

Ethical principles

Any proposed project or partnership that engages with the National Landscapes Association must meet and adhere to the following ethical principles.

2024



National
Landscapes
Association

Supply-side principles

- **Science-based nature recovery**

The environmental outcomes generated by projects delivered by the National Landscapes Association, National Landscapes and in partnership with other organisations should be quantified based on science-based methodologies.

The National Landscapes Association and National Landscapes may also consider projects that are novel but have the potential to contribute to the development of robust methodologies and standards. These types of projects should clearly define the outcomes they set to achieve and how evidence will be provided.

- **Alignment with global, national and National Landscapes objectives**

Projects should be aligned with the objectives of the National Landscapes Association and National Landscapes, the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), UK statutory environmental such as those set out in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#), and the [Environment Act 2021](#), and the objectives of the National Landscapes Association and National Landscapes.

National Landscapes are well-placed to support the delivery of the UK's environmental targets such as those related to biodiversity, climate change mitigation, the enhancement of beauty, heritage and engagement with nature, and clean and plentiful water.

- **Environmental, climatic, and social safeguarding**

Projects should minimise any adverse impacts on local communities, the natural environment, climatic and historic environment.

Community empowerment and the protection of natural and cultural heritage are central to the work of National Landscapes. Projects should be delivered in a holistic, integrated manner through co-design and consultation with local communities to deliver the desired outcomes.

- **Permanence and prudence**

Projects should maximise the permanence and prudence of environmental outcomes and mitigate against the risks of reversal of these outcomes.

Risks of environmental outcome reversals may occur via circumstances such as natural disasters or the expiration of funding. Mitigation measures such as ensuring adequate financial provisions to cover remediation works, sustainable project management to ensure benefits are retained and delivered in the long-term, and safeguards to protect against potential future risks from climate change should be incorporated into projects.

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- **Local knowledge and community engagement**

Projects should engage local communities and stakeholders throughout project lifecycles to incorporate important local knowledge, values and skills to shape project design and address potential impacts.

Engagement with communities should begin at the project's outset and continue throughout its duration, ensuring that optimal benefits are realised and potential impacts are assessed so resolutions can be integrated into the design and implementation phases.

- **Verifiability**

Projects will be monitored to demonstrate their outcomes. Where applicable, project outcomes should be validated by independent third-party verification to ensure their accuracy and credibility.

Projects should ensure relevant outcomes, such as environmental and social, are real and measurable. Outcomes should be independently verified by third parties. Where this is not feasible, projects should clearly define the outcomes they set to achieve and how evidence will be provided, in line with supply side "Principle 1: Science-based nature recovery".

- **Transparency**

Projects should accurately disclose potential and actual environmental outcomes and impacts generated pre- and post-implementation.

Projects should disclose their potential and actual impacts transparently and publicly. Project information should be made available through appropriate channels, such as websites and social media, with information updated and disclosed throughout the project lifecycle.

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Demand-side principles

- **Promote the objectives and preserve the reputation of the National Landscapes**

The National Landscapes Association and National Landscapes should only enter partnerships that align to the green finance strategy and National Landscapes objectives. Partnerships should not compromise the objectives or reputation of National Landscapes.

The National Landscapes Association should ensure that any partnerships formed to advance the National Landscapes Association's Green Finance Strategy adhere to a common and harmonised approach across all landscapes, while preserving the flexibility for National Landscapes to incorporate their specific needs and characteristics into the decision-making process.

- **Adherence to best practices**

The National Landscapes will only seek to partner with organisations that demonstrate commitment to environmental best practices, such as [Science-Based Targets](#) and adherence to the [mitigation hierarchy](#) (see Fig. 3 below), where there is evidence that the organisation is partnering with National Landscapes to complement and accelerate their own sustainability initiatives rather than as a substitute for internal action.

Partners should adhere to best practices develop a carbon reduction plan to commit and reduce their own operational emissions as far as possible, demonstrating a commitment towards net zero. They should only use National Landscapes projects to complement and further —not replace or delay — their own social and environmental initiatives. In the case of National Landscapes projects that generate environmental claims, such as 10ha of woodland planted, partners should prevent greenwashing by:

- Setting their science-based environmental targets (in particular for climate and nature), or demonstrate a credible, time-bound plan to implement such targets and address their environmental impacts; and
- Adhering to the [mitigation hierarchy](#) and only use offsetting or compensation as a last resort or to accelerate action beyond the scope of their operations.

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Demand-side principles

- **Excluded and restricted activities**

The National Landscapes Association and National Landscapes should exercise heightened scrutiny and caution when considering partnerships with organisations involved in potentially damaging industries or activities.

Partners should not be involved in industries and activities that put the reputation of National Landscapes at risk or compromise their objectives as detailed in the Due Diligence Checklist. This checklist also includes a list of restricted activities and sectors which require further scrutiny before a partnership is considered.

- **Partnership agreements**

Partnerships and transactions should be underpinned by legal agreements and holistic management plans.

Legal agreements should be drawn up that clearly set out the purpose, objectives, ethical considerations, intended outcomes, time-frames, claims and responsibilities of each organisation.