

Thames Valley

Environmental Records Centre



Enabling data-driven decisions to better enhance and protect our natural environment

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@TVERC1

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN DATA STANDARDS FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE

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BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN DATA STANDARDS FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out standards for the collection and submission of biodiversity data to facilitate the delivery of biodiversity net gain in West Oxfordshire.

Habitat data are routinely collected in surveys carried out to provide information to inform decisions regarding planning and development proposals. In order to facilitate an efficient, reproducible and repeatable assessment of the impact of development, these data need to be collected in a consistent manner and to a common standard.

It is also important for there to be standards for recording species observations and in identifying and proposing Local Sites for consideration by local selection panels. TVERC guidance on Local Sites can be found here <http://www.tverc.org/cms/content/local-wildlife-sites> and for species here <http://www.tverc.org/cms/content/share-your-records>

STANDARDS

The following standards are set to support delivery of biodiversity net gain.

1. Structure - the attributes recorded for each observation (e.g. grid reference, location name for species observations, and plant species lists for habitat etc...). Recording the same attributes for each observation ensures that assessments of biodiversity value and the calculation of biodiversity units are reproducible and repeatable and therefore that decisions made with that data are transparent and repeatable.
2. Format - formats should be open where possible, but not be onerous for those using proprietary software to use. Therefore, it may be appropriate for more than one format to be specified. However, the use of proprietary formats should not exclude those without the appropriate licences from accessing and scrutinising these data.
3. Transparency - data submitted should be full and complete. This means that decisions can be scrutinised without having to make assumptions about the data.



4. Habitat classification system - The DEFRA biodiversity metric 2.0 uses the UKHabs classification system. Biodiversity impact assessments and unit calculations carried out using this metric therefore need habitat data to be classified according to this system. As such habitat data collected and/or submitted as part of planning applications will need to be classified according to this system

This document sets out standards for:

- Habitat data
- Habitat condition data

HABITAT DATA

The table below sets out the attributes that should accompany GIS vector data submitted to LPAs and LERCs.

Format: Geopackage, ESRI shapefile

| Attribute | Data type | Description | Example |
|--------------------|-----------------|--|----------------|
| ID | Integer | Unique reference ID for the geometry | 1 |
| HabitatType | Character (255) | UKHabs habitat type | Acid grassland |
| HabitatCode | Character (25) | UKHabs habitat code | g1 |
| Condition | Character (10) | Condition of habitat according to DEFRA metric 2.0 | Good |
| CreateDate | Date | Date habitat recorded/surveyed | 2019-10-25 |

Data Standards for Biodiversity Net Gain

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| Attribute | Data type | Description | Example |
|-------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| SiteName | Character (255) | Name of site surveyed | Land adjacent to Speedwell House, Oxford |
| SurveyName | Character (255) | Name of project or survey | Phase 1 survey for land adjacent to Speedwell House, Oxford |
| Comments | Character (255) | Comments on habitat | |
| MapBy | Character (50) | Name of person carrying out habitat mapping | Dan Carpenter |
| Contractor | Character (50) | Name of contractor carrying out survey | Ecologist123 |
| BaseMap | Character (30) | Basemap used to digitise habitat boundaries | OS MasterMap |

HABITAT CONDITION DATA

Condition assessments are a vital part of calculating biodiversity units when carrying out biodiversity impact assessments of development. Habitat condition is one of the three main factors, along with area and distinctiveness. DEFRA metric 2.0 includes a document which sets out condition criteria for each of the broad habitats in the UKHabs classification, design to determine the condition of habitats included in unit calculations.

It is absolutely vital that the information collected and considered to decide on the condition of a habitat in a biodiversity net gain calculation is made available alongside habitat data used in a metric calculation. This provides for independent assessment of the calculation and provides for reproducibility of metric calculations. Habitat and condition data, to defined standards, should be provided such that someone else can perform a metric calculation and achieve the same result using the same data.

Habitat condition data should be submitted with habitat data and other documents as part of a planning application. Each habitat patch should have a condition assessment, but patches can be combined where condition is the same for a single habitat across multiple patches. Condition data should be provided as part of a baseline ecological report for the proposed development site in the following format.

| Attribute | Description | Example |
|---|--|---|
| ID | Polygon ID from GIS data | 1 |
| HabitatType | UKHabs habitat type | Acid grassland |
| HabitatCode | UKHabs habitat code | g1 |
| Condition | Condition of habitat according to DEFRA metric 2.0 | Good |
| Criterion1... Criterionn | Each criterion from the metric should be listed, with the value recorded from the field against each criterion | 4. Undesirable species and physical damage is below 5% cover. |
| CriteriaPassed | Number of criteria which were passed for the habitat | 5 |

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| Attribute | Description | Example |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| CriteriaFailed | Number of criteria which were failed for the habitats | 3 |
| Comments | Comments to justify any of the scores or decisions | Good example |



ABOUT TVERC

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) is a 'not for profit' organisation covering Berkshire and Oxfordshire. We are run by a partnership and are one of a national network of local records centres. We are a member of the Association of Local Records Centres (ALERC) and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). Our funding partners include all the local authorities in Oxfordshire & Berkshire plus the Environment Agency. We also work closely with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

WHAT WE DO

We provide our funding partners with annually updated species and sites information as GIS tables, and undertake surveys of local wildlife sites. We also carry out data analysis for the monitoring of local authority Local Plans. We provide information to parish councils, local people, conservation bodies, land-owners, students and commercial organisations such as ecological consultants and utilities companies via data searches, data licensing and data exchanges. We provide other services such as ecological surveys, data analysis & presentation and training.

OUR RECORDS

We hold over 2.7 million records of flora and fauna in Berkshire and Oxfordshire plus information about Local Wildlife and Geological Sites, NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principal Importance (previously called UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats) and Ecological Networks (Conservation Target Areas and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas). We collect this data from the general public, skilled volunteer /amateur recorders, professionals working for wildlife charities (BBOWT and RSPB), professionals working for government agencies (the Environment Agency & local authorities) and ecological consultants. This information is used:

- by planning authorities and developers to make informed decisions on the design and location of sustainable development
- to help farmers, land-owners and conservation organisations manage land in the best way to enhance biodiversity
- by nature partnerships to direct wildlife conservation work
- by teachers, students and scientists for education and scientific research.

For more information please visit our website: www.tverc.org