



## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) minimum information requirements – DDC guidance for application form (V1.0)

To ensure that you provide the necessary information for the DDC to assess the validity of your planning application with regards to the biodiversity net gain minimum information requirements, please follow this guidance.

This guidance only covers the minimum information requirements for BNG.

There are additional local validation requirements to support Local Plan Policy NE1 that will be detailed in the local validation checklist.

Sections of the planning application form are presented, followed by explanatory text and guidance:

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### 1. Does biodiversity net gain apply?

Do you believe that, if the development is granted planning permission, the Biodiversity Gain Condition (as set out in Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) would apply?

Yes     No

If No, please provide reasons, with reference to which exemptions or transitional arrangements you believe apply:

Mandatory biodiversity net gain applies to all new developments, unless exempt (Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments - GOV.UK). Guidance on the following exemptions is provided below:

- Householder applications
  - No requirement for BNG. **NO EVIDENCE REQUIRED.**
- Self-build and custom build
  - No requirement for BNG. **INFORMATION REQUIRED – see below.**
- Developments below the de minimis threshold
  - No requirement for BNG. **EVIDENCE REQUIRED – see below.**

Self-build and custom build:

Definition: *The development must:*

- consist of no more than 9 dwellings AND,
- be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares AND,
- consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in [section 1\(A1\) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#)

You will need to comply with the terms of the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

**Further information to be provided: Confirmation that you will comply with the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.**

Developments below the de minimis threshold:

Definition: *A development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:*

- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows

*A development 'impacts' a habitat if it decreases the biodiversity value.*

All on-site habitats with a distinctiveness score above 0 in the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool must be included in the consideration of 'impacts' (government guidance: [Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides - GOV.UK](#)).

In addition to habitats such as trees and grassland, on-site habitat with a distinctiveness score above 0 could include (but is not limited to) ivy covered walls, planters and vacant / derelict land (including bare ground).

The potential presence of priority habitats can be checked on the maps linked below. These are not definitive locations and verification by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist may be necessary.

The Government's list of priority habitats can be found here: [Habitats and species of principal importance in England - GOV.UK](#). Maps of priority habitats can be found here: [Dover District Local Plan Policy Map](#) (Layers > Natural Environment and Climate Change > Biodiversity > Habitat Designations > National Priority Habitat Inventory / Locally-identified Priority Habitat) and here: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> (Map Layers > Habitats and Species > Habitats > (Priority Habitat Inventory)

**Evidence to be stated in the 'reasons' box of the planning application form: Provide existing and proposed plans of the development identifying the location and dimensions of existing habitat (in square metres). Confirm no priority habitat. Photographs of the site will be helpful to substantiate this information.**

## 2. Pre-development biodiversity value

If Yes, please provide the information requested in all the questions below:

Please provide the date the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitat(s) have been calculated: (this should be one of the following dates: the date of this application; or an earlier proposed date)

Date (DD/MM/YYYY):

1

Please provide the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitats on this date:

2

If a date earlier than the date of the submission of the planning application has been specified above, please provide reasons why this date has been used:

3

**1** The date of the pre-development biodiversity value of on-site habitats should be the date of the application but could be the date on which the baseline biodiversity survey was undertaken, or the date prior to vegetation clearance works taking place. Your reasons for proposing an earlier date should be explained in the text box **3**. DDC must be in agreement regarding the earlier date. Detailed scrutiny and, if necessary, formal agreement of the date of the pre-development biodiversity value will take place after validation of a planning application.

**2** The pre-development biodiversity value of on-site habitats is the number of biodiversity units on the site: the 'on-site baseline' units, as stated in your submitted statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool.

## 3. Biodiversity metric calculation tool

Please state the publication date of the biodiversity metric tool(s) used to calculate the onsite biodiversity value(s) provided above.

Date (DD/MM/YYYY):

The publication date of your submitted statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool is specified in the 'Version History' tab of the tool.

Version	Changes made	Date released
Version 1.0.0	Initial statutory version	29th November 2023
Version 1.0.1	Amended to fix an error in the irreplaceable habitats dropdown and minor changes to the working of the tool such as ensuring the rows auto populate correctly and cells adjust their height so error messages can be read	15th December 2023
Version 1.0.2	Updated to correct some labelling errors, minor formula errors and expand width of columns	12th February 2024
Version 1.0.3	Minor formatting errors corrected to ensure text is visible and flags appear correctly, version history sheet added.	23rd July 2024

#### 4. Habitat degradation

Has there been any loss (or degradation) of any onsite habitat(s), resulting from activities carried out before the date the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitat(s) was calculated and either:

- on or after 30 January 2020 which were not in accordance with a planning permission; or
- on or after 25 August 2023 which were in accordance with a planning permission?

Yes     No

If yes, please provide details including: the date immediately before this activity was carried out; the onsite biodiversity value on this date; and any supporting evidence (or reference to relevant document containing these details).

To discourage pre-submission habitat degradation of proposed development sites, mandatory biodiversity net gain provides for the pre-development biodiversity value (the on-site baseline) to be set prior to carrying out of the degradation activities. Government guidance can be found here [Biodiversity net gain habitat degradation - GOV.UK](#).

Detailed scrutiny of the date of the pre-development biodiversity value will take place after validation of your planning application and will include review of aerial photographs (and any other available evidence)..

If evidence indicates that pre-submission habitat degradation has taken place, an alternative date of the pre-development biodiversity value will be discussed and agreed with you, and you will be required to revise your submitted statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool as necessary.

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#### 5. Irreplaceable habitat

Does the application site have irreplaceable habitat(s) (corresponding to the descriptions in The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) which exist on land to which this application relates on the date the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitat(s) was calculated?

Yes     No

If yes, please provide a description of these and any further details (for example reference to relevant document):

*The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 define and list irreplaceable habitats for the purposes of biodiversity net gain. Defra has stated that there will be further consultation on the definition and list of irreplaceable habitats. The current (May 2025) list is:*

- Ancient woodland
- Ancient and veteran trees
- Blanket bog
- Limestone pavements
- Coastal sand dunes
- *Spartina* saltmarsh swards
- Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub
- Lowland fens

Further information is available here: [Irreplaceable habitats and BNG - DEFRA](#)

The mandatory biodiversity net gain framework has specific provisions for irreplaceable habitats to reflect their value, acknowledging that the biodiversity metric is not an

appropriate tool with which to capture and address any loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats. Bespoke mitigation / compensation will be required. Government guidance can be found here: [Biodiversity net gain irreplaceable habitats - GOV.UK](#).

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## 6. Supporting documentation

<p>I/We confirm this application is accompanied by the following:</p> <p>i. The completed biodiversity metric tool(s) showing the calculation of the pre-development biodiversity values, and on the dates, detailed above including, if applicable, those related to any loss (or degradation) of any onsite habitat(s)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ii. Plan(s), showing onsite habitat(s) existing on the date the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitat(s) was calculated; and</p> <p>iii. If applicable, plan(s) showing onsite irreplaceable habitat(s) existing on the date the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitat(s) was calculated.</p> <p>Please provide details (for example reference to relevant document):</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
<p><b>Note:</b> Plans must be drawn to an identified scale, and show the direction of North.</p>

In addition to accurately completing the planning application form BNG section, your planning application must include:

- i. **Statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool completed in accordance with the relevant User Guide.**
- ii. **Site plan showing on-site baseline habitat (pre-development biodiversity value).**
- iii. **Site plan showing on-site irreplaceable habitat (if applicable).**