

### Annex 3 – Ecosystem Approach self-assessment form, April 2015

*Note: the format for this self-assessment form was revised in April 2015 as a result of piloting by England's National Parks*

## Biodiversity 2020 Outcome 1C – Ecosystem Approach Self-Assessment Criteria and Method

### Background

[‘Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services’](#) (Defra, 2011) includes ‘Outcome 1C: By 2020, at least 17% of land and inland water, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, conserved through effective, integrated and joined up approaches to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services including through management of our existing systems of protected areas and the establishment of nature improvement areas’.

The Terrestrial Biodiversity Group (TBG), set up by Defra and Chaired by Natural England, is responsible for overseeing action to implement this Outcome.

Following work by a TBG Task and Finish Group, including a range of stakeholders and local piloting, TBG agreed (at its meeting on 18 September 2013) this self-assessment form as a way to support partnerships and learn from the progress they are making in deploying ‘integrated and joined up approaches’ that deliver for both biodiversity and multiple ecosystem services, thereby adding value over and above other Outcomes in Biodiversity 2020.

Delivery of Outcome 1C will be measured through local partnerships\* (that operate at a large scale of national significance) undertaking the self-assessment set out in Part 2 below. This explores how they are currently applying an Ecosystem Approach to their planning and delivery.

\*Local partnerships and projects that are encouraged to complete the self-assessment include (but this is far from an exhaustive list): Nature Improvement Areas, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, catchment based and other large scale conservation initiatives. The Part 1 ‘screening stage’ below clarifies the intended audience.

It is expected that such large scale partnerships will seek to progress towards meeting the Outcome by 2020 (and as soon as reasonably practical). Once the partnership has ‘met’ the criteria, the area of the partnership will contribute to the 17%. The criteria include reflection of the 12 Ecosystem Approach principles set out in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – and summarised as an annex at the end of the form.

Advice on completing the self-assessment can be sought from Natural England area staff responsible for landscape scale delivery. Natural England will also shortly issue a ‘toolkit’ to support partnerships in applying the Ecosystem Approach and considering the assessment questions.

TBG is keen to receive completed assessments, regardless of whether or not all criteria are met, to help track progress towards the Outcome and consider where further support might be helpful. **Completed forms** and any queries that cannot be addressed via local Natural England staff, **should be sent to the TBG Secretariat** c/o [graeme.hayes@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:graeme.hayes@naturalengland.org.uk)

*TBG Secretariat, 14 November 2013*

**Notes on completing the self-assessment:**

The criteria are in two parts:

- ❖ Part 1 - 'Does Outcome 1C apply to you?'  
This is a screening stage – do you meet the scope of 1C?
  
- ❖ Part 2 - 'How is your partnership using the ecosystem approach in your work?'  
This is the self-assessment stage
  
- ❖ The questions in Part 1 and 2 refer to a 'Plan'. This can be a partnership management plan, delivery plan or project plan – e.g. *National Park Management Plan, AONB Partnership Management Plan, NIA Business Plan*

**Part 1 – Does Outcome 1C apply to you?**

If you meet all 5 of these questions then proceed to Part 2

**Recording your partnership's response to Part 1:**

- Name of partnership or project: .....
  
- Completed by whom? (Name and organisation): ..... Completion date: .....  
*e.g. the officers who drafted the response on behalf of the partners*
  
- Which partners and other organisations were involved in undertaking Part 1 of this self-assessment? .....

<b>Question about your partnership or project</b>	<b>Why are you being asked this?</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Your partnership's response.....</b>	
			<b>Your reply to the question by highlighting the relevant response below</b>	<b>Your reasons for the reply</b> - why you responded YES or NO - be as specific as you can

<p>1. Are you a <b>partnership seeking to deliver multiple outcomes?</b></p>	<p>The ecosystem approach involves a range of partners working in partnership together across sectors and interests to agree management of an area.</p> <p>A partnership can be a formally constituted partnership, or a more informal partnership that is working together collaboratively. A key point is that planning and action is done together – see Q2.</p>	<p>Types of partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Park</li> <li>• AONB</li> <li>• NIA</li> <li>• Living Landscapes</li> <li>• Futurescapes</li> <li>• Catchment</li> <li>• Other landscape scale/large area partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>YES or NO</b></p>	<p><i>e.g. give name of the partnership and say how long it has been in operation</i></p>
<p>2. Does your partnership have a <b>shared plan</b> covering the project or partnership area?</p>	<p>Having a shared plan for management of the area demonstrates that joint decisions have been taken and joint action planned.</p> <p>Your partnership's plan will help you answer the questions in Pt 2.</p>	<p>Types of plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Park Management Plan</li> <li>• AONB Management Plan</li> <li>• NIA Business Plans</li> <li>• Living Landscape partnerships</li> <li>• Futurescapes projects</li> <li>• Catchment Management plans</li> <li>• Local Nature Partnership strategies</li> <li>• Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership</li> <li>• Other landscape scale /large area plans</li> </ul>	<p><b>YES or NO</b></p>	<p><i>e.g. give the title of the plan, and say what period it covers and when it was agreed between the partners</i></p> <p>National Park Management Plan 2012 - 2017</p>
<p>3. Does your partnership operate at <b>landscape scale?</b></p>	<p>Ecosystems are usually large scale and cover large parts of a landscape. The ecosystem approach is about managing the function of ecosystems. The partnership should be operating at a scale that can influence the whole/a significant part of the ecosystems</p> <p>Generally smaller scale sites (e.g. many nature reserves, SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites) may be part of a larger landscape scale partnership, and will not be assessed on their own.</p>	<p>Landscape scale partnership areas as above.</p>	<p><b>YES or NO</b></p>	<p><i>e.g. say what area your partnership covers and give the approximate area of operation</i></p> <p>National Park area = 144 square kilometres</p>

	<p>For <b>specific sites or groups of sites</b> to be assessed for the ecosystem approach they <b>should cover a continuous area of at least 10,000 ha</b></p> <p><i>[Links to CBD Principles 2, 3 and 7]</i></p>			
<p>4. Are you working in partnership in an integrated way at a landscape scale to benefit <b>both biodiversity and ecosystem services</b>?</p>	<p>The recent policies that promote the linking of action for nature and benefits for people (Lawton Review; NEWP; Biodiversity 2020) all recognise the value of nature to people. Improving the health of nature will increase the benefits for people (ie ecosystem services). Management should combine improving both together – not at the expense of each other.</p>		<p><b>YES or NO</b></p>	<p><i>e.g. say how your partnership combines management for both biodiversity and other benefits for people (ie ecosystem services) – for example, via an integrated management plan and a cross-sector board</i></p>
<p>5. Are you working in partnership to deliver <b>multiple ecosystem services</b>?</p>	<p>The recent policies also highlight that sustainable use involves integrated management across a range of interests and ecosystem services.</p>		<p><b>YES or NO</b></p>	<p><i>e.g. say what sectors your partnership includes, and provide a list of partner organisations</i></p>

## Part 2 - How is your partnership using the ecosystem approach now?

*This is the formal assessment section.*

*You must complete this to determine how your partnership is delivering for Biodiversity 2020 Outcome 1C.*

### Ecosystem Approach Score Card

Date of self-assessment: .....

#### Summary of your partnership's response to Part 2:

- Name of partnership or project: .....
- Part 2 completed by whom? (Name and organisation): ..... Completion date: .....  
*e.g. the officers who drafted the response on behalf of the partners*
- Which partners and other organisations were involved in undertaking Part 2 of this self-assessment? .....
- What is the area your partnership or project operates over (in km<sup>2</sup>)? .....
- Proposed date for reviewing Part 2 of your self-assessment: .....

	Progressing towards meeting the criteria				Meeting the criteria	
<b>Your assessment</b> – of how far you are meeting each criteria/question	No or very little evidence	Some evidence	Good progress	Near to meeting the criteria	Meeting the criteria	Exceeding the criteria
<b>Indication of progress</b>	We have little or no evidence to demonstrate that we are underway with this criteria	We have evidence to demonstrate we are beginning to address this criteria – but we have not progressed far	We are at least half way to meeting this criteria and have identified actions planned to address the gaps	We have only one or two areas that require development and action to address these is underway	We have sufficient evidence to demonstrate we are meeting the criteria	We have met the criteria and can demonstrate good practice and/or innovative activity for this criteria

<b>Question 1</b> – Is your partnership actively considering and planning for a wide range of environmental assets, within your partnership area (beyond biodiversity, landscape and geodiversity)?	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Question 2</b> – Have you collated data to understand the most relevant ecosystem services in your partnership/project area?	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Question 3</b> – Are you involving a wide range of stakeholders and the local community in planning and delivering action for ecosystem services in your area, including those who benefit from them?	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Question 4</b> - Is there a management plan with objectives that deliver multiple benefits for biodiversity and other ecosystem services through joint action?	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Question 5</b> – Are you addressing the current and future risks, pressures and changes affecting the environmental assets in your area, and the ecosystem services they provide?	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Question 6</b> - Are you considering the long term (10+ years) management requirements for delivering high quality ecosystem services from functioning ecosystems?	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Question 7</b> - Are you using monitoring as feedback, to inform and adjust your management planning, actions and priorities? (I.e. adaptive management)?	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Question 8</b> – Is your partnership taking action to understand what ecosystem services people value from your project area, and using valuation to capture them? (Remember values can be both monetary and non-monetary values?)	1	2	3	4	5	6

<b>Questions – for you to assess how your partnership is using the Ecosystem Approach <u>at the moment</u></b>				<b>Why are you being asked this?</b>		
<b>Question 1</b> – Is your partnership actively considering and planning for a wide range of environmental assets, within your partnership area (beyond biodiversity, landscape and geodiversity)?				To understand how your partnership is considering the <b>ecosystems</b> and the <b>environmental assets</b> that underpin them  [Links to CBD Principle 5]		
<b>Question 1 self-assessment score</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Your response to Question 1</b>						
<u>Summary:</u>						
<u>Evidence and examples:</u>						
<u>Gaps &amp; areas for development:</u>						
<u>Opportunities:</u>						
<b>Question 2</b> – Have you collated data to understand the most relevant ecosystem services in your partnership/project area?				To see how your partnership is considering <b>ecosystem services</b>  [Links to CBD Principle 11]		
<b>Note:</b> <i>Natural England’s Natural Character Area Profiles consider ecosystem services in each NCA, and can help with this stage – see toolkit.</i>						
<i>Prompt questions to help you answer Question 2:</i>						
<i>Considering the main ecosystem services is fine – but include a range across sectors.</i>						
<i>Have you collated data from partners – including local and national data? Using proxy data is fine where you do not have direct data.</i>						
<i>Have you got what you need? Have you identified the gaps in data for the ecosystem services in your area?</i>						
<b>Question 2 self-assessment score</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Your response to Question 2</b>						

Summary:  
Evidence and examples:  
Gaps & areas for development:  
Opportunities:

**Question 3**– Are you involving a wide range of stakeholders and the local community in planning and delivering action for ecosystem services in your area, including those who benefit from them?

*Prompt questions:*

*Have you involved a wide range of relevant stakeholders from across different sectors (economic, community and environment)?*

*Are they involved in developing the plan AND delivery of the actions*

*How have you done this? – e.g. visitor surveys, consulting beyond the boundary of your partnership*

To understand how your partnership is **involving** relevant **stakeholders**, and the **beneficiaries and providers of ecosystem services**?

*[Links to CBD Principles 1 +12]*

<b>Question 3 self-assessment score</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
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**Your response to Question 3**

Summary:  
Evidence and examples:  
Gaps & areas for development:  
Opportunities:

**Question 4** - Is there a management plan with objectives that deliver multiple benefits for biodiversity and other ecosystem services through joint action?

*Prompt questions to help you answer Question4:*

*Have you identified the priority ecosystem services which require action?*

*Have you considered tensions and conflicts when managing for the range of ecosystem services? Are you openly dealing with these?*

*Is ecosystem integrity, function and health being considered? for:*

To see how your partnership is planning for future **management which is integrated and holistic**; combining the conservation and use of your local environment.

*[Links to CBD Principle 10]*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hydrology</li> <li>• carbon storage and sequestration</li> <li>• nutrient cycling</li> </ul> <p>Have you considered linkages for ecological networks and ecosystem services beyond the partnership/project area?</p>						
<b>Question 4 self-assessment score</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>Your response to Question 4</b></p> <p><u>Summary:</u></p> <p><u>Evidence and examples:</u></p> <p><u>Gaps &amp; areas for development:</u></p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p>						
<p><b>Question 5</b> – Are you addressing the current and future risks, pressures and changes affecting the environmental assets in your area, and the ecosystem services they provide?</p>				<p>To understand how your partnership is addressing <b>key risks</b>, both for the local environment and the ecosystem services it provides.</p> <p><i>[Links to Principle 6]</i></p>		
<b>Question 5 self-assessment score</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>Your response to Question 5</b></p> <p><u>Summary:</u></p> <p><u>Evidence and examples:</u></p> <p><u>Gaps &amp; areas for development:</u></p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p>						

<p><b>Question 6</b> - Are you considering the long term (10+ years) management requirements for delivering high quality ecosystem services from functioning ecosystems?</p> <p><i>Prompt questions for Q6 -</i></p> <p><i>Are you working to improve long term ecosystem function?</i></p> <p><i>Are you working to improve long term ecological connectivity?</i></p> <p><i>Are you planning to adapt ecosystems to climate change?</i></p>	<p>To see how your partnership is taking a <b>long-term view</b> to management of the local environment</p> <p><i>[Links to CBD Principles 8 + 9]</i></p>					
<p><b>Question 6 self-assessment score</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>Your response to Question 6</b></p> <p><u>Summary:</u></p> <p><u>Evidence and examples:</u></p> <p><u>Gaps &amp; areas for development:</u></p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u> _____</p>						
<p><b>Question 7</b> - Are you using monitoring as feedback, to inform and adjust your management planning, actions and priorities? (I.e. adaptive management)?</p> <p>This can include qualitative assessment and feedback.</p>	<p>To understand how your partnership uses <b>monitoring to inform future actions</b></p> <p><i>[Links to CBD Principles]</i></p>					
<p><b>Question 7 self-assessment score</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>Your response to Question 7</b></p> <p><u>Summary:</u></p> <p><u>Evidence and examples:</u></p> <p><u>Gaps &amp; areas for development:</u></p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p>						

**Question 8** – Is your partnership taking action to understand what ecosystem services people value from your project area, and using valuation to capture them? (Remember values can be both monetary and non-monetary values?)

*Prompt questions for Q8 –*

*How are you recognising what people value? E.g. citizen panels, visitor surveys.*

*What values are you looking at? E.g. economic, perception, cultural.*

*What valuation methods are you using to capture and demonstrate these different values?*

To see how your partnership is taking account of the **values people place on their local environment/landscape** – both monetary and non-monetary?

*[Links to CBD Principle 4]*

**Question 8 self-assessment score**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**6**

**Your response to Question 8**

Summary:

Evidence and examples:

Gaps & areas for development:

Opportunities:

**Areas for development of the Ecosystem Approach**

- To be completed once you have responded to Question 1-8 above.
- Record below the actions you will undertake to address the gaps and areas for development that you have identified in your responses to Question 1-8, when you will deliver them by and who in your partnership will lead each action.
- You may adjust this table to a format that best suits your partnership.

<b>Next Steps – Key Actions</b>	<b>When – date to begin this action</b>	<b>Lead for this action</b>