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Authors	Matt Davies, Chloë Smith, Julie Cox (GiGL) Branding updated 07/2017 (MR)

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Introduction

GiGL can provide support to organisations undertaking, or commissioning consultants to conduct, habitat surveys, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) reviews or open space surveys.

Note that GiGL can also support Green Infrastructure reviews and new guidance on this is coming soon.

GiGL can supply data (or reports) on current baseline survey information, advice on interpreting this information, advice on data standards for new data or tailored outputs. This document provides information on how you can access and use GiGL resources to support preparation and delivery of surveys. It outlines provision of data to GiGL partners and to their contractors (including licensing and SLA costs); how non-partners can access and use resources; and, preferred data standards for integration of results into the London dataset.

After the survey is complete and results are adopted GiGL will¹: update habitat survey results into existing baseline for London; update SINC boundary, grade or citation changes into the database for London and calculate and update any consequential changes to Area of Deficiency in Access to Nature; update open space survey results into existing baseline for London and calculate and update any consequential changes to Area of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Space².

Resources to support survey

Datasets

It is advisable for surveyors to review existing baseline data to inform their new survey. London has comprehensive coverage of survey information and designations. Existing GiGL datasets comprise standardised categories and formats, providing context for new data collection. GiGL site-based datasets are snapped to Ordnance Survey MasterMap at the time of digitisation and therefore provide a good baseline for the survey to either verify original habitat status and/or update new results.

Datasets that GiGL recommends for inspection are as follows.

Habitat survey

- Habitat survey parcels that overlap survey sites i.e. results from previous habitat survey(s)
- Recorded wildlife observations for survey sites. Extract can be restricted by all or some of the following categories to suit your project:

¹ assuming quality and format of data is sufficient

² Updates to the core GiGL datasets are normally covered by GiGL core funds or GLA contract funding. GiGL will notify the partner if additional funds or SLA time are required to facilitate updates

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- Protected and Notable Species i.e. Internationally or nationally protected species, National or London Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species, Red Data List species, Species of Conservation Concern in London
- Invasive species i.e. those categorised by London Invasive Species Initiative (LISI)
- Date of record e.g. records made in the last 10 years only
- Geographical resolution e.g. records made to 6-figure grid reference or longer only

SINC survey

- Existing SINC boundaries and Citation documents
- Current Area of Deficiency (in Access to Nature) for the locality
- Datasets as above for habitat survey

Open space survey

- Open space sites overlapping survey sites i.e. survey information about the public access, amenity designations and features of sites
- Features and facilities within survey sites
- Open Space designations that apply to survey sites

Other resources

GiGL may also be able to provide tailored resources for survey support such as maps, data entry sheets or custom data audits. Please get in touch to discuss this option further. SLA time or commercial costs would apply.

Accessing the baseline data

Mode of access to GiGL data depends on who is carrying out the analysis and GiGL partner status:

GiGL partners, in-house work

GiGL partners receive core dataset GIS data routinely as part of their SLA agreement. For in-house surveys, partner staff can access this GIS from their SLA manager. Ask GiGL if further interpretation or fresh copies are required. Alternatively the partner may benefit from a bespoke output or modelled data to support their surveys, which GiGL can develop.

Costs: Provision of core datasets for *in-house* use is a standard part of the SLA package. Any additional projects can be developed with GiGL and delivered within your SLA time.

GiGL partners, external contractor(s)

GiGL can provide baseline data in GIS/spreadsheet format for the survey area to the SLA partners' chosen contractor(s) under a Contractor Licence. Once signed, this licence temporarily extends the terms and conditions of data use in the partner's SLA to their contractor so they can access the partner level of data to complete the project.

GiGL offer to meet or teleconference with the chosen contractor(s) of partners to have an introduction to the baseline data and discussion regarding data use and compatibility.

Costs: Provision of the recommended datasets to the consultant and staff time to resolve queries is included as part of the SLA package.

No current SLA with GiGL

For non-partners conducting surveys, either in-house or via a contractor, GiGL can provide information about baseline data in report format. Full resolution GIS datasets are a partner-only product.

Costs: non-partner work is charged at GiGL's hourly commercial work rate. Please visit <http://www.ecountability.co.uk/ecdatasearch/emailform.aspx> to request a quote, or consider taking up a Service Level Agreement with GiGL if your organisation is eligible <http://www.gigl.org.uk/data-search-for-consultants/>.

Recommended survey standards

Ecological expertise and local factors will dictate the most appropriate methods for a given survey. However, GiGL recommends the following data management standards or considerations in the survey design and outputs. This will improve the ease of handling your results alongside original survey data and enable GiGL to incorporate local results into the London dataset without loss of local information therefore improving the legacy value of survey results.

Ideal survey outputs for London data:

Wildlife observations

- Excel file of records as in 'Standard data entry spreadsheet' which can be downloaded from: <http://www.gigl.org.uk/submit-records/recording-spreadsheet/>
- One record per line
- Include a reference to the relevant survey parcel/site or target note if appropriate.

Habitat data

- Survey parcel and habitat boundaries in GIS polygons (tab or shape file) – *also see category and mapping recommendations below.*
- Target Note GIS points (tab or shape file)

SINC data

- Boundaries in GIS polygon (tab or shape file) – *see category and mapping recommendations below.*
- SINC citations as Word documents, one per site (format outlined in *Annex 2*)
- Indication as to whether the site counts towards alleviating Areas of Deficiency (Access to Nature). If only part of the site counts, provide a GIS boundary of that area. AoD may be affected if:
 - a new SINC has been designated;

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- a SINC has been lost;
- a SINC is re-designated from Local to Borough level or above (or the reverse);
- the boundary of a SINC which alleviates AoD is changed; or,
- the accessibility or quality of a site changes so that its ability to alleviate AoD is altered

Survey categories and content

Habitats

- The most common survey method in London's habitat survey data is an adapted version of Phase I called the "London Survey Method". Baseline data is most likely to be in this format.
- GiGL's habitat dataset can also incorporate Phase I survey categories or other standard categorisations. It will be able to incorporate UKHabitats categories currently in development.
- More information about GiGL Habitats dataset attributes can be found in <http://www.gigl.org.uk/giglpolicy/data-guide/>, more information about the London Survey Method can be found at <http://www.gigl.org.uk/habitat-data/londonsurvey/>. Please check with GiGL if you are unsure about compatibility.

Open space

- Categories following the London Survey Method can be easily incorporated into the London dataset. Please check with GiGL about compatibility of other outputs. GiGL open space dataset attributes can be found in <http://www.gigl.org.uk/giglpolicy/data-guide/>

SINCs

- Please indicate the recognised name, code and grade of the site. GiGL SINC dataset attributes can be found in <http://www.gigl.org.uk/giglpolicy/data-guide/>

Mapping

Habitats

- Single habitat mapping (i.e. one boundary around one habitat patch) is preferable in most cases to multiple habitats per boundary, even when using the London Survey Methodology categories (which are likely to have been recorded as multiple habitats per parcel in the historic baseline).
- Reference to the original GiGL baseline habitat survey parcels (PolygonID) is helpful for ease of incorporating updates into the London dataset, though in some cases the original parcels may be inappropriate for new boundaries.
- Boundaries of survey parcels or habitat patches should match and not straddle boundaries of Local Authorities and designated sites where applicable (to avoid future update problems such as outlined in *Appendix 1*).

SINCs

- Please digitally map one site per GIS feature (multi-part polygons are OK, where necessary)

Digitising

- Please digitise any site survey results carefully, snapping boundaries to the latest Ordnance Survey MasterMap polygons where appropriate e.g. the boundaries of sites.

Survey Scope for habitat data

In the case of partial survey, for example SINC site re-surveys, it is recommended that the survey scope includes all original baseline survey parcels that overlap the new survey sites, not just the habitats immediately within the survey sites.

This approach ensures that the best data coverage for the locality is achieved and requires a relatively small increase in the area being surveyed (anticipated to be around 5-10% more of the borough's habitat area during a SINCs re-survey).

If any original baseline multi-habitat parcels are only partially re-surveyed, original data is lost from the un-surveyed area when updates are made by GiGL to the London dataset. For a fuller illustration of this risk, please see *Annex 1*.

To help with the consideration of scope, GiGL will provide the boundaries and original habitat information of all *overlapping* survey parcels, not just habitats within the survey sites of focus.

Annex 1

Identifying scope of partial borough surveys

During some types of survey, not all habitat within a borough or region will be resurveyed, for example a SINC review will survey habitats within the boundaries of existing or candidate SINC, not within adjacent open spaces.

GiGL advises that the original habitat survey boundaries are also considered and any overlapping parcels that are only partially within survey sites are included entirely within the scope of survey. This enables a fuller update of the baseline following the survey and ensures no remnant parcels are left with a loss of data.

An example (hypothetical data)

An original survey parcel with habitats surveyed during the London rolling habitat survey as: Amenity grassland 15%, bare artificial 40%, scattered trees 5%, scrub 25%, bare ground 5%, tall herb 5%, standing water 5%



Original habitat parcel © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100032216. GLA

Only part of the site is designated as a SINC, so during a SINC re-survey one part will generate new data: Scrub 75%, scattered trees, 10%, amenity grassland 5%, tall herb 5%.



Resurveyed SINC area © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100032216. GLA

If SINC survey scope is restricted to just the SINC area, the remaining 'remnant' of the older parcel must now be updated as 'habitats unknown' until a verification or additional survey exercise can take place.

GiGL therefore recommends that these remaining areas are also included in the resurvey, to ensure that all habitats within the borough are represented by either older or newer data. Additionally, as these areas are adjacent to important sites for nature, it is significant that habitat data is available for them.



Remnant areas of original habitat parcel requiring habitat update

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How much land will this entail

The areas around SINCs that can be affected tend to be relatively small, though this will vary from borough to borough. In one example a SINC land resurvey covered 69% of the borough's habitat area. An extra 7% of the borough's habitat area would need to be included to encompass consequential losses of data from the updates within SINC boundaries. This figure will differ depending on the nature of the partial survey but can be provided to the partner at the planning stage.

Annex 2

Example SINC citation:

Borough Grade I	
Site Reference:	BaBI03
Site Name:	Monken Hadley Common
Summary:	A large wooded common with areas of acid grassland and several ponds.
Grid ref:	TQ 264 971
Area (ha):	72.16
Borough(s):	Barnet
Habitat(s):	Acid grassland, Marsh/swamp, Pond/lake, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland
Access:	Free public access (all/most of site)
Ownership:	Trustees of Monken Hadley Common

Site Description:

This large common is the last remaining fragment of the former Enfield Chase. It is mostly wooded, with small areas of grassland, a large artificial lake and two ponds.

The woodland is dominated by pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), with hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) locally abundant, and a few fine old field maples (*Acer campestre*). Holly (*Ilex aquilifolium*) forms a dense understorey in places, while elsewhere a more diverse shrub layer includes Midland hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), field maple, hazel (*Corylus avellana*), crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.) and rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*). The ground flora includes wood speedwell (*Veronica montana*), stinking iris (*Iris foetidissima*), wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), goldilocks buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*), dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), wood melick (*Melica uniflora*), bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and broad buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*). Several of these are ancient woodland indicators, suggesting that fragments of the woodland have survived from before the time when the common was managed as wood-pasture. Butterflies occurring in the woodland include white-letter and purple hairstreaks. Breeding birds include sparrowhawk, tawny owl, cuckoo, stock dove, willow warbler, nuthatch and treecreeper.

Several clearings support acid grassland. The sward is dominated by red fescues (*Festuca rubra*) or wavy hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), with a little mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*) in places, the latter rather rare in London. Typical wild flowers of acid soils can be seen, such as harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), mouse-ear hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), heath groundsel (*Senecio sylvatica*) and common sedge (*Carex nigra*).

The largest of the three water bodies, known as Jack's Lake or Beech Hill Lake, is managed for angling, but contains some wetland vegetation and supports common waterfowl. It is used for feeding by Daubenton's bats, which forage low over the water. The two smaller ponds have a much richer flora, including broad-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), water-starwort (*Callitriche* sp.), lesser spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), common spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), nodding bur-marigold

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(*Bidens cernua*) and branched bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*). The ponds support large populations of amphibians, which attract grass snakes.

Site first notified: 01/01/1997 Boundary last changed: 01/01/1997

Citation last edited: 28/11/2005 Mayor Agreed:

Defunct: N

Last Updated: 05/04/2006