

Building a Sustainable Future for the UK's Biodiversity Data Heritage

An NBN Trust organisational sustainability project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund

The NBN Trust has secured funding for a 24-month organisational sustainability project to strengthen data and digital leadership, protect the public value of the NBN Atlas, develop and test value-added services, and build a clearer route to long-term financial sustainability. The Head of Data and Digital will lead the project and the Trust's wider data and digital function.

Why this project, why now

The NBN Atlas is the UK's largest infrastructure of publicly available biodiversity data and an important part of the nation's digital natural heritage. It supports conservation, research, policy, planning, and public understanding. The Trust's data and technical teams are heavily committed to existing platforms and funded delivery, leaving limited capacity for strategic stewardship, service design, and long-term planning. The project adds senior leadership and focused external expertise.

The delivery path

1 Understand and decide	2 Design and test	3 Support and sustain
Review current services, capacity, governance, and risks. Commission market testing, service design, legal and licensing advice, and an options appraisal. Use stakeholder evidence to set priorities and a practical sustainability route.	Develop and pilot value-added services, such as portals, analytics, interpretation, dashboards, reporting, training, or quality assurance. Test demand, costs, delivery capacity, and income potential before committing to scale.	Publish an NBN Atlas data-sharing toolkit and support package in English and Welsh. Build an impact framework, theory of change, and case studies. Develop funding-ready propositions and feed the learning into the Trust's strategy.

What the Head will own

- Lead the Trust's overall data and digital function through its team managers, supporting their development and ensuring clear priorities, effective delivery, and strong collaboration across the NBN Atlas, NBN Record Manager, and wider services.
- The Head will work closely with the Principal Software Engineer, who provides the Trust's senior software engineering leadership and technical expertise.
- Project manage and own delivery of the project, including: scope, budget, timetable, governance, reporting, risk, benefits tracking, and delivery.
- Commission and manage commercial, service design, legal, licensing, and evaluation expertise, then turn the evidence into decisions, roadmaps, and strategy.
- Engage data providers, users, partners, funders, and prospective commissioners, while sequencing work within a small team's capacity.
- Recommend what to progress, defer, or stop, and build the future income mix, impact evidence, team model, and service pipeline for Board approval.

How success will be judged in numbers

25m	2,000	10	2	2	1	1
additional wildlife records publicly available via the NBN Atlas	additional people supported to use the Atlas	new data partners supported to share records	service pilots tested and evaluated	funding-ready propositions developed	NBN Atlas biodiversity data-sharing toolkit and support package	organisational impact framework