NPU STUDENT AMBASSADOR

TOOLKIT 2: BIODIVERSITY BASELINES

NATURE POSITIVE BY 2030

NATURE POSITIVE UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

UN environment programme

UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION 2021-2030

January 2026

Introduction to Toolkit 2

This Toolkit is intended to accompany the information provided in Workshop 2, to provide more detail on some of the topics, and suggest some related actions you might wish to carry out.

These actions are designed to help provide inspiration for what you could do during your time as an ambassador and are optional, we encourage you to take the approach that you think works best.

If you have any questions, we would suggest reaching out to other NPU Student Ambassadors through the WhatsApp Community or alternatively, you can email us at: emily.stott@biology.ox.ac.uk, hollie.thompson@biology.ox.ac.uk, naturepositiveuniversities@gmail.com

Thank you,

Emily, Hollie, Favour and Avani
January 2026

The Nature Positive Pledge: What does it mean?

Part of being a Student Ambassador is working and advocating for your university to sign the Nature Positive Pledge, if they haven't done so already. Information about which universities have already made the pledge can be found later in this Toolkit.

This is a pledge made by senior management of a university, such as a Vice Chancellor, Rector or Head of Sustainability, committing to start a Nature Positive journey. Your university doesn't have to have taken action already to take the Pledge, but must be willing to start the steps below.
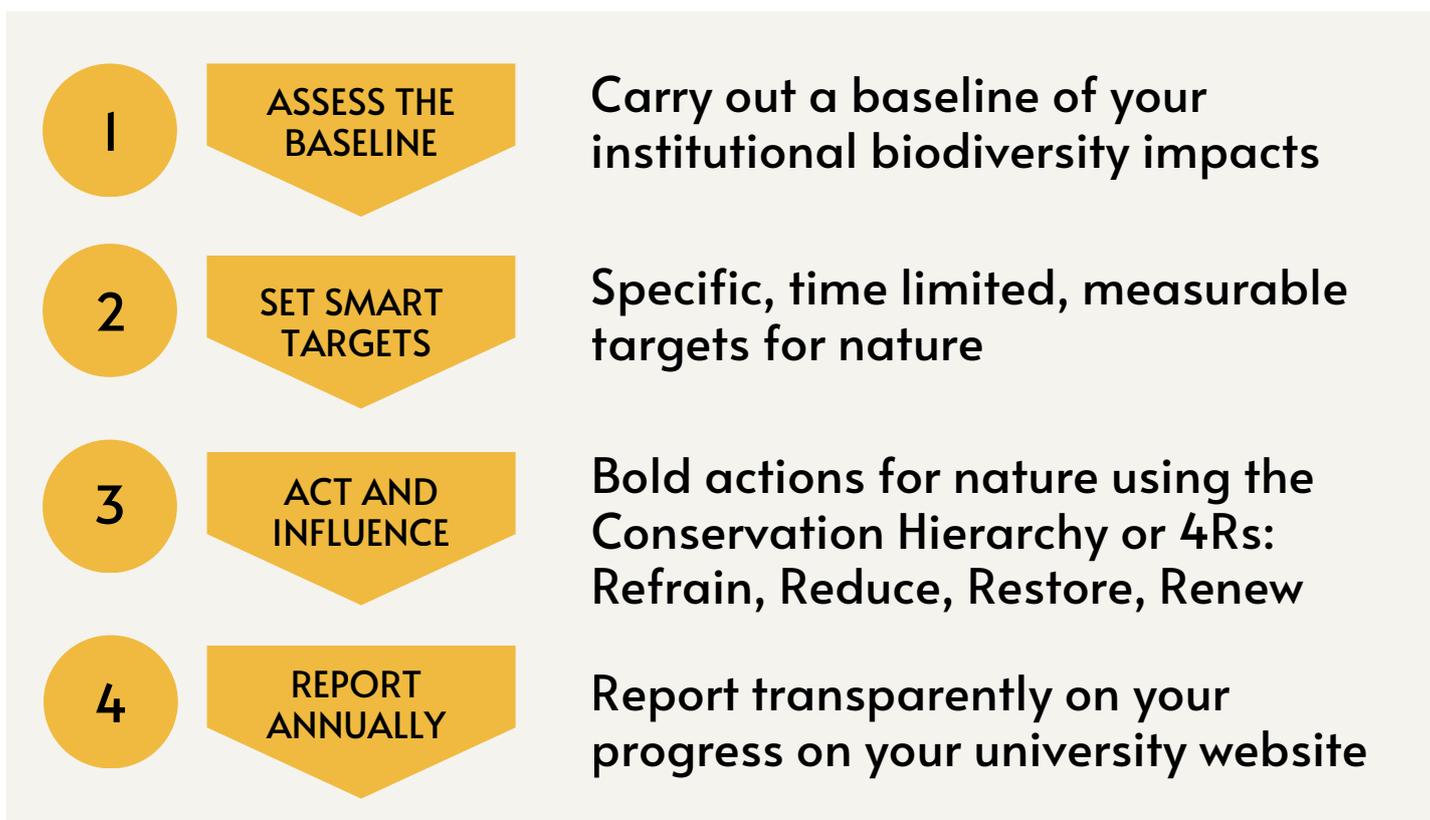
Actions towards Nature Positive will require collaboration between many parts of an institution, such as grounds and estates teams, catering and gardening staff, academic experts, students and sustainability managers.

Colombian universities announce their pledges at Biodiversity COP16, Cali, October 2024

# The Nature Positive Pledge: Steps of the Pledge

When a university makes a Pledge, they commit to the following steps to work towards becoming Nature Positive as an institution:

1 — **ASSESS THE BASELINE** — Carry out a baseline of your institutional biodiversity impacts

2 — **SET SMART TARGETS** — Specific, time limited, measurable targets for nature

3 — **ACT AND INFLUENCE** — Bold actions for nature using the Conservation Hierarchy or 4Rs: Refrain, Reduce, Restore, Renew

4 — **REPORT ANNUALLY** — Report transparently on your progress on your university website

The Pledge timeline involves university action and collaboration between staff, students and the public, so this may mean not all stages of the process are feasible for Student Ambassadors to undertake. We highlight areas where we believe Student Ambassadors can empower themselves and others through the Baseline and Actions stages of the Pledge, as well as taking other actions for nature.

# The Nature Positive Pledge: Who has already made the Pledge?

Since our launch at UN Biodiversity conference COP15 in Montreal, December 2022, we've received pledges from 184 universities across 47 countries, most recently from Easwari Engineering College and Mahayogi Gorakhnath University Gorakhpur in India, Université Senghor in Egypt and Uneps University in Venezuela.
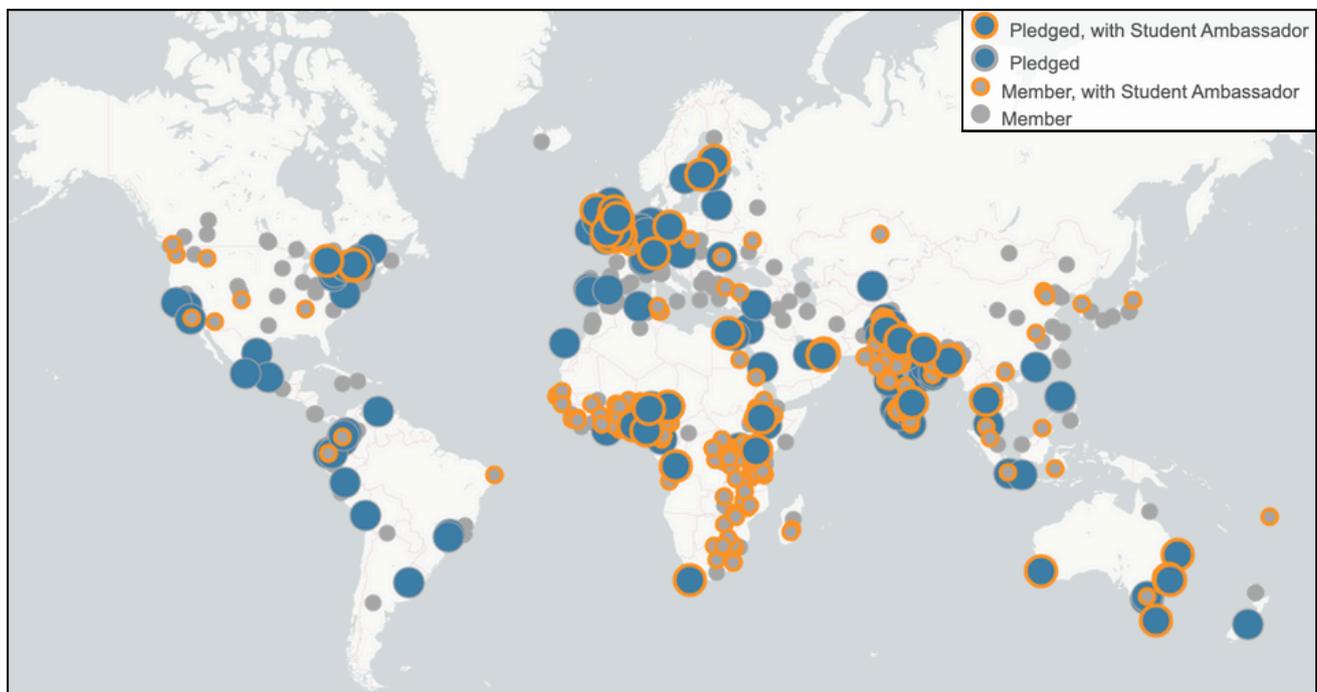
The members map on our website displays all different types of membership with Nature Positive Universities. Blue dots represent the 184 universities who have made the pledge (also available as a list on our website), orange circles show universities where there are students who have signed up to be a Student Ambassador with us for the 2025-26 cohort. Grey dots show our wider community of members.

1. Assess the baseline

To begin its nature positive journey, a university first needs to carry out a baseline of its biodiversity impacts. This is the first step of the Nature Positive Pledge. The university can choose its metrics and scope to measure its institutional impacts on biodiversity. This is unlikely to be something a student could approach alone, but it will be valuable for your university to have your support with this!
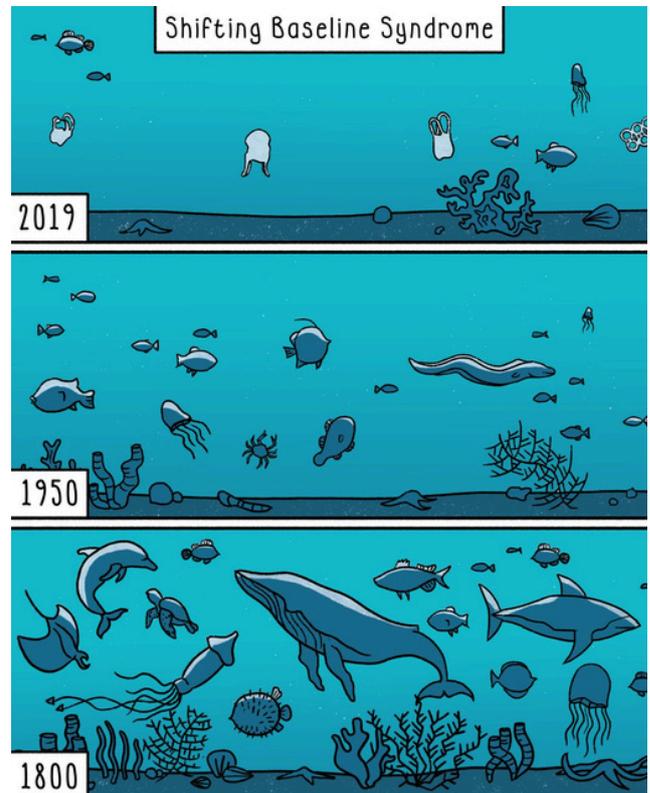
What is a biodiversity baseline?

A biodiversity baseline allows us to measure change and impact by recording the state of nature and activities which could affect it at a particular point in time. Setting a baseline can help inform action now and in the future. There are many ways to go about it, depending on resources and ambition.

Why is a baseline important?

The principle of measuring a baseline, is to work towards measurable biodiversity uplift, known as net positive outcomes, on our campus land, related to the resources we use, and using our influence as universities within teaching, research and community engagement.

1. Assess the baseline

WHAT ARE YOUR MOTIVATIONS?

There are many reasons to take action for nature and set a biodiversity baseline. It is important to think what you would like to do with this data, who will collect and maintain it, and more importantly what kinds of targets and actions it might lead to.

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU HAVE?

Ideally you and your university will work with an ecologist to help assess your site's biodiversity, and plan future interventions. It is worth seeing if there are species or habitat experts at your institution, or if you could make links with a local environmental NGO to help with this.

CAN YOU MAP THE HABITATS OF YOUR SITE?

You can create a habitat map of your site using an existing site-map, or you could create a new one using google maps. This can help identify the habitats and their condition, and identify opportunities for uplift. Photographs can be a useful way to record the current state of ecosystems.

WHAT DATA ALREADY EXISTS?

You can check which species have already been recorded on your site, either by staff, students or professional surveys, using public records or with citizen science platform such as **iNaturalist.** This may highlight particular species or ecosystems of concern or interest, and can provide a starting point for future surveys and monitoring.
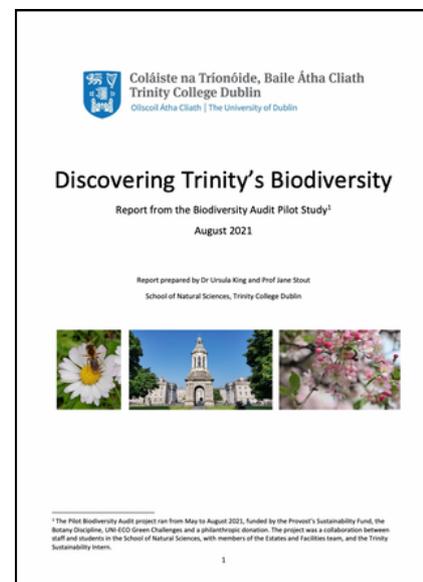
1. Assess the baseline

1a) Campus biodiversity survey

The first stage might be to complete a baseline study of the biodiversity present on campus and university-owned land. Depending on resources available, this may include comprehensive records of species and/or habitats present at this point in time. It may also focus on particular indicator species or use citizen science to match the available time and resources of the people carrying out this work. The scope is up to your institution. We provide further case studies in our BIODIVERSITY BASELINES guidance document, which can be accessed on the Resources page.

Case Study: Trinity College Dublin pilot biodiversity audit

A biodiversity audit was completed to document biodiversity across Trinity's 47-acre green campus in the city of Dublin. This was a collaboration between staff and students, Estates and Facilities teams, interns and volunteers. The study highlighted that in addition to iconic species such as foxes, trees and swifts, there is a wealth of hidden biodiversity in the form of plants, insects, fungi and other creatures.

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
Trinity College Dublin
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

Discovering Trinity's Biodiversity

Report from the Biodiversity Audit Pilot Study[1]

August 2021

Report prepared by Dr Ursula King and Prof Jane Stout
School of Natural Sciences, Trinity College Dublin

[1] The Pilot Biodiversity Audit project ran from May to August 2021, funded by the Provost's Sustainability Fund, the Botany Discipline, UNI-ECO Green Challenges and a philanthropic donation. The project was a collaboration between staff and students in the School of Natural Sciences, with members of the Estates and Facilities team, and the Trinity Sustainability Intern.

1

Credit: Trinity College Dublin

1. Assess the baseline

1a) Campus biodiversity survey

Case Study: <u>1,000 species in 1,000 days at Dawson College, Canada</u>

Students from Dawson College in Canada ran a 1,000 Species in 1,000 Days initiative. Students, faculty and staff all contributed their talents and curiosity to get as many species identified on campus as possible with the count after one year being 820 species, with 3,916 total observations and 279 people contributing to the project. The goal of the initiative is to highlight biodiversity in an urban setting.

Credit: Dawson College

Credit: Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability

Credit: University of Canterbury

Case Study: <u>Predator Monitoring and Management, University of Canterbury, New Zealand</u>

Predator monitoring investigations were carried out in June 2022 to understand current predator presence. A predator trapping line was setup in July 2022 along one waterway to reduce predator numbers based on the results of the monitoring. Rat/mice traps, mustelid traps, and possum traps were all implemented on this line. This predator work was done with the support and input from the student body EnviroSOC, who helped with monitoring and installation of the line, and then continued support of clearing and maintaining the line. Since the beginning of the programme, 18 hedgehogs, 48 mice, 18 possums and 115 rats have been caught.

1. Assess the baseline

1a) Campus biodiversity survey

Case Study: <u>University of Melbourne biodiversity baseline data project</u>

University of Melbourne established an online dashboard for their university community tracking their progress towards their "No Net Loss" target for campus biodiversity. They record a range of biodiversity measures such as:

- Tree canopy cover area (m2)
- Plantable area (m2)
- No. plant species
- No. trees and tree species inventory
- No. fauna and fungi species
- No. of 'areas of significance'
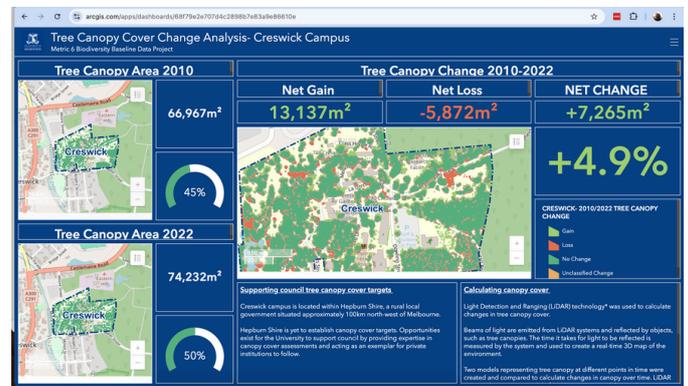
Credit: Marc Dalmulderr

Figure 1- Example land cover map of Wolfson College

CATEGORY	COLOUR
Water	Blue
Mowed lawn	Brown
Meadow and uncut grass	Yellow
Wetlands and water meadows	Red
Herbaceous borders and flowerbeds	Pink
Hedges, shrubs, and trees	Green

Case Study: <u>Campus habitat map, Conference of Colleges, University of Oxford</u>

The Conference of Colleges Sustainability Working Group at the University of Oxford conducted a college biodiversity audit, which included a land cover audit. Staff used Land Cover maps and Google Earth images to record landcover types using a colour-coded key.

1. Assess the baseline

1a) Campus biodiversity survey

Ambassador Case Study: Janya Narwani - Bird Census at American University of Sharjah (AUS), UAE

The AUS Bird Census is an ongoing citizen science project under the Sustainable Campus Initiative that aims to establish data on bird diversity and abundance across campus. Birds are key indicators of ecosystem health, so documenting their presence and numbers helps track environmental change over time. The campus was divided into 16 transects, which students surveyed after sunrise and before sunset, identifying various bird species and their numbers. To support accurate identification, volunteers were provided with species identification sheets. Tools like iNaturalist were used in identifying unknown or foreign species.

One challenge that arose was accurate identification, particularly with quick-moving and visually similar birds. This was addressed by working in pairs when possible and cross-checking observations afterward. Filming was also helpful as it allowed observations to be reviewed later and contribute to more accurate flock counts. An important addition to the census was the inclusion of cat sightings, as free-roaming cats are natural predators of birds and provide valuable ecological context. The data gathered is currently being analyzed by students.

Common species tally sheet

Campus transects

Photos credit: Janya Narwani, American University of Sharjah, UAE

1. Assess the baseline

1a) Campus biodiversity survey

Ambassador Case Study: Prerana Balu - BioBlitz at Newcastle University, UK

In summer 2025 a two-hour campus BioBlitz was ran, recording 33 species, including Western Honey Bees and 7-Spot Ladybirds, using iNaturalist. Hedgehog tracking tunnels and pollinator surveys were also set up to support the university's Nature Positive Pledge and connect with the Global Campus Biodiversity Network. Key partners were campus sustainability staff, the university grounds team, local community nature groups, student environmental societies and relevant faculties and schools. Some of the challenges included the short event windows, advertising, timing and weather. Prerana's top advice would be to involve staff, keep and creatively show records and run more activities during peak seasons.

Photo credit: Prerana Balu, Newcastle University, UK

1. Assess the baseline

1a) Campus biodiversity survey

Ambassador Case Study: Carlos Ontegi Nyabuto, Mount Kenya University - Biodiversity Baselines experience

"What we do not measure, we cannot manage—and what we fail to monitor, we risk losing."

Over five years of hands-on experience in biodiversity monitoring across grassland, forest, wetland, mangrove, and agroforestry ecosystems across Kenya, Carlos's work has focused on establishing biodiversity baselines using vegetation point counts, quadrats, transects, camera traps, bioacoustic monitoring, and species occurrence surveys for plants, insects, birds, small mammals, large mammals and soil indicators to support conservation and restoration planning.

Much of this monitoring has taken place in data-poor and highly dynamic landscapes, where limited historical data and seasonal variability required adaptive approaches. These challenges were addressed through rapid field methods, participatory monitoring, and GIS-based habitat mapping. Key takeaways for students to curb these challenges include the value of clear indicator selection, consistent protocols, and accessible tools such as bioacoustics to complement field surveys and inform adaptive management.

Photos credit: Carlos Ontegi Nyabuto, Mount Kenya University, Kenya

1. Assess the baseline

1b) Calculating the university's biodiversity footprint

Supply chain impacts can be estimated by first collecting university procurement data, such as paper and lab supplies, IT equipment, food and building materials. An example of how this can be done has been documented at the University of Oxford. Procurement data was converted into environmental impacts such as land and water use, greenhouse gas emissions, water and air pollution. This data was then converted into a proxy biodiversity measure to allow relative comparisons of impacts on biodiversity and identification of hotspots. The steps are shown below:

1   Choose the scope

2   Collect the data
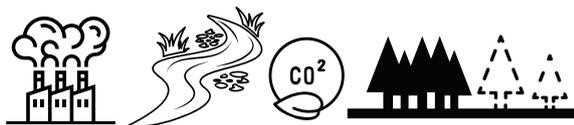
3   Calculate environmental impacts
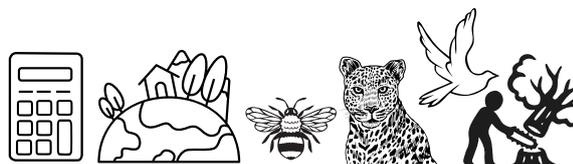
4   Calculate biodiversity impact

1. Assess the baseline

1b) Calculating the university's biodiversity footprint
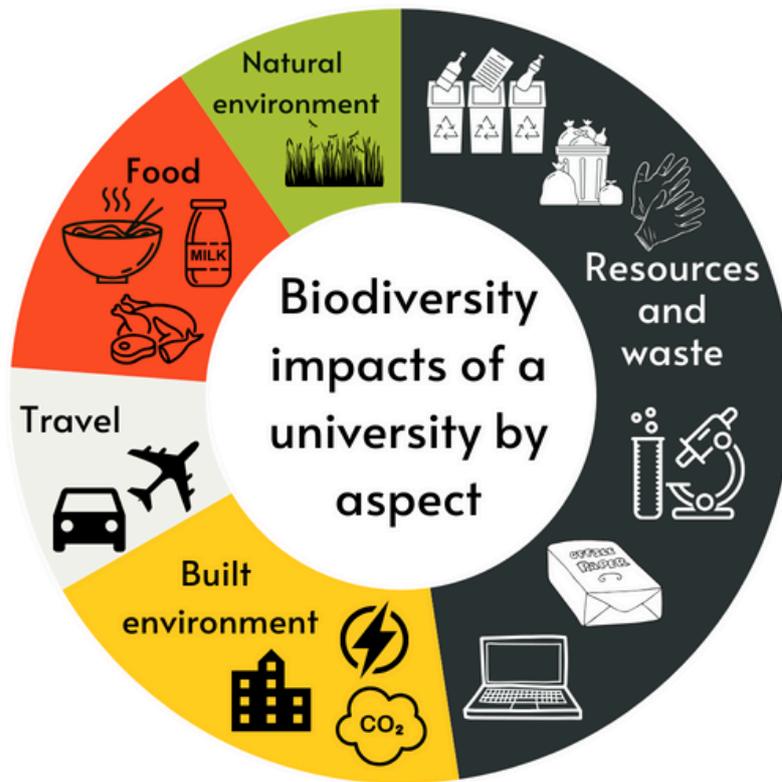
Natural environment	These include impacts to existing biodiversity present on site, grounds and facilities management relating to green spaces, including loss of habitat for new construction projects or biodiversity uplift activities such as creation of new habitats or nature areas.
Built environment	These include fuel, electricity and water use in university-owned and managed buildings and mining and transport of resources involved in construction and infrastructure.
Food	These include impacts related to growing and transporting all food consumed on site, eg in university canteens, cafeterias and departmental catering and conferences.
Resources and waste	These include impacts related to procurement of goods and services used in all university activities, such as IT equipment, server space, paper, laboratory equipment and supplies and furniture, at all stages from production to disposal.
Travel	These include impacts related to staff and student travel including commuting between home and work, conference and business travel.

1. Assess the baseline

1b) Calculating the university's biodiversity footprint

We have worked with students at University of British Colombia (Canada) and University of Tokyo (Japan) to begin carrying out biodiversity footprint assessments of their university food consumption. Other students at University of Hohenheim (Germany) and Jyvaskyla (Finland) have also contributed to institutional biodiversity footprint analyses.

Biodiversity footprinting is a time-intensive process and requires access to university procurement data, as well as support identifying suitable conversion factors, to turn activities (eg spend on IT equipment) into environmental pressures (eg land and water use, GHG emissions), and biodiversity impact estimates. However we are keen to support students to assist with biodiversity footprinting where possible. A draft guidance document is available at: https://www.naturepositiveuniversities.net/resources

Adapted from Biggs, et al. (2021) *Wild Business Ltd for the University of Oxford*
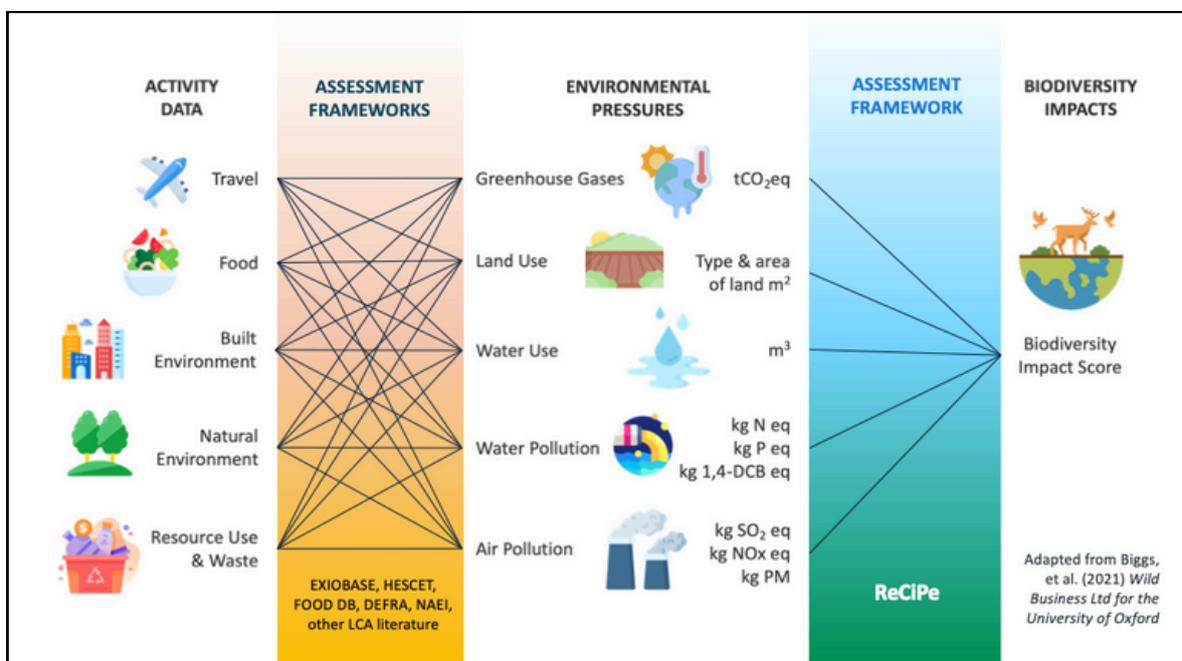
1. Assess the baseline

1b) Calculating the university's biodiversity footprint

Case Study: <u>University of British Colombia, Canada</u>

Research students at University of British Colombia (UBC) assessed the environmental impacts of their food procurement using Oxford's conceptual framework, looking specifically at the GHG emissions, land and water use, air and water pollution of food procured by UBC Food Services (UBCFS) outlets (including dining halls, restaurants, retail and catering) between January and December 2022. They used the impacts to estimate the extent of biodiversity loss associated with food procurement and identify areas for reduction of negative impacts.

Replicating the Nature Positive Universities Framework to Assess the Biodiversity Impact of Food Procurement at the University of British Columbia

% OF TOTAL BIODIVERSITY IMPACT, BY ITEM CATEGORY

0.1%
0.7%
1.6%
1.4%
2.5%
4.7%
1.2%
4.4%
13.0%
70.3%

■ Bakery ■ Beverage ▪ Dairy ■ Grocery ▪ Legumes ■ Meat ▪ Poultry ■ Produce ■ Seafood ■ Snacks

RESULTS

🍓 UBC procured the most grocery and beverage products by weight

🍓 Grocery and dairy categories had the highest mid-point and biodiversity impacts

🍓 Meat, poultry and dairy had the highest per-kilo impacts

Final report available here:
https://www.naturepositiveuniversities.net/wpcontent/uploads/2024/04/NPU_UBC_FinalReport.pdf

1. Assess the baseline

Some of the case studies in this Toolkit were also featured in our short animated film, available in English and in Spanish, which we encourage you to watch. You can find it on our Instagram or YouTube channels. Please do spread the word for others at your institutions and in your networks to watch it!

There is also an accompanying guidance document, available in English, French and Spanish, which you can find on our website at: www.naturepositiveuniversities.net/resources

2. Set SMART targets

After a university has calculated its baseline, it should set SMART targets — specific, time limited, measurable targets for nature. Some universities set an overall target first, then use their baseline and data collection to refine specific actions and targets.

- Targets must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound, but their scope is up to the university.
- A great time to set these is when writing or reviewing the university's sustainability or biodiversity strategy.
- Ambitious targets can be institution-wide, encompassing campus buildings, grounds, operations and supply chains.
- Depending on what is acceptable to your university community, targets could also be just for specific aspects, such as "Biodiversity net gain for food purchasing by 2035" or "No net loss of forests associated with university paper procurement by 2025".
- Wide consultation with different stakeholders is key to gauging ambition and achieving buy-in for your targets.

Students can also use these principles to plan their own projects, and review progress, holding themselves to account, and reflecting on challenges and successes.

You can read the next page to see what SMART targets involve.

S M A R T

SPECIFIC	**MEASURABLE**	**ATTAINABLE**	**RELEVANT**	**TIME-BASED**
What exactly are you trying to achieve?	How will you know when you've achieved it?	Is it genuinely possible to achieve it?	Does it contribute to your organisation or institution?	When do you want to achieve this by?
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
State what you'll do Use action words	Provide a way to evaluate Use metrics or data targets	Within your scope Possible to accomplish	Ensure targets improve the organisation or institution	State when you'll get it done Be specific on date or timeframe

3. Actions and Influence

The Actions and Influence stage can include all the actions and activities that universities take for nature, including on their grounds, operations, catering, investment decisions, outreach and public-facing events and initiatives, using the framework for action from the Conservation Hierarchy (Refrain, Reduce, Restore, Renew). We will cover this in more detail in our next workshop.

This stage is the easiest for Ambassadors to get involved with, and can involve action at many levels, as an individual, as part of a student group, or in collaboration with university staff.

Get involved with baselines and actions, whether or not your university has made the Nature Positive pledge. Everyone has a role to play advocating for nature!

Promote nature positive concepts and action through education, community engagement and outreach within the university and wider community

Remember to consider your capacity as a student versus the university institution as a whole; don't put too much on yourself. Acknowledge your own limits and where the university should support you or take over.

3. Actions and Influence

Students recording plants on campus at Independent University Bangladesh, Bangladesh

Students, staff, faculty and volunteers helping restore the ecosystem of the only natural creek on campus at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), United States

Planting an urban pocket forest at Government College University Lahore, Pakistan

Campus fauna crossings and wildlife corridors at University of Campinas, Brazil

Architecture and Design students creating a series of species hotels to help restore habitats for local wildlife at University of Tasmania, Australia

Mangrove restoration led by staff and students at University of Ajman, United Arab Emirates

4. Reporting

We ask universities to commit to transparent reporting of progress on an annual basis, highlighting current progress towards reducing impacts on nature according to the aspects of the pledge: baseline, targets and actions.

The requirements are light-touch, similar to the information required in the initial Pledge form, with brief updates on each aspect and relevant URLs. More detailed submissions are also welcome, documenting your university's Nature Positive journey and links to any reports and publications we can share.

Reporting is suggested to be done by your university by a committee or paid sustainability/biodiversity staff member. However, we encourage students to get involved with the reporting where possible and to make sure student voices and contributions are acknowledged in the reporting process.

Ambassador Actions:

As part of this second Toolkit on the theme of "Biodiversity Baselines" we've included a range of suggested actions.

Workshop 2 Actions:

1. iNaturalist:
   a. Register on iNaturalist and start recording wildlife
   b. Join the iNaturalist Student Ambassador group (details below)
   c. Speak to your university about joining the NPU-Campus Biodiversity Network (you will need a campus map)

2. Photos: Think of an area that could be improved for nature, take 'before' photos and think about how you could make improvements

3. Bioblitz: Plan or participate in a Bioblitz for your campus or nearby area. Consider taking part in the City/Campus Nature Challenge - 24 - 27th April 2026.

Register on iNaturalist and start recording wildlife

iNaturalist is a free app and website that allows you to identify and record species you see around you, using pictures taken on your phone or camera. Once uploaded, they are identified by the app and verified by members of the community. This approach is known as citizen science.

How to use iNaturalist to make observations:

An observation records an encounter with an individual organism at a particular time and location. This includes encounters with signs of organisms like tracks, nests, or things that just died. When you make an observation, you'll record:

Who you are
You'll need to make an **iNaturalist account** and please only post your own personal observations

Where you saw it
Record both the coordinates of the encounter as well as their accuracy. You can obscure the location from the public

What you saw
Choose a group of organisms like **butterflies** or better yet a specific organism like the **Monarch butterfly**. If you provide evidence you can leave this blank and the **community can help**

When you saw it
Record the date of your encounter, not the date you post it to iNaturalist

Evidence of what you saw
By including evidence like a **photo or sound**, the community can help add, improve, or confirm the identification of the organism you encountered. Help the community by taking clear well framed photos, by including multiple photos from different angles

Your observations don't need to include all of these parts, but they do in order to become research quality observations for science. Remember, you should make separate observations for each separate organism you encounter. If you observed something that is not wild, like a garden plant or a lion in the zoo, make sure to mark it as captive/cultivated to prevent it from becoming research quality.

©iNaturalist

Join the Student Ambassadors' iNaturalist group

Join the group by visiting the Student Ambassadors' iNaturalist group page: https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/nature-positive-student-ambassadors

You can record wild flora and fauna anywhere you are for this group- it does not only have to be on campus! You will be able to see the observations of members of our community from all over the world.

Please don't include observations of pets or humans, and make sure to take a few photos from different angles.

Founded by Vanier College in Montréal, Québec, and launched in 2022, the Campus Biodiversity Network aims to promote campus greenspace observation and protection by using iNaturalist, eBird and eButterfly.

The Campus Biodiversity Network has now partnered with NPU and encourages students, staff, and faculty at educational institutions in Montreal and beyond to champion their institutions' green spaces and connect with others through citizen-science observations.

By creating a project for your university under the Campus Biodiversity Network, all the species recorded within your campus boundaries will be collated together, allowing you (and the rest of the world) to see what biodiversity is found on your campus. This can show us the kind of nature that exists on your campus, as one type of baseline for your university's campus biodiversity.

Watch this NPU Student Ambassador workshop from 2023 to find out more!

Steps to setting up an iNaturalist campus project (will need cooperation from university staff)

1. Make an iNaturalist account and start recording species you see on campus.

2. Find out if there is already an iNaturalist project for your campus.

3. If not, find out if there is a map (KML format) of your campus land, or make one yourself using our instructions.

4. Consider making a digital banner for your university. This needs to be 760 x 320 pixels and can include photos or artwork.

5. Check with your university if they're happy to share the university logo and complete the form to join.
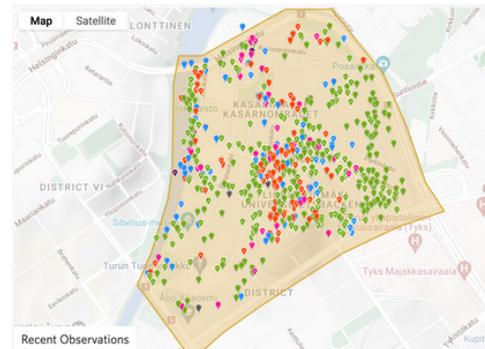
A biodiversity baseline doesn't have to be complicated or involve specialist ecological knowledge. As featured in our short film with the example of Government Dungar College, India, taking before and after photos is a really powerful way to document the state of the environment and specific habitats at a point in time, and to record progress and changes visually.

We would like you to take 'before' photos of a green or natural area of your campus grounds (even if polluted or degraded) that could be improved for nature. If you do not have much green space, you could focus on areas of buildings that could be enhanced for wildlife, or natural areas close to your university. You might choose to focus on degraded areas and think about how these could be enhanced for people and nature. If possible, you could then work to improve this area as part of your role as a Student Ambassador and take 'after' photos, when the work is complete.

You can record your observations and ideas in an Activity form and upload your photos!

BEFORE
Non-native planting at University of Konstanz, Germany

Credit: University of Konstanz

AFTER
Mix of native flowers and shrubs to attract pollinators and provide variety of habitats

Credit: University of Konstanz

Case Study: Government Dungar College, Bikaner (India)

Government Dungar College embarked upon extensive restoration activities on their campus and beyond through the Familial Forestry initiative. Progress was recorded using before and after photographs detailing the extent of ecosystem change over time, showing the impact of their interventions.

Screenshot from the NPU Biodiversity Baselines animated film, accessible here: https://youtu.be/7S5je8PwbZ4

Credit: Familial Forestry

Student Ambassador Avani Jyani participating in restoration activities with her family and community through Familial Forestry.

Credit: Familial Forestry

Credit: Familial Forestry

Before and after pictures of public land degraded by illegal mining, and restored by the Familial Forestry initiative.
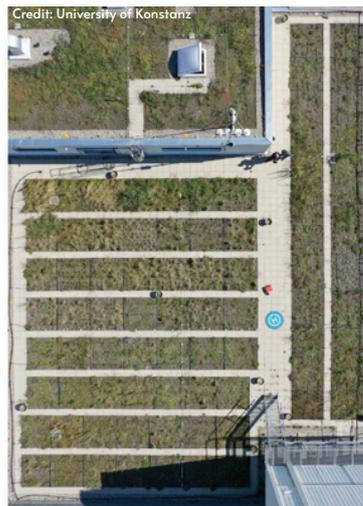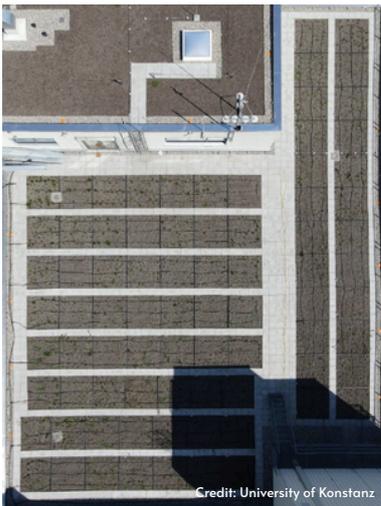
Credit: University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Credit: University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Rethinking lawn areas to add shade, and provide habitats for a wider variety of species at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Credit: University of Konstanz

The roof in August 2020 and 2022

Case Study: University of Konstanz, Germany

In collaboration with their Biology Department, University of Konstanz have been converting gravel roofs to green biodiversity roofs, planting multiple, native species. A biodiversity experiment was set up to compare different native plant species, adapted to relatively dry conditions and test whether it's helpful to start with high biodiversity to increase cover of on the green roof and prevent unwanted species. These aerial photos document before and after the experiments.

You can watch NPU Webinar 3 to find out more about some of these Case Studies.

A BioBlitz is an event in which a group of individuals aim to record as many species of plants, animals and fungi as possible in a location, over a defined time period (usually 24 hours). It's an informal and fun way to create a snapshot of the biodiversity that can be found on your campus.

As well as providing a good idea of species richness on campus grounds, a BioBlitz is a great opportunity for participants to learn together and share their expertise and enthusiasm for nature. It usually involves a group of scientists, students, naturalists and members of the public working together. This is a great way of breaking down barriers to engagement with science and raising awareness of the role of biological recording, and gives the public an opportunity to contribute to a genuine scientific survey.

Ambassador Case study: Oxford University Nature Conservation Society, UK

Taras Bains

"For the past three years, we have been running our annual society BioBlitz for students and staff of the University as well as wider residents of Oxford City."

To consider...

The site:

Choose a site and secure permissions to access and survey — this might involve checking any conservation designations in the survey area that may limit the activities which can be undertaken or obtaining permission from the landowner.

Time of year:

Biodiversity varies hugely across the year and this can strongly affect your BioBlitz findings.

Promotion:

The more people involved in your BioBlitz, the more records you'll get and the more successful it will be. Promote the event through different channels, including social media, email, posters, and word of mouth.

Equipment:

You might need nets and containers for terrestrial invertebrates or aquatic life. Universities often have equipment to borrow, so do ask!

Species records:

Species records are the ultimate goal for your BioBlitz. You can either make your own recording sheets to give out to participants on the day, or preferably use a mobile app to save paper. All species records are important, whether common or rare, as they allow you to build a biodiversity map of your local area, and also compare how your university is doing compared to others or where it can improve. You should also always try and send your records to the local environmental records centre (in the UK) or local environmental charity as it might be useful to them.

Expert advice:

Universities have many academics and biology experts which are passionate about their research and may be happy to volunteer their time for a few hours — ask them if they'll come along and help you ID! If not, use ID books and mobile apps such as iNaturalist and iRecord.

Further guidance and information:

- A Guide to Running a BioBlitz from the UK Natural History Museum
- Download the iRecord app
- Watch back a presentation given by NPU Student Ambassador Aliisa Wahlsten from University of Turku at a Student Ambassador workshop back in 2023
- Visit the iNaturalist website

The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is a four-day Bioblitz style competition where cities across the world compete to see who can make the most observations of nature, find the most species and engage the most people. This year, the CNC is taking place from April 24th – 27th, with over 700 cities and areas projected to be participating.

The challenge started in 2016 as a competition between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and has since grown into an international event, motivating people around the world to find and document wildlife in their own cities.

The CNC is a great opportunity to plan a Bioblitz on your campus for these same days, and help count towards your city's efforts recording biodiversity. It could also be a chance to coordinate with others in your city to invite participation and wider community engagement with your event.

Campus Nature Challenge

This year, to align with the CNC, our partners at the Campus Biodiversity Network will be holding a second Campus Nature Challenge focusing on campus wildlife at the same time as the City Nature Challenge so this is even more reason to get involved!

Further guidance and information:

- View <u>Case Studies</u> on the NPU website, including examples of how a biodiversity baseline could be assessed.

- Watch the NPU Biodiversity Baselines animated film - available in <u>English</u> and <u>Spanish</u> and read the accompanying primer document, available in <u>English</u>, <u>French</u> and <u>Spanish</u>.

- Explore the <u>iNaturalist guides</u> and the <u>support centre</u>.

- Watch <u>Webinar 2</u> in the NPU series from 2024, which features speakers from Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brazil and Vanier College, Canada.

- Watch back the presentations given at Student Ambassador workshops back in 2023 and 2024:

1. <u>iNaturalist and Campus Biodiversity Network</u>
2. <u>Biodiversity footprints-Why supply chains matter & how to start at your university</u>