

E2. Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity

a. Public sector expenditure on UK biodiversity

b. Non-governmental organisation expenditure on UK biodiversity

c. UK public sector expenditure on international biodiversity

Type: Response Indicator

Summary

In 2016/17, £445 million of UK public sector funding was spent on biodiversity in the UK; a real-term decrease of 9% since 2015/16 and of 17% over the last 5 years.

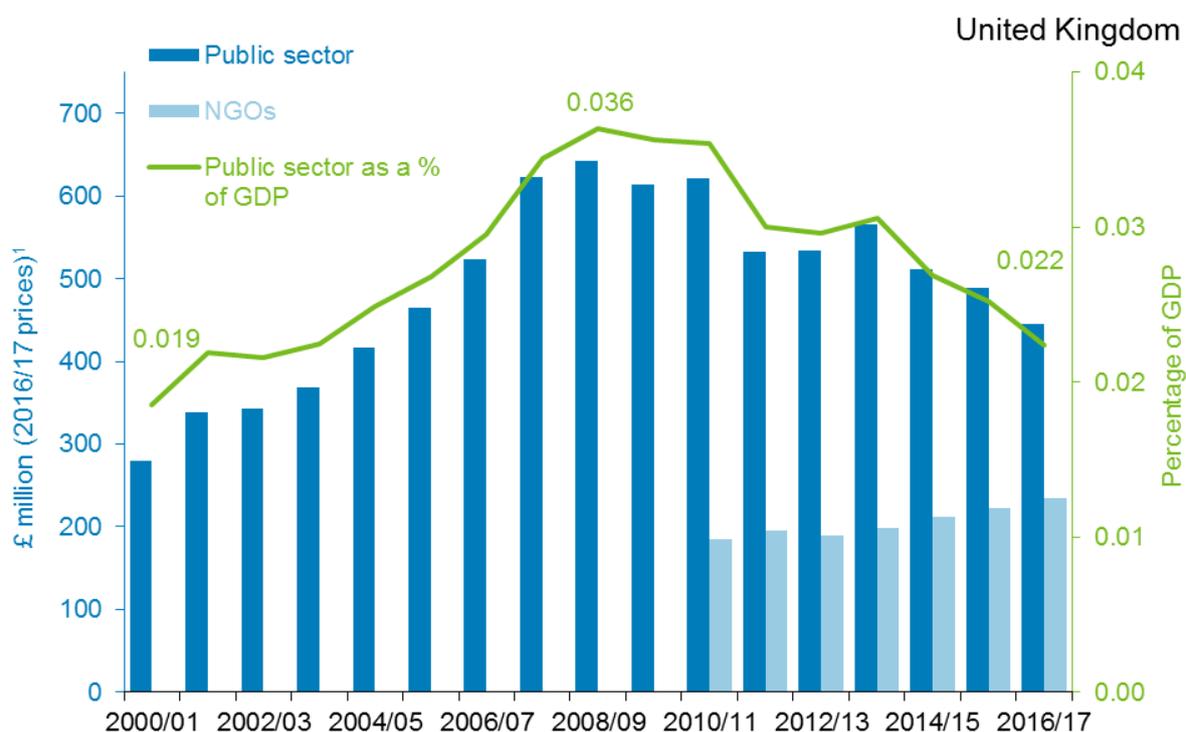
Since 2000/01, public sector funding for UK biodiversity relative to gross domestic product (GDP) has fluctuated between 0.02% and 0.04%.

Spending on biodiversity in the UK by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with a focus on biodiversity and/or nature conservation was £234 million (net of government funding) in 2016/17; a real-term increase of 5% since 2015/16 and of 20% over the last 5 years.

Indicator Description

The first part of this indicator provides real-term, public sector spending on biodiversity alongside spending by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with a focus on biodiversity and/or nature conservation. Spending is one way of assessing the priority that is given to biodiversity within the UK public sector. The second part of this indicator provides real-term UK public sector spending on global biodiversity. Funding for international biodiversity is essential for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in developing countries, along with other international biodiversity policy commitments.

Figure E2i. Expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, 2000/01 to 2016/17.



E2. Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity

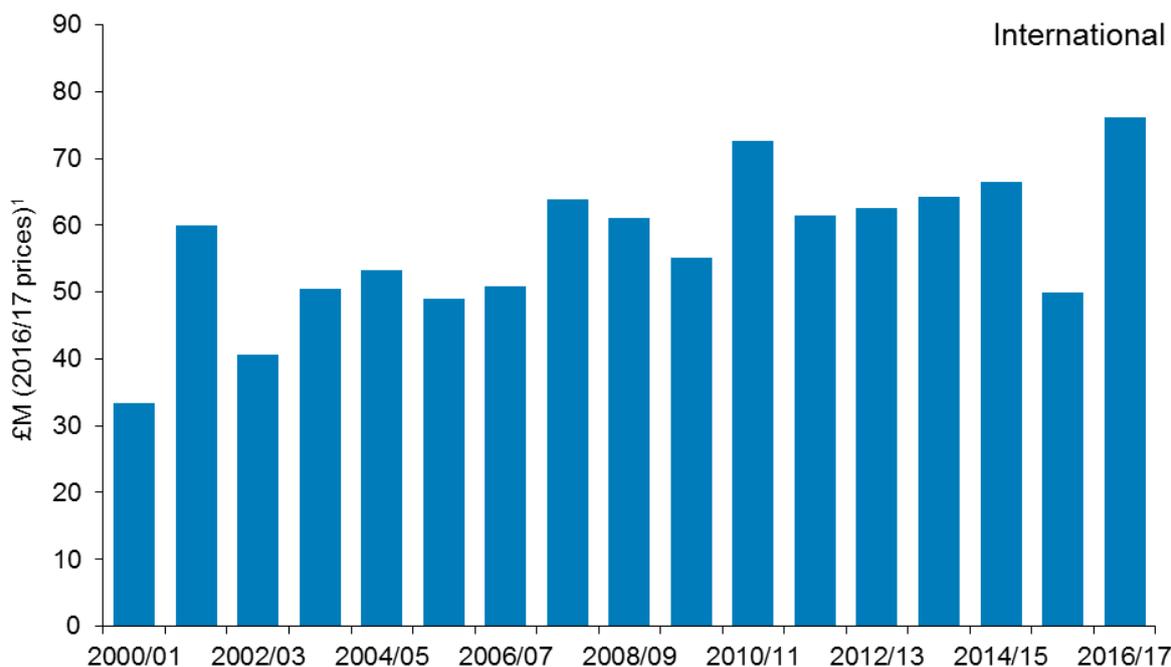
Notes:

1. Deflated using UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator.
2. Wherever possible, NGO spend is net of government funding.
3. There may be some minor inconsistencies in the reporting of expenditure on UK biodiversity from one year to the next.
4. Revisions to past data series as a result of improved estimation methodology or access to additional data mean the chart (and figures) are not directly comparable to those presented in previous publications (see background section for further details).

Source: Defra, HM Treasury.

In 2016/17, UK public sector funding for international biodiversity totalled £76 million; a real-term increase of 24% over the last 5 years. Whilst this indicator shows that international expenditure has also increased by 128% since the time series began in 2000/01 and by 24% in the latest year, both these changes have been artificially inflated by the irregular nature of contributions to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and should, therefore be treated with caution. The long-term and short-term assessments for this indicator, however, use a 3-year average as their baseline, thereby reducing the effect of any large irregular payments such as those to the GEF.

Figure E2ii. UK public sector expenditure on international biodiversity, 2000/01 to 2016/17.



Notes:

1. Deflated using UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator.
2. There may be some minor inconsistencies in the reporting of expenditure on international biodiversity from one year to the next.
3. Most of the large fluctuations between years are due to the irregular nature of contributions to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), for example, there were large payments in 2001/02 and 2007/08, 2 payments in 2010/11 and no payments in 2015/16.
4. Revisions to past data series as a result of improved estimation methodology or access to additional data (in particular, the timing and magnitude of some large GEF payments) mean the chart (and figures) are not directly comparable to those presented in previous publications.

Source: Defra, HM Treasury.

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Assessment of change in public expenditure on biodiversity			
	Long term	Short term	Latest year
Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK	 2000/01–2016/17	 2011/12–2016/17	Decreased (2015/16– 2016/17)
Non-governmental organisation spending (net of government funding) on biodiversity in the UK		 2011/12–2016/17	Increased (2015/16– 2016/17)
UK public sector expenditure on international biodiversity	 2000/01–2016/17	 2011/12–2016/17	Increased (2015/16– 2016/17)

Note: The latest-year assessment of the UK public sector expenditure on international biodiversity measure is influenced greatly by there being no payments to the GEF in 2015/16.

Public sector spending on UK biodiversity increased from £280 million in 2000/01 to a peak of £643 million in 2008/09 (in 2016/17 prices). Although the figure has since fallen to £445 million in 2016/17, it is still 53% higher than the level of spend in 2000/01. The indicator is assessed as increasing over the long term and decreasing over the short term.

Payments made to farmers and land managers under agri-environment schemes (Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship) fell in 2016/17. This was because (a) no new Environmental Stewardship agreements could be offered in 2015 following the scheme's closure in 2014 and (b) take-up of the new 'Countryside Stewardship' schemes was lower than expected during 2016. At the same time, a large number of Entry-Level Stewardship agreements came to an end in 2016 and with no replacement scheme available during that year, the planned budget was inevitably reduced. These changes account for the majority of the 9% fall in the indicator value between 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Public sector funding for UK biodiversity relative to GDP has followed a very similar pattern, again peaking in 2008/09 when approximately £3.60 was spent on biodiversity for every £10,000 of GDP (2016/17 prices). This figure has now fallen to approximately £2.20 per £10,000 of GDP in the latest year of reporting (2016/17).

Spending on UK biodiversity by NGOs was £234 million in 2016/17, a real-term increase of £49 million (26%) since the time series began in 2010/11, of £39 million (20%) in the last 5 years and of £11 million (5%) between 2015/16 and 2016/17. The data series for this measure is not yet long enough to make a long-term assessment, however the short-term trend for NGO spend on biodiversity in the UK is assessed as increasing.

UK public sector funding for international biodiversity has increased from £33 million in 2000/01 to £76 million in 2016/17; a real-term increase of 128%. Funding for international biodiversity has also increased by £15 million (24%) in the last 5 years and the indicator is assessed as improving over both the long and short term. The most prominent rise was an 80% increase in 2001/02. This was due to a large contribution to the GEF, a multilateral trust fund that supports a wide range of projects in developing countries. These projects cover a diverse range of themes including: biodiversity, climate change, chemicals and waste, land, international waters and the sustainable management of forests. The increase in 2007/08 was due to there being no GEF payment in 2006/07 followed by a large payment in 2007/08 and the increase in 2010/11 resulted from there being 2 GEF contributions in the same financial year. There was no GEF contribution in 2015/16 which accounts for the drop in that year, but a further contribution was made in 2016/17 in line with those from 2011/12 to 2014/15; contributions to the current GEF replenishment will continue until 2018/19.

Relevance

Spending is just one way of assessing the priority that is given to biodiversity within government. Funding for conservation work is critical to delivery of country biodiversity and environment strategies. Adequate access to resources is essential for the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in developing countries, along with other international biodiversity policy commitments, as part of more general development aid and poverty alleviation.

The increases in public sector expenditure in the UK should be considered in the context of the funding needed, in tandem with appropriate policy and legislative measures, to a level sufficient to meet UK and international biodiversity targets.

Background

The public sector expenditure indicator is based on a combination of expert opinion together with published and unpublished data from organisations across the UK. The data are collated by Defra statisticians to provide estimates of spending on biodiversity in the UK and abroad between 2000/01 and 2016/17.

In 2014, Defra developed a measure of spend on UK biodiversity by NGOs with a focus on biodiversity and/or nature conservation. Although the measure does not include all the NGOs working in this field, it does compile data on biodiversity spending from 41 different organisations. These include 13 of the 47 Wildlife Trusts with the largest annual turnover together with other well-known organisations such as RSPB, the Woodland Trust and WWF-UK. The data are used to provide estimates of spending on biodiversity in the UK between 2010/11 and 2016/17; wherever possible these figures are net of any government-funded spend. NGO support for and action on biodiversity, some of which is funded by businesses and private individuals, is an important contribution to achieving biodiversity targets. Therefore, capturing the contribution of NGOs is a key element of tracking the UK's conservation efforts and including this source of expenditure gives a more complete picture of biodiversity expenditure in the UK. It is not currently possible to disaggregate the measure to country level or to report NGO spending on international biodiversity. However, work was undertaken in 2018 to identify and exclude expenditure on international projects by the larger contributors to this indicator (e.g. RSPB and WWF-UK). This resulted in reductions in the real term annual expenditure figures previously reported for the NGO measure of between £37 million and £44 million. It may, therefore, be possible to extend this indicator to include contributions to overseas work in the future.

Both indicators include direct expenditure on nature reserves and conservation measures together with spending on relevant research and development; they generally exclude expenditure on administration and training. Where possible, indirect expenditure (e.g. transfers to other organisations) has also been excluded from the indicator in order to avoid any double counting of financial flows. Judgment has been employed to finalise some components of the totals and the figures should be taken as approximate. Restructuring of government departments, changes to funding streams and/or projects and the outsourcing of work relating to biodiversity (e.g. research and development) mean that there may be some minor inconsistencies in the reporting of biodiversity expenditure from one year to the next. The limited coverage of the NGO indicator together with the complexities involved in both defining and identifying expenditure on biodiversity also mean that the public sector and NGO figures are likely to be an underestimation; they do however provide a clear trend of biodiversity expenditure since the beginning of 2000/01 (UK public sector) and 2010/11 (NGOs). Ongoing work to improve the coverage of both indicators should result in improvements to the overall accuracy of the 2019 publication.

A full list of public sector and non-governmental organisations included in this indicator together with further details of the methodology used to produce the totals are available in the [technical background document](#).

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Assessment of the public sector spending measures (UK and international) and the NGO spending measure is based on whether the change over the period is greater than or less than a 3% [rule of thumb](#). A 3-year average is used to calculate the base year for both the long-term and short-term assessments; this reduces the likelihood of any unusual year(s) unduly influencing the assessment.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator is a measure of general inflation in the domestic economy – it captures the price changes over a period of time. The deflator is expressed in terms of an index number. It is used here to convert historic prices into constant, 2016/17 prices, thereby allowing meaningful comparisons to be made between biodiversity expenditure in different years. It does, however mean that data presented here are not directly comparable to those presented in previous publications.

Goals and targets

Aichi Targets for which this is a primary indicator

Strategic Goal E. Enhance implementation through planning, knowledge management and capacity building.



Target 20: By 2020, at the latest, the mobilisation of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 from all sources and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilisation should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resources needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

Aichi Target for which this is a relevant indicator

Strategic Goal A. Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society.



Target 2: By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.



Target 3: By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio-economic conditions.

Full details of this indicator, including a datasheet and technical documentation is available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4251>

Last updated: July 2018

Latest data available: Financial year 2016/17