

## **THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORTING TEMPLATE: LEVEL THREE ORGANISATIONS**

**Public bodies that do not engage directly or indirectly with communities, young people or the public and do not own or manage land, regulate land use, or have responsibilities linked to biodiversity**

### **Report Outline**

Bodies are encouraged to use the following structure for their report. This is set out in the template below, which you can either type directly into, or copy into a separate document.

- Section 1: Introductory information about your public body
- Section 2: Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature
- Section 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity
- Section 4: Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity
- Section 5: Workforce development
- Section 6: Research and monitoring
- Section 7: Biodiversity highlights and challenges

### **The Completion Notes**

These completion notes offer guidance to support your public body to complete your Biodiversity Duty Report. Taken together with the associated hyperlinks, they provide suggestions on the breadth of actions that could be included in your report. They may also assist with forward planning on how biodiversity can be taken into account in future.

While they incorporate the key elements on which you may wish to report, they are not an exhaustive list and it is possible that there will be a range of additional work that your organisation carried out in support of biodiversity on which you may also wish to report. To find out more on the Biodiversity Duty see the [NatureScot website](#).



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PUBLIC BODY

Please describe your organisation's role and purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>Summarise your organisation's role and purpose, including a brief outline of governance and management structures.</p> <p>Summarise any relevance and impacts of biodiversity to your organisation. This might include the key environmental impacts from your operations, and any your role you have in sustainable development.</p>
<b>Text Field</b>	<p>The Standards Commission for Scotland (Standards Commission) is a statutory body which was established under the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, as amended. The 2000 Act created an ethical standards framework whereby councillors and members of devolved public bodies are required to comply with Codes of Conduct, which are approved by Scottish Ministers.</p> <p>The Standards Commission's vision is to achieve the highest possible ethical standards in public life so that the public in Scotland has confidence in those elected to local councils and those appointed to the board of devolved public bodies. Our aim is to promote awareness of, and adherence to, the Codes of Conduct by providing guidance, support and training to key stakeholders and by maximising engagement opportunities with the public and media.</p> <p>The aims of the Standards Commission are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage high ethical standards in public life; including the promotion and enforcement of the Codes of Conduct and to issue guidance to councils and devolved public bodies; and</li><li>• Adjudicate on alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct, and where a breach is found, to apply a sanction.</li></ul> <p>The Standards Commission comprises of five part time Members, who are appointed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. The Standards Commission employs four members of staff.</p> <p>The Standards Commission's role and remit does not include any particular environmental responsibilities.</p>



## SECTION 2: ACTIONS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

Please describe and explain any actions that your organisation has undertaken alone or as part of a partnership to benefit biodiversity directly, to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, or to achieve wider outcomes for nature and people

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>You may wish to include any activities across the breadth of your organisation, including any actions that you have undertaken on your premises.</p> <p>Please explain how these actions have benefited biodiversity or sustainability, noting successes and challenges, and any plans for future or follow-up work. These might include:</p> <p>Addressing or raising awareness of some of the key drivers of biodiversity loss, which might include work or projects to tackle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Climate Change;</li><li>• Land use change;</li><li>• Pollution.</li></ul> <p>Enhancing biodiversity at your premises through actions in and around offices, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• providing bird boxes / feeders;</li><li>• creating habitat for wildlife, such as wildflower areas;</li><li>• installing green roofs;</li><li>• organising staff volunteering days;</li><li>• sponsoring a species or habitat, or raising funds for a local wildlife trust or charity;</li><li>• reducing energy use;</li><li>• recycling and re-using as much as you can so that you produce less waste;</li><li>• encouraging staff to cycle or walk to work more.</li></ul>
<b>Links to related resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guidance on the <a href="#">Key pressures on biodiversity</a>.</li><li>• Guidance on <a href="#">Buildings and biodiversity</a> - how to make space for nature in the built environment.</li><li>• Information on <a href="#">placemaking, open space and green infrastructure</a>.</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Examples of smaller actions that can be enacted in the office or staff homes - <a href="#">Biodiversity - what can you do?</a></li></ul>
<b>Text Field</b>	<p>The Standards Commission's office is located within the Scottish Parliament building and, as such, its staff and members support the actions the Parliamentary Corporate Body takes to improve its environmental performance and benefit biodiversity. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensuring all building users fully understand the contribution they can make to improving the Parliament's environmental performance;</li><li>• Mitigating against climate change by working towards reducing the Parliament's carbon footprint;</li><li>• Adapting for climate change by preparing contingency plans to deal with a changing climate, adverse weather conditions and the associated impacts;</li><li>• Using water efficiently;</li><li>• Safeguarding resources by minimising waste and identifying ways to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle materials;</li><li>• Purchasing in an environmentally responsible manner in line with the Responsible Purchasing Policy and Strategy;</li><li>• Reducing the need to travel and promote the use of sustainable travel by people working in and visiting the building;</li><li>• Supporting and encouraging biodiversity within the parliamentary grounds; and</li><li>• Complying with environmental legislation.</li></ul>



### SECTION 3: MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

Please outline any steps your organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into its wider policies, plans or strategies. This should include decision-making structures and staff and organisational roles and responsibilities.

<p><b>Guidance on completing this section</b></p>	<p>Outline any of your own body’s policies, plans and strategies that refer to biodiversity, or that may affect biodiversity positively or negatively, and describe how these are reflected in the structure of your organisation.</p> <p>These may include policies on consideration of biodiversity in estate management, procurement policies and purchasing decisions, and Sustainability and Climate Change commitments.</p> <p>Detail any areas in which your organisation has most successfully implemented mainstreaming of biodiversity, including through working with others, or raising awareness of biodiversity or nature.</p>
<p><b>Links to related resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study - <a href="#">Procurement by the Scottish Courts and Tribunal (SCTS) Services</a>.</li> <li>• Guidance on <a href="#">Scotland's Pollinator Strategy, projects, resources</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Text Field</b></p>	<p>The Standards Commission has incorporated biodiversity measures into its own policies and procedures. In particular, the Standards Commission now undertakes the vast majority of its engagement via digital means, through the use of email and by publishing news, updates and training material on its website and through social media. The Standards Commission no longer creates paper copies of its case files, which has significantly decreased its paper usage and printing and postage requirements (which will have had an impact in terms of the associated travel emissions). The Standards Commission’s data retention and disposal policies have been amended to reflect these changes.</p> <p>The Standards Commission has reduced travel by holding some of its Hearings (to adjudicate on alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct) online, where some or all facts are not in dispute. The Standards Commission also promotes the use of sustainable travel for staff travelling to and from the office, and for Members and staff when they are attending Hearings and external meetings.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the Standards Commission has aimed to conduct some of its meetings and workshops online. The Standards Commission has made use of the online facilities in the Parliament’s digitally enabled meeting rooms to reduce or negate the need to print meeting papers.</p>



	<p>The Standards Commission's work to promote and enforce requirements the Code of Conduct assists in ensuring planning decisions are made on their merits and in the public interest, which includes the requirement to reflect the Scottish Government's commitment to sustainable development.</p>
--	---



## SECTION 4: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

[Climate change](#) is a direct driver of biodiversity loss. Some species are dying out while others are being displaced due to warmer air temperatures, extreme weather patterns, and higher sea levels. As well as being a direct driver of biodiversity loss, climate change also worsens the other drivers. For example it enables quicker spread of non-native invasive species. Combined action for biodiversity loss and climate change can be achieved through nature-based solutions.

This reporting section provides the opportunity for your organisation to provide details on how you are supporting the positive contribution biodiversity can make to building resilience, and helping nature to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

### How has your organisation integrated biodiversity into nature based solutions to the climate emergency and other socio-economic outcomes?

<p><b>Guidance on completing this section</b></p>	<p>Nature-based solutions can play a vital role in helping us to protect and enhance biodiversity, achieve net zero targets, and improve quality of life.</p> <p>If relevant, you may wish to report on any processes or activities that your organisation has undertaken, including within your buildings and workforce, and projects that you have delivered.</p> <p>Integration might include incorporating biodiversity into nature-based solutions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The climate emergency, for example by developing climate change strategies that include nature, investing in green infrastructure, and taking action for pollinators.</li> <li>• Build inclusive economic growth, for example by supporting nature based industries, or key natural visitor attractions</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing, for example by improving access to nature for all.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Links to related resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on how <a href="#">urban nature-based solutions</a> can help Scotland's towns and cities mitigate and adapt to climate change providing guidance and examples.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Helping nature to adapt</a> webpage contains useful information on making use of nature's capacity to adapt to change as one of our best tools for managing climate change impacts, including through managing native woodlands and restoring peatlands.</li> <li>• The publication <a href="#">People, Place and the Climate Emergency</a> includes examples and information on local nature-based solutions to deliver a range of socio-economic outcomes.</li> </ul>



<b>Text Field</b>	Not applicable.
-------------------	-----------------





## SECTION 5: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Workforce skills and training

<p><b>Guidance on completing this section</b></p>	<p>Detail activities that have been undertaken to support the development of your workforce, particularly in relation to skills relevant to biodiversity, nature, or outdoor learning and community engagement in the natural environment. Identify any opportunities that are available to your staff to take part in practical action.</p> <p>Activities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting volunteering days, for example with environmental Non-Governmental Organisations;</li> <li>• Staff training, education and capacity building;</li> <li>• Staff networks that aim to deliver on or promote objectives related to biodiversity or nature;</li> <li>• Hosting conferences, exhibitions and events;</li> <li>• Collaborative working with other organisations and sharing best practice;</li> <li>• Information about nature hosted on your webpage or blog posts;</li> <li>• Ideas on <a href="#">volunteering outdoors</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Text Field</b></p>	<p>In 2023 the Standards Commission signed up to a Social Impact Pledge, aimed at increasing the social impact of public sector organisations in Scotland.</p> <p>As part of its pledge, the Standards Commission decided that its staff would give back to the community by spending a day working for a charity. On 16 August 2023, staff spent the day working for The Yard, a Scottish charity, supporting disabled children and young people, and their families, through adventure play.</p>



## SECTION 6: RESEARCH AND MONITORING

**Describe any research activities that your organisation has undertaken that may be relevant to biodiversity or nature**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	Detail any relevant research activities undertaken, if any. This might include research papers, surveys or reports undertaken by your organisation.
<b>Text Field</b>	Not applicable.

**What follow-up actions or monitoring have you undertaken to assess the impacts of the actions you have taken? How have you measured this?**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>If relevant, you may wish to report on monitoring of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities relating to biodiversity, sustainability, climate change or nature more generally;</li> <li>• Implementation of relevant strategies or policies;</li> <li>• Organisational capability or development in relation to biodiversity or the natural world.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to related resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NatureScot reports on many different surveys</a> to better understand how people in Scotland use, enjoy and value the natural environment.</li> <li>• Information on biodiversity data, including obtaining and sharing data from Local Records Centres <a href="#">Biodiversity - where to find data</a>.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">State of Scotland's Nature report</a> provides a useful overview.</li> </ul>
<b>Text Field</b>	No follow up actions or monitoring has been undertaken.



## SECTION 7: BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

Describe your organisation’s main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>Examples of key achievements might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions taken to improve biodiversity through processes followed by your organisation;</li> <li>• Actions taken to improve biodiversity on your premises;</li> <li>• Meeting any strategic aims in relation to biodiversity or nature;</li> <li>• Completion of any projects with relevance to biodiversity or nature;</li> <li>• Volunteering days or time invested.</li> </ul>
<b>Text Field</b>	<p>The staff of the Standards Commission really enjoyed their day volunteering at The Yard and plan to make this an annual event going forward.</p>

Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>Challenges might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and resource pressures;</li> <li>• Delivery of cross-cutting actions;</li> <li>• Preventing further loss of habitats and species;</li> <li>• Effective management of invasive non-native species;</li> <li>• Pressures for space;</li> <li>• Need to meet targets;</li> <li>• Encouraging enhanced partnership working.</li> </ul>
<b>Text Field</b>	<p>Economic and resource pressures may prove to be the main challenge over the next three years as funds may be prioritised elsewhere.</p>



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot