Irice
CERTIFYING IMPACT

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OpenNAT and biodiversity credits: the role of IRICE

OpenNAT
LE BILAN NATURE DES PROJETS

Press kit, 25 October 2026. IRICE, certification body, Aix-en-Provence, France, a NORMAXIS group company.

Key points

- OpenNAT measures the nature a construction project consumes on its site and through its materials, in square metres of equivalent habitat (m²HE) integrated over 50 years. The method, its tables and its engine are open and public; NORMATYS publishes them, IRICE publishes the online calculation tool.
- Two funding schemes rely on OpenNAT. OpenNAT credits will reward a measured and verified nature gain: their method is submitted to the Biodiversity Standard Council and no credit is issued before it is approved. The OpenNAT maintenance contribution, in force since 25 October 2026, funds verified ecological upkeep of green spaces; it is not a credit.
- IRICE certifies projects against the Effinature standards and the Effinature HVE addendum, whose on-site control every two years conditions each payment of the maintenance contribution. IRICE issues no credit, does not keep the registry and sets no price.

About IRICE

IRICE is a third-party certification body for the ecological performance of real estate projects, based in Aix-en-Provence. It applies the Effinature standards owned by NORMATYS: new construction (NCO), renovation (EVO), urban development (HOR) and the Effinature HVE addendum for the ecological management of green spaces in use. Its assessors review files and sites; IRICE takes the certification decision; every certificate is listed in the public register of certified projects on effinature.com.

OpenNAT in figures

Item	Value
Unit	m² of equivalent habitat (m²HE): one m² of a habitat of maximum quality
Time horizon	50 years, year by year

Item	Value
Indicators	Cnat (site), Inat (materials and works), Snat = -(Cnat + Inat), Bnat (biotope coefficient)
Habitat types	191, each with its condition grid and maturation times
Method conventions	70, written and numbered
Uncertainty	1,000 draws over the table intervals
Engine verification	73 benchmark cases reproduced by an independently written calculation notebook
Licences	text and tables CC BY 4.0; engine and tool AGPL-3.0

Until the Biodiversity Standard Council has approved the OpenNAT 1 method, its thresholds are proposals and its results are indicative: an OpenNAT result is neither a certification nor, on its own, an environmental claim.

OpenNAT credits

The OpenNAT Credits method, version 1 of 24 October 2026, describes nature gain credits. It is submitted to the Biodiversity Standard Council; no credit is issued before its approval. Its rules:

- one credit equals 1,000 m²HE·year of creditable gain, roughly 20 m² of reference ecosystem in full integrity for 50 years;
- the gain is measured beyond a reference scenario and beyond everything regulation already requires, and is taken at the 10th percentile of the draws, not at its central value;
- a credit is issued only for a gain observed by survey; a common reserve of 20 to 40% of each issuance covers losses; the gain is secured for 50 years by a French environmental real obligation and a funded management plan;
- no avoided-loss credits; a credit is acquired for own use and then retired, it cannot be resold in version 1; a gain is credited only once, in a single registry;
- a retired credit supports a quantified contribution to the restoration of an identified site, never a claim of neutrality, offsetting or overall positive impact;
- NORMATYS writes the method, a third-party verifier verifies, the registry issues; none of them holds credits or is paid according to their price or volume.

The method was built against published frameworks: Verra Nature Framework, Plan Vivo PV Nature, Biodiversity Credit Alliance principles, English Biodiversity Net Gain.

The OpenNAT maintenance contribution

In force since 25 October 2026, it lets a company fund the ecological upkeep of green spaces it does not own: residential gardens, office grounds, neighbourhood parks of Effinature certified projects. The contributor pays only after each successful Effinature HVE control, carried out on site every two years by an independent certification body. The price, published by NORMATYS, is EUR 1.50 excl. VAT per m² of planted and water areas per year. The owner orders and pays the control, at a flat fee whatever the outcome, and chooses the certification body freely: the Effinature HVE addendum is open to any body that meets the NORMATYS licence terms.

Who does what

Party	Role
NORMATYS	Publishes the OpenNAT methods and tables, keeps the OpenNAT registry, publishes the contribution price
Biodiversity Standard Council	Scientific and technical committee of the NORMATYS standards: approves the methods, their conventions and thresholds
IRICE	Publishes the OpenNAT calculation tool; certifies against Effinature and Effinature HVE; issues no credit, keeps no registry, sets no price
Third-party verifier	Verifies the gains of a credit project before any issuance
Owner	Manages the site under its management plan, orders and pays the control
Contributor or buyer	Funds verified upkeep or acquires credits for own use

OpenNAT and the France Crédits Biodiversité sites

The French law of 23 October 2023 on green industry created state-approved nature compensation, restoration and renaturation sites (articles L163-1 et seq. of the French Environmental Code), known as France Crédits Biodiversité sites, used in particular by developers subject to a compensation obligation. OpenNAT is a voluntary scheme, separate from these sites: an OpenNAT credit or contribution cannot satisfy a compensation obligation, and a plot carrying a unit of an approved site is not eligible for OpenNAT credits.

Resources

- Method, tables, engine and documentation: github.com/normaxis-group/opennat
- Online calculation tool: opennat.irice-certification.com; overview: irice-certification.com/en/opennat
- Biodiversity credits, the NORMATYS position: normatys.org/en/biodiversity-credits
- Maintenance contribution, rules and contract templates: normatys.org/en/maintenance-contribution

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Voluntary scheme, separate from the approved nature compensation, restoration and renaturation sites known as France Crédits Biodiversité sites (articles L163-1 et seq. of the French Environmental Code). It cannot satisfy a compensation obligation.