

RDP - Biodiversity for Highways

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/ESS>

A connected country
A thriving environment



Our roads can be,
and will be,
a force for good



“

Our environmental performance is of national significance, and we are setting out ambitious but credible plans to achieve **net zero carbon**, be positive for **nature** and reduce our environmental impacts on **communities**

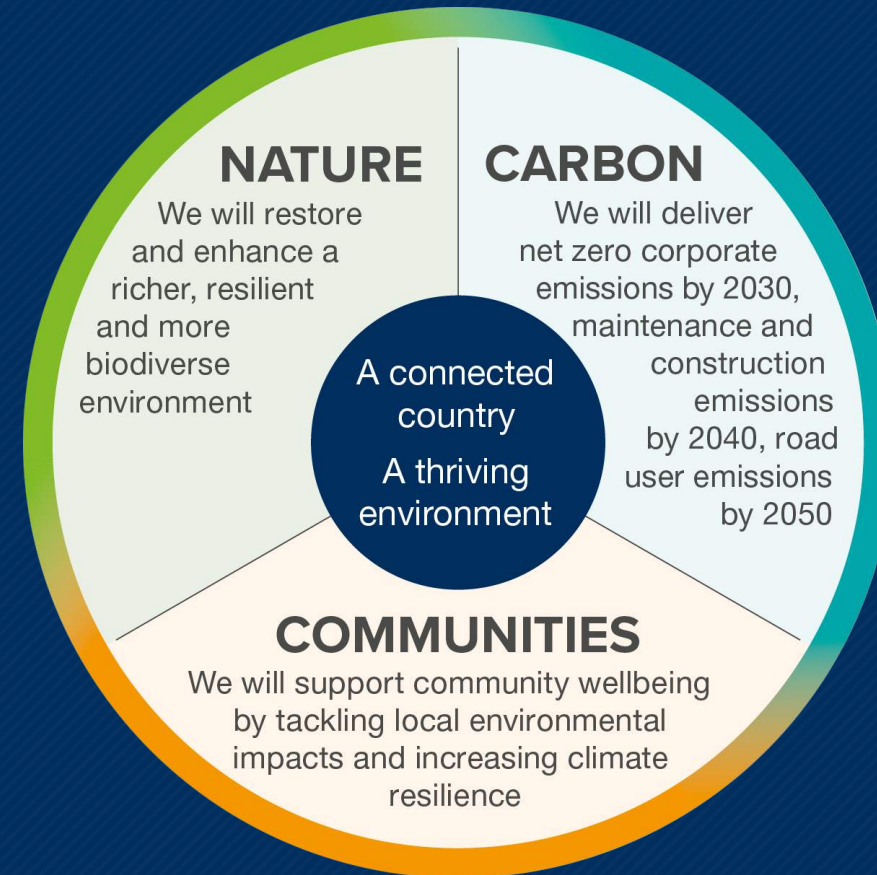
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**Stephen Elderkin, Director,
Environmental Sustainability**

Our strategic outcomes

To realise our vision, we need to deliver ambitious, positive change for nature, carbon and communities

We describe what we are working towards for each of these strategic outcomes

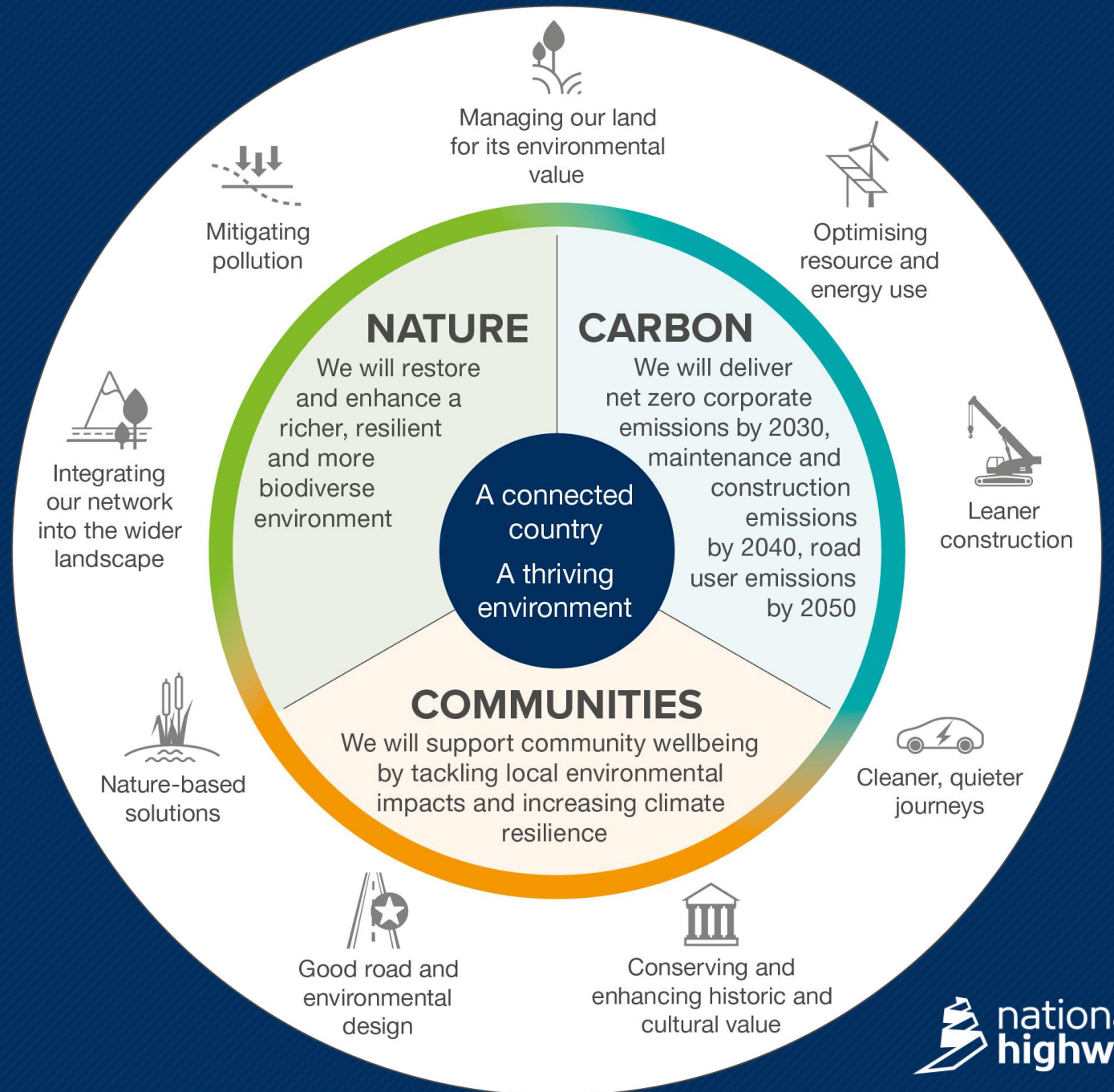


Our nine priority areas

We've identified nine key areas where we can focus our efforts to maximise benefits across the three strategic outcomes of nature, carbon and communities

Each priority area can holistically contribute to one or more of the strategic outcomes

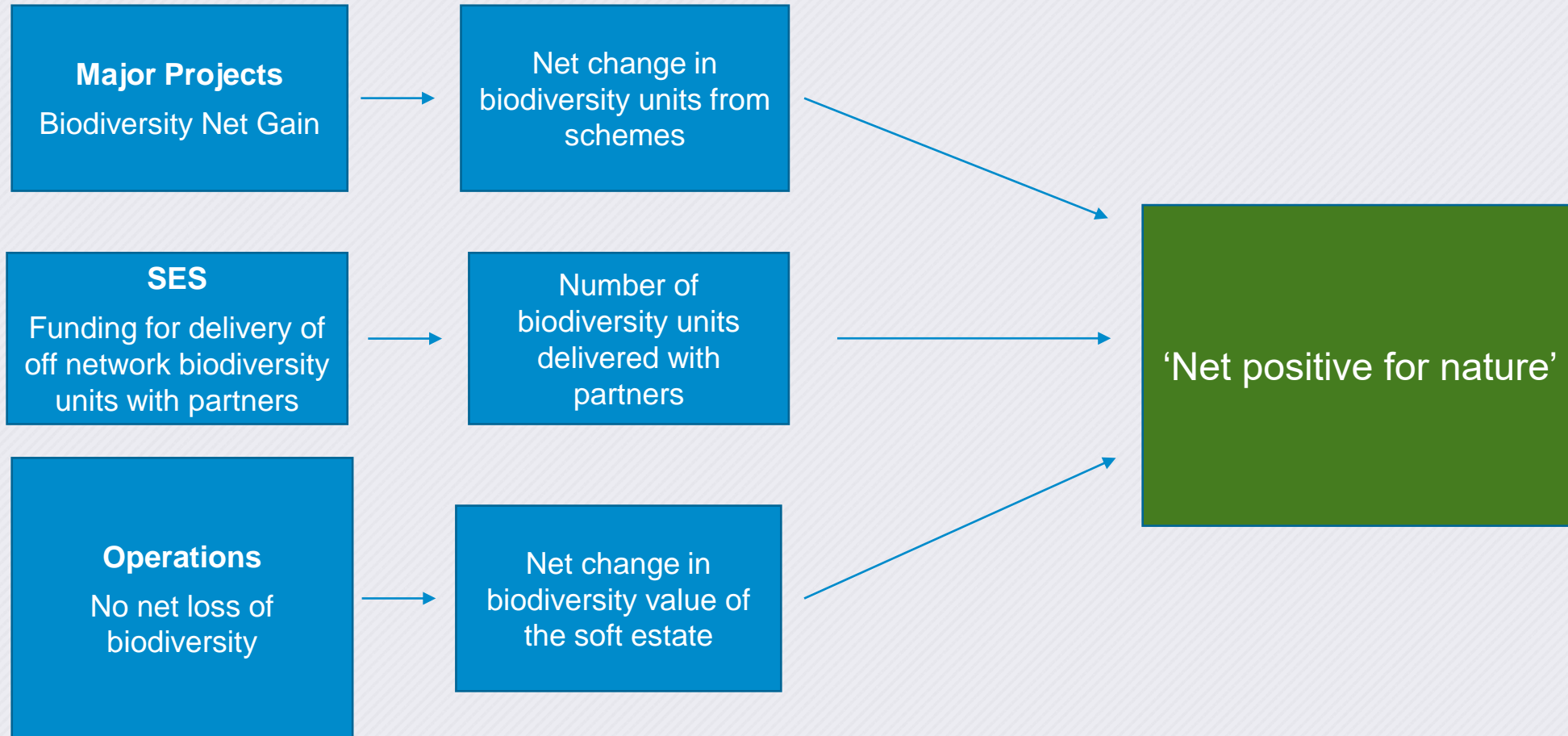
The priority areas set out the actions we are taking to deliver our strategy for environmental sustainability



net positive for nature

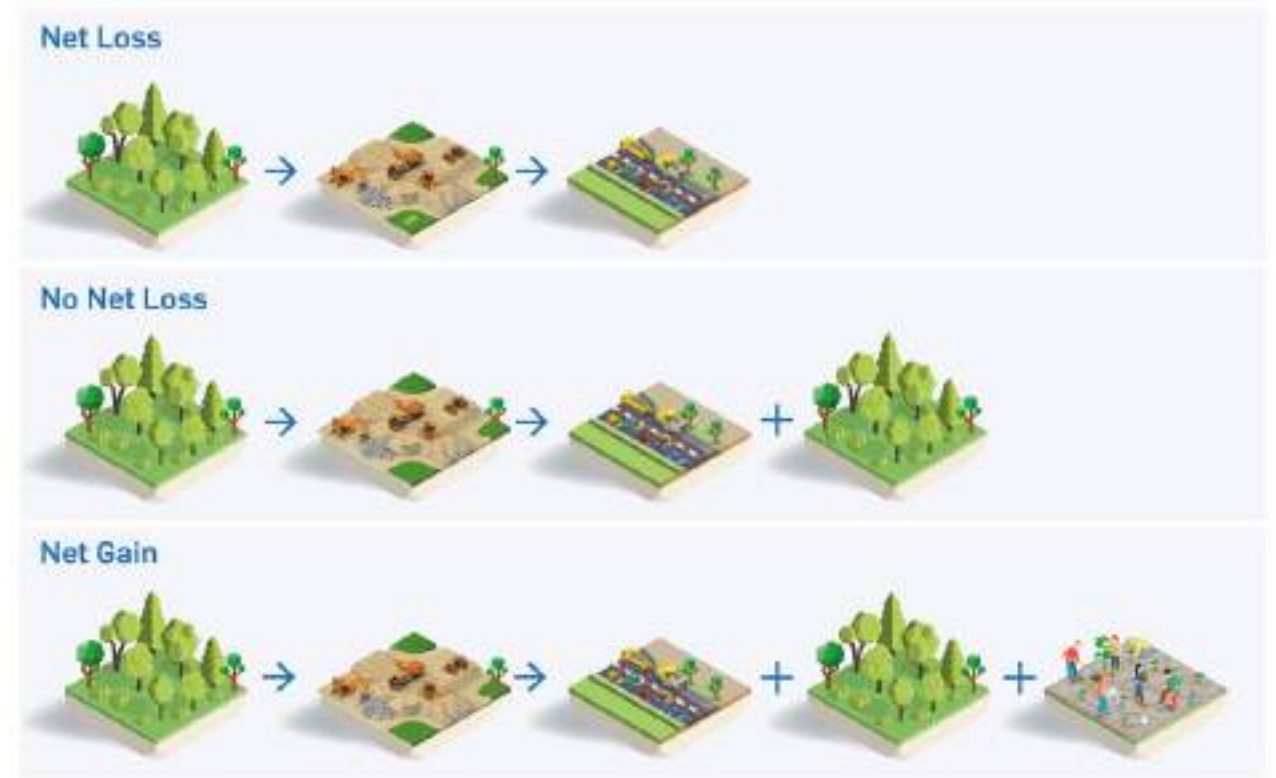


Net positive for nature

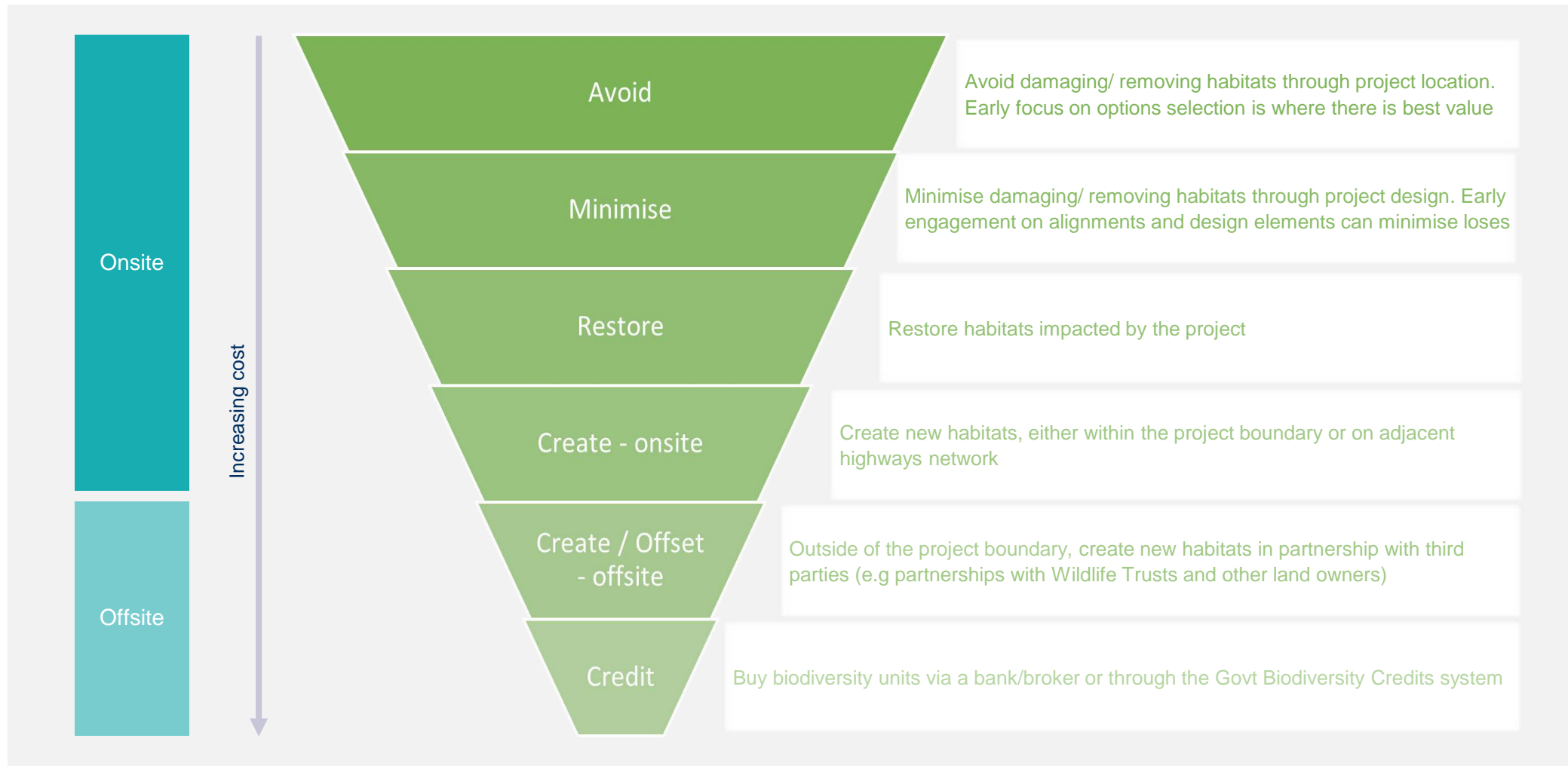


Biodiversity Net Gain and Biodiversity Metrics

- All RP3 projects will have a Biodiversity Net Gain target.
- Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before the works started.
- It goes beyond only mitigating losses.
- Biodiversity Net Gain is measured using a Biodiversity Metric.
- Biodiversity metrics use habitats, as a proxy to describe biodiversity. These habitats are converted into 'biodiversity units', depending on their size, condition, and location.
- These biodiversity units are the 'currency' of the Metric.



Biodiversity delivery hierarchy



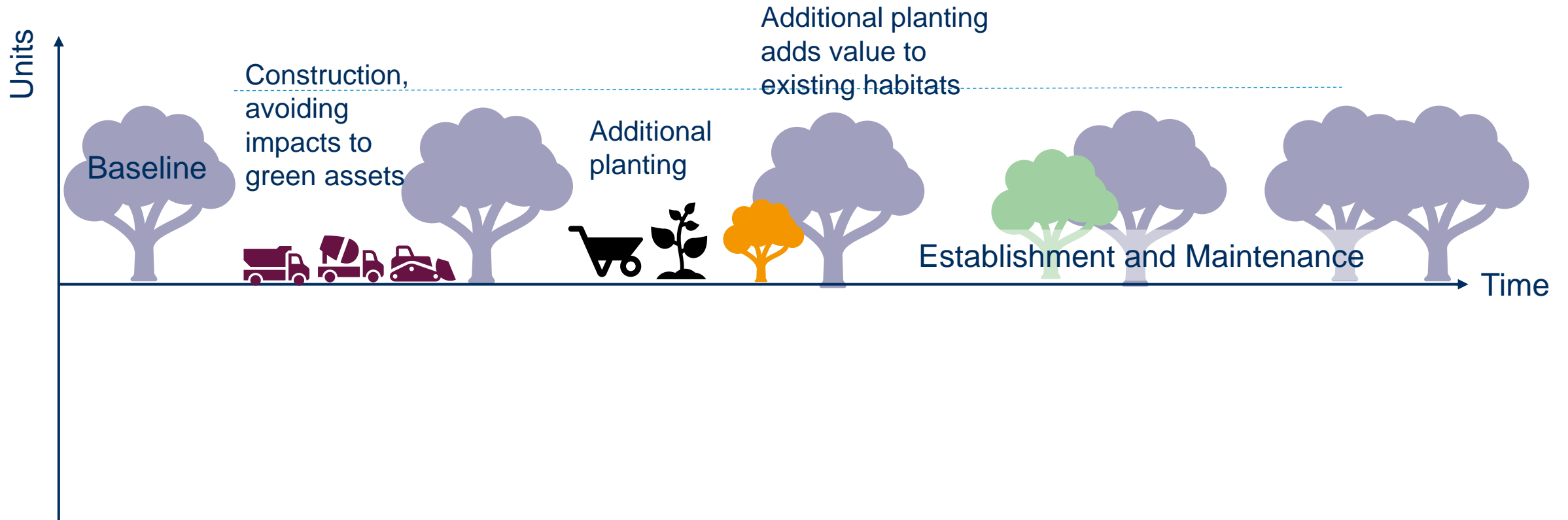
Note: purchasing *new* land to deliver biodiversity should be avoided where the above hierarchy can deliver scheme requirements

Avoid / minimise loss



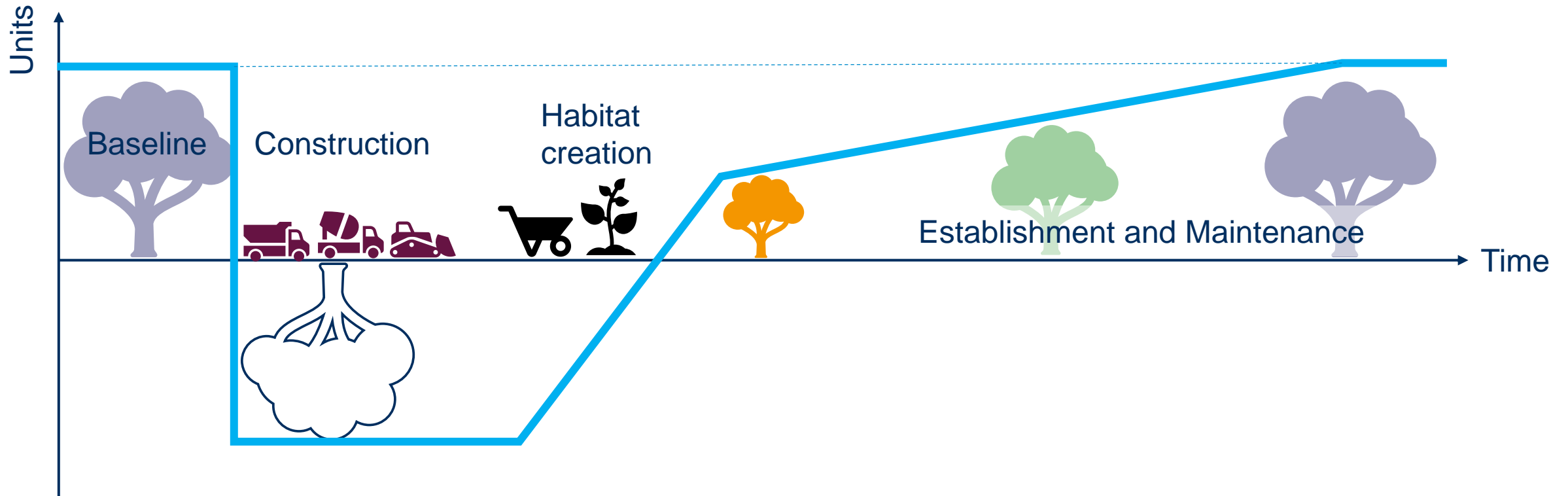
Habitat restoration

Restoring a habitat means retaining the baseline habitat and improving its condition or value. This means you keep all of your existing units and get more



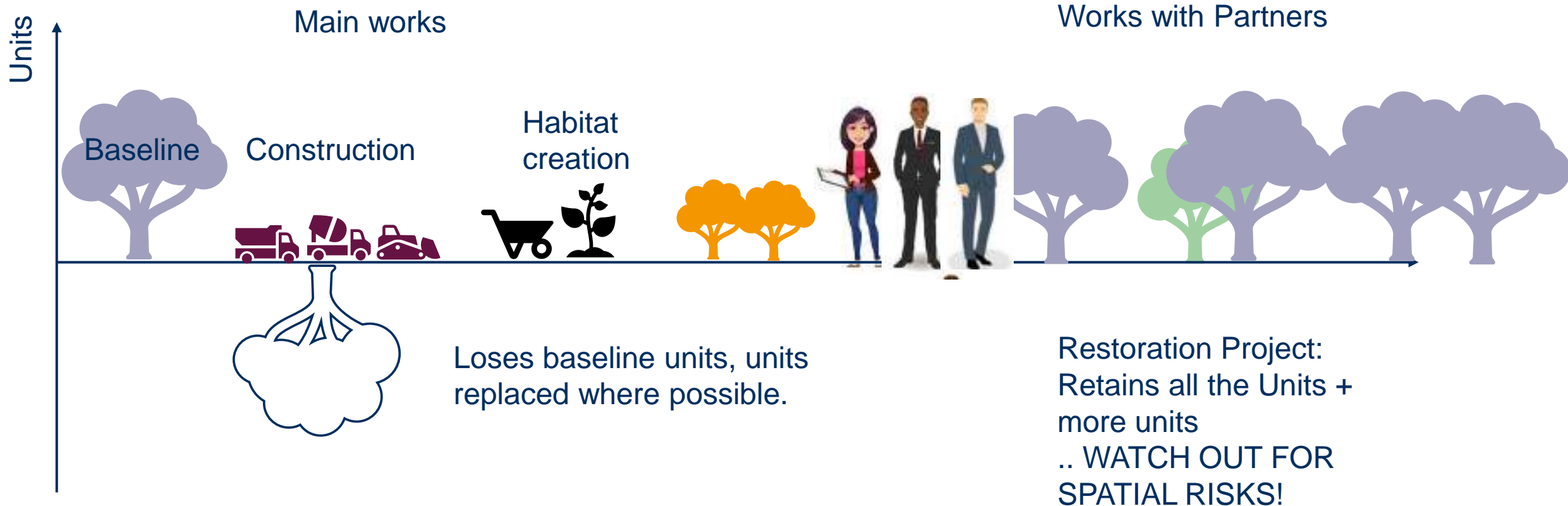
Habitat loss and then creation

Creating a habitat often means losing the old one, and that means you lose all those Units



Working with Partners

For some projects losses are unavoidable. Projects in this position should retain green assets, reduce losses and replace what they can **before** looking at offsetting. Works to compensate losses include improving the condition of adjacent habitats. This can include working with Partners.



A30 Green Ribs



- The Green Ribs are green infrastructure corridors following valleys through central Cornwall
- Working with Arup, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Cornwall Council and other local organisations
- A suite of bespoke and locally distinctive landscape interventions were designed
- Community generated ideas – stakeholder engagement was key to success

Green Ribs Key Information

13,000
trees planted



across 5,000
hectares



32 connected
habitats



+97% biodiversity
net gain



+242% increase in net gain hedgerow biodiversity
9 farms benefited
.. and 10 tonnes of CO2 absorbed annually!

Challenges faced & keys to success

Attrition rates

Build trust

s.253 agreements

Utilise local expertise

Work with the community

What is in it for me?

Work in unison with
landowners

Enthusiasm

Over programme

Be realistic



Enabling delivery

Data and Mapping

- **Spatial database of current biodiversity units for SRN and 1km adjacent land, minimum of 83% accuracy across the asset is now available.**
- **Can be used by projects to understand what habitats and biodiversity units are in their area.**
- **Available on NH's Spatial Portal.**
- **From 2026 annual data will be available.**

