**Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Areas in the Securing Biodiversity Framework**

This note aims to provide greater clarity on the role of Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Areas (IBDAs) in the context of the Securing Biodiversity delivery framework. It has been produced in response to feedback from Local BAP Partnerships, Regional Biodiversity Coordinators, Chairs of Biodiversity Integration Groups (BIGs) and Taxon group leads, who have requested additional information on the nature and purpose of IBDAs.

1. **Implementing the England Biodiversity Delivery Framework**

Despite considerable efforts, it is clear that biodiversity loss is continuing and that more effort is needed if we are to meet our 2015 targets. To address this, in November 2008, a new England delivery framework, [‘Securing Biodiversity’](http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/Product.aspx?ProductID=5b8ad336-a23b-4184-9ad2-ce98f3d92502), was launched to help drive a step change in action to halt, and ultimately reverse, the decline of biodiversity. The framework aims to enhance the recovery of priority habitats and species in England, and in doing so ensure that we collectively meet our 2015 national biodiversity targets. It also aims to do so in ways which enhance ecological resilience, thereby supporting climate change adaptation.

The framework places greater emphasis on delivering biodiversity outcomes through habitat-based work. In particular, this will involve managing the current BAP habitat resource to improve its quality within and outside designated sites in ways which better meet the needs of species. This will include managing habitats to create a range variation and diversity to establish the niches species need to both persist and colonise. IBDAs are not intended to reduce funding for other important biodiversity work; rather, they will complement other habitat improvements and species recovery work in other areas.

Habitat-based work is an important part of the new approach but it will not be sufficient to recover all priority species. Many priority species have particular management or research requirements, or are so restricted that their recovery needs to be carefully managed. Consequently, targeted species recovery remains a critical component of the new framework.

1. **The landscape-scale approach and IBDAs**

In addition to improving management of the existing priority habitat resource, the framework also aims to drive achievement of BAP habitat expansion and restoration targets. Delivery of these target types has been one of the areas of the BAP process where we have so far made least progress. Where and how these targets are delivered matters, in particular it is increasingly accepted that there are significant benefits in taking a landscape-scale approach to restoring biodiversity.

The landscape-scale approach involves linking and buffering existing sites through targeted, large scale restoration of habitats, often including multiple habitat types and structural variability. This helps us conserve biodiversity, both because species are more likely to survive in the long term on larger, more varied and better connected sites, and because they can disperse through the landscape, helping them to adapt their distribution to climate and other environmental change. A landscape-scale approach can produce healthy habitats in mosaics or catchment units, which will deliver both ecosystem services and habitats for priority species.

IBDAs are a key delivery mechanism for meeting our biodiversity targets. Agreeing them requires the expertise and experience of all the components of the Securing Biodiversity framework: regional and local partnerships, biodiversity integration groups (BIGs), and targeted species recovery. IBDAs will be areas where biodiversity gains will be delivered through:

* Achieving better condition of existing BAP habitats and wider linking habitats, so they can better support the full range of BAP species present.
* Achieving better quality habitat restoration and expansion, by incorporating the needs of the full range of BAP species present in, or likely to colonise, an area from the start.
* Targeting restoration and expansion to create the best habitat networks possible, in order to maximise resilience to our changing climate.
* Working across the full range of habitats present, to maximise the benefits to the many species that are dependent on habitat mosaics or edges;
* IBDAs will also be carefully monitored to assess the outcomes of this approach for biodiversity and ecosystem services, to learn lessons for biodiversity delivery elsewhere.

By improving biodiversity at a landscape scale, for a range of different habitats and species, IBDAs will make an important contribution towards the development of English landscapes, with thriving biodiversity and in which species have the greatest chance of adapting to, and persisting through, a time of rapidly changing climatic conditions.

It is expected that each IBDA will constitute one or more landscape scale projects, covering in excess of 10,000ha. The scope of each IBDA project, what it will achieve in terms of contribution to the 2015 targets, and how it will be implemented, will be developed collaboratively between national, regional and local delivery partners. An overview of this information will form an important part of an England Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Plan in 2010. A number of IBDAs are likely to contain existing delivery projects, which may be expanded as a result of this process.

Many organisations have adopted a landscape-scale approach already. Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Areas are intended as areas where several organisations and partnerships – including national, regional and local – agree to collaborate to achieve significant biodiversity gains by working to achieve shared, ambitious objectives across large landscapes.

1. **Funding for biodiversity delivery**

To meet our collective 2015 targets as a sector, we will need to focus resources on the most important activities within each of the areas of work outlined above. The IBDA initiative has the potential to increase the total funding available for biodiversity through:

* Focusing existing schemes better on biodiversity priorities, e.g. agri-environment Higher Level Schemes
* Increasing the total amount of external funding, e.g. from lottery or landfill sources and by helping to raise the profile of biodiversity.
* Developing new income streams, e.g. through the ecosystem services delivered by high quality landscapes.

In addition, a limited amount of additional funding will be available from Natural England, in the 2010/11 financial year, specifically to support the development of IBDAs.

1. **Wider context**

As stated earlier, IBDAs are just one element in the approach that we need to meet our 2015 biodiversity species and habitat targets. They will deliver biodiversity alongside other components of the framework (see figure 1 for a schematic representation):

* Targeted Species Recovery
* Regional and Local Delivery
* Biodiversity Integration Groups
* Policy Environment (EBS Sectoral Workstreams)



**Figure 1:** Indicative representation of the relationships and geographical area covered between elements of biodiversity delivery and the geographical concentration of BAP priorities (habitats and species).