world as a result of UK consumption of crop commodities.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – LIFE Score](#)

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Figure 1:

Estimates are for crop commodities only.

Note that the entire time series has been recalculated compared to the previous data release, to ensure consistency across the time series following updates to underlying data sources.

7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

The Environment Strategy for Scotland: Delivering the Environment Strategy Outcome on Scotland's Global Footprint



Photo: Community recycling point for glass, paper and cans, Perth and Kinross, Scotland (© Lorne Gill, NatureScot).

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Enable sustainable consumption choices to reduce waste and overconsumption

Scotland has a policy goal of being responsible global citizens. However, [research](#) commissioned by Scottish Government and carried out by the Global Footprint Network found that Scotland's consumption exceeds what its territories can renew by about one quarter. Footprint across the UK as a whole has declined since the 1960s, predominantly through decreases in carbon footprint of energy use and imports but is still beyond sustainable levels. Scotland's response is part of the Environment Strategy which includes regular reports to the Scottish Parliament. This report also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Waste Reduction

Scotland has seen a reduction in both [waste](#) generated and waste sent to landfill. The total amount of waste generated from all sources in Scotland was 10.2 million tonnes in 2022. This is a decrease of 15% (1.8 million tonnes) since the 2011 baseline. A reduction in construction and demolition waste in 2022 is the biggest single factor in the reduction of total waste. However, looking at the other two types of waste (commercial & industrial; and household), the amount of waste not from construction and demolition has declined from 6.8 million tonnes in 2011 to 5.6 million tonnes in 2021, a drop of around 18% in 10 years. Construction and demolition wastes make up around half of all waste and are highly variable year to year, linked to the scale and type of construction activity in Scotland at any given time. For waste generated from all sources, there is a target of a 15% reduction from 2011 levels by 2025, derived from '[Safeguarding Scotland's resources: blueprint for a more resource-efficient and circular economy](#)'. Since 2011, the [carbon footprint of Scotland's waste](#) has decreased by 30.4%, with much of this decrease (84%) arising from a reduction in the carbon impact of materials production.

Recycling

[Recycling rates](#) for waste have increased to 57% overall and 62% for household, business and public service waste. This has been supported by public education and the development of specialist recycling businesses. For example, Brewster Brothers, based in Livingston, won the Scottish Government and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) backed Scottish Environment Business Award (VIBES) Circular Scotland Award in 2023. The company, which takes construction, demolition and excavation waste from the construction sector and recycles it before selling it back to the construction industry, has invested in new capacity to meet market demand for high quality recycled aggregate products with assistance from Scottish Enterprise's Green Jobs Fund.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Total greenhouse gas emissions have been halved since 1990, largely due to a shift from fossil fuel to renewable energy. Scotland [generated 38.4 TWh](#) of renewable energy in 2024, a 13% increase on the year prior and well in excess of Scotland's electricity. Most of the generation capacity is from onshore wind.

Global Environmental Impacts

Scotland's consumption and production activities have global environmental impacts, particularly related to resource extraction and biodiversity loss in other countries. These are not currently well-measured and so this is an important research area for the future.

Target 16**Next steps**

The [Environment Strategy](#) calls for a building of the evidence base, working with experts and stakeholders to ensure that research is tailored to Scotland's circumstances. The combined evidence available suggests that a significant transformation across many sectors will be needed to achieve a nature positive economy in Scotland. Scotland's economy was estimated to be 1.3% circular in terms of its resource use in 2022, below the level of circularity estimated for the global economy (8.6%). There have been sizeable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and waste generation, and ongoing targets are ambitious, but further system change will be needed to meet them. Scotland will also be looking to work with international partners to address the environmental impacts of Scotland's consumption and production activities abroad.

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 17

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 17

Establish biosafety measures and distribute the benefits of biotechnology

The UK will establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement biosafety measures as set out in Article 8(g) of the Convention on Biological Diversity and measures for the handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits as set out in Article 19 of the Convention.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK complies with relevant biosafety legislation controlling the use of living modified organisms (LMOs – also known as genetically modified organisms), including by implementing the Cartagena Protocol. Regarding distributing the benefits from biotechnology, the UK operates coordinated initiatives that specifically enable collaboration with developing countries to allow the benefits of biotechnology research and development to be shared on an ongoing basis. Examples of these initiatives include the International Science Partnerships Fund and the Global Challenges Research Fund. Furthermore, the UK operates domestic legislation enacting the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing.

Regarding the main actions under Target 17:

Implementation of biosafety measures and strengthening biosafety capacity

The UK has several competent authorities that are committed to biosafety measures as set out in [Article 8\(g\) of the Convention](#) through the implementation of legislation addressing the potential risks associated with the release and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) derived from modern biotechnology. These are the [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (Defra), [Food Standards Agency](#) (FSA), [Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE), [Department for Transport](#) (DfT) and the Devolved Governments of the UK, and their equivalent bodies, for example, Food Standards Scotland. Through legislation implemented by the competent authorities, there is management and control of the potential risks of using LMOs. They have honoured this commitment by complying with relevant biosafety legislation controlling the use of LMOs including which:

- i) implements the [Cartagena Protocol](#) on Biosafety,
- ii) controls the release of LMOs into the environment for research and marketing purposes
- iii) enables authorisation of food and feed for import and
- iv) enables laboratory research on LMOs.

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	Ongoing activities regarding i)–iii) were undertaken by Defra, including processing LMO field trial applications, overseeing existing consents and providing developers with guidance on Cartagena Protocol requirements. Measures to manage the potential risks associated with the release and use of LMOs, e.g. risk assessment-based authorisations and post release environmental monitoring, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. Additionally, the use of LMOs can bring sustainable gains, e.g. higher yields from plants compared to their non-engineered counterparts. Equitable access to results and benefits The UK recognises the potential benefits of biotechnology, particularly for developing countries. The UK provides regular financial support to the Secretariat which, in turn, supports capacity building for all Parties, particularly developing countries. To support and promote equitable access to benefits of biotechnology, UK research councils have coordinated initiatives that specifically enable collaboration with developing countries to allow the benefits of biotechnology research and development to be shared on an ongoing basis. Examples of these initiatives include the International Science Partnerships Fund and the Global Challenges Research Fund. The UK operates domestic legislation enacting the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing.
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target ☒ On track to achieve target ☐ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK is on track to achieve Target 17, having fully implemented biosafety measures and legislation governing the use and release of living modified organisms (LMOs), in line with the Cartagena Protocol. Relevant competent authorities within the UK manage and control the potential risks of using LMOs and ensure compliance with relevant biosafety legislation. Risk assessments on food and feed authorisations are published on the Biosafety Clearing House as required by the Cartagena Protocol. The UK Biological Security Strategy (2023) reinforces these commitments to protect the UK from potential risks. The UK has invested £119 million in the International Science Partnerships Fund to foster global collaboration on biotechnology and innovation, alongside funding through the Global Challenges Research Fund. These initiatives enable equitable access to biotechnology benefits for developing countries, with projects mainstreamed into national development plans. The UK also conducts scientifically sound risk assessments for genetically modified organism (GMO) field trials, such as the Oxford GM wheat trial, which included eight detailed risk management measures to

Target 17

protect biodiversity. Overall, the UK demonstrates comprehensive legislative coverage, robust implementation, and significant international engagement, ensuring biosafety and fair distribution of biotechnology benefits.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 17:

Implementation of biosafety measures and strengthening biosafety capacity

Policy for the regulation of living modified organisms (LMOs) is devolved in the UK and, as such, each Government of the UK has its own legislation and is responsible for the release and marketing of LMOs in their countries. Applications for consent to use LMOs in the UK are varied and include the release of various living modified plant species in agricultural field trials, vaccines and medicines in clinical trials and importing food and feed comprising of or derived from LMOs.

As such marketing authorisations (import only – not cultivation) have been granted for some LMO food and feed products throughout Great Britain. The relevant biosafety legislation was implemented by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Biosafety legislation requires that independent expert advice is taken on potential environmental risks to ensure that biodiversity remains protected.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published information e.g., risk assessments on food and feed authorisations on the Biosafety Clearing House as required by the Cartagena Protocol.

To underline its plans to protect the UK from potential risks, the UK published its Biological Security Strategy in 2023.

Equitable access to results and benefits

The UK operates domestic legislation enacting the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing.

An initial £119 million was announced for the [International Science Partnerships Fund \(ISPF\)](#) to allow collaboration between UK scientists and international partners working in the field of innovation. Further examples of equitable access to benefits supported by the UK were funded through the Research Councils UK Global Challenges Research Fund, for which an [evaluation report](#) was published in November 2025.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation:

Summary of key challenges

The UK is a long-held leader in science and biotechnology and has well established legislation and policies, which mean that implementation has not been challenging. Further implementation is not, at this time, considered challenging.

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4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) ⁸	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁹ 17.b Number of countries that have taken action to implement biosafety measures as set out in Article 8(g) of the Convention and measures for the handling of biotechnology and the distribution of its benefits as set out in Article 19 17.1 Has your country established biosafety-related policy, legal, administrative and other measures as set out in Article 8(g) of the Convention? (c) Fully 17.2 Does your country implement biosafety measures as set out in Article 8(g) of the Convention? (c) Fully 17.3 Has your country taken legislative, administrative or policy measures, as appropriate, to provide for the effective participation in biotechnological research activities by those Parties, especially developing countries, that provide the genetic resources for such research, as set out in paragraph 1 of Article 19 of the Convention? (c) Fully 17.4 Has your country taken practicable measures to promote and advance priority access on a fair and equitable basis by Parties, especially developing countries, to the results and benefits arising from biotechnologies based on genetic resources provided by those Parties, as set out in paragraph 2 of Article 19 of the Convention?	Comments (optional): _____

⁸ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

⁹ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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	(d) Fully 17.5 Does your country carry out scientifically sound risk assessments on the use and release of living modified organisms? (c) Fully 17.6 Does your country provide access to biosafety-related information for the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms? (c) Fully	
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed Implementation of biosafety measures during genetically modified organism deliberate releases in the UK The effectiveness of actions taken to achieve Target 17 are illustrated by describing the implementation of biosafety measures during genetically modified organism (GMO) deliberate releases in the UK. The four countries of the UK implement biosafety measures through numerous pieces of legislation¹⁰. Since leaving the European Union, the legal framework has been kept and amended to remain operable domestically. GMO deliberate releases may only take place following a formal application for authorisation by the relevant UK Competent Authority (CA). As an example, a research group applied to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for consent to release genetically modified (GM) wheat in a field trial: Genetically Modified Organisms: University of Oxford (24/R57/01). The trial was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the genetic modification, which was intended to improve yield and stress tolerance of wheat plants, ultimately leading to more sustainable agricultural practices. This example demonstrates how statutory biosafety measures are implemented. As with all applications, this trial contains detailed scientific information relating to an assessment of the potential risks to human health and the environment resulting from the proposed release. The precise information requirements were stipulated in the biosafety regulations and include <i>inter alia</i>: the biology of the crop species (in this case wheat) and any interactions it may have with natural predators, parasites, competitors and symbionts; methods used for genetic modification; analysis of the inserted transgenes; effect of the	

¹⁰ Directive 2001/18/EC; Regulation (EC) 1829/2003; Part VI of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) Regulations 2002; Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) (Scotland) Regulations 2002; Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release)(Wales) Regulations 2002; Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2003; Genetically Modified Food (England) Regulations 2004; Genetically Modified Food (Wales) Regulation; Genetically Modified Food (Scotland) Regulations; Genetically Modified Food (Northern Ireland) Regulations.

Target 17

expressed transgenes on the biology of the crop and any altered ecological effects; molecular characterisation of the inserted genes and their expression. The biosafety regulations require that the risk assessments for all applications are scrutinised and evaluated by an independent expert scientific committee. Having assessed the environmental risk assessment for the above trial, the committee advised Defra (the competent authority) that there were no safety reasons that would prevent the release and recommended certain risk management measures that should be adopted by the researchers. Risk management measures may vary from trial to trial depending on the crop species being grown. In this case they included the following:

1. Ensure that there is 20 m surrounding the trial site, in which no cereals or grass species will be left to grow, other than those being trialled under separate GM releases.
2. Plant a wheat pollen barrier, of 2 m width, to flower at the same time as the GM wheat as an additional precautionary measure.
3. Control *elymus repens* (couch grass) and *elymus caninus* (bearded couch) using hand-weeding, other mechanical methods or application of glyphosate herbicide, within the trial site and the surrounding 20 m, before flowering and for the duration of the trial.
4. Ensure that any GM or non-GM wheat plant material remaining in the area of release at the end of the trial is disposed of appropriately.
5. Ensure that following harvest, the area of release is lightly tilled twice (once after harvest and again in the following spring) to a depth of 5 cm to stimulate germination of any wheat plant volunteers. The release areas should be left fallow and monitored for wheat plant volunteers for 2 years following harvest.
6. Record the number of wheat plant volunteers that germinate before destroying them with hand pulling, mechanical methods (e.g. harrowing) or application of glyphosate herbicide prior to flowering.
7. Ensure that suitable measures (such as those described in the University of Oxford's application) are put in place to keep large birds out of the trial area and that the efficacy of these measures are kept under review.
8. Ensure that machinery used on the site is cleaned thoroughly onsite, including between using it with GM and non-GM material, and that clothing and equipment such as vehicles used by personnel on the site are also cleaned thoroughly before leaving the site

These measures are written into a legal consent document, the provisions of which must be complied with by the researchers during the course of the field trial. A government-associated inspectorate is in place to make regular visits to the site to ensure compliance. This example therefore clearly demonstrates how biosafety measures that were written into statutory instruments were practically deployed for the safe deliberate release of GMOs, ensuring maximum protection of the environment and human health.

- 8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 18

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 18

Contribute to reducing incentives harmful for biodiversity by at least \$500 billion per year and scale up positive incentives for biodiversity

The UK will identify by 2025, and eliminate, phase out or reform by 2030, incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, in a proportionate, just, fair, effective and equitable way, while contributing to the global target to reduce them by at least \$500 billion per year by 2030, starting with the most harmful incentives, and scaling up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK is taking steps towards understanding and reforming harmful incentives, with the most progress made to date in agriculture. In England, the Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes are replacing area-based payments, backed by over £7 billion for nature recovery, including tree planting and peatland restoration. Scotland's Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) and biodiversity audits are driving similar changes, while Jersey's Rural Support Schemes and the Isle of Man's Agri-Environmental Initiatives Scheme are phasing out crop-based and pesticide subsidies. Northern Ireland has launched the Sustainable Agriculture Programme and Farming with Nature Package to restore habitats and improve connectivity.

Internationally, the UK's Nature Positive Economy programme with United Nations Development Programme Biodiversity Finance Initiative is helping eight countries repurpose harmful subsidies and scale up positive incentives.

While these steps mark significant progress, full identification and reform of harmful incentives across all sectors is still underway.

Regarding the main actions under Target 18:

Identify by 2025 incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity starting with the most harmful incentives

The UK has taken steps to identify its incentives, including subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity, and the wider environment. The UK has devised a methodology for determining if incentives or subsidy schemes have a harmful impact against seven environmental objectives. The methodology has then been applied to screen available data on subsidies in the energy, agriculture, fishing, forestry, manufacturing, transport, waste, water and research, development and innovation sectors. There remain data gaps, and so the UK will further develop the available data on incentives to fully complete the identification required by this target.

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Eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, starting with the most harmful incentives, and scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

The UK has undertaken action to reform agricultural incentives to encourage practices which benefit the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In England, area based direct payments are being phased out over a seven-year transition period (2021-2027) and being replaced with a set of targeted Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes that incentivise farmers to deliver environment, climate, and animal health and welfare outcomes alongside supporting viable businesses and maintaining food production at its current level. The Government is making the largest investment into nature in history, with over £7 billion directed into nature's recovery. This includes environmental farming schemes (£5.9 billion), tree planting (£816 million) and delivering peat outcomes, including peatland restoration (£85 million). These will make a significant contribution to Environment Act 2021 and statutory net zero targets, including improving the quality of water, air, and spaces for wildlife so biodiversity can thrive, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This includes £1.8 billion in 2025/2026 for ELM to accelerate the transition to a more resilient and sustainable farming sector (see Target 10 for further details of this scheme).

In Scotland, there is a move from general subsidies to those that support biodiversity and climate mitigation. Over 3,000 farms are tackling the nature-climate emergency with the support of funding from the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS). Carbon audits are required from all farms claiming agricultural payments and biodiversity audits are also being rolled out.

In Wales, the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) underpinned by the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 will deliver against the four sustainable land management objectives set out in the Act. These include to produce food and other goods in a sustainable manner, to mitigate and adapt to climate change, to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide, and to conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources. When launched in 2026 there is a requirement for 10% of all land entered to be managed as habitat as well as bringing designated sites into better condition. Support is available to undertake actions to enhance and create habitat, benefit species as well as incentives to collaborate at a landscape/catchment scale to deliver multiple outcomes. The SFS will replace the current direct support through the Basic Payment scheme, which will be phased out completely by 2029.

In Northern Ireland, changes to farm support are being implemented through the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) [Sustainable Agriculture Programme](#). The Sustainable Agriculture Programme is seeking to transition to a more sustainable farming sector by implementing policies and strategies that benefit the climate and environment, while supporting our economically and socially significant agriculture sector in Northern Ireland. The Programme's four long-term outcomes include improved environmental sustainability, enhanced productivity, stronger resilience, and an effective functioning supply chain.

Jersey is phasing out Rural Area Payments (based on areas of crops cultivated) and instead funding Rural Support Schemes (RSS) linked to the supply of public and environmental goods, as well as phasing out subsidies on nematicides and fungicides.

The Isle of Man is also funding farmers to enhance biodiversity through the [Agri-Environmental Initiatives Scheme](#). The Farming with Nature Package is planned to support farm businesses across all agricultural land types to make substantial contributions to environmental improvements and

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	sustainability and will focus on measures to increase the extent, quality and connectivity of habitats on agricultural land. Farming with Nature aims to contribute to reversing the trends in nature decline by creating, restoring and managing habitats that are important for species diversity and improving connectivity between habitat areas. It is planned to roll out the Farming with Nature Package in phases, and the first phase, the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme opened for applications on 23 June 2025. Further phases on the Farming with Nature Package will support environmental improvements on agricultural land within designated sites and other priority habitat areas, and collaborative action by groups of farm businesses. The Isle of Man has also removed incentives for 'business as usual' fisheries management and introduced incentives for lower impact gears, partly achieved through the Agriculture and Fisheries Grant Scheme. Further, under the Isle of Man's Biodiversity Strategy 2015-25 (currently under review), since 2018, where the Government offers incentives, it will need to show that the activities it supports are not detrimental to biodiversity and wherever possible it will provide positive incentives to conserve it. The UK has taken action to support other countries in eliminating, phasing out or reforming incentives harmful for biodiversity. The UK's Nature Positive Economy programme, delivered in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), provides practical support to businesses, financial institutions and governments to catalyse investments in nature. Through the programme, the UK has supported work to repurpose subsidies harmful to the environment in eight developing countries (Philippines, Tanzania, Botswana, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Argentina and India). The UK also continued to provide support to developing countries to reduce environmentally harmful spending through other Official Development Assistance programmes. This included increasing contributions to the UNDP's Climate Promise by a further £3 million, enabling it to support developing countries to increase their climate ambition, and implement their commitments to meet the Paris Agreement goal using forests, land and nature. Through the programme, the UK has supported work to build capacity, promote engagement and prepare for the set-up of forest carbon markets to scale-up positive incentives in developing countries across Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia (e.g. Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Kenya and Viet Nam).
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target ☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK has made good progress towards Target 18. The UK has developed a screening methodology to identify harmful subsidies and applied it across multiple sectors, with interim results suggesting positive progress has been made in the last two years to reduce harmful spend via subsidies. However, there are known data gaps that require further development. Regarding positive incentives, there has been an overall decrease in the number

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of active policy instruments that represent positive incentives to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. However, we know not all schemes are captured by the indicator currently, and further work is needed.

The most measurable gains are in agriculture, where uptake of new schemes is high – over half of England's farmed land is now under agreements that deliver environmental outcomes. Scotland, Jersey, and the Isle of Man have begun shifting support toward biodiversity benefits, and Northern Ireland has launched its first phase of Farming with Nature. Internationally, UK-backed programmes are embedding subsidy reform into national plans in several countries.

While these steps mark significant progress, full identification and reform of harmful incentives across all sectors is still underway

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 18:

Identify by 2025 incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity starting with the most harmful incentives

In developing the indicators for this target, the UK has taken steps to identify its incentives, including subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity, and the wider environment. The UK has devised a methodology for determining harmful impact against its environmental objectives and has used that to screen available data on subsidies in the energy, agriculture, fishing, forestry, manufacturing, transport, waste, water and research, development and innovation sectors. The subsidies screened as potentially harmful to environmental objectives totalled £5.1 million in 2017 (in 2022 prices) and £21.5 million in 2022 (Headline Indicator 18.2). The 2022 figure is a decrease from the peak of £40.2 million in 2020. The rise in the figures in 2020 and 2021 is likely to be related to several factors, including COVID-19 related support payments and changes in schemes supporting disruption as a result of leaving the European Union. The indicator methodology is in development and the results presented here are interim. There remain data gaps, and so the UK will further develop its available data on incentives to complete the identification required by this target.

Eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, starting with the most harmful incentives, and scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

The number of active policy instruments that are considered to be positive incentives to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity has decreased from 13 in 2010, when the time series starts, to 10 in 2024, for which the most recent data are available. Across the time series, there is a low of eight active policy instruments in 2021 (Headline Indicator 18.1). Subsidies screened as positive to environmental objectives totalled £186.9 million in 2017 (in 2022 prices) and £5.1 billion in 2022.

Uptake of Environmental Land Management schemes in England demonstrates how positive incentives are being scaled up in the agricultural sector. As of April 2025, there were over 77,000 live agri-environment scheme agreements under the Sustainable Farming Incentive and Countryside Stewardship schemes, involving more than 50% of farmers in England. This is the highest number of accepted scheme agreements in history, rising from 59,200 in 2010. 50% (4.3 million ha) of farmed land in England is actively managed in schemes, with another 14% (1.3 million ha) covered by assessments and plans. Early findings from a 2024 Natural England [report](#) (commissioned by Defra) indicated that nature-friendly farming practices led to a 25% increase in breeding bird populations and benefited other wildlife such as butterflies and bees.

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Internationally, through the Nature Positive Economy Programme, progress is being made in supporting eight countries on repurposing subsidies to work for both people and nature. Activities across these countries include engaging with governments and other stakeholders to align priorities, awareness campaigns to underscore sustainable farming practices, cost-benefit analysis to inform policy reforms, mapping subsidies in key sectors, screening for likely biodiversity impacts, prioritising action based on biodiversity impact, drafting reports to inform subsidy reform options, and piloting nature-positive incentives. Through this support in Kyrgyzstan, repurposing harmful subsidies to biodiversity has for the first time been mainstreamed in a key national development plan and recommendations and actions are being integrated in their revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Funding has been extended for 2025/2026 for work on repurposing subsidies to continue in six countries.

The first phase of the Farming with Nature Package, the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme, opened for applications on 23 June 2025. The Scheme offers support to farm businesses to implement environmental actions including planting new hedgerows and farmland trees, creating riparian buffer strips, establishing multi-species winter cover crops, and retaining winter stubble. Items, such as protective fencing, gates and drinking water troughs, are also available to support the implementation of these actions. The application period closes on 4 August 2025.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation:

Summary of key challenges

There are challenges in scaling up positive incentives in the agricultural sector due to difficulties in engaging stakeholders and increasing uptake of voluntary Environmental Land Management Schemes. This inertia amongst some land managers to deliver ambitious ecosystem restoration stems from understandable concerns about the impact on local traditions and food production, the perceived economic risk, a lack of knowledge and skills needed to transition to nature restoration, and the complexity of the regulatory and funding landscape. The UK Government is developing and testing a range of approaches to address these barriers, and considering the role of the supply chains, private finance and alternative delivery methods, such as regulation, to address low delivery progress and the impact on public finances. In Jersey, there is a need for increased funding due to a change in criteria meaning more applicants are now eligible, and further work is needed on guidance and compliance to ensure that payments for ecological gain are delivering the intended objectives.

The key challenge in developing the Sustainable Farming scheme in Wales has been designing a scheme that enables all types of farms and sectors the opportunity to join – the universal element. Extensive consultation has been undertaken to ensure farmers have the confidence to undertake the actions required on entry. Support is being provided to help farmers understand the requirements of the scheme which will be ongoing. It will be essential to review the uptake and address any barriers as they arise and to monitor the optional actions being undertaken to benefit nature which will inform any future revisions required to the scheme.

Internationally, key challenges identified through Nature Positive Economy Programme work include shifting priorities following changes of government in partner countries which can necessitate re-engaging with a new group of individuals and stakeholders and create delays and challenges in securing or engaging with the right experts in-country to support the work. While supporting countries with repurposing subsidies remains

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	challenging and contentious work, this is slowly changing the more progress is made and the more examples of positive reforms are generated to demonstrate the benefits. The roll out of the Farming with Nature Package is at an early stage. Following the recent launch of the first phase, the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme, on the 23 June 2025, policy design, implementation and delivery is being kept under review and lessons learned will be evaluated and incorporated, as appropriate, into future scheme design and delivery. More work is required in the identification of and removal of harmful subsidies in the marine environment; this has been noted as a known gap that requires additional consideration.
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)¹¹ Headline Indicator 18.1: Positive incentives in place to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Positive incentives in place to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use ☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator tracks the number of positive incentives in place in the UK to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Within this indicator, positive incentives are represented by policy instruments, which are tools used by governments to achieve policy goals and influence the behaviour of individuals or organisations. This indicator represents the sum of the number of instruments that are active during each year with data available. The instruments are categorised under five possible headings. Data for this indicator are extracted from the database on Policy Instruments for the Environment (PINE database) administered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Further investigation

¹¹ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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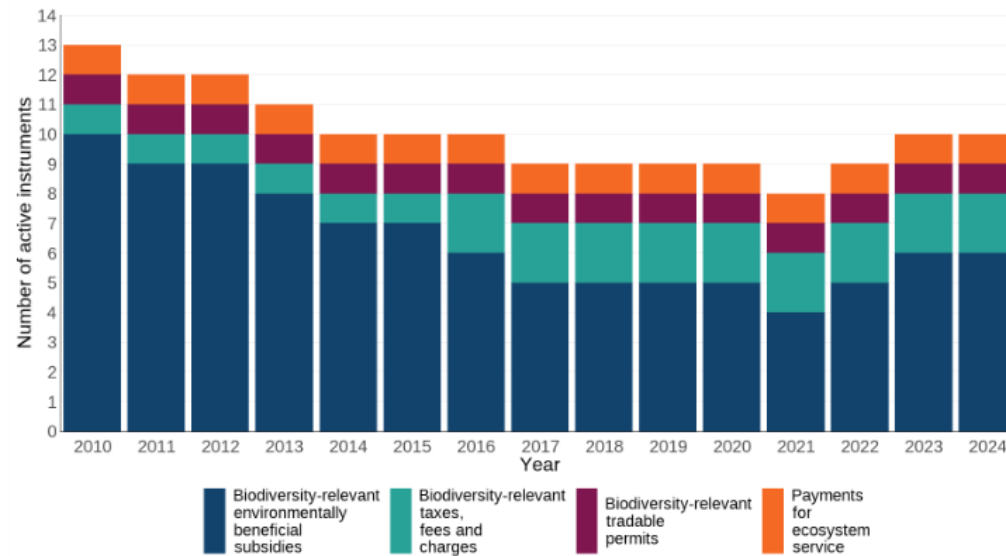


Figure 1: Number of active instruments in the UK per year that represent positive incentives to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, 2010 to 2024.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Positive incentives in place to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use](#)

is needed into the coverage and comprehensiveness of the data for the UK.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Positive incentives in place to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use](#)

Figure 1:

The number of active instruments in the UK per year is according to the data held in the OECD's PINE database. Further investigation is needed into the coverage and comprehensiveness of the data for the UK.

In this first version of the indicator, the time series starts from 2010, therefore allowing comparison with pre-2020 data as an initial baseline for the indicator.

Each instrument is regarded as being active for at least part of its start and end years, so these are displayed as years when an instrument was active.

A list of the policy instruments considered for this indicator is included in the [published datafile](#).

In this indicator the Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESA) is classed under the payments for ecosystem service category based on detail on its categorisation in the PINE database, while noting that it is also classed under environmentally beneficial subsidies in the PINE database.

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Headline Indicator 18.2: Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity)

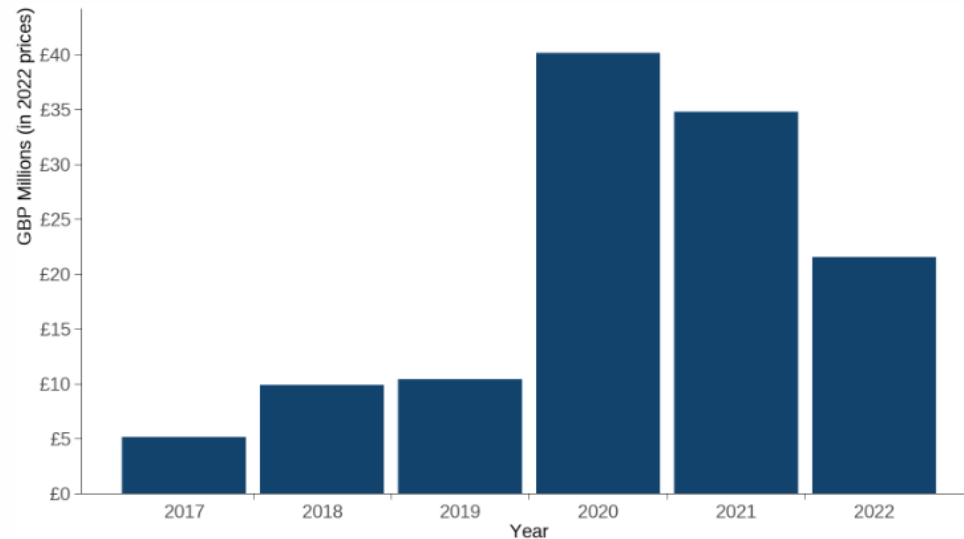


Figure 1: Total value of subsidies screened as harmful to environmental objectives, 2017 to 2022.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity](#)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator presents the value of the UK's incentives, including subsidies, that are potentially harmful to the environment. The indicator is based, in this publication, on the UK's subsidies reported to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and, for fisheries, to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. There is currently a data gap between the intention of this indicator and the data available, for instance it is not possible at present to include comprehensive data on incentives. This will be addressed in future publications of the indicator.

The indicator has been developed by screening available subsidy data to determine if each subsidy can be regarded as 'environmentally harmful'. An overview of the screening process is provided in the [technical annex](#). Not all subsidies are harmful, and the indicator also presents the total value of subsidies screened as positive to provide context. Data are presented at the UK level.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

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Table 1: Total value of subsidies screened for harm to environmental objectives.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity](#)

Year	Negative	No impact	Positive	Uncertain	Total
2017	£ 5,147,000	£ 155,605,000	£ 186,856,000	£620,367,000	£ 967,975,000
2018	£ 9,887,000	£ 49,482,000	£ 227,230,000	£ 667,875,000	£954,474,000
2019	£ 10,404,000	£ 1,540,877,000	£ 6,331,239,000	£ 483,447,000	£ 8,365,966,000
2020	£ 40,174,000	£ 2,346,707,000	£ 7,392,400,000	£ 574,422,000	£ 10,353,703,000
2021	£ 34,787,000	£ 2,135,897,000	£ 6,325,930,000	£ 806,180,000	£ 9,302,794,000
2022	£ 21,528,000	£ 2,275,041,000	£ 5,096,656,000	£ 624,552,000	£ 8,017,777,000

Table 2: Percentage of subsidies screened for harm to environmental objectives.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity](#)

Year	Negative	No impact	Positive	Uncertain
2017	0.5%	16.1%	19.3%	64.1%
2018	1%	5.2%	23.8%	70%
2019	0.1%	18.4%	75.7%	5.8%
2020	0.4%	22.7%	71.4%	5.5%
2021	0.4%	23%	68%	8.7%
2022	0.3%	28.4%	63.6%	7.8%

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity](#)

Figure 1:

Data based on reports to the World Trade Organisation, and, for fisheries, to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Data are adjusted for the effects of inflation using the UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator for 2022. Data presented here will not be directly comparable to those in subsequent publications because a new deflator is used to prepare each update.

Details of the screening process undertaken is provided in the [technical annex](#).

The screening process took account of a range of environmental objectives, which directly or indirectly interact with the UK's biodiversity. The data should not be interpreted as only reporting on subsidies which interact with biodiversity directly as the majority of the subsidies in the WTO reports interact with multiple environment related objectives.

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5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator¹²	Comments (optional): _____
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed England – Landscape Recovery Landscape Recovery (LR) schemes are for landowners and managers who want to take a large-scale, collaborative, long-term approach to producing environmental and climate goods on their land. It will facilitate and fund ambitious projects through bespoke, 20+ year agreements. The scheme involves a publicly funded project development phase, which takes around two years, and a project implementation phase, which will last 20 years (or longer) and will be funded through a blend of public and private funding. The four main distinguishing features of the LR schemes are: 1. Large-scale projects: the scheme is designed to deliver outcomes that require collaborative action across a big area, such as restoring ecological or hydrological function across a landscape. 2. Long-term public funding (for example, for 20 years or longer): the scheme will support outcomes that take a long time to deliver, such as peatland restoration, river restoration, woodland management, or habitat restoration. 3. Bespoke agreements: the scheme can fund activities that contribute to priority outcomes but are specific to the locality which would otherwise be difficult to facilitate through other schemes. 4. Blended funding: the features above and the provision of development funding should enable projects to attract private investment into nature. The first round of LR took forward 22 projects that collectively aim to restore over 600 km of rivers and target the conservation of over 260 flagship species such as water vole, lapwing, and great crested newt. Round 2 launched in spring 2023, with 34 projects focused on net zero and biodiversity being awarded development grants. The first two projects from Round 1 of the scheme have now completed the necessary assurance process, signed their agreements, and are ready to start work on the ground:	

¹² See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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Boothby Wildland Project – East Midlands

Boothby Wildland is the first LR project to move into the implementation phase.

Boothby Wildland is a large-scale nature recovery project near Grantham in Lincolnshire. It spans roughly 620 ha of former grade 3 soil arable farmland (good to moderate quality land with limitations that affect crop choice, timing of cultivation, or yield).

The land was bought in 2021 by Nattergal Ltd, a nature restoration company. The project aims to transform the site through natural colonisation, creating a rich and dynamic mix of habitats, including wetland, woodland, scrub and grassland. These areas will provide habitats for many notable species from small invertebrates and butterflies to bats.

In the early years, the focus was on preparation. This included detailed ecological and hydrological surveys to create environmental baselines.

Rivers and streams that had previously been straightened or drained are now being returned to more natural forms, with meanders and seasonal pools supporting wetland species. At least three kilometres of streams and the River Glen will be restored and encouraged to follow a more natural course after centuries of drainage, dredging and canalisation.

By restoring habitats, including those needed by beavers, the projects will bring back local wildlife and improve water quality - a government priority. Slowing the river and allowing it to flood naturally will reduce agricultural runoff and pollutants entering waterways.

The site also supports different groups across society to engage with nature and conservation, by hosting corporate away days, guided walks, volunteering sessions, and educational visits. A digital platform, WildMap, tracks wildlife sightings and ecological change.

The project is generating income by selling ecosystem services such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units and carbon credits, alongside wildland experiences. Furthermore, a £1 million private investment has been secured to support the restoration of 67.5 ha of degraded land within the project area that suffer from carbon-depleted soils. This commitment secures 10,000tCO₂e of high-quality carbon removal credits over the next 30 years, aligned with the UK's leading nature and climate standard. In time, the project will also produce meat sustainably. This shows how environmental recovery can enable the long-term, sustainable use of land.

As one of the first LR projects to move into delivery, Boothby is helping to shape the future of land use in England. The site now employs more people than it did during conventional farming.

Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery – Lake District National Park

Led by the University of Leeds, the Upper Duddon project brings together farmers, environmental organisations and the local community to manage 2,800 ha of uplands in West Cumbria.

The project works with ten land managers - six of them tenant farmers - demonstrating the strength of collaborative working. It recognises the important role of upland fell farmers and supports them in restoring habitats and enhancing nature across the landscape.

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Tucked away in the heart of the Lake District National Park, the Duddon Valley is rich in local history and culture. One of the quietest and most wooded valleys in the area, it is home to extensive ancient broadleaf woodland, making it a valuable haven for wildlife.

The project will restore a mosaic of meadows, heathland, wood pasture, scrub, woodland, temperate rainforest and blanket bog. Alongside restoration of habitats, the project will also help recovery of local wildlife such as tree pipit, pine marten and water vole.

This project is set to deliver a range of benefits from nature-based solutions, including a reduction in downstream flood risk. Restoration work, which includes re-naturalisation, will improve water quality in parts of the River Duddon and its tributaries.

A volunteering programme will provide opportunities for the local community and visitors to contribute to nature recovery. A new community wildflower and tree nursery will grow the flowers and trees needed to help habitats recover.

Careful monitoring will track the recovery of habitats and species as the project progresses. This is done through a combination of on-the-ground surveys, technological tracking, and community-led observations. The monitoring program is comprehensive, focusing on the project's key environmental and social outcomes.

This 20-year project will help ensure a vibrant future for small farms and support the local rural economy by creating new jobs. The hope is that the partnerships formed, and the progress made through this funding, will have a lasting impact for generations.

Together, Boothby and Upper Duddon represent over £55 million of investment. LR funding will sit alongside private investment in an innovative 'blended finance' model, combining public and private finance over the next 20–30 years.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

Target 19

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 19

Contribute to mobilising \$200 billion per year for biodiversity from all sources, including \$30 billion from developed to developing countries.

The UK will contribute to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from all sources, in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and contribute to the global targets for mobilising at least \$200 billion per year by 2030:

- a) Increasing total biodiversity related international financial resources from developed countries, including official development assistance, and from countries that voluntarily assume obligations of developed country Parties, to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, to at least \$20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least \$30 billion per year by 2030;
- b) Significantly increasing domestic resource mobilisation, facilitated by the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments according to national needs, priorities and circumstances;
- c) Leveraging private finance, promoting blended finance, implementing strategies for raising new and additional resources, and encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity, including through impact funds and other instruments;
- d) Stimulating innovative schemes such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, with environmental and social safeguards;
- e) Optimising co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises;
- f) Enhancing the role of collective actions, including by indigenous peoples and local communities, Mother Earth centric actions and non-market-based approaches including community based natural resource management and civil society cooperation and solidarity aimed at the conservation of biodiversity^{1,2};
- g) Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of resource provision and use.

¹ The United Kingdom does not recognise rights of nature or rights of Mother Earth. However, the UK in its international engagements acknowledges the existence of different value system including, for those countries that recognise them, rights of nature and Mother Earth

² The United Kingdom does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity

Target 19

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK has increased financial resources through public, private, and international sources to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans and contribute to the global targets.

Domestically, major public investments include over £7 billion committed in England by 2030 for nature recovery, with programmes such as the £750 million Nature for Climate Fund. Scotland's Nature Restoration Fund has delivered over £55 million to more than 230 projects since its launch in 2021, while Wales established the Ministerial Portfolio for Change with an annual £2 billion budget to support net zero and tackle biodiversity loss. Northern Ireland launched the Environment Fund and Farming with Nature Transition Scheme, allocating £4.84 million to support habitat restoration. Private finance mobilisation is advancing through measures like Biodiversity Net Gain in England, the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland, and blue investment initiatives in Wales. The UK has supported nature markets via the Woodland Carbon Code and Guarantee, which have driven woodland creation and carbon unit sales worth millions of pounds.

Internationally, the UK committed £3 billion of International Climate Finance for nature (2021–2026), including £1.5 billion for forests, and funds programmes such as the Darwin Initiative, PROBLUE, and the Global Fund for Coral Reefs. These efforts collectively aim to scale biodiversity finance and deliver global targets.

Regarding the main actions under Target 19:

Contribute to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from public sources

In England, the Government has committed that over £7 billion will be spent by 2030 to protect and restore nature – including environmental farming schemes (£5.9 billion), tree planting (£816 million) and peatland restoration (£85 million). This will make a significant contribution to the Environment Act 2021 targets, including improving the quality of water, air, and spaces for wildlife, so biodiversity can thrive. In England, the £750 million Nature for Climate Fund, delivered between 2020 and 2025, has supported implementation of the 91 actions outlined in the England Trees Action Plan. This investment has kick-started a transformation in how trees and woodlands are grown and managed in England, laying the foundations for achieving England's 2050 tree canopy and woodland cover targets and its broader vision for healthier, more resilient treescapes.

The Scottish Government is making considerable large-scale public investments in nature with the ambitious Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) and Peatland Action. For example, the NRF has awarded over £55 million since its launch in 2021, including to more than 230 projects through the competitive fund run by NatureScot. Projects are delivering on-the-ground activity to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity while helping to build resilience to climate change. The Scottish Government has also funded research into setting up a [Biodiversity Investment Plan](#) to help cost the actions required to deliver the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045](#).

In Wales, the Ministerial Portfolio for Climate Change was established in 2021 with an annual budget of over £2 billion to support net zero and tackle biodiversity loss. The Welsh Government has recently developed [Sustainable Investment Principles](#) ("Principles") in consultation with the public, environmental non-governmental organisations and Natural Resources Wales. The Principles aim to set the Welsh Government's expectations for

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sustainable investment in nature. They outline the behaviours market participants should demonstrate when investing in Wales and describe the project factors the Welsh Government considers important.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) administers the Environment Fund 2023–28 to support projects that will help deliver key environmental outcomes across Northern Ireland. DAERA's Environmental Farming Scheme offers participants a five-year agreement to deliver a range of environmental measures. This scheme's objectives are to restore, preserve and enhance biodiversity, improve water quality and mitigate against climate change. In addition, the Farming with Nature Transition Scheme opened for applications in 2025. This scheme is the first phase of the Farming with Nature Package that aims to create, restore and manage habitats that are important for species diversity, and to improve connectivity between habitat areas. £4.84 million has been allocated to the scheme, with funding up to a maximum of £9,500 per farm business available to support a range of environmental actions which aim to support biodiversity on farmland.

In Jersey, the Overseas Aid Commission, established under the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission (Jersey) Law 2005, can fund and support conservation efforts where it sees appropriate.

The Falkland Islands Government Environment Department actively incentivises landowners to apply for Environmental Studies Budget (ESB) grants to undertake restoration and conservation works on their land. The extent of the ESB varies with each financial year, but the 2024–25 ESB provided funding worth £170,000 to a variety of landowners and organisations to undertake conservation and restoration work.

Contribute to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from private sources

The UK recognises the critical role of the private sector in mobilising funding for biodiversity and aims to increase the level of private finance for biodiversity. The UK is setting out plans to streamline and strengthen nature market governance through continued support for the British Standards Institution's (BSI) Nature Investment Standards Programme, and to introduce new measures to boost confidence and scale up private investment for nature and sustainable farming. The UK is actively advancing international private investment through its Growth and Investment Partnerships (formerly known as British Investment Partnerships), drawing on the UK's development expertise and diplomatic network to deliver investment into sustainable development for the UK's partner countries. These investments are designed to address global development challenges, reduce poverty, and combat climate change by promoting green growth and inclusive growth and jobs. The UK Government is also supporting action to unlock high integrity Voluntary Carbon and Nature Markets, (VCNM) which mobilise additional finance to help meet our climate and biodiversity goals sooner.

In the UK, water companies will make up to £3 billion investments in the water sector by 2030 into nature-based solutions and projects to increase biodiversity. Terrestrially, the UK Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) is the quality assurance standard for UK woodland carbon projects, which leads the creation of high integrity woodland carbon units that can be sold in the voluntary carbon market. Action is being taken to continually improve the WCC, for example by modernising its registry, improving the monitoring, reporting and verification framework, improving additionality tests, and securing endorsement by the International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance. In England, the Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme has also provided landowners creating new woodlands with agreements that the government will buy their carbon units if the market does not offer a higher price, giving crucial financial assurance that has helped expand the use of the WCC across the sector.

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In England, a Biodiversity Net Gain condition for planning permissions, implemented in February 2024, requires new developments to deliver a 10% gain for biodiversity, which will channel private finance towards improving biodiversity outcomes.

The Welsh Government, through the Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru), is advancing blue investment to restore marine ecosystems and attract blended finance. It has developed Sustainable Finance Principles with partners to set the Welsh Government's expectations for sustainable investment in nature and outline the behaviours market participants should demonstrate when investing in Wales. To build capacity, two pathfinder roles are funded: (i) Head of Natural Capital Development at Brecon Beacons National Park (£119k/year) to explore natural capital markets and share best practice, (ii) Fund Development Manager for MARINE (Marine Resilience and Improvement of Natural Ecosystems) Fund Cymru (£85k/year) to establish governance and attract private donations for marine restoration, evidence-based management, community engagement, and ocean literacy.

The Scottish Government, NatureScot and the National Heritage Lottery Fund launched the [Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland \(FIRNS\)](#) in 2022. FIRNS is supporting projects that shape and grow private investment and market-based mechanisms to finance the restoration of Scotland's nature on land and in our waterways and seas. Grants of up to £240,000 are offered to help develop a viable business case and financial model, to attract investment in suitable projects.

The Isle of Man Government has been looking at schemes to bring private finance into climate change and biodiversity work. Work is currently focussed on developing an economically ambitious new nature market under the Finance Agency's Sustainable Finance Initiative, but this is at a very early stage.

Internationally, the International Advisory Panel on Biodiversity Credits (IAPB) was co-launched by the UK and France in 2023 at the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in Paris. It brings together experts from finance, science, non-governmental organisations, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities. Additionally, the UK co-chaired the negotiations at CBD COP16 that led to the establishment and launch of the Cali Fund – the global multilateral benefit sharing mechanism for the use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources. For the mechanism to be successful, it is essential that private sector entities make meaningful contributions to the Cali Fund. To provide assurances to business that there will not be duplicative expectations across both bilateral and multilateral benefit sharing mechanisms, the UK and Chile are co-leading the Friends of the Cali Fund – a growing global partnership of governments and, in time, the private sector.

Contribute to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from international sources

The UK is reinvigorating our international leadership on climate and nature and remains committed to providing International Climate Finance (ICF) now and in the future. The UK provided £1.3 billion of ICF funding towards nature between 2021/2022 and 2023/2024 and has re-committed to delivering a total of £3 billion in ICF funding towards nature between 2021 and 2026, including £1.5 billion on forests. Since 2011, the UK's ICF spending has resulted in avoiding the loss of over 700,000 ha of important ecosystems and habitat and led to over 12 million hectares now being managed sustainably, to protect ecosystems and make them resilient to future climate shocks.

The UK delivers a significant bilateral and multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) portfolio to support global commitments to protect biodiversity and improve nature's contributions to people. Terrestrially, this includes implementing a range of programmes to protect and restore ecosystems and to generate additional finance for nature, including:

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- The [Darwin Initiative](#) (£94 million in grants from 2022/2023 to 2025/2026), which supports projects that enable low and middle-income countries to conserve their unique biodiversity, reduce poverty, enhance food security and address climate change. Since 2022, these Darwin Initiative projects have enabled countries to manage over 600,000 ha of habitat more sustainably, and more than 130,000 people to improve their resilience to natural disasters and climate change.
- Darwin Plus, which supports biodiversity and conservation projects in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), through both ODA and non-ODA funding (£41.44 million total from 2022/2023 to 2025/2026).
- The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund (£34 million on grants from 2022/2023 to 2025/2026), a competitive grants scheme aimed at eradicating the illegal trade in wildlife and developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by the illegal wildlife trade.
- The Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, which has been strengthening the management of ecosystems, tackling climate change and reducing poverty across several transboundary landscapes of global significance for biodiversity.

Through its marine ODA portfolio, the UK has supported a range of initiatives to protect coastal ecosystems, reduce poverty and increase resilience to climate change. For example:

- Since 2021, the UK has invested in the World Bank's PROBLUE – a Multi Donor Trust Fund supporting the growth of blue economies globally to reduce poverty in ODA-eligible coastal communities, while maintaining a healthy ocean. In the 2024/2025 financial year, every \$1 invested in PROBLUE-supported activities unlocked \$151 in World Bank financing.
- The UK has invested in the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA) to develop innovative finance solutions to build resilience in vulnerable coastal communities. The UK provided support for the creation of Fiji's first Sovereign Blue Bond in 2023. The Sovereign Blue Bond raised \$10 million in private capital to support Fiji's efforts to unlock the economic potential of its blue economy through sustainable use of its ocean resources.
- The UK supports the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR), a blended finance mechanism that integrates public and private finance to mobilise action and resources to protect, restore and safeguard coral reef ecosystems and the communities that depend on them. Through the UK's investment into GFCR since 2021, £26.5 million of public and £8 million of private finance has been leveraged from other sources for climate and nature.

Recognising the co-benefits of aligning biodiversity and climate finance, the UK launched the third call for proposals under the [Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate](#) (GCBC) to support research and development that can generate evidence and unlock new approaches to addressing biodiversity and climate challenges simultaneously. The UK also committed £330 million to the eighth replenishment of the [Global Environment Facility Trust Fund](#) (2022–2026) and a total contribution of £55 million towards the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund. The UK is committed to securing an ambitious ninth replenishment of the Trust Fund (2026–2030).

The Welsh Government has funded Size of Wales since 2013/14 to support tree planting and forest protection projects, notably the Mbale Tree Planting Programme in Uganda, which has planted 25 million trees and sequestered over 1.4 million tonnes of CO₂ since the project began. The programme also promotes gender empowerment and provides community benefits such as fuel-efficient stoves, improved farming techniques, seeds, and beekeeping. Wales has additionally funded Size of Wales's work with the Wampis Nation in Peru to advance renewable energy and protect 1.3 million

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	hectares of biodiverse forest. Further support through the Wales and Africa small grants scheme includes agroforestry pilots in Ghana to improve livelihoods and environmental resilience. These initiatives contribute to climate action, poverty alleviation, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target Actions have been taken by the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CD's) to provide funding for both domestic and international biodiversity and conservation work, and to incentivise private investment. This has led to some good progress against this target. Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK reached approximately £1.07 billion in 2023/2024, representing a real-term increase of 210% since the time-series began in 2000/2001, of 77% since 2019/20 and 14% in the latest year, demonstrating an improving trend in both the short- and long-term. Funding for agri-environment schemes rose by £49 million in 2023/2024. Funding made available to farmers and land managers under agri-environment schemes is one of the major sources of public sector funding for biodiversity and makes up almost half of the total spend in 2023/2024. Non-governmental organisation and private sector expenditure also grew to £452 million in 2023/2024, a 92% real-term increase since the time-series began in 2010/2011, of 37% since 2019/20 and 12% in the latest year, again demonstrating an improving trend in both the short- and long-term. Internationally, UK public sector funding for biodiversity totalled £560 million in 2023/2024, up 134% since the time-series began in 2013/2014, with real-term increases of 37% over the last five years and 39% in the latest year. Annual changes in this measure are influenced greatly by fluctuations in the irregular nature of (i) contributions to the Global Environment Facility and (ii) other Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. Despite these improving trends over time, challenges remain in tracking private investment and overcoming reliance on government grants for tree planting, highlighting the need for stronger mechanisms to scale finance and meet 2030 targets. Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 19: Contribute to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from public sources In 2023/2024, around £1.07 billion of UK public sector funding was allocated to biodiversity in the UK. This figure equates to real-term increases of	

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210% since the time series began in 2000/2001 and 14% in the latest year for which data have been compiled, and a real-term increase of 77% over the last five years (Headline Indicator D.2). Both the long-term and the short-term assessments of public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK are improving.

Funding made available to farmers and land managers to support biodiversity through agri-environment schemes increased by £49 million in [2023/2024](#) and accounted for around half of annual public sector spending on biodiversity in the UK. This increase reflects the increases seen in the number of agreements and area of land under agri-environmental schemes.

Contribute to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from private sources

Spending on biodiversity and nature conservation by non-governmental organisations and the private sector in the UK was around £452 million in 2023/2024. This figure represents a real-term increase of 92% since the time series began in 2010/2011, and real-term increases of 44% over the last five years and 12% in the latest year for which data have been compiled (Headline Indicator D.3).

The UK co-sponsored the independent International Advisory Panel on Biodiversity Credits (IAPB), who launched their framework for high integrity biodiversity credits and credit markets at CBD COP16. The framework provides a comprehensive overview of what high integrity biodiversity credit markets could look like, from supply through to demand, for all market actors, and contributes to the international discussion on biodiversity credits. It provides a strong foundation, rooted in high integrity, for market actors to build upon as these markets grow. In June 2025, IAPB became a fully independent not-for-profit entity, supported by matched funding from the UK (£500,000) and France (€580,000). Its mission is to develop high integrity biodiversity credit markets, including market guidance, a community of practice (which now has over 40 pilot projects in nearly 30 countries), and a Policy Lab to help governments build enabling regulatory frameworks.

During UNFCCC COP29, the UK launched six principles that aim to improve the integrity of voluntary carbon and nature markets, to support organisations engaged in discretionary action towards net zero and nature positive transitions. In 2025, a public consultation was launched to seek views on how these principles could be put into practice, through new guidance and policy, to unlock additional finance.

There has been a total of eight auctions run by the Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme, with a total of 124 successful bids, across 2,800 ha of proposed woodland.

As of June 2025, the impact of the UK's Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) included:

- 40,012 ha of new woodland created (i.e. validated and verified projects), with a total of 93, 506 ha of planted and potential new woodland registered with the Code
- 13.6 million tonnes of planned carbon dioxide removal, which would rise to 29.3 million tonnes if all projects under development were to be validated
- 806 projects validated under the code, with a further 1,379 projects under development.

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WCC unit prices more than doubled over five years – from an average of £11.02 in 2020 to £26.85 in 2024 – based on information published by Ecosystem Marketplace. Applying the most recent price to the 6.4 million pre-issuance units (PIUs) currently available for sale would represent a total potential value of £173 million, in addition to the 3.5 million PIUs and 3,500 Woodland Carbon Units that have already been sold.

The UK Government is working closely with businesses across a range of sectors to raise awareness of the Cali Fund, its objectives, and how those businesses considered to be in scope of the benefit sharing mechanism can engage and contribute. As a result of these efforts, a UK company, Tierra Viva AI, is the first in the world to contribute to the Fund.

Contribute to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from international sources

In 2023/2024, UK public sector funding for international biodiversity totalled around £560 million based on new expanded indicator methods. This figure equates to a real-term increase of 134% since the time series began in 2013/2014 and real-term increases of 37% over the last five years and 39% in the latest year for which data have been compiled (Headline Indicator D.1). This indicator is an official statistic in development and is being developed further to explore alternative and additional data sources, as part of the UK's commitment to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). As a result, it was not formally assessed, however, both the long-term and short-term UK public sector expenditure on international biodiversity show improving trends. Annual changes in this measure are influenced greatly by fluctuations in the irregular nature of (i) contributions to the Global Environment Facility and (ii) other Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Tracking the increase in private sector investments in nature is challenging. Publicly available information on nature-related investments is limited and disaggregating the parts of the available investments that benefit nature is often not possible. Available investment figures are typically presented as forward-looking investment intentions over several years, rather than *ex post* reports on investments already made. This limits their reliability and usage for tracking and reporting on spend with a high degree of confidence.

Delivery of the [Nature for Climate Fund](#) (NCF) in England has faced a range of strategic and technical barriers. These include: the demand-led nature of tree planting; competition from other land uses; the ambitious 2050 tree cover target (equivalent to increasing England's tree cover by c.210,000 ha); limited workforce capacity/skills and nursery/seed supply; and current low levels of private investment, which mean that tree planting is predominantly reliant on government grants. England is continuing to explore appropriate mitigations to these challenges, building on lessons learned through NCF programme delivery. These include exploring options to simplify the forestry grant landscape, stimulating green finance investment, working with delivery partners to secure private investment for woodland creation and management, reducing regulatory and bureaucratic barriers, encouraging behavioural change in favour of tree planting; building capacity across the supply chain (workforce, skills and nurseries), enhancing convening and partnering and providing clear messaging, guidance and advice.

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	In the Falkland Islands, the economy has been largely based around agriculture (particularly animal husbandry) and fishing, both of which have relied on intensive use of the natural environment. Historically, it has been a challenge to strike a balance between development of these industries and biodiversity conservation. However, as the growing tourism industry supports shifts in the Falkland Island's economy, the conservation of biodiversity is gaining appeal throughout the archipelago. The resulting Land Recovery Scheme, along with other means of diversifying landowner incomes in the future, may further address this challenge. In the Cayman Islands, Darwin Plus, Blue Belt, and other similar funding programmes have been critically important external sources of biodiversity funding. Without these funds, the Cayman Islands would be greatly challenged to continue the biodiversity conservation work currently underway.
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)³ Headline Indicator D.1: International public funding, including Official Development Assistance for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator - Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity) ☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: This indicator provides real-term UK public sector spending on global biodiversity. This part of the indicator is being developed and includes data based on methods used in the previous publication, alongside data from alternative and additional sources. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity Figure 1: Data are adjusted for the effects of inflation using the UK Gross Domestic Product deflator. Data presented here are not directly comparable to

³ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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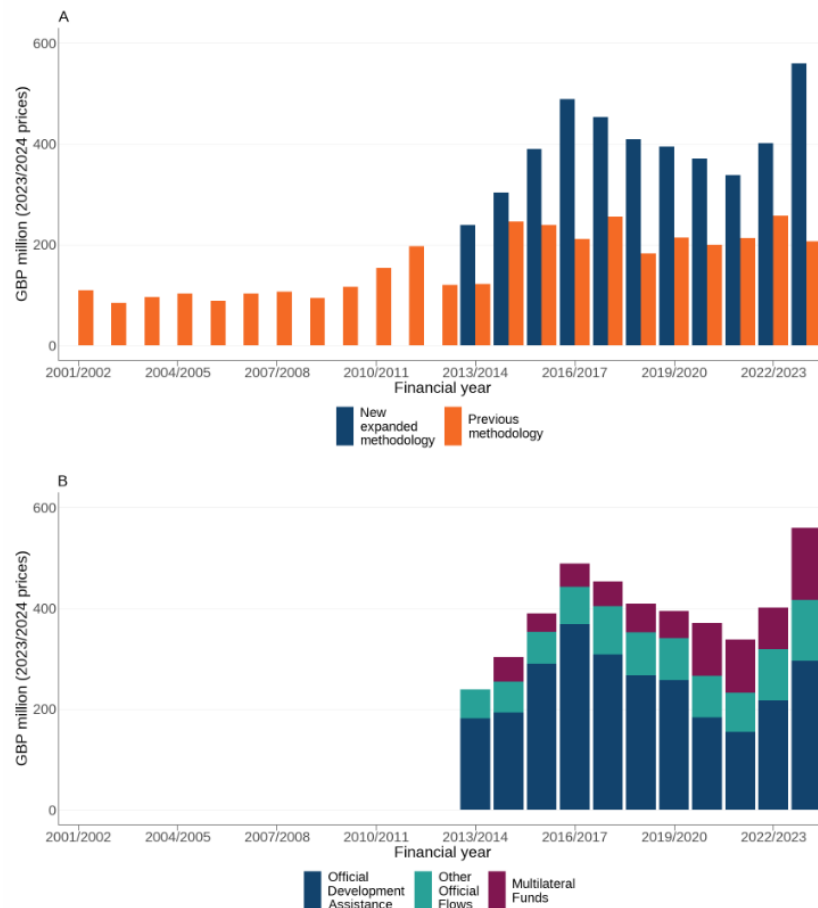


Figure 1: UK public sector expenditure on international biodiversity, 2001/2002 to 2023/2024, based on the previous methodology for this measure, and using a new expanded methodology that includes alternative and additional data sources (A), with a breakdown of categories for the new expanded methodology (B).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity](#)

those in previous publications because a new deflator is used to prepare each annual update.

There may be some inconsistencies in the reporting of expenditure on international biodiversity from one year to the next (see [Technical annex](#) section for further details).

The step change in 2014/2015 in the data from the previous methods is due to increased Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding for biodiversity related projects.

Global Environment Fund (GEF) and other ODA expenditure are reported by calendar year; they have been allocated to the financial year beginning in each relevant calendar year, for example, 2020 data are included in 2020/2021.

Revisions to past data series resulting from improved methodology or access to additional data can mean the chart (and figures) are not directly comparable to those presented in previous publications. Figure 1A shows the data as collected following the previous method alongside the data from additional and alternative sources, while Figure 1B shows a breakdown of the data from alternative and additional sources by category.

The alternative data series shown in Figures 1A and 1B includes ODA, Other Official Flows and Multilateral flows. The Multilateral flows include data from the GEF, Global Climate Fund, Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, Forest Investment Programme, and Nature, People and Climate programme.

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The alternative data series starts in 2013/2014, as that is when the Rio Markers for Biodiversity for the ODA part of the dataset became widely used.

The large fluctuations between years are mostly due to the irregular nature of (i) contributions to Multilateral Flows, (ii) contributions to the GEF and (iii) ODA funding.

Headline Indicator D.2: Domestic public funding on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator - Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity)

Table 1: Assessment of change in public expenditure on biodiversity in the UK.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK	Long term	2000/2001 to 2023/2024	Improving
Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK	Short term	2018/2019 to 2023/2024	Improving

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator provides real-term, public sector spending on biodiversity in the UK, with the focus being on biodiversity and/or nature conservation. Spending is just one way of assessing the government's commitment to biodiversity. The methods for this part of the indicator have not been changed since the previous publication, but alternative data sources are being investigated (see [Technical annex](#) for more detail).

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity](#)

Table 1: The long-term and short-term assessment of these measures is based on a 3% rule of thumb. The base years for these

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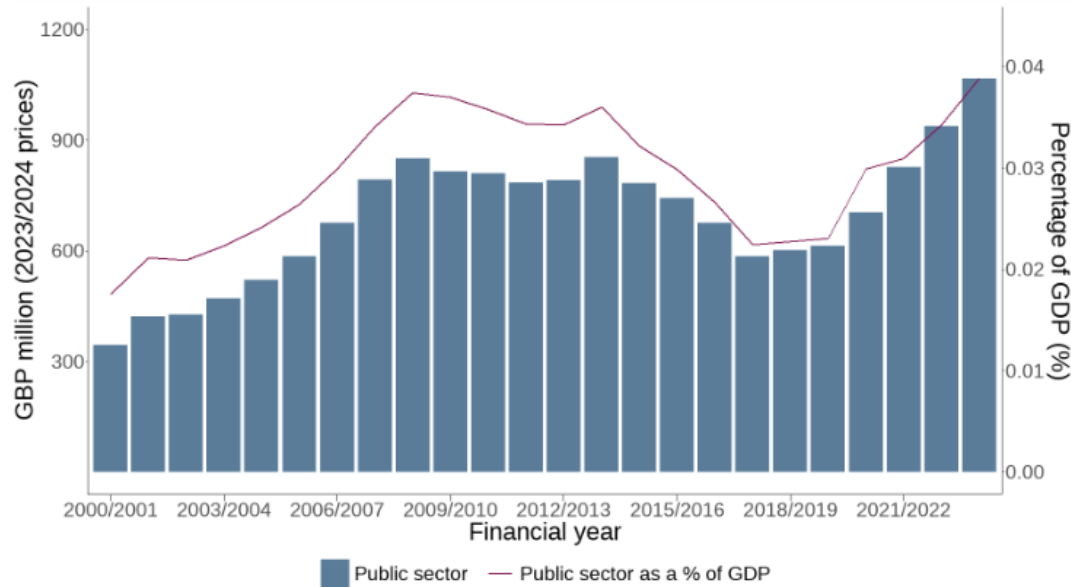


Figure 1: Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, 2000/2001 to 2023/2024.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity](#)

assessments use a three-year average.

See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1: Data are adjusted for the effects of inflation using the UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator. Data presented here are not directly comparable to those in previous publications because a new deflator is used to prepare each annual update.

There may be some inconsistencies in the reporting of expenditure on UK biodiversity from one year to the next (see [Technical annex](#) section below for further details).

Revisions to past data series resulting from improved methodology or access to additional data can mean the chart (and figures) are not directly comparable to those presented in previous publications.

D.3 Private funding (domestic and international) on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator - Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity)

- ☒ Use national data set
- ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)
- ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____
- ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator provides real-term spending by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector spending, again with a focus on biodiversity and/or nature conservation. The methods for this part of the indicator, which

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Table 1: Assessment of change in non-governmental organisation and private sector spending on biodiversity in the UK.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Non-governmental organisation and private sector spending on biodiversity in the UK	Long term	2010/2011 to 2023/2024	Improving
Non-governmental organisation and private sector spending on biodiversity in the UK	Short term	2018/2019 to 2023/2024	Improving

previously focused on spending by NGOs, have been adjusted to include additional sources of spending from the private sector.

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity](#)

Table 1: The long-term and short-term assessment of these measures is based on a 3% rule of thumb. The base years for these assessments use a three-year average. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Figure 1: Data are adjusted for the effects of inflation using the UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator. Data presented here are not directly comparable to those in previous publications because a new deflator is used to prepare each annual update.

Wherever possible, NGO spend is net of government funding.

There may be some inconsistencies in the reporting of expenditure on UK biodiversity from one year to the next (see [Technical annex](#) section below for further details).

Revisions to past data series resulting from improved methodology or access to additional data can mean the chart (and figures) are not directly comparable to those presented in previous publications.

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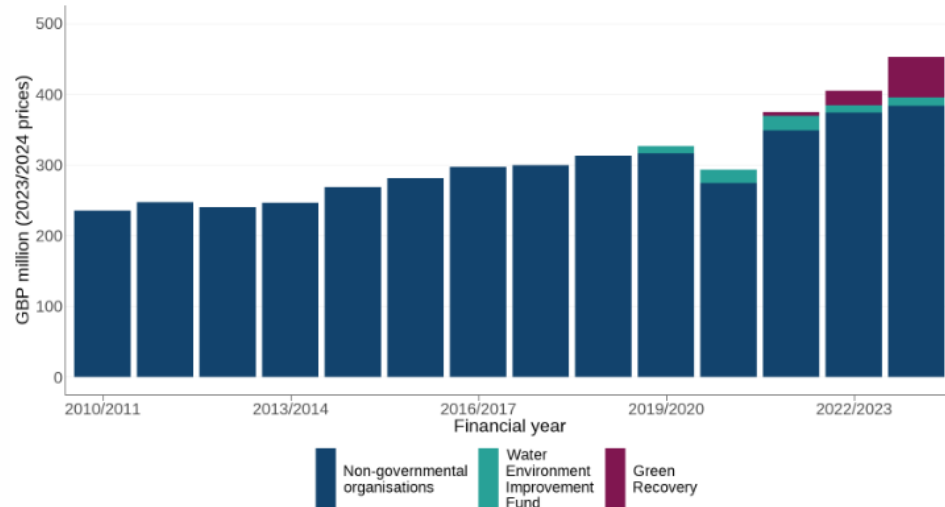


Figure 1: Non-governmental organisation (NGO) and private sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, 2010/2011 to 2023/2024.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity](#)

5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁴

Comments (optional): _____

6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)

Comments (optional): _____

⁴ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund



Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) with marmalade hoverfly (*Episyrphus balteatus*) and peacock butterfly (*Aglais io*), two important pollinators. Restoring and connecting habitats for pollinators has been a priority of several Nature Restoration Fund projects (© Lorna Gill, NatureScot).

Transformative change

Since its launch in 2021, the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) has awarded over £55 million, including support for more than 240 projects delivered through the competitive fund run by NatureScot, the Scottish Government's statutory nature conservation body. The NRF comprises both this competitive fund and direct funding to local authorities through the Edinburgh Process. Funding for large-scale, transformative projects has been awarded over multiple years. Projects are delivering exciting on-the-ground activity to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity while helping us build resilience to climate change. There has been a tremendous response across Scotland to harness the opportunities provided by the NRF.

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Nature-rich networks

Projects led by community groups and non-governmental organisations have been funded across Scotland's land and seas. For example, as part of the Leven Programme, Green Action Trust has been granted £420,000 to create a network of nature-rich sites for wildlife to live and thrive. This will restore and expand biodiversity around the River Leven, improve natural drainage to reduce flooding and give local people access to nature on their doorstep.

Targeted action for declining species

RSPB Scotland is also among the latest successful awardees. The charity will use a £158,000 grant to develop a project to help stop and reverse the population decline of Slavonian Grebes in Scotland. Working closely with landowners and loch users, they will identify conservation measures to improve the rare waterbird's breeding success in Scottish lochs through a future delivery project.

Pollinators

In addition, Aberdeen Nectar Networks will receive £56,000 to create, restore and connect habitats for pollinating insects across Aberdeen. Buglife Scotland will lead the project to create a series of nectar-rich 'stepping-stones' to allow bees, hoverflies and other wildlife to move across the city and into the wider landscape.

Habitat restoration

A grant has also been awarded to the Loch Lomond Rainforest project, which aims to re-establish a resilient and well-connected temperate rainforest habitat within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. Led by the National Park's Future Nature Partnership, the £93,600 award will be used to carry out surveys to confirm the extent of rhododendron encroachment and grazing pressures and to devise a plan to tackle these major threats to the rainforest habitat.

These are just some of the [many projects](#) that have been funded by the NRF and are a core part of achieving the ambition to restore Scotland's nature by 2045.

8. **Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)**

Target 20

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 20

Strengthen capacity building, technology transfer, and scientific and technical co-operation for effective implementation and biodiversity

The UK will strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and promote development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, fostering joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK's implementation of Target 20 focuses on work within the UK and moreover, the UK's work with other countries to help them strengthen capacity-building, technology transfer, and scientific and technical cooperation for biodiversity.

Domestically, the UK is strengthening capacity-building and development through initiatives such as Skills England, which aims to strengthen science and technology skills in England, and England's Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme to strengthen evidence-based policymaking. In Scotland, institutions like the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) deliver training, while Wales delivers coastal capacity-building via the Coasts and Seas Partnership Cymru. Northern Ireland is creating a "Living map" to increase capacity for evidence-based environmental policymaking, and its Eco-Schools programme aims to enhance environmental education. In the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), the Darwin Plus programme and the new UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy focus on building local capability, skills, and regulatory frameworks to ensure long-term sustainability and contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) targets.

The UK works internationally to strengthen capacity-building and development for effective implementation, primarily through Official Development Assistance (ODA)-funded programmes. Key initiatives include the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC), which provides technical assistance and research capacity support; the Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) programme, supporting locally led projects in Africa and Asia; and the Darwin Initiative, which embeds capacity-building in all funded projects. Marine-focused programmes such as the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCCP), Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature (OCEAN), the World Bank's PROBLUE, the Sustainable Blue Economies (SBE) Programme, and the UK Blue Carbon Fund build scientific expertise and capacity. These efforts are complemented by UK leadership in global coalitions like the Global Ocean Alliance (GOA) and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People (HAC for N&P). The UK's

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Devolved Governments and their bodies also work internationally to build capacity, including Scotland's RBGE's work via its Centre for Middle Eastern Plants, Welsh Government support for the charity Size of Wales, which works with communities in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia to protect tropical forests and deliver education, and through the Wales and Africa small grants scheme, funding projects such as agroforestry pilots in Ghana to embed sustainable practices and improve livelihoods.

The UK is promoting access to and transfer of technology and fostering innovation to support effective implementation, both domestically and internationally. The AI Opportunities Action Plan (2025) underpins major investment in AI infrastructure, while England's NCEA programme is advancing technologies such as remote sensing, environmental DNA, autonomous systems and AI. Internationally, the UK's Biodiversity Challenge Funds – including the Darwin Initiative and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund – support projects that test innovative approaches and enhance transfer of technology such as GIS, remote sensing, drones, camera traps and DNA technology. Marine-focused programmes (SBE, UK Blue Carbon Fund, OCPP and OCEAN) also drive technological innovation and knowledge exchange. Additionally, Welsh Government support for Size of Wales has enabled solar technology training for the Wampis Nation in Peru, resulting in the country's first solar-powered boat.

The UK carries out actions domestically and internationally to promote scientific and technical cooperation, foster joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes and to strengthen scientific research and monitoring capacities. The UK Science and Technology Framework (2025) provides a systems-level approach to science and technology policy to strengthen collaboration and innovation. The UK's association with Horizon Europe enables participation in the world's largest research cooperation programme. Across the UKOTs, initiatives such as the Falkland Islands Environment Strategy, projects by Falklands Conservation and the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute, and partnerships by the Cayman Islands and Gibraltar with UK and other institutions foster joint research and monitoring. Internationally, the UK leads and participates in major partnerships to promote scientific and technical cooperation, including the HAC for N&P, the UK-led Global Ocean Alliance, the UN Ocean Decade, and the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance. The UK supports platforms such as the REEF+ Platform for knowledge exchange among reef nations, the Global Plastic Action Partnership to tackle plastic pollution, and the World Bank's PROBLUE programme, which promotes scientific and technical cooperation to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and investment in environmentally sustainable blue growth. Additional UK-supported schemes, including the GCBC, OCPP, OCEAN, and SBE Programme, enable joint research, technology transfer, and capacity-building to strengthen biodiversity conservation worldwide. UK scientists also collaborate directly with international partners, such as NatureScot's work with the University of Benghazi to develop genetic diversity reporting tools.

Regarding the main actions under Target 20:

Strengthen capacity-building and development to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries

In England, in 2025, the Government established Skills England, a crucial part of the Government's plan to build and maintain the science and technology skills that England needs through attracting, developing and retaining expertise across all career stages, developing talent pipelines in schools, universities, and research institutions, and creating systems for lifelong learning and reskilling to keep pace with technological changes.

Also in England, the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme collects data on the extent, condition and location of England's terrestrial and marine ecosystems and the benefits they provide, thereby increasing England's capacity for evidence-based environmental

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policymaking. The terrestrial arm of the NCEA programme, which is delivering a nationwide survey of England's land, freshwater assets and coast, is publishing new datasets and products that will allow the full benefits of a comprehensive assessment of the natural environment to be realised. The programme will complete a baseline assessment in 2028.

Scotland aims to maintain and grow strength in capacity-building and development to create a more educated, inclusive and innovative Scotland. Scotland has an established Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture research programme that delivers capacity building research related to biodiversity. The current programme runs from 2022 to 2027, with the 2027 to 2032 programme currently under development. Further, research institutions such as Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and Scottish Universities have fostered links to help further understanding and broaden capacity. For example, the RBGE provides training in [practical horticulture](#) to support the sector in Scotland and abroad. Similarly, [Scotland's Rural College](#) (SRUC) trains people for land-based careers in Scotland, the wider UK and internationally.

In Wales, the Coasts and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru), the Welsh Government's overarching marine stakeholder group, has established a Coastal Capacity Building Working Group that aims to support and enhance capacity and capability to deliver resilient marine ecosystems. A Coastal Capacity Building Fund ran from 2022 to 2025, funding 11 projects with a value of £800k, to provide capacity, upskilling and local engagement to improve outcomes for the marine environment. In August 2025, Welsh Government launched a Challenge Fund to provide coastal coordinators in coastal communities, to engage and build coastal capacity to address marine ecosystem challenges such as climate change adaptation and achieving the 30by30 target (Target 3). CaSP Cymru also established the Welsh Ocean Literacy Coalition, which is continuing to expand as a network and is developing ways to deliver the national ocean literacy framework 'Y Môr a Ni' (The Sea and Us) at local and national levels for individuals, communities and partners across Wales.

The Welsh Government's [Programme for Government](#) sets out the actions Wales will pursue over this Senedd term to ensure that individuals of all ages can receive a high-quality education, with jobs for all, through a shared commitment to ensure everyone reaches their potential. [The Plan for Employability and Skills](#) seeks to signal clear policy and investment priorities, sharpen our delivery focus and the activity of partners, on actions over this Government term that will leave a positive legacy for future generations.

The development of the first "Living map" of Northern Ireland will inform decisions on habitat and land cover policy, including achievement of the 30by30 target (Target 3), thereby increasing Northern Ireland's capacity for evidence-based environmental policymaking. Northern Ireland has entered into joint research and restoration projects with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), other Devolved Governments and the Government of Ireland, mainly through EU grant-aided work. Greater collaboration between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on sharing species and habitat data is being taken forward within the respective data recording centres. Northern Ireland's Eco-Schools programme provides the opportunity to foster environmental awareness while linking to many curriculum subjects. It aims to educate and empower young people to make positive decisions and become change makers for an environmentally sustainable world.

In the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), each year, the UK Government's Darwin Plus programme awards grants to initiatives that incorporate capacity-building activities, ensuring that investments contribute to long-term sustainability beyond the project's duration. In 2023, the UK Government launched a small grants scheme, [Darwin Plus Local](#), to support environmental projects and help build capacity and capability in the UKOTs. The projects are locally led, building capacity and capability in the UKOTs and leading to lasting environmental change. Since April 2024, the UK Government has also funded the first two projects under Darwin Plus Strategic – a new grant scheme designed to fund larger-scale, longer-term

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conservation projects in and between the UKOTs. The Darwin Plus programme is funded through a mixture of the UK Government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme and other funding.

Defra published the new UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy in November 2025. The strategy was developed in close consultation with UKOT Governments and administrations. The strategy recognises the value of developing skills and talent, with a focus on building capacity and capability in-territory. It also highlights the valuable contribution the UKOTs make to global frameworks and targets and details goals dedicated to support their delivery, for example, by strengthening and implementing management and regulatory frameworks.

Through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Blue Belt programme, support is provided to the UKOTs for protecting and enhancing ocean health to halt biodiversity loss, enable sustainable growth, ensure climate change resilience and connect people with the natural environment. The programme is central to the UK Government's ambition of leading action to tackle illegal fishing, species extinction and climate change.

Internationally, the UK works extensively through international partnerships to support global capacity development to deliver the KMGBF, including in many developing countries. Much of the work is funded under the UK Government's ODA programmes, which have had a variety of impacts across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Summary details of relevant ODA programmes are below.

The [Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate \(GCBC\)](#) supports developing countries in shaping decisions and policies that better value, protect, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity while strengthening climate resilience and supporting poverty alleviation. At the programme level, GCBC has established a technical assistance framework and facility to provide grantees with access to expert advice from a roster of consultants. It offers research delivery capacity building support based on an application process and in the form of written responses, face-to-face engagement, or both. Many GCBC research projects are conducting capacity-building activities around innovation, science and transfer of technology, such as the Flourishing Landscapes Programme, GlobalSeaweed, and project research related to Indigenous knowledge.

The [Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia \(REDAA\)](#) programme is supporting 28 locally led and informed projects in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. The projects will strengthen the capacity of organisations and groups affecting ecosystems, helping both people and nature to thrive in times of climate, resource and fiscal insecurity. Alongside funding, REDAA-supported initiatives can access a community of practice that facilitates mutual support and learning among supported initiatives and others.

The Darwin Initiative grant scheme places a strong emphasis on capacity building across all its grants and offers a dedicated funding stream specifically designed to support capacity-building efforts. Projects are required to have local partner involvement in development and delivery, strengthening the capacity of local and national organisations to address challenges effectively. Capacity is developed at multiple levels through training sessions, mentorship programmes and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Capacity and capability outcomes are tracked to assess progress, share best practices, and refine approaches, ensuring impact is maximised.

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) supports ODA eligible countries to manage the marine environment more sustainably, including by strengthening marine science expertise, developing science-based policy and management tools and creating educational resources for coastal communities.

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The [Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature \(OCEAN\)](#) is an up to £60 million global competitive grants programme targeting support to locally led projects to deliver lasting change to the marine environment and coastal communities. These projects have a focus on building capacity and capability within local communities to deliver marine protection and reduce poverty worldwide, by employing innovative new technologies in new contexts and sharing learning between projects in Upper Middle Income Countries with Low and Middle Income Countries/Least Developed Countries. OCEAN provides capacity building support at multiple stages of a project's development, including through a helpdesk, workshops, webinars, online guidance, tailored feedback to applicants and a platform for exchange of ideas and best practice.

The UK supports the World Bank's PROBLUE multi-donor trust fund, which focuses on job creation, inclusive economic growth and improved, more diverse livelihoods that help to build resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts while preserving marine natural resources. PROBLUE delivers through bank-executed disbursal activities that focus on knowledge generation and exchange, strengthening institutional capacity, and piloting policy and analytical tools, alongside support for country-implemented recipient-executed disbursal activities to enable countries to drive their own development and marine agendas.

The Sustainable Blue Economies (SBE) Programme has been working with ODA-eligible Small Island Developing States to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and economic shocks, including through capacity building and the provision of technical assistance, working with key stakeholders to deliver better ocean management, poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and greater use of nature-based solutions.

The UK Blue Carbon Fund (UKBCF) is a single donor trust fund managed by the Inter-America Development Bank. The programme aims to accelerate the development of the blue economy of four countries in Latin America and the Caribbean – Colombia, Jamaica, Panama and Suriname – by catalysing and mobilising strategic public and private investments in the blue carbon sector and closely linked areas such as sustainable fisheries, sustainable aquaculture, coastal zone management, payment for ecosystem services and eco-tourism. It works directly with local communities to support knowledge exchange, build capacity and support development in the sustainable marine management of blue carbon ecosystems. To date, this has been achieved through thematic symposiums, training workshops and community engagement.

Alongside its ODA programmes, the UK leads the [Global Ocean Alliance](#) (GOA), which is supporting its members to implement the KMGBF for the ocean and continuing to advocate for ocean action. As the Ocean Champion of the [High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People](#) (HAC N&P)'s Steering Committee, the UK has been actively assisting the secretariat of the HAC N&P to support members committed to the 30by30 target (Target 3). Together, the HAC N&P and the UK-led GOA have established a Partnership Agreement to coordinate support for members where appropriate.

In Scotland, the RBGE's [Centre for Middle Eastern Plants](#) (CMEP) works with local partners across the region to build capacity in biodiversity knowledge in the face of serious environmental and societal challenges such as migration, poverty, security, habitat loss, changes in traditional land management practices and climate change. For example, CMEP are engaging rural communities in Afghanistan to prevent environmental degradation by reducing fuelwood collection through more efficient, sustainable and healthier fuel interventions.

Wales is also supporting global capacity development to deliver the KMGBF. The Welsh Government has provided grant funding to [Size of Wales](#) since 2013/2014 to support its Mbale Tree Planting Programme in Uganda and to support its work with the Wampis Nation in the Peruvian Amazon. Size of Wales is a Welsh charity that works alongside locally based partner organisations and communities in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia to

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protect rainforests and plant trees to protect at least two million hectares of tropical forests – an area the size of Wales. They also provide education to pupils in Wales about the need to act on deforestation and climate change.

In addition to the above, funding has also been provided to Welsh organisations to deliver climate work with partners in sub-Saharan Africa, via the Wales and Africa small grants scheme. For example, in 2024–2025, the Welsh Government provided a grant to the organisation CAENDON to run a pilot agroforestry project in Ghana. This pilot will be used to help the communities develop and embed agroforestry practices that will not only benefit the environment but will also bring increased revenue to these communities. Successful completion will create the opportunity for scaling over a large area.

Strengthen access to and transfer of technology and promote development of and access to innovation to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries

In January 2025, the UK Government released an AI Opportunities Action Plan to support the UK's role in shaping the AI revolution through exploring how to seize the opportunities of AI fairly and effectively. Following the introduction of the Action Plan, three major technology companies have committed £14 billion of investment to build the AI infrastructure the UK needs to harness the potential of the technology.

The NCEA programme in England is developing and capitalising on ground-breaking scientific innovation and new technologies, such as enhancing the use of remote sensing from satellites and acoustic samplers, using environmental DNA at scale, moving manual measurements to autonomous systems, and using AI to reduce field effort. NCEA is engineering an inventory of environmental data, maps and other outputs from the baseline that will be publicly accessible. This public access will ensure the transfer of knowledge, best practice and techniques to the private sector, central and local governments, and public and third sectors.

The UK's [Biodiversity Challenge Funds](#) (the Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus) support projects that test and evaluate novel approaches that, if proven, could scale to deliver meaningful results for biodiversity conservation and multidimensional poverty reduction. The Darwin Initiative has supported the development of new, transformative and innovative solutions for biodiversity throughout its lifetime and, in 2022, funding structures were refined to create more opportunities for testing pioneering methods. A key focus of projects supported by the IWT Challenge Fund is enhancing access to and transfer of technology to strengthen conservation efforts and combat wildlife crime. These projects often promote capacity development in advanced spatial planning tools, including remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems, to improve decision-making and conservation impact. Other projects provide support for tools to monitor biodiversity such as camera traps, drones, and DNA technology, for example, the development of the [Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool \(SMART\)](#) to reduce commercial wildlife poaching in Tanzanian game reserves.

The UK also supports access to and transfer of technology and the development of and access to innovation in other countries through schemes described above: the SBE Programme, the UKBCF, OCPP and OCEAN.

Supported by the Welsh Government, Size of Wales's project supporting the Wampis Nation in Peru has provided training in solar technology for indigenous technicians and enabled them to construct the first solar-powered boat in Peru.

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Promote scientific and technical cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, fostering joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the framework

The [UK Science and Technology \(S&T\) Framework](#) was released by the Department for Business and Trade in 2025, providing an integrated, systems-level approach to science and technology policy across the whole of government. It contains a set of 10 critical levers that government can use to ensure that S&T is at the centre of delivering core priorities, including the transition to clean energy, understanding the impact of climate change, and securing resilience against natural threats. Two of these levers focus on research and development. In 2024, the UK Government announced a £20.4 billion investment in research and development (R&D), recognising that by harnessing public and private investment into R&D, the UK can foster collaboration with international partners and ensure that innovative technologies and scientific advancements benefit society. Additionally, the UK's association with Horizon Europe enables UK researchers and businesses to participate in the world's largest research cooperation programme.

The Falkland Islands Environment Strategy (2021–2040) includes several strategic objectives and actions of relevance, including to help facilitate science, research and the development or implementation of new technologies, methods or approaches, and to have a strong and responsible culture of innovation across the Falkland Islands. Actions will include increasing capacity within government for the exploration of opportunities for development in science and innovation (e.g., strategic horizon-scanning). Falklands Conservation is a non-governmental organisation that carries out several vital projects that help in the monitoring and understanding of our natural environment. Their work includes developing novel techniques using drones to map breeding seabird colonies and the discovery of new species (such as Falkland Nassauvia: *Nassauvia falklandicus*). The South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute has led a variety of research projects and collaborates with institutions worldwide.

The Cayman Islands Department of Environment continues to build and maintain relationships with several research and conservation institutions, particularly UK-based institutions such as Heriot-Watt University, Exeter University, Bangor University, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, and Marine Conservation International, but also some regional, US and Canadian institutions.

The Gibraltar [25 Year Environment Plan](#) recognises the importance of working across boundaries and building strong partnerships at different levels. Gibraltar is actively seeking to create partnerships with other UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies UKOTs and CDs), as well as with Morocco.

Internationally, the UK is the Ocean Champion of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People (HAC for N&P), which is matching requests for financial and technical assistance with offers of support, developing the 30by30 (Target 3) guidance website along with technical webinars, and continuing to mobilise very significant political support for this work, increasing the number of countries now committed to the target. Activities that have been undertaken with members of the UK-led GOA include hosting technical and political events, signposting to tools and resources, and promoting collaboration and exchange of information.

The UK is part of several established partnerships to foster joint research and innovation for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and to strengthen marine scientific research and monitoring capabilities. These include the UN Ocean Decade, which provides a framework for marine science cooperation for sustainable development, the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance, which promotes

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	pole-to-pole science cooperation in the Atlantic Ocean, and the OCPP, which provides North-South marine science support for ODA-eligible countries. The Global Fund for Coral Reefs has also developed the REEF+ Platform, which heavily supports scientific and technical cooperation within reef nations. REEF+ aims to enhance learning and encourage solution sharing and networking among coral reef finance and management practitioners (North-South and South-South knowledge exchange) through focused webinars and practitioner discussions, networking events, thematic communities of practice and working groups, practitioner training, and annual convenings. The UK has supported the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) to meet its target of establishing 25 National Plastic Action Partnerships by 2025. GPAP brings together governments, businesses and civil society to tackle plastic pollution and increase investment in waste management and the circular economy transition in ODA-eligible countries. This is achieved principally through the creation of public-private collaboration platforms that bring together influential stakeholders across the plastics value chain. The UK supports the World Bank's PROBLUE programme, which promotes scientific and technical cooperation through its numerous bank executed projects, which focus on building knowledge and capacity to inform policies and investments. For example, the AqualInvest Platform, funded by PROBLUE, promotes scientific and technical cooperation to advance sustainable aquaculture worldwide. It connects governments, researchers, and industry to share data, tools, and best practices, developing global guidelines like the Aquabusiness Investment Guide and conducting spatial mapping and pilot projects in countries such as Zambia and Cabo Verde. Through research, innovation in areas such as seaweed farming and blue carbon, and capacity-building activities, the platform strengthens evidence-based decision-making and investment in environmentally sustainable "blue economy" growth. The UK also supports scientific and technical co-operation in other countries through schemes described above: GCBC, OCPP, OCEAN, and the SBE Programme. Scientists from NatureScot have been collaborating with the University of Benghazi, Libya to develop genetic diversity reporting tools that aim to give local communities insight into the variety among species of plants and animals.
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target ☒ On track to achieve target ☐ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved

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3. Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved

Summary of progress towards the target

The UK has made good progress towards this target, particularly in supporting other countries in developing their capacity. Actions have been taken to implement each of its elements including actively working towards ensuring capacity-building and development, operating a variety of funding schemes to assist other countries, and participating in international partnerships.

The UK has plans and assessments to address capacity-building needs for biodiversity. Key domestic initiatives include the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment programme, which is delivering a nationwide survey of England's ecosystems, publishing datasets and tools to inform policy. Scotland is fostering research links to broaden capacity, while Wales has invested £800k in 11 coastal capacity-building projects and launched a Challenge Fund for coastal coordinators to engage and build coastal capacity to address marine ecosystem challenges. Northern Ireland's new "Living map" and Eco-Schools programme will aid decision making and foster environmental awareness in the change-makers of the future. In the UK Overseas Territories, the new UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy prioritises skills development and regulatory frameworks, while the Darwin Plus Local programme has funded over 150 projects and trained more than 2,700 people to strengthen conservation capacity.

Internationally, the UK has worked extensively through international partnerships and Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes to build global capacity for Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) implementation. For example, the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate has awarded £20 million to more than 30 projects, generating 31 case studies and 75 policy-relevant outputs, and the Ocean Country Partnership Programme has invested £58.5 million, delivering 102 datasets and 18 educational resources.

Work has been underway to strengthen access to and transfer of technology and to promote development of and access to innovation. In January 2025, the UK Government released an AI Opportunities Action Plan to support the UK's role in shaping the AI revolution, and three major technology companies have committed £14 billion of investment to build the AI infrastructure the UK needs to harness the potential of the technology. Internationally, the UK strengthened technology transfer through ODA-funded programmes. The UK Blue Carbon Fund developed a regional monitoring, reporting and verification system for mangrove carbon stocks in Latin America and the Caribbean and trained projects in its use, and the UK's Biodiversity Challenge Funds – including the Darwin Initiative and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund – have supported projects introducing advanced technologies such as drones, camera traps, DNA tools and Geographic Information Systems.

The UK has established partnerships to foster joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and to strengthen scientific research and monitoring capabilities. For example, the UK supported the Global Plastic Action Partnership, which brings together governments, businesses and civil society to tackle plastic pollution, with 12 grants awarded to local organisations in the informal waste sector to improve health, safety and livelihoods.

The UK is making strong progress against this target and considers itself to be 'on track', noting that some challenges remain in ensuring lasting impact beyond grant cycles and balancing food security with conservation in partner countries.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 20:

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Strengthen capacity-building and development to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries

In England, in 2025, the Government established Skills England, a crucial part of the government's plan to build and maintain the science and technology skills that England needs: through attracting, developing and retaining expertise across all career stages, developing talent pipelines in schools, universities, and research institutions, and creating systems for lifelong learning and reskilling to keep pace with technological changes. Also in England, the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme is already enhancing decision-making and policy within the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and providing value to a wide range of users outside government. The evidence gathered will help ensure we invest in environmental reforms that achieve maximum benefits for nature and society. The three-year marine NCEA programme was completed in March 2025, delivering evidence, tools and guidance to integrate natural capital approaches into policy and decision making for marine and coastal environments.

Scotland aims to create a more educated, inclusive and innovative Scotland and has already fostered links with research institutions to help further understanding and broaden capacity.

In Wales, the Coast and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru), Challenge Fund, and the Welsh Ocean Literacy Coalition are all supporting capacity building among coastal communities to address marine ecosystem challenges such as climate change adaptation and achieving Target 3. A Coastal Capacity Building Fund ran from 2022 to 2025, funding 11 projects with a value of £800k, to provide capacity, upskilling and local engagement to improve outcomes for the marine environment. The Welsh Ocean Literacy Coalition now consists of over 50 organisations from Wales, the UK and further afield. It has worked closely with the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition to expand global knowledge of ocean literacy and presented a joint event at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2025.

Northern Ireland's new "Living map" and Eco-Schools programme will aid decision making and foster environmental awareness in the change-makers of the future.

Defra published the new UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy in November 2025, which was developed in close consultation with UK Overseas Territory (UKOT) Governments and administrations. The strategy recognises the value of developing skills and talent, with a focus on building capacity and capability in-territory. It also highlights the valuable contribution the UKOTs make to global frameworks and targets and details goals dedicated to supporting their delivery, for example, by strengthening and implementing management and regulatory frameworks.

In 2023, the UK Government launched the grass-roots, high-impact Darwin Plus Local fund, which funds small-scale environmental projects in the UKOTs. Since its launch, more than 150 projects have been funded, with a total value of more than £5.9 million. Between 2022 and 2025, over 230 key local and national UKOT organisations have improved their capability and capacity, and over 2,700 people from key national and local stakeholders have completing structured and relevant training. Since April 2024, the UK Government has also funded the first two projects under the new Darwin Plus Strategic scheme, which is designed to fund larger-scale, longer-term conservation projects in and between the UKOTs.

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The UK Government has continued to work extensively through international partnerships to support global capacity development to deliver the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), including in many developing countries, particularly via the UK Government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes. Further details of these initiatives are provided above.

The [Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate \(GCBC\)](#) has awarded over £20 million to more than 30 projects since May 2023, funding research and development into the intersection of nature, climate and poverty in developing countries and supporting research delivery capacity building. Its third grant competition is in progress and will be awarding research grants until 2028/2029.

The [Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia \(REDAA\)](#) programme is supporting 28 locally led and informed projects in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia, strengthening the capacity of organisations and groups affecting ecosystems.

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP) has so far spent £58.5 million, supporting ODA eligible countries to manage the marine environment more sustainably. Eleven bilateral country partnerships are delivered through UK Government agencies that possess unique expertise in marine science and management. Investment into the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership has supported 12 countries to start developing ocean natural capital accounts for use in ocean resource policy and decision-making. The programme has also supported Friends of Ocean Action to bolster the sustainability of the blue economy by strengthening ocean resilience while scaling access to sustainable aquatic foods.

[Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature \(OCEAN\)](#), which focuses on building capacity and capability within local communities to deliver marine protection and reduce poverty worldwide, funded 21 projects across 13 ODA eligible countries in its first round. OCEAN Round 2 opened in January 2025 with a strong focus on projects that prioritise gender equality, disability and social inclusion.

The Welsh Government has provided grant funding to [Size of Wales](#) since 2013/2014 to support its Mbale Tree Planting Programme (MTPP) in Uganda and to support its work with the Wampis Nation in the Peruvian Amazon. As of June 2025, the MTPP, through the planting of 25 million trees, has sequestered an estimated 1,434,819 tonnes of CO₂ since the project began, and is helping the local community to adapt to climate change, secure their habitats from natural disasters and improve their livelihoods. The project supporting the Wampis Nation has provided training in solar technology for indigenous technicians and enabled them to construct the first solar-powered boat in Peru.

Strengthen access to and transfer of technology and promote development of and access to innovation to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries

In January 2025, the UK Government released an AI Opportunities Action Plan, to support the UK's role in shaping the AI revolution through exploring how to seize the opportunities of AI fairly and effectively. Following the introduction of the Action Plan, three major technology companies have committed £14 billion of investment to build the AI infrastructure the UK needs to harness the potential of the technology.

The UK Blue Carbon Fund (UKBCF) programme has developed a standardised and regional Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification mechanism for the blue carbon captured in mangrove forests in Latin America and the Caribbean. It collects data through remote sensing, including satellite imagery, and on the ground field measurements to help develop region-specific parameters for the estimation of carbon stocks in mangroves. Projects within the UKBCF are being trained in its use to support local monitoring of blue carbon habitats and potential blue carbon pricing initiatives.

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As part of the Sustainable Blue Economies' (SBE) Blue Social Challenge Fund, the UK has worked with Jamaica and Guyana to provide support to capacity building in drone use technology for monitoring and mapping mangrove ecosystems. In Guyana, the indigenous Warrau communities were involved in drone-based monitoring initiatives, which harnessed their rich understanding of local ecosystems and environmental changes. This synergy fostered more accurate data collection and interpretation and provided an important alternative livelihood within these communities. With the provision of training and a drone, the team at the Imbotero Research Centre are developing an early warning system for the Barima Mora Passage (BMP), which is especially important as four endangered turtles nest nearby. The BMP drone unit is now capable of tracking wildlife populations and monitoring deforestation, encroachment, fragmentation and other ecosystem threats.

The Blue Social Challenge Fund has also supported a partnership between the Montego Bay Marine Park Trust and the Mona Geoinformatics Institute to monitor and oversee the Montego Bay Marine Park in Jamaica. The project bolstered monitoring and enforcement efforts for the protected fishing sanctuary using drone technology, which will also be used to monitor and assess the various marine ecosystems within the park. The drones are equipped with advanced sensors to monitor the health and/or coverage of mangroves, seagrasses and coral reefs, providing near real-time data on vital indicators such as biodiversity and habitat integrity that has significant potential to influence research and management. Youth and women were involved using a citizen science approach for shoreline monitoring that detected coastline erosion through strategically positioned "CoastSnap" points – fixed photo points where community members can easily capture and share images of the shoreline, which are then analysed to track coastal changes over time. The project is empowering youth to contribute to environmental management, fostering trust and a deeper appreciation for nature. By integrating technology, education, and community engagement, it aims to strengthen the park's ecological resilience and ensure its long-term sustainability.

In 2025, the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP) delivered a sub-regional Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing training workshop in Sri Lanka to address critical gaps in spatial data expertise. Held over seven days with participation from over 70 delegates across 23 organisations, the workshop emphasised hands-on, face-to-face training using real-world case studies. It focused on using freely available satellite data and open-source tools like QSWAT to assess coastal pollution and link land-based activities to marine water quality. The workshop aimed to build capacity, foster collaboration, and equip participants with tools for sustainable marine management.

Applicants for the Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature (OCEAN) Community and Partnership Grant are encouraged to consider innovative approaches to addressing marine conservation and multi-dimensional poverty. For example, the Hunger Project Senegal is taking an innovative approach to reducing waste in its small-scale fisheries project by using biodegradable octopus pots. OCEAN also ensures projects in Upper Middle Income Countries provide knowledge sharing opportunities on project outcomes, and engagement through learning platforms and seminars with regional bodies for Low and Middle Income Countries/Least Developed Countries at the end of the project cycle. Throughout the first competitive funding round, and project implementation, tailored capacity building support is provided via the OCEAN Helpdesk. OCEAN have established a learning platform that will share key documents and resources and support grantee-grantee learning and collaboration through the Ocean Decade Platform.

[Biodiversity Challenge Fund](#) (Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus) projects frequently work to introduce and support capacity development in the use of spatial planning technology including remote sensing and GIS. For example, a [Darwin Initiative project](#) in Madagascar combined drone technology, AI, and community engagement to monitor biodiversity and deter illegal activities in protected areas. The

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project developed semi-automated systems for detecting tree survival and species composition in reforestation plots and used infrared-equipped drones to survey populations of the Critically Endangered Alaotran Gentle Lemur (*Hapalemur alaotrensis*). These innovative approaches enabled high-resolution monitoring of conservation targets, improved patrol planning, and catalysed national policy development for drone regulation.

Technology transfer through the Biodiversity Challenge Funds has supported the development of tools to monitor biodiversity such as camera traps, drones, and DNA technology. For example, the IWT Challenge Fund has [supported the protection of Critically Endangered Palawan Pangolin populations in the Philippines and the development of the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool \(SMART\)](#) to reduce commercial wildlife poaching in Tanzanian game reserves. The Pangolin project resulted in a 37.5% reduction in pangolin poaching across the two project sites, and in Tanzania, for the first time, a SMART trainer development course was established within a recognised training institution, providing a platform for wider sustained capacity building.

A Darwin Initiative project in India and Pakistan ([Sound of Safety: Testing Pingers for River Dolphins and Fishers](#)) tested an innovative acoustic exclusion device that potentially eliminates river dolphin bycatch while improving local fishers' income and reducing their costs. The project demonstrated encouraging initial results. Dolphin mortality from bycatch fell to zero by the end of the project in pinger trial sites, whilst positive socio-economic benefits were achieved through increased fish catch and a decrease in costs associated with net repairs in both countries. This emerging evidence suggests that pingers may support the long-term coexistence of healthy river dolphin populations and thriving riverine communities in the Ganges and Indus River systems, if deployed as part of holistic river-dolphin friendly practices and policies.

Using innovative approaches, an Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Evidence project ([Building evidence to reduce demand for wildlife products in Peru](#)) generated insights to enable long-term transformational change at Belén Market, Peru, a key hotspot for the illegal trade of poached wildlife. The project created a robust evidence base that informs local and national plans to reduce IWT, builds the capacity of enforcement officials and directly engages with vendors, consumers, and organisations involved in the IWT to reduce consumer demand for IWT products and support market vendors to transition towards legal, sustainable, alternative livelihoods. These outcomes will influence species survival and the wellbeing of the region's poorest citizens.

Promote scientific and technical cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, fostering joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the framework

The work of the GCBC has strengthened research partnership between North and South research organisations. The programme's latest annual review reported that the GCBC has generated 31 new case studies and 75 new policy-relevant evidence products, and 103 research partnerships/collaborations were formed or strengthened. The GCBC provides specialist support to its grantees through a technical assistance facility, which has funded and delivered several successful group sessions. The first, on Access and Benefit Sharing, was run twice in December 2024, with 54 attendees benefitting from the sessions on the legal framework that ensures benefits from biodiversity accrue to the countries of origin. Additionally, a GCBC Programme Day convened 28 project leads and partners to foster shared learning and strengthen understanding of their collective contribution to the GCBC Theory of Change.

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The OCPP has enhanced education, awareness, and the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and data. One hundred and two datasets or monitoring systems have been developed or improved, and 18 educational resources have been produced that support sustainable marine management. For example, in the Solomon Islands, OCPP consulted government officials to identify areas of interest for remote sensing to produce a technical assessment on the Islands' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Honiara Port. The programme has also developed 67 scientific papers, reports, strategies, tools and/or databases that are freely available. For example, the programme conducted national protected areas system management effectiveness evaluations for 14 marine protected areas (MPAs) on behalf of the Belize Fisheries Department, Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management, and MPA co-managers.

The UK has continued to support the [Global Plastic Action Partnership](#) (GPAP), which brings together governments, businesses and civil society to tackle plastic pollution and increase investment in waste management and the circular economy transition in ODA-eligible countries. GPAP has now reached the 25-country milestone, recently welcoming seven new countries – Angola, Bangladesh, Gabon, Guatemala, Kenya, Senegal, and Tanzania, making GPAP the largest global programme tackling plastic pollution. The 25 public-private partnerships created are joining forces to scale systemic plastic waste management and upstream circular plastics innovation, fostering greater sustainability and climate resilience worldwide. In 2024, the UK's contribution continued to support people working in the informal waste sector through 12 grants to local organisations, including technical assistance on health and safety, entrepreneurship and financial literacy and legal rights and recognition.

Through the SBE Programme, Common Seas is currently working with five Small Island Developing State Governments (St Lucia, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and Guinea-Bissau) in three regions under formal agreements to develop national policy responses to plastic pollution. Through this programme to date, baseline data and models have been completed to provide the evidence needed for effective policy frameworks. Inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations have been held involving over 120 people to co-develop policy responses. National Action Plans in St Lucia and Grenada identify strategies for implementation to reduce plastic waste and pollution by 30% and 80% respectively, with consultation on policies underway in Guinea-Bissau, Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

In some parts of partner countries, there are tensions between the need to maximise food production and the imperative to protect nature. UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes support countries to find just, sustainable solutions to these challenges, for example, by building capacity to sustainably intensify agriculture where appropriate, while protecting and restoring wilderness areas that are critical for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Ensuring lasting impact beyond the life of grant funding can also be a challenge. Positive change can be short-lived if underlying drivers of environmental degradation are not addressed. The UK is shifting its ODA approach away from directly paying for nature restoration, instead supporting partnerships that tackle root causes of degradation - like unsustainable charcoal consumption - and strengthen local and international systems that protect and restore nature for the long term.

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4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) ⁵	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁶ 20.b Number of countries that have taken significant action to strengthen capacity-building and development and access to and transfer of technology, and to promote the development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation 20.1 Does your country have plans, policies or instruments for addressing capacity-building and development needs for biodiversity? (c) Partially 20.2 Does your country have measures to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women and girls, children and youth and people with disabilities in capacity-building and development for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity? (Select all that apply) Yes: (a) Women and girls (b) Children and youth (c) People with disabilities	Comments (optional): _____

⁵ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

⁶ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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	20.3 Has your country undertaken a national capacity self-assessment or other processes for assessing the capacity needs for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity? (b) Under development 20.4 Has your country undertaken a national assessment of the capacity-building and development needs of indigenous peoples and local communities, women and girls, children and youth and people with disabilities for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity? (Select all that apply) Yes: (a) Women and girls (b) Children and youth (c) People with disabilities 20.5 Has your country established partnerships to foster joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening? (c) Partially	
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed Darwin Initiative – Strengthening Conservation Organisations in Madagascar In April 2023, the Darwin Initiative supported the Strengthening Conservation Organisations in Madagascar project, led by Maliasili Initiatives. Madagascar is widely recognised as a global biodiversity hotspot, home to an extraordinary range of species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. However, this rich biodiversity is under increasing pressure from habitat loss driven by deforestation, human activity, climate change, and illegal wildlife trade. Local conservation organisations working to protect these ecosystems often face constraints such as limited resources, reduced organisational capacity, socio-political instability, and challenges in sustainability. This Darwin Initiative project was developed to help address these issues by providing targeted support to six Malagasy conservation organisations. Through a focus on strengthening internal systems and governance,	

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the project aimed to build the capability and capacity of these organisations so they can more effectively contribute to biodiversity conservation in Madagascar.

The project worked with a group of Malagasy non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to improve strategic planning, financial management, leadership development, and stakeholder engagement. These areas were identified as priorities through consultation with local partners and were intended to help local organisations operate more effectively and respond to conservation needs in their regions.

The project contributes to Target 20 by supporting the development of institutional capacity to implement biodiversity strategies, and additionally to Target 21 through its focus on knowledge exchange. It also reflects the principles outlined in Section C of the KMGBF, including inclusive governance and collaboration across sectors. Activities were designed to involve a range of stakeholders, including locally based NGOs that work closely with communities, government representatives, and actively promoted participation from underrepresented groups.

Training and mentoring were tailored to each organisation's context, with a focus on practical tools and approaches. For example, partners were supported in developing clearer organisational strategies, improving financial oversight, and building stronger relationships with donors and local authorities. Peer learning and knowledge exchange were also encouraged and enabled through workshops and conferences, helping organisations share experiences and build networks.

The project also supported a whole-of-government approach by facilitating stronger linkages between local NGOs and national biodiversity policy frameworks. It helped organisations align their work with Madagascar's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and encouraged collaboration with government agencies responsible for protected area management and environmental regulation. This alignment ensured that local conservation efforts contribute meaningfully to national and international biodiversity targets.

Technology was used to support monitoring and reporting, with partners introduced to tools that help track progress and manage data. These tools are intended to improve transparency and support adaptive management, allowing organisations to respond more effectively to challenges as they arise.

Feedback suggests that participating organisations have seen improvements in how they plan and manage their work. Some have reported increased confidence in engaging with funders and stakeholders, and others have implemented new systems for financial tracking and team coordination. Forty-two Malagasy NGO staff have reported that they are applying new capabilities after training, and 106 trainers were trained who have since delivered further training. Several Malagasy NGOs have successfully diversified their funding sources, reducing reliance on single donors and increasing financial sustainability. According to Maliasili's monitoring dashboard, the six participating Malagasy organisations reported overall funding increases of 5% to over 20% since 2022.

The project also contributed to broader efforts to strengthen biodiversity governance in Madagascar. By supporting local organisations, it helped build a more stable and capable conservation sector, which is important for long-term biodiversity outcomes. The approach taken was intended to be flexible and replicable, with lessons shared across the wider Darwin Initiative network.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

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National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 21

Ensure that knowledge is available and accessible to guide biodiversity action

The UK will ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity, and to strengthen communication, awareness-raising, education, monitoring, research and knowledge management and, also in this context, traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities should only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation⁷.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK is taking action to ensure the best available biodiversity data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision-makers, practitioners and the public. This includes developing new UK Biodiversity Indicators aligned with Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) goals, re-launching the Clearing-House Mechanism to improve access to CBD-related information, and publishing comprehensive resources such as the UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and national reports. Open-access platforms like the National Biodiversity Network provide high-quality terrestrial data, while marine data are made available through the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network in addition to an array of initiatives to improve data, information and knowledge access at a country level. Further, the UK contributes to global data sharing through initiatives such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, supporting international biodiversity targets.

Key actions to strengthen communication, awareness and education on biodiversity include hosting the twelfth session of the Plenary of IPBES (IPBES-12) in Manchester in February 2026 with an ambitious parallel programme to engage government, academia, business and non-governmental organisations, as well as developing a new GCSE in natural history for England to deepen young people's understanding of the natural world. Initiatives such as England's National Education Nature Park, Scotland's biodiversity indicator publications, Wales' ocean literacy framework 'Y Mor a Ni' (The Sea and Us) and Northern Ireland's Eco-Schools programme promote public engagement and awareness of biodiversity. UK Overseas Territories and

⁷ The United Kingdom does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

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Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) are also active, with education programmes in the Isle of Man and Gibraltar, alongside community and stakeholder engagement and awareness campaigns.

The UK is strengthening biodiversity monitoring. National schemes such as the Breeding Bird Survey, Seabird Monitoring Programme, and UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme provide robust, long-term data, supported by citizen science and non-governmental organisation partnerships. In England, the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment programme delivers ecosystem, soil and freshwater monitoring, and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) is developing a new approach to monitoring and evaluation under the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25). In the Isle of Man, monitoring includes satellite and mobile tracking of fishing vessels, systematic river quality assessments, and bathing water quality checks, with data used to support fisheries and marine management. The UKOTs and CDs employ species and habitat surveys, remote sensing, and innovative tools such as eDNA, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and baited remote underwater video surveys, alongside community initiatives like bioblitz events, and digital apps. Internationally, the UK supports Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) biodiversity finance monitoring and explores innovative technologies through projects like Innovate 4 Nature to improve global biodiversity data and unlock nature finance.

Key actions to strengthen research and knowledge management include the UK Science and Technology Framework, which sets out a systems-level approach to embed science and technology across government policy, including through research and development (R&D). Defra has funded £25 million of research in England to improve tree resilience and maximise biodiversity benefits in its tree planting programme, while Wales' Sharks Inspiring Action and Research with Communities project advances marine species research through community collaboration. Internationally, the UK funds over £20 million of research via the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC) and supports locally led research projects through the Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) programme. Defra has also commissioned global modelling research to inform pathways for achieving KMGBF targets.

The UK is committed in its international engagements to promoting the effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), ensuring that their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices are accessed only with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation.

Regarding the main actions under Target 21:

Ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge, are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity

Across the UK, efforts are underway to collect new information and make it available for use by decision-makers and others. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) has worked alongside the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), the Devolved Governments and country nature conservation bodies to review the KMGBF goals, targets and headline indicators against the current suite of [UK Biodiversity Indicators \(UKBIs\)](#), country-level indicators, and others, to propose a new set of UKBIs to report progress towards the KMGBF goals and targets. These new UKBIs will contain the latest assessments of the UK's KMGBF headline indicators, which have been used to assess progress towards the KMGBF targets throughout this report and will also be used in the UK's 8th CBD National Report.

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The UK has relaunched its [Clearing-House Mechanism](#) on the Bioland platform, strengthening the Clearing-House Mechanism network and improving access to information related to UK implementation of the CBD. In May 2024, JNCC published up-to-date information on how the UK, the UK Devolved Governments and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) implement the CBD, and details on UK financial support for CBD activities both nationally and internationally, as well as hosting the UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), UK Biodiversity Indicators (UKBIs) and the UK's 6th National Report.

The [National Biodiversity Network \(NBN\)](#) was created in 1997 to exchange biodiversity information and to make available high resolution and high-quality data to provide the evidence base for all environmental decision-making in the UK. NBN is a collaborative partnership between UK wildlife conservation organisations, government, country agencies, environmental agencies, local environmental record centres and many voluntary groups. The [NBN Atlas](#), created in 2017, is an online tool that provides a platform to engage, educate and inform people about the natural world. It is open access, except in relation to sensitive species, which are restricted. There are also separate NBN Atlases for [Scotland](#), [Wales](#), [Isle of Man](#) and [Northern Ireland](#). Wider projects of the NBN are aiming to develop the use of data and enhance the awareness and capabilities of the main potential suppliers of data, in particular Local Environmental Records Centres and voluntary societies.

Marine biodiversity data in the UK is available via the [Marine Environmental Data and Information Network \(MEDIN\)](#). MEDIN is a partnership of UK organisations committed to improving access to and stewardship of UK marine data. MEDIN is open to anyone with an interest in UK marine data and information. Fifteen sponsors and 50 partners, from both the public and private sectors, support MEDIN's vision to make UK marine data findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme is delivering a nationwide survey of England's land, freshwater assets and coast, publishing new datasets and a baseline assessment. These datasets and products are being made available on publicly accessible government platforms, online web-visualisation services and delivery partner websites, to ensure ease of access for multiple user needs. The NCEA '[Find Natural Capital Data](#)' public search service launched in summer 2025 provides a single digital location to search for NCEA data alongside over 8,000 natural capital relevant datasets from various sources. The three-year marine NCEA programme, which was completed in March 2025, delivered evidence, tools and guidance to integrate natural capital approaches into policy and decision making for marine and coastal environments. Programme data are discoverable through MEDIN and project reports can be found on [Defra Science Search](#) by entering "ME45" in the search function. Further, Defra has initiated a project that will make detailed soils data for England and Wales available under an open license. This will dramatically improve the visibility and accessibility of this nationally strategic data and allow its use in research, analysis and decision-making concerning land use planning, net zero, flood risk mapping, food and water security, and numerous other applications.

In Scotland, the Scottish Government is working with partners such as the NBN to ensure that [data is available](#) and well-managed for a range of purposes. [Species at Risk](#) provides a central site for information on Scotland's most vulnerable species. The database contains all species in Scotland that have a formally endorsed [IUCN GB Red List assessment](#), or are of conservation concern ([Birds of Conservation Concern](#)). NatureScot developed the database in partnership with Buglife, Plantlife, RSPB Scotland, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Scottish Environment Link, The Mammal Society, Bat Conservation Trust, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Additionally, NatureScot publishes a range of indicators on ecosystems, species, genetic and socioeconomics. A

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partnership of non-governmental organisations, research institutes and statutory nature conservation bodies also produce the [State of Nature Scotland report](#), which provides an agreed evidence base that is used by partners and has been cited in the Scottish Parliament.

In Wales, legislation is being used to improve data accessibility, including the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023, which enables data to be collected from the agricultural sector. There is a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Wales, and to ensure marine spatial data are widely available through the marine planning data portal. Wales has committed to maintaining and improving the spatial evidence base for the distribution and state of biodiversity in Wales. The Welsh Government is developing a stronger understanding of the economic contribution of marine sectors, the benefits from marine ecosystem goods and services and the value of the marine environment to the Welsh economy and society. Additionally, Natural Resources Wales regularly publishes the State of Natural Resources Report. This sets out their assessment of the extent to which sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved; the main trends and factors that are affecting, and are likely to affect, the state of natural resources; and relevant information gaps.

Northern Ireland aims to publish its first “Living map” detailing habitat/land cover to inform decisions on 30by30 (Target 3) and other initiatives. Greater collaboration between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on sharing species and habitat data is being taken forward within the respective data recording centres.

In the Isle of Man, the availability of publicly-accessible mapping data has increased significantly since 2020 via the development of government mapping apps, in particular the ‘Island Environment app’ and ‘Nature Recovery Network’, and the [all-island habitat map](#) is used for improving decision-making processes for land use and management. The [UNESCO Biosphere IOM website](#) hosts information on Biodiversity Action Plans and habitat management, details of protected sites and specific species, and raises awareness about human-wildlife conflict issues, such as conflict with herring gull.

The Falkland Islands makes available scientific data through the [Falkland Islands data portal](#) to support decision makers. In Gibraltar, the Department of the Environment publishes [annual reports](#) on the government website, which include data on air and water quality, habitats and species, as well as progress on renewable energy and waste management. The Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society ([GONHS](#)) publish a wealth of information on their website on the flora and fauna of Gibraltar. [The Nautilus Project](#) provides similar levels of information on the marine environment and has also developed an app called Nemo Live, which encourages citizens to share information on species sightings. In the Cayman Islands, principles of data accessibility are embodied within the [National Conservation Act 2013](#).

The UK's involvement in global biodiversity data initiatives like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) enhances data sharing and helps international biodiversity targets to be met across the territories and internationally.

Strengthen communication, awareness-raising, and education

The UK hosted the twelfth session of the Plenary of IPBES (IPBES-12) in Manchester in February 2026, focusing on the Business and Biodiversity Assessment. The Plenary brought together academia, government and businesses in a partnership to protect global biodiversity. The UK Government has developed and is continuing to implement an ambitious parallel programme, collaborating with institutions such as JNCC, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the University of Oxford and UK Research & Innovation (UKRI). The UK Government is also partnering with businesses from around the world that

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recognise that their future depends on thriving biodiversity and that are working towards investments and supply chains that protect and actively restore nature. The parallel programme is a series of events bringing together government, academia, the private sector and non-governmental organisations to discuss the issues facing biodiversity and how stakeholders can work together to mitigate the risks to nature, which also pose risks to the economy. Volunteers from a range of disciplines have supported IPBES-12, including students from local universities, who have gained exposure to a large international nature event and an opportunity for engagement with United Nations (UN) and UK Government officials. Additionally, a business roundtable involving large banks and insurance firms aimed to improve their understanding of how risks to nature are important to their businesses and provided them with an opportunity to flag difficulties they have experienced in accessing the necessary biodiversity expertise to make business decisions. Following IPBES-12, a further event is planned to focus on operationalising the Business and Biodiversity report. Defra, JNCC, and UKRI have been communicating IPBES-12 and the parallel programme through formal channels and have been directly target local stakeholders in Manchester, so that awareness of IPBES-12 and why it matters is raised amongst the public locally and nationally. The UK Government is in the very early stages of thinking about how we can use the raised awareness generated by IPBES-12 to continue a legacy, by ensuring continued communication between government, academia and business to effectively implement the Business and Biodiversity report findings in the UK.

Efforts are being made to educate children and other age groups on the importance of biodiversity. For example, in England, the Government is moving ahead with a new General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in natural history. A GCSE is a subject-based academic qualification taken by students typically aged 14 to 16 and predominantly in England and Wales. The new GCSE will enable more young people to understand and respect the natural world and contribute to the protection and conservation of the environment locally, nationally and internationally. The Government plans to finalise and consult on proposed subject content for the new GCSE after autumn 2025.

In England, the [National Education Nature Park](#) was launched in 2023. It encourages young people to engage with local biodiversity by bringing together people from different educational settings into a vast virtual nature park. A £15 million grant allows young people in areas of disadvantage and nature depletion to participate. The initiative provides educational opportunities to take part in community science, biodiversity monitoring, mapping, and data analysis – enabling young people to get involved in practical action to improve the biodiversity of their school grounds while developing a greater connection to nature and learning about its role in climate change.

In Scotland, data are used to raise awareness of biodiversity, such as through regular publication of biodiversity indicators.

Wales has published a national [ocean literacy framework](#), 'Y Mor a Ni' (The Sea and Us), to connect people to the sea, including through building knowledge, skills, networks and capacity, to ensure people can act to protect and enhance marine ecosystems. The Welsh Ocean Literacy Coalition is growing fast, supporting joint and national action, such as Festivals of the Sea, to amplify messages and accelerate behaviour change to safeguard and protect marine species and habitats.

In Northern Ireland, the Eco-Schools programme provides the opportunity to foster environmental awareness and action and embed these as part of the ethos of school life, while linking to many curriculum subjects. Eco-Schools aims to educate and empower young people to make positive decisions and become change makers for an environmentally sustainable world.

The Isle of Man uses a variety of approaches for increasing awareness of biodiversity, from providing leaflets at the Manx Marine Nature Reserve, which publicise the marine life within, to providing a farmland biodiversity calendar free of charge to all farmers in 2023. The Isle of Man has committed to

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actively involving society in understanding, appreciating and safeguarding biodiversity by 2025 in its Biodiversity Strategy. Stakeholders are engaged on biodiversity issues via a variety of fora including the [Manx Nature Conservation Forum](#), the Biodiversity Action Plan Leaders' Group, the [Manx Biological Recording Partnership](#), the [Recreational Fisheries Management Board](#), the [Isle of Man Scallop Management Board](#), the [UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder Partnership Group](#) and the [UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Board](#). The Manx Wildlife Trust has dedicated resource to delivering education sessions to primary and secondary school students and adults, and has set up the [Action for Wildlife](#) webpage highlighting high priority wildlife conservation projects that people can engage with.

The [Alameda Kusuma Education Zone](#) was opened at the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens in 2024. Designed as a dedicated space for environmental education, it offers children the chance to learn about nature, wildlife, horticulture and environmental science whilst also encouraging them to care for the natural world. This zone complements the activities offered at [Tovey Cottage](#) as well as the education sessions and marine introduction programmes offered by the Nautilus Project.

Strengthen monitoring

The UK has made significant efforts to establish or strengthen existing national monitoring schemes in support of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). JNCC and the four countries of the UK work together on several wildlife surveillance schemes, often run in partnership with non-governmental organisations, the nature conservation community and volunteer recorders. Examples include the [Breeding Bird Survey](#), the [Seabird Monitoring Programme](#), the [National Bat Monitoring Programme](#), the [UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme](#) and the [National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#). The data from the schemes is used in multiple ways, including in the UKBIs, official statistics and reporting under the Habitats Regulations 2017 in each country. Many of the UK's citizen science datasets are robustly designed, long standing and undertaken by experts. For example, the British Trust for Ornithology, JNCC and RSPB Breeding Bird Survey, which is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common and widespread breeding birds, is supported by nearly 3,000 volunteers who help monitor the population changes each spring.

In England, sensors in rivers will be used for real-time monitoring, as part of the first England-wide network focused on understanding the impact of extreme weather, gathering critical data to pinpoint where incidents are likely to occur and planning to limit their impact. The NCEA is undertaking the UK's largest ever field survey – the England Ecosystem Survey – which will provide soil, vegetation and landscape data that will enable national-scale assessments of land assets and their ability to provide key ecosystem services. The survey will be the primary source of data used for the Government's Environmental Indicator Framework Indicator on Healthy Soils. Similarly, data collected through the NCEA England freshwater monitoring networks will inform various water quality and condition metrics and indicators. The NCEA programme will complete a baseline assessment in 2028, subject to spending reviews, with interim datasets available beforehand.

As part of the review of England's Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (EIP25), Defra is developing a new approach to monitoring and evaluation that uses theories of change and systems thinking to better coordinate evidence and to better understand where action is needed. Defra is developing a systematic approach to understanding and monitoring contributions across EIP25 goals and targets. This will be complemented by specific policy and EIP25-wide evaluations to understand the process and impact of our activities better. Defra will share what has been learned from monitoring and evaluation evidence in the annual progress report, demonstrating how this is shaping the ongoing development of the EIP25. Our updated approach will enable more comprehensive reporting on Defra's progress towards environmental goals.

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Data from the monitoring and evaluation of specific projects can also provide an indication of progress. In England, Natural England published an annual report in 2024 summarising early findings from the Agri-Environment Scheme Monitoring and Evaluation Programme. This showed that eco-friendly farming practices led to a 25% increase in breeding bird populations and benefited other wildlife such as butterflies and bees.

In the Isle of Man, a range of approaches are used to provide necessary monitoring data, including mandatory monitoring requirements for the commercial fishing industry to use satellite Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) monitoring of all scallop vessels in Manx waters, and iVMS (mobile technology-based system) for most Manx static gear vessels. Systematic [river quality monitoring](#) of biological and chemical parameters and heavy metals is undertaken at specific monitoring sites, and bathing water quality is monitored and results posted on the government website. This data is used extensively in fisheries and marine management applications.

The Isle of Man Government is supporting surveys, including multi-year species surveys (including annual scallop and Queen Scallop), and industry surveys. There have been various other surveys of fishery species, biodiversity, and habitat, including marine nature reserves and pollack (2024). Juvenile migratory fish species are monitored at approximately 20 sites island wide. Contracts with Manx Wildlife Trust and Manx Whale and Dolphin Watch establish survey data provision for small shark tagging, seal population surveys, cetacean monitoring, and a marine mammal stranding programme.

Advances in 'big data' and citizen science are transforming conservation efforts within the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs). Citizen science platforms such as iNaturalist, iRecord, and FIT Count are expanding biodiversity records, with significant growth in observations from UKOTs. Bioblitz events, as carried out in many UKOTs (e.g. Cayman Islands and Falkland Islands) further encourage community participation in biodiversity recording. These grassroots efforts complement professional surveys, ensuring a balance of technical expertise and broad data coverage.

Projects such as Seabird Watch use remote cameras and public participation to monitor seabird populations in remote UKOT locations, while platforms like Zooniverse enable volunteers to analyse thousands of wildlife images efficiently. Similarly, baited remote underwater video surveys, supported by initiatives like the Blue Belt programme, are widely used to monitor marine life across UKOTs. The Blue Iguana Gardens programme in the Cayman Islands mobilises local community support for monitoring and protecting the Critically Endangered Blue Iguana. Digital tools like the E-guana app enhance data collection by engaging the public in reporting iguana sightings and threats.

Emerging technologies like AI and environmental DNA (eDNA) offer promising new tools for conservation monitoring and invasive species detection in UKOTs. For example, eDNA methods are being explored in Gibraltar for early detection of invasive marine species such as lionfish.

Internationally, the UK is supporting the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to monitor and report on biodiversity-related development finance, in line with commitments in the COP26 DAC Declaration, by submitting data on its biodiversity-related development finance to the OECD DAC annually in line with its reporting requirements.

In the context of supporting the KMGBF monitoring framework, Defra is exploring how to catalyse new ways of monitoring ecosystems and biodiversity in developing countries, and the role that improved data might have in unlocking nature finance by improving investor confidence. The Innovate 4 Nature project will assess the demand for innovative monitoring technology, skills and infrastructure by developing use cases in one or more lower- or middle-income countries. It will identify potential users and evaluate how improved biodiversity data and insight could improve livelihoods, reduce poverty, attract investment, and improve ecosystem protection or restoration. For specific use cases, the programme will explore which technologies

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or methods would be applicable, how they could be packaged, what the specific barriers to uptake are and how they may be overcome, facilitating more accessible, affordable and effective biodiversity monitoring.

Strengthen research and knowledge management

The [UK Science and Technology \(S&T\) Framework](#) was released by the Department for Business and Trade in 2025, providing an integrated, systems-level approach to science and technology policy across the whole of government. It contains a set of 10 critical levers that government can use to ensure that S&T is at the centre of delivering core priorities, including the transition to clean energy, understanding the impact of climate change, and securing resilience against natural threats. Two of these levers are focused on research and development. In line with its commitments in the Framework, the UK Government will pursue opportunities to improve researcher data access, learning from our £5 million pilot programme with UKRI, and launch a National Data Library to provide simple, secure and ethical access to key public data assets. In autumn 2024, the UK Government announced a £20.4 billion investment in research and development (R&D).

In England, Defra has funded over £25 million of research and development work since 2022 under its tree planting programme. Much of this work focusses on how to maximise the resilience of trees, woodlands and forests in the face of future threats, as well as how to maximise the value of woodland creation and management to biodiversity.

In Wales, the [Sharks Inspiring Action and Research with Communities](#) project, supported by the [Nature Networks Programme](#), conducts crucial conservation research in Carmarthen Bay and Tremadog Bay, focusing on sharks, skates, and rays. The project, which spans across Wales, collaborates with fishers, communities, researchers, and citizen scientists to fill data gaps for six key species.

The UK is also supporting efforts internationally. The [Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate](#) (GCBC), Defra's Official Development Assistance (ODA) R&D programme, has launched three grant competitions. The programme has awarded over £20 million to more than 30 projects, funding R&D into the intersection of nature, climate and poverty in developing countries. The science funded through the GCBC focuses on innovative and scalable solutions to the triple challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change and poverty. Research outputs can be used to support the development of local and national policy, business plans and investments.

Recognising the need for globally modelled pathways for achieving the targets of the KMGBF, Defra commissioned a major research project (the Modelling and Scenarios research project) that aims to build on the best available scientific models and align with the KMGBF to provide clear pathways and insight into what changes are required internationally to achieve the framework. The outputs of this project will support policymakers' understanding of progress towards the 2030 targets and help to guide the next decade's framework in support of achieving the 2050 goals. Institutions that are contributing to this work include the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, the Natural History Museum and the University of Edinburgh.

The UK is also supporting other countries to meet their KMGBF commitments by strengthening research. For example, the [Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia \(REDAA\) programme](#) is supporting research and action for nature restoration and climate resilience across 28 locally led, interdisciplinary projects in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. REDAA initiatives are supporting the generation of evidence,

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	including local and traditional knowledge, and building local research capability, research networks, and systems that make data useful locally or install locally generated evidence in national or regional information systems. Traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities should only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation The UK does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as defined in CBD. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the KMGBF, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.	
2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The four countries of the UK support knowledge generation, dissemination, education and communication through knowledge exchange, research, monitoring, and innovation, and regularly publish environmental data and indicators. Over recent decades, biodiversity records have been accumulating increasingly rapidly. The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) held 247.9 million biological records by September 2023, and the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network offers over 17,000 datasets from 600 organisations. The number of records in the NBN Atlas accessed by users increased by 50% between 2019 and 2024, with over a billion records downloaded in 2024 – an increase from 688 million records in 2019. In England, the Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment programme is enabling evidence-based decision-making and delivering open-access habitat maps, soils data and other products to inform Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Wales will publish the third State of Natural Resources Report in December 2025 to support the sustainable management of natural resources, while the Isle of Man and Falkland Islands have expanded public access to mapping and environmental data. Internationally, the UK shares biodiversity finance data with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee and publishes evidence from projects funded by the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate, including tools and modelling to support countries to transition their economies to be more nature positive.	

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Progress is also being made towards strengthened communication, awareness-raising, and education. While several actions are in progress or planned across the four countries of the UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs), evidence of progress is limited to the National Education Nature Park in England, which has engaged 7,000 education settings, mapping 12 million square metres of habitat, and the Species of Conservation Concern reports in the Isle of Man.

There is significant investment in strengthening monitoring across the UK, but it is unclear when this element of Target 21 will be fully achieved. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) have committed £12 million (2024–27) under the Innovation in Environmental Monitoring programme to develop sensor and systems-based approaches, and Defra and Innovate UK have invested £1.3 million (2024–2025) to develop marine monitoring systems.

Work is being undertaken to strengthen research and knowledge management through various initiatives such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) Modelling and Scenarios research project, which is developing approaches to analyse policies needed to achieve Goals A and B. However, it is too early to assess the wider implications of the project.

The UK does not have indigenous peoples or local communities as defined under the CBD but remains committed internationally to ensuring their effective participation and that traditional knowledge is accessed only with free, prior and informed consent. Defra's review of the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund highlighted the need for participatory, locally led approaches and has updated guidance to require co-design, two-way knowledge exchange, and consideration of poverty and marginalisation.

Despite these advances, challenges persist, including specialist staff shortages, a lack of fine-scale data, and gaps in monitoring frameworks. Addressing these issues is critical to achieving equitable governance and informed biodiversity policy.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 21:

Ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge, are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity

The number of records in the NBN Atlas accessed by users increased by 50% between 2019 and 2024, from 688 million records in 2019 to over a billion records downloaded in 2024 (Headline Indicator 21.1). This demonstrates a short-term improving trend with progress being made towards improved accessibility and use of biodiversity data. Records with a finer resolution provide more accurate information on where species were observed and support more detailed assessments, for example, in planning casework. Over time, the resolution of records has improved.

The Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN) data discovery portal allows users to access over 17,000 datasets from over 600 UK organisations, held at the Data Archive Centres and at other public and private sector bodies.

In England, the Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) is supporting evidence-based policy-making within Defra and providing value to a wide range of users outside government. Its outputs include data for Defra's Environmental Indicator Framework Indicator on Healthy Soils, as well as a Trees outside Woodland map and the England peat map. The NCEA is also providing biodiversity data to inform Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) through Living England – a satellite-derived national habitat map that provides open access, up-to date information on diverse habitats, including via a LNRS Data Viewer. This assists planners, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and the public to identify locations for

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habitat creation or restoration. These products are all publicly accessible under an Open Government Licence, supporting their use by the private sector, central and local governments, and the third sector to ecosystem condition and put nature at the heart of decision-making.

An example of a broader assessment and evidence base made available for use by a range of stakeholders is Wales' periodic State of Natural Resources Report, which provides details about the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales. The [State of Natural Resources Report 2025](#) was published in December 2025, providing an update on progress since the [State of Natural Resources Report 2020](#).

The Isle of Man has committed that by 2025, everyone will have access to reliable, up-to-date and comprehensive biodiversity data via a central and accessible point (underpinned by the NBN Atlas Isle of Man) to support government policies and the decisions of businesses and private land and sea users. Since 2020, the availability of publicly accessible mapping data in the Isle of Man has increased significantly via the development of [government mapping apps](#), in particular the Island Environment app and Nature Recovery Network app.

Similarly, the [Falkland Islands data portal](#) contains publicly available datasets on biota and the environment, including environmental impacts from development, that help to inform research and decisions on biodiversity actions.

The UK's international provision of data to the OECD Development Assistance Committee has informed reports on biodiversity-related development finance, including [Biodiversity and Development Finance 2015–22](#) (2024). The UK drew on the latest OECD data to publish the first annual [Biodiversity Finance Trends Dashboard](#) at COP28 in 2023, which has tracked collective progress against the finance targets of the KMGBF.

Quarterly and annual reports submitted by grantees to the [Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate](#) (GCBC) provide opportunities to capture lessons learned from funded projects. These insights are synthesized annually and published on the GCBC website as an evidence report, enabling open access to information on approaches to sustainable biodiversity management that support climate and poverty outcomes. For example, the GCBC-funded Nature Transition Support Programme (NTSP) has developed a toolkit to support countries to transition their economies towards nature-positive pathways and has undertaken data modelling to develop roadmaps that decouple growth from environmental degradation. In Colombia, NTSP findings featured in the Ministry of Finance mid-term fiscal strategy. In Ecuador, NTSP analysis identified that 34% of the country's GDP depends on nature, a finding now informing government policymaking, including the development of Ecuador's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and Ecuador's Sustainable Finance Roundtable.

Strengthen communication, awareness-raising, and education

In England, the [National Education Nature Park](#) was launched in October 2023. As part of the project, children and young people, from early years to further education, have been using digital tools to identify, map, monitor and report on changes in biodiversity at their education sites. As of 25 July 2025, over 7,000 education settings were registered and more than 12 million square meters of habitat on school sites had been mapped. This data will provide insights into local ecosystems and develop virtual pictures of UK biodiversity, as well as helping participants develop their digital mapping skills.

In the Isle of Man, Species of Conservation Concern reports have been produced to guide decision makers and raise awareness with the public (see Target 14).

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Strengthen monitoring

In the UK, Defra and UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) have invested £12 million in new monitoring technologies through the Innovation in Environmental Monitoring programme. This programme, running from 2024 to 2027, is designed to fund projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to environmental monitoring at a sensor or systems-based level.

In 2024 and 2025, Defra and Innovate UK invested £1.3 million into small and medium-sized enterprises to develop complete end-to-end marine monitoring systems. This was part of a £2.1 million competition to improve the way we monitor marine biodiversity in UK waters.

Strengthen research and knowledge management

The UK Government is continuing with the delivery of the AI Research Resource, a £300 million programme that will provide access to cutting edge computational resources in Bristol and Cambridge.

The KMGBF Modelling and Scenarios research project has almost completed a review of existing models and scenarios relevant to the goals and targets of the KMGBF, with a focus on Goals A and B. Results were informed by extensive literature searches and experts from across disciplines, countries and realms. The project has also developed a modelling approach based on the IPBES Nature Futures Framework and the approach is being used to support an analysis of policies and actions needed to achieve the KMGBF targets contributing to Goals A and B. The outputs from this work link directly to the needs of the IPBES second global assessment and IPBES monitoring assessment and will be used as key evidence sources. A communication strategy has been developed to ensure the results are communicated to the global biodiversity and academic communities, including CBD.

In the Isle of Man, research on the decline of the yellowhammer was conducted in 2022, highlighting the need for action and leading to the establishment of the [Farmland Bird Recovery Project](#).

Traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities should only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation

The UK does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under CBD. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the KMGBF, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

For example, as part of its commitment to inclusive conservation and poverty reduction, Defra reviewed the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, assessing how projects address poverty and involve Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). A key finding was the need to move from top-down design to participatory, locally led approaches that empower IPLCs. The review has led to changes in fund guidance, promoting co-design and two-way knowledge exchange. Applicants are now required to carefully consider and articulate how their interventions may affect poverty or

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marginalisation. The reports also advocate for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion frameworks that reflect intersectional identities, aligning with Defra's commitments under the KMGBF.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Several challenges have been identified across different geographic and administrative areas. These include shortages of specialist staff to undertake landscape survey work, alongside associated operational and logistical difficulties; challenges in raising awareness and driving participation across the education sector; opposition to the aims of this target and to biodiversity conservation more broadly; difficulties in securing accurate evidence to track progress; and limited capacity within the public and private sectors to access and use the best available data, information, and knowledge.

In England, raising awareness about biodiversity and driving participation across the education sector is difficult due to the many competing priorities. The delivery the [National Education Nature Park](#) is providing case studies to demonstrate impact and the benefits of participation.

In Wales, [evidence gaps](#) for the assessment of the sustainable management of natural resources makes tracking progress challenging. The [Wales Biodiversity Partnership](#) brings together key players from the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote and monitor biodiversity and ecosystem action in Wales.

In the Cayman Islands, political buy-in remains a key challenge.

In the Falkland Islands, ensuring accessibility to the best available data, information, and knowledge is a major challenge within both the public and private sectors. Ensuring that datasets are monitored, uploaded, and updated is not always feasible. The Falkland Islands Government has a Memorandum of Understanding and contract with the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute to ensure the maintenance and operation of the data portal and that the best-available data remain accessible.

In Gibraltar, a lack of time and resources to dedicate to the creation of resource and knowledge hubs is the main challenge.

Internationally, OECD's methodologies are not currently used consistently, potentially undervaluing mainstreaming of biodiversity finance. As part of the UK's engagement with OECD, the UK is working to improve reporting standards for biodiversity finance to ensure these are accurately capturing nature spend. Further, the Global Centre Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC) will continue to produce evidence papers and to publish these on open access websites. Whilst many GCBC-funded research projects are still at an early stage of implementation, as the projects mature and reach their conclusions, there will be more evidence available to share.

Whilst robust scientific evidence is fundamental, the timescales required to generate such outcomes are often long due to the complexity of environmental impacts. This challenge could potentially be overcome by incorporating adaptive management into policy implementation. The use of experiential evidence, including practitioner insights and data collected through relevant apps, should also be encouraged to monitor responses to measures.

Target 21

4. Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)⁸

Headline Indicator 21.1 Indicator on biodiversity information for monitoring the global biodiversity framework (UK Biodiversity Indicator - Biodiversity information for conservation decision making)

Table 1: Assessment of change for biodiversity information for conservation decision making.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

Measure	Assessment	Time period	Result
Number of records downloaded	Short term	2019 to 2024	Improving
Number of download events	Short term	2019 to 2024	Improving
Number of NBN Atlas users	Short term	2019 to 2024	Improving

☒ Use national data set

☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided)

☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____

☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____

Comments:

This indicator presents trends in the use of biodiversity records, download events, and total number of users. Data for this indicator is provided by the [National Biodiversity Network \(NBN\) Atlas](#).

Data for this indicator can be found in the [published datafile](#).

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

Table 1: Long- and short-term assessments are based on a 3% rule of thumb (see [Assessing Indicators](#)).

The full data series for the revised indicator starts in April 2017 and finishes in March 2025. Assessments are based on the last five years which have data for all four quarters.

Assessments are based on calculating the number of records downloaded, download events, and number of users in a start year, and comparing that with the end year.

⁸ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

Target 21

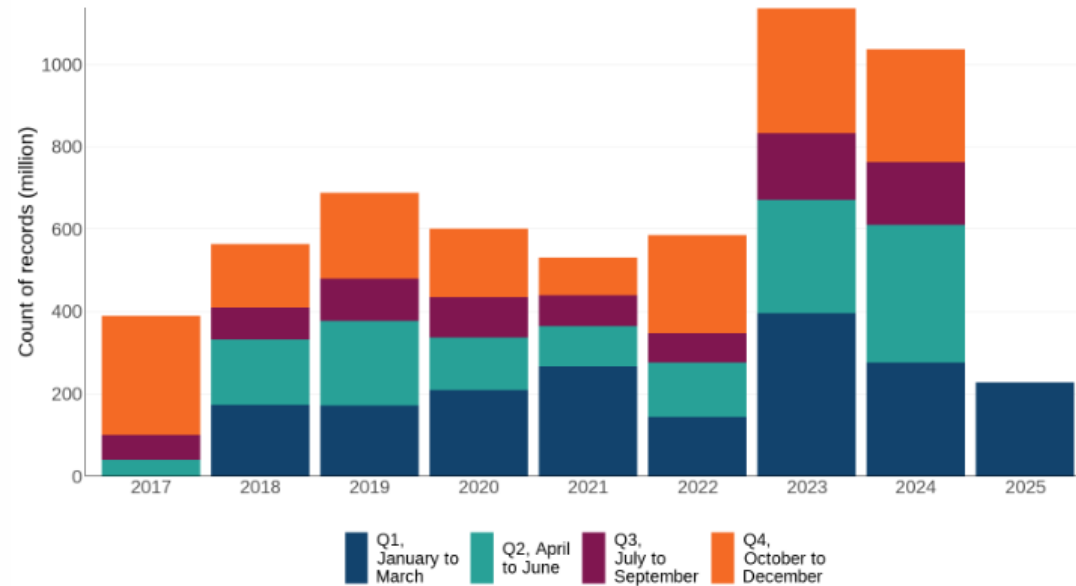


Figure 1: Number of records downloaded per year, 2017 to 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

Figure 1:

The data series starts in April 2017. Data from the first quarter of 2017 is not available for reporting.

Individual records may be downloaded on multiple occasions, and therefore the number of records downloaded per quarter does not represent unique records.

Figure 2:

The data series starts in April 2017. Data from the first quarter of 2017 is not available for reporting.

The high number of records downloaded in 2024 may be due to new biodiversity legislation enacted at this time; however, this cannot be verified.

Figure 3:

The data series starts in April 2017. Data from the first quarter of 2017 is not available for reporting.

Individual users may download records on more than one occasion, so the users downloading records may be duplicated.

Figure 4:

The step change observed in both time series in 2017 is due to the move from the NBN Gateway to the NBN Atlas and the addition of 10 large datasets by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

The number of records dropped in May 2018 as a result of the system behind the NBN Atlas not saving the date (timestamp field) of when the records were first created. In addition to this,

Target 21

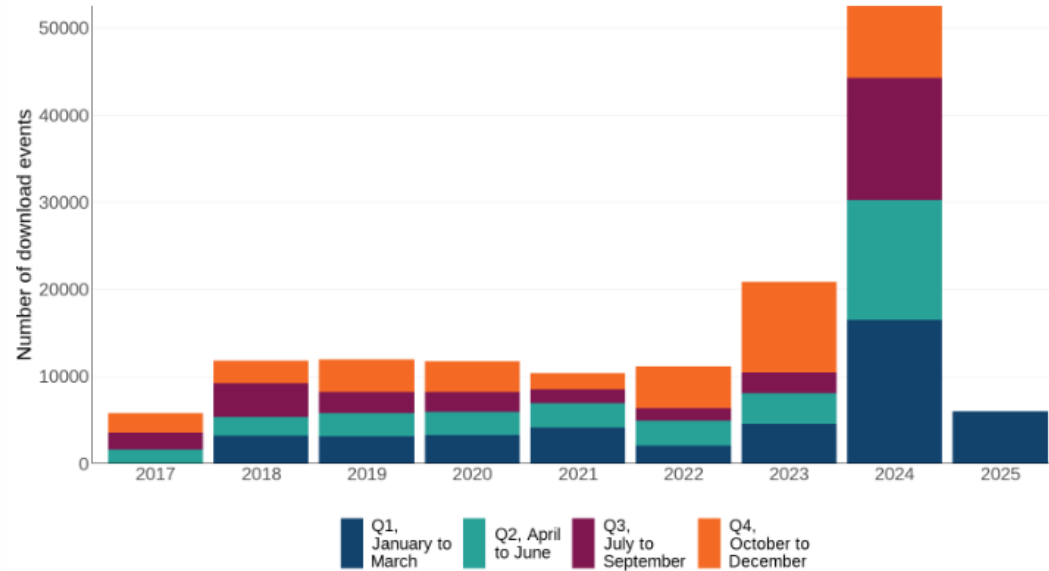


Figure 2: Number of download events per year, 2017 to 2025

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

there were technical challenges in the transfer of data from the Gateway to the NBN Atlas, where the NBN needed to delete records before they were updated. Both of these problems have now been resolved.

The number of records dropped in September 2020 as a result of the BTO updating their datasets and aggregating many records.

Data is available to September 2023 – this figure has not been updated for this version of this indicator.

Figure 5:

Data for the period 2020 to 2025 is included as a partial decade in this figure.

Dates in this figure refer to the date of the record, not when the record was added to the NBN.

The majority of records are dated between 2000 and 2025.

This figure focuses on the date of the observation record, not the date the information was added to the NBN and thus shows the age of the records in the NBN Atlas are.

Figure 6:

This data is aggregated since April 2017 to show the availability of data at different spatial scales.

Figure 7:

Users need to register with the NBN Atlas if they wish to download data.

Target 21

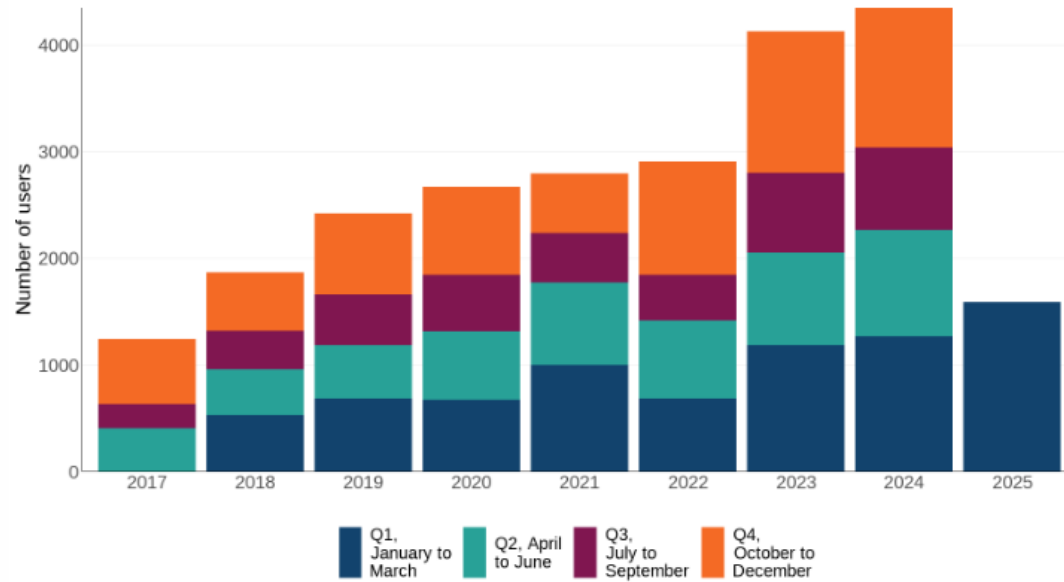


Figure 3: Number of users downloading records, 2017 to 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

Individuals may register for a particular download event, or may make multiple downloads within a year, or may be registered for multiple years, depending on what use they wish to make of NBN data.

Target 21

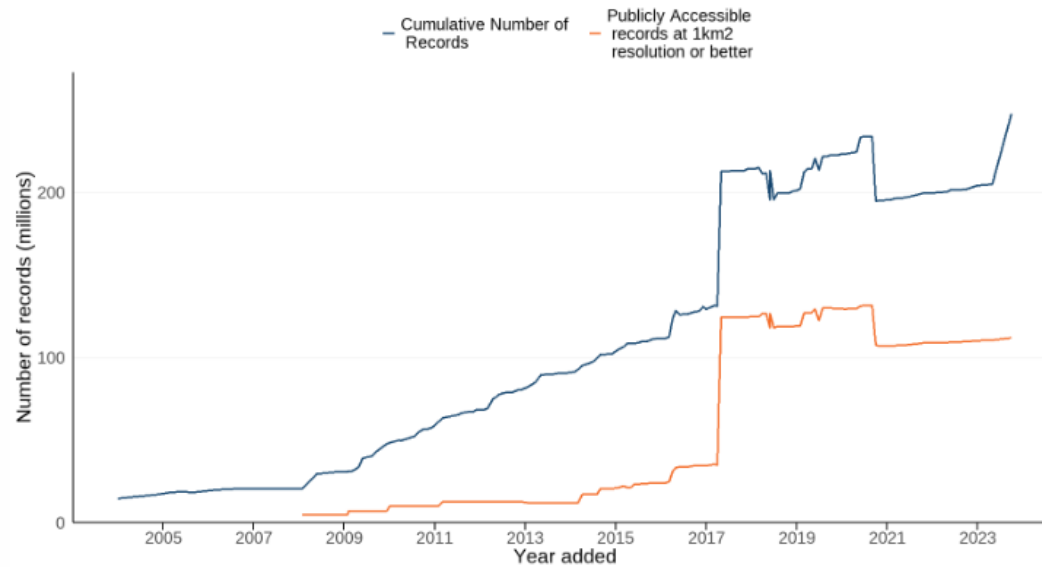


Figure 4: Records added to the National Biodiversity Network, 2004 to 2023.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

Target 21

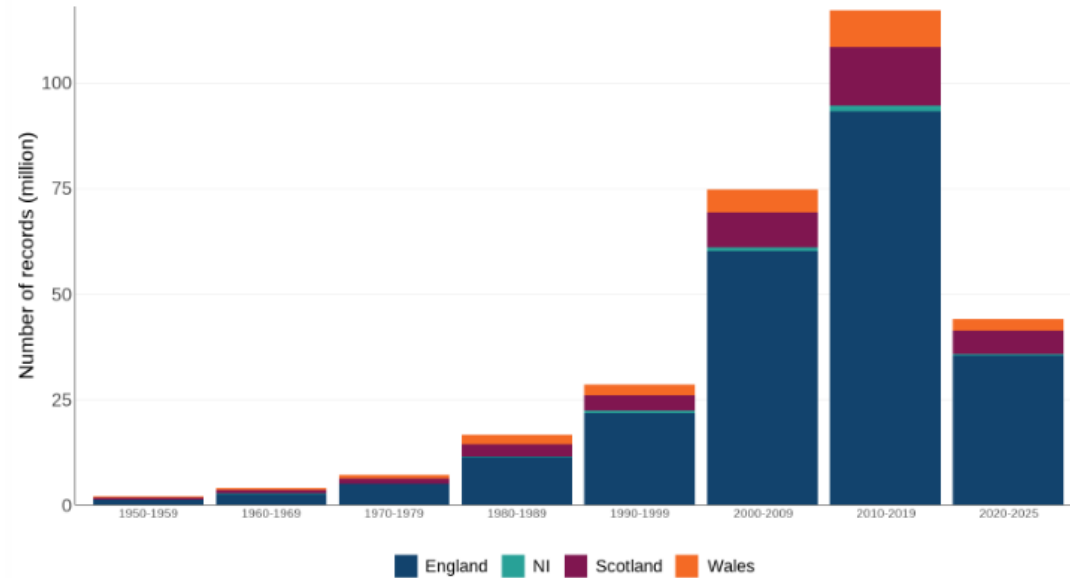


Figure 5: Records within the National Biodiversity Network associated with a decade, 1950s to 2025.

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

Target 21

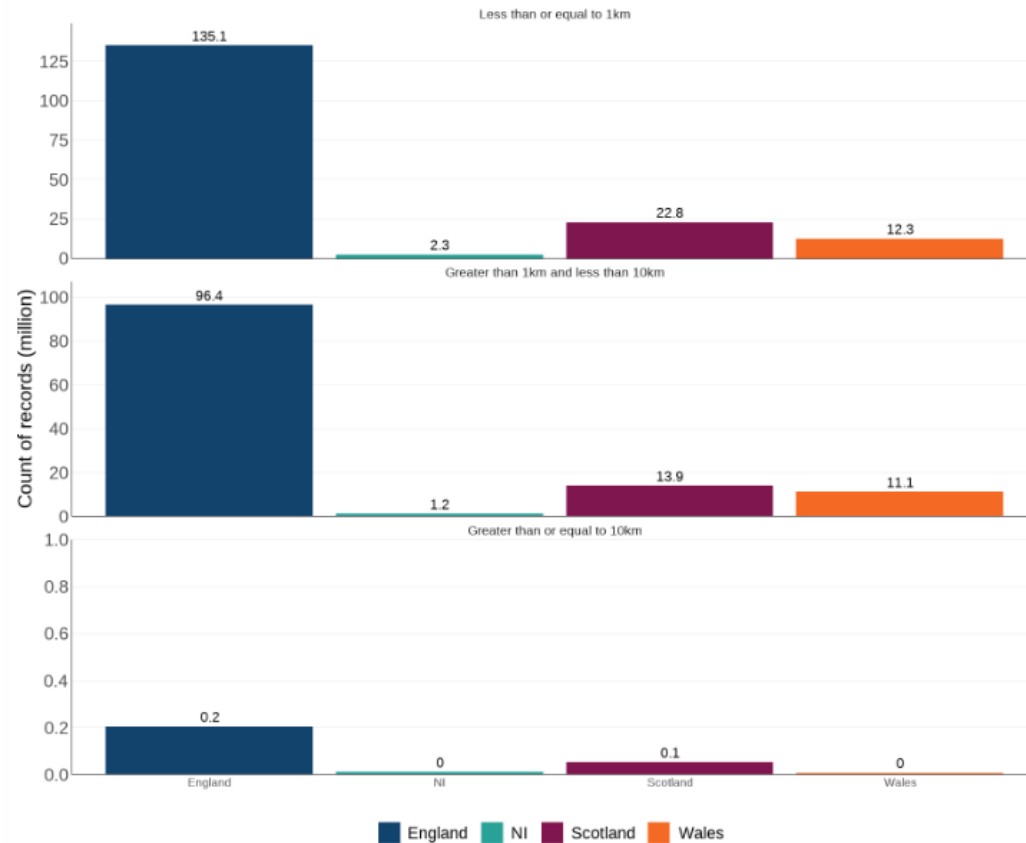


Figure 6: Biodiversity records by spatial resolution, 2017 to 2025

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

Target 21

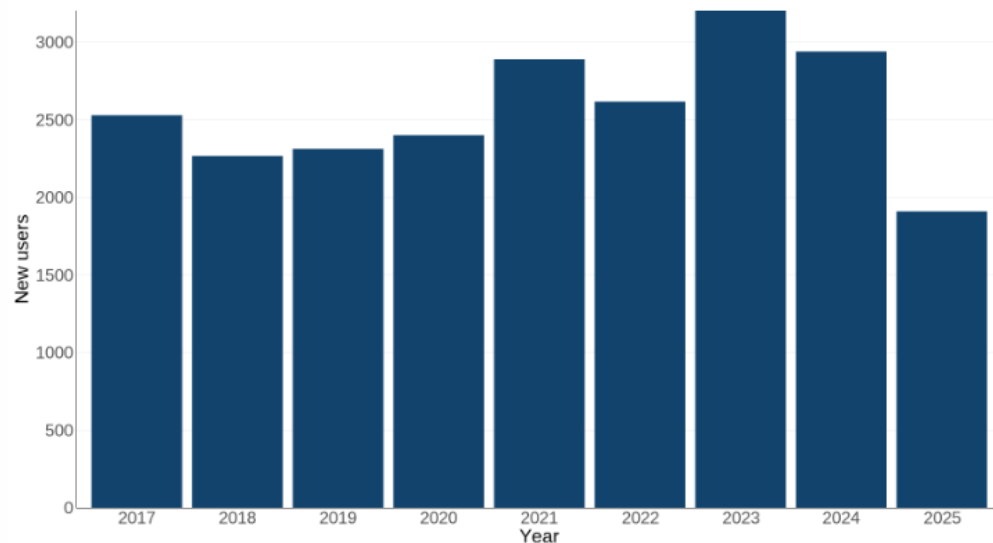


Figure 7: Number of new NBN Atlas users by year, 2017 to 2025

Source: [UK Biodiversity Indicator – Biodiversity information for conservation decision making](#)

5. Respond to the questions for the binary indicator⁹	Comments (optional): _____
6. Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____

⁹ See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

Target 21

7. Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed

National Education Nature Park

The [National Education Nature Park](#), commissioned by the Department for Education, helps schools increase biodiversity and enables all children and young people to learn about nature and to develop skills for the future and a lifelong connection with the natural world. This initiative was inspired by the independent global review on the [Economics of Biodiversity](#) led by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta.

A wide range of free curriculum-linked [resources](#) and lesson plans are made available on the Nature Park website. All resources with climate change content undergo a science review and receive the Royal Meteorological Society quality mark if they meet the qualifying criteria.

This is one of the largest community science projects England has ever known. Through participation in the Nature Park activities, as of May 2025, children and young people have mapped more than eight million square metres of habitat on school, nursery or college sites in England using digital geospatial tools. This is vital information, as although we know a lot about biodiversity in England, school grounds remain less understood. From the maps created by children and young people taking part in the Nature Park programme, the Nature Park science team can use previous biodiversity estimates from similar habitats to estimate biodiversity levels. They use datasets such as those in the [PREDICTS database](#), a Natural History Museum led project that holds data on the levels of different species around the world. This gives us a baseline for measuring change, so that when new habitats, like a pond or a wildflower area, are added or improved through the Nature Park programme, the increase in biodiversity expected from these improvements can be estimated.

Participating children and young people develop [skills](#) that will allow them to build careers and access jobs that require a knowledge of sustainability and climate change, to support the country's transition to net zero and nature's recovery.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to regularly spend time outside than those from more affluent backgrounds. Grant funding supports participation where there is disadvantage and less access to natural green space. Since the Nature Park rolled out in October 2023, more than £12 million of grant funding has been awarded to over 1,200 nurseries and schools. There is also a growing [list of organisations](#) that are supporting the Nature Park with guidance and local resources that are needed to improve biodiversity and their outside spaces. The list also includes organisations that work in overcoming specific barriers, such as deprivation, the urban environment and inequality, which have historically prevented schools from developing their nature-based learning.

Schools across the country, such as Larkholme Primary School in Lancashire, are using the activities across topics and in their outdoor learning. After mapping their site boundary, the children at Larkholme used Nature Park resources to learn more about their wildflower and grass, tree and micro habitats.

Target 21

Selly Oak Nursery School in Birmingham emphasises the importance of spending time outside in nature. They promote pupil and staff wellbeing by encouraging everyone to use the outside areas that they are improving through the Nature Park programme, including a pond that the pupils helped to plan and design.

And, at Co-op Academy in Manchester, young people have used the activities to identify an area of their school grounds to turn from grey to green. Students noticed a grey, concreted area outside a technology classroom that becomes very hot in summer and installed a green wall to enhance nature and cool the classroom.

You can read more about Larkholme, Selly Oak Nursery School, Co-op Academy and other case studies [here](#).

With over 6,000 settings now registered, the Nature Park programme leads education settings to naturally complete the biodiversity pillar of their climate action plan. The aim of the biodiversity pillar is to improve each setting's green spaces and their local environment, along with encouraging learners to spend time in nature. All these activities will increase pro-environmental behaviours over time.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

Target 22

National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 22

Ensure participation in decision making and access to justice and information related to biodiversity for all

The UK will ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders¹⁰.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK and the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs) have a range of legislation and other measures in place to ensure inclusive, gender-responsive participation in biodiversity decision-making by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities. In Great Britain, the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty require public bodies and employers to prevent discrimination and advance equality, and the Scotland Act 1998 enshrines equal opportunities in Scotland. In England, the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard helps local authorities to plan inclusive environments. In Wales, the Breaking Barriers scheme actively engages underrepresented groups in nature activities through outreach, tailored support, and inclusive communications. In Northern Ireland, Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and to consider the need to promote good relations across key groups, helping to address inequalities. The Falkland Islands applies equality and sustainability checks in policy decisions, while Gibraltar enforces equal opportunities and inclusive public consultations through its Equal Opportunities Act and Department of Equality.

The UK guarantees access to biodiversity-related information through the Environmental Information Regulations 1992 and 2004, which require public authorities to provide environmental data. Access to justice is ensured via judicial review for challenging breaches of environmental law, supported by

¹⁰ The United Kingdom does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Target 22

the Human Rights Act 1998, which incorporates the right to a fair trial under the European Convention on Human Rights. An independent judiciary upholds impartiality in these processes.

The UK promotes inclusive, rights-based participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in biodiversity decision-making through international leadership and targeted programmes. The UK was the first government to endorse the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action at United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP30, supporting gender-responsive, locally led approaches. The UK mobilised the IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge at COP26 and continues to back tenure rights and governance reforms through initiatives such as the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate programme and the Global Land Governance Programme. Additional support includes the Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, the World Bank's Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions (EnABLE) trust fund, and the Darwin Initiative, which fund locally led projects to strengthen land rights and sustainable resource management. Through the newly created Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities programme, tenure rights and territorial governance of IPLCs across the Amazon Basin has been strengthened, including targeted actions to promote gender equality and social inclusion. The UK's Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Forests (AIM4Forests) programme builds IPLC capacity for forest monitoring and mapping and empowers youth through the Young Forest Champions Initiative, helping to ensure access to biodiversity information by IPLCs.

The UK Government supported the creation of a rapid response mechanism to protect environmental defenders (as defined in Aarhus Convention Decision VII/9) during the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in 2021. In 2022, the UK supported the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention.

Regarding the main actions under Target 22:

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making related to biodiversity by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities

In Great Britain, the Equality Act 2010 prevents discrimination on the basis of sex, age, or disability, among other protected characteristics. It requires employers with more than 250 employees to publish information on their gender pay gap, which helps to achieve equitable gender representation at all grades within organisations, including those that make decisions related to biodiversity. It ensures that persons with disability have equal access to green spaces, public engagement in conservation and environmental education. It also sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which places a duty on public authorities to, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for persons who have a protected characteristic, and to remove or minimise disadvantages they suffer. The PSED applies to several bodies with a role in biodiversity-related decision-making, including Natural England, NatureScot, Natural Resources Wales, and local authorities.

The Women and Equalities Unit, part of the UK Cabinet Office, works alongside the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to integrate gender equality into environmental and biodiversity policies. The Unit supports alignment between domestic policy and the positions the UK promotes on gender in international fora.

In England, the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard provides benchmarks for green space provision, helping local authorities plan inclusive environments.

Target 22

In Scotland, the Scotland Act 1998 enshrined equal opportunities as: “the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.”

In Wales, the Breaking Barriers scheme, funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by Keep Wales Tidy (KWT), has taken a comprehensive and multi-layered approach to implementing Target 22 by actively increasing the engagement and participation of underrepresented groups in nature activities across Wales. Key actions include targeted outreach to groups such as ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers, Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities, disabled individuals, and others facing social or economic disadvantage. KWT has delivered tailored support such as help with funding applications, land access, and introductions to trusted partners. A network of mentors and buddies has been established to provide peer support, and inclusive communications campaigns have been launched using multilingual materials and culturally relevant content. Events have been held in accessible and culturally significant locations, with interpreters provided where needed. Staff have received diversity and inclusion training, and digital mapping is being used to identify priority areas for engagement. These actions collectively aim to remove barriers to participation and ensure equitable access to nature-based decision-making and activities.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and to have due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across various categories including religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, gender, marital status, and sexual orientation. The statutory duties aim to address inequalities and improve the quality of life for all in Northern Ireland.

In the Falkland Islands, gender equality is enshrined through several different pieces of legislation including the Sex Discrimination Ordinance 1998, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, gender, or marital status, and the Equal Employment Rights Ordinance 1998, which ensures the equal treatment of men and women in employment. Furthermore, as part of the Falklands Constitution, the creation of laws/ordinances that contain any discriminatory clauses is prohibited. Within the policy and decision-making process, biodiversity and equality is considered in Executive Council decisions following extensive consultation processes with stakeholders. Implications of Executive Council decisions must be assessed based on both Equalities and Human Rights, and Environmental Sustainability. An equalities working group has been established to review and create new legislation to ensure equalities are considered within Falkland Island legislation.

The Government of Gibraltar routinely undertakes fully inclusive public consultation processes to inform decision making. These rights are enshrined under the [Equal Opportunities Act](#) and the Government has a dedicated Department of Equality whose role is to ensure that all discrimination is identified and eliminated.

Ensure access to justice and information related to biodiversity by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities

In the UK, the Environmental Information Regulations 1992 and 2004 give the public the right to access environmental information held by public authorities, including data on biodiversity. Public authorities must respond to requests within 20 working days. If access is denied, applicants can appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Target 22

Regarding access to justice, citizens and environmental groups can use the judicial review process to challenge public authorities' decisions that breach environmental law. The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, which guarantees the right to a free trial. The UK has an independent judiciary that ensures impartiality in legal proceedings.

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making related to biodiversity by IPLCs, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge

At the UNFCCC COP30, the UK was the first government to endorse the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action (PINA), an eight-point framework developed collaboratively to promote gender-responsive, locally led and rights-based approaches to halting and reversing biodiversity loss. Defra has played a leading role in developing the principles, which build on the foundations laid by the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation and the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities' Shandia Principles, applying their core values to support nature and biodiversity outcomes by centring inclusive, locally grounded approaches. PINA provides a framework for a wide array of actors to deliver on Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) goals for more inclusive and effective biodiversity action, supporting the rights and leadership of IPLCs.

At UNFCCC COP26, the UK Presidency mobilised a collective \$1.7 billion [IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge](#) from 25 public and private donors to advance support for IPLC tenure rights in tropical forest countries, during 2021–2025. The Pledge has facilitated meaningful advancements in tenure security, territorial governance, and Indigenous inclusion in decision-making processes. The UK has been actively supporting the donor working group and the development of a renewed IPLC Forest and Land Tenure Pledge, which was launched at UNFCCC COP30 in Belém in November 2025.

The UK also co-launched the [Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership](#) to enable an inclusive and constructive dialogue between governments, funders and representatives of IPLC organisations.

Through Official Development Assistance (ODA), the UK directly helps to advance tenure security and land governance systems. This includes work in Colombia improving land systems and usage rights in conflict-affected areas through the [Forest, Communities and Sustainable Growth \(Territorios Forestales Sostenibles\)](#) programme (£64 million, 2020–2027). The UK also works in various countries through the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate programme (£500 million, 2024–2034), which aims to bring about governance and market reforms that reduce the illegal use of forest resources and benefit poor people who depend on forests for their livelihoods.

The UK's Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT) programme (£94 million, 2025–2031) aims to strengthen forest governance and tenure security for IPLCs across the Amazon Basin. AMCAT promotes gender-responsive and inclusive approaches across all areas of its work, with a strong focus on advancing the rights of women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities. This includes dedicated budget lines for gender equality, support for women-led and women's organisations, and encouragement for partners to embed inclusive practices in their strategies and activities. Through collaboration with IPLCs, AMCAT supports efforts to strengthen women's leadership, enhance participation in decision-making, and drive policy reforms that promote equity and inclusion.

The UK's Global Land Governance Programme (£105 million, 2020–2030) works with organisations such as the Tenure Facility to provide direct support to forest communities, including IPLCs, to strengthen their land rights and increase land tenure security. The UK's [Land Facility](#) partners with governments to further effective, robust and transparent land governance systems and increase formal recognition and protection of rural, urban and

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forest tenure rights. Similarly, the Biodiverse Landscapes Fund has been supporting and working with IPLCs in transboundary landscapes including the Andes, the Amazon and Mesoamerica, focussing on environmental protection, sustainable livelihoods, governance structures and organisational capacity building.

The UK also made a £10 million contribution to the World Bank's Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions (EnABLE) multi-donor trust fund – a global knowledge, operations and technical assistance programme to enhance the inclusion of marginalised communities and disadvantaged groups within forest mitigation programmes, facilitating access to climate finance.

Defra's Darwin Initiative is a demand-led challenge fund that seeks to conserve biodiversity and support the communities (including IPLCs) that live alongside it through locally led projects worldwide. For example, the Ridge to Reef Conservation project in West Papua Province, Indonesia (£5 million, 2022–2027) focuses on enhancing the tenure security and legal access rights to the natural resources in these protected areas for long-term sustainable resource management. The UK supported Blue Ventures' Blue Forests programme (£11.16 million, 2016–September 2025), which aimed to help transfer the right to manage and use coastal resources such as fish and other mangrove forest products to communities through government approved management plans. The UK also advocates for higher social and environmental standards in carbon markets including forest carbon markets.

Ensure access to justice and information related to biodiversity by IPLCs, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge

The UK's Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Forests (AIM4Forests) programme, a £31.5 million programme delivered in partnership through the Food and Agriculture Organization, works with IPLCs and other customary communities to strengthen technical capacities in forest monitoring and mapping. The programme has pioneered the Young Forest Champions Initiative, empowering youth for forest conservation and climate action. From Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Ghana, and Peru, 50 young leaders have been selected to support actions in restoring forests, monitoring ecosystems, and protecting vital landscapes. Through mentorship, capacity-building, and technologies like remote sensing, they are gaining the skills to create real, lasting impact. These efforts support local initiatives to recognise, manage, protect and restore forest lands, biodiversity, and territories.

Ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders

The UK Government is firmly committed to supporting the rights of environmental human rights defenders.

The UK Government supported the creation of a rapid response mechanism to protect environmental defenders (as defined in Aarhus Convention Decision VII/9) during the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in 2021. In 2022, the UK supported the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention.

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2.	Indicate the current level of progress towards the target	☐ On track to achieve target ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate ☐ No significant progress ☐ Not applicable ☐ Unknown ☐ Achieved
3.	Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved Summary of progress towards the target The UK has put in place policy, legislative and administrative frameworks that protect women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities and others by ensuring full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in biodiversity decision-making, access to biodiversity-related information, and access to justice. Domestically, legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 underpin equality and access to justice, while oversight is provided by bodies such as the Information Commissioner's Office and Office for Environmental Protection. Representation is supported through initiatives such as Scotland's National Biodiversity Forum, which includes youth networks, and Wales's Breaking Barriers scheme, which engages underrepresented communities through tailored support and outreach. Internationally, UK guidelines on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion apply across climate and biodiversity finance, with programmes like the Darwin Initiative and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund using frameworks to promote equitable involvement. The UK is also a party to the Aarhus Convention, which guarantees the right to challenge certain decisions relating to the environment. The UK has also undertaken action to ensure the full, equitable, and inclusive representation and participation of IPLCs in decision-making processes, particularly through the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) initiatives. For example, from April 2022 to March 2024, 48,396 people benefitted from tenure or access rights through ODA initiatives funded by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). The Blue Forests programme produced five government-approved mangrove management plans now being implemented by local communities, and the Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities programme has contributed funding to 17 projects across the Amazon Basin, supporting significant progress on land rights and territorial governance over nearly nine million hectares, around two-thirds of which are advancing towards formal land title recognition. The UK protects environmental human rights defenders through legislation and international mechanisms. However, the UK does not currently monitor implementation of the full protection of environmental human rights defenders. The UK Government supported the creation of a rapid response mechanism to protect environmental defenders (as defined in Aarhus Convention Decision VII/9) during the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in 2021. In 2022, the UK supported the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention. Whilst good progress has been made against this target, a lack of monitoring means there is little information available on the outcomes of these efforts.	

Target 22

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 22:

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making related to biodiversity by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities

The UK has in place policy, legislative and administrative frameworks that protect women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities and others by ensuring full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in biodiversity decision-making. However, there is a lack of information available on the outcomes of these efforts.

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to ensure equality and prevent discrimination, including on the grounds of gender and disability, when carrying out functions relating to the environment and biodiversity.

The Scottish National Biodiversity Forum, which feeds into Scotland's implementation of the UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), includes representation from the UK chapter of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network.

In Wales, the original Breaking Barriers scheme operated by National lottery Heritage Fund finished, having supported 13 projects delivering outcomes to improve the accessibility of mainstream grants to underrepresented communities. The new Breaking Barriers scheme commenced in April 2025 and has made significant progress in engaging underrepresented communities. Outreach efforts have engaged more than 80 groups, with 38 receiving direct support from Keep Wales Tidy and 18 successfully awarded Local Places for Nature packages, which are free garden packs to help turn neglected spaces, from small to large-scale, into vibrant gardens where nature can thrive. Notable successes include supporting RainbowBiz CIC, which works with disabled individuals, and Newport Social Services, which secured garden packages for children's homes housing refugee children. Engagement events have been held with groups such as the North Wales Africa Society and Shirenewton Gypsy Roma Traveller site, fostering dialogue and identifying nature-based opportunities. Barriers such as lack of space and funding have been addressed through tailored solutions, including mini garden packages and wellbeing gardens. The scheme has also developed a growing network of 40 mentors and is producing inclusive media content to showcase diverse participation in nature work. These outcomes demonstrate tangible progress in making biodiversity-related activities more inclusive and representative.

The UK has published guidelines for the integration of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion across all UK International Climate Finance (ICF), to ensure that the ICF delivers positive outcomes for women and girls, IPLCs, people with disabilities, people living in poverty and people that are otherwise marginalised and impacted by climate change and biodiversity loss. For example, the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (including the Darwin Initiative and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund) support women's participation through a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion framework that ensures inclusive, equitable involvement in biodiversity and poverty reduction projects. There are also growing efforts to promote inclusive conservation.

Ensure access to justice and information related to biodiversity by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities

The UK has in place policy, legislative and administrative frameworks that protect women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities and others by (i) ensuring public access to information related to biodiversity, and (ii) providing access to justice. Within the UK, there is oversight from the

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Information Commission's Office, Office of Environmental Protection, parliamentary committees, environmental non-governmental organisations and public interest groups. The UK is also a party to the Aarhus Convention, which guarantees the right to challenge certain decisions relating to the environment.

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making related to biodiversity by IPLCs, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge

The Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge has helped drive global attention on the central role local and Indigenous communities play in climate mitigation, protecting nature and biodiversity, and the critical role of tenure security in sustainable land use. The total number of people benefitting from tenure or access rights as a result of Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) ODA programmes from April 2022 to March 2024 was [48,396](#).

The UK also supported Blue Ventures' Blue Forests programme (£11.16 million, 2016–September 2025), which included work to transfer the rights to manage and use coastal resources such as fish and mangrove forest products to local communities. By the end of the programme, Blue Forests produced five government-approved mangrove management plans, which are being implemented by local communities at sites across Indonesia and Madagascar.

Since 2021, the [Forest, Communities and Sustainable Growth \(Territorios Forestales Sostenibles\)](#) (TEFOS) programme has supported the Colombian Government to update the multipurpose cadastre (a comprehensive land information system) in the Amazonian region. It has adopted a multicultural approach that respects the collective rights of Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities within their territories. Following a year-long consultation process, the national government issued a decree enabling IPLCs to actively participate in cadastral management through various levels of engagement across normalised Indigenous reserves, which account for 95% of the municipalities where TEFOS operates. In Indigenous reserves that have not been formalised, an Intercultural Dialogue Procedure has been established to ensure inclusive participation in land registry operations, resulting in the formalisation of five new reserves with a combined area of 1.4 million hectares. By 2025, the land registry process had advanced in 10 of the 20 target municipalities, involving 6.5 million hectares and 35,285 land parcels. Capabilities of indigenous organisations have been strengthened to enable them to act as ethnic cadastre operators, which will operate in 92 reserves in the region between 2025 and 2026. Institutional frameworks and laws have been strengthened to protect IPLCs (and beyond) in relation to the cadastre, extending way beyond TEFOS's contribution.

Since its official launch in 2025, the Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT) programme has co-funded 17 projects across the Amazon Basin, supporting significant progress on land rights and territorial governance over nearly nine million hectares, around two-thirds of which are advancing toward formal land title recognition. In addition, AMCAT has provided over 16 small grants to Indigenous and Afro-descendant organisations, mapping entities, media platforms, and regional exchanges. These grants have strengthened IPLC coalition-building, regional coordination, negotiation capacity, participation in UNFCCC COP30, communication efforts, and organisational development. The programme also established an IPLC consultative body composed of 15 diverse leaders from eight Amazon countries, who provide strategic guidance, review progress, and help align the programme with local priorities and contexts.

The UK contributed £10 million to the Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions (EnABLE) trust fund in 2024. EnABLE activities are designed to promote social and gender inclusion in climate finance initiatives by raising awareness and capacity, improving the enabling environment

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and building new skills to address obstacles limiting participation. To date, EnABLE has hosted knowledge and capacity building activities in 14 countries and has formalised large grants with local civil society organisations in four countries (Indonesia, Ghana, Mozambique, and Fiji).

Ensure access to justice and information related to biodiversity by IPLCs, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge

The UK's Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Forests (AIM4Forests) programme, a £31.5 million programme delivered in partnership through the Food and Agriculture Organization, works with Indigenous Peoples and other customary communities to strengthen technical capacities in forest monitoring and mapping. These efforts support local initiatives to recognise, manage, protect and restore forest lands, biodiversity, and territories. AIM4Forests has trained over 3,500 individuals, 40% of whom are from IPLCs, and launched nine new monitoring solutions and tools including Open Foris Ground and Whisp, which help IPLCs and smallholder farmers produce forest monitoring information and support compliance with deforestation regulations. The AIM4Forests programme has also recently established a global Community of Practice (CoP) on forest monitoring, in collaboration with IPLCs and community organisations. The CoP seeks to promote tailored capacity development, collaboration, peer-to-peer learning, mentorship, and knowledge exchanges.

Ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders

The UK has a suite of legislation, policies, and administrative frameworks that ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders. The UK Government supported the creation of a rapid response mechanism to protect environmental defenders (as defined in Aarhus Convention Decision VII/9) during the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in 2021. In 2022, the UK supported the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention. However, the UK does not currently monitor implementation of the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

Despite the UK having legislation and frameworks in place to ensure full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in biodiversity decision-making, certain sectors of communities including youth, women, and persons with disabilities may still be limited in their ability to participate in international, national and regional decision-making on biodiversity. Participation by these groups may be improved by simple changes to local engagement practices – such as holding meetings in more accessible locations or at more convenient times, or via methods that favour those who are outside existing institutional power or networks. More fundamentally, participation is also constrained by systemic inequalities, such as fewer personal resources (time, money), more caretaking responsibilities, or social norms that limit their voices.

More meaningful participation by all sectors of local communities can be attained by ensuring information is accessible and engaging and by providing training and capacity building for local and national groups. Monitoring of participation in decision-making and governance by all sectors of communities would, however, require the development of bespoke indicators that are not currently included within the KMGBF.

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	Regarding the Welsh Breaking Barriers Scheme, despite the successes, several challenges persist in achieving full, equitable participation. The most significant identified barriers are a lack of space and funding, followed by limited awareness, understanding, and access to equipment or expertise. Digital exclusion and language barriers also hinder engagement. To address these, Keep Wales Tidy is adapting application processes, offering hands-on support including form-filling and translation services, and prioritising face-to-face engagement. Future approaches include expanding the mentor network, deepening partnerships with community organisations, and enhancing inclusive communications through social media and influencer collaborations. Continued investment in staff training and flexible funding mechanisms will be essential. Additionally, forming strategic advisory groups with representatives from underrepresented communities could strengthen their role in shaping biodiversity policy and programme design, aligning with the spirit of Target 22.	
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)¹¹	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: ____ ☒ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ The UK does not have indigenous peoples, or indigenous and local communities as understood under the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, in accordance with the Convention and the relevant provisions of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, recognising the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity, the UK in its international engagements remains committed to promoting the effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, with their free, prior and informed

¹¹ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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		consent, in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity. Comments (optional): _____
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator¹² 22.b Number of countries taking action towards the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth and persons with disabilities, and the full protection of environmental human rights defenders. 22.1 Does your country have policy, legislative and administrative frameworks at the national and subnational levels that: (a) Ensure full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in biodiversity decision-making related to biodiversity of the following (select all that apply): Yes: (b) Women and girls (c) Children and youth (d) Persons with disabilities (e) Others (b) Respect the following rights and cultures of indigenous peoples and local communities (select all that apply): (e) Not applicable (c) Ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders?	Comments (optional): _____

¹² See decision 16/-- for the list of binary indicators.

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(b) Yes

(d) Ensure public access to information related to biodiversity for the following (select all that apply):

Yes:

(b) Women and girls

(c) Children and youth

(d) Persons with disabilities

(e) Others

(e) Provide access to justice for one or more of the following categories (select all that apply):

Yes:

(b) Women and girls

(c) Children and youth

(d) Persons with disabilities

(e) Others

22.2 Does your country have operational frameworks and mechanisms related to the policy, legislative and administrative frameworks listed under question 22.1?

(c) Partially

22.3 Does your country monitor the following:

(a) The full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in biodiversity decision-making of the following (select all that apply):

(f) None of the above

(b) The following culture and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (select all that apply):

(f) Not applicable

(c) The full protection of environmental human rights defenders?

(a) No

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6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)	Comments (optional): _____
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed The Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge Introduction The Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge (the 'Pledge') was launched in 2021 at UNFCCC COP26, led by 25 private and public UK donors committing \$1.7 billion between 2021–2025 to advance forest tenure rights in tropical forest countries, and to increase the share of climate finance which reaches IPLCs. The Pledge aims to strengthen tenure rights of IPLCs in the context of the Rio Conventions, increase the amount of climate finance reaching IPLCs, and drive ambition for stronger coordination and partnerships between stakeholders. Pledge Progress The Pledge has helped drive global attention on the central role local and Indigenous communities play in climate mitigation, protecting nature and biodiversity, and the critical role of tenure security in sustainable land use. From 2021 to 2024, \$1.86 billion was disbursed, exceeding the total target of \$1.7 billion, with the final year of funding in 2025 still to be confirmed. Critically, direct funding support to IPLCs <i>has also increased</i>. In 2024, over \$39 million, or 7.6% of pledge funds, reached IPLC led organisations directly. This is a significant increase from 2.1% in 2022 and 2.9% in 2021. Alongside this, the number of reported IPLC organisations receiving direct funding grew significantly, from 22 in 2021 to 112 in 2024. These trends show positive shifts in donor support for the role of IPLCs in forests and nature, and greater support for funding models that gives greater control to communities on how donor funds are designed and delivered. In addition to increasing direct support for forest communities, an important focus of donor activities under the Pledge is to support national land and forest tenure reform processes that recognise and enforce the tenure rights of IPLCs. These can include work with partner governments or regional organisations to support systemic changes to land and forest tenure laws, policies and systems. Even where IPLCs' tenure rights are legally recognised, ongoing work with regional and national governments is important to ensure these rights are respected in practice, and that communities can participate in processes and exercise these rights. UK Actions The UK remains committed to advancing the ambitions of the Pledge, which has influenced our priorities and resulted in new programmes that strengthen land and forest tenure rights and governance systems. For example, the Global Land Governance Programme works with organisations	

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such the [Tenure Facility](#), who provide direct support to IPLC-led organisations across Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia, to strengthen their land rights and livelihoods. The UK has also supported the development of a renewed IPLC Forest and Land Tenure Pledge (2026–2030) by strengthening partnerships between governments and the private sector to mobilise more funding and increase ambitions to support IPLCs in securing their land and forest rights. The renewed Pledge was launched at COP30 in Belém in November 2025.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

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National target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets or from the text of the global target when a national target does not exist for that global target)

UK Target 23

Ensure gender equality and a gender-responsive approach for biodiversity action

The UK will ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by recognising their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision making related to biodiversity.

1. Briefly describe the main actions taken to implement the target

Summary of actions taken

The UK is committed to ensuring gender equality in the implementation of the framework and in all areas of public and private life as set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#). In Great Britain, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, including biodiversity agencies, to consider equality of opportunity. Scotland and Wales embed equal opportunities in law, with Wales proposing rights-based biodiversity policies and capacity-building for women and girls. In Northern Ireland, Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and to consider the need to promote good relations across key groups, helping to address inequalities. UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) such as the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar enforce gender equality through legislation and inclusive decision-making processes. Internationally, the UK has integrated Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion into International Climate Finance (ICF), to ensure that the ICF delivers positive outcomes for women and girls that are otherwise marginalised and impacted by climate change and biodiversity loss. At CBD COP16, the UK launched the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action to guide gender-responsive, locally led biodiversity action globally. These efforts aim to ensure women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the Convention's objectives.

The UK ensures gender equality in rights to land and natural resources through robust legal frameworks. Key measures include the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010, which prohibit discrimination, alongside property laws such as the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, Married Woman's Property Acts, and Land Registration Act 2002 that enable women to own and register property independently. In Wales, the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan reinforces equal rights and access for all women and girls. Internationally, through its Official Development Assistance (ODA), the UK supports the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure, which promote women's rights to land, fisheries, and forests and encourage inclusive governance and legal reforms. The UK is also committed internationally to gender equality in land and resource rights as a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Sustainable Development Goals on Gender Equality (Goal 5) and Life on Land (Goal 15).

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The UK promotes the full and equitable participation and leadership of women and girls in biodiversity-related decision-making. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits sex discrimination and mandates gender pay gap reporting for large employers, supporting equitable representation in organisations influencing biodiversity policy. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Gender Board drive actions to close the gender pay gap and remove barriers to progression, ensuring inclusive leadership. Public funding supports initiatives like the Women's Environmental Network's Just Food and Climate Transition programme, which applies feminist principles to environmental action. In Wales, the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan advances women's leadership through education, training, and capacity-building, prioritising the experiences of ethnic minority women.

Regarding the main actions under Target 23:

Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention

The Women and Equalities Unit, part of the UK Cabinet Office, works alongside the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to integrate gender equality into environmental and biodiversity policies. The unit supports alignment between domestic policy and the positions the UK promotes on gender in international fora.

In Great Britain, the Equality Act 2010 prevents discrimination in the workplace and in wider society and sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty. This places a duty on public authorities to, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for persons who have a protected characteristic, including sex, and to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share that protected characteristic. The Duty applies across public bodies with a role in contributing to the objectives of the Convention, including statutory nature conservation bodies and local authorities.

In Scotland, the Scotland Act 1998 enshrined equal opportunities as: "the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions."

In Wales, it has been proposed to integrate gender equality into biodiversity policies, emphasising a rights-based approach that promotes inclusivity and equity. Efforts include education and training programs to build the capacity of women and girls, prioritising the lived experiences of ethnic minority women. Promoting women's leadership and ensuring equal access to resources are crucial components.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and to have due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across various categories including gender. The statutory duties aim to address inequalities and improve the quality of life for all in Northern Ireland.

In the Falkland Islands, gender equality is enshrined through several different pieces of legislation including the Sex Discrimination Ordinance 1998, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, gender, or marital status, and the Equal Employment Rights Ordinance 1998, which ensures the equal treatment of men and women in employment. Furthermore, as part of the Falklands Constitution, the creation of laws/ordinances contain any discriminatory clauses are prohibited. Within the policy and decision-making process, biodiversity and equality are considered in Executive Council

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decisions following extensive consultation processes with stakeholders. Implications of Executive Council decisions must be assessed based on both Equalities and Human Rights, and Environmental Sustainability. An equalities working group has been established to review and create new legislation to ensure equalities are considered within Falkland Island legislation.

HM Government of Gibraltar routinely undertakes fully inclusive public consultation processes to inform decision making. These rights are enshrined under the Equal Opportunities Act and the Government has a dedicated Department of Equality whose role is to ensure that all discrimination is identified and eliminated.

Internationally, in May 2025, the UK published guidelines for the integration of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) across UK International Climate Finance (ICF), with clear minimum standards on GEDSI and a focus on poverty reduction across ICF programmes. This will ensure that the UK's ICF portfolio effectively delivers positive outcomes for women and girls. Further, at CBD COP16, the UK introduced a collectively owned initiative aimed at promoting inclusive, gender-responsive, and locally led biodiversity action: the Wilton Park conference on [Transformative change for global biodiversity: the role of gender equality and social inclusion](#). One of the key outcomes of this initiative was the development of the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action, which set out eight guiding principles designed to ensure biodiversity action is more inclusive and centres the rights and leadership of women and girls to help deliver against the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) targets and goals. These principles are fully aligned with the CBD Gender Plan of Action.

Recognise the equal rights and access of women and girls to land and natural resources

The UK has numerous legal frameworks in place to ensure gender equality and equal opportunity in granting rights of ownership and control over land and natural resources:

- The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights.
- The Equality Act 2010 prevents gender discrimination in property transactions and prohibits gender-based pay disparity.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty eliminates discrimination and fosters equality in the functions of public bodies.
- The Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 and Married Women's Property Act 1964 ensure fair division of property.
- The Land Registration Act 2002 enables women to register property independently.

Within the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) programming, the UK supports the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure, which emphasise women's rights to land, fisheries, and forests, and encourage inclusive governance and legal reforms.

The UK is a signatory to international agreements promoting gender equality in land and resource rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 15 focusing on gender equality and the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

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Recognise full, equitable, meaningful, and informed participation and leadership of women and girls at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity

The UK Government supports environmental bodies that encourage the participation of women, such as the Women's Environmental Network, which has received public funding through bodies like the government-backed National Lottery Community Fund. Their Just Food and Climate Transition (Just FACT) programme has a vision to create an environmentally sustainable and socially just food system in Tower Hamlets, London. The project's design reflects feminist values: collaboration, care, equity and justice, and promotes systems change by advocating for community control over food systems and land use.

In Great Britain, the Equality Act 2010 prevents sex discrimination in the workplace and requires employers with more than 250 employees to publish information on their gender pay gap. This helps to achieve equitable gender representation at all grades within organisations, including those that make decisions related to biodiversity.

Defra is committed to being an equitable, diverse, and inclusive organisation, where every individual has equality of opportunity to progress and can thrive in a supportive environment. The Defra group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020–2024 reaffirms this commitment to gender equality. In Defra, [gender pay gap reporting](#) is overseen by the Gender Board, which is a working group chaired by an executive committee champion. The Gender Board has supported and driven evidence-based and targeted actions that address the pay gap by improving equality, promoting collaborative working and removing barriers to progression.

2. Indicate the current level of progress towards the target

- ☐ On track to achieve target
- ☒ Progress made but at an insufficient rate
- ☐ No significant progress
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ Achieved

3. Provide a summary of progress towards the target, including the main outcomes achieved

Summary of progress towards the target

The UK has made progress towards gender equality in biodiversity governance.

The UK partially applies a gender-responsive approach in implementing the Framework, supported by legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010, which protects women from discrimination, and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which reinforces equality in public functions. Internationally, the UK introduced minimum standards across its International Climate Finance portfolio to deliver positive outcomes for women and girls and submitted views for the mid-term review of the Gender Plan of Action 2023–2030.

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Legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 and Land Registration Act 2002 fully protect women's rights to land and natural resources.

The UK has some mechanisms for facilitating the full participation and leadership of all women and girls in biodiversity-related policy and decision-making. These include legal protections against sex-based workplace discrimination, requirements for gender pay gap reporting, and funding for environmental bodies that encourage women's participation. Representation of women in environmental policymaking is increasing, with higher proportions of women in leadership roles across the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and statutory conservation bodies, and a rise in women's representation in the House of Commons. Workforce data from Defra and NatureScot also show growing female representation at senior levels.

Despite these advances, challenges remain, including limited sex-disaggregated data and the absence of gender-specific biodiversity policies, highlighting the need for stronger mechanisms to embed gender-responsive approaches in biodiversity planning and implementation.

Regarding progress in the main areas under Target 23:

Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention

The UK partially applies a gender-responsive approach and recognises the contributions and roles of women and girls in its implementation of the Framework.

Legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 protect women from discrimination on the basis of sex, while the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) reinforces equality measures by placing a duty on public authorities to consider equality of opportunity whilst exercising their functions.

The UK has introduced minimum standards to ensure that the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) portfolio effectively delivers positive outcomes for women and girls, and at CBD COP16, the UK introduced a collectively owned initiative aimed at promoting inclusive, gender-responsive, and locally led biodiversity action. The UK also submitted views to support the preparations for the mid-term review of the Gender Plan of Action 2023–2030 as per CBD notification 2025-103. The report outlined the meaningful steps as stated in this [national report](#) that the UK has taken to implement the three key outcomes of the Gender Plan of Action.

Recognise the equal rights and access of women and girls to land and natural resources

The UK has fully adopted legal, administrative or policy measures that explicitly recognise and protect all women and girl's rights and access to land and natural resources. Numerous legal frameworks are in place to ensure gender equality and equal opportunity in granting rights of ownership and control over land and natural resources.

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Recognize full, equitable, meaningful, and informed participation and leadership of women and girls at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity

The UK partially has mechanisms for facilitating the full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership of all women and girls at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity. These include legal measures and strategies to protect women from workplace discrimination on the basis of sex, and the provision of funding to environmental bodies that encouraged the participation of women.

The UK Government launched the HM Treasury Women in Finance Charter in March 2016 to encourage the financial services industry to move towards gender balance in senior management. The Charter now has ~450 signatories covering about 1.3 million employees across the sector. More than a third (36%) of the 205 signatories analysed in the [review](#) have met their targets for female representation in senior management, and a further 44% that have targets with future deadlines said they are on track to meet them.

Though not specific to biodiversity-related decision-making, there has been an increase in the proportion of seats held by women in the UK House of Commons from 20% in 2005 to 40% in 2024 (Component Indicator 23.CT.1). Representation of women is also increasing in conservation and environmental policymaking in the UK. For example, there has been an increase in women in leadership roles in government departments and agencies including the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs ([Defra](#)), [Natural England](#), and the [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#). Furthermore, a woman has been appointed as the special representative for nature to drive ambition on environmental policy, programmes and campaigns both domestically and internationally.

Analysis shows that the percentage of women in Defra's workforce is 56.4% and the percentage of women in the upper quartile (representing the top 25% of earners) has increased from 50.4% in 2023 to 52.5% in 2024. This demonstrates progress in achieving workplace equity at higher grades. Representation of women in biodiversity negotiations and leadership roles within Defra is strong, with over half of the workforce and negotiation teams being female, and an entirely female ministerial team as of September 2025.

In Scotland, as of 30 June 2025, NatureScot's headcount was 823, of which 62% are women (across all grades), noting that women are more likely than men to occupy part-time posts. NatureScot has 169 employees in professional/managerial roles (21% of the total headcount), of which 49% are women and 51% are men.

Provide a summary of key challenges encountered and different approaches that may be taken for further implementation

Summary of key challenges

The UK has the relevant legal frameworks and policies in place to ensure gender equality; however, experiences of these protections vary significantly in practice. One of the main challenges for the UK is the lack of gender specific policies. There is no clear mechanism for integrating gender into biodiversity and planning domestically. Whilst historically there has been gender disparity in conservation and decision-making, gender pay gap

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	reporting by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs suggests the trend is changing. However, there remains limited data on gender and biodiversity, and little research on how biodiversity policy impacts women and men differently in the UK. Despite these challenges, the UK is committed to ensuring a gender responsive implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).	
4.	Provide data on headline indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (pre-populated from the submission of national targets)¹³	☐ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments (optional): _____
5.	Respond to the questions for the binary indicator 23.b Number of countries with legal, administrative or policy frameworks, inter alia, to implement the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030), to ensure that all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by ensuring women's equal rights and access to land and natural resources 23.1 Does your country have mechanisms for facilitating the full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership of all women and girls at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity? (c) Partially 23.2 Has your country adopted legal, administrative or policy measures that explicitly recognize and protect all women and girl's rights and access to land and natural resources? (d) Fully 23.3 Does your country explicitly apply a gender-responsive approach and recognize the contributions and roles of women and girls in its implementation of the Framework through its national reports or its national biodiversity strategy and action plan?	

¹³ See the online reporting tool for an example of how the submission of data has been included in the tool.

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	(c) Partially 23.4 Does your country conduct sex-disaggregated data collection and analyses to assess the differential impacts of biodiversity policies and programmes? (c) Partially	
6.	Provide data on component, complementary or other national indicators used for assessing progress towards the target (optional) (pre-populated from the submission of national targets) Component Indicator 23.CT.1: Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments (Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 5.5.1) Source: UK Sustainable Development Goals indicator 5.5.1 and House of Commons Library	☒ Use national data set ☐ Use the data available from relevant global (data sources provided) ☐ No data available. Please explain why: _____ ☐ Not relevant. Please explain why: _____ Comments: The data shows the percentage of women who hold seats in national parliament, devolved parliaments and assemblies, and local authority councils for all countries of the UK where data are available. Source: UK Sustainable Development Goals indicator 5.5.1 and House of Commons Library
7.	Provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of the actions taken to implement the target. Provide relevant web links or attach related materials or publications, as needed Principles for Inclusive Nature Action At the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP16, the UK introduced a collectively owned initiative aimed at promoting inclusive, gender-responsive, and locally led biodiversity action: the Wilton Park conference on Transformative change for global biodiversity: the role of gender equality and social inclusion. One of the key outcomes of this initiative was the development of the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action (PINA), which set out eight guiding principles designed to ensure biodiversity action is more inclusive and centres the rights and leadership of women and girls to help deliver against the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) targets and goals. These principles are fully aligned with the CBD Gender Plan of Action. The PINA are intended to provide a guiding framework to help governments, donors, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders support and scale up transformative action to sustainably use, protect and restore global biodiversity in ways that are locally led, gender-responsive and inclusive of a wide diversity of rights holders. The principles for inclusive nature action build on and extend the foundations laid by the principles for	

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[locally led adaptation](#) and the [Shandia Principles \(PDF\)](#), applying their core values to deliver on nature and biodiversity outcomes by centring inclusive, locally grounded approaches.

Set out in an eight-point framework, the Principles emphasise the need to:

1. Recognise and respect rights.
2. Devolve decision making and strengthen local leadership.
3. Recognise and address structural and intersectional inequalities.
4. Encourage flexible, adaptive biodiversity programming.
5. Provide direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible funding.
6. Recognise the mutual value of scientific, and local and traditional knowledge.
7. Promote collaborative and coherent action and investment.
8. Safeguard local actors, beyond 'do no harm'.

A coalition of civil society groups, research institutions, multilateral organisations, and Indigenous Peoples and women's rights organisations are advancing the development and uptake of these Principles. At the IUCN World Conservation Congress, they launched a "Road to CBD COP17" call to action, seeking endorsements and funding to drive implementation. At COP30, the UK was the first government to endorse the principles, signalling strong commitment to promoting locally led, gender-responsive, and rights-based approaches to halting and reversing biodiversity loss in the run up to CBD COP17.

8. Briefly describe how the implementation of the target relates to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements (optional)

Section IV. Assessment of national progress contributing towards the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

2050 Goals	Summary of national progress contributing to the global goals	Headline and Binary Indicators
GOAL A – Protect and Restore The integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems are maintained, enhanced, or restored, substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems by 2050; Human induced extinction of known threatened species is halted, and, by 2050, the extinction rate and risk of all species are reduced tenfold and the abundance of native wild species is increased to healthy and resilient levels; The genetic diversity within populations of wild and domesticated species, is maintained,	The UK is making progress towards contributing to Goal A of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), yet biodiversity decline persists. Statutory planning systems and marine plans are in place across all four countries, with initiatives such as Wales's Resilient Ecological Networks and England's Local Nature Recovery Strategies supporting ecosystem integrity. However, assessments show most ecosystems remain threatened, and only 24% of land is covered by natural ecosystems. Restoration efforts are underway, however, the effectiveness of these efforts and their contribution to enhancing the integrity, connectivity and resilience of ecosystems remains uncertain. Marine Protected Areas now cover 33.8 million hectares or 38.2% of UK inshore and offshore waters, surpassing the coverage target of 30%. In contrast, terrestrial protected sites cover only 10.6% of land and freshwater in the UK. Action being taken to protect and conserve species has led to the improved status of some species in both the marine and terrestrial environments, demonstrating that management actions can aid recovery. While the overall risk of extinction of species in the UK is decreasing, the overall trend in status for many wild species in the UK is declining or not improving. The abundance of priority species decreased on average by 62% since 1970. Native species in the UK are under increasing pressure from invasive and non-native species (INNS). Approximately three new INNS become established in Great Britain annually. Regarding genetic diversity, 64% of assessed wild species are meeting the minimum population size threshold considered necessary for maintaining genetic diversity and in terms of maintenance of genetic diversity in domestic livestock, there has been little to no change in the proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, from 87% in 2000 to 89% in 2025. However, amongst the at-risk breeds, several groups are	Headline Indicator A.1 Red List of Ecosystems This indicator measures the average risk of ecosystem collapse across natural and semi-natural ecosystems in the UK. It is based on Red List Ecosystem (RLE) assessments to assess the risk of collapse of individual ecosystems, carried out at UK level. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Red List of Ecosystems For further details, see Target 1. Headline Indicator A.2 Extent of Natural Ecosystems This indicator shows the extent of natural ecosystems in the UK both on land and at sea. It includes a wide range of natural and semi-natural ecosystems that are considered to be of importance for nature conservation. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile.

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safeguarding their adaptive potential.	experiencing declines in effective population size, especially over the most recent five years. Overall, while frameworks and actions exist, the outcomes of these will take time to materialise due to inherent lag periods and further work is required to address key gaps in halting species decline, improving ecosystem resilience, and safeguarding genetic diversity in the UK. Regarding the main areas under Goal A: Ecosystem Integrity, Connectivity and Resilience Statutory planning systems cover all areas of land in the UK and National Planning Frameworks guide biodiversity management. For example, in Wales, Resilient Ecological Networks (REN) are capturing a landscape scale approach for managing integrated habitat networks to improve resilience and maintain and enhance biodiversity. In the south of England, 24 of 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies have now been published. These are designed to propose where actions are needed to enhance ecosystem integrity, connectivity and resilience. Across the UK's extensive marine environment, the UK Marine Policy Statement provides a framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking effective decisions. Marine plans have so far been published in the four countries of the UK, and some are currently undergoing review to ensure they remain effective. The integrity and resilience of marine ecosystems was assessed in 2024 as part of the UK Marine Strategy assessment. One of the key findings in this assessment showed that the levels of disturbance and loss of natural habitats, plants and animals on the seabed caused by commercial fishing were no worse than when last assessed in 2019 but remain above what is required to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES). Despite all these measures, biodiversity continues to decline. The Headline Indicator A.1. "Red List of Ecosystems" shows that, of those ecosystems assessed, most are classified as "critically endangered", "endangered" or "vulnerable" and the Headline Indicator A.2. "Extent of natural ecosystems" shows that on land only 24% is covered by natural ecosystems.	Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent of natural ecosystems For further details, see Target 1. Headline Indicator A.3 Red List Index This indicator is published for the UK as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 15.5.1 and can be viewed on the UN Statistics page for the UK. Source: SDG Indicator Database For further details see Target 4. Headline Indicator A.4 Proportion of populations within species with an effective population size greater than 500 This indicator brings together information on effective population sizes for a range of UK species, and aggregates this to a representative average value for the proportion of populations exceeding an effective population size of 500. Data for this indicator comes from a range of sources and expert elicitation, as convened and supported by SEFARI (Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutes), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, NatureScot, University of

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	Progress on the restoration of degraded ecosystems is being made across the UK and the UKOTs and CDs, but the rate of progress varies by ecosystem type and location. Progress towards 30% of degraded ecosystems under restoration is currently unknown (Headline Indicator 2.1). Work is underway to develop this indicator and report it in the future. Although numerous restoration actions are currently underway and progress is being made, the effectiveness of these efforts and their contribution to restoring the integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems and increasing the area of natural ecosystems remains uncertain. The UK reached 30% coverage of protected areas at sea in 2020, with 38.2% of UK inshore and offshore waters now protected. However, the 30% target has not been met for terrestrial areas with just 10.6% of terrestrial areas protected up to 31 March 2025. The UK has developed the indicator of Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA), which will be critical to tracking progress and securing ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). Interim results of this new MEPCA indicator suggest that 52% of all UK marine protected areas are currently under effective management. Species Abundance and Extinction Risk The latest Headline Indicator A.3. Red List Index (RLI)¹ shows a gradually improving trend in the overall global extinction risk for species that occur in the UK, with a slight increase from 0.973 in 2005 to 0.974 in 2024. The abundance of 'priority species' in the UK that are targeted for conservation and protection has declined on average by 62% between 1970 and 2023. However, in the short-term (2018-2023) and medium-term (2013-2023) term there has been little change, on average, in the abundance of priority species. Action being taken to protect and conserve species has led to improvements in the status of some species in both the marine and terrestrial environment, indicating that management actions can aid recovery. However, the overall trend for many wild species is one of decline or stability. It is difficult to assess whether the	Edinburgh, and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Genetic diversity of wild species For further details, see Target 4.

¹ Red list index (RLI) value ranges from 1 (all species are categorised as 'Least Concern') to 0 (all species are categorised as 'Extinct').

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	actions currently being taken are enough to halt further declines and human induced extinction of known threatened species, due to the inherent lag time in species recovery. The 2023 State of Nature report suggests that significant further action is needed in the UK and UKOTs and CDs to stop the decline of many species. In 2025, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) made the following four recommendations to the UK Government to make more progress in helping nature to recover: 1. Focus on the rapid and effective implementation of major initiatives, primarily nature-friendly farming, 2. Maximise the contribution of protected sites for nature, 3. Speed up action in the marine environment, and 4. Set out clear mechanisms for reconciling competing demands for use of land and sea. One of the main pressures on biodiversity in the UK and globally comes from Invasive and Non-Native Species (INNS). The Headline Indicator 6.1. shows that invasive species are establishing in Great Britain at a rate of approximately three per year; however, this rate is stable and not increasing significantly over time. Proximity to other countries, climate change, and opposition to lethal control methods each pose a challenge. Genetic Diversity The Headline Indicator A.4, which assesses the proportion of populations within species with an effective population size more than 500 shows that of the 43 UK species assessed, 64% meet this minimum population size threshold considered necessary for maintaining genetic diversity. Scotland has developed a Genetic Diversity Scorecard for 26 target species of importance, including fungi, plants and animals, which assesses their genetic diversity and any associated risks. Over half the species were classed as being at negligible genetic risk. There has been little to no change in the proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk in the UK as a percentage of local breeds with known level of extinction risk, which has remained around 87% during 2000 to 2024.	

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GOAL B – Prosper with nature Biodiversity is sustainably used and managed and nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, are valued, maintained and enhanced, with those currently in decline being restored, supporting the achievement of sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations by 2050	The UK is making progress towards contributing to Goal B of the KMGBF. Statutory planning systems integrate biodiversity across all UK land areas, and sustainable farming practices are expanding. Other measures, such as banning lead shot in England, Scotland and Wales is expected to reduce risks to over one million birds. 44% of forestry woodlands are certified as sustainable managed. Protection in the marine environment of seafloor habitats has strengthened through targeted restrictions on damaging fishing practices in Marine Protected Areas, but overall disturbance of the UK's seafloor habitats is still above levels required to achieve Good Environmental Status. 73% of UK marine fish stocks are now considered to be sustainably harvested within safe limits. However, bycatch of marine mammals and birds in marine fisheries remain a key challenge. Restoration efforts are underway, including peatland, woodland, and marine projects, yet their effectiveness is uncertain due to inherent lag periods. There is some evidence that actions being taken are leading to progress towards ensuring that nature's contributions to people are being restored, maintained or enhanced. For example, ecosystem service values have risen by 12% since 2014, greenhouse gas emissions are now 53% lower than in 1990, and large-scale tree planting and soil health initiatives are currently underway. Despite these actions, ecosystem functions and services remain under pressure. For example, in UK freshwater systems, only 33% of terrestrial water bodies were in good or high or good ecological status in 2024 and showed "little or no overall change" since 2009. While there are indications that the use of biodiversity is becoming more sustainable, information is not currently available on how this is helping people in terms of improving food security, nutrition, livelihoods, and other benefits. Regarding the main areas under Goal B: Sustainable Use and Management of Biodiversity All UK land areas operate under statutory planning systems, guided by national frameworks that integrate biodiversity. The UK has increased the area of agricultural land being managed sustainably, and the area of certified woodland has remained stable at around 44% for the past two decades. There are recent indications that land being farmed in England in a biodiversity-friendly manner increases breeding-bird	Headline Indicator B.1 Services provided by ecosystems This indicator shows the overall trend in key ecosystem services being provided in the UK. The trends are calculated from data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Natural Capital Accounts. Trends are disaggregated by three broad groupings of ecosystem service: provisioning services, such as agricultural biomass provision; regulating services, such as air pollution regulation; and cultural services, such as the health benefits from recreation. Trends are provided at UK level, as well as disaggregated to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The indicator focuses on flows of ecosystem services rather than natural capital assets (i.e. use each year as opposed to the overall amount available), in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity's international guidance for this indicator. In particular the indicator is focused on services particularly relevant to biodiversity (e.g. excluding the service of fossil fuel consumption). The indicator results provide a broad indication of change but should be viewed with consideration, bearing in mind the interpretation of ecosystem

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	populations and other species. Plant species abundance in arable land and broadleaf woodland and hedges has remained stable since 2015 despite annual fluctuations. However, both farmland and woodland birds and butterflies in the UK have shown a general deterioration in the long-term and the short-term. Evidence suggests that the recently announced ban on use of lead shot in England, Scotland and Wales will prevent the release of an estimated 7,000 tonnes of the toxic metal into fields, forests and wetlands each year, reducing risks to over 1 million birds. Marine management is being delivered through the UK Marine Policy Statement and UK Marine Strategy, which aim to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) in the UK's seas. Nearly 60% of England's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have restrictions on the use of fishing gear that damage habitats, plants and animals living near, on or within the seabed. Scotland has also introduced fishing-related prohibitions in 20 offshore MPAs, and Wales manages 139 MPAs with targeted byelaws in place. The latest UK Marine Strategy Assessment in 2024 highlighted some improvements in the level of pressure exerted on seabed habitats. For example, in the Southern and Northern Celtic Sea physical disturbance from fisheries using mobile bottom-contacting gears has reduced and 68% of broad-scale seabed habitats were achieving GES. However, across the UK's seas, overall level of disturbance and loss of seabed habitats caused by commercial fishing was no worse in 2024 than when last assessed in 2019 but remained above what would be required to achieve GES. The health of UK waters within the North-east Atlantic is threatened by a complex and growing mix of direct and indirect impacts from human activities. The ocean does not respect regional or international boundaries so to achieve the UK's vision and to meet this aspect of Goal B, it is essential that the UK continues to work with its regional ocean partners to set common goals, standards and methodologies for assessing whether those goals have been achieved. The sustainability of fishing in UK waters appears to be improving, with 73% of UK quota-fish-stocks harvested within safe limits in 2020, compared to only 9% in 1990. Eleven Fisheries Management Plans have been published in England, with further plans being developed across the UK and UKOTs and CDs. However, bycatch of marine mammals and birds remains a major challenge, and broader application of ecosystem-based management is needed to maintain prey availability for predators.	service trends is often complex and nuanced. The ONS natural capital accounts include further details on both ecosystem flows and natural capital assets for a wide range of services. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Services provided by ecosystems For further details, see Target 11. Binary Indicator B.b Number of countries with policies or action plans for implementing and monitoring the sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance and enhancement of nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services B.1 Does your country have policies and/or action plans aimed at ensuring the maintenance, enhancement and restoration of nature's contributions to people, including of ecosystem functions and services (c) Partially B.2 Does your country have policies and/or action plans aimed at ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity? (c) Partially

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	There is some progress on aquaculture. In England, aquaculture is strictly regulated to ensure it is carried out sustainably. Scotland is taking steps to improve salmon farming sustainability, focusing on environmental impact, escape prevention and fish health, and Northern Ireland is advancing the Fisheries and Water Environment Bill to establish a comprehensive licensing system for all aquaculture activities. Restoration of Declining Ecosystem Functions and Services Progress on the restoration of degraded ecosystems is being made across the UK and the UKOTs and CDs, but the rate of progress varies by ecosystem type and location: • Peatlands: in 2024/2025 14,206 ha actively managed in England, 51,000 ha have been restored to date in Scotland and 3,000 ha in Wales, and 500 ha are under restoration in the Isle of Man. • Woodlands: in 2024/2025, 5,765 ha of new woodland were planted in England (highest since 2002/2003) and 960 ha in Wales, and 45,925 trees have been planted in the Isle of Man since 2020. • Marine & Coastal: byelaws protect 4,000 square kilometres of offshore MPAs in England with consultations for 30,000 square kilometres more, 10.8% of territorial sea in the Isle of Man is under effective restoration and projects are underway to support recovery of corals in the Cayman Islands, and seagrass in Gibraltar. Although numerous restoration actions are currently underway, their outcomes will take time to materialize due to inherent lag periods. As a result, the effectiveness of these efforts and their contribution to ensuring ecosystem functions and services are valued, maintained and enhanced remain uncertain. The Headline Indicator 2.1 'area under restoration' will help address some of these information gaps once developed. Maintenance and Enhancement of Nature's Contributions There is some evidence that actions being taken are leading to progress towards ensuring that nature's contributions to people are restored, maintained or enhanced. The Headline Indicator B.1. 'Services provided by ecosystems' shows an index of service flow value of 1.12 for the UK in 2022, relative to a baseline value of 1 in 2014	B.3 Does your country monitor the sustainable use of biodiversity? (c) Partially B.4 Does your country monitor the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services for the benefit of present and future generations? (c) Partially

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	representing a 12% increase in the value we obtain from ecosystem services since 2014. The UK and UKOTs and CDs have made progress in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions which should ultimately benefit biodiversity with total greenhouse gas emissions being 53% lower in 2023 than they were in 1990. Further, substantial tree-planting schemes in parts of the UK demonstrate how nature-based solutions can benefit both climate and nature. At a country-level: • In England, as of April 2025, there are 885,000 hectares of arable land farmed without insecticides, reducing harm to pollinators and improving soil health. • In Wales, Green Infrastructure Plans require measurable enhancements, such as new/expanded habitats and measures to reconnect fragmented sites to form coherent, urban-nature networks. • In Northern Ireland, the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 sets out in law the need to mainstream positive outcomes for biodiversity and the use of nature-based solutions across all sectors when delivering plans and programmes to achieve the Northern Ireland carbon budget in pursuit of the delivery of longer-term targets for Net Zero and climate resilience by 2050, thereby promoting enhanced ecosystem services and sustainable development and embracing nature's contribution to people. • Further, an annual cover crop competition has commenced in Jersey that recognises and rewards the value of pollinators and encourages cooperation with agricultural industries to maximise the benefits of cover crops to pollinators. Despite these actions, ecosystem functions and services remain under pressure. For example, in UK freshwater systems, only 33% of terrestrial water bodies were in good or high or good ecological status in 2024 and showed "little or no overall change" since 2009.	
GOAL C - Share Benefits Fairly The monetary and non-monetary benefits from the utilization of genetic	The UK is making strong progress towards contributing to Goal C of the KMGBF through the delivery of several access and benefit sharing policy measures. The UK has fulfilled its obligations of the Nagoya Protocol through implementing the UK Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations and by playing a key role in ensuring an agreement on a multilateral benefit sharing mechanism under the CBD – 'the Cali	Headline Indicator C.1 Monetary benefits received in accordance with applicable internationally agreed access and benefit-sharing instruments

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resources and digital sequence information on genetic resources, and of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, as applicable, are shared fairly and equitably, including, as appropriate with indigenous peoples and local communities, and substantially increased by 2050, while ensuring traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is appropriately protected, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in accordance with internationally agreed access and benefit-sharing instruments.	Fund'. As a Party to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and through the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, the UK is also making good progress implementing ABS measures beyond the CBD and Nagoya Protocol. Regarding the key area under Goal C: Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) The UK's long-term vision is to mainstream the ABS concept and to substantially increase the benefits shared from the use of genetic resources, including marine genetic resources and digital sequence information on genetic resources. The UK implements the Nagoya Protocol through the UK Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations, ensuring that UK-based users share benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources in line with the national legislation of the provider country. Two Post Implementation Reviews (the latest in October 2025) confirm that the UK Regulations remain effective and achieved its objectives regarding balancing the needs of users, providers and the UK as a Party to the Protocol. The UK is actively raising awareness of ABS obligations with academia and the private sector. The UK is also establishing industry liaison groups to strengthen partnerships with businesses. The UK ABS Regulations also cover traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources (aTK), which is relevant to the use of genetic resources and included within Mutually Agreed Terms. Separate to the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, under the CBD, the UK played a leading role in negotiating and operationalising the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism for the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI). This included a global funding mechanism – the Cali Fund. The UK co-launched the Friends of the Cali Fund coalition to mobilise global support. The UK will take measures to implement the decision on DSI and will encourage users of DSI to contribute to the Cali Fund.	Although a Party to the Nagoya Protocol, the UK has chosen not to exercise sovereign rights for accessing its genetic resources under the Nagoya Protocol. There is no requirement to establish Prior Informed Consent (PIC) or negotiate Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) with the UK Government for any utilisation of UK genetic resources and therefore no requirement to share benefits back to the UK. This Headline Indicator under Target 13 has therefore been judged not to be relevant to the UK and is not being developed. For further details, see Target 13. Headline Indicator C.2 Non-monetary benefits arising from applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments Although a Party to the Nagoya Protocol, the UK has chosen not to exercise sovereign rights for accessing its genetic resources under the Nagoya Protocol. There is no requirement to establish Prior Informed Consent (PIC) or negotiate Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) with the UK Government for any utilisation of UK genetic resources and therefore no requirement to share benefits back to the UK. This Headline Indicator under Target 13 has therefore

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	The UK is also: • Implementing the Biodiversity Beyond Natural Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement through new legislation and supports capacity-building initiatives for Small Island Developing States. • Contributing to benefit sharing under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, maintaining major gene banks and making Annex I materials available for research and breeding under standard material transfer agreements.	been judged not to be relevant to the UK context and is not being developed. For further details, see Target 13. Binary Indicator 13.b Number of countries that have taken effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures at all levels, as appropriate, to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources For further details, see Target 13.
GOAL D - Invest and Collaborate Adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework are secured and equitably accessible to all Parties, especially	The UK is making progress towards contributing to Goal D of the KMGBF in mobilising public and private finance for biodiversity, building domestic and international capacity, advancing technology transfer and technical/scientific cooperation and in reforming harmful incentives and promoting nature-positive financial flows. However, some key challenges remain, for example, in the identification and elimination of harmful subsidies, and in scaling up private finance. Regarding the key areas under Goal D: Financial Resource Mobilisation & Alignment of Financial Flows The UK is demonstrating good progress on domestic and international biodiversity finance. Domestic public sector expenditure on biodiversity (Headline Indicator D.2) and non-governmental organisation (NGO) and private sector expenditure on biodiversity (Headline Indicator D.3) both show strong improving trends in the short- and long-term. Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK reached ~£1.07 billion in 2023/2024, a real-term increase of 77% since 2019/20 and of 210% since	Headline Indicator D.1 International public funding, including official development assistance for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems This indicator provides real-term UK public sector spending on global biodiversity. This part of the indicator is being developed and includes data based on methods used in the previous publication, alongside data from alternative and additional sources. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile.

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developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, progressively closing the biodiversity finance gap of \$700 billion per year, and aligning financial flows with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2050 Vision for biodiversity.	2000/2001. NGO/private sector expenditure grew to £452 million in 2023/24, a real-term increase of 44% over the last five years and of 92% since 2010/2011. Internationally, UK public sector funding for biodiversity (Headline Indicator D.1) reached a new high in expenditure of £560 million in 2023/24, which is real-term increase of 37% over the last five years. The UK will continue to contribute to closing the biodiversity finance gap by 2030 through: • Remaining committed to providing International Climate Finance (ICF) now and in the future to deliver UK international commitments including the KMGBF. The UK will deliver £11.6 billion in ICF by the end of FY25/26, including at least £3 billion to protect and restore nature, of which £1.5 billion should be spent on forests. The UK will also continue with ICF programmes that tackle climate change and protect nature and ecosystems and help communities build resilience to climate change by providing development finance, capacity development, technical and scientific support and fostering access to innovation, knowledge and technology. • Continuing to deliver a significant bilateral and multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) portfolio to deliver on global nature commitments to protect biodiversity and improve nature's contributions to people through a range of programmes, for example: ○ The Darwin Initiative (£94 million in grants from 2022/23 to 2025/26) supports projects that enable low and middle-income countries to conserve their unique biodiversity, reduce poverty, enhance food security and address climate change. Since 2022, these Darwin Initiative projects have enabled countries to manage over 600,000 hectares of habitat more sustainably, and more than 130,000 people to improve their resilience to natural disasters and climate change. ○ Darwin Plus supports biodiversity and conservation projects in the UK Overseas Territories, through both ODA and non-ODA funding (£41.44 million total from 2022/23 to 2025/26).	Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity For further details, see Target 19. Headline Indicator D.2 Domestic public funding on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems This indicator provides real-term, public sector spending on biodiversity in the UK, with the focus being on biodiversity and/or nature conservation. Spending is just one way of assessing the government's commitment to biodiversity. The methods for this part of the indicator have not been changed since the previous publication, but alternative data sources are being investigated (see Technical annex for more detail). Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity For further details, see Target 19. Headline Indicator D.3 Private funding (domestic and international) on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems

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	○ The UK has invested in the World Bank's PROBLUE since 2021, a Multi Donor Trust Fund supporting the growth of blue economies globally to reduce poverty in ODA-eligible coastal communities, while maintaining a healthy ocean. ● Prioritising investment that supports key domestic priorities: ○ In England, the 2025 Spending Review signaled the UK Government's largest investment into nature in history, with over £7 billion directed into nature's recovery in England by 2030. ○ Scotland's Nature Restoration Fund has delivered £55 million to over 230 projects since 2021, alongside additional investment in peatland restoration and a Biodiversity Investment Plan. ○ Wales allocates £2 billion annually under its Climate Change portfolio to tackle biodiversity loss and net zero. ○ Northern Ireland launched the Environment Fund and Farming with Nature Transition Scheme with £4.84 million allocated to support nature restoration. ● Recognising the critical role the private sector will play in mobilising funding for biodiversity, the UK is addressing barriers to investment. The UK is increasing regulation-driven compliance markets, championing the development of new domestic and international voluntary nature markets and promoting the integration of nature into decision-making by businesses, financial institutions and governments. The UK will also work internationally to drive global financial reform and mobilise investments from a range of sources to meet the growing global needs on climate, nature and development. The UK has developed a screening methodology to identify harmful incentives and subsidies across sectors (agriculture, fisheries, energy, transport). Full identification is pending due to data gaps. There has been strong progress domestically in the agricultural sector: ● England: Transition to Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes with over 77,000 agri-environment scheme agreements now live, covering over half of farmed land in England.	This indicator provides real-term spending by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector spending, again with a focus on biodiversity and/or nature conservation. The methods for this part of the indicator, which previously focused on spending by NGOs, have been adjusted to include additional sources of spending from the private sector. Data for this indicator can be found in the published datafile. Source: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity For further details, see Target 19.

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	- Scotland: Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) and biodiversity audits. - Wales: Sustainable Farming Scheme launching in 2026; Basic Payment phased out by 2029. - Northern Ireland: Launched its first phase of Farming with Nature. - Jersey & Isle of Man: Phasing out crop-based and pesticide subsidies; introducing biodiversity-linked payments. Internationally, the UK supports subsidy reform in eight countries via the Nature Positive Economy Programme. The UK Government is taking steps to ensure the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)'s International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) are reflected in UK policy and legislation. The UK Government recently consulted on UK versions of the ISSB Standards, known as UK Sustainability Reporting Standards (UK SRS), which will be made available for voluntary use in 2026. The UK is also developing and implementing a range of policies to help businesses reduce their negative impacts on biodiversity. Further, the UK has been a key actor in supporting in the development of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), which empowers businesses with the risk management tools they need to monitor, assess, and disclose their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity. As of November 2025, there are 92 UK-based organisations that have committed to report in line with the TNFD recommendations, out of a global total of 733, thereby constituting 12.55% of the global adoption figure and representing the second highest national proportion of TNFD adoption globally. Capacity-building The UK is making strong progress in increasing capacity-building and development, operating a variety of funding schemes to assist other countries, and participating in international partnerships; however, challenges remain in ensuring lasting impact beyond grant cycles.	

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	Domestically: • The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) programme is delivering a nationwide survey of England's ecosystems, publishing datasets and tools to inform policy, with the marine arm completed in 2025 and the terrestrial arm due to finish by 2028. • Scotland has an established Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture research programme that delivers capacity building research related to biodiversity, the current programme runs 2022-2027, with the 2027-2032 programme currently under development. • Wales has invested over £54 million through the Nature Networks Programme to strengthen the resilience of Wales's protected sites and improve habitat connectivity. This includes over £10 million awarded in the latest round to 13 projects across Wales. • Northern Ireland's new "Living map" and Eco-Schools programme will aid decision making and foster environmental awareness in the change-makers of the future • In the UKOTs, the UK Government's Darwin Plus Local programme has funded more than 150 projects worth more than £5.9 million to initiatives that incorporate capacity-building activities, ensuring that investments contribute to long-term sustainability beyond the project's duration. Internationally: • UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes have had a variety of impacts across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, for example the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC), the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP) and the OCEAN grants programme are all funding locally led projects, research partnerships and providing technical assistance. • The UK is supporting IPLCs through a range of programmes including the Amazon Catalyst for forest communities (AMCAT) programme, AIM4Forests,	

2050 Goals	Summary of national progress contributing to the global goals	Headline and Binary Indicators
	and the Global Land Governance Programme, strengthening land tenure, governance, and monitoring. Technology Transfer & Technical/Scientific Cooperation The UK is fully compliant with the Cartagena Protocol and operates coordinated initiatives that specifically enable collaboration with developing countries to allow the benefits of biotechnology research and development to be shared on an ongoing basis through initiatives such as the International Science Partnerships Fund and Global Challenges Research Fund. The UK supports technology transfer through: • Domestic programmes such as the Natural Capital Ecosystem and Assessment Programme in England, which is engineering an inventory of environmental data, maps and other outputs from the baseline that will be publicly accessible thereby ensuring the transfer of knowledge, best practice and techniques to the private sector, central and local governments, and public and third sectors • International programmes, including: the Blue Carbon Fund (Monitoring Verification and Verification systems for mangrove carbon accounting), Sustainable Blue Economies Programme (drone-based monitoring in Guyana and Jamaica and GIS workshops in Sri Lanka and Maldives), and Darwin Initiative projects (AI and drone technology for biodiversity monitoring in Madagascar; acoustic devices reducing river dolphin bycatch in India and Pakistan). The UK supports multiple global partnerships and research collaborations in the support of capacity building and scientific cooperation, such as the Global Ocean Alliance, High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People, UN Ocean Decade and All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance.	

Section V. Conclusions on the national implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

In the present section, Parties are encouraged to provide a summary of the national implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework, including the main achievements and major challenges encountered, in particular those related to capacity, technical, technological, institutional and financial gaps and constraints, and support provided for implementation. Parties could refer to cross-cutting challenges affecting the implementation of the Convention and the Framework or specific obstacles that have hindered progress. Those challenges may include lack of adequate financial, human and technical resources; difficulties regarding interministerial or inter-agency cooperation and coordination; lack of timely and reliable access to knowledge, information and data; lack of the scientific expertise needed to support project development and management; and lack of access to relevant technology for implementation. Parties should try to avoid duplication if relevant information is covered in the sections above.

Provide a summary assessment of the implementation of the Convention and the Framework, including all the sections of the Framework, and the main achievements and major challenges encountered and, where applicable, resolved, in particular those related to capacity, technical, technological, institutional and financial gaps and constraints, and support provided for implementation (1000-2000 words).

Achievements

The UK has made substantial progress in some key areas in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) within the four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs that have had the CBD extended to them. Some of the main achievements to highlight include:

Developing and implementing national biodiversity plans, strategies and legislation

The four countries of the UK, the UK Overseas Territories, and the Crown Dependencies have worked collaboratively to develop Blueprint for Halting and Reversing Biodiversity Loss: the [UK's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2030 \(UK NBSAP\)](#) including the UK's National Targets which commit the UK to achieving all 23 targets of the KMGBF at home. In the UK, devolution allows the four countries of the UK to tailor KMGBF implementation to their unique circumstances. They have each set out their priorities for action in targeted plans for protecting and restoring biodiversity and the wider environment. The UK NBSAP draws on these individual country strategies and the commitments made by each country, as well as the UK-level commitments on reserved matters, to demonstrate the ambition of the UK as a whole.

- **England:** The Environment Act 2021 (the Environment Act) requires the government to prepare an Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) for significantly improving the natural environment, set legally binding targets, and have 'due regard' for the environmental principles. The revised EIP, EIP25, was published on 1 December 2025. It includes prioritised actions to deliver its goals, as well as new delivery plans for the ambitious Environment Act targets. The EIP25 clearly describes the actions needed to be taken, who is responsible for delivering them and how to hold government to account. The EIP25 sets out a plan to restore nature, improve environmental quality, create a circular economy, protect environmental security and improve people's access to nature. The EIP25 and accompanying target delivery plans set ambitious yet achievable interim targets with a clear, detailed, pathway to drive progress towards the statutory Environment Act targets for England, the delivery plans give more detail on this.
- **Scotland:** The Scottish Government has published a national biodiversity strategy (2024/2045) which has the overall ambition to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and restore biodiversity by 2045.

The strategy is supported by a delivery framework which includes six yearly rolling delivery plans, the first of which was published in 2024, and proposed statutory nature restoration targets via the Natural Environment Bill which is currently being progressed through the Scottish Parliament. Also, the Strategic Framework for Biodiversity in Scotland identifies a range of conditions which need to be in place to enable the successful achievement of the Scottish Government's Strategic Goals. These include the need to systematically mainstream positive outcomes for biodiversity across the wider policy landscape and to strengthen accountability for delivery, including evidence based monitoring and statutory nature restoration targets.

- **Wales:** An integrated legislative framework underpins the approach to tackling biodiversity loss. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 defines seven well-being goals for Wales. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduces a framework for sustainably managing natural resources in Wales and places a duty on certain public bodies to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience by producing a National Natural Resources Policy that sets out the key priorities, risks and opportunities for managing our natural resources sustainably and based on the evidence set out in the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR), produced every four years. This framework will be further strengthened through the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill, which is currently progressing through the Welsh Senedd and will introduce a target setting framework, to include enhanced planning, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.
- **Northern Ireland:** The Environment Act 2021 requires the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to publish an Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), which sets out the steps that it and any other Northern Ireland department intend to take to improve the natural environment. This plan must be reviewed every five years. The first EIP was published in September 2024 and includes targets to restore or create 20,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites by 2030, restore or conserve all semi-natural peatlands to healthy, functioning ecosystems by 2040 and by 2027 review the existing protected site network and its effectiveness in safeguarding priority habitats and species and contributing to ecological and climate resilience. A Nature Recovery Strategy is also under development, the aim of which is to further promote the full suite of targets in the EIP and focus attention on areas of the KMGBF that have not been fully addressed by the EIP.
- **OT Strategy:** The [UK Overseas Territories biodiversity strategy](#), published in November 2025, promotes participatory and integrated spatial planning that embeds biodiversity considerations across land and marine environments. It encourages inclusive governance by involving local communities, governments, and stakeholders in planning processes through the delivery of technical training in priority areas such as monitoring, evaluation and spatial planning. The strategy prioritises biodiversity-inclusive approaches to development, ensuring that planning frameworks address ecosystem resilience and climate adaptation alongside economic needs. This will be partly achieved through the consolidation of spatial data into a user-friendly system and the provision of training to increase staff access to biodiversity information. The strategy also strengthens effective management through the expansion and improved governance of protected area networks and advocates adaptive management to respond to land and sea use pressures. By integrating land-sea planning and monitoring habitat change, the strategy aims to reduce cumulative impacts and maintain ecological connectivity, ensuring that all areas are managed in ways that safeguard biodiversity and support sustainable development.

Investing significant funding towards nature recovery

- In 2023/2024, there has been a new high in expenditure of UK public sector funding for international biodiversity totaling around £560 million.
- Both the long-term and the short-term assessments of public and NGO/private sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK are improving, with £1.07 billion and £452 million allocated in 2023/2024 respectively. Between 2020 and 2025, the £750 million Nature for Climate Fund has transformed how trees and woodlands are grown and managed in England.

- The UK Government is committed to investing over £7 billion into nature recovery in England by 2030, including £5.9 billion for farming schemes that deliver biodiversity, climate mitigation, and resilience outcomes, £816 million for tree planting, and £85 million for peatland restoration.
- Since 2021, funding of nearly £40 million under the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund has gone to habitat restoration and protection of native species. Further, Scotland has made a financial commitment of £250 million over 10 years to restore 250,000 hectares of degraded peat by 2030.
- The Welsh Government, through its Nature Networks Programme, has provided £9 million in match funding to help restore the ecological condition of four key rivers. Further, the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP) has received £11.6 million of funding from Welsh Government to progress peatland restoration across Wales.

Fulfilling the UK's obligations under the Nagoya Protocol

- The UK has fulfilled its obligations under the Nagoya Protocol through implementing the UK Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations. The appointment of a National Focal Point and Competent Authority in the UK, as well as the implementation of the ABS Regulations will ensure that benefits are shared fairly and equitably with the providers of genetic resources.

Driving the establishment and implementation of the multilateral benefit sharing mechanism for the use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources

- The UK played a key role in reaching agreement on the multilateral benefit sharing mechanism for the use of DSI on genetic resources – including the Cali Fund – by co-chairing an extensive intersessional process and the negotiations at CBD COP-15 and COP-16. The UK co-launched the Friends of the Cali Fund with Chile and is working with businesses to raise awareness of the Cali Fund and encourage contributions. The first payment into the Cali Fund was made by a UK business – TierraViva AI.

Implementation of the KMGBF Monitoring Framework

- Following agreement of the KMGBF Monitoring Framework, the UK has made significant progress in using the Headline Indicators (HI) in the 7th National Report, as requested in Decision 16/6 reporting on 19 HI in this report.

Climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience

- The UK is the first major economy to halve its emissions – having cut them by 53% between 1990 and 2023, while also growing its economy by over 80%. The UK's Climate Change Act (2008) made the UK the first country to introduce a legally binding, long-term emissions reduction target. This sets the UK's commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050 in law. Under The Climate Change Act (2008), the UK has set carbon budgets, which are five-year caps on emissions levels. The UK has overachieved its targets for Carbon Budgets 1-3, is projected to overachieve on Carbon Budget 4-5, and has recently published its plans to meet Carbon Budget 6.
- The UK Government recently published a report on 'actions to jointly address climate change and biodiversity loss in England'. It sets out how the UK Government is delivering its key commitments on climate and nature in an integrated way, and the opportunities to further enhance an integrated approach. Nature-based solutions across land and sea are a core part of tackling climate change and averting its impacts.
- The UK is scaling up Nature-based solutions through extensive peatland restoration, woodland creation, blue carbon and seagrass projects, and expanded natural flood management to strengthen carbon storage, ecosystem resilience and climate adaptation. Across the UK, long term monitoring (1990-2023) shows forests have cumulatively stored the equivalent of 590

million tonnes of carbon dioxide (Mt CO₂e), supporting progress towards national mitigation and resilience goals.

Access to Nature

- Across the UK, significant progress has been made in improving access, health and wellbeing through enhanced green and blue spaces. Wales has created over 4,000 new or improved green spaces, including 730 pollinator sites and 220 community food-growing areas, engaging over 15,500 volunteers. Northern Ireland has designated 110 green and blue spaces, with the Comber Greenway offering accessible, biodiversity-friendly recreation. Scotland is developing a policy framework for Nature Networks and integrating blue-green infrastructure into every new transport projects. In England, the £33 million Access for All Programme has expanded inclusive access across landscapes and National Trail.

Fully implementing biosafety measures and legislation governing the use and release of living modified organisms (LMOs), in line with the Cartagena Protocol

- In this area, the UK has demonstrated comprehensive legislative coverage, robust implementation, and significant international engagement. The UK's actions have ensured biosafety and fair distribution of benefits derived from biotechnology.

Investing significant resources in capacity-building and development

- The UK works extensively through international partnerships to support global capacity development to deliver the KMGBF. The UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes are having positive impacts on the protection and recovery of terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, including the UK Blue Carbon Fund, which builds capacity and supports development in sustainable marine management

Achieving greater coverage of protected areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs)

- Following a substantial increase in the number of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) during 2010-2020, the four countries of the UK have now designated more than 30% of their marine area, as have many of the UKOTs and CDs. The focus is now on ensuring the effective management of these MPAs, which will be monitored using the UK's MEPCA indicator.

Ensuring sustainable use of wild species

- The UK is making measurable progress, particularly in sustainable fisheries, with 73% of UK quota fish stocks now harvested within safe limits. The Fisheries Act 2020 established 8 fisheries objectives, including precautionary approaches to ensure sustainability, to protect marine ecosystems and to minimise contributions to climate change, as well as adapting to the impacts of climate change. This Act required the fisheries authorities (Defra and the Devolved Governments) to produce a joint statement agreeing a shared direction for fisheries management. The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) in 2022 sets out a timetable for the publication of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) that will manage stock sustainability in a flexible manner, with input from the fishing industry. This represents a significant shift in the UK's approach to fisheries management, recognising the importance of enabling those with a stake in the fisheries to participate in the management of those fisheries.

Enabling more sustainable consumer choices

- The UK has taken a range of actions, including legislating UK-wide bans on the sale of wet wipes containing plastic and single-use vapes. Other legislation will come into force in the next 2-3

years that will introduce a UK-wide deposit-return scheme and mandatory recycling labelling of products.

Demonstrating the important role of science, technology, and innovation in the implementation of the KMGBF

The UK has done this through:

- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES): The UK is a substantial supporter of IPBES and has provided annual voluntary contributions to fund IPBES, including most recently (2025) a significant contribution of £1.39 million. Further, the UK contributes the second highest number of IPBES experts compared to other countries globally. The UK hosted IPBES-12 Plenary in Manchester on 3-8th February 2026, focusing on the Business & Biodiversity Assessment. The UK also supported a Parallel Programme that brought together the best of academia, government and business to protect global biodiversity.
- Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC): The GCBC is a UK ODA programme that supports developing countries in shaping decisions and policies that better value, protect, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity while strengthening climate resilience and supporting poverty alleviation. Funding from the UK will support actions towards achieving KMGBF Targets on minimising the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and build resilience (Target 8), on restoring, maintaining and enhancing nature's contributions to people (Target 11) and on integrating biodiversity in decision-making (Target 14). GCBC efforts will help to establish a global network of research institutions and experts to address critical research gaps in how the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity can address climate solutions and improve livelihoods. It has launched three grant competitions and has awarded over £20 million to more than 30 projects in developing countries.
- Research and Development (R&D) projects: The UK has funded several key projects that will support KMGBF implementation. For example, the KMGBF Modelling and Scenarios research project is due to be concluded in early 2026 and will aim to provide an evaluation of current models and development of scenarios relevant to the goals and targets of the KMGBF, with a focus on Goal A to protect and restore and Goal B to prosper with nature. Another project, on Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management (EAFM) has conducted a review of global approaches and provides best practice recommendations for transitioning to EAFM, to support implementation of the ecosystem approach, and is particularly relevant to Target 5 of the KMGBF.

Challenges

Despite all these achievements, ongoing challenges persist. Some of the challenges are described below.

Financial and Resource Constraints

- There are significant capacity issues, for example, only one-third of English councils have in-house ecologists and some UKOTs have only one staff member for taking decisions around planning and the environment.
- Limited and short-term funding cycles hinder long-term commitments, for example for restoration and protected area management. There are also workforce shortages and skills gaps in restoration, tree planting, and monitoring technologies. For example, tree-planting schemes are currently demand-led and therefore uptake must be sufficient to deliver benefits and models must be sustainable, attractive and financially viable for both participants and government. Longer-term planning of tree-planting would enable the supply of resources such as workforce capacity and skills, supply of saplings and seed, to keep pace with demand.

Technical and Data Gaps

- The availability, accessibility and quality of sufficient, timely and reliable data and evidence vary considerably for some key areas, for example spatial data for mapping and planning. There are

technical difficulties around monitoring certain pressures and their impacts and the effectiveness of management in reducing them. This creates key knowledge gaps that hinder effective prioritisation of policy action. Data are most deficient in some of the UKOTs and CDs. Some examples of knowledge gaps include:

- Detecting invasive non-native species, fisheries bycatch and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.
- Understanding the sources, transport, pathways and fate of marine plastic pollution.
- Monitoring impacts from human activities over large areas of seabed.
- Understanding how biodiversity policy impacts women and men differently.
- Measuring the benefits to people derived from the sustainable use of wild species.
- All Defra ODA programmes have monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes built in from the start, which help to measure effectiveness towards each programme's intended outcomes. However, standardising MEL processes can be challenging when programmes vary in scale, focus and timeframe.

Competing Demands and Priorities and Transboundary Challenges

- There are often competing societal demands and priorities to balance in managing the use of natural resources on land and at sea. For example, across the UK, the commitment to a significant expansion of offshore wind to achieve Net Zero will likely create additional pressure on the Marine Protected Area (MPA) network and the species and habitats they were designed to protect.
- Land availability, complex ownership, and competing uses can also constrain the ability to expand access to green and blue spaces.
- There are also ongoing tensions between the need to maximise food production and the imperative to recover and protect nature. The UK is encountering difficulties in persuading all stakeholders to share its ambition of moving more agricultural land away from farming to restore nature. This inertia amongst some land managers to deliver ambitious ecosystem restoration stems from understandable concerns about the impact on local traditions and food production, and the perceived economic risk. Further challenges include a lack of the knowledge and skills needed to transition to nature restoration, and the complexity of the regulatory and funding landscape.
- Regarding pollution, many types of pollution are transboundary, making them difficult for any single country to tackle. In particular, water environments across the UK face mounting pressures from nutrient pollution, chemical contaminants, and plastic pollution. Climate change exacerbates existing pressures on freshwater, terrestrial and marine ecosystems by accelerating degradation, increasing pollution and erosion, which impact further on habitats that are already in poor condition. Climate change not only impedes restoration, it also intensifies conflicts over land and sea use, strains limited capacity for monitoring and funding and threatens blue carbon and coastal systems that underpin long-term resilience.

Overcoming Challenges

The UK has committed to achieving all its 23 National Targets in full. This will require substantive transformative change, including incentivising more local action. Such change will always come with challenges, but these will also provide opportunities for innovative solutions. The UK has identified and progressed some opportunities and developed solutions in response to some of the challenges highlighted above.

Financial and Resource Constraints

- To address the need for long-term private finance opportunities and to provide the long-term stability that partners need to commit necessary resources, Defra is working across government and with industry partners to encourage the development of such opportunities to support tree

planting and woodland creation. Defra is also putting in place the conditions for more private sector investment to flow into genuinely additional nature recovery activities. It will explore how businesses can be supported and incentivised to pay for the services nature provides; support the British Standards Institute to develop a suite of standards to guide high integrity investment in UK nature markets; support project pipeline and capacity development through the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund; and it will facilitate blended finance through the Landscape Recovery Programme and Big Nature Impact Fund.

- To help overcome Wales's £5-7 billion finance gap for nature-related targets over the next 10 years (as reported in the [Finance Gap for UK Nature Report](#)), the Welsh Government is developing a foundation on which to grow future green investment. It has provided funding through the Nature Networks Fund to support capacity building, with a focus on investment readiness. It has drafted responsible investment principles and is developing a marine environmental enhancement fund (MARINE fund Cymru) with marine conservation NGOs through the Blue Investment Group of the Coast and Seas Partnership.

Technical and Data Gaps

- To improve monitoring efforts around the UK's ODA programming in helping to deliver Targets 19-23 of the KMGBF, Defra uses a robust set of overarching metrics, which include cross-Government International Climate Finance (ICF) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Defra International (DI) KPIs. All KPIs are validated rigorously and voluntary compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics is encouraged, as are mechanisms to eliminate double counting. KPIs have been aligned with various international-level agreements, including the KMGBF, but also Sustainable Development Goals and others. This allows for comparable reporting between programmes so effectiveness can be assessed and used to prioritise the most effective ODA programmes.
- In Wales the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill which is currently progressing through the Welsh Senedd will introduce a target setting framework, to include enhanced planning, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.