

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR LANDOWNERS & MANAGERS

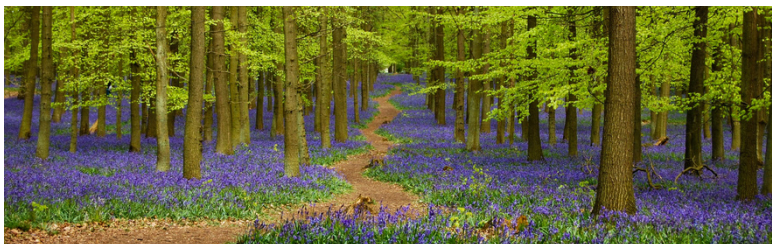
If you are looking to diversify your income, get a reasonable return on the less productive parts of your land or increase the wildlife on your land, then Biodiversity Net Gain could be for you.

WHAT IS BNG AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that **leaves biodiversity in a better state after development than before.**

The 2021 Environment Act requires all new developments are required to **offset any loss of biodiversity** associated with their developments and to produce at least a 10% biodiversity net gain. Where on-site biodiversity gain isn't possible, developers are required to find off-site areas to enhance biodiversity.

In Oxfordshire, the charity Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) provides a service to developers by taking on the responsibility of providing and monitoring projects and delivering the offsite biodiversity units required.



Where a developer uses TOE for off-site BNG, we receive a tariff from the developer commensurate with the type of habitat that will be lost. TOE then sources and funds projects throughout the district where new habitats can be restored, enhanced or created, which TOE supports and monitors for the full 30-year offset period.

Once a project has been approved, we offer landowners contracts to cover the cost of creating the habitat and managing it over 30 years. In return, the landowner agrees to maintain the habitat in accordance with an agreed management plan for the full length of the agreement – 30 years.



Why should I work with TOE to deliver BNG?

- TOE's **local relationships**: TOE has relationships with the Local Planning Authorities and environmental community across Oxfordshire.
- Working with you, the landowner:
 - We work with you to **maximise the biodiversity benefit** of the project on your land while recognising the importance that it enhances your business.
 - You will have ongoing **support** throughout both the project development phase and the project delivery, ensuring the individuality of the project and your circumstances are reflected and catered for.
 - **We take the responsibility** of all regulatory reporting and dealings with developers and councils leaving you free to manage the project.
- **Reduced financial risk**: TOE offers flexible payment terms to help landowners manage risk and tax liability. Spending is aligned with robust and transparent principles which ensure payments are being used to the greatest effect.

As a long term, **guaranteed income stream**, a BNG project could be the perfect way to diversify your income and help with risk management in the highly changing context in which landowners currently find themselves.

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FAQS: FUNDING & FINANCES

What does a BNG agreement through TOE pay for?

Each agreement is **bespoke** to the site, the creation/restoration work and long-term management required. Costs that an agreement would cover include:

- Capital investment costs
- Establishment costs
- Management
- Reporting (TOE requires an annual report to be sent by the landowner and detailed ecological monitoring throughout the project.)



How much is a Biodiversity Unit worth?

There is no set payment rate per Biodiversity Unit, but a range for each habitat type being created or enhanced. The price paid per biodiversity unit delivered will depend on the complexity and outcomes of each proposal.

What are the tax implications?

Payments linked to BNG agreements may attract tax. We advise you to seek independent financial advice to discuss how BNG income may affect your tax liability.

Can other sources of funding be used on the same site?

TOE will not pay for something also being funded through alternative means. However, it may be possible to receive funding on the same land for activities not covered by BNG if these don't negate the outcomes we are looking for and are additional.

Please note: this document is correct to the best of our knowledge as of Sept 2022. However BNG regulations are subject to change.

WHAT IS TOE LOOKING FOR?

TOE is keen to receive project proposals that restore, enhance or create new habitat. Typically we are seeking species rich grasslands, native woodlands, wetlands and heathland. Priority for funding will be given to projects that are located within the Nature Recovery or within a Conservation Target Area and that connect existing high value habitats. Find out which you are in at www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk

Who can approach TOE for consideration for BNG project support?

Anyone (farm managers, charities, individuals or volunteer groups), as long as they have the **landowner consent** for a 30-year management contract on that land.

BIODIVERSITY SITES

How is biodiversity maintenance recorded and monitored?

All relevant biodiversity habitats and features created using BNG funds will need to be recorded. TOE records these sites and shares the information with the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre. Any registered sites will need to maintain the biodiversity enhancement for a minimum of 30 years from the date of completion of the habitat enhancement works.

Contracts agreed with TOE will be monitored by TOE for their lifetime. Monitoring is two-fold; (i) ecological monitoring will be carried out at a frequency and to a consistent framework as set out in our Monitoring Standards, (ii) management plan implementation will be monitored annually with the landowner and the management will be reviewed on an agreed basis.

TALK TO US

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