



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Delivering 30by30 on land in England

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We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We are responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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Introduction

In 2020, the government committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030 (30by30). Thanks to UK leadership, a global 30by30 target was adopted at the UN Biodiversity Summit COP15 in December 2022, as part of an ambitious [Global Biodiversity Framework](#). This document sets out our approach to delivering 30by30 on land in England. Biodiversity policy is devolved in the UK, and therefore Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will set out their approaches to delivering this target separately.

Contributions to the target

New contributions to the 30by30 target will be made on a voluntary basis, and there is no obligation on landowners or land managers to participate. Contributing to the 30by30 target simply recognises where an area is already being effectively protected and managed for biodiversity conservation. Whilst any existing designation requirements (including nature or heritage designations) will continue to apply, new 30by30 contributions do not represent any new management requirements or designation. Landowners or land managers will be able to withdraw their contribution at any point if they wish.

30by30 should be a collaborative, voluntary effort, led by those who are driving nature's recovery on the ground. Achieving this ambitious commitment presents an important opportunity to continue the UK's international leadership on nature protection. This will require a collaborative, cross-sector approach, and everyone has an important role to play. That is why we will be opting for a bottom-up approach. We will be engaging with landowners, land managers, and wider partners to understand how we can work together to deliver this important target.

How we will achieve it

Delivering this commitment for England will ensure our most important places, at the core of nature's recovery, have the long-term protection and favourable management needed for biodiversity to thrive. This will also help to ensure that everyone can enjoy these treasures for generations to come.

In line with the global target, 30by30 in England should primarily focus on our most important areas for biodiversity. We also recognise the importance of ensuring delivery of wider priorities including food production, and that some areas are unlikely to be suitable for 30by30, including highly productive land such as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land.

The [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#) (EIP23) set out how we will deliver 30by30 on land in England by:

1. **Strengthening:** ensure effective policy and statutory safeguards and powers are in place to improve management for nature, prevent degradation and ensure appropriate access for people.
2. **Extending and creating:** designate new protected areas and restore or create wildlife rich habitat outside of these
3. **Investing:** invest in habitat restoration across our protected areas and beyond.

Here we demonstrate how the government is taking action across these themes to deliver 30by30 on land in England. We also introduce our 30by30 criteria, which sets out how areas can contribute towards 30by30 in England, alongside a map showing the areas which can already count and broad areas with potential to count to 30by30 in future.

Our approach is robust and ambitious, supporting delivery of our targets in EIP23 - including our long-term target to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030 - alongside wider government priorities such as food production.

At sea, our Marine Protected Area (MPA) network already covers 40% of English waters. Our statutory target is for 70% of designated features at sea to be in favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in recovering condition. We aim to have fisheries management measures in place by the end of 2024. These will contribute towards 30by30, and our broader goal of achieving Good Environmental Status across our seas.

An explanation of key terms used throughout this document is included in Annex 1.

Our collaborative, bottom-up approach

We want to work with landowners, farmers, land managers and wider partners to further develop our approach to delivering 30by30 in England, and ensure we play our part in meeting the global target.

We will work with these partners to finalise our 30by30 criteria and develop more detailed guidance by summer 2024 including on the pledging and assessment processes. This will include information around how more areas can contribute towards the target while also contributing to wider environmental objectives and other priorities including food production. Our approach will be shaped and led by those who are driving nature's recovery on the ground, including farmers, conservation organisations, heritage organisations and local bodies. This will ensure that we can recognise the full range of positive action already taking place for nature, access, and the historic environment across the country. Importantly, this will also ensure that we can develop a process that minimises any additional requirements or burdens for landowners and land managers.

How the government is taking action to achieve 30by30

We are already taking action to accelerate nature's recovery and deliver this critical target. This includes:

Strengthening

The Environmental Improvement Plan confirms our commitment to delivering the 25 Year Environment Plan goal to **restore 75% of our SSSIs to favourable condition** by 2042.

It also sets two interim targets on protected sites which support the delivery of that 2042 goal and contribute to the achievement of statutory species targets. The interim targets are that by 31 January 2028:

- all SSSIs will have an up-to-date condition assessment; and
- 50% of SSSIs will have actions on track to achieve favourable condition.

In cooperation with the Major Landowners Group (including NGOs, water companies, and key Public Bodies), Natural England is leading the delivery of a prioritised programme of SSSI improvement.

New guidance on the **strengthened biodiversity duty**, which requires public authorities to have regard to **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)** and to periodically consider the action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity – and then take that action.

Action through the **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act** to enhance Protected Landscape management plans and place a stronger requirement on partners such as local authorities and public bodies to contribute to their delivery.

The creation of **a new partnership** between the National Landscapes Association (formerly the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), National Parks England, National Trails UK and Natural England to deliver a range of exciting projects and programmes on nature recovery and widening access to nature. The partnership will also boost opportunities for private sector investment in our Protected Landscapes.

A new **outcomes framework** for Protected Landscapes, which will set targets for their contributions to national environment and climate commitments, to be embedded in their management plans. We are also updating Protected Landscape management plan guidance to ensure consistency.

Our [response to the consultation on implementing the Landscapes Review](#), which sets out our action plan for Protected Landscapes.

Extending and creating

We have announced a competition to **create a new National Forest** – inspired by the success of the existing National Forest in the Midlands, which spans 200 square miles across parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire.

We will establish **34 new Landscape Recovery projects** across England, covering over 200,000 hectares (ha) of land, including woodlands, rainforests and areas of sustainable food production. This will mean that over 50 Landscape Recovery projects are in place across the country.

Our target to restore or create more than **500,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat** outside existing protected sites by 2042, with an interim target to restore or create **140,000 ha** by January 2028.

Declaring/extending **25 National Nature Reserves** by 2027, in addition to the existing 219 which cover 109,000 ha across England.

Launching a further **13 Nature Recovery Projects** across England by 2025, building on the 12 already launched. In May 2022 6 Tranche I NRPs were launched, covering 120,200 ha of land. In July 2023, 6 Tranche II NRPs were launched which covered a greater expanse of 176,000 ha.

A mandatory **Biodiversity Net Gain** requirement for new development through the Environment Act 2021. When commenced, Biodiversity Net Gain will mean that developments leave habitats in a better state for wildlife than they were in before.

Laying the groundwork for **LNRS** to target the best places for nature recovery and wider environmental benefits through the Environment Act 2021. LNRS will equip local planning authorities to communicate local priorities for nature recovery and deliver an evidence-based strategy for where action and investment is needed. We have launched a £14 million funding pot for LNRS preparation.

England's peatlands provide a home for rare wildlife. In the Net Zero Strategy, we committed to aim to **restore approximately 280,000 ha of peatland** in England by 2050.

We have legislated a statutory tree and woodland target to **increase tree canopy and woodland cover of England to 16.5%** by 2050. Of this, approximately 100,000 ha will be priority woodland habitat, which contribute directly to the wildlife-rich habitats target.

Investing

Our new **Environmental Land Management (ELM)** schemes are funding farmers and land managers to deliver, alongside food production, significant and important outcomes for the climate and environment. There are currently around 35,000 farmers and land managers in our agri-environment schemes.

Delivering the **Conservation and Enhancement Scheme** to improve and maintain the condition of those SSSIs not currently eligible for existing agri-environment schemes.

Committing to invest **£100 million** in thriving farming businesses through our successful **Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme**. More than 5,000 farmers and land

managers have engaged with the programme, delivering projects that achieve outcomes for climate, nature, people and place.

Investing in **National Parks Partnerships** and the **National Landscapes Association** to build the capacity to create a pipeline of projects to generate more private finance in Protected Landscapes.

Launching the **£25 million Species Survival Fund**, taking action to preserve vital habitats needed to halt the decline in species abundance.

Launching the England Peat and Trees Action Plans to create and restore peatlands and woodlands, backed by the **£750 million Nature for Climate Fund**.

The government has also set a target to raise at least **£500 million in private finance to support nature's recovery** every year by 2027 in England, rising to more than £1 billion by 2030.

Pledging a **further £15 million to support our existing National Parks and National Landscapes**, helping to support our most iconic landscapes.

Announcing a **new plan to recover England's temperate rainforests** – backed by £750,000 of Research and Development funding to improve resilience, management and protection of our unique temperate rainforests in England found in Cornwall, Devon and Cumbria.

England's 30by30 criteria: the types of area that could count towards 30by30 on land

We have developed criteria to provide clarity on which areas could credibly count towards 30by30 in England. Our approach reflects academic research, guidance and best practice, including that drafted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

An explanation of key terms used within the criteria, including “protected area”, “OECM” and “biodiversity values” can be found in Annex 1.

Our criteria are structured around three pillars which are central to the 30by30 target:

1. **Purpose**
2. **Protection**
3. **Management**

Areas contributing towards 30by30 either as Protected Areas or OECMs, should be able to demonstrate that they possess specific attributes under each pillar.

Purpose

Areas counting towards 30by30 should be able to demonstrate that their purposes or management objectives ensure the delivery of positive outcomes for biodiversity.

Criteria metric:

- Is the primary management objective of this area to deliver in-situ biodiversity conservation, or is the area delivering secondary or ancillary conservation?

Protected Areas are designated for the purposes of biodiversity conservation, although they may have additional purposes or objectives. OECMs may not primarily be managed for biodiversity, but conservation outcomes may be delivered through a secondary objective or as a by-product of management (ancillary conservation). This is important for recognising the potential for land to deliver positive long-term outcomes for biodiversity, even if this is not its primary purpose. While urban areas and those of intensive food production may be unsuitable for 30by30, contributions to the target could include areas which are maintaining or improving habitat, within our towns and cities or within a larger area/farm primarily dedicated to food production.

Ultimately, the purpose or objectives of the area must not be in conflict with conservation to the extent that activities would undermine the achievement of overall positive outcomes for biodiversity in the long term.

Protection

Areas counting for 30by30 should be protected from loss or damage to important biodiversity values, either through legal or other effective means which may include conservation covenants, planning policy, long-term ownership or long-term management agreements.

Criteria metric:

- Is the area protected from loss or damage to important biodiversity values, either through legal or other effective means?

Management

Beyond purposes and protections, it is crucial that areas contributing towards 30by30 are effectively managed in order to deliver positive long-term outcomes for biodiversity. Management should provide confidence that governance/ownership has the mandate and capacity to achieve and sustain such outcomes. Management mechanisms should identify, implement and prioritise the delivery of biodiversity outcomes in the area. Monitoring should be in place to identify baselines and assess progress.

Positive biodiversity outcomes are likely to include creating, restoring, maintaining, or improving wildlife-rich habitat in the area, and/or sustaining important assemblages or

populations of species. These outcomes may be taking place alongside and supporting the delivery of wider ecosystem services such as food production.

Criteria metrics:

- Does governance/ownership have the ability to undertake reasonable in-situ management actions to deliver and sustain positive outcomes for biodiversity?
- Is there a management plan or similar that is designed to deliver identified outcomes for biodiversity?
- Are these management measures being implemented, with monitoring in place to assess progress and inform future management?
- Is there evidence that the area is achieving or making progress towards biodiversity outcomes, and that this will be sustained over the long-term?
- Does the area contain (or are plans in place to create or restore) wildlife-rich habitat and/or sustain important assemblages/populations of species?

We look forward to working with partners to finalise our 30by30 criteria and develop more detailed guidance. This includes recognising and exploring the role of farming tenancies, and shorter-term management agreements including agri-environment schemes.

Indicative 30by30 map

We have produced an initial 30by30 map which includes two groupings:

- 'Areas Currently Counting' towards 30by30, as per our 30by30 criteria
- 'Potential 30by30 Areas' showing broad areas where there is likely to be land with potential to contribute to 30by30 in the future

This map is based on currently available data and is therefore not exhaustive.

The 8.5% of England mapped as currently counting towards 30by30 includes:

- Protected Sites – which includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites.
- areas of woodland and associated open habitats, managed or protected for biodiversity, for example in the nation's forests (the public forest estate)

Protected Sites provide a high level of protection to our most valuable areas for nature. Recognising the contribution of these sites towards 30by30 demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that they are delivering positive outcomes for biodiversity, and where necessary that there are plans in place for their recovery. This will be driven by action towards our EIP commitments to ensure that: by January 2028 50% of SSSIs have actions on track to achieve favourable condition by 2028, and by 2042 75% of SSSIs are in favourable condition.

We have identified 'Potential 30by30 Areas' covering an additional 26.8% of England. This includes broad areas and **does not guarantee that these areas in their entirety will be able to contribute to 30by30 in the future**. However, this helps to identify areas and habitats which may have the potential to contribute towards 30by30, following support from landowners and land managers, and/or targeted action and investment. This includes areas which already have some protections or management in place, and/or habitats containing important biodiversity values.

Areas mapped as 'Potential 30by30 Areas' include:

- priority habitat
- additional areas of woodland
- Nature Recovery Projects – projects supported by Defra and Natural England which help us to deliver the Nature Recovery Network at scale by increasing, improving and connecting wildlife-rich places to restore entire ecosystems
- Local Nature Reserves
- Country Parks
- Natural World Heritage Sites
- Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes)
- farmland within any of the above under appropriate management

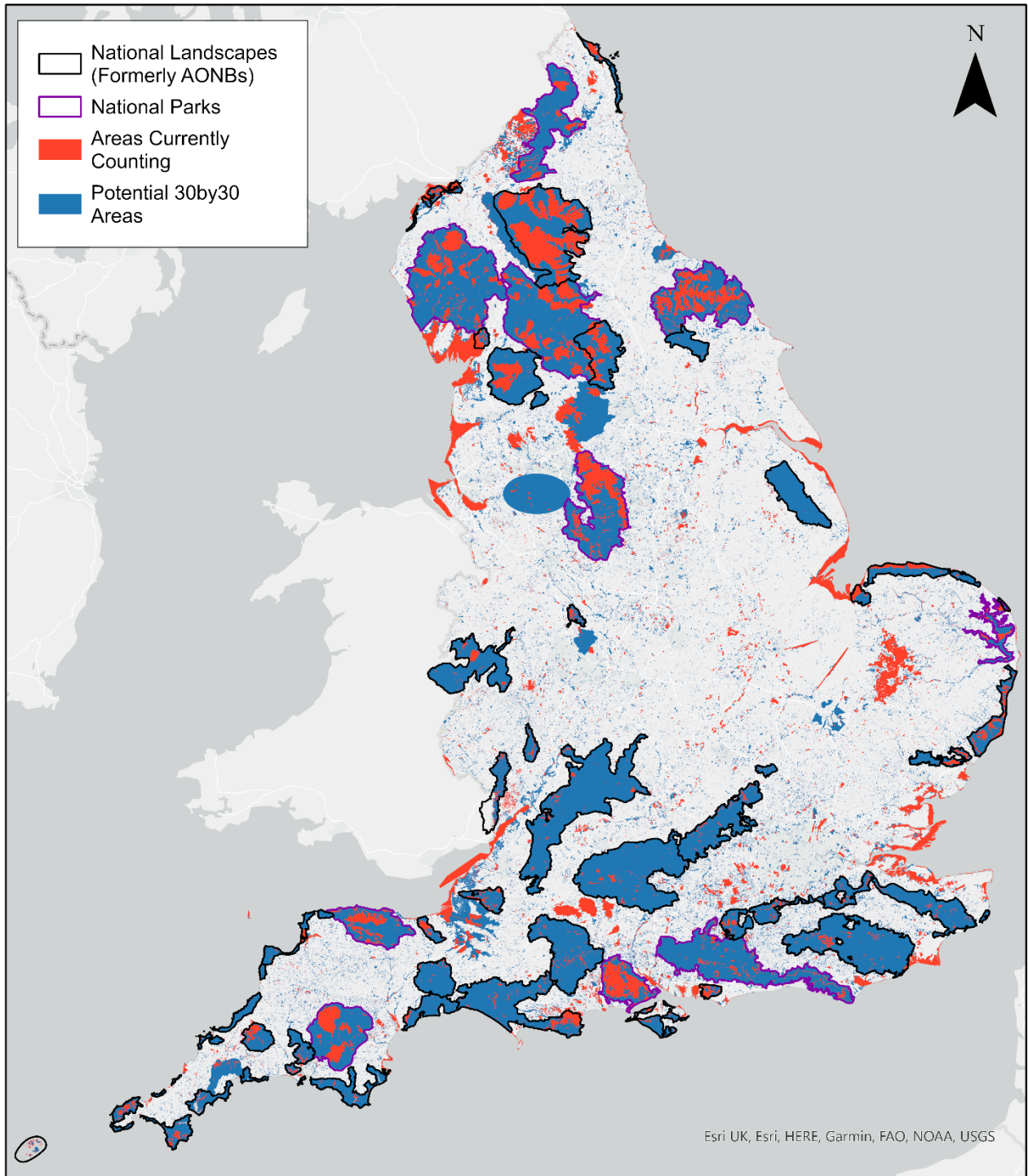
Our Protected Landscapes will be at the heart of 30by30, where they are delivering for nature. We recognise that these landscapes cannot currently count towards 30by30 in their entirety, and that action is needed to maximise the contribution of our National Parks and National Landscapes towards the target. This will be supported by a new outcomes framework for Protected Landscapes and refreshed management plan guidance, and supported by the new measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. 30by30 will also be an important focus of the work of the new Protected Landscapes Partnership.

We expect that significant areas which have not yet been mapped will also contribute to 30by30, as we take action for nature recovery across the country. These areas include but are not limited to:

- Landscape Recovery projects and land managed under other relevant agri-environment agreements
- Local Wildlife Sites
- privately owned areas including eNGO estate
- public estate
- chalk stream recovery projects
- areas being created or restored through meeting the statutory wildlife-rich habitat target, or off-site biodiversity net gain

We look forward to working closely with landowners and land managers – including farmers, conservation organisations, and local bodies – as well as wider partners, to finalise the 30by30 criteria and drive further progress towards achieving this important target.

An indicative map showing areas currently counting and with potential to count towards 30by30 on land in England



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0 25 50 100 Kilometers

Breakdown of areas in the map

Areas that currently count with publishable map data

Area	% of England (to Mean Low Water)
Total areas that currently count	8.5%
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	7.8%
Additional areas beyond SSSIs (woodland under favourable management for biodiversity and National Nature Reserves (NNRs))	0.7%

Potential 30by30 areas with publishable map data

Area	% of England (to Mean Low Water)
Total area	26.8%
Additional areas of priority habitat	3.3%
Additional areas of woodland	5.8%
Additional potential areas including Local Nature Reserves, Nature Recovery Projects, Natural World Heritage Sites (UNESCO) and Country Parks	2.1%
Wider Protected Landscapes not captured through other categories	15.6%

Potential areas not included in the map

There are several areas with the potential to contribute towards 30by30 but are not included in the current map. This is either because we do not have an appropriate Open Government License to access or publish the data sets or because the areas do not yet exist. This includes:

- Local Wildlife Sites
- Landscape Recovery projects
- privately owned areas including eNGO estate

- public estate
- areas being created through meeting the statutory wildlife-rich habitat creation target

Annex 1 - 30by30 criteria explanation of terms

30by30

The government has committed to protect 30% of the land and of the sea in the UK for nature's recovery, by 2030 (30by30).

In December 2022, a global 30by30 target was agreed under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, as part of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (GBF).

Delivering 30by30 in England will be an important contribution towards the global 30by30 target.

Protected Area (PA)

Internationally defined by the CBD as “a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives”. (Source: [Protected areas, CBD](#))

JNCC's [C1 \(Protected Areas\) indicator](#) currently recognises the following protected areas in England:

- Protected Sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, sites designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance/Ramsar Sites, and National Nature Reserves)
- Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes)

Protected Areas will be at the heart of 30by30 in England. To contribute towards the target, Protected Areas will need to meet our 30by30 criteria.

Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measure (OECM)

Internationally defined by the CBD as “a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–

economic, and other locally relevant values.” (Source: [Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures](#), CBD)

OECMs deliver effective biodiversity conservation, even though this may not be the primary objective or purpose of the area. We have not yet recognised OECMs on land in England. This guidance will help to identify areas outside of Protected Areas which could contribute to the 30by30 target, and which could therefore be officially recognised as OECMs.

In-situ conservation

Internationally defined by the CBD as “The conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance and recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings”. (Source: [use of terms, CBD](#))

Biodiversity values

Biodiversity values include wildlife-rich habitat and/or the sustenance of important assemblages/populations of species.

It is important that areas contributing to 30by30 currently contain (or have potential to contain) important biodiversity values.

Wildlife-rich habitat

Wildlife-rich habitat is a type of natural or semi-natural habitat of as identified in [The Environmental Targets Regulations](#) and which is of sufficient quality that is, or will be, capable of supporting flora and fauna which are typically found in the habitat in question.

It is important that areas contributing to 30by30 are creating, restoring, or maintaining/improving wildlife-rich habitats, and/or sustaining important assemblages/populations of species.

Long-term

It is expected that both Protected Areas and OECMs sustain conservation outcomes over the long-term. There is no set timescale for “long-term”, but generally this should mean long enough to secure biodiversity outcomes - generally at least 20 years. However, this may vary according to habitat, species, and other circumstances.