

## Chleansaid Wind Farm 132 kV OHL Connection Environmental Appraisal (EA) Report

## Appendix 7.4: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report

November 2024



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#### **Executive Summary**

This report sets out the results of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations and the approach to delivering on SSEN Transmission's BNG commitments for the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will comprise of a 10.5 km 132 kV Overhead line (OHL), which would be supported on wooden trident poles between the consented Chleansaid Wind Farm Substation and the existing Dalchork Substation, in the Sutherland region of the Highlands and within the Local Authority area of The Highland Council (THC).

This report details the BNG assessment undertaken for the Proposed Development and should be read alongside the SSEN Biodiversity Project Toolkit Excel Sheet (hereafter referred to as 'the Toolkit').

What is hereafter referred to as 'the BNG Study Area' is based on the extent of the clearance corridor of the OHL (36 metres (m) either side of the OHL). Due to the low impact nature of the Proposed Development, which would allow recovery of all habitats, with the exception of woodland, within two years, only woodland habitats are considered in the biodiversity calculations. No additional access tracks will be required to facilitate the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development and the BNG Study Area are shown in **Figure 7.4.1, Annex A**.

This report includes a BNG assessment of the Study Area surrounding the Proposed Development (hereafter refereed to as 'the BNG Study Area') following the guidance outlined within SSEN Transmission's Biodiversity Net Gain Toolkit User Guide<sup>1</sup> and the SSEN Transmission Assessment Methodology & Associated Guidance<sup>2</sup>, a calculation of baseline and post development Biodiversity Units (BU) for the Proposed Development, and details of the habitat creation or enhancements required to achieve biodiversity enhancements.

The BNG Study Area is located within an area dominated by blanket bog, upland heathland, and other coniferous woodland with smaller areas of wet woodland and other Scot's Pine woodland. A summary of the baseline and post development BU within the BNG Study Area are detailed in **Table 1.1** below with a summary of overall BU change. No irreplaceable habitats will be affected by the Proposed Development and is therefore not assessed further.

Loss of habitats (in ha)	Baseline BU	Post Development BU	Change in BU
24.78	80.17	91.91	+11.73 (15%)

Table 1.1: Summary of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Results

The assessment assumed that all woodland habitats within the current design footprint would be lost as a result of the Proposed Development. Based on the assumptions made with respect to habitat reinstatement and creation, there is a predicted 15 % increase in BU (+11.73 BU) as a result from the Proposed Development.

To ensure the Proposed Development achieves this significant Net Gain (NG), compensatory planting will be required for the loss of woodland, which was agreed with SSEN Transmission to constitute a mixture of 2.15 ha modified grassland, 18.38 ha mixed scrub, and 4.25 ha of broadleaved woodland.

To align with SSEN Transmission's BNG commitments a 10 % Net Gain (NG) would be sufficient, which would translate to a net change in BU of 8.17 (Post Development BU of 88.35) for the Proposed Development, which means the proposed compensatory planting measures would achieve an additional 3.56 BU which could be banked for future transmission projects.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> SSEN Transmission (2019), Biodiversity Net Gain Toolkit User Guide. SSEN, Perth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> SSEN Transmission (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Assessment Methodology & Associated Guidance. SSEN, Perth.

In the event that the proposed woodland planting is found not to be feasible, it has been calculated that 3.59 ha of woodland creation would suffice to achieve a 10 % NG, along with the proposed modified grassland and mixed scrub creation, which will be required regardless.

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#### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Project

- 1.1.1 Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) Transmission, operating under licence held by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc, to operate and develop the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands, commissioned WSP UK Ltd (WSP) to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment which seeks to assess the biodiversity losses and gains resulting from the development of a 10.5 kilometre (km) long 132 kV Overhead line (OHL), using the SSEN Biodiversity Toolkit, (hereafter referred to as 'the Toolkit')
- 1.1.2 SSEN Transmission is proposing to construct 134 wooden trident poles to form an OHL between the consented Chleansaid Wind Farm Substation and the existing Dalchork Substation hereafter referred to as the "Proposed Development". The purpose of this report is to assess the baseline and post development Biodiversity Units (BU) for the Proposed Development and detail the required habitat creation or enhancements to achieve biodiversity enhancements.
- 1.1.3 SSEN Transmission (the Applicant) is applying for consent to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) under Section 37 of The Electricity Act 1989 for the Chleansaid Wind Farm 132 kV OHL Connection. The already consented 96 megawatt (MW) Wind Farm has a contracted connection date of 31st July 2027. Under the terms of their license, the Applicant is therefore obliged to connect the developer to the transmission network by the contracted connection date. This would be achieved via the construction of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.4 The Proposed Development comprise the following elements:
  - 132 kV overhead line comprising of 134 wooden trident poles;
  - OHL construction compound will be within the contractor's compound area at Chleansaid substation; and
  - Construction access to the OHL route is anticipated to be via the existing Dalnessie Estate track and then locally to each pole location access from the Dalnessie Estate track will be via the use of all-terrain vehicles and bog mats, which will be removed after construction.

#### 1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The Proposed Development will be located on land approximately 3 km to the north of Lairg, in the Sutherland region of the Highlands and within the Local Authority area of The Highland Council (THC) between the National Grid References NC 62091 15677 and NC 58166 09519. The Proposed Development is bounded by Chleansaid Wind Farm to the north, the A836 to the west and commercial forestry land, forming part of Shin Forest, to the south-east.
- 1.2.2 The Proposed Development is located within an area dominated by blanket bog, upland heathland, and other coniferous woodland, with smaller areas of wet woodland and other Scot's Pine woodland. There are various unnamed watercourses running through the Proposed Development, one of which is connecting the Loch Beannachan with the River Tirry, which connect further downstream with Loch Skin. Loch Beannachan is part of the Lairg and Starth Brora Lochs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA), and is located, at the closest point, 1.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development. The SSSI and SPA are designated for the favourably maintained population of breeding black-throated diver *Gavia arctica*.

#### 1.3 Scope of Study

1.3.1 WSP was commissioned by SSEN Transmission to undertake a BNG assessment of the to quantify the biodiversity value of the habitat impacted by the Proposed Development and the predicted post construction biodiversity value, measured in Biodiversity Units (BU). This report should be read alongside the Toolkit.

#### 1.4 Policy and Legislation

- 1.4.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)<sup>3</sup> requires significant biodiversity enhancements be provided in addition to any proposed mitigation stating that "Development proposals for national or major development that require an Environmental Impact Assessment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks, so that they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. This will include future management. To inform this, best practice assessment methods should be used".
- 1.4.2 Additionally, the Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>4</sup> outlines actions for nature and the following commitments relevant to BNG are included within Action 1: Planning and development decisions provide biodiversity protection: *'Ensure planning and development policies protect biodiversity and reduce climate change impact' and in doing so THC will 'move towards implementation of a biodiversity net gain system for new development when the Environment Bill becomes law'.*
- 1.4.3 This BNG assessment has been undertaken to identify the habitats present throughout the assessment area and provide evidence that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed during the design development, to avoid impacts to biodiversity, where avoidance is not possible, impacts should be minimised and compensated to aligned to the Scottish

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> National Planning Framework 4: Revised Draft. Available: https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-andguidance/2022/11/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/documents/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/govscot%3Adocument/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Highland Environment Forum (2021). Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026. Available online: https://www.highlandenvironmentforum.info/wpcontent/uploads/2022/01/Highland-Nature-Biodiversity-Action-Plan-2021-2026-\_compressed-.pdf.

Government's NPF4 Policy 3 for proposed developments to contribute a biodiversity enhancement.

#### 1.5 SSEN Transmission's Biodiversity Ambition

- 1.5.1 SSEN Transmission is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment by minimising the potential impacts from their construction and operational activities. As part of this approach, SSEN Transmission has made commitments from May 2023 to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain on all new projects<sup>5</sup>, which adds onto their previous Sustainability Strategy (2018)<sup>6</sup> for new infrastructure projects, committing to:
  - ensure natural environment considerations are included in decision making at each stage of a project's development;
  - utilise the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts by consideration of biodiversity in project design;
  - positively contribute to the United Nations and Scottish Government biodiversity strategies by achieving an overall net gain on new infrastructure projects gaining consent;
  - work with their supply chain to gain the maximum benefit during asset replacement and upgrades; and
  - avoid all impacts on Irreplaceable Habitats, such as ancient woodland and blanket bog, wherever possible. Where there is an unavoidable impact SSEN Transmission commits to mitigate, restore more than what is lost, and enhance to support greater biodiversity growth in the long term.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Delivering for Nature and Net Zero on World Biodiversity Day by committing to biodiversity net gain on all our projects - SSEN Transmission (ssen-transmission.co.uk) (2023).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Delivering a smart, sustainable energy future: The Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Sustainability Strategy (2018).

#### 2 Methodology

2.1.1 A summary of the BNG assessment methodology along with specific data sources, assessment limitations and assumptions are provided in this methodology section. This report should be read in conjunction with the Toolkit, provided separately.

#### 2.2 Desk Study

- 2.2.1 Publicly available datasets from NatureScot Site Link Portal<sup>7</sup> were reviewed to identify statutory and non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the Proposed Development, in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines (2016)<sup>8</sup>. Results were limited to those designated sites with qualifying ecological, biological or nature conservation interest only (i.e., not solely geological) and included the following:
  - Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
  - LNCS;
  - National Nature Reserves (NNR);
  - SSSI;
  - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
  - SPA, and
  - Ramsar sites.
- 2.2.2 In addition to the above, publicly available Native Woodland Survey of Scotland<sup>9</sup> data was reviewed to identify the presence of ancient woodland within 1 km of the Proposed Development.

#### 2.3 Field Survey

2.3.1 A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey was completed by field-based surveys on 11 April 2023 for the previous routing stage of this project, where habitats within 250 m of three options were surveyed and the middle option was taken forward as the location of the Proposed Development. The UKHab survey was undertaken by a team of surveyors, led by an ecologist who holds a Level 3 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC)<sup>10</sup> and is experienced at a 'capable'<sup>11</sup> level of surveying similar habitat types encountered in the geographical region and land-use setting. All habitats were assigned UKHab Primary Habitats in line with UKHab Classification User Manual (Version 2.1). Full UKHab methodology and survey data are reported separately<sup>12</sup>. Habitat Condition Assessment

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> <u>SiteLink - Home (nature.scot).</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain – Good practice principles for development. Available: https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-goodpractice-principles-for-development/ [Accessed: January 2024].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Forestry.Gov (2021). Native Woodlands Survey Scotland. Available: https://forestry.gov.scot/forests-environment/biodiversity/native-woodlands/native-woodlandsurvey-of-scotland-nwss [Accessed: November 2021].

<sup>10</sup> Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland, Field Identification Skills Certificate. Available at: https://bsbi.org/field-skills.

<sup>11</sup> CIEEM (2021). Competency Framework. Available at: https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Competency-Framework-2022-Web.pdf.

<sup>12</sup> SSEN (2024) Chleansaid Windfarm Connection 132kv Overhea.d Line Connection Environmental Impact Assessment Appendix 7.1 - Habitat Data.

surveys were conducted following system presented in Natural England's Biodiversity Metric 3.1<sup>13</sup>. All habitat mapping was undertaken in Arc Map Version 10.8.1.

#### 2.4 Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.4.1 The BNG assessment was completed within the Toolkit following the SSEN Biodiversity Net Gain Toolkit User Guide<sup>14</sup>, hereafter referred to as the User Guide. This method has been revised to align with Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.1<sup>13</sup>, adapted to reflect the requirements of Scottish habitats, to quantify losses and gains of biodiversity. Data were collected on type, area, and condition of the habitat to be directly affected by the Proposed Development, namely woodland within 36 m of the OHL, which is hereafter referred to as the 'BNG Study Area'<sup>15</sup>. The corridor width surrounding the OHL is based on SSEN's operational clearance requirements.
- 2.4.2 Information from The Highland Council Local Development Plan<sup>16</sup> and Highland Nature Local Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>17</sup> was obtained to assess the strategic significance scores. The methodology used for calculating strategic significance follows the User Guide, scores have been assigned as follows, based on habitats identified of local importance:
  - Woodlands have high strategic significance. Other coniferous woodland (w2c) have been taken out of this category, as these plantations hold significantly less biodiversity value compared to native woodlands.
  - All other habitats which are not formally identified but ecologically desirable have medium strategic significance.
  - Habitats which are neither formally identified nor ecologically desirable such as urban, cropland, and modified grassland have low strategic significance. Other coniferous woodland was also categorised as being of low strategic significance due to the comparatively low value to biodiversity.
- 2.4.3 Connectivity followed 2019 Natural England Guidance<sup>18</sup> meaning all habitats of high distinctiveness were assumed to be of moderate connectivity; and all others assumed to be low.
- 2.5 Difficulty and time to target condition values have been assigned as per the values given in Metric 3.1<sup>13Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup>
- 2.5.1 The Toolkit can produce a Unit score for three categories of habitat: Biodiversity Units (BU), Linear Hedgerow (H) Units and Linear Watercourse (W) Units. Due to the absence of linear features within the BNG study Area, this report will only report on BUs.

#### 2.6 Irreplaceable Habitats

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Natural England (2022) Biodiversity Metric 3.1 User guide. Available at: https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&scrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiD9Pi6tvaDAxVvTkEAHWCoAgkQFnoECBYQAQ&url=https%3 A%2F%2Fpublications.naturalengland.org.uk%2Ffile%2F4711800952848384&usg=AOvVaw0QXNtF14nxwUNQkwjEEo2R&opi=89978449.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> SSEN Transmission (2019), Biodiversity Net Gain Toolkit User Guide. SSEN, Perth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Detailed approach on this assumption can be found in the assumption section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Highland Council Highland Council Local Development Plan (2012) | https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1505/highlandwide local development plan.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Highland Council (2021) Highland Nature Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Available at: <u>Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 – 2026 - Highland Environment</u> <u>Forum</u>.

<sup>18</sup> Biodiversity metric 2.0 User Guide - Beta Test Final (1).pdf. Available: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5850908674228224 [Accessed March 2024].

- 2.6.1 To aid understanding of the value of the irreplaceable habitats where present, these are quantified in terms of BU within a separate toolkit. Woodland listed on the AWI as categories 1a and 2a<sup>19</sup>, ancient and veteran trees and blanket bog in moderate condition or above are classed as irreplaceable habitats<sup>20</sup>.
- 2.6.2 In these situations, the SSEN Transmission Assessment Methodology & Associated Guidance<sup>21</sup>, hereafter referred to as 'SSEN Guidance', dictates that any compensation offered to address impacts on irreplaceable habitats should be agreed directly with the planning authority.
- 2.6.3 Unavoidable impacts on irreplaceable habitats should not undermine the BNG process for the other habitats. In these situations, the SSEN Guidance dictates that any compensation offered to address impacts on irreplaceable habitats should be agreed directly with the local authority, in this case THC.

#### 2.7 Limitations and Assumptions

- 2.7.1 The following assumptions have been made for the BU calculations of the BNG Study Area;
  - The BNG assessment exclusively looks at woodland within the BNG study Area, as no impacts are predicted on any other habitats recorded in the BNG Study Area. Where temporary impacts will arise, for example as a result of access, these habitats are predicted to have recovered to their baseline habitat type and condition within two years, due to the sensitive construction methods to be used (i.e. bog mats placed temporarily across habitats to access pole locations).
  - The wooden poles will be installed in a foundation trench approximately 3 m x 4 m wide with all excavated material reinstated immediately after installation. The direct footprint of habitat loss at the pole location itself has therefore not been included, given the very small-scale area to be lost. The area immediately around the pole, will be subject to temporary impacts only, while the pole is being installed, but sensitive working methods will be followed (to be set out in a Construction Environmental Management Plan), to ensure these areas will return to their current habitat type and condition within two years of the impact.
  - The BNG Study Area was agreed through discussions with SSEN Transmission (assumptions confirmed via email on 06.09.24 and is based on SSEN's operational clearance requirements. The corridor width surrounding the OHL consists of three areas, Area A, B and C, comprising the following:
    - Area A is 5.24 m wide and located directly below the OHL. All woodland types are to be removed here and will be replaced with modified grassland in moderate condition;
    - Area B covers 7.5 m from the edge of area A. All woodland types are to be removed and will be replaced with mixed scrub in moderate condition;

<sup>19</sup> SSEN Transmission (2023) Ancient Woodland - Approach to Assessment and Reporting.

<sup>20</sup> SSEN do not consider woodland classed on the AWI as Long-Established Plantation Origin as irreplaceable habitat.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> SSEN Transmission (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Assessment Methodology & Associated Guidance. SSEN, Perth.

- Area C Where passing through coniferous woodland, this habitat is to be removed out to 36 m from the OHL and will be replaced with mixed scrub in moderate condition between extent of Area B out to 30 m, and will be replaced with broadleaved woodland in moderate condition between 30 and 36 m; and
- Area C Where passing through broadleaved woodland, this habitat is to be removed out to 30 m and will be replaced with mixed scrub in moderate condition between extent of Area B out to 30 m.
- The proposed woodland and scrub planting on which this is assessment is based, as shown in **Annex A Figure 7.4**.3, are currently indicative proposals. As part of the forestry requirements, offsite compensatory woodland planting is also being explored to compensate for the loss in woodland, although locations have not been agreed at this stage of the project (See Appendix 11.1 OHL Woodland Report Chleansaid). SSEN Transmission are committed to provide a 10% NG, the precise details on how this will be delivered are yet to be determined, but may either be achieved within the OHL, or offsite, or through a combination of both. Once precise details have been determined the BNG assessment will be updated to confirm that the 10% NG requirements are met.
- SSEN Transmission Ancient Woodland Guidance<sup>19</sup> states that category 1b and 2b long-established of plantation origin (LEPO) woodland and other woodlands on 'Roy' woodland sites are not considered irreplaceable woodland and as such are included within calculations of biodiversity units for non-irreplaceable habitats for its projects.
- Area calculations are based on areas being rounded to two decimal places before being entered into the biodiversity toolkit. Therefore, there may be a difference of 0.01 hectares (ha) between the BNG Study Area and total baseline habitat area based on rounding up or down of values. Additionally, areas smaller than 0.01 appear as 0.00 in the toolkit. The BU achieved from these small areas is negligible and therefore this does not affect the BNG calculations.
- Although there are watercourses within the BNG Study Area, as the OHL spans across these, they are not expected to be impacted by the Proposed Development and will therefore not be considered further in this assessment.
- The calculated woodland loss of this BNG assessment does not correspond with the Forestry Chapter<sup>22</sup> due to the different parameters followed for assessing the baseline. The baseline habitat survey captured in detail the full range of habitats present on site. In locations where forestry has been cleared felled, but habitats are recovering beneath, such as heath, habitats have been recorded as such, to fully capture the biodiversity value of these habitats. Furthermore, where areas with scattered conifer regrowth are present within a differing habitat type, the dominant habitat type has been recorded. The woodland loss figures reporting within the BNG assessment are therefore lower than the woodland loss figures within the Forestry Chapter.

 $<sup>^{22}</sup>$  WSP (2024) Appendix 11.1 OHL Woodland Report Chleansaid

#### 3 Results

- 3.1.1 This section should be read in conjunction with the Toolkit which provides full details of habitat extents and biodiversity values for non-irreplaceable habitats.
- 3.1.2 There was no irreplaceable habitat recorded within the BNG Study Area. Therefore, irreplaceable habitat is not further assessed.
- 3.1.3 The biodiversity baseline and post development values for the BNG Study Area are presented below and shown in **Figure 7.4.2** and **Figure 7.4.3** of **Annex A**, respectively.

#### 3.2 Baseline Biodiversity Value

- 3.2.1 The majority of the BNG Study Area was occupied by other coniferous woodland (UKHab classification w2c) totalling 24.36 ha or 98.33 %. Additionally, 1.67 % of the BNG Study Area, or 0.41 ha was occupied by wet woodland (UKHab classification w1d). Baseline habitats comprised 24.78 ha of the BNG Study Area and are shown in **Figure 2 Appendix A.**
- 3.2.2 The total BU value of non-irreplaceable woodland habitat within the BNG Study Area was 80.17 BU comprising of 98.33 % low and 1.67 % high distinctiveness habitats.
- 3.2.3 The average BU per one hectare of habitat can range between 2 BU/ha (low biodiversity) and 18 BU/ha (very high biodiversity), the habitats present within the BNG Study Area are considered to be of low biodiversity value (3.24/ha).

#### 3.3 Post Development Biodiversity Value

- 3.3.1 Once compensatory planting establishes, the majority of the BNG Study Area is predicted to be vegetated by 18.38 ha of mixed scrub (UKHab classification h3h) in moderate condition totalling 74.16 %. The mixed scrub is proposed to cover the area within 2.62 m and 30 m of the OHL, where woodland was felled to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Development and must remain clear of woodland following construction to remove the risk of tree damage to the OHL.
- 3.3.2 Additionally, it is understood that 17.17 % of the BNG Study Area will be planted with 4.25 ha of other broadleaved woodland (UKHab classification w1g) in moderate condition, at a distance of 30 m and 36 m to the OHL, within areas where coniferous woodland (UKHab classification w2c) was felled to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Development.
- 3.3.3 Furthermore, 8.67% of the BNG Study Area will become vegetated by 2.15 ha of modified grassland (UKHab classification g4) in moderate condition, below the established OHL. Post-development habitats are shown in **Figure 7.4.3 of Annex A**.
- 3.3.4 The total BU value for the post development habitats is 91.91 BU comprising of 82.83 % low and 17.17 % medium distinctiveness habitats.
- 3.3.5 The average BU per one hectare of habitat can range between 2 BU/ha (low biodiversity) and 18 BU/ha (very high biodiversity), the habitats present within the BNG Study Area, post construction are predicted to be of low biodiversity value, albeit slightly higher in value to the baseline (3.71/ha).
- 3.4 A summary of the baseline and post development BU is presented below in **Table 3.1**.

#### Table 3.2: Summary of the Baseline and Post Development BU

Baseline BU	Post Development BU	Change in BU
80.17	91.91	+11.74(15%)

#### 4 Conclusion

- 4.1.1 Habitats within the BNG Study Area that were included within the BNG calculations comprised of other coniferous woodland and wet woodland.
- 4.1.2 The biodiversity baseline value for the Proposed Development was 80.17 BU. Based on the assumptions made with respect to habitat reinstatement and habitat creation, the post construction BU value is predicted to be 91.91 BU, an increase of 11.73 BU. Overall this equates to a 15% gain in BU.
- 4.1.3 The assessment assumed that all woodland habitats within the current design footprint would be lost as a result of the Proposed Development. To allow the Proposed Development to achieve a NG, the felled woodland will be planted with modified grassland, mixed scrub, and broadleaved woodland.
- 4.1.4 To align with SSEN Transmission's BNG commitments, a 10 % NG would be sufficient, which would translate to a net change in BU of 8.17 (Post Development BU of 88.35) for the Proposed Development, which means the proposed planting measures would achieve an additional 3.56 BU which could be banked for future SSEN Transmission projects.
- 4.1.5 In the event that the proposed woodland planting (4.25 ha) is found not to be feasible, then an alternative calculation was undertaken to determine the minimum level of woodland planting required to reach the 10% targeted net gain.
- 4.1.6 This alternative calculation identified that a minimum of 3.59 ha of woodland creation, along with the proposed 2.15 ha of modified grassland and 18.38 ha of mixed scrub creation would be sufficient to achieve a 10% NG.
- 4.1.7 As noted, the proposed woodland and scrub planting on which this is assessment is based, are currently indicative proposals. As part of the forestry requirements, offsite compensatory woodland planting is also being explored to compensate for the loss in woodland, although locations have not been agreed at this stage of the project (See Appendix 11.1 OHL Woodland Report Chleansaid). SSEN Transmission are committed to provide a 10% NG, the precise details on how this will be delivered are yet to be determined, but may either be achieved within the OHL, or offsite, or through a combination of both. Once precise details have been determined the BNG assessment will be updated to confirm that the 10% NG requirements are met.

#### Annex A

Figure 7.4.1 Proposed Development and BNG Study Area Figure 7.4.2 Baseline UKHab Figure 7.4.3 Post-development UKHab

Chleansaid Wind Farm 132 kV OHL Connection Appendix 7.4: BNG Report





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- Wood Pole Locations
- OHL Route
- BNG Study Area

Client:



Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

#### Chleansaid Wind Farm Connection

Title

# Figure 7.4.1 Proposed Development and BNG Study Area

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Community	Drawn:	LW	Ch

er 2024 hecked: SK

Scale: 26,050 @ A3 Approved: SB















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