

The NATURE Tool is a user-friendly Excel tool to assess natural capital (impact) at the project scale. It is free to use and applicable across the UK. Natural capital captures what nature does for people and is essential for tackling the climate and ecological emergencies as well as improving public health.

The tool predicts changes to natural capital across 17 ecosystem services as well as physical and mental health benefits, simply expressed through percentage changes. It also aggregates scores across services and benefits based on national or local policy priorities which allows you to easily demonstrate net gains for the environment from your projects.

NATURE

Nature Assessment Tool

for Urban and Rural Environments

Tool Development Led By  	In Collaboration With 	Co-funded By 
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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

In the UK and beyond, built development such as housing and transport infrastructure needs to efficiently deliver better environmental outcomes and meet sustainability targets. Net gains for the environment is growing in importance in UK policy. Therefore, it is essential that built environment professionals are able to effectively assess environmental change through development. The NATURE Tool facilitates the process of efficient and objective natural capital assessment, accounting for a broad variety of ecosystem services.

WHAT CAN IT DO FOR YOU?

As a tool user (such as a built environment professional), the NATURE Tool offers a mechanism to assess both a sites' baseline natural capital and changes to it through development. The tool does not require natural capital expertise and helps you to:

As an objective setter (such as a local planning authority), the NATURE Tool can be locally adapted to suit your local planning and objectives. The tool can be used to facilitate environmentally positive action and helps you to:



-  **Prioritise actions to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies.**
-  **Demonstrate positive sustainable action to planning authorities, regulators and stakeholders.**
-  **Enhance decision making by demonstrating natural capital impacts and opportunities through design and delivery.**

-  **Translate planning policies into natural capital objectives for new development which can be objectively measured and monitored.**
-  **Define from the outset what will be expected from new development in terms of greenspace functionality.**
-  **Prioritise an array of ecosystem services to correlate with local planning objectives and policies.**



The Nature Tool Process

HABITAT:

The user will first enter habitat and land-use areas for a site's baseline, and if completing a 'change' assessment, predictions for the post-development habitats across the site. The same data is often required for biodiversity assessments and should therefore be available. Users can enter data at different detail levels, suiting the data you have already collected.

INDICATOR ENTRY:

Following the habitat data entry phase, the NATURE Tool then captures factors relating to habitat condition, location and management. Apart from data on habitat accessibility, all other indicators are optional so there is no need to collect additional data. The NATURE Tool also accounts for the delivery risk associated with creating habitats, with the delivery factors derived from the Biodiversity Metric to ensure consistency between the tools. The tool is designed so that it can be applied alongside the Biodiversity Metric.



Habitat Data

Indicator Information

Results

Assessment against natural capital and local priorities.

Net gains and natural capital objectives achieved?

No

Yes

Headline results:

The most visual results section, offering the main project details and key results across both biodiversity and natural capital. This section also visually represents local policy priorities and project achievements.

Summary results:

The most relevant section for tool users offers a visual output for the three critical indicators: change score, baseline units/score and potential score across all assessed services and benefits.

Detailed results:

This section offers an opportunity to 'dive deeper' into how results are calculated as transparency is key. It provides a variety of outputs that relate to the aggregated scores calculation, objectives and project achievements.

Results Narrative:

Gives the tool user the opportunity to add qualitative information and to contextualise the NATURE Tool results in the wider project context.

Better places for people to visit, live and work.

Re-assessment of updated design with NATURE Tool

Update design in line with natural capital objectives



Who can use the NATURE Tool?

DEVELOPERS

The NATURE Tool can be used by built environment professionals to identify and promote environmentally positive action from development. The tool can facilitate net-gains from the environment and offer a platform to promote sustainable action through the tool's achievements framework.



LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

The NATURE Tool can be adapted to match local priorities through the use of policy weightings and setting natural capital objectives. This allows the tool to be targeted to a region or project, offering a tailored and effective tool.



LAND MANAGERS

The NATURE Tool can be used by land managers to facilitate sustainable action and the enhancement of natural capital during the creation of management plans. The net-gain focus of the tool also offers the opportunity to explore and design net-gain schemes.



STRATEGIC PLANNERS

The NATURE Tool can facilitate strategic decision making through effectively quantifying baseline natural capital values and projected natural capital change. This offers enhanced opportunities to identify sustainable action and improve decision making. It can also help to identify sites with least natural capital impact/most natural capital enhancement potential to be selected for development.



What NATURE Tool services can we offer?



WSP and the Ecosystem Knowledge Network have led the development of the NATURE Tool and would be very happy to provide support including but not limited to:

- Knowledge exchange and tool training
- Ad-hoc user support such as through our NATURE Tool mentors
- Running NATURE Tool assessments for you
- Running accompanying Biodiversity Metric assessments
- Helping you to create your own local/corporate NATURE Tool version
- Results aggregation such as at the city or corporate level
- Natural capital mapping and reporting including interpretation
- Advice on site design and natural capital optimisation
- Implementing the NATURE Tool in stakeholder consultation
- Develop tailored tool versions for you in case you're looking for something slightly different
- Using the NATURE Tool outside the UK
- Monetary natural capital valuation incl. cost-benefit analysis and natural capital accounting



Find out more

The NATURE Tool is free to access and use. Please visit our website to download the tool and for additional information and resources. For enquiries, such as for tool-related services, please email the NATURE Tool team at WSP.



Website: www.nature-tool.com



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