



Mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions

Mainstreaming nature-based solutions (MNbS) to deliver greater value for society and the environment.

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An Introduction to The Mainstreaming NbS Toolkit

www.mainstreamingnbs.org

The Mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions programme has developed a National Toolkit to make it simpler to develop and deliver nature-based solutions. It provides practical tools, clear evidence standards, standard templates, a Common Value Framework, and guidance on assessing risk and viability. Together, these resources help organisations turn ideas into well-developed projects that are ready for funding, delivery and ongoing evaluation

As part of the programme, the National Toolkit is being tested through eight regional pilots across the North West, North East, East, South East and South West of England, the Wye-Usk, Wales and Northern Ireland.

These tests will show how the toolkit works in real places and help turn the learning into recommendations for regulation. The aim is to create practical outputs that can feed into PR29 decision-ready option packs, so nature-based solutions become easier to evidence, approve, fund, deliver and verify.

The National Toolkit is part of the programme's Catchment Resilience Pathway. This pathway looks at the long-term pressures that affect water catchments, such as pollution, climate change, flooding and demand for water. These pressures can weaken the natural systems that support clean water, communities and the economy, making them more vulnerable to future risks.

At the moment, many organisations are dealing with the same water-related challenges, but often through separate plans, duties, funding routes, timescales and measures of success. This can make it harder to join up action across sectors.

The Catchment Resilience Pathway is testing a more joined-up and practical way forward. Through the MNbS National Toolkit Catchment Resilience Scorecard (under development), it sets out clear evidence standards, consistent decision-making tools, fundable routes and delivery approaches. This will help make nature-based solutions a normal, trusted part of how we plan and invest in resilient water catchments.



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Common Value Framework (CVF)

Capturing and valuing the benefits of NbS in a robust, consistent and comparable way.

Now
available to
download

What is the CVF?

The CVF is a way of showing the full value of nature-based solutions. It helps include the wider environmental, social and economic benefits into decision making. By using standard pathways and values, it makes appraisal more consistent and easier to understand.

Why is it needed?

The CVF is needed because nature-based solutions often create important benefits that are not always considered in standard appraisal. When those wider benefits are missed, these options can appear less effective than traditional approaches. The framework helps make their full value clearer, so decisions can be fairer and better informed.

How does it work?

The CVF works by linking specific nature-based actions to the outcomes they can deliver and the value those outcomes create. It uses standard outcomes, pathways and values to create a more consistent and evidence-based way of assessing options. It can also be built into decision-support tools to help organisations compare choices in practice.

Who is it for?

The CVF is for the people and organisations involved in assessing nature-based solutions. This includes water companies, technical specialists and decision-makers who need to compare options and understand their wider benefits. It can also support regulators, consultants and tool providers who are involved in planning and appraisal.

Find out more about the CVF



Visit the programme website to learn more about how to use the CVF



Download the CVF that is now available to use



Get in touch the programme team if you have any questions



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The Evidence Framework

A framework to accelerate investment in NbS with sufficient evidence gathering and risk management.

Currently in development

What is The Evidence Framework?

The Evidence Framework brings the evidence for different NbS delivering a range of benefits together. It is a practical way to organise and assess the information needed to select NbS, so teams can understand what is known, where gaps remain and what is needed to move projects forward.

Why is it needed?

To build a greater understanding of the evidence for NbS. Evidence for nature-based solutions is often scattered, inconsistent and hard to compare. This can make it difficult for organisations to approve, fund or scale projects with confidence. A shared framework helps turn promising ideas into investable, deliverable solutions by making the evidence base clearer and more credible. The ambition is that, over time (and beyond the scope of MNbS), this evidence framework will be populated to support the scale up of NbS delivery.

How does it work?

The framework has an objective and consistent approach to reviewing and assessing evidence, as well as enabling aggregation of findings across catchment and source types. It works by using a common structure and language to capture technical, environmental, regulatory and delivery evidence in one place. It also sets proportionate evidence expectations at different stages, helping teams see what is already in place, what assumptions are being made and what gaps still need to be filled. This creates a clearer and more auditable route from early concept to investable project.

Who is it for?

The Evidence Framework is for the people and organisations involved in developing, reviewing and approving nature-based solutions. This includes project teams, regulators, planners, funders and delivery partners who need clear, reliable evidence to assess options, make decisions and support delivery.

Find out more about The Evidence Framework



Download the Summary Note to learn more



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Common Data Framework

A common framework to enable data sharing across organisations, projects and plans.

Currently in testing

What is the Common Data Framework?

The Common Data Framework is a standard way of organising information about nature-based solutions and nature recovery projects. It gives different organisations a shared structure, common definitions and core data fields, so data can be collected, compared and reused more easily.

Why is it needed?

The Common Data Framework is needed because data on nature-based solutions is often inconsistent, duplicated and difficult to compare across organisations. A common model reduces reporting burden, improves confidence in the data and makes easier to manage projects as long-term assets and combine projects across a whole landscape. By reducing management costs, it's easier to attract investors and to grow funding for existing projects.

How does it work?

It works by providing one standard framework for recording data about nature-based solutions. It separates essential and optional information, uses clear definitions and auditable records, and captures data across the full life of a project, from planning to monitoring and maintenance. Different options exist for presenting the data, but the framework adds value by presenting all data in a consistent format.

Who is it for?

The Common Data Framework is for anyone involved in planning, managing, funding or delivering nature-based solutions. This includes water companies, government bodies, investors, landscape and catchment managers, and delivery organisations that need consistent data to compare options, track progress and report clearly.

Find out more about the Common Data Framework



Download the [Common Data Framework V1](#)



Get in touch the programme team if you have any questions



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The NbS Risk Framework

Making risk allocation clearer to streamline procurement and management of NbS.

Draft
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download

What is The Risk Framework?

The Risk Framework is a practical way to set out how risk should be shared in different types of nature-based solution projects. It provides a starting point that organisations can use when working together, making it easier to agree roles, understand responsibilities and explain any changes from the usual approach.

Why is it needed?

The Risk Framework is needed because risk is often unclear in multi-party nature-based solution projects, which can slow progress and increase costs. Setting out a clear baseline for allocating risks helps reduce delays, lower transaction costs, and make nature-based solutions feel more reliable and understandable compared with traditional infrastructure. A standard framework streamlines the contract development phase of a project.

How does it work?

It works by defining standard roles, such as buyers, landowners, investors and delivery partners, and setting out a repeatable model for how risk can be allocated between them. It also breaks risk into clearer categories so teams can see what can be agreed, assured and monitored at each stage of a project.

Who is it for?

The Risk Framework is for the organisations involved in funding, owning, coordinating and delivering nature-based solutions. This includes buyers, investors, landowners, convenors, delivery partners and anchor organisations that need a clearer way to understand risk, agree responsibilities and work together more confidently.

Find out more about The Risk Framework



Visit the programme website to learn more about The Risk Framework



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Viability Framework

A practical route to analysing the viability of landscape projects.

Concept

What is The Viability Framework?

The Viability Framework is a tool for testing whether a landscape project can move from a good idea to something that can be delivered and funded in the real world. It helps teams understand who benefits, who might pay, how the project could be delivered and what evidence would be needed to demonstrate that it is workable.

Why is it needed?

Too many landscape projects are developed without sufficient consideration of their economic viability, and with an assumption that funding will follow once the idea has been established. The Viability Framework helps teams identify from the get go whether a project can realistically attract finance and, if so, what kind: public, private, statutory, philanthropic or a combination of these.

How does it work?

The Framework applies a viability checklist covering beneficiaries, funding, governance, delivery, economics and potential cash flows. This helps teams identify what is already in place, where the main gaps lie and what action would be needed to make the project financeable and ready to deliver.

Who is it for?

The Framework is for anyone considering interventions within a landscape, including farmers, non-profits, utilities and local authorities.

Find out more about The Viability Framework



Visit the programme website to learn more about The Viability Framework



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