# UK set to mandate 10% biodiversity net gain for major infrastructure projects by 2025



The UK is on the brink of a transformative policy shift in its approach to biodiversity, particularly with the upcoming mandatory requirement for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) to achieve a minimum of 10 per cent biodiversity net gain (BNG) by November 2025. This initiative is rooted in the Environment Act 2021, a legislative framework aimed at counteracting the alarming decline of biodiversity across the nation, largely attributed to human activity. With less than half of the UK’s natural biodiversity remaining, the urgency for such an initiative cannot be overstated.

Drawing insights from France, which has successfully implemented a ‘no net loss’ biodiversity policy since 2016, the UK could potentially navigate this paradigm shift more effectively. The French model operates on a clear mitigation hierarchy: avoid biodiversity impacts wherever possible, minimise them when avoidance isn’t feasible, and compensate for any residual impacts. This principle, encapsulated in the phrase ‘éviter, réduire, compenser’ (avoid, reduce, compensate), has fundamentally altered project planning in France, encouraging a design-led approach that prioritises ecological considerations from the outset. According to Amy Dickinson, director of environmental, social and governance for Egis, this method not only reduces ecological disruption but also fosters a project alignment with natural surroundings that can curb additional costs and enhance project integrity.

The UK government aims to ensure that developers adhere to similar principles as part of the BNG requirement, recognising the complexities and scale of NSIPs. Guidance and support will be provided to facilitate the integration of biodiversity into project designs, ensuring a consistent approach across various types of developments. This is crucial, as the forthcoming BNG regulations also require developers to create biodiversity gain statements, evidencing their compliance and commitment to ecological enhancement.

Embedding biodiversity considerations early in project planning not only fosters ecological responsibility but also offers economic benefits. By minimising material usage and optimising routes to avoid ecologically sensitive areas, developers can streamline their projects and reduce costs associated with environmental mitigation. Strategies such as these present a dual benefit: they enhance the environment while reinforcing positive community relationships.

Moreover, innovative technological tools are enhancing decision-making in infrastructure development. For instance, Egis has developed systems to monitor urban heat islands through data analysis of factors like solar radiation and vegetation cover. This allows for informed decisions regarding urban planning and landscape management. Similarly, comprehensive data on flood risks can empower stakeholders to safeguard vulnerable areas through proactive measures, thereby ensuring that infrastructure projects are both resilient and sustainable.

The prospect of adopting a BNG mandate for NSIPs is not merely a regulatory obligation; it is a pivotal opportunity to foster a new model of infrastructure development that marries ecological preservation with modern construction needs. As climate change exacerbates weather extremes and threatens biodiversity, the need for responsible planning and execution becomes increasingly critical.

There is a palpable potential for the UK construction industry to not just meet but exceed biodiversity targets. By embracing these principles, the sector can lead the way in harmonising development with the natural environment, ensuring that future infrastructure aligns harmoniously with ecological goals. This shift would not only serve to mitigate past damage but also lay the foundation for a more sustainable future, where economic and environmental priorities coalesce seamlessly.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/sections/long-reads/opinion/can-the-uk-learn-from-france-on-project-biodiversity-23-05-2025/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-biodiversity-net-gain-regulations-and-implementation/outcome/government-response-and-summary-of-responses)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/sections/long-reads/opinion/can-the-uk-learn-from-france-on-project-biodiversity-23-05-2025/), [[3]](https://www.michelmores.com/agriculture-insight/biodiversity-net-gain-and-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-england/), [[4]](https://www.herbertsmithfreehills.com/insights/2022-03/how-must-major-infrastructure-projects-deliver-on-biodiversity-net-gain)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.michelmores.com/agriculture-insight/biodiversity-net-gain-and-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-england/), [[5]](https://www.gowlingwlg.com/en/insights-resources/articles/2023/biodiversity-net-gain-critical-guidance), [[6]](https://www.fishergerman.co.uk/insights/news/navigating-biodiversity-net-gain-preparing-for-new-requirements-in-national-significant-infrastructure-projects)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/sections/long-reads/opinion/can-the-uk-learn-from-france-on-project-biodiversity-23-05-2025/), [[5]](https://www.gowlingwlg.com/en/insights-resources/articles/2023/biodiversity-net-gain-critical-guidance), [[6]](https://www.fishergerman.co.uk/insights/news/navigating-biodiversity-net-gain-preparing-for-new-requirements-in-national-significant-infrastructure-projects)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/sections/long-reads/opinion/can-the-uk-learn-from-france-on-project-biodiversity-23-05-2025/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-biodiversity-net-gain-regulations-and-implementation/outcome/government-response-and-summary-of-responses)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/sections/long-reads/opinion/can-the-uk-learn-from-france-on-project-biodiversity-23-05-2025/), [[3]](https://www.michelmores.com/agriculture-insight/biodiversity-net-gain-and-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-england/), [[7]](https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities/biodiversity-net-gain-now-and-future)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/sections/long-reads/opinion/can-the-uk-learn-from-france-on-project-biodiversity-23-05-2025/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-biodiversity-net-gain-regulations-and-implementation/outcome/government-response-and-summary-of-responses> - The UK government has outlined its approach to implementing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regulations, emphasizing that Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) will be required to deliver a minimum 10% BNG by November 2025. This policy aims to ensure that developments contribute positively to biodiversity, aligning with the mitigation hierarchy of avoiding, reducing, and compensating for biodiversity impacts. The government has committed to providing guidance and support to developers to facilitate the integration of BNG into project designs, ensuring consistency and clarity across different development types.
3. <https://www.michelmores.com/agriculture-insight/biodiversity-net-gain-and-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-england/> - The article discusses the upcoming implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in England, set to commence in November 2025. It highlights the government's decision to extend BNG obligations to NSIPs, acknowledging their significant scale and complexity. The piece emphasizes the importance of developers incorporating BNG into their project designs and outlines the anticipated regulatory changes, including the need for biodiversity gain statements and the potential for different percentage requirements in certain cases.
4. <https://www.herbertsmithfreehills.com/insights/2022-03/how-must-major-infrastructure-projects-deliver-on-biodiversity-net-gain> - This article examines the forthcoming Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements for major infrastructure projects in the UK, focusing on the 10% BNG mandate set to take effect by November 2025. It discusses the government's approach to integrating BNG into the planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), including the necessity for developers to demonstrate compliance through biodiversity gain statements. The piece also addresses potential challenges and considerations for developers in meeting these new environmental obligations.
5. <https://www.gowlingwlg.com/en/insights-resources/articles/2023/biodiversity-net-gain-critical-guidance> - The article provides critical guidance on the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in England, detailing the statutory requirement for developers to achieve a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity compared to the pre-construction condition of the development site. It outlines the phased introduction of BNG, with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) expected to comply by November 2025. The piece emphasizes the importance of understanding exemptions, such as those for small-scale developments and irreplaceable habitats, and the need for developers to integrate BNG into their project planning effectively.
6. <https://www.fishergerman.co.uk/insights/news/navigating-biodiversity-net-gain-preparing-for-new-requirements-in-national-significant-infrastructure-projects> - This article discusses the upcoming Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in the UK, set to be implemented by November 2025. It highlights the government's objective to reverse biodiversity decline by mandating that new developments result in a net increase in habitat provision. The piece outlines how developers can achieve BNG through on-site habitat enhancement, off-site improvements, or purchasing offsetting units, and emphasizes the importance of adhering to the mitigation hierarchy in project planning.
7. <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities/biodiversity-net-gain-now-and-future> - The article provides an overview of the UK's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy, detailing its implementation timeline and requirements. It explains that BNG will become mandatory for most new major developments under the Town and Country Planning Act from January 2024, with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) required to comply by November 2025. The piece outlines the key components of BNG, including the 10% gain requirement, the use of the Biodiversity Metric, and the application of the mitigation hierarchy, and discusses the role of local authorities in supporting BNG implementation.