

Delivering biodiversity net gain on transmission projects

Francis Williams

Environmental Net Gain Manager SSEN Transmission

Introduction

- Biodiversity
 - Our commitments
 - Regulatory requirements
 - Embedding biodiversity gains
 - SSEN Transmission metric
 - Biodiversity gains = wider benefits

- Questions

Biodiversity net gain

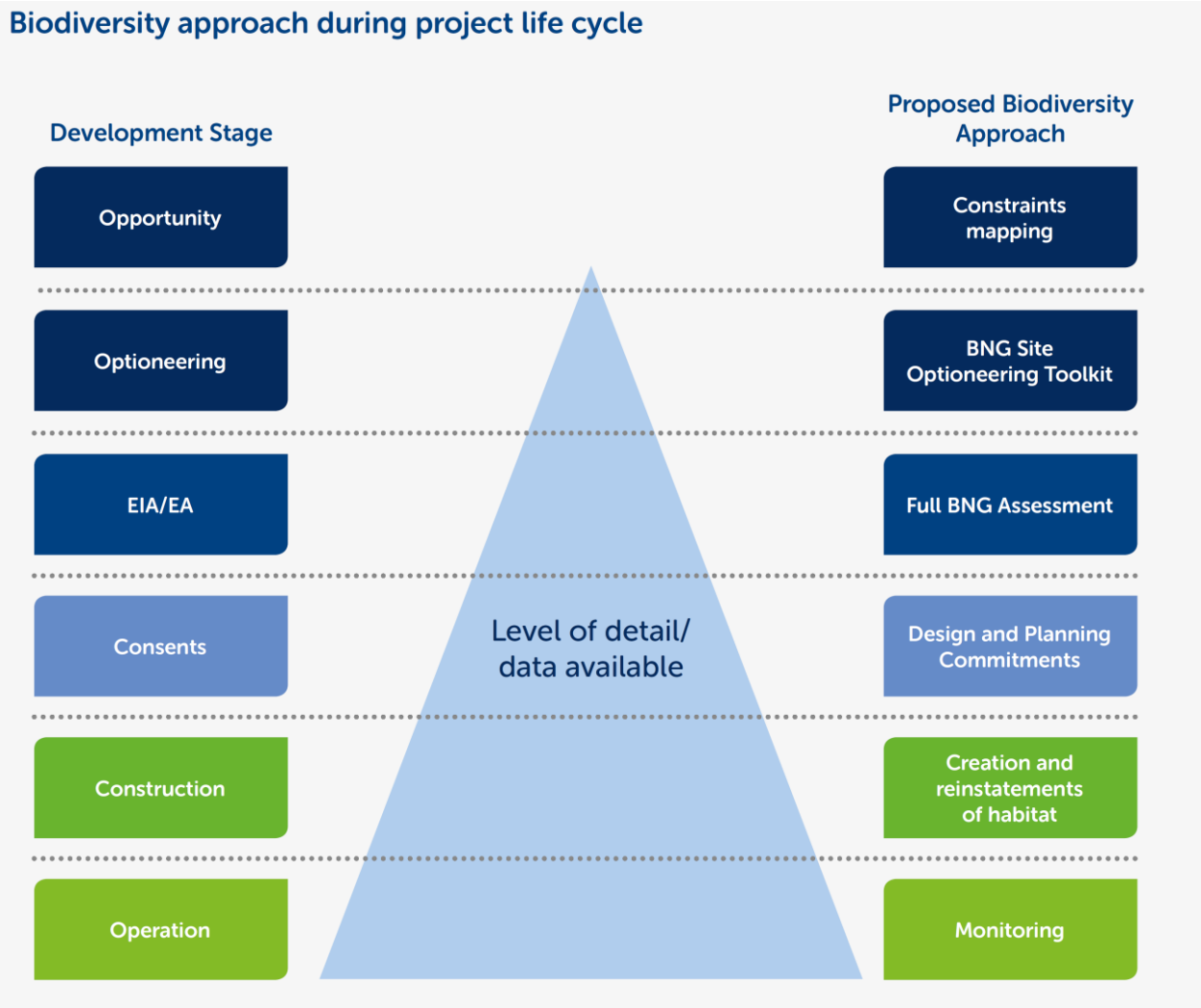
- Principle 1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy
- Principle 2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere
- Principle 3. Be inclusive and equitable
- Principle 4. Address risks
- Principle 5. Make a **measurable** Net Gain contribution
- Principle 6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity
- Principle 7. Be additional
- Principle 8. Create a Net Gain **legacy**
- Principle 9. Optimise sustainability
- Principle 10. Be **transparent**

Our biodiversity commitments

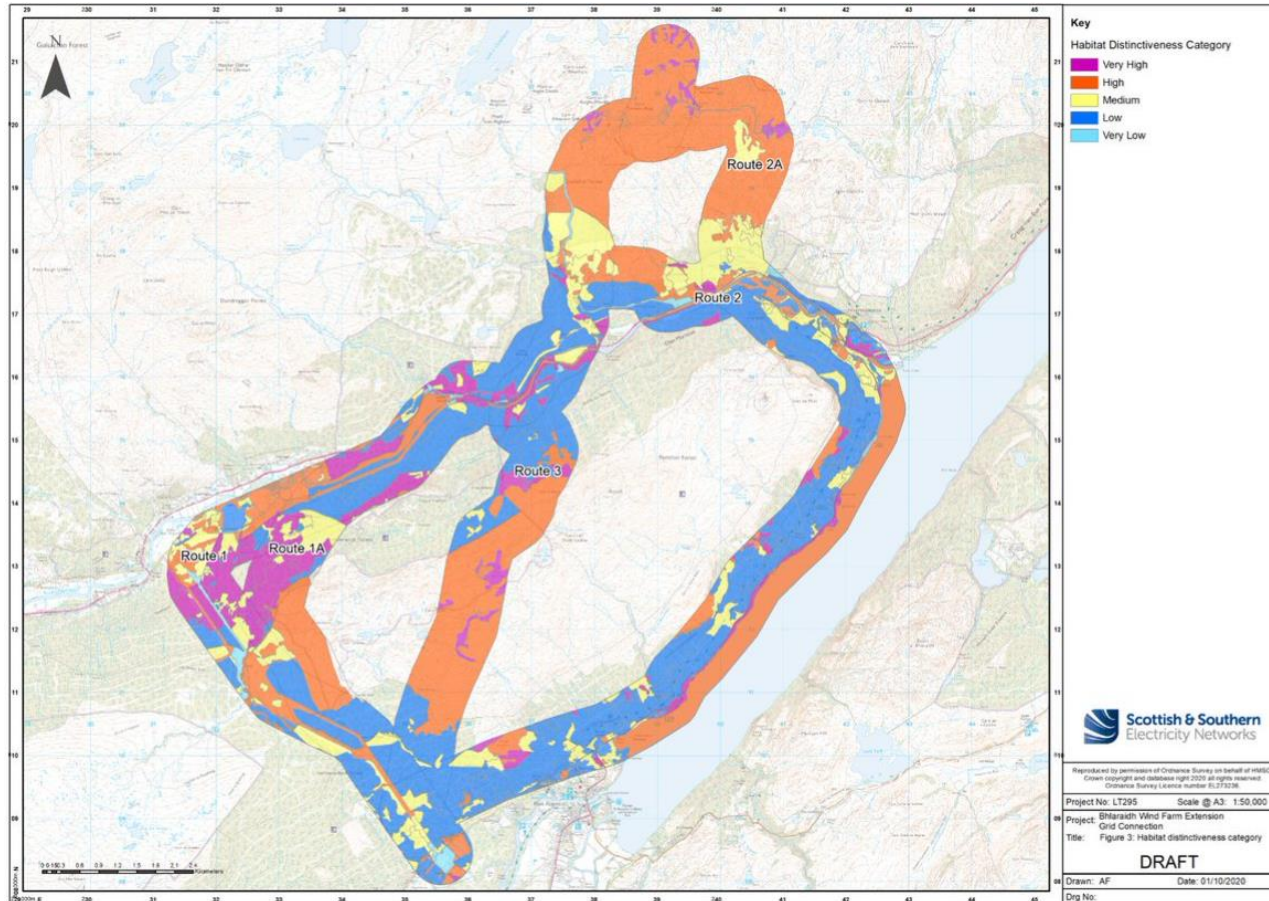
- Committed to No Net Loss (NNL) in biodiversity in non-irreplaceable habitats on to all projects gaining consent from April 2020.
- Net Gain (NG) on all new consented projects from 2025.
- Excludes project with insignificant impacts on biodiversity eg maintenance and most reconductoring projects.



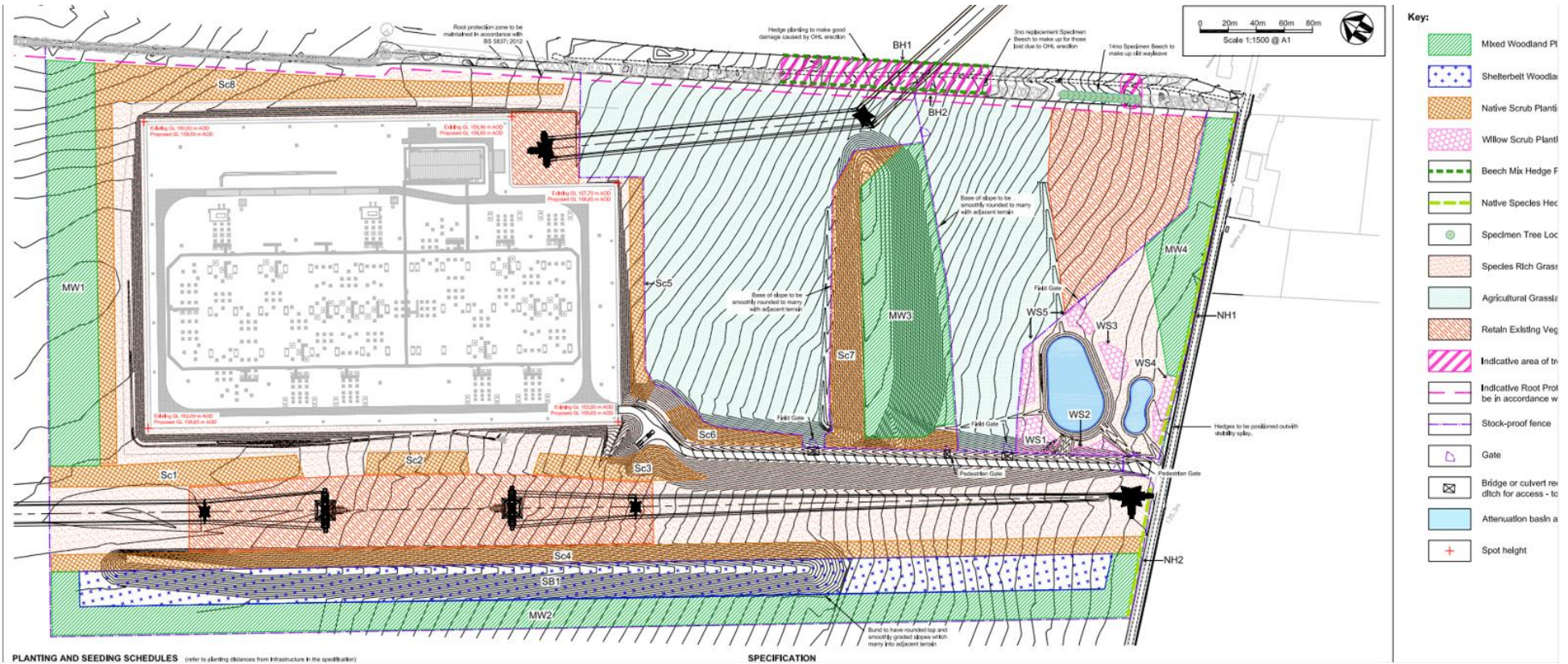
Embedding biodiversity



Site selection



Landscape plans



Biodiversity actions

- To avoid the losses calculated in the toolkit the type of interventions include;
 - Replanting previously felled habitats with mixed woodland.
 - Replacing habitats lost due to temporary works with higher value habitats e.g replacing amenity grassland with semi improved grassland.
 - Removal of non-native species.
 - Improving condition of marshy grasslands.
 - Restructuring existing woodland to enhance biodiversity – coniferous to more mixed woodland.
 - Explore opportunities to plant within wayleave.



Why do we use a metric?

- Regulatory requirement – Ofgem.
- Better way to measure impacts and inform mitigation.
- Demonstrates the benefits of habitat creation and enhancement to all stakeholders.
- Currently exploring ways to that metric can help develop off-site compensation.

Need for a Scottish-specific metric

- Our experience since 2017 has demonstrated that an amended metric works better in Scotland.
- Based on an accepted metric – **transparent and measurable**
- Prevalence of irreplaceable habitats – peatland and ancient woodland.
- Waterbody classification based on an Environment Agency approach and not well known in Scotland.
- There is a need to acknowledge benefits of peatland restoration and other Nature based Solutions.
- Approach to redline boundary not practical for larger developments.
- Condition assessment, risk factors and habitat distinctiveness need to be adapted for use in Scotland.
- Greater level of flexibility is needed to aid the required strategic delivery of biodiversity.

Biodiversity gains = wider benefits

- The biodiversity crisis and climate change are intrinsically linked.
- Communities can be better placed to identify the enhancements they need.
- Biodiversity enhancements provide a wider variety of ecosystem services – Natural Capital valuations.
- Regulatory Natural Capital reporting by 2025.
- Additional social values including employment and up skilling opportunities.
- Strategic biodiversity goals can lead to more and better biodiversity outcomes in the longer term.

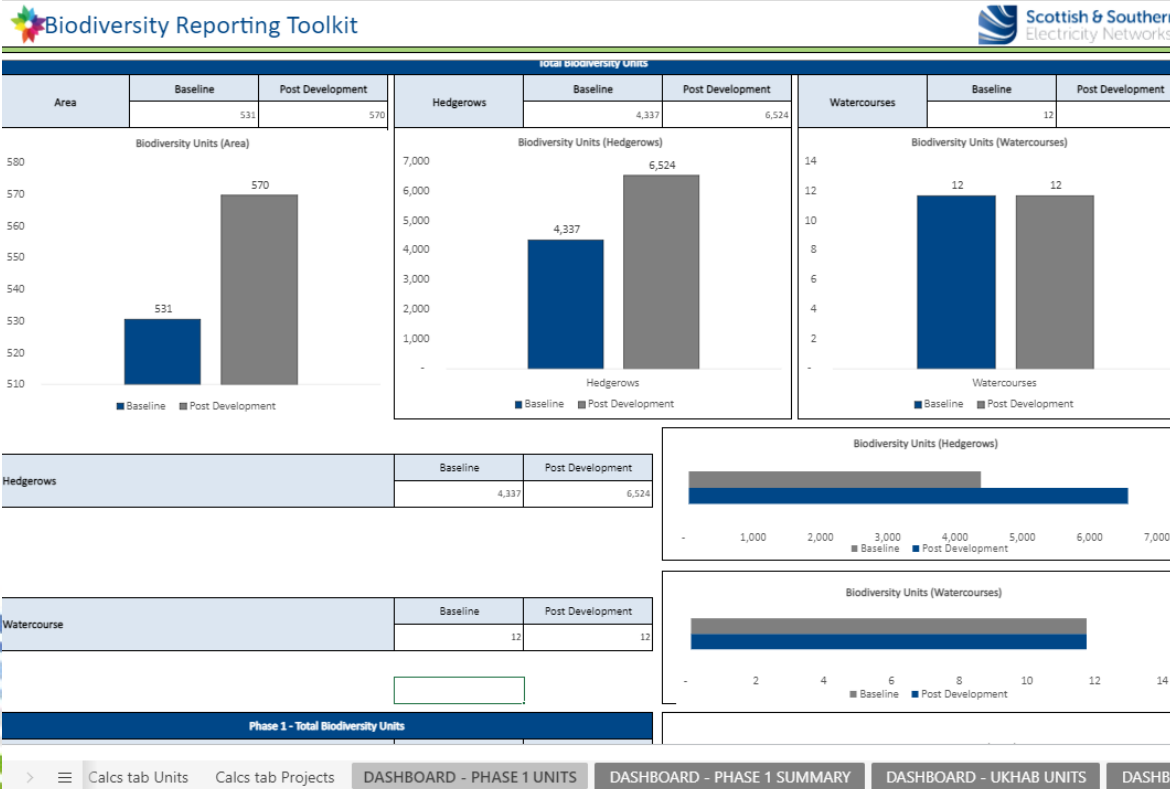
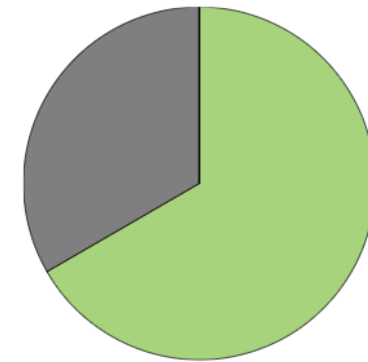
Regulatory reporting

- Report annually on the % projects delivering NNL or NG.
- Total baseline BUs and designed in BUs.
- Over 25 projects assessed (OHLs, substations, cables and warehouses)

Biodiversity Reporting Toolkit

% Biodiversity NG/NNL/NL projects designed into the Project Portfolio at consent application		
Total number of projects		3
NG	NNL	NL
67%	33%	0%

% Biodiversity NG/NNL/NL projects designed into portfolio at consent application



Questions