

Guidance for Local Planning Authorities

The purpose of the biodiversity gain plan template is to provide an easily accessible document for developers to complete, to demonstrate how proposals meet the statutory regulations for the biodiversity gain plan.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on how to review a biodiversity gain plan template.

As part of biodiversity gain plan, check that the developer has submit the following in addition to the completion of this template:

- Completed metric calculation tool
- Pre-development and post-development plans, showing the location of onsite habitat and drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North
- Approved compensation plan (if applicable)
- Register reference number(s) (if applicable)
- Statutory biodiversity credits eligibility evidence in the form of correspondence from habitat providers (if applicable)
- Statutory biodiversity credits proof of purchase (if applicable)
- Habitat management and monitoring plan (if applicable)

A. Details of submission

Section 1: Date of submission

- The submission date should be entered.
- Any resubmission date should also be recorded for version control purposes.

Section 2: Planning application reference number

- The planning application reference number should be entered.

Section 3: Local Planning Authority

- Details of the lead Local Planning Authority who is determining the application.

Section 4: Development site address or site description

- The site address should be entered.
- If the site does not have an address or postcode, the developer should have included a description of the site and the OS grid reference.

Section 5: Description of development to which the biodiversity gain plan relates

- A description of the proposed development and any changes of use should be entered. Check that the information matches the details on the application form.

B. Applicant responsible for completion of the biodiversity gain plan

Section 6: Name

- The name of the applicant responsible for the completion of the biodiversity gain plan should be entered. This could be an employee of the organisation.

Section 7: Organisation

- The name of the organisation that the applicant works for should be entered.

Section 8: Address

- The full address of the organisation should be entered.

Section 9: Email address

- Email address should be entered.

Section 10: Telephone number

- Telephone number should be entered.

Section 11: Declaration

- The name and signature of the applicant responsible for completing the biodiversity gain plan should be entered.

C. Person responsible for completion of the biodiversity gain plan.

Section 12. Name

- The name of the agent responsible for the completion of the biodiversity gain plan should be entered. This could be an agent acting on behalf of the organisation such as planning agent or ecologist.

Section 13. Organisation

- The name of the organisation that the agent works for should be entered. This could be a consultancy and the developer organisation that they are representing.

Section 14. Address

- The full address of the organisation should be entered.

Section 15. Email address

- Email address should be entered.

Section 16. Telephone number

- Telephone number should be entered.

Section 17. Declaration

- The name and signature of the agent responsible for completing the biodiversity gain plan should be entered.

D. Biodiversity Net Gain strategy

Section 18. Please explain how you have met the ‘what counts towards your BNG’ guidance

- (Insert guidance link)

Check that the developer has explained how they have met the ‘what counts towards your BNG guidance’

The criteria for ‘what counts’ include:

- Providing green infrastructure, environmental impact assessment compensation or sustainable drainage
- Providing river basin management plan mitigation and enhancement measures
- Providing mitigation or compensation for protected species or sites
- If you are providing off-site mitigation and compensation for protected sites and species this may count, but you need to do at least 10% of your BNG through other activities such as on-site habitat creation and enhancement.

The criteria for what ‘does not count’ include:

- The replacement of trees relating to a tree felling licence or a restocking notice
- Marine licensing activities
- Remediation required under the environmental damage regulations

Section 19. Set out the steps taken on-site to avoid impacts to habitats and/or minimise impacts to habitats

- On-site means on the land the development work is on, within the red line development boundary.
- The developer may have scenario metrics which show the separate approaches where they have tried to avoid impacts to habitats and/or minimise impacts to habitats on-site.
- Where there is irreplaceable habitat present on site, the developer must set out steps taken to minimise any adverse effect on the biodiversity of that irreplaceable habitat and any appropriate compensation arrangements in place where there is an impact.

Section 20. Is the target net gain percentage being delivered on-site?

- Relevant box should be ticked.

Section 21. Are any of your on-site enhancements considered “significant”?

- If the developer is providing on-site enhancements that significantly increase the baseline biodiversity value of habitats on the land, the LPA will count these as significant.
- A significant on-site enhancement normally involves creating, enhancing and maintaining habitats of:
 - higher distinctiveness (for example, managing a meadow area for biodiversity)
 - better condition (for example, restoring a woodland to good the condition)
 - larger size (for example, creating a large amenity planting area) or where the size is significant relative to the size of the development
- The developer will need to check with the LPA to see if their on-site enhancements are significant.
- The LPA may want the developer to secure less significant on-site enhancements if they contribute to locally important species or ecological networks.

Section 22. If yes, provide details of appropriate planning condition or obligation to secure its long-term management.

- A planning condition or legal agreement such as a S106 or conservation covenant should be entered.

Section 23. If no, how many Biodiversity Units are needed off-site to meet the required net gain percentage?

- Off-site units are either from the developers own land outside the development redline boundary, or units from a land manager.
- The total of off-site Biodiversity Units required should be entered.

Section 24. Rationale for proposed off-site delivery (if applicable)

- For example, if on-site units have not met the required target percentage.

Section 25. Rationale for proposed use of Statutory biodiversity credits (if applicable)

- For example, if on-site and off-site units have not met the required target percentage.

Section 26. Do you have a habitat management and monitoring a plan in place?

- Relevant box should be ticked.
- The developer may need to submit a HMMP alongside their biodiversity gain plan if they are doing onsite BNG.
- If the developer is doing off-site BNG, the landowner will agree the HMMP with the LPA or the responsible body.
- If the developer is doing significant onsite BNG, the HMMP will accompany the s106.

Section 27. Have you used the statutory biodiversity metric?

- Relevant box should be ticked.

Section 28. Completed biodiversity metrics

- The statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool should be submitted, and the file name should be detailed in the biodiversity gain plan.

Section 29. Condition assessment

- The condition assessment sheets should be submitted, and the file name should be detailed in the biodiversity gain plan.

Section 30. Baseline habitat survey report and map

- The baseline habitat survey report and map should be submitted, and the file name should be detailed in the biodiversity gain plan.

Section 31. Post-development habitat map or landscape plan

- The post-development habitat map or landscape plan should be submitted, and the file name should be detailed in the biodiversity gain plan.

Section 32. Has any approved habitat degradation been included in the baseline? If yes, include any relevant consenting body and reference number

- Relevant box should be ticked.
- Details of the relevant consenting body and the reference number should be entered.

E. Are any of the below being lost as part of the development – if so, have you submitted a compensation plan to meet other existing biodiversity obligations to the Local Planning Authority?

Section 33. Irreplaceable habitats

- Link to irreplaceable habitat list

F. On-site habitat enhancements (if required)

Section 34. Survey date(s)

- Survey date(s) should be entered.

Section 35. Survey constraints

- E.g., access issues, weather, seasonal constraints.

Section 36. Total pre-development biodiversity value (in Biodiversity Units)

- The total pre-development biodiversity value should match the biodiversity units in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

Section 37. Total indicative post-development biodiversity value (in Biodiversity Units)

- The total indicative post-development biodiversity value should match the biodiversity units in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

Section 38. Total net change in Biodiversity Units

- The total net change in Biodiversity Units should match the biodiversity units in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

Section 39. Will Biodiversity Units being delivered on any part of your site be registered and allocated to other developments? If yes, please provide details

- Details may include the amount of Biodiversity Units and the location of the other development.
- If the developer has excess gains, they must be registered if they plan to allocate them to other developments. The allocation will need to be recorded on the Biodiversity Gain Sites Register before the developer submits the Biodiversity Net Gain Plan to the LPA.

G. Off-site habitat enhancements (if required)

Section 40. Please give details of the off-site habitat enhancement being proposed

- Details should include whether off-site enhancements are being delivered by the developer or whether the developer are purchasing Biodiversity Units from a third party.

Section 41. Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference number(s)

- Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference number(s) should be entered here.

Section 42. How have off-site habitat enhancement proposals been secured?

- The relevant box should be ticked.

Section 43. Total pre-development biodiversity value (in Biodiversity Units)

- The total pre-development biodiversity value should match the biodiversity units in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

Section 44. Total indicative post-development biodiversity value (in Biodiversity Units)

- The total indicative post-development biodiversity value should match the biodiversity units in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

Section 45. Total net change in Biodiversity Units

- The total net change in Biodiversity Units should match the biodiversity units in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

H. Statutory biodiversity credits

Section 46. Are Statutory biodiversity credits required? If yes, please complete section 47 to 49.

- The relevant box should be ticked.

Section 47. How many Statutory biodiversity credits are required?

- The total amount of Statutory biodiversity credits should match the habitat deficit in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

Section 48. What evidence is there that no units are available through the market?

- Correspondence from at least three habitat providers, or a search result from other online registers, showing that there are no appropriate units for sale should be attached.

Section 49. Proof of purchase

- Proof of purchase from Natural England and reference number should be attached.

I. Trading summary

Section 50. Trading summary

- The relevant box should be ticked according to information in the Statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool tab 'Headline results'.

J. Sharing data (not mandatory)

Section 51. Will you share relevant ecological survey data with the appropriate Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC) or any other bodies?

- The developer may indicate whether they intend to share data with Local Environmental Record Centres or other bodies. **This is not mandatory.**