

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Biodiversity Targets Advisory Group

Title: Biodiversity Targets Advisory Group (BTAG) Minutes

Meeting Date: 15th September 2021

Attendees: Rosie Hails --(Chair), Charlies Godfray, Ian Hodge, Penny Johnes, James Wood, Defra group officials.

1. Terrestrial Targets Update

1.1. Defra and Natural England (NE) have been developing scenario analysis for each of the biodiversity targets with support from UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH). Methodologies were presented to BTAG members alongside the assumptions, uncertainties and caveats associated with each.

2. Habitats

2.1 BTAG members felt it important to ensure work was linked across targets outside of biodiversity e.g., water as well as across other policy initiatives active across government to see where areas were joined up allowing for collaboration and increased efficiency.

2.2 BTAG members raised that the 'Business As Usual' scenario (Scenario 1) in the wider Habitats target included a mix of committed actions and uncommitted. This is still being reviewed and finalised, going forward Scenario 1 will only include committed actions and delivery mechanisms.

2.3 BTAG highlighted how the scenarios, analysis and targets may be useful in the future to answer questions linked to the whole process

3. Species

3.1 Scenario analysis for the Species Extinction Risk target has not yet been completed but will be created using expert consensus opposed to modelling approach to determine deliverability of actions under each scenario.

3.2 BTAG raised that freshwater (FW) species were underrepresented under both the abundance and extinction target. CEH has addressed FW species represented as much as able given timescales and data availability. NE will ensure FW species are represented where possible as data on Red List assessed FW species is limited.

3.3 BTAG raised concern for species extinction risk target that methodology creates too optimistic a target and does not represent freshwater species. Defra and Natural England will look to alter methodology to address concerns where possible.

3.4 CEH presented on the species abundance target. Following BTAG's previous feedback on the indicator CEH have further tested their methodology and made some revisions as well as confirming how weighting of taxa should be addressed. CEH believes the modifications to methodology have addressed BTAGs comments. Work still to be quality assured.

4. General Comments

- 4.1 BTAG recommend when producing evidence for targets include RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating.
- 4.2 There was discussion about whether freshwater species and habitats were underrepresented in the scenarios and targets. More work would be done to ensure more FW is represented.
- 4.3 BTAG highlighted that scenarios don't have monetary figures associated with them. A Cost Benefit Analysis developed by Defra aims to give an estimate of what will be required for each scenario
- 4.4 BTAG recommended being clear in sources and levels of uncertainty. Defra will ensure reporting of all assumptions, uncertainties, limitations and caveats linked to target development.
- 4.5 BTAG recommended data and analysis relevant to targets be provided in order to see the detail and impacts on different taxonomic groups alongside progress toward achieving target ambition.