



Introduction

A series of Biodiversity Guidance to accompany the Natural Capital Protocol

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Acknowledgements

This guidance is an output of the 'Integrating biodiversity into natural capital assessments' project run in collaboration between the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and the Capitals Coalition. The Cambridge Conservation Initiative is the focal point of research and advice on biodiversity issues for the Coalition.



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**Cambridge
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<https://www.cambridgeconservation.org/about/partners/>

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Orientation

The Natural Capital Protocol (the Protocol) is an internationally accepted, standardized framework to help generate trusted, credible and actionable information that business managers need to inform decisions.

Through the development of the Protocol, it became obvious that the complexity of biodiversity meant further guidance was required to ensure that biodiversity and its role in delivering the benefits we derive from nature could be more easily reflected in corporate natural capital assessments.

In recognition of these challenges, the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) has led a Capitals Coalition project to address these gaps and develop guidance to complete a biodiversity-inclusive natural capital assessment.

This guidance does not replace the Protocol but is meant to accompany it. You will therefore need a copy of the Protocol with you to use this guidance. If you do not already have a copy you can find one at www.naturalcapitalcoalition.org/protocol.

Why is biodiversity important?

Biodiversity describes the variety of the living component of a natural capital stock. This includes the variety of all living things, from genes through species and populations to habitats and ecosystems. Many of the flows of benefit from natural capital come directly from the interactions within and between biodiversity and non-living resources. The interactions that generate these benefits are vast, complex and often poorly understood.

Sometimes values can be measured, for example for the role a specific insect species has in pollinating a crop, or the role a forest ecosystem may have in watershed maintenance. Many values, particularly those related to underlying ecosystem function, resilience to change or the 'intrinsic' values of nature, can be hidden or missed altogether if your natural capital assessment is solely focused on final ecosystem services.

Natural capital approaches provide a holistic framework for understanding societal relationships with nature, but can struggle to capture the values of biodiversity. We have therefore developed this Biodiversity Guidance to accompany the Protocol; enabling businesses to better incorporate biodiversity into natural capital assessments and decision-making.

Audience

The intended audience of this Guidance is the same as the Protocol, covering all business sectors, including finance, and targeted primarily at managers from sustainability, environment, health and safety, and operations departments. The Guidance is written for businesses who recognize the importance of natural capital and wish to ensure their assessments incorporate biodiversity, as well as businesses who are interested in biodiversity and want to expand those considerations to a broader natural capital perspective. The Guidance covers terrestrial, freshwater and marine realms; in order to be appropriate for different decision-makers.

Guidance structure

The Biodiversity Guidance builds on the Protocol. It consolidates existing materials rather than seeking to create new tools or methods. As well as an overarching decision tree, additional guidance has been produced for each Stage of the Protocol to allow the completion of a biodiversity-inclusive natural capital assessment.

Decision Tree

Using a series of questions, the Decision Tree will guide you through the Frame, Scope, Measure & Value and Apply stages of the Protocol and Biodiversity Guidance in order to carry out a biodiversity-inclusive natural capital assessment. It follows the steps outlined in the Protocol and suggests a number of biodiversity-specific tools and methodologies along the way. The content of the Guidance will be linked to as you go through the Decision Tree. Ultimately, the Decision Tree will be added as an additional resource of the Natural Capital Protocol Toolkit and linked to the MIT SHIFT website.

Framing Guidance

This Guidance helps you to establish why you would want to conduct a natural capital assessment that incorporates biodiversity. It covers the concept of biodiversity, how biodiversity relates to natural capital, why biodiversity may be missed from natural capital assessments, and why this is relevant to business (Step 01).

Scoping Guidance

This Guidance describes how to set and incorporate biodiversity-inclusive objectives and define the scope of your assessment (Step 02 - 04). This includes aligning natural capital assessments with existing corporate biodiversity commitments or policies, and key technical considerations when defining the scope of an assessment that considers biodiversity.

Measuring and Valuing Guidance

This Guidance describes how to measure (Step 05 and 06) and value (Step 07) biodiversity impacts and dependencies as part of a natural capital assessment.

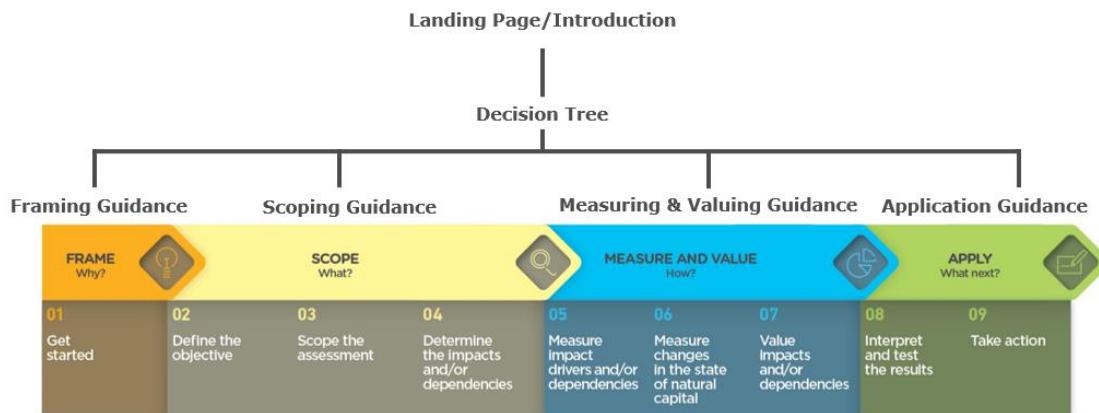
Application Guidance

This Guidance covers how to interpret, apply and act on the results of a natural capital assessment to help set informed biodiversity targets. This Guidance aims to inform biodiversity target setting by exploring how to interpret and test the results (Step 08) and take action (Step 09).

In Figure 1 below, you will find what each guidance note covers in relation to the stages within the Protocol:

Figure 1

Biodiversity Guidance and the corresponding Protocol steps



Please note:

- The Stages and Steps above are iterative, and you should expect to revisit previous Steps as necessary. For example, after identifying your most material biodiversity impacts and dependencies in Step 04, you may need to go back and change the objective or scope of your assessment in Steps 02 and 03.
- The Biodiversity Guidance follows the overarching Protocol Framework and does not introduce any additional Stages or Steps.
- Each Step in the Guidance contains additional biodiversity-specific guidance that will help your business complete the actions within that Step and navigate through the Protocol Framework. For some actions, additional biodiversity-specific guidance may not be appropriate. At the beginning of each Stage and Step, the Guidance outlines the actions for which additional biodiversity-specific guidance is provided.
- To help bring biodiversity-specific business applications to life, this Guidance includes real-life and hypothetical examples to describe how your business could complete each of the Stages.

Useful definitions of key terms are provided when they are first introduced. For a complete glossary, please refer to the Protocol.