Los Angeles County Nature-based Solutions Blue Ribbon Panel Workshop #6 – Summary

Meeting Details
Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Time: 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Location: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, 900 S Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803

Meeting Objectives

1. **Finalize Recommendations:** Refine the final set of recommendations for the report.
2. **Metrics Presentation:** Review proposed metrics, determine next steps.
3. **Comprehensive Standard Package:** Review the full Standard Package, gather feedback, and confirm all necessary components are included in the Recommendations Report.

Attendees

Panel Members:
Amanda Begley (TreePeople)
Maggie Gardner (LA Waterkeeper)
Keith Hala (LA County DPW)
Bruce Hamamoto (LA County DPW)
Kelsey Jessup (The Nature Conservancy)
Stephanie Landregan (UCLA)
Mark Nguyen (LA City Department of Sanitation)
Jason Pepito (LA County DPW)
Claire Robinson (Amigos de los Rios)
Rowan Rodrick-Jones (Stillwater Sciences)
Andrea Vona (LA County Department of Parks and Recreation)
Melina Watts (Watershed Coordinator, North Santa Monica Bay)
Melanie Winter (The River Project)

Panel Facilitation Support Team:
Eileen Alduenda (Council for Watershed Health)
Tanishka Chellani (Council for Watershed Health)
Debbie Enos (Council for Watershed Health)
Kimberly Guo (Better World Group)
Colleen Easler (Better World Group)

LA COUNTY WATER PLAN

Agenda Item	Notes
1. Arrival and Check-In	• Eileen welcomed panelists and invited them to share their favorite flora or fauna, encouraging reflection on how the Blue Ribbon Panel's (BRP) work will impact non-human species. **Discussion:** None from this section.
2. Welcome and Agenda Overview	• Eileen gave a land acknowledgement and recognized the efforts that the BRP made to include Tribal voices in the process to develop the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Standard. • Tanishka reviewed the priority tasks for the BRP within the context of the documents presented for discussion at the meeting – the BRP Recommendations Parallel Tracks document, the proposed metrics, and the complete NbS Standard package. • Tanishka provided an overview of the meeting agenda, reminding Panelists that they would have the opportunity to further refine their recommendations at a future NbS Task Force meeting. **Discussion:** None from this section.

3. Discuss Recommendations: Parallel Tracks Document	• Tanishka presented the Parallel Tracks Document (Appendix A), which outlines several potential pathways for implementing the BRP's NbS Standard through the scoring of Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) projects. She organized Panelists into three small groups and asked them to review the document and discuss the following questions:
	  ○ Are there any clarifications you need on the tracks?
	  ○ Which track does your group prefer, and why?
	  ○ Are there pieces from other tracks you'd want to keep?
	  ○ Are there any tracks your group would not support?
	• Following the small group discussion, Tanishka hosted a Q&A session to answer any outstanding questions on the document. She then invited Panelists to share answers to the following questions:
	  ○ Is your group comfortable with making the recommendation to restructure scoring?
	  ○ Is your group comfortable making the recommendation to award partial points to projects that aren't a Nature-based Solution?
	  ○ Your group's preferred track
	  ○ Specific thoughts on the "Additional BRP Recommendations"
	  ○ Any remaining questions or concerns
	
	Discussion:
	Open Q&A:
	• **Need recommendations about compensation for technical consulting and Peer Review Panel (PRP)**: BRP recommendations

	are not clear regarding how NbS technical consulting or PRP members would be compensated. The BRP should consider recommendations to source and provide funding to NbS technical consultant and the PRP. • **Additional recommendations for the SCWP application process and NbS definition**: At an upcoming Task Force meeting, Panelists may make recommendations related to adjusting the existing application process to reduce burdens to the PRP and consulted Tribal communities. Panelists can also recommend adjusting scoring values and weighting to prioritize water supply for fish and other aquatic organisms as part of water supply in the overall NbS definition and evaluation process. • **Explaining the need for the PRP in addition to the Scoring Committee:** Panelists discussed that although the SCWP states that the Scoring Committee should prioritize NbS, NbS are not being prioritized in practice. The PRP would provide an added layer of expertise to ensure NbS projects are accurately evaluated and provide additional guidance to the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs). *Full Group Discussion* • **Recommended changes to the SCWP NbS scoring:** Panelists expressed the following recommendations about the current NbS scoring process and the Parallel Tracks document: ○ Replace the "good/better/best" language currently part of SCWP NbS scoring process with more specific language. ○ Include and prioritize specific metrics, such as watershed restoration and biodiversity improvements, as part of scoring criteria. ○ Pre-screen projects using the framework from the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) to identify NbS projects prior to the Scoring Committee's review. This may eliminate the need to award partial funding. ○ PRP must be separate from any agencies applying for SCWP funding. PRP membership must be consistent, given the complex variety of expertise – including academic, community-based, and Tribal knowledge – required to analyze projects holistically. ○ Remove the self-scoring portion of the SCWP funding application process, as this introduces unnecessary bias in the process. ○ Analyze NbS projects that currently fail to score well, such as habitat restoration projects, and restructure project scoring to award funding to these projects. For example, habitat restoration projects will not be approved unless they also have explicit – not just inherent – benefits to water quality and supply. Project scoring should be restructured to include inherent benefits to water quality and supply, in combination with other factors.

	○ Change scoring values to ensure that NbS plays a larger role in securing project funding through the 60-point threshold required for projects. Currently, the 60-point threshold can be attained through water quality and water supply criteria alone. ▪ This recommendation can be combined with the recommendation to pre-screen and filter NbS projects for official scoring. ▪ Other options are to drastically reduce the water quality and supply point values, and/or to redefine the water quality and supply criteria categories to avoid unwanted processes such as conversion. ▪ Award partial points for NbS. At the moment, scoring is binary and applicants can receive either 0 or 5 points per NbS criterion. ▪ The BRP does not recommend that the scoring use the terms "green," "gray," and "nature-mimicking" infrastructure. To more accurately assess the extent of an NbS, Panelists recommended referring to the "achievement units" system used in the MMS. ○ Incorporate watershed signatures into scoring to ensure that the SCWP goes beyond TMDLs and compliance. ○ Require intra-agency coordination and stakeholder engagement as part of the SCWP application process. For example, in USDA grant projects, applicants are required to talk to all neighbors surrounding their project site. This has led to increased project size and impact. ○ The BRP needs to directly incorporate climate and climate change in the scoring, as well as community impact. • Tanishka asked if Panelists would like to restructure scoring to award partial points to projects that are not NbS. ○ By a show of hands, all Panelists agreed. • Tanishka asked Panelists which track their group preferred during the small-group discussions. The answers were as follows: ○ Two groups preferred ***3a***. However, one group did not agree with the partial funding component of this track. Instead, there should be a pre-scoring NbS "filter," which would circumvent the need for partial funding. ○ One group preferred ***4a***. This group expressed that given the difficulty in recruiting NbS experts to a SCWP Scoring Committee, it might be even more challenging to assemble a separate PRP. • Tanishka asked Panelists for their thoughts on the additional recommendations listed in the scoring document. Their responses were as follows: ○ *"Additional Pre-Design and Redesign Support for Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)"* – **Remove this recommendation.** It is unnecessary to have pre-design or re-design support for projects. Agencies know how to design NbS projects, but the issue is that there is little incentive to do so. Redevelopment

	of metrics to prioritize true NbS projects should provide enough incentive. ○ *"Establish a Dedicated NbS Technical Assistance (TA) Fund"* – **Modify this recommendation**. The SCWP should reassess and transform the Technical Resources Program to provide and prioritize funding for community-based organizations. ○ *"Prioritize Community Stewardship for NbS Monitoring and Maintenance"* – **More Task Force conversation needed.** Community stewardship should be prioritized, but it is unclear how to do so. Workforce development funding could be an important aspect of this. The BRP should continue to discuss this recommendation during the upcoming Task Force Working Group meetings. ○ *"Facilitate Interagency Coordination for NbS Monitoring, Operations, and Maintenance"* – **More Task Force conversation needed.** Coordination is crucial, and the lack thereof has led to a lack of diverse voices in decision-making. However, as written, this recommendation acknowledges that agencies are siloed but also accepts it without making any structural changes. The BRP should continue to discuss this recommendation during the upcoming Task Force Working Group and include the streamlining of permitting in its discussions. ○ *"Require Letter of Intent specifying project beneficiaries and audience"* – **Add this recommendation.** Panelists recommended that SCWP applicants be required to submit a letter of intent that specifies project audience and beneficiaries as part of the application process. Beneficiaries should be human and non-human.
4. Discuss Metrics and Next Steps	• Tanishka introduced the document containing suggested metrics for NbS scoring (Appendix B). She explained to Panelists that the metrics are organized by criteria. She welcomed any questions or discussion. **Discussion:** • One Panelist asked where the suggested metrics were sourced from. ○ Tanishka responded that the metrics were compiled based on the SCWP Interim Guidance Document and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. • Another Panelist suggested that when the BRP present these metrics to the County, the metrics should be framed in a way that acknowledges and responds to the existing MMS document. • A third Panelist suggested that a metric related to how well projects sustain environmental flows should be added.

5. Gather General Feedback on Complete Standard Package	• Tanishka introduced the document containing the complete package for the BRP's developed NbS standard (Appendix C). She welcomed questions and feedback.
	
	Discussion
	• Panelists agreed the complete standard package needed to be tested using a variety of representative projects.
	  ○ Several Panelists volunteered to identify and share projects for the Project Test Template (Appendix D). One Panelist noted that it would be important to include projects at various geographic scales.
	  ○ One Panelist suggested that the BRP should also re-examine projects that have already been scored in the existing framework to test if the BRP's recommendations would have an impact on their success. All previous project applications are publicly available online.
	• Panelists expressed concern around the NbS definition.
	  ○ The definition created a duality between humans and the ecosystem by naming both "human wellbeing" and "biodiversity."
	  ○ The definition states what NbS do but does not make it clear what they are.
	  ▪ A Panelist suggested that this could be clarified in the preamble document.

6. Share Out Recommendations Report Contents & Outline	• Tanishka introduced the outline of the BRP's recommendations report and welcomed panelists' questions and feedback.
	
	Discussion:
	• Panelists shared the following recommendations:
	  ○ Remove the terms "nature-mimicking" and "green" from the report, as these terms are not well-defined. The two ends of the NbS spectrum should be "grey" and "NbS."
	  ○ Ensure that NbS metrics are exceedingly clear. This includes ensuring that data collected to measure NbS are easily interpreted by the PRP to assess factors such as percentage of permeable surface and native flora at a site before and after NbS implementation.

7. Wrap-Up and Next Steps	• Tanishka will follow up via email on forthcoming meetings. She requested that Panelists send her examples of projects that are representative of the various types of NbS that the BRP should prioritize by June 6th. • Eileen welcomed Panelists to share further feedback on the NbS definition via email or in the upcoming Task Force Working Group meetings. • Tanishka adjourned the meeting.

Appendix A: BRP Recommendations Parallel Tracks

The scenarios below organize BRP Recs in the Metrics + Recs Document previously shared with the BRP into several parallel scenarios/ parallel tracks that organize the recommendations into various processes that can effectively implement the BRP's Standard into the SCWP to effectively incentivize NbS.

Restructuring Scoring for Nature-Based Solutions: All parallel tracks of the recommendations below require restructuring the scoring process to effectively recognize and incentivize Nature-Based Solutions. Accordingly, scoring criteria will need to be restructured to effectively incentivize NbS projects, and to clearly distinguish NbS from other project types to prioritize projects that demonstrate strong ecological performance, community benefits, and climate resilience.

Awarding Partial Points for Projects: All parallel tracks of the recommendations below either require or would benefit from a mechanism for awarding partial points to projects, allowing for more nuanced evaluation. This approach ensures that projects that partially meet NbS criteria can still be recognized, while those that fully meet NbS standards are appropriately rewarded. Partial points provide flexibility in scoring, effectively incentivize NbS, and ensure that projects that aren't Nature-based Solutions are still awarded some points (Gray Infrastructure projects are eligible for partial points when NbS, Nature-Mimicking, or Green Infrastructure are infeasible due to technical, environmental, or regulatory constraints).

Peer Review Panel (PRP) Evaluation Scenarios - Comparative Table

Please See Metrics + Recommendations document, tab 2 to view additional details on the Peer-Review-Panel.

	Scenario 1: PRP as Advisory Review Panel (Low Impact, Low Incentives)	Scenario 2A: PRP Before Scoring (Pre-Scoring, Moderate Impact/Incentives)	Scenario 2B: PRP During Scoring (During-Scoring, Moderate Impact/Incentives)	Scenario 3A: PRP Before Scoring with Funding Influence (High Impact/Incentives)
Summary	**Advisory Document Provided to WASC.**	**Project Classification Impacts Scoring** **Requires Changes to Scoring**	**Project Classification Impacts Scoring**	**Project Classification Impacts Funding**

		Partial Points Awarded to Projects based on Project Classification as Gray, Green, NM, NbS	**Changes to Scoring Recommended-See "Changes to Scoring" Row** **Partial Points Awarded to Projects based on Project Classification as Gray, Green, NM, NbS**	
Position in Process + Mechanism	After scoring, available during the WASC deliberation process (similar to Scientific Study reviews.;Provides a written evaluation memo for WASCs to consider.	Before scoring, directly classifies and assesses projects; reviews and validates NbS classification as Green, Nature-Mimicking, or NbS., reclassifies if needed.	During scoring, validates and adjusts classifications; reviews and validates NbS classification, reclassifies if needed.	Before scoring, directly classifies and assigns funding recommendations; reviews and classifies projects, assigns funding levels (Full, Partial, None).
Influence Level	Advisory only. No impact on scoring or funding.	Moderate. Directly affects project classification and scoring.	Moderate. Directly affects project classification and scoring.	High. PRP classifies projects. Directly influences funding.
Changes to Scoring	No scoring change.	NbS points are reweighted/increased to hold more weight in the overall scoring process. (See attached Sample Scoring Model 2A)	NbS is a factor in scoring all categories, NbS category changed to Biodiversity Criteria in the form of an Ecological Benefits Scoring Category (BRP Criteria 1). (See Sample Scoring Model 2B)	Tiered funding structure: Full for NbS, Partial for Nature-Mimicking, Partial for Green, No funding for Gray
Funding Allocation	None. Relies on WASC to consider PRP feedback.	No impact.	No impact.	Determined by PRP's classification and recommendations. Green: 60% funding. Nature-Mimicking: 80% funding.

				Nature-based: 100% funding.
PRP Scoring Impact	None. Relies on WASC to consider PRP feedback.	PRP directly affects scoring based, as scoring is based on PRP's classification. **Partial Points:** Green: 60% NbS points Nature-Mimicking: 80% Nbs points Nature-based: 100% NbS points	PRP directly affects scoring based, as scoring is based on PRP's classification. **Partial Points:** Partial points allotted within "Ecological Benefits" based on project classification. Green: 60% EB points Nature-Mimicking: 80% EB points Nature-based: 100% EB points	Directly impacts project classification. Does not necessarily impact scoring but heavily impacts funding levels.
SCWP Tier Alignment	Post-Scoring Review (Advisory Only).	Integrated into Scoring and Classification Process.	Could be Integrated into Scoring and Classification Process or could also be done after reclassifying projects.	Classifies Project before Scoring. Scoring process continues. Classification impacts funding.
Good-Better-Best NbS Model **(SEE COMMENT)**	Could be used by the review panel as an advisory tool.	PRP applies Good-Better-Best (GBB) as a per-scoring assessment tool (Incorporating BRP Metrics).	PRP applies Good-Better-Best (GBB) as a per-scoring assessment tool (Incorporating BRP Metrics).	PRP assigns project classification to NbS projects. GBB is used as an advisory tool.
Transparency	PRP report shared with WASCs but does not impact scoring.	PRP input directly shapes scoring.	PRP input directly shapes scoring.	PRP directly impacts funding allocation based on the classification of the project. Done beforehand to inform the Scoring Committee and project proponents.
Pros	- Mirrors the existing Scientific Review Panel.	- Aligns project scoring with NbS standards from the start.	- If PRP follows scoring, this allows initial scoring speed,	- Strongly incentivizes NbS quality, ensures funding is aligned with integrity.

	- Supports transparency and adaptive management.	- Minimizes the chance of misclassification.	PRP can reclassify projects for quality control. - PRP focuses on validation rather than full review.	- Supports tiered funding aligned with NbS quality.
Cons	- Relies on WASC willingness to act on PRP feedback.	- Higher PRP workload, may slow project review.	- Potential conflict when PRP adjusts scores post-scoring.	- Complex implementation, may face resistance without clear County guidance.

3B. Partial Funding Model:
The partial funding model in Scenario 3 can be used regardless of Peer Review Panel involvement.
Using a project classification tool to determine if a project is a Gray-Green-Nature Mimicking-NbS. Additionally, the updated GBB could be used to determine if an NbS project is a Good NbS-Better NbS-Best Nbs.

- **Gray Infrastructure:**
    - Eligibility: Ineligible for funding in all scenarios unless the PRP determines that NbS, Nature-Mimicking, or Green Infrastructure are infeasible due to technical, environmental, or regulatory constraints.
    - Conditional Exception Partial Funding: If NbS, NM, Gray and Green are infeasible, Gray may receive partial funding (up to 50%).
- **Green Infrastructure:**
    - Explicitly eligible for partial funding (up to 60%) based on PRP's classification.
- **Nature-Mimicking:**
    - Explicitly eligible for partial funding (up to 80%) based on PRP's classification.
- **Nature-Based Solutions (NbS):**
    - Eligible for full funding if verified as an "NbS"
    - Good NbS-Better NbS-Best NbS model can be further used to distinguish gold star NbS projects. Council recommends status within NbS not impact funding.

4A. Enhanced Scoring Committee with Integrated NbS Classification (Without PRP)

If the Blue-Ribbon Panel (BRP) does not support establishing a Peer Review Panel (PRP), an alternative approach would be to enhance the existing Scoring Committee by directly integrating NbS classification into the scoring process. This model supports adjusting scoring without creating a separate review panel, but may have a more limited impact on effectively incentivizing NbS.

Alternative Model Options:

- Leverage the existing NbS Expert Seat on the Scoring Committee (however this person would have to be a NbS expert as opposed to a NbS or CIB expert). Could also use additional support from Vetted NbS Experts Available for Consultation.
    - SCWP would maintain a list of vetted NbS experts who can be consulted by the Scoring Committee on complex projects. These experts would provide technical advice on NbS design but would not have direct authority over scoring or funding decisions.
- Direct NbS Classification by Scoring Committee: The Scoring Committee would classify each project as Gray, Green, Nature-Mimicking, or NbS using a clear scoring rubric.
- ClScoring Criteria: Projects would be evaluated based on defined NbS criteria, indicators and metrics.
- Transparent Feedback: Applicants receive a scoring sheet indicating their project's classification and performance, with guidance on how to improve.

Limitations:

- Overburdened and Non-diversified Expertise: A single NbS expert may be overwhelmed, limiting the depth of review.
    - Use of a consultant group not integrated into the current process may also cause delays
- Risk of Inconsistent Classification: Without a PRP, NbS classifications depend on committee consensus, reducing clarity.
- Limited Accountability: No structured feedback loop ensures applicants understand why they did not qualify as NbS.
- Limited Iterative Design Support: Projects lack a pathway for continuous improvement between funding cycles.

Additional BRP Recommendations

Additional Pre-Design and Redesign Support for Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)

To support applicants whose projects do not fully meet the County's NbS standards, the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) could establish structured pre-design and redesign support pathways, ensuring that feedback leads to viable opportunities for improvement rather than disqualification. This approach would provide applicants with written feedback from the Peer Review Panel (PRP), clearly identifying where their projects fall short of NbS expectations and offering targeted design recommendations. Applicants could receive guidance on improving site design, achieving soil permeability and health goals, refining plant selections, enhancing hydrologic connectivity, or incorporating community co-benefit strategies. Where appropriate, applicants would be eligible for partial or tiered funding for early-phase design, feasibility, or planning work, providing a financial bridge to

help strengthen their projects. The PRP could also serve as an ongoing technical resource, offering one-on-one consultations, targeted workshops, and iterative design review support. This model would be paired with a commitment to transparent project monitoring, including field visits to assess success criteria such as vegetation health, soil condition, hydrologic performance, and community benefits. By ensuring that applicants receive actionable feedback and a pathway to improve, this approach would promote high-quality NbS while supporting equitable access to funding and technical assistance.

Establish a Dedicated NbS Technical Assistance (TA) Fund

To ensure that Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) are effectively integrated into all phases of project development, the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) should establish a dedicated NbS Technical Assistance (TA) fund. This targeted funding pool would provide project-specific support for incorporating NbS principles from planning through construction and long-term operations and maintenance. This TA fund could be structured to require that a minimum percentage (e.g., 1%) of a project's design and construction costs be allocated to NbS support, similar to the County's Civic Art Policy. The fund would ensure that applicants have access to technical expertise for soil management, native plant selection, hydrologic connectivity, and other critical NbS components. Additionally, SCWP should assess whether the current Technical Resources Program (TRP) provides sufficient support for NbS, including a review of the TRP's existing funding menu to ensure that NbS design, permitting, and engagement are adequately prioritized. To further strengthen this support, SCWP could require that all TRP consultant contracts include an assessment of NbS opportunities, ensuring that experts are appropriately compensated for designing, implementing, and maintaining high-quality NbS projects.

Prioritize Community Stewardship for NbS Monitoring and Maintenance

SCWP should prioritize community-based stewardship frameworks for the long-term monitoring, operations, and maintenance of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) projects. This approach would empower local communities to take ownership of NbS projects, ensuring that they are maintained in ways that reflect local priorities and support both climate and cultural resilience. To make this approach effective, SCWP should provide targeted funding for community stewardship initiatives, including training programs, educational workshops, and partnerships with local organizations. Educational outreach is essential to ensure that communities understand the value of NbS and the benefits of ecological landscapes, overcoming misconceptions and resistance, such as the prevailing "leaf blower-mower-wacker" culture (Arends, Claudia). This could be complemented by state or County-funded educational campaigns that promote an understanding of the ecological value of plants, soils, and insects in urban environments. By aligning stewardship with local priorities and ensuring communities have the knowledge and resources to care for NbS, SCWP can build lasting support for sustainable urban landscapes.

Facilitate Interagency Coordination for NbS Monitoring, Operations, and Maintenance

To ensure that Nature-Based Solutions are effectively monitored, maintained, and supported over the long term, SCWP should prioritize interagency coordination and establish clear roles, responsibilities, and funding mechanisms for NbS stewardship. This coordination model should be built on a framework of cooperation and collaboration rather than competition, recognizing that the ecological and social benefits of NbS are shared by all. SCWP should facilitate early-stage coordination among relevant agencies, defining shared protocols and maintenance agreements to ensure that NbS installations are supported by appropriate staffing, technical expertise, and consistent monitoring practices. These agreements should clarify which agency is responsible for each aspect of NbS maintenance, reducing confusion and ensuring accountability. SCWP should also ensure that interagency coordination is presented to the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) as part of the ongoing biennial review process, promoting a continuous learning and improvement approach. This model would ensure that NbS projects are sustained over time, providing long-term ecological, social, and climate resilience.

Sample Scoring Models

*All models use **SAMPLE VALUES** to illustrate possible approaches to restructuring scoring*

Current SCWP Scoring

Benefits	Current Points Allocated
Wet & Dry Weather Water Quality	50
Significant Water Supply	25
Community Investment Benefits	10
Nature-based Solutions	15
Leverage Funding and Community Support	10
Total Points	110

Scenario 2A: NbS Points Re-weighted to be equal to Water Quality and Water Supply

Benefits:	Sample Updated Point Allocation
Wet & Dry Weather Water Quality	40
Significant Water Supply	25
Community Investment Benefits	10
Nature-based Solutions	25
Leverage Funding and Community Support	10
Total Points	110

Scenario 2B: NbS Points Integrated into Each Benefit, Previously NbS specific points in New “Ecological Benefits” Category

Benefits: (+ NbS points in each Category)	Sample Updated Point Allocation
Wet & Dry Weather Water Quality (+NbS)	40 + 5
Significant Water Supply (+NbS)	25 + 5
Community Investment Benefits (+NbS)	10 + 5
Ecological Benefits (previously NbS)	10
Leverage Funding and Community Support	10
Total Points	110

Appendix B: BRP Metrics

BRP Criterion 1: NbS result in a benefit to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity

IUCN Criteria 3

1.1: NbS actions are informed by local, Indigenous, and community knowledge and directly respond to a well-informed assessment of the functional health of the ecosystem and prevailing drivers of degradation and loss

Binary Indicators

- Baseline ecological assessment conducted prior to design (yes/no)
- Local, Indigenous, or community knowledge incorporated into baseline assessment (yes/no)
- Drivers of degradation or habitat loss identified and mapped (yes/no)
- Restoration or planting palette based on historical/reference ecosystem (yes/no)
- Functional degradation addressed through soil, vegetation, or hydrology interventions (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of restoration/vegetation area informed by historical or reference ecosystems
- % of identified stressors (e.g., erosion, compaction, invasive species) addressed through design
- % reduction in area affected by identified degradation drivers (e.g., erosion-prone zones treated)
- Acres of land treated with interventions directly linked to baseline conditions

1.2: Measurable biodiversity outcomes that support improved ecosystem health and function are identified, benchmarked, and periodically assessed

Binary Indicators

- Measurable biodiversity targets identified during design (yes/no)
- Project includes species or habitat benchmark goals (yes/no)
- Plan for periodic ecological reassessment included (yes/no)
- Pre/post biodiversity monitoring methodology established (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % increase in native vegetation cover (baseline vs. year 3 or 5)
- % of total area restored to target habitat type
- % increase in pollinator or bird sightings (via community science or ecological surveys)
- % improvement in habitat condition score (e.g., CRAM or site-based index)
- % of biodiversity targets met or exceeded (relative to initial benchmarks)

1.3: Monitoring includes periodic assessments of unintended adverse and beneficial consequences as nature responds and adapts from the NbS

Binary Indicators

- Project includes monitoring plan with reassessment intervals (yes/no)
- Monitoring includes assessment of unintended ecological impacts (yes/no)
- Adaptive management protocols established (yes/no)
- Community or place-based monitoring included (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- Frequency of monitoring events conducted post-installation (e.g., annually)
- % of project elements triggering adaptive changes based on monitoring data
- % of design components modified due to observed adverse effects
- % of observed ecological changes categorized as unplanned but beneficial

1.4: Opportunities to enhance ecosystem integrity and connectivity are identified and incorporated into the NbS strategy

Binary Indicators

- Project design aligns with regional conservation or linkage plans (yes/no)
- Opportunities to improve habitat connectivity identified (yes/no)
- Site linked to existing natural areas or ecological corridors (yes/no)
- Project includes buffer zones, wildlife crossings, or stepping-stone habitat (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % overlap with mapped habitat corridors or connectivity priority areas
- Acres of habitat reconnected or expanded via the project
- Linear feet of ecological corridor created or restored
- % improvement in connectivity index

Other Relevant to Criterion 1

Binary Indicators

- Use of compost, mulch, or regenerative soil materials (yes/no)
- Vegetation planted for soil stabilization or faunal habitat (yes/no)
- Site incorporates vertical vegetation layering (trees + shrubs + groundcover) (yes/no)
- Project includes long-term management for invasives or ecological succession (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of soil surface treated with regenerative materials
- % increase in soil infiltration rate (measured or modeled)
- Gallons/year of stormwater retained in vegetated or permeable zones
- % of vegetated area with native species that support multiple trophic levels

- % of project area designed to support faunal use (food, shelter, water)

BRP Criteria 2: Design of NbS is informed by scale

IUCN Criteria 2

2.1: NbS design recognizes and responds to ecological, hydrological, and social interactions across spatial and functional scales

Binary Indicators

- Design process explicitly considers ecological and social processes across site, neighborhood, and watershed scales (yes/no)
- Design incorporates upstream/downstream ecosystem connections (yes/no)
- Project integrates or complements other existing or planned NbS (yes/no)
- Regional-scale landscape planning (e.g., habitat linkages, canopy corridors) informs design (yes/no)
- Multi-jurisdictional or cross-boundary insights incorporated (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of habitat or vegetated area connected to broader ecological corridors or patches
- % of project boundary that abuts or extends existing natural or green infrastructure
- Linear feet or acres of ecological function extended beyond project footprint
- % of design informed by upstream or downstream ecological or community conditions
- % increase in area of overlapping co-benefits (e.g., biodiversity + access + climate resilience) at landscape scale

2.2: NbS design reflects the interaction between the ecosystem, society, and economy

Binary Indicators

- Project includes systems framing that integrates ecology, equity, and economy (yes/no)
- Design informed by Local land use, cultural, and socio-economic dynamics (yes/no)
- Design decisions informed by Community-led priorities and feedback (yes/no)
- Design considers trade-offs between ecological and community access/use (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of design area that supports multi-use functionality (e.g., habitat + gathering space) without degrading ecological integrity
- % of project site within or adjacent to underserved or equity-priority areas
- % of budget allocated to features that serve both community and ecosystem goals

- % of shaded or vegetated area sited intentionally for human benefit (e.g., walking routes, recreation areas)
- % increase in spatial overlap of ecological and social value zones (e.g., tree canopy over walkways in DACs)

2.3: NbS design considers potential positive and negative impacts on and beyond the intervention site

Binary Indicators

- Assessed offsite ecological effects (positive and negative) in design process (yes/no)
- Design explicitly considers cross-boundary ecological processes or risks (yes/no)
- Site planning includes evaluation of downstream ecological implications (yes/no)
- Mitigation strategies for potential adverse offsite effects are included (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of project functions (e.g., habitat, shading, biodiversity corridors) that extend beyond site boundary
- % increase in access or ecological benefit to adjacent properties or communities
- Acres of surrounding area that become ecologically reconnected due to project
- % of identified offsite risks (e.g., habitat fragmentation, edge effects) addressed through buffer or transition zone design
- % change in ecological connectivity index (e.g., patch cohesion or effective mesh size) across the intervention zone

Criterion 3: NbS Effectively Respond to Societal and Communal Challenges

IUCN Criteria 1

3.1: The most pressing societal challenges for affected communities, interested parties, and beneficiaries are prioritized

Binary Indicators

- Formal needs assessment conducted? (yes/no)
- Frontline or underserved communities consulted during challenge identification? (yes/no)
- Tribes consulted during challenge identification? (yes/no)
- Community Co-created narrative describing local challenges? (yes/no)
- Participatory tools used? (e.g., mapping, visioning, place-based assessments) (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of engaged stakeholders who confirmed their priority challenges were reflected in final design

- % of features mapped directly to priority concerns raised by Tribes or community groups
- % of challenge areas (e.g., urban heat, flooding, green space access) within the project area addressed
- % of project beneficiaries residing in Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), as designated under SB 535 (CalEnviroScreen)

3.2: Societal and communal challenges are understood, documented, and addressed

Binary Indicators

- Documentation includes baseline community and ecological conditions (yes/no)
- Participatory assessments or mapping were used to characterize conditions (yes/no)
- Design rationale links features to specific community and ecosystem needs (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of project area evaluated using participatory or community-based diagnostic tools
- % of project features that address both ecological and socio-cultural conditions (ie.. disaster response, shade , community hub, multi-purpose gathering space)
- % reduction in identified burdens (ie., UHI, lack of tree cover, etc.) in project footprint

3.3: Societal and communal well-being outcomes are identified, benchmarked, and periodically assessed

Binary Indicators

- Monitoring plan includes indicators for communal well-being (yes/no)

- Community members involved in outcome evaluation or adaptive management (yes/no)
- Project uses both ecological and human-focused outcome metrics (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- Tree canopy coverage (% increase)
- Surface temperature reduction (°F)
- CalEnviroScreen percentile (used to contextualize community burden)
- Air quality proxy (e.g., PM2.5, NO_2 hotspots)
- Parks and green space access (acres per 1,000 residents)
- Distance to community infrastructure (e.g., schools, clinics)
- Community population served (estimated residents)
- % of total shaded area co-located with public paths, play areas, or gathering spaces
- % increase in green space or tree cover in high-vulnerability census tracts
- % increase in perceived safety, well-being, or comfort (via pre/post survey)
- °F reduction in surface temperature in active-use zones (e.g., parks, sidewalks)
- % of local population gaining walkable access to new green or shaded space
- % of outcome benchmarks (e.g., tree canopy, cooling, access) met within defined time period

- % of features with dual social and ecological function monitored over time

BRP Criteria 4: NbS are a communal asset cared for through adaptive management and stewardship.

IUCN Criteria 7

4.1: Appropriate approaches for long-term stewardship and adaptive management are identified and integrated into the NbS design and implementation

Binary Indicators

- Adaptive monitoring and management plan drafted (yes/no_
- Identification of iterative learning mechanisms (e.g., scheduled monitoring, reviews, feedback loops) (yes/no)
- Integration of relational care practices (e.g., shared resource agreements) into design documents (yes/no)
- O&M Plan Created (yes/no)
- Community outreach conducted and/or stewardship partners identified and engaged (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- Number monitoring check-ins scheduled per year
- Number of community or partner organizations engaged in ongoing stewardship roles
- % of site projected to be stewarded by co-owned by community partners (e.g., maintenance, monitoring)
- Number of years for which stewardship responsibilities are formally committed (e.g., via MOU, contract, or plan)
- % of project budget allocated to long-term stewardship and adaptive management
- % of design features with associated stewardship guidance or protocols (e.g., native plant beds, bioswales)
-

4.2: A monitoring and evaluation plan is developed and implemented throughout the intervention cycle to support adaptive management

Binary Indicators

- Existence of a written monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan covering pre-, during, and post-implementation phases (yes/no)
- Inclusion of both ecological and social indicators in the M&E plan (yes/no)
- Periodic data review and decision-making checkpoints (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- Number of monitoring indicators tracked
- Frequency of monitoring events (e.g., quarterly, biannual, annual)

4.3: The NbS intervention is supported by a plan for operations and maintenance, and outlines a pathway for communal and long-term stewardship

Binary Indicators

- Formal Operations & Maintenance (O&M) plan (yes/no)
- O&M plan co-signed or endorsed by local agency partners (yes/no)
- Inclusion of capacity-building initiatives (e.g., training, tool sharing) in the O&M plan (yes/no)

Quantitative Indicators

- % of annual O&M budget committed to community-led activities
- Number of trained community stewards or volunteers retained year-over-year

Appendix C: Complete Standard Package

NbS Definition(s):
Nature-based Solutions address societal challenges through sustainable actions that protect and restore living ecosystems and their functions to ensure human well-being and benefit biodiversity.

Water-specific Definition:
Nature-based Solutions address water quality, water supply and stormwater challenges through sustainable actions that protect and restore living ecosystems and their functions to ensure human well-being and benefit biodiversity.

Standard: Nature-based solutions must implement place-appropriate and evidence-backed living processes and infrastructure, such as soil and vegetation, to lead to improved long-term ecosystem function and connectivity and community health and wellbeing. Success of nature-based solutions should be qualitatively and quantitatively evaluated using the following criteria and indicators:

Key NbS Criteria

BRP Criterion 1: NbS result in a benefit to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity
IUCN Criteria 3

Criteria 1 Guidance: Nature-Based Solutions are in a symbiotic relationship with the health of an ecosystem, having the capacity to improve the health of the ecosystem while also relying on ecosystem health to sustain themselves and provide social, communal, and public health benefits. NbS design and implementation should proactively seek to enhance the functionality and connectivity of an ecosystem or ecosystems.

1.1: NbS actions are informed by local, Indigenous, and community knowledge and directly respond to a well-informed assessment of the functional health of the ecosystem and prevailing drivers of degradation and loss.
Guidance: To develop a Nature-based Solution, one must have a well-founded understanding of the current state of the ecosystem concerned. The well-informed assessment needs to be broad enough to characterize ecological

conditions, drivers of degradation and loss, and options for net functional health improvements informed by local, Indigenous, community knowledge and scientific understanding.

1.2: Measurable biodiversity outcomes that support improved ecosystem health and function are identified, benchmarked, and periodically assessed.
Guidance: In order to inform the design, monitoring and assessment of an NbS, targets for enhancing key biodiversity values should be established. For each NbS, the type of target may differ; for example, the target could be the percentage of ecosystem area restored or the return of a keystone species.

1.3: Monitoring includes periodic assessments of unintended adverse and beneficial consequences as nature responds and adapts from the NbS.
Guidance: Ecosystems are complex, with interdependent components and processes. There will always be a level of uncertainty in how they respond to specific interventions or external change. Nature-based Solutions should be designed to recognize this uncertainty, minimizing potential harm while remaining open to unexpected ecological benefits. Monitoring should support adaptive learning and may include community and place-based observation to help ensure the long-term integrity of the solution.

1.4: Opportunities to enhance ecosystem integrity and connectivity are identified and incorporated into the NbS strategy
Guidance: Ecosystems are largely distributed systems and NbS can create opportunities to enhance biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management efforts in ways that other types of centralized engineering interventions, on their own, cannot achieve. Wherever possible, NbS should be designed to restore lost ecosystems, reintroduce beneficial ecological functions, and strengthen connectivity with nearby natural areas and existing conservation or land management efforts.

BRP Criterion 2: Design of NbS is informed by scale
IUCN Criteria 2

Criteria 2 Guidance : The purpose of this criterion is to encourage Nature-Based Solution designs that recognize the complexity within and across living ecosystems. Scale, in this context, applies not only to biophysical or geographic perspectives but also to time scales, socio-political frameworks, and cultural perspectives that influence the effectiveness and longevity of NbS. NbS design should be informed by the geographic, hydrological, and biological conditions of the site, as well as a long-term vision of its full potential. This includes understanding how the NbS can function alongside other NbS and leveraging insights from interested parties regarding the interactions between different elements of a landscape or seascape. When designing an NbS, it should be considered within the site itself, in relation to other parts of the landscape, and in the context of the broader environment. The goal of NbS design is to maintain the health and biodiversity of living ecosystems while enhancing their productive capacity to address communal and societal challenges, delivering benefits essential for human well-being.

2.1: Design of Nature-Based Solutions recognizes and responds to ecological, hydrological, and social interactions across both spatial and functional scales.
Guidance: Nature-based Solutions should be informed by ecological, hydrological, and social interactions that occur across watershed boundaries and at multiple spatial and governance scales. Effective design considers how water, people, and ecosystems are connected across the upstream and downstream areas, at the watershed, subwatershed, and site level, to support long-term resilience and coordination beyond the immediate site.

2.2: The design of the NbS recognizes and responds to interaction between the ecosystem, society and economy.
Guidance: The success of an NbS will be determined not only by the quality of the technical intervention but, critically, how well the interactions between people, the economy, and the ecosystem are understood and responded to. For NbS to be durable and sustainable, the design of NbS requires a “systems” framing that acknowledges and is informed by the interaction between ecology, equity, and economy and builds them into the decision making.

2.3: The design of the NbS considers potential positive and negative impacts on and beyond the intervention site.
Guidance: NbS has the potential to either positively or negatively impact ecosystems outside the immediate intervention area. For the solution to be sustainable, such types of interactions both within and around the intervention area need to be understood and accounted for in the decision making process. Appropriate approaches to anticipate and respond to both positive and negative ecological and social outcomes should be incorporated into NbS design.

BRP Criteria 3: NbS effectively respond to societal and communal challenges
IUCN Criteria 1

Criteria 3 Guidance: The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that the Nature-Based Solution is designed to adaptively and effectively respond to societal and communal challenges identified as priorities by those directly affected. All interested parties, especially Tribes, disadvantaged communities, and other communities impacted by the NbS, must be included in the decision-making process for identifying priority challenges.

3.1: The most pressing societal challenges for affected communities, interested parties and beneficiaries are prioritized
Guidance: NbS interventions must address challenges that have significant and demonstrable impacts on society. Identification of the most pressing challenges is best informed by a transparent and inclusive consultation process.

3.2: Societal and communal challenges are understood, documented, and addressed. Guidance: Establishing a clear understanding and rationale of the societal and communal challenges to be addressed, and ensuring these are documented is important for future accountability and optimizing those strategies to contribute to human well-being outcomes.

3.3: Societal and communal well-being outcomes arising from the NbS are identified, benchmarked and periodically assessed
Guidance: NbS must deliver substantive benefits to communal (ie. both environmental and human) and societal wellbeing. Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) targets should be used as appropriate, as they are important for accountability and informing adaptive management.

Criteria 4: NbS are a communal asset cared for through adaptive management and stewardship.
IUCN Criteria 7

Criteria 4 Guidance : This Criterion requires that NbS implementation plans include provisions to enable/encourage/facilitate adaptive management to effectively harness ecosystem resilience.
The foundation of adaptive management is the evidence-base provided by regular monitoring and evaluation, drawing on scientific, indigenous, traditional, community and local knowledge. By proactively adopting an adaptive management approach, the NbS can continue to be relevant through the lifecycle of the intervention and the risk of redundancy and stranded investments minimised.

4.1: Appropriate approaches for long-term stewardship and adaptive management are identified and integrated into the NbS design and implementation.
Guidance: NbS requires adaptive management and stewardship to ensure resilience and long-term functionality. These strategies should be co-developed with local communities or stewards and should reflect a commitment to iterative learning, resource sharing, and relational care over time, including consideration of operations and maintenance and evolving community needs.

4.2: A monitoring and evaluation plan is developed and implemented throughout the intervention cycle to support adaptive management.
Guidance: A monitoring and evaluation plan is a key requirement to understand whether NbS Strategies effectively deliver intended outcomes and are essential to informing how care practices can evolve.Insights generated should inform adaptive decision-making and support those responsible for long-term stewardship.

4.3: The NbS intervention is supported by a plan for operations and maintenance, and outlines a pathway for communal and long-term stewardship.
Guidance: Effective long-term care of NbS should build on adaptive management and be further supported by a plan for Operations and Management and evolving stewardship. Plans for operations and maintenance and stewardship should be designed to work across agencies and departments where appropriate.

Project Guidance: ***Adapted from IUCN Criteria for Application Across All Projects (including NbS Projects)***

Economic viability of a project is best understood not only as financial feasibility but also as the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of a project over time.
IUCN Criteria 4

Economic viability is an essential consideration for all projects including Nature-based Solutions projects, which often involve long-term, multi-benefit investments in public goods. Rather than requiring NbS to justify their value against conventional engineering approaches, the focus should be on whether the intervention is designed and resourced in a way that ensures long-term functionality, financial sustainability, and equitable distribution of costs and benefits. Projects should document and assess the economic dimensions of their design and implementation, including the identification of direct and indirect benefits, potential public health and wellbeing outcomes, and the long-term return on investment. Cost-effectiveness analyses should identify trade-offs between upfront and ongoing costs and the anticipated ecological and social gains over time.

Economic sustainability also depends on securing diverse, resilient sources of funding. A viable approach should include leveraged funding, particularly when benefits cross sectors or stakeholder groups. This includes attention to who pays and who benefits, ensuring equity is a core part of project planning and evaluation.

Where appropriate, quantitative indicators such as avoided infrastructure costs, improved public health metrics, or long-term maintenance costs should be used to assess outcomes and to capture broader social-ecological value that may be less easily monetized. Metrics should reflect the full suite of Project and NbS benefits rather than relying solely on conventional cost-benefit tools.

Projects are better when balancing trade-offs and ensuring equitable outcomes.

IUCN Criteria 6

Nature-based Solutions deliver a wide range of social, ecological, and economic benefits—but they may also involve trade-offs, particularly when land use changes, access shifts, or certain benefits accrue more to some groups than others. Equitable project design requires that these trade-offs are proactively assessed, transparently communicated, and managed in a way that prioritizes the rights, wellbeing, and participation of the most affected communities, especially Indigenous peoples, frontline communities, and other interested parties in Los Angeles County.

Projects should anticipate potential trade-offs early, integrate safeguards and due diligence measures, and ensure that benefits are distributed equitably. In line with previous guidance on NbS, projects should:

Conduct equity-centered trade-off or risk assessments that go beyond cost-benefit ratios to consider who benefits, who bears costs, and how impacts are distributed.

Identify and document associated costs and benefits in addition to primary project goals, and track how these may shift over time.

Apply adaptive management to ensure trade-offs remain equitable and do not reinforce existing disparities.

In cases involving Indigenous communities, it is critical that projects conduct meaningful engagement with Tribes and Indigenous groups and respect customary rights and responsibilities related to land and resources.

Program Guidance: ***To effectively incentivize NbS, programs should meet or exceed this standard***

Inclusive, Transparent, and Empowering Governance
IUCN Criteria 5

Programs should be grounded in governance structures that are inclusive, transparent, and accountable, especially to the communities and partners most directly impacted. This means going beyond procedural requirements to foster genuine power-sharing, trust, and long-term engagement.
Program guidance should ensure that accessible and clearly defined feedback and grievance mechanisms are in place from the outset, co-developed with community input to promote legitimacy and responsiveness.
Participation must be equitable and informed, with intentional outreach to historically excluded groups. For Indigenous communities, this includes honoring the right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and recognizing Tribal sovereignty and cultural knowledge systems.
Programs should require that community and partner involvement is integrated throughout planning and implementation, not just through stakeholder identification, but through structures that support meaningful influence over decisions. Documentation of governance processes, including who is involved, how input is incorporated, and how decisions are made should be a standard component of program accountability, particularly in contexts shaped by historic inequities.
For initiatives spanning jurisdictions, governance frameworks should support interagency coordination and shared decision-making, especially in water and land-based programs. Public access to meetings, clear and accessible translation services, comment opportunities, and regular updates must also be embedded as standard program practices to ensure transparency and build community trust.

Aligning Programs Across Jurisdictions and Agencies
IUCN Criteria 8

Programs should be structured to advance long-term sustainability and alignment with local and regional planning priorities. This includes supporting policies and institutional practices that enable the continued implementation of equitable, ecosystem-based approaches across agencies and jurisdictions.

Program guidance should promote the integration of project outcomes into relevant County frameworks (e.g., the OurCounty Plan, County Water Plan) and emphasize respect for local Tribal guidance. Programs should also establish mechanisms for capturing and sharing lessons learned across funded projects to support ongoing coordination, adaptation, and capacity-building at the regional scale.

By embedding these practices, programs can play a key role in reinforcing durable policy change, facilitating inter-agency collaboration and providing institutional support for Nature-based Solutions.

Appendix D: Project Test Template

This template can be used as a sample test for running projects through both the current SCWP scoring framework and the BRP Criteria. The BRP scoring approach applied here is adapted from the IUCN model and is not yet finalized. As the BRP continues broader discussions around how scoring should be structured, this exercise is intended to support exploration of how the BRP Criteria might be operationalized within a scoring context.

Step 1: Calculate SCWP Score

Current SCWP Scoring for Nature-based Solutions

Maximum Points: 15

For projects that have been scored through SCWP, please share how many points you received, or proceed through the self assessment process. Refer to the NbS Programming Guidelines for more guidance on scoring if needed.

Criteria	Please Describe how the Project Met the Criteria	Project Points Awarded	Maximum Points
Implements natural processes or mimics nature processes to slow, detain, capture, and absorb/infiltrate water in a manner that projects enhances and or restores habitat, green space and/or unusable open space (yes/no).	-	X	5
Utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation (yes/no).	-	X	5
Removes Impermeable Area for a	-	X	5

Step 2: Calculate BRP Score

Project (1 point for 20% paved area removed)			
	Total Points	X	15

BRP NbS Scoring

For the purpose of this exercise, we are adopting the scoring model used by IUCN as part of its self-assessment framework. While this approach may evolve in the long term for scoring projects under the SCWP, it will serve as the basis for this exercise to validate the effectiveness of the BRP Criteria and Indicators.

Instructions (IUCN Guidance for using the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions, 2020):

For each Indicator, a score out of four is recorded, depending on whether the intervention addresses the Indicator to a strong, adequate, partial or insufficient extent. The result is used to calculate the level of adherence to each individual Criterion, also giving a strong, adequate, partial and insufficient result for scores greater than 75, between 50 and 75, between 25 and 50 and lower than 25 per cent respectively.

Key (%)		Output
≥75	Strong	Intervention adheres to the IUCN Global Standard for NbS.
≥50 & <75	Adequate	
≥25 & <50	Partial	
<25	Insufficient	Intervention does not adhere to the IUCN Global Standard for NbS.

IUCN Self-Assessment Break Down

Key NbS Criteria:

BRP Criteria	Self-Assigned Value + Explanation (Insufficient: 25, Partial: 50, Adequate: 75, Strong: 100)
Criteria 1: NbS result in a benefit to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity	
1.1:NbS actions are informed by local, Indigenous, and community knowledge and directly respond to a well-informed assessment of the functional health of the ecosystem and prevailing drivers of degradation and loss. Guidance: To develop a Nature-based Solution, one must have a well-founded understanding of the current state of the ecosystem concerned. The baseline assessment needs to be broad enough to characterize ecological conditions, drivers of degradation and loss, and options for net functional health improvements informed by local, Indigenous, community knowledge and scientific understanding.	
1.2: Measurable biodiversity outcomes that support improved ecosystem health and function are identified, benchmarked, and periodically assessed. Guidance: In order to inform the design, monitoring and assessment of an NbS, targets for	

enhancing key biodiversity values should be established. For each NbS, the type of target may differ; for example, the target could be the percentage of ecosystem area restored or the return of a keystone species.	
1.3: Monitoring includes periodic assessments of unintended adverse and beneficial consequences as nature responds and adapts from the NbS. Guidance: Ecosystems are complex, with interdependent components and processes. There will always be a level of uncertainty in how they respond to specific interventions or external change. Nature-based Solutions should be designed to recognize this uncertainty, minimizing potential harm while remaining open to unexpected ecological benefits. Monitoring should support adaptive learning and may include community and place-based observation to help ensure the long-term integrity of the solution.	
1.4: Opportunities to enhance ecosystem integrity and connectivity are identified and incorporated into the NbS strategy Guidance: Ecosystems are largely distributed systems and NbS can create opportunities to enhance biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management efforts in ways that other types of centralized engineering interventions, on their own, cannot achieve. Wherever possible, NbS should be designed to restore lost ecosystems,	

reintroduce beneficial ecological functions, and strengthen connectivity with nearby natural areas and existing conservation or land management efforts.	
BRP Criteria 1 Average Value:	
Criterion 2: Design of NbS is informed by scale	
2.1: Design of Nature-Based Solutions recognizes and responds to ecological, hydrological, and social interactions across both spatial and functional scales. Guidance: Nature-based Solutions should be informed by ecological, hydrological, and social interactions that occur across watershed boundaries and at multiple spatial and governance scales. Effective design considers how water, people, and ecosystems are connected across the upstream and downstream areas, at the watershed, subwatershed, and site level, to support long-term resilience and coordination beyond the immediate site.	
2.2: The design of the NbS recognizes and responds to interaction between the ecosystem, society and economy. Guidance: The success of an NbS will be determined not only by the quality of the technical intervention but, critically, how well the interactions between people, the economy, and	

the ecosystem are understood and responded to. For NbS to be durable and sustainable, the design of NbS requires a “systems” framing that acknowledges and is informed by the interaction between ecology, equity, and economy and builds them into the decision making.	
2.3: The design of the NbS considers potential positive and negative impacts on and beyond the intervention site. Guidance: NbS has the potential to either positively or negatively impact ecosystems outside the immediate intervention area. For the solution to be sustainable, such types of interactions both within and around the intervention area need to be understood and accounted for in the decision making process. Appropriate approaches to anticipate and respond to both positive and negative ecological and social outcomes should be incorporated into NbS design.	
BRP Criteria 2 Average Value:	
Criteria 3: NbS effectively respond to societal and communal challenges	
3.1: The most pressing societal challenges for affected communities, interested parties and beneficiaries are prioritized Guidance: NbS interventions must address challenges that have significant and	

demonstrable impacts on society. Identification of the most pressing challenges is best informed by a transparent and inclusive consultation process.	
3.2: Societal and communal challenges are understood, documented, and addressed. Guidance: Establishing a clear understanding and rationale of the societal and communal challenges to be addressed, and ensuring these are documented is important for future accountability and optimizing those strategies to contribute to human well-being outcomes.	
3.3: Societal and communal well-being outcomes arising from the NbS are identified, benchmarked and periodically assessed Guidance: NbS must deliver substantive benefits to communal (ie. both environmental and human) and societal wellbeing. Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) targets should be used as appropriate, as they are important for accountability and informing adaptive management.	
BRP Criteria 3 Average Value:	
BRP Criteria 4: NbS are a communal asset cared for through adaptive management and stewardship.	

4.1: Appropriate approaches for long-term stewardship and adaptive management are identified and integrated into the NbS design and implementation. Guidance: NbS requires adaptive management and stewardship to ensure resilience and long-term functionality. These strategies should be co-developed with local communities or stewards and should reflect a commitment to iterative learning, resource sharing, and relational care over time, including consideration of operations and maintenance and evolving community needs.	
4.2: A monitoring and evaluation plan is developed and implemented throughout the intervention cycle to support adaptive management. Guidance: A monitoring and evaluation plan is a key requirement to understand whether NbS Strategies effectively deliver intended outcomes and are essential to informing how care practices can evolve.Insights generated should inform adaptive decision-making and support those responsible for long-term stewardship.	

4.3: The NbS intervention is supported by a plan for operations and maintenance, and outlines a pathway for communal and long-term stewardship. Guidance: Effective long-term care of NbS should build on adaptive management and be further supported by a plan for Operations and Management and evolving stewardship. Plans for operations and maintenance and stewardship should be designed to work across agencies and departments where appropriate.	
BRP Criteria 4 Average Value:	
Total Points:	**X/400**
Key NbS Criteria Score = (Total Criterion Score/400) × 15	

Understanding the SCWP Score vs. BRP Score

While this exercise translates the BRP criteria into a 15-point scale to resemble the existing SCWP NbS scoring, it's important to note that the two scores are not directly comparable. This assessment looks at the BRP criteria **at face value**, *without* metrics or recommendations, and serves as a starting point for thinking about how those pieces might eventually align.

The BRP criteria are intentionally more selective and holistic, aiming to evaluate Nature-Based Solutions across multiple dimensions. The BRP is also exploring changes to how NbS is scored and weighted within the SCWP framework. This exercise is a tool to begin evaluating the effectiveness of those criteria and considering future refinements to SCWP scoring.

The IUCN scoring model included here is simply a reference that is useful for structure and comparison, but not definitive. It's meant to help test and refine the BRP criteria.

Reflection Questions:

- What could be streamlined in the NbS BRP Self-Scoring process?
- Did your project score higher or lower under the BRP criteria compared to the SCWP NbS score?
- Were there criteria where your project stood out or struggled?
- Did the exercise surface any gaps or strengths in the BRP criteria?
- What criteria might deserve more weight?
- Any thoughts on how metrics and recommendations could complement the Standard?