

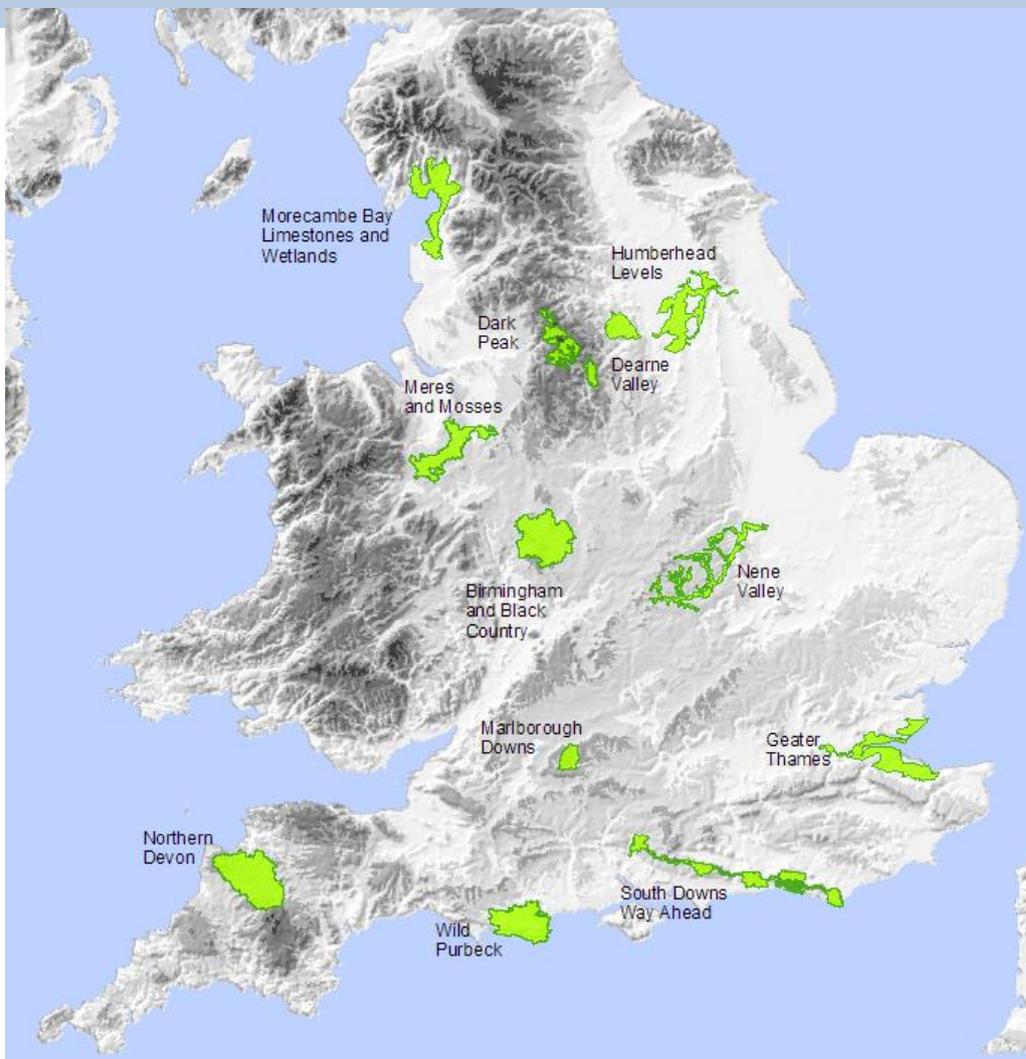


Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Defra project code: WC 1061

Updated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Nature Improvement Areas



March 2014

Collingwood
Environmental
Planning Limited

in partnership with
GeoData Institute and
Cascade Consulting



Project title:	Monitoring and Evaluation of Nature Improvement Areas: Phase 2
Contracting organisation:	The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Defra project code:	WC 1061
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Report details:	<p>Report title: Updated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Nature Improvement Areas</p> <p>Work Package: WP1: Applying the monitoring and evaluation framework</p> <p>Date issued: 28th March 2014</p> <p>Purpose: To sets out an updated version of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) drawing on the lessons from the year 1 M&E process and the progress that has been made in developing the approach to the evaluation, the indicator protocols and online reporting tool.</p> <p>Version: FINAL (revision 1)</p> <p>Author(s): Ric Eales and Owen White, (both CEP); and Chris Hill (GeoData Institute).</p> <p>Citation: Collingwood Environmental Planning (2014) <i>Updated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Nature Improvement Areas</i>. Collingwood Environmental Planning Ltd, London.</p>
Acknowledgements:	This report has been prepared for Defra and Natural England by Collingwood Environmental Planning (CEP) with support from the GeoData Institute. The preparation of the report was managed by Andy Stott (Defra), Brian McDonald (Natural England) and Helen Pontier (Defra), with particular support from Rebecca Jackson Pitt (Natural England). The NIAs provided input to the document at a workshop on 6 th February 2014.

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Abbreviations

BARS	Biodiversity Action Reporting System	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
CEP	Collingwood Environmental Planning Ltd	MENE	Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	NBN	National Biodiversity Network
EA	Environment Agency	NE	Natural England
LNP	Local Nature Partnership	NIA	Nature Improvement Area

1. Introduction

1.1 Context to the NIA programme

The establishment of the Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) Programme was announced in the Natural Environment White Paper – *Natural choice – securing the value of nature* (2011)¹. NIAs are large, discrete areas that will deliver a step change in nature conservation, where a local partnership has a shared vision for their natural environment. The scheme takes forward the recommendations of the Lawton review, *Making space for nature* (2010)².

The aim of the NIAs is that they will benefit both wildlife and people and will:

- **Become much better places for wildlife** – creating more and better-connected habitats over large areas which provide the space for wildlife to thrive and adapt to climate change.
- **Deliver for people as well as wildlife** – through enhancing a wide range of benefits that nature provide us, such as recreation opportunities, flood protection, cleaner water and carbon storage.
- **Unite local communities, landowners and businesses through a shared vision for a better future for people and wildlife.** The hope is that they will become places of inspiration, that are loved by current and future generations.

The 12 initial NIAs started work in April 2012, following a national competition for a share of £7.5 million of government funding which attracted 76 bids. The selected NIAs are partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations. The NIA Grant Scheme provides funding to the 12 initial NIAs and will operate over three years from 2012 to 2015, although NIAs have made commitments to continue their activities after this time. The NIA programme promotes actions at a landscape scale that improve biodiversity, ecosystem services and people's connections with their natural environment.

NIAs need to demonstrate measurable ecological, social and economic benefits and outcomes. Natural England and Defra developed NIA General Guidance Notes³ and Criteria⁴ which set out who may apply for the NIA Grant Scheme, and this also provides details of what activities and associated direction of change are sought. The 12 initial NIAs developed detailed Business Plans at Stage 2 of the application process which sought to apply the NIA criteria – these plans include the NIA's ambition, including a shared vision, their objectives, outputs and outcomes with quantified and timebound outputs and outcomes and their work programme and project milestones. All the NIAs also have Partnership Agreements between partner organisations involved.

Distinct from the 12 initial NIAs that were awarded NIA status and funding, Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and local planning authorities can now identify and agree where locally determined NIAs can take shape.

What is monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring is the systematic collection of data and information on specified indicators or topics to inform the extent of progress and achievement of objectives from an intervention, in this case the establishment of an individual NIA or the NIA programme as a whole.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed intervention (in this case the establishment of an individual NIA or the NIA programme as a whole), including its design, implementation and outcomes / impacts. The aim of the evaluation is to determine the fulfilment of objectives, impact and sustainability. An evaluation will draw on data and information collected through monitoring as part of its evidence base.

¹ H.M. Government. 2011. *The natural choice: securing the value of nature*. The Stationary Office Ltd. Available for download at: www.official-documents.gov.uk

² Lawton, J.H., Brotherton, P.N.M., Brown, V.K., Elphick, C., Fitter, A.H., Forshaw, J., Haddow, R.W., Hilborne, S., Leafe, R.N., Mace, G.M., Southgate, M.P., Sutherland, W.A., Tew, T.E., Varley, J. & Wynne, G.R. 2010. *Making space for nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network*. Report to Defra. <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

³ Natural England. 2011. Nature Improvement Areas Competitive Grant Scheme general guidance notes. http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NIA-guidance-notes_tcm6-26959.pdf

⁴ Defra (September 2012) *Criteria for Local Authorities, Local Nature Partnerships and others to apply when identifying NIAs*.

1.2 Why monitoring and evaluation is needed

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the NIAs is needed to:

- Assess progress towards achievement of individual NIA objectives, and support adaptive management.
- Share knowledge and learn from the 12 initial NIAs.
- Help build a practical evidence base for the future.
- Monitor and report progress on the aggregated contribution of NIAs towards delivering relevant national and international policy commitments and targets.
- Demonstrate the outcomes of NIAs objectively and win continuing support.

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear explanation of the purpose of the monitoring and evaluation of the NIAs, the requirements on the 12 initial NIAs and any local locally determined NIAs and to provide an overall framework for the approach being adopted to undertake the monitoring and evaluation. Note that a glossary is included at the end of this document to provide clear definitions of some of the key terms used.

1.3 Roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation activities

In their Business Plans, the 12 initial NIAs set out their strategic objectives, expected outputs and outcomes and plans to report, monitor and evaluate progress. They also had to identify ways/mechanisms in which they will progress after 31 March 2015 and provide a statement on what impact the NIA will have made by the year 2020. As part of the NIA programme, the 12 initial NIAs are expected to periodically submit quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation reports on agreed outputs and activities to Natural England.

The NIAs' M&E processes should be able to detect and record changes across a range of themes: biodiversity (habitats and selected species); ecosystem services; social and economic benefits; and partnership working. For the three years of the NIA Grant Scheme Natural England, Defra and other partners including the Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Communities and Local Government are directly supporting some data analysis / reporting. The M&E is also supported by existing data capture systems and data gathering activities such as the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS), National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey.

At the end of the three year period, the NIAs are required to provide an end of project report. These are to gather information about the outcome, beneficiaries and achievements and longer term sustainability. An important element of the NIA programme is that successful partnerships will participate in the shared learning and best practise network that has been established to support the 12 initial NIAs.

The locally determined NIAs are also encouraged to monitor their ecological, social and economic benefits and outcomes and apply the M&E framework, NIA criteria and lessons learnt from the 12 initial NIAs to help inform their development and progress. They are also committed to using the Online Reporting Tool developed for NIAs to record their monitoring results (see section 3.3).

Defra, in collaboration with Natural England, has commissioned contractors to support the M&E of the 12 initial NIAs⁵. The contractors' role includes developing the M&E Framework, the indicator protocols, the online reporting system, providing support to the NIAs and undertaking some knowledge exchange with other related initiatives, as well as undertaking an annual cumulative evaluation of the NIAs in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

⁵ <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/funding/nia/monitoringandevaluation.aspx>

2. The overall approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the NIAs

The underlying principles used to develop the approach to the M&E of NIAs included the need to be flexible, cost-effective and fit-for-purpose. The M&E approach is intended to be suitable for use by the 12 initial NIAs, as well as future NIA partnerships and other integrated landscape-scale initiatives. Overall, the M&E of the NIAs needs to operate at several different levels to enable reporting on:

- Progress related to the objectives of individual NIAs.
- The contributions of NIAs to national and international commitments.
- The outcome of the NIA programme as a whole.

The M&E of the NIAs is underpinned by a set of principles to guide the approach, which must:

- Be based on **existing monitoring, surveillance and reporting initiatives** at national and local levels, wherever possible, but also **encourage new data collection** by NIA partnerships where needed.
- Be **flexible** to allow for evaluation of different objectives and approaches adopted within NIAs or adaption of existing user-orientated data capture systems (e.g. BARS and NBN).
- Facilitate **sharing of knowledge, learning and information** amongst the NIA partnerships, with the wider community and government to help improve performance and provide transparency.
- Embrace **quantitative and qualitative** monitoring, as appropriate.
- Facilitate **comparison and aggregation** of monitoring data by promoting consistent approaches to the collection and reporting of certain key data through the use of a set of common NIA indicators supported by accompanying protocols. The protocols should provide clear, unambiguous guidance on realistic methods for data capture and analysis that NIAs are either expected or encouraged to adopt as appropriate.
- Provide a **core set of information** from which compatible results that can be summarised nationally.
- Where necessary, allow for **adjustment of monitoring data to meet local NIAs' needs**. For example, the NIAs may wish to develop new protocols for local indicators relevant to their particular circumstances.
- Enable **short-term evaluation** during and at the end of the three year funding of the 12 initial NIAs, but also facilitate assessment in the **longer term** as outcomes start to be realised.
- Focus, where possible, on features that relate to **outcomes**. Due to confounding variables and the short project timescale, it is recognised that some monitoring will need to relate to **processes and outputs**.
- Provide a **user-friendly and streamlined reporting system** proportionate to needs that avoids duplication, conflict or overburdening the NIAs.

3. What is being monitored and how is it being recorded?

3.1 Data and information sources

A variety of both qualitative and quantitative information is being used as part of the monitoring of the NIAs that will feed into the evaluation of their progress and performance, both individually and collectively. This information is being drawn from a variety of different sources and ranges from, for example, data on NIA financial expenditure and activities recorded by national biodiversity data capture systems to qualitative data from case studies on community involvement in the NIAs.

Some of the key sources of monitoring data and information supporting the evaluation are illustrated in the Figure 1.

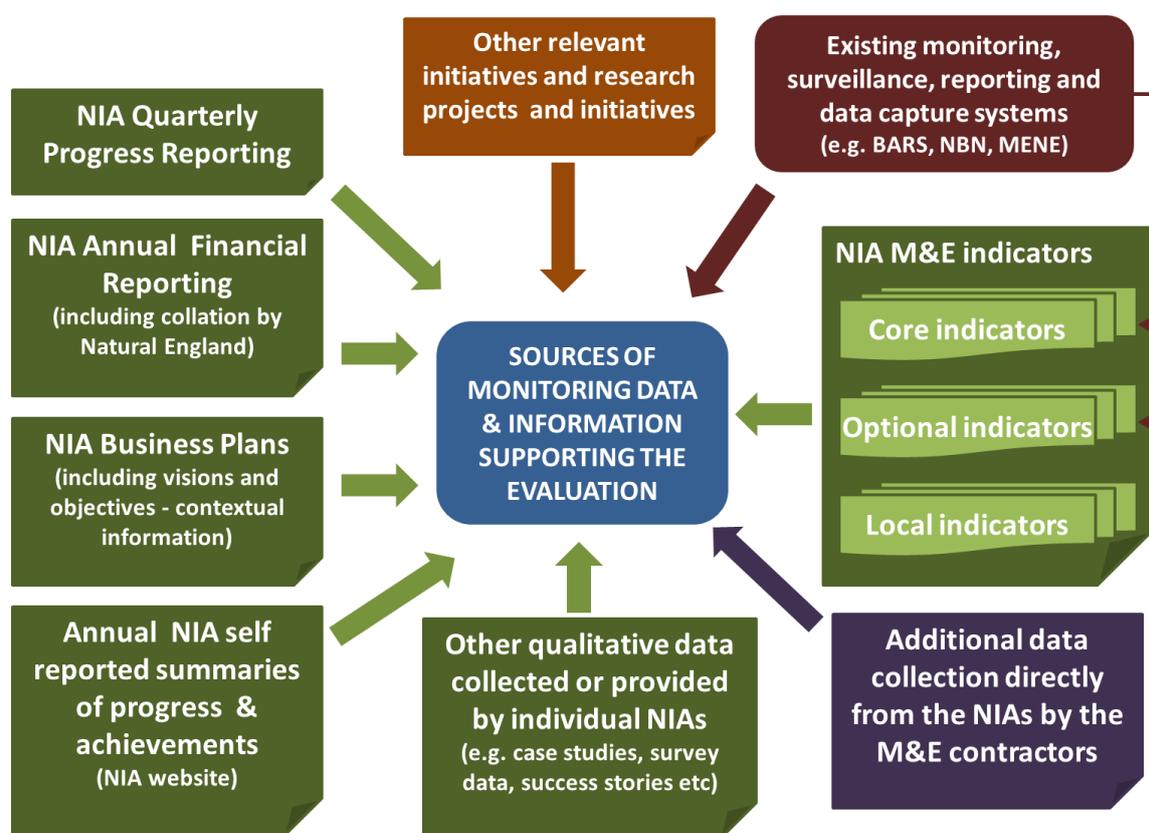


Figure 1: Sources of monitoring data and information

3.2 NIA monitoring and evaluation indicators

One of the mechanisms being used to measure change and to help assess the performance of the NIAs, both individually and collectively, is through the use of indicators. An indicator framework has been specifically developed to support the NIA monitoring and evaluation. This seeks to integrate monitoring and evaluation across a broad range of themes/subthemes. These indicators are intended to provide a useful and flexible tool for the NIAs to measure the progress of their delivery within and beyond the three year programme. Indicators are used as they are a way of describing complex factors in simple terms providing a more practical and economical way to track outcomes than recording every possible variable. Locally determined NIAs are also encouraged to utilise these indicators.

3.2.1 Indicator themes

The NIA indicators are organised into **four themes**, under which there are a number of sub-themes as illustrated in Figure 2.

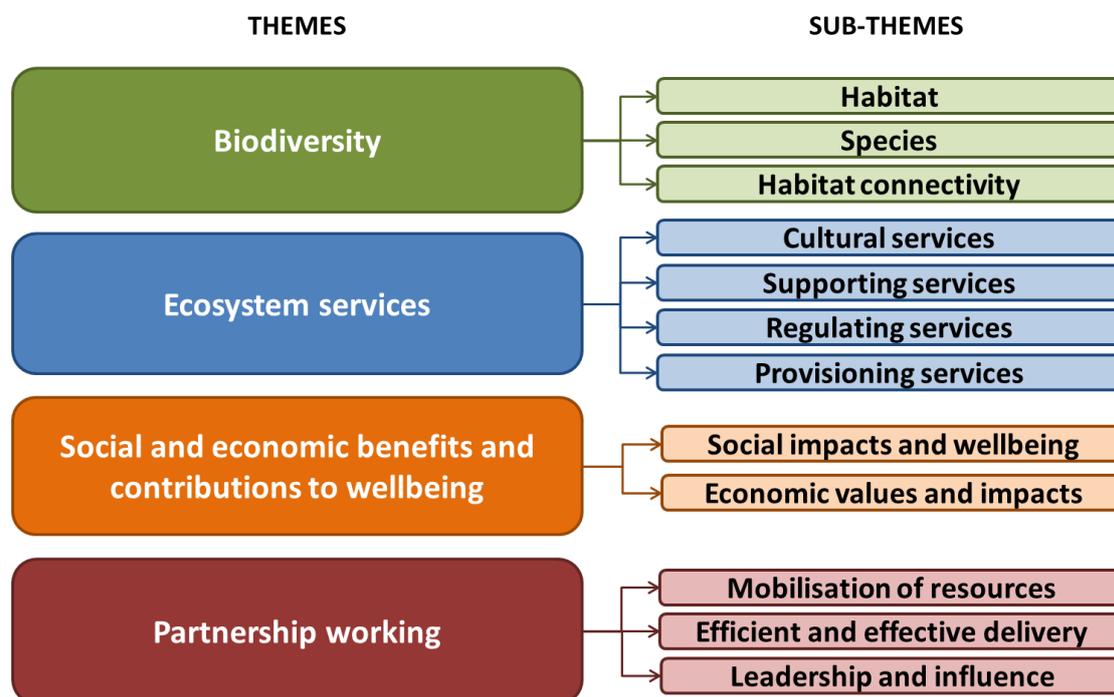


Figure 2: NIA M&E indicator themes and sub-themes

3.2.2 Indicator categories

As part of the 12 initial NIAs' M&E responsibilities, they are required to monitor and report on indicators under the four themes. Each indicator has been categorised as one of three types:

- **Core** indicators.
- **Optional** indicators.
- **Local** indicators.

Descriptions of the indicator categorisation are:

Core indicators are those indicators that all NIAs *must* select and report on. Core indicators have a protocol description which sets out **fixed data sourcing and indicator calculation methods** (i.e. all NIAs should use the same source/s of data and calculate indicator values using the same method). In recognition of the distinctive nature of each NIA, there is some flexibility to select NIA-specific features, for example in relation to habitat types or species.

Core indicators are comparable at the data level, meaning it is intended that it should be possible to combine and analyse data in a consistent manner across all NIAs.

Optional indicators Optional indicators recognise the diversity of the NIAs and the need to provide flexibility in the number and scope of the indicators. NIAs can choose those Optional indicators they feel will best help them measure progress against and report on the priorities and objectives in their own Business Plan (as long as the minimum number and different themes of Optional indicators are selected). All Optional indicators have a protocol, which describes the indicator purpose (i.e. what is being measured / indicated) and provides guidance on the data sources and calculation methods that should be used. NIAs must ensure that they record progress against the indicator purpose / outcome defined in the protocol. The protocols for Optional indicators provide guidance on methods, references and links to recommended data sources.

However, there is some scope for NIAs to adapt the protocols to local circumstances.

Optional indicators are intended to be comparable across NIAs at the outcome level, meaning it is possible to report on the achievements of NIAs against a common indicator outcome (e.g. increased levels of outdoor recreation). Although standardised methods are strongly encouraged it is recognised that the available data will not necessarily be suitable for combination and analysis across all NIAs. The protocols seek to facilitate the use of common data collection and calculation methods and the aim is for data comparability where possible, particularly where it is an indicator being used by several of the NIAs.

Local indicators are indicators that are defined and developed by individual NIAs. NIAs may wish to develop Local indicators within particular sub-theme which are locally dependant and/or methods are not necessarily well developed, such as Ecosystem Services. Some potential local indicators already have protocols to guide the NIAs and are therefore included in the indicator diagram in Appendix 1. However, the **NIAs are also free to develop their own Local indicator even where the indicator diagram does not propose one using their own measures, data sourcing and calculation methods**. Local indicators reflect the research and innovation focus of the NIAs, and provide an opportunity for NIAs to develop and explore their own measures to monitor their respective outcomes. The sharing of experience in developing local indicators is encouraged.

Local indicators are not intended to be comparable across NIAs as they reflect NIA-specific interests, although comparison will be possible where more than one NIA collaborates to develop a local indicator. Where local indicators are used, NIAs are requested to develop and submit protocols that describe the data, processing and analysis using the template protocol (see below and Appendix 2) to assist other NIAs who may wish to adopt or adapt for similar indicators.

The complete set of NIA indicators illustrating how they are organised into the themes and sub-themes and categorised into Core, Optional or Local is included in the indicator diagram in Appendix 1 (note that only some potential local indicators are illustrated in the diagram, particularly where methods are under development such as ecosystem services and habitat connectivity, but NIAs are free to develop local indicators under any sub-theme).

3.2.3 Types of indicators and what they are monitoring

The NIAs are not expected to select and monitor all the indicators (see section 3.2.4). The indicator categories acknowledge the differences between the NIAs and their objectives and the need for flexibility, whilst also aiming to provide some key consistent monitoring data to evaluate the NIAs collectively.

Ideally, the indicators would focus on measuring the **outcomes** and **impacts** resulting from the NIAs' activities (e.g. the levels of increase in public awareness and engagement in natural environment and improvements to community wellbeing, and the levels of increase in ecological connectivity through habitat creation or restoration). This is not always practicable, for example, due to lack of available data and the time lag before outcomes and impacts might become apparent and measureable. Therefore some of the indicator monitoring involves measuring **processes** and **outputs** (e.g. the extent of habitat managed to improve its condition and the number of educational visits) (see section 4.1).

Proxy indicators

Where it is not possible to measure the desired outcomes and impacts resulting from the NIAs' activities directly, it is sometimes possible to use a surrogate or **proxy indicator**. For example, the number of people visiting natural areas could serve as a proxy measure for cultural ecosystem services. While the number of visitors does not directly measure the cultural benefits people receive from ecosystems, it could serve as a proxy by providing some insight into the level of this service provided by the natural areas.

It is important to be clear what assumptions are being made in using such a proxy indicator and ideally to draw on relevant evidence about the relationship between the proxy and the outcomes and impacts of ultimate interest (e.g. existing research showing a link between visiting natural areas and health and spiritual benefits).

3.2.4 NIA indicator selections

The 12 initial NIAs have selected the indicators most relevant to their objectives and which best suit their needs from the menu of indicators within each theme. A total of **6 Core indicators** must be adopted by all the NIAs and these have standard protocols describing them to ensure for these indicators some compatible results that can be summarised nationally. In addition to the Core indicators, the NIAs need to monitor a selection of the Optional indicators to ensure integrated monitoring across the four themes. In practice, a minimum of **13 indicators** in total covering all four themes should be selected by all NIAs, as detailed in Table 1.

NIAs are also encouraged to propose and use additional Optional or Local indicators. They are especially encouraged to do so in relation to ecosystem services, where NIAs may contribute to the development of new, practical approaches to monitoring and evaluation.

Table 1: NIA indicator selection requirements

Themes	Sub-themes	Indicator minimum selection requirements
Biodiversity	Habitat	A minimum of four indicators must be selected for this theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two CORE habitat indicators ('Extent of habitat managed to improve its condition' and 'Extent of areas managed to restore/create habitat'). • One species indicator (not including invasive non-native species). • One CORE habitat connectivity indicator.
	Species	
	Connectivity	
Ecosystem Services	Cultural services	A minimum of three indicators must be selected for this theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One indicator of cultural services. • One indicator of regulating services. • One indicator of provisioning services. In addition, an indicator(s) of supporting services can be selected / developed if an NIA wishes. Ecosystem services are very location-dependent and methods for monitoring are not well-developed. NIAs therefore are encouraged to identify locally-specific issues and test approaches to examine their own local indicators.
	Supporting services	
	Regulating services	
	Provisioning services	
Social & economic benefits & contributions to wellbeing	Social impacts and wellbeing	A minimum of two indicators must be selected for this theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One CORE indicator on social impacts and well-being ('Number of volunteer hours on NIA activities'). • One indicator of economic values and impacts. Social and economic issues and priorities vary between NIAs and they may wish to explore a range of different options in this theme. NIAs may also wish to collect qualitative evidence and case studies, alongside the more quantitative data, to assist them in assessing issues and benefits such as: health; social cohesion; symbolic/spiritual/aesthetic; recreation; education and ecological knowledge; and business and investment.
	Economic values and impacts	
Partnership working	Mobilisation of resources	A minimum of four indicators must be selected for this theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two CORE indicators of mobilisation of resources. • One indicator of efficient and effective delivery. • One indicator of leadership and influence.
	Efficient and effective delivery	
	Leadership and influence	

3.2.5 NIA indicator protocols

Indicator protocols have been developed for the Core and Optional indicators and some Local indicators to guide the NIAs in their monitoring activities and help ensure consistency. The protocols are based on a common template to present a description of the indicator (i.e. what it indicates) and information on, for example, the datasets to use, methods for calculating indicator values and approaches to presenting and recording the indicator results. Many of the protocols recommend that NIAs utilise existing data sources (e.g. MENE data).

The protocols aim to provide sufficient details to enable the NIAs to collect identical types of data and record it in the same way for a given indicator even if the task of collecting data is undertaken at different times by different people. NIAs are encouraged to use and submit the protocol template to describe any Local indicators they develop. The protocol template is presented in Appendix 2.

3.3 Online tool for reporting the indicator data

An online reporting tool was developed to aid the capture of information from the NIA M&E indicators. The online tool is linked with the indicator protocols and is designed to enable the NIAs to record their achievements relating to each indicator each year. The online tool is also intended to complement rather than duplicate other systems of data recording, such as BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System).

The online tool provides NIAs with a structured data-entry tool for the recording, storing and reporting of data and information relating to their chosen indicators of their activities and outputs. The system was built with different levels of permission, and user registration to qualify permission levels assigned to individuals and the specific fields to which they are granted access by the NIA project manager for data entry and approval. The online tool was developed for the 12 initial NIAs, but can also be used by locally determined NIAs to record their indicators.

The NIAs are encouraged to enter 'Caveats' (that describe the baseline, data and model uncertainty) and a 'Narrative' (that can be used by the NIA to describe and interpret the monitoring results and to enter qualitative indicators).

The online tool is also intended for use by Defra, Natural England, NIAs and other interested organisations and individuals, who may view the: **Project Reports** (review of the data across a theme for a selected NIA); and **National Reports** (reports across all NIAs that have used a selected indicator).

4. What is being evaluated?

4.1 The logic model underlying the evaluation

Logic models describe the relationship between the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of an intervention. An intervention in this context could be a project, a programme, a policy or a strategy, but in this case is the establishment and implementation of an individual NIA or the NIA programme overall. A logic model is used within evaluation to help explain how the intervention is intended to achieve its objectives and helps to clearly identify the evaluation objectives and research questions which will direct the evaluation approach, and inform the types of data and information that need to be collected.

The logic model provides an overarching framework for understanding and systematically testing the assumed connections between the intended outcomes (both short term and longer term impacts) of the NIAs individually and collectively with the inputs, activities and processes. This complements the logic model approach used within the NIA Business Plans.

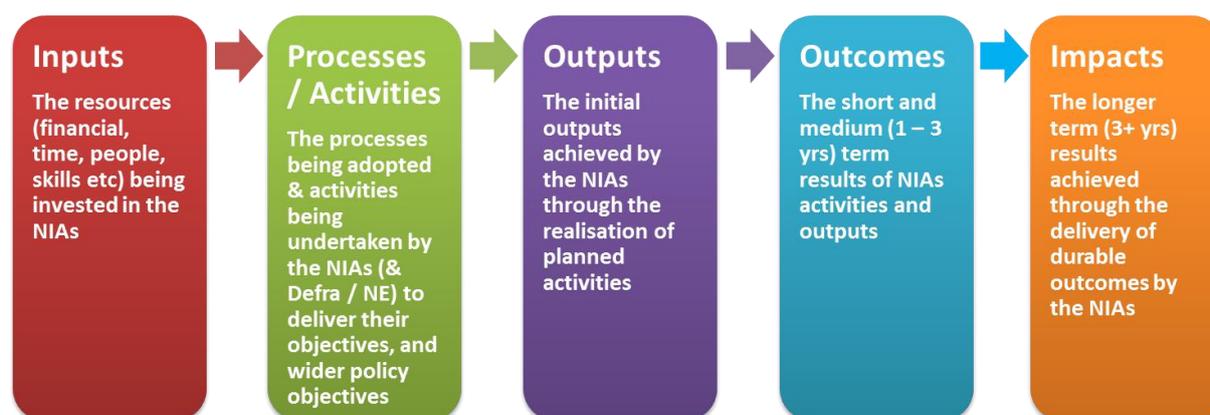


Figure 3: Steps in the logic model

At the end of the three year funding of the 12 initial NIAs, the evaluation will focus on the NIAs objectives and desired outcomes and in particular the contribution made to the NIAs aims to:

- become much better places for wildlife;
- deliver for people as well as wildlife; and
- unite local communities, landowners and businesses through a shared vision for a better future for people and wildlife.

The evaluation may also need to focus on processes and outputs due to confounding variables and the short timescale of the initiative to realise the desired outcomes. The evaluation should also use the evidence available to explore the expected or potential longer term outcomes.

Wider policy relevant questions underlying the NIA programme will also be considered, such as:

- the benefits of partnerships in delivering enhancements to biodiversity and ecosystem services at the landscape scale;
- the potential of NIAs to help deliver the wider biodiversity policy commitments;
- the social and wellbeing benefits of improvements in and interactions with the natural environment; and
- the value for money of such investments in the natural environment.

4.2 Evaluating the individual NIAs

At the NIA level, the focus of the evaluation will be on assessing the progress towards meeting the objectives and the delivery of outcomes by each NIA. At the end of the three year funding of the 12 initial NIAs, this may need to focus on assessing the direction of travel towards longer term objectives, expected outputs and outcomes or any targets they have set. The NIAs were asked to develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) objectives which will also be taken into account.

4.3 Evaluating the NIA programme

The evaluation of the NIA programme as a whole will consider the aggregated contribution of the 12 initial NIAs towards meeting their objectives and intended outcomes and the contribution of NIAs to wider national and international commitments, including the Natural Environment White Paper, the Biodiversity 2020 strategy, and the UK Governments' wider ambitions for economic growth and the expansion of the green economy.

The evaluation will be based primarily on the Core indicators, but the Optional and Local Indicators will also be used where appropriate as well as other information sources discussed in section 3.1. The evaluation will help in sharing learning about the different approaches adopted by the NIAs and the efficacy of policies, partnerships and actions. This in turn will provide evidence to inform any future extension of the NIA programme or similar landscape initiatives. The evaluation will consider whether the NIA programme met its objectives and delivered desired outcomes or had any other unforeseen effects. It will attempt to tease out what led to it working well or not so well.

4.4 Understand the counterfactual

The evaluation imposes a need to determine and understand a counterfactual (i.e. the situation or condition which would have prevailed were there no intervention, in this case if an individual NIA or the NIA programme as a whole was not established and implemented). A counterfactual could be the baseline before the intervention, or a comparable or control situation where no intervention takes place. The baseline situation before the NIAs started work or a similar landscape that is not an NIA could make a suitable counterfactual. The challenge for the evaluation will be in trying to attribute change within the NIA to the NIAs activities as opposed to other factors or delivery mechanisms. Determining the counterfactual is essential to evaluate what difference the NIA's achievements have made over and above what would have happened without the intervention of the NIAs and their activities.

Determining the counterfactual represents a considerable challenge given the availability of data, the nature of the NIAs and their activities and the difficulties in attribution of cause and effect. It will therefore be important to clearly state any assumptions and uncertainties of the evaluation process.

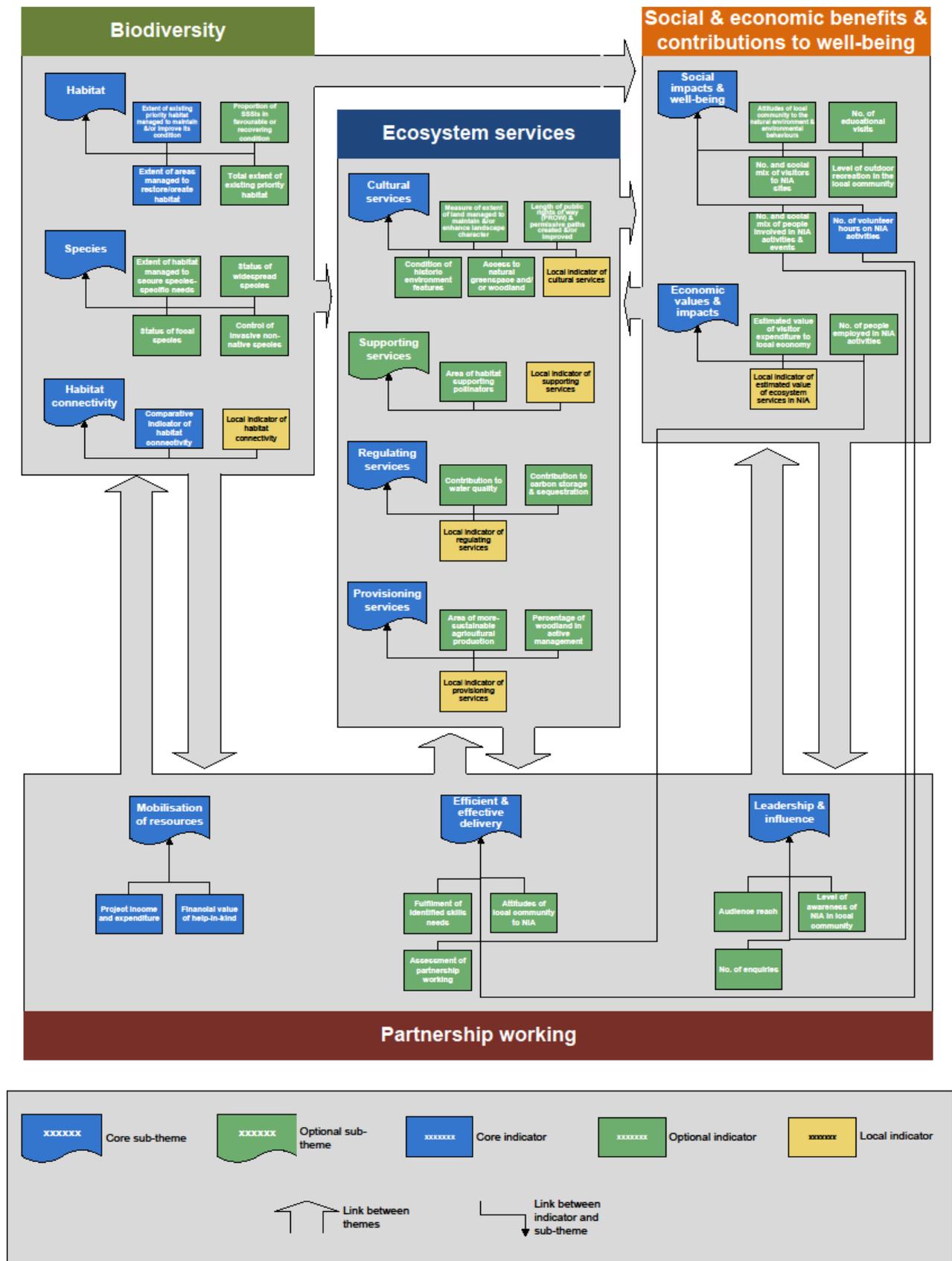
Glossary

Term	Definition
Baseline	<p>A description of the situation prior to an intervention being implemented against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made. In this case the intervention would be the work of an individual NIA or the implementation of the NIA programme as a whole.</p> <p>The baseline situation before the NIAs started work could make a suitable counterfactual (<i>q.v.</i>) for the evaluation (<i>q.v.</i>) of the NIA programme.</p>
Counterfactual	<p>The situation or condition which may have prevailed were there no intervention, in this case if an individual NIAs or the NIA programme as a whole was not established and implemented.</p> <p>The counterfactual is used as part of the evaluation (<i>q.v.</i>) to help understand what difference the NIA's achievements have made towards the achievement of policy objectives and to help understand the difference the NIAs have made over and above what would have happened anyway without the intervention of the of the NIAs and their activities.</p>
Evaluation	<p>The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed intervention (in this case the establishment of an individual NIA or the NIA programme as a whole), including its design, implementation and outcomes / impacts. The aim of the evaluation is to determine the fulfilment of objectives, impact and sustainability.</p> <p>A logic model (<i>q.v.</i>) is used within evaluation to help explain how the intervention is intended to achieve its objectives and helps to clearly identify the evaluation objectives and research questions which will direct the evaluation approach, and inform the types of data and information that need to be collected.</p> <p>The evaluation should provide information to enable incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of those involved both in making policy and implementing it, in this case this could include Defra, Natural England and an NIA and its partners, for example.</p>
Impacts	<p>The longer term (3 years plus) results and effects achieved through the delivery of durable outcomes (<i>q.v.</i>) by the NIA partnerships (these could be positive and negative, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended impacts). Impacts are the major detectable changes resulting from the intervention (for example, a significant increase in downland butterfly populations or reduced habitat fragmentation).</p>
Indicator	<p>A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple measurement and is sensitive to change, to reflect the effects resulting from an intervention. Indicators are a way of describing something complex in simple terms, providing a more practical and economical way to track outcomes than if one attempts to record every possible variable.</p> <p>See section 3 for the definitions of Core, Optional and Local indicators.</p>
Indicator protocol	<p>Practical instructions, descriptions and information on each of the NIA M&E indicators (<i>q.v.</i>) presented in a common template which includes, for example, the datasets to use, methods for calculating indicator values and approaches to presenting and recording indicator results. These aim to provide sufficient details to enable the NIAs to collect identical types of</p>

	data and record it in the same way for a given indicator even if the task of collecting data is undertaken at different times by people.
Inputs	The financial, material, energy, human time, effort and skills being invested in the NIAs.
Logic model	Logic models describe the relationship between an intervention's (a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy) inputs (<i>q.v.</i>), activities, outputs (<i>q.v.</i>), outcomes (<i>q.v.</i>), and impacts (<i>q.v.</i>). It is used within evaluation (<i>q.v.</i>) to help explain how the intervention is intended to achieve its objectives (<i>q.v.</i>) and helps to clearly identify the evaluation objectives and research questions which will direct the evaluation approach, and inform the types of data and information that need to be collected.
Monitoring	The systematic collection of data and information on specified indicators or topics to inform the extent of progress and achievement of objectives from an intervention. Generally involves repeated observations or measurements over time to assist in identifying changes. For the NIAs some of the data monitoring required is provided by key existing tools / systems such as BARS and MENE.
Objective	An objective is the steps that need to be taken in order to achieve an aim or the goals need to reach to achieve an aim. An aim is an aspiration, a statement of what you hope to achieve, an overall target. For example whilst the aim of the NIAs is to achieve ecological coherence, the objectives are for example increasing connectivity and increasing condition or size of habitats.
Online reporting tool	A web-based solution developed specifically for the NIA M&E to enable users to submit data annually for their indicators (<i>q.v.</i>). The system allows reporting on an individual NIA and NIAs collectively. The system makes data on NIA indicators freely available for viewing on a read-only basis via public web-pages.
Outcomes	The likely or achieved short and medium (1 – 3 years) term results and effects of NIA partnership activities and outputs (<i>q.v.</i>) expected delivered.
Outputs	The outputs (products, goods and services etc) achieved by the NIA partnerships as a result of undertaking planned activities. Outputs should be clearly stated or measured and relate in some way to the outcomes (<i>q.v.</i>) desired (for example x ha of new habitat created).
Processes / Activities	The processes being adopted by the NIA partnerships (and Defra / Natural England) to deliver their objectives (<i>q.v.</i>), and wider policy objectives. The activities being undertaken by the NIA partnerships.
Proxy indicator	A substitute measure used to provide insight into the area of interest when it is not possible to measure the area of interest directly. For example, the number of people visiting natural areas could serve as a proxy measure for cultural ecosystem services. While the number of visitors does not directly measure the cultural benefits people received from ecosystems, it does serve as a proxy by providing some insight into the level of this service provided by the natural areas.

Sources: definitions developed for this document as well as drawn and adapted from: HM Treasury Magenta Book, OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, WRI Ecosystem Service Indicators Database.

Appendix 1: Indicator diagram



Appendix 2: Standard template for protocols

Indicator: [ref. number]	[Indicator title]
Theme	
Sub-theme	
Sub-theme category	
Indicator category	
Indicates (<i>what is the indicator intended to indicate</i>)	
Units	
Relevance to Government indicators	
Existing data for establishing baseline	
Relevant dataset(s)	
Source(s) of data (<i>contact details or hyperlink</i>)	
Spatial coverage	
Temporal coverage	
Planned updates	
Data collection method (<i>estimate, survey, monitoring</i>)	
Accuracy of data	
Additional/new data for establishing baseline and monitoring change	
Relevant additional/new data	
Responsibility for data collection (<i>e.g. NIA partnerships or potentially to be taken on by NE or EA</i>)	
Data collection method	
Calculating and presenting indicator	
Baseline date	
Methods for calculating indicator values	
Responsibility for calculating indicator values (<i>e.g. NIA partnerships or potentially to be taken on by NE or EA</i>)	
Reporting	
Online reporting	
Interpreting	
Interpretation (<i>inc linkage to other indicators</i>)	