

# A brief introduction to Biodiversity Net Gain, Metric 4.0 and the Metric Checklist



July 2023

# Learning Outcomes



## After today's training you will:

1. Be aware of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and the timeline towards it becoming mandatory
  2. Have an awareness of the Biodiversity Metric and why it is fundamental to BNG
  3. Know how to navigate around a completed Metric
  4. Understand the Metric Checklist and how to apply it at the validation stage of a planning application
- **Note: Metric Checklist is a draft version**

# Environment Act 2021

**‘a turning point for nature’ Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England**



- Amends Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) and 2008 Planning Act (NSIP's)
- Mandates BNG in the planning process, making it a requirement for all appropriate developments to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity
- Calculation of net gain by way of a mandatory biodiversity metric and approval of a biodiversity gain plan. Habitat secured for at least 30 years.
- Statutory duty to manage & maintain National Register of net gain delivery sites
- Statutory biodiversity credits

**Why do we need Biodiversity Net Gain?**

**Answer: to put nature on the road to recovery**

**For years biodiversity has been routinely lost through development**

—

**BNG provides the opportunity to reverse this**

# Biodiversity Net Gain will put nature on the road to recovery

For the Economy



For Nature



For People



**BNG provides the most significant opportunity in decades to not only reverse, but to grow nature**

# Biodiversity Net Gain

## Key points and timeline



- BNG will currently apply to England only
- Mandatory BNG is expected to commence for all large scale/major developments in November 2023
- Developments undertaken on small sites will not need to comply with BNG requirements until April 2024. The extension will give Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) and smaller developers a longer window to prepare for BNG on small sites and learn from early experiences of BNG on major sites.
- BNG does not replace or diminish any current protection for biodiversity or processes that are required  
e.g. ecological impact assessment, arboricultural survey, flood risk assessment

# Key BNG Stakeholders

Developers

Landowners

LPA's

Three very important but different conversations, some guidance already available online:

- [Sell biodiversity units as a land manager](#)
- [Combining environmental payments](#)
- [Biodiversity metric](#)
- [What counts towards BNG](#)
- [Biodiversity net gain](#)
- [Conservation covenants](#)
- [Biodiversity net gain for local authorities \(PAS\)](#)

# Training and Information Autumn 2023



## **Biodiversity Net Gain policy updates and timeline**

- These will be delivered through the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and member institutes as webinars by Natural England or Defra, as appropriate

## **Basic and intermediate training on the Metric and Metric Checklist**

- These will be delivered through the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and member institutes as webinars by Natural England

## **Advanced level training on the Metric**

- CIEEM currently offer advanced level training on the Metric and this will continue and likely to increase, especially for LPA ecologists
- Member institutes and other organisations are encouraged to deliver and Natural England will discuss how to support them e.g. training material



# What is Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and what is the Metric?



- When it comes into force, BNG will be mandated in the planning process, making it a requirement for all appropriate developments to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity
- Calculation of net gain will be by way of the **statutory biodiversity metric**:
  1. Calculation of the baseline biodiversity unit value of a piece of land prior to planning application
  2. A second calculation of the post-intervention biodiversity unit value
  3. Difference between the two calculations is biodiversity gain or loss

# The Metric

## Calculating the value of habitats using an Excel workbook



The Metric is fundamental to BNG, has been consulted on by the Secretary of State (Sept 2022) and will be maintained and updated into the future

**Metric 4.0** published March 2023 following a decade of development:

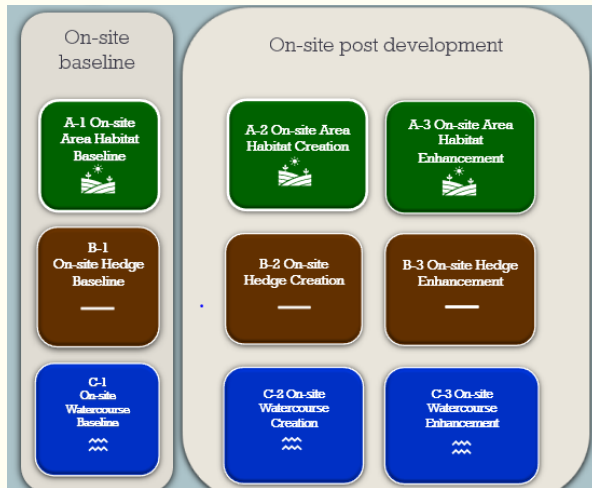
Defra pilot Metric 2012, Metric 2.0 2019, Metric 3.0 2021, Metric 3.1 2022

From day one of mandatory biodiversity net gain, all applications that need to submit a Metric must use the **Statutory Biodiversity Metric**

Note, transition arrangements will apply for a short time. Awaiting update.

# What is a biodiversity unit?

- Biodiversity units are a proxy to describe biodiversity



- **Area units**
- **Hedgerow units**
- **Watercourse units**

BNG applies to **each habitat type** that is **present at the baseline**.

For example, a site with 100 area units, 20 hedgerow units and 40 watercourse units will need to provide as a minimum, post-intervention units of:

110 area units, 22 hedgerow units and 44 watercourse units

# Mechanisms for delivery of BNG



## On-site (units)

Potentially in full or combination



Habitat creation or enhancement; landscaping or green infrastructure

## Off-site (units)



New habitat creation or enhancement on land holdings or via habitat banks

## Statutory Credits

Only if units not available

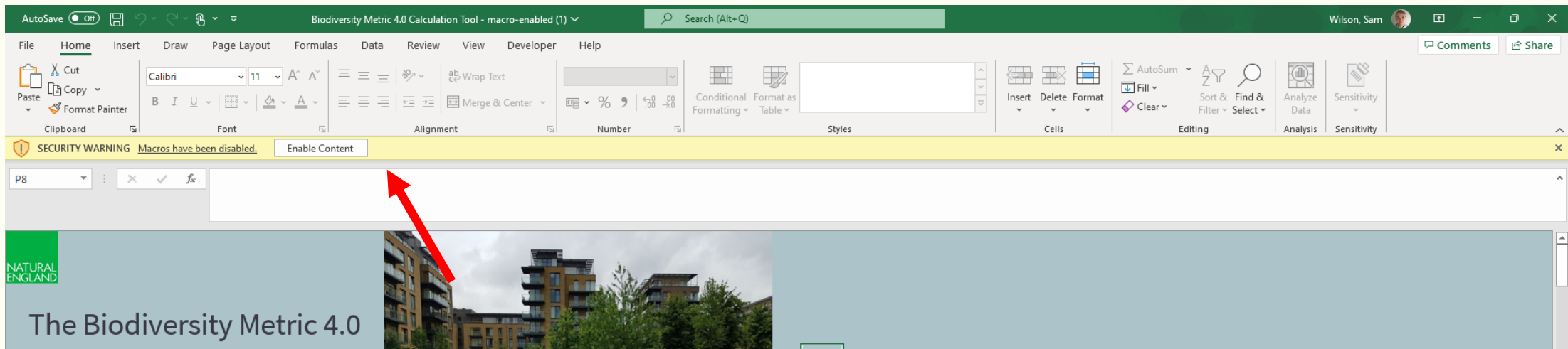


Landscape-scale strategic habitat creation delivering nature-based solutions

# First Steps



- When first opening the Metric, click the 'enable content' box to allow macros to function
- Always open on to your laptop or pc. Do not open in a browser.
- After this training, download a copy of these slides and the training Excel file
- [Download Metric 4.0 here](#)



# Metric Checklist for use at planning application validation

## Updated draft – July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023

1. Is a Metric required? All major developments from November x, 2023:

- a. erection of ten or more dwellings or housing development on a site of 0.5 hectare or more
- b. erection of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created is 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more
- c. development on a site of 1 hectare or more

2. Is the development exempt from BNG – ~~permitted development~~, self-build, biodiversity gain site, de minimis threshold

3. Has the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool been submitted in Excel format (not pdf or other form)?

NB. No other versions of the Metric e.g. 3.1, 4.0 are allowable  
(note re transition arrangements, DLHUC)

4. Are sufficient details on start page? date of assessment, assessor.

5. Are there are any red boxes present?

Check start page, headline results page and A2 habitat creation  
If so, fails validation, return to developer.

**NB. This  
checklist is  
subject to change**