

Invitation to express an interest in becoming an Environmental Benefits from Nature (EBN) Tool Case Study

To accompany the Beta release of the EBN tool, Natural England are looking for c.20 projects to take part in a follow-on project that will provide and explore case-studies relating to its application. [Find out more – link to rest] This work is intended to complement a survey of all users and test our theory of change to provide an in-depth understanding of how the tool is being used by different users in a variety of settings. These case-studies will build on previous pre-release piloting and seek to achieve a representative sample of users. They will help us observe, learn, explore, understand and evaluate how the tool might be used in practice. The case studies will be used as 'real world' examples and provide a valuable resource following the evaluation to showcase how others might go about using the tool. We are keen to hear expressions of interests from all interested projects over the next two months to finalise a representative list that will allow evaluation work to begin in September.

What is required?

Interested participants will be required to:

- Use the tool in a 'real world' application – for example an existing project or project that will be initiated in this period.
- Provide evaluators with quantitative data taken from the tool itself for assessment (including results from scenarios tested) – this will be anonymised in acknowledgment of potential sensitivities.
- Complete a short proforma providing basic details about the project.
- Take part in interviews with evaluators, based on key evaluation themes. These will include:
 - interviews with users to evaluate use shortly after they have used the tool, and at the end of the evaluation period.
 - interviews with other stakeholders involved in the project to evaluate the potential impact of results. This may be decision-makers, approvers or consultees, for example the developer (client), senior management or Local Planning Authority.

Why take part?

By taking part users can:

- help inform what happens next to the tool and project and can help shape its future direction and development.
- feedback generated from the case-studies will be used to help inform future Environmental Net Gain policy.
- Showcase engagement and involvement in forward thinking natural capital initiatives (organisations involved in the cases-studies will be flagged in subsequent communications).
- Gain support that will enable a better understanding of the tool and how it can be used.

What type of projects are you interested in?

- Where possible Natural England will be looking to achieve a representative sample of case-studies illustrating use of a variety of developments, at a variety of scales and at different stages of development.
- Examples include but are not limited to: housing and infrastructure developments, local authorities projects relating to Green/Blue Infrastructure, existing or upcoming work considering natural capital and offsite biodiversity units, and other significant habitat-led projects looking to consider wider benefits.
- We will also be interested in novel application where the tool is being used in different ways to meet business-needs.

What support will be available?

- A contract to evaluate the project will be put out to tender shortly which will co-ordinate the evaluation process.
- In addition, those taking part in the case-studies will be offered presentation materials and technical support, as needed with regards to application of the tool.

What do I do if I am interested?

- Users are asked to provide an expression of interest to EBN@naturalengland.org.uk providing short details of the project in question to confirm its potential suitability.
- Details should include, project title, aims, scale of application (site, plan or strategic scale); location (with map if available), key contacts, and brief details on how testing the EBN could help with your project.
- Expressions of Interest should be no longer than 2 sides of A4.

What happens next?

- Interested participants may be contacted again to provide additional information (as needed for consideration), expressions of interest will then be sifted by an expert panel to determine the final list.

Timescales

- All **expressions of interest must be returned by 18 August 2021**. Applicants will hear if they have been successful by the end of August. Evaluation will commence in September and continue until the end of March 2022.

Questions/ Further information

- For any questions or further information please contact the EBN mailbox: EBN@naturalengland.org.uk