

## **NATURE'S RIGHTS BILL 202[5] - PROPOSED DRAFT**

### **A BILL**

**[Long Title]** To recognise Nature as a legal subject; establish and protect the rights of Nature; establish a legal duty of care for public bodies, businesses, and individuals; provide procedural rights for the protection of Nature; establish an Integrated Rights Framework; establish mechanisms for dispute resolution and legal enforcement; establish a Select Committee for Nature's Rights; establish a Nature Guardianship Council and Bioregional Councils; establish a Nature's Rights Tribunal; create a governance structure for implementation and integration; provide for phased implementation and periodic review; ensure compliance with international environmental obligations; promote public awareness and education; and for connected purposes.

### **PART 1: PRELIMINARY**

#### **1. Short Title, Commencement, and Extent**

1. This Act may be cited as the Nature's Integrated Rights Act 202[5 ].
2. This Act extends to England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland and to the worldwide operations of UK Entities.
3. This Act shall come into force on the day of Royal Assent.
4. This Act binds the Crown in all its capacities, including in relation to activities conducted by the UK military and other public bodies, without exception, unless expressly provided for in this Act.

#### **2. Interpretation**

1. In this Act:

**"Amicus Naturae"** a person, team of experts, or entity appointed by the Nature's Rights Tribunal, or individuals and organisations permitted to submit amicus briefs, to provide impartial legal and ecological insights in

proceedings, aiding the Tribunal in understanding potential impacts on the Rights and Duties.

**"Bioregion"**: A geographic area defined by natural boundaries, including but not limited to watersheds, ecosystems, and topographical features, where ecological, cultural, and economic systems are integrated for sustainable governance.

**"Bioregional Council"** means the governance body established within each Bioregion to oversee the implementation, enforcement, and governance of the Rights and Duties within its respective Bioregion, working in close coordination with the Nature Guardianship Council.

**"Duty of Care"** means a legal obligation established by this Act to protect and preserve the rights of Nature as a legal subject, maintaining ecological integrity for the benefit of present and future generations.

**"Earth Jurisprudence"** means a legal framework that recognises the Earth as a living entity with inherent rights. It requires human laws to align with Nature's laws, acknowledging the interconnectedness of all life and upholding the inherent rights of Nature to exist, thrive, and regenerate.

**"Earth System Boundaries"** (ESBs) means scientifically established safe environmental thresholds ensuring planetary and ecosystem stability. This includes but is not limited to climate, biodiversity, water, nutrient cycles and aerosols at global and subglobal scales. ESBs also consider human justice so as to minimise exposure to significant harms to humans. The stricter of the safe or just boundaries sets the integrated safe and just ESB. The ESBs build on Planetary Boundaries and are designed from the outset for operationalisation at regional and even local levels.

**"Ecological Integrity"** means the ability of ecosystems to maintain their natural structure, function, and processes, including biodiversity, productivity, and resilience, thereby supporting ecological interactions and cycles that sustain the ecosystem over time.

**"Integrated Rights Framework"** means the framework established in Part 2, Section 3 of this Act (Establishing the Integrated Rights Framework) and set out in Schedule 1 (The Integrated Rights Framework).

**"Nature"** means the interconnected community of living organisms, ecosystems, geological processes, and natural cycles, including all species, habitats, landscapes, waters, soils, the atmosphere, and the evolutionary and regenerative dynamics of life on Earth.

**"Nature Guardianship Council"** means the statutory body established under Part 5 (Ecological Governance) of this Act, responsible for operational oversight over the implementation and enforcement of the Rights and Duties.

**"Planetary Boundaries"** means scientifically established global limits within which humanity can operate safely, ensuring the stability and resilience of Earth systems. This includes climate, biosphere, land system, freshwater, biogeochemical, ocean acidification, atmospheric aerosol loading, stratospheric ozone and novel entities.

**"Public Interest Exemption"** means an exemption granted under Section 13(5) based on the grounds that compliance with the Rights and Duties would conflict with the broader interests of the public, provided such exemption is justified, narrowly construed, and subject to oversight.

**"Restoration Order"** means a legal directive requiring the restoration of ecosystems to their original or an enhanced regenerative state.

**"Rights and Duties"** means all the substantive and procedural rights, the Integrated Rights Framework and the Duty of Care established in this Act.

**"Rights Impact Assessment (RIA)"** means an evaluation conducted under Section 13(6) to assess the potential impacts of proposed activities, exemptions, or historical practices on the Rights and Duties under this Act, including alternatives and mitigation measures.

**"Select Committee for Nature's Rights"** means a parliamentary committee established under this Act, tasked with parliamentary oversight such as scrutinising the implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness of the provisions of this Act.

**"Tribunal"** means the Nature's Rights Tribunal, a judicial body established under Section 19 (Nature's Rights Tribunal) to adjudicate disputes and enforce the Rights and Duties.

**"UK Entity"** means any public body, business, corporation, or other legal entity that is registered, headquartered, or controlled within the United Kingdom, including its overseas subsidiaries, contractors, or supply chains where they are subject to direct or indirect control from within the UK.

**"UK Entity Reporting Threshold"** means the financial, employment, or environmental criteria prescribed by the Nature Guardianship Council, pursuant to Section 13, to determine the applicability of the annual reporting obligation under this Act.

### 3. Alignment and Implementation of International Treaties

1. This Act implements and furthers the ecocentric principles enshrined in the following treaties to which the UK is a signatory:
  - a. World Charter for Nature 1982; and
  - b. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2022 which integrates the promotion of human rights and the rights of nature into its strategic plan to protect and restore biodiversity through 2030.

## PART 2: ESTABLISHING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### 1. Establishing the Integrated Rights Framework

1. The Integrated Rights Framework ("the Framework") is established as set out in Schedule 1.
2. The Framework embeds economic and human rights within the rights of Nature because without Nature we cannot exist.
3. The Framework mandates that the UN Sustainable Development Goals are applied in alignment with Planetary Boundaries (PBs), ensuring:
  - a. that no SDG component is implemented in isolation from the broader Framework; and

- b. all activities remain aligned with the Rights and Duties.
- 4. The Framework shall guide all legislative, regulatory, policy and Tribunal decisions.
- 5. The Framework shall be applied across all Bioregions in the United Kingdom.

## 2. Legal Subjecthood for Nature

### 1. **Recognition of Nature as a Legal Person:**

- a. Nature is recognised as a legal person and subject of law.
- b. The rights of Nature established by this Act shall vest in Nature as a single legal entity.
- c. These rights shall be enforceable collectively on behalf of Nature to prevent fragmentation of legal claims.

## 5. Substantive Rights of Nature

- 1. Nature is entitled to the following inherent rights:
  - 1. **Right to Exist, Persist, and Evolve:** Nature has the right to exist, thrive, and evolve without interference that undermines its processes.
  - 2. **Right to Ecological Integrity:** Nature has the right to maintain the structural and functional integrity of its ecosystems, ensuring the health and ecological balance of all life forms.
  - 3. **Right to Regeneration:** Nature has the right to be restored and regenerated where ecosystems have been harmed.
  - 4. **Right to be Free from Pollution:** Nature has the right to be free from pollution, contamination, and degradation that threaten its resilience and health.

5. **Right to Operate within Planetary Boundaries:** Nature has the right to maintain and exist within Planetary Boundaries.

### 6. Duty of Care towards Nature

1. This Act establishes a legal duty of care towards Nature as a legal subject.
2. This duty of care applies to all activities of UK Entities both within the UK and globally.
3. All public bodies, businesses and individuals shall:
  - a. Protect, preserve, and restore Nature for the benefit of present and future generations;
  - b. Prevent actions that degrade Nature and mitigate harm caused by their activities taking into account the specific ecological characteristics of the region;
  - c. Remedy any damage to natural systems caused by their activities, ensuring they remain within safe ecological limits;
  - d. Promote regenerative practices that support ecological integrity and resilience.

### 7. Procedural Rights to Enforce the Rights and Duties

1. **Right to Participation in Decision Making:** Individuals, communities, and organisations have the right to participate in decisions that impact the Rights and Duties.
2. **Right to Legal Standing:** Nature, through its representatives, has the right to legal standing in judicial and administrative proceedings.
3. **Right to Access Information:** All citizens have the right to access information regarding environmental and rights impacts.
4. **Right to Cost-Free Legal Representation:** Parties acting to defend the Rights and Duties have the right to cost-free legal representation if the case is referred to Tribunal.

## PART 4: IMPLEMENTATION

### 8. Integration of Rights and Duties into Law and Policy

1. The Rights and Duties established under this Act shall be integrated into all relevant legislation, regulations, policies, and strategies enacted by public bodies, having regard for the Integrated Rights Framework set out in Schedule 1.
2. Public bodies shall develop Bioregional Implementation Plans, ensuring that the Rights and Duties reflect the ecological conditions, resource limitations, and cultural practices of each Bioregion.
3. Existing laws, policies, and regulations shall be reviewed and, where necessary, amended to align with the Rights and Duties, with particular regard to the ecological realities of each Bioregion.

### 9. Integration into Decision-Making

#### 1. Incentives for Compliance

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Nature Guardianship Council, shall establish a scheme of incentives, including tax reliefs, grants, and subsidies, to encourage businesses and public bodies to adopt practices in line with the objectives of this Act.

#### 2. Sector-Specific Rights Impact Assessments (RIA)

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council, in collaboration with industry stakeholders and the Secretary of State, shall develop sector-specific Rights Impact Assessments (RIA).
- b. These assessments shall consider a just transition while ensuring a phased compliance with the Rights and Duties under this Act.

#### 3. Public-Private Partnerships

Public bodies, in collaboration with the Nature Guardianship Council, may form public-private partnerships with businesses and civil society organisations to facilitate the implementation of sustainable and regenerative practices.

### 4. **Incorporation by UK Entities**

UK Entities shall integrate the Rights and Duties into their decision-making processes, including:

- a. Strategic planning, operational activities, and policy development within the UK and internationally;
- b. Environmental and social responsibility initiatives globally;
- c. Risk management and sustainability assessments tailored to the ecological conditions of relevant Bioregions, both within and outside the UK.

## 10. **Rights Impact Assessments (RIA)**

### 1. **Application of RIA**

All decisions and activities that may affect Nature shall include a Rights Impact Assessment (RIA) to:

- a. Evaluate the potential impacts on the Rights established under this Act, whether within the UK or abroad;
- b. Assess compatibility with the Duty of Care within the specific Bioregion or international region;
- c. Identify implications for human and economic rights in accordance with the Integrated Rights Framework, ensuring that decisions respect planetary boundaries in a way that promotes a just transition.

### 2. **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)**

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for projects, policies, or activities shall incorporate Rights Impact Assessments (RIA), ensuring that the Rights and Duties are fully considered in all evaluations.

## 11. **Phased Implementation**

- a. **Initial Phase:** During the initial phase, projects and policies shall proactively move towards compliance with the Integrated Rights



Framework and Planetary Boundaries, in accordance with guidelines mandated by the Nature Guardianship Council (NGC).

- b. **Final Phase:** Public bodies and businesses shall have in place policies, practices, operations and long-term strategies to achieve full compliance with the Rights and Duties in this Act.

### 2. **Flexibility in Implementation**

The Nature Guardianship Council, in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall allow for flexibility in the phased implementation of this Act, adjusting targets and timelines in light of sectoral and Bioregional considerations, provided that progress towards the objectives is demonstrated.

### 3. **Adaptive Management**

- a. **Flexible Targets:** The Nature Guardianship Council, in coordination with the Secretary of State, may adjust timelines and sector-specific targets, provided progress towards compliance is demonstrable;
- b. **Adaptive Management:** An adaptive management approach shall apply, enabling revisions to measures based on evolving scientific consensus and monitoring outcomes.

## 12. **Reporting Obligations and Monitoring**

### 1. **Annual Reports by UK Entities**

UK Entities shall submit annual reports to the Nature Guardianship Council detailing:

- a. Compliance with the Rights and Duties under this Act, both within the United Kingdom and in overseas operations;
- b. Progress on restoration projects, including those mandated abroad, with independent third-party verification by local experts;
- c. Actions taken to mitigate ecological harm, particularly in overseas jurisdictions, and the effectiveness of those actions;
- d. Progress towards achieving phased implementation goals.

### 2. **Reporting Thresholds**

## **NATURE'S RIGHTS BILL DRAFT 8**

1. The reporting obligation under subsection 1 shall apply only to UK Entities that meet the thresholds, prescribed in regulations:
  - a. Financial metrics: UK Entities whose annual turnover exceeds the threshold set by the Nature Guardianship Council through regulations;
  - b. Employee numbers: UK Entities with an average number of employees greater than the threshold specified by the Nature Guardianship Council;
  - c. Environmental footprint: UK Entities with a significant environmental impact, as determined by criteria established by the Nature Guardianship Council, including emissions, resource use, or ecological disturbance.

### **3. Exemption for Smaller Entities**

1. UK Entities that do not meet the thresholds prescribed in subsection 2 shall be exempt from submitting annual reports under subsection 1, unless otherwise directed by the Nature Guardianship Council on grounds of significant local environmental impact.

### **4. Regulations and Guidelines**

1. The Nature Guardianship Council may prescribe in regulations reporting thresholds. These regulations may refer to United Nations protocols, planetary boundaries or any other empirically derived or politically agreed targets, such that by specified dates, they bring the United Kingdom into compliance with Planetary Boundaries, taking into account a just transition.

### **5. National Security and Other Public Interest Exemptions**

5.1. No entity, including the Crown, UK military, or any public body, shall be exempt from the obligations under this Act solely on the grounds of national security, public interest, or economic hardship, except as expressly provided under this section.

5.2. An exemption may be granted only if:

## **NATURE'S RIGHTS BILL DRAFT 8**

- a. The exemption is strictly necessary for the purpose of national security or public interest;
- b. The Nature Guardianship Council, in consultation with the Secretary of State, determines that compliance with the Rights and Duties under this Act poses an imminent and direct threat to national security or a compelling public interest;
- c. The exemption applies only to the specific activity in question, and is subject to periodic review by the Nature Guardianship Council.

5.3. Any decision to exempt an activity under subsection 5.2 shall be:

- a. Accompanied by a written justification, explaining why the exemption is necessary and proportionate;
- b. Reviewed by the Select Committee for Nature's Rights to ensure accountability and transparency;
- c. Reported to Parliament annually, ensuring that such exemptions are documented and subject to public scrutiny.

### **6. Rights Impact Assessments (RIA) for Exemptions**

All entities, including those granted an exemption under sub-clause 5, must conduct a Rights Impact Assessment (RIA) to evaluate:

- a. The potential impacts on the Rights and Duties under this Act;
- b. Measures that could mitigate such impacts;
- c. Any reasonable alternatives that would comply with the Rights and Duties.

## **PART 5: ECOLOGICAL GOVERNANCE**

### **13. Establishment of a Select Committee for Nature's Rights**

#### **1. Parliamentary Oversight**

- a. A Select Committee for Nature's Rights is hereby established to provide parliamentary oversight of the implementation of this Act.
- b. The Committee shall scrutinise the activities of the Nature Guardianship Council and review the government's compliance with the objectives of the Act.

**2. Duties of the Select Committee**

- a. Review annual reports submitted by the Nature Guardianship Council, assessing progress in compliance and enforcement.
- b. Conduct hearings with stakeholders, including businesses, environmental groups, and public bodies, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Act's implementation.
- c. Make recommendations to Parliament on amendments to the Act or associated policies, where necessary.
- d. Submit an annual report to Parliament summarising its findings and recommendations.

**3. Non-Operational Role**

- a. The Select Committee shall not engage in the direct implementation or enforcement of the Act.
- b. Its remit shall be confined to parliamentary scrutiny and legislative review.

**14. Establishment and Functions of the Nature Guardianship Council**

**1. Compliance, Implementation and Enforcement**

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council is responsible for the compliance and enforcement of this Act.
- b. the Nature Guardianship Council shall develop guidelines and standards to enable compliance across all relevant entities, including businesses, public bodies, and individuals.

**2. Regulation-Making Powers of the Nature Guardianship Council**

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council may make regulations, issue codes of practice, and publish guidance necessary to give effect to the provisions and purposes of this Act.

- b. Regulations made under this section may relate, but are not limited to:
  - i. the establishment, composition and functioning of Bioregional Councils;
  - ii. participatory and procedural rules for receiving and investigating complaints;
  - iii. the conduct of non-adversarial dispute resolution and tribunal proceedings;
  - iv. monitoring, assessment, reporting, and enforcement measures;
  - v. public engagement and access to justice mechanisms.
  - vi. Regulations made under this section shall be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure in Parliament.

**3. Judicial Guidance and Interpretation**

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall issue guidance notes to assist courts in the interpretation and application of the rights of Nature as established by this Act.
- b. Such guidance shall have regard to principles of Earth Jurisprudence and relevant scientific understanding and shall be subject to periodic review.

**4. Pilot Implementation**

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall establish pilot schemes in selected Bioregions for the purpose of testing implementation, enforcement and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- b. The outcomes of these schemes shall inform the wider application of the Act.

**5. Coordination with the Tribunal**

- a. the Nature Guardianship Council shall pursue non-adversarial resolution of disputes.

- b. If this fails, the Nature Guardianship Council may refer matters to the Nature's Rights Tribunal and provide recommendations for sanctions, such as fines or restoration orders.

### 6. **Reporting to Parliament**

The Nature Guardianship Council shall submit an annual report to the Select Committee for Nature's Rights, detailing enforcement actions and progress towards the Act's objectives.

### 7. **Collaborative Governance**

The Nature Guardianship Council shall collaborate with Bioregional Councils, adapting enforcement and compliance measures to bioregional contexts..

### 8. **Engagement with Devolved Administrations**

The Nature Guardianship Council shall engage with the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland to support implementation, share information, and facilitate cross-border environmental collaboration.

## 15. **Composition of the Nature Guardianship Council**

### 1. **Membership**

the Nature Guardianship Council shall consist of the following members, appointed through a transparent, merit-based process ensuring diversity and inclusivity:

- a. **Chairperson:** An independent expert in environmental law and governance, appointed by the Secretary of State.
- b. **Ecological Experts:** Five members with expertise in ecosystem restoration, biodiversity, regenerative practices, and planetary boundaries.
- c. **Legal Experts:** Three members with expertise in environmental law, administrative law, and Earth Jurisprudence.

- d. **Bioregional Representatives:** One representative from each Bioregion.
- e. **Youth Representatives:** Two members under the age of 30, representing the interests of future generations.
- f. **Economic and Social Experts:** Four members with expertise in sustainable development, environmental economics, and social equity.

### 2. **Terms of Office**

Members shall serve a term of five years, with the possibility of one renewal, except for Youth Representatives, who shall serve a single three-year term.

## 16. **Monitoring, Reporting, and Enforcement**

### 1. **Monitoring and Reporting**

The Nature Guardianship Council shall review compliance reports submitted by UK entities to assess adherence to this Act. If entities fail to show progress after a follow-up period, the Nature Guardianship Council may investigate.

### 2. **Enforcement Actions**

- a. Where non-compliance is persistent, the Nature Guardianship Council may:
  - i. Issue formal notices with corrective action deadlines.
  - ii. Refer the matter to the Nature's Rights Tribunal for enforcement, including fines or operational restrictions.
  - iii. Provide evidence and recommendations to support enforcement actions.

## 17. **Periodic Review and Adaptive Management**

### 1. **Periodic Review of Enforcement and Compliance**

## **NATURE'S RIGHTS BILL DRAFT 8**

- a. the Nature Guardianship Council shall:
  - i. conduct a review of enforcement and compliance annually;
  - ii. submit a report on their findings to the Secretary of State;
  - iii. make the report publicly available.
- b. The review shall assess the progress made towards the objectives of the Act and identify necessary adjustments to improve enforcement and compliance measures.

### **2. Amendment of Targets and Timelines**

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council, following each review, may propose amendments to targets, timelines, and enforcement measures to the Secretary of State.
- b. These amendments shall ensure continued alignment with the Act's objectives, as well as any relevant developments in scientific understanding or international obligations.

## **18. Public Participation**

1. All stakeholders, including individuals, local communities, industry representatives, and other affected parties, may participate in consultations conducted by the Bioregional Councils or the Nature Guardianship Council under this Act.
2. The Nature Guardianship Council and Bioregional Councils, as applicable, shall publish notices of consultations in a manner that ensures broad accessibility and adequate time for engagement by all affected parties.

### **3. Inclusive Participation**

- a. Stakeholders, including individuals, communities, and organisations, may refer cases of non-compliance directly to the Bioregional Councils for geographically specific matters and to the Nature Guardianship Council for matters of national or international significance.



- b. The Secretary of State shall allocate the necessary funding and resources to support the right to participation.
- c. Such support may include, but shall not be limited to, financial assistance, access to information, and any other resources required to ensure equitable representation.

## **18. Bioregional Councils**

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council shall, by regulation, establish a network of Bioregional Councils across the United Kingdom. Each Bioregional Council shall represent a distinct ecological and socio-cultural bioregion, having regard to natural boundaries, watersheds, traditional territories, and community cohesion.
- b. Each Bioregional Council shall:
  - i. receive and investigate concerns, petitions, and complaints regarding actual or potential violations of Nature's Rights within its bioregion; support inclusive public participation and facilitate dialogue and non-adversarial resolution of disputes;
  - ii. monitor ecological indicators and the implementation of Nature's Rights within its region;
  - iii. issue local recommendations and refer unresolved or serious matters to the Nature Guardianship Council or the Nature's Rights Tribunal as appropriate;
  - iv. support education, outreach, and local governance initiatives aligned with the principles of this Act.
- c. Each Bioregional Council shall be composed of:
  - i. at least one expert in environmental or ecological science;
  - ii. at least one legal professional with expertise in environmental, human, or Nature's Rights law;

- iii. local community representatives, including youth and members from marginalised communities, selected through participatory and inclusive public processes;
  - iv. Indigenous or traditional knowledge holders where applicable;
  - v. such other persons as the Nature Guardianship Council may by regulation prescribe.
- d. The Nature Guardianship Council shall determine, by regulation, the procedures for:
  - i. appointment, eligibility, and term limits of Bioregional Council members;
  - ii. internal decision-making, codes of conduct, and accountability mechanisms reporting obligations and cooperation between Bioregional Councils and the Council.
- e. Bioregional Councils shall be supported and overseen by the Nature Guardianship Council, which may issue binding guidance to ensure consistency, capacity, and effectiveness.

## **PART 6: DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND ENFORCEMENT**

### **19. Offences and Liability**

#### **1. Offences**

Any act or omission that infringes the Rights and Duties established under this Act shall constitute an offence.

- 2. Such offences may result in criminal, civil, environmental, or administrative liability as determined by the Nature's Rights Tribunal.
- 3. Any case brought before the Nature's Rights Tribunal to uphold the Rights and Duties shall be brought in the name of Nature.

### 4. **Liability of Legal Entities**

Where the offence is committed by a legal entity other than people or Nature such as a public body or a corporation, individuals with control or decision-making authority shall be held jointly and severally liable for any breach.

## 20. **Non-Adversarial Resolution**

### 1. **Non-Adversarial Resolution**

The Nature Guardianship Council shall attempt to resolve disputes non-adversarially before pursuing formal enforcement actions.

### 2. **Referral to Tribunal**

If disputes cannot be resolved through non-adversarial means, the Nature Guardianship Council may refer cases to the Nature's Rights Tribunal for adjudication and recommend appropriate sanctions.

### 3. **3. Review of Emergency Powers**

3.1. In the event that emergency powers are invoked under any other law, resulting in a temporary suspension or modification of obligations under this Act:

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council shall conduct a review to determine the impact of such actions on the Rights and Duties under this Act;
- b. The findings shall be reported to Parliament and the Select Committee for Nature's Rights within three months of the invocation of emergency powers.

## 19. **Nature's Rights Tribunal**

### 1. **Establishment of the Tribunal**

A Nature's Rights Tribunal ("the Tribunal") is hereby established as an independent judicial body to adjudicate disputes arising under this Act, including those involving the overseas operations of UK Entities.

2. The Tribunal shall consist of judges and multidisciplinary experts with the requisite knowledge to adjudicate the case the need to manage a just transition.
3. The Tribunal shall have the authority to:

## **NATURE'S RIGHTS BILL DRAFT 8**

- a. Issue restoration orders to address harm caused to Nature, including in overseas operations;
- b. Grant injunctions to halt activities that violate Nature's rights;
- c. Impose sanctions, fines, and corrective measures for environmental harm, as detailed in Schedule 4;
- d. Refer complex cases to higher courts where necessary.

### **4. Restorative Justice**

- a. The Tribunal shall prioritise restorative justice in its rulings, with a focus on the ecological restoration of harmed ecosystems, and enabling the transition to full compliance with the Integrated Rights Framework.
- b. In issuing restoration orders, the Tribunal shall collaborate with scientific experts and local communities to ensure that remediation efforts are effective and sustainable.

### **5. Appeals**

Decisions of the Tribunal may be appealed to the High Court on points of law. The Tribunal's findings of fact shall be final.

### **6. Nature's Rights Tribunal and Bioregional Adjudication**

- a. Each Bioregional Council shall have the authority to act as a first-instance adjudicatory body for matters relating to alleged or potential violations of Nature's Rights within its bioregion.
- b. The Nature Guardianship Council may provide assistance or oversight in such matters, and may intervene where necessary to ensure procedural fairness or consistency with this Act.
- c. Where a case:
  - i. involves systemic or cross-regional issues;
  - ii. has not been resolved at the bioregional level; or

- iii. is deemed to require national-level intervention

it may be referred to the Nature's Rights Tribunal by the Bioregional Council, the Nature Guardianship Council, or directly by affected persons or communities, in accordance with rules of procedure.

- d. The Nature's Rights Tribunal shall be convened by the Nature Guardianship Council either:
  - i. on a standing basis, with permanent members appointed for fixed terms; or
  - ii. on an ad-hoc basis, drawing from a panel of qualified experts.
- e. The Tribunal shall include expertise in ecological science, law, restorative justice, and local or traditional knowledge where appropriate.
- f. The Nature Guardianship Council shall publish procedural rules and guidance governing proceedings before both Bioregional Councils and the Tribunal.

## 20. Cost-Free Access to Justice

### 1. No Cost for Accessing Justice

No costs shall be incurred by any party initiating non-adversarial dispute resolution or Tribunal proceedings under this Act.

### 2. Funding for Legal Representation

The Government shall ensure that funding mechanisms are in place to provide cost-free legal representation for Nature in Tribunal proceedings.

## 21. Precautionary Principle and Burden of Proof

### 1. Application of the Precautionary Principle

In cases of scientific uncertainty regarding potential environmental harm, the precautionary principle shall apply, requiring public bodies to act to prevent harm.

### **2. Burden of Proof**

The burden of proof shall lie with the party alleged to be infringing the Rights and Duties to demonstrate that no violation has occurred or will occur.

## **23. Amicus Naturae**

### **1. Appointment of Amicus Naturae**

The Tribunal may appoint Amicus Naturae, consisting of qualified experts, to provide insights during proceedings.

### **2. Submission of Amicus Briefs**

Individuals, organisations, or entities with relevant expertise or a legitimate interest may submit amicus briefs to the Tribunal, offering legal, scientific, or community-based perspectives.

a. The Tribunal shall consider amicus briefs where they provide impartial and relevant information to aid understanding of potential impacts on Nature's rights.

b. The submission of amicus briefs shall not be subject to fees, ensuring open access for diverse contributions.

## **24. Immunity of Nature from Legal Proceedings**

### **1. Immunity from Legal Proceedings**

a. Nature, as recognised under this Act, shall be immune from any legal proceedings brought against it.

b. No party may seek to join Nature as a defendant in any legal proceedings, and any attempt to do so shall be null and void.

c. Nature shall only be represented by duly appointed legal representatives, such as the Nature Guardianship Council or its authorised agents, solely for the purpose of protecting and enforcing its Rights.

## **PART 7: MISCELLANEOUS**

## **25. Application to Devolved Administrations**

1. This Act applies to England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, subject to the following conditions:
  1. Environmental matters, including the protection and enforcement of Nature's rights, fall primarily within the competence of the devolved administrations.
  2. The UK Parliament shall seek Legislative Consent Motions from the devolved parliaments before the Act's provisions take effect in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
2. The devolved administrations may enact supplementary legislation to enhance or expand the Rights and Duties, provided that such legislation meets or exceeds the minimum standards set forth in this Act.
3. In the absence of legislative consent, this Act shall apply only to matters reserved to the UK Parliament, including human rights and cross-border environmental impacts.

## **27. Power of the Secretary of State to Amend and Implement**

1. The Secretary of State may, by statutory instrument:
  1. Amend this Act to expand rights and obligations or address emerging challenges; and
  2. Make regulations necessary for the effective application and implementation of this Act.
2. Any amendments or regulations made under this section must:
  1. Uphold the principles of the Integrated Rights Framework; and
  2. Maintain or enhance the rights, duties, and protections of Nature as established in this Act.



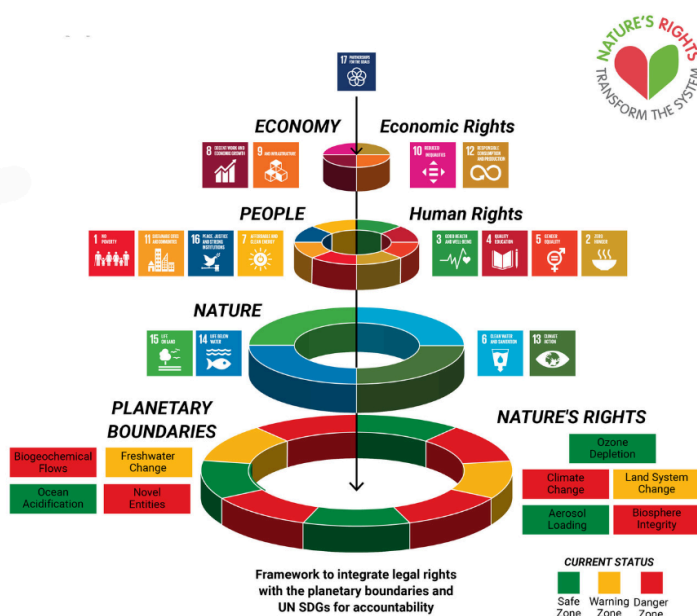


## SCHEDULE 1

### Integrated Rights Framework

**The Integrated Rights Framework** provides a systemic foundation for the relationship between the rights of Nature, human rights, and economic rights. It acknowledges the undeniable reality that human societies and economies are entirely dependent on the health and integrity of the natural world. By recognising the rights of Nature as the bedrock upon which all other rights depend, the Framework offers a paradigm shift — embedding economic and human rights within ecological limits and aligning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with Planetary Boundaries. This integration delivers both a qualitative and quantitative structure for reorienting governance, law, and policy towards a regenerative future. The Framework is grounded in a collaborative, synergistic approach to rights — where ecological, social, and economic wellbeing are advanced together, not in competition. Regulations and guidance based on this Framework shall be applied within each Bioregion, ensuring that legal rights are implemented according to the ecological realities, resource limits, and regenerative capacities of each Bioregion for optimal outcomes.

### The Integrated Rights Framework



## **SCHEDULE 3: GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS OF the Nature Guardianship Council**

### **1. Regulations and Guidelines for Public Bodies, Businesses, and Individuals:**

- 1.1. Provide comprehensive instructions on integrating the Rights and Duties into decision-making processes.
- 1.2. Establish criteria for Rights Impact Assessments (RIAs) that must be conducted for projects, policies, and activities with potential impacts on Nature.
- 1.3. Operationalise Planetary Boundary compliance for the UK by developing scientific ESB targets.

### **2. Standards for Environmental Harm Mitigation:**

- 2.1. Define benchmarks for environmental harm prevention, based on the Integrated Rights Framework and focusing on practices that promote ecological integrity and regeneration.
- 2.2. Set minimum sustainability standards, including pollution reduction, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and ecological resilience.

### **3. Procedures for Procedural Rights Implementation:**

- 3.1. Detail processes for ensuring public participation in decision-making, access to information, and non-adversarial dispute resolution mechanisms.
- 3.2. Outline procedures for granting cost-free legal representation in

Nature-related disputes.

#### **4. Sector-Specific Guidelines**

##### **1. Sector-Specific Compliance Standards**

The Nature Guardianship Council, in consultation with industry representatives and environmental experts, shall issue sector-specific guidelines for industries with significant ecological impacts, including agriculture, fishing, mineral extraction, civil and private construction, energy, and manufacturing.

2. The guidelines shall outline the steps required to achieve compliance with the Act.

##### **3. Training and Capacity Building**

the Nature Guardianship Council, in collaboration with public authorities, shall develop training programmes to assist businesses, industry professionals, and public bodies in understanding and fulfilling their duties under this Act.

#### **5. Compliance Monitoring and Reporting:**

- 5.1. Outline requirements for annual reports from UK Entities and Bioregional Councils including the format, content, and submission timelines.
- 5.2. Develop methods for tracking compliance with the Rights and Duties and guidelines for monitoring the effectiveness of imposed sanctions and restoration efforts.

#### **6. Training and Public Awareness:**

- 6.1. Specify the content and structure of training programmes for policymakers, businesses, and industry associations.
- 6.2. Design public awareness campaigns on the implementation of the Integrated Rights Framework.

## **SCHEDULE 4: SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT MEASURES**

### **1. Fines and Penalties:**

#### **Fines and Penalties**

##### **1. Proportional Fines**

- a. The Nature Guardianship Council shall have power to make regulations that impose fines proportionate to the nature and severity of the violation, taking into account the financial capacity of the offender and the ecological harm caused. Regulations should be reviewed annually.

##### **2. Operational Restrictions and Permit Revocations:**

- a. Temporary restrictions may be imposed on activities contributing to environmental harm until compliance is restored.
- b. Permits and licences may be suspended or revoked in cases of severe or repeated violations.

##### **3. Restoration Orders:**

- a. Offenders shall undertake ecological restoration actions, including habitat rehabilitation and pollution cleanup, under the supervision of independent environmental experts.
- b. Restoration efforts must meet standards set by the Nature Guardianship Council, aiming to return ecosystems to a state as close as possible to their original condition.

##### **4. Environmental Bonds and Offsetting:**

- a. Entities engaged in activities with significant environmental impact must post environmental bonds, which will be forfeited in the event of a breach.

- b. Where direct restoration is not feasible, responsible parties must fund conservation projects of equivalent or greater ecological benefit.

**5. Criminal Liability for Corporate Officers:**

- a. Directors, executives, and key decision-makers shall be personally accountable for breaches, facing sanctions including fines, community service, or imprisonment for severe or intentional violations.
- b. Individuals found responsible for repeated or severe breaches may be disqualified from holding directorial or managerial positions in companies operating in the UK.

**6. Restorative Justice and Rehabilitation:**

**a. Restorative Justice Measures**

- i. Offending parties may be required to participate in community-led ecological restoration projects.
- ii. Such projects shall involve local stakeholders in planning and execution to ensure the restorative process benefits both Nature and the affected communities.

**b. Compensation Fund**

- i. A Compensation Fund, financed through fines and penalties imposed under this Act, shall be established to support ecological restoration projects.
- ii. The Fund shall be administered by the Nature Guardianship Council, in consultation with local communities and environmental experts.

