



IUCN Biodiversity Offsets Policy

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Background – Resolution 110

WCC-2012-Res-110-EN : Biodiversity offsets and related compensatory approaches

CALLS ON the Director General to:

- a) establish a working group to develop an IUCN general policy on biodiversity offsets. The working group will also consider the desirability of IUCN developing global biodiversity offset guidelines. The working group's membership and mode of operating will be based on the One Programme approach involving relevant experts, including from the Secretariat, Members and Commissions.
- b) the working group should expedite the preparation of recommendations for consideration by the IUCN Council by no later than end of 2014; and
- c) as a parallel activity, continue to contribute to the current state of knowledge about the practical implementation of biodiversity offsets by (a) undertaking project work with partners, IUCN Members and Commissions and (b) the sharing of experiences.



Background – Resolution 110

[The working group] should arrive at its recommendations following consideration of:

- i. an evidence-based analysis of existing offset schemes and standards to identify the conceptual weaknesses and strengths and the opportunities and risks associated with the practical implementation of biodiversity offsets;
- ii. scientific literature and expertise to ensure that policy is solidly grounded in robust ecological principles;
- iii. modes of implementation given different national and regional contexts cognizant that biodiversity offset schemes need to specify, among other things, (i) an appropriate conceptual framework(s), (ii) metrics and other methodologies, and (iii) governance and financing mechanisms including means of verification with respect to delivering no net loss, or preferably net positive, outcomes for biodiversity;
- iv. the theoretical and practical meaning and utility of the terms ‘no net loss’ and ‘net positive impacts’ in the context of biodiversity conservation; and
- v. the particular scientific and practical challenges of applying the full mitigation hierarchy to address the impact of activities in critical habitat;



Working Group(s) Composition:

Kerry ten Kate (Forest Trends)

John Pilgrim (The Biodiversity Consultancy)

Tom Brooks (IUCN)

Swapan Mehra (Iora Ecological Solutions)

Fabien Quétier (Biotope)

Steve Edwards (IUCN)

Rachel Asante-Owusu (IUCN)

Cyril Kormos (Wild Foundation; WCPA)

Jane Lawton (IUCN Asia Region)

Martine Maron (University of Queensland)

Gerard Bos (IUCN)

Jonathan Hughes (Scottish Wildlife Trust; IUCN Council)

Philip Gibbons (Australian National University)

Brendan Mackey (Griffith University; IUCN Council)

Jeffrey Manuel (South African National Biodiversity Institute)

James Watson (Wildlife Conservation Society; University of Queensland),

Bruce McKenney (The Nature Conservancy)

Melanie Heath / Ariel Brunner (Birdlife International)

Pippa Howard / Zoe Balmforth (Fauna and Flora International)

Connie Martinez (Global Policy Unit, IUCN)

Jaime Rovira (Ministry of Environment, Chile)

Simon Stuart (Chair IUCN SSC; IUCN Council)

Jan Schipper (Arizona State University, IUCN SSC)

Santiago Martinez (Environmental Law Center, IUCN)



Phase 1 (Completed June 2014)

Nov. 2013 - Technical Study Group established to do preparatory analytical work and have produced a technical paper that:

- ✓ Describes the technical and policy issues concerning biodiversity offsets
- ✓ Presents and describes areas of general stakeholder convergence
- ✓ Highlights unresolved issues concerning biodiversity offsets and how they might be addressed either technically or politically

Consultation process with IUCN Commissions and also at No Net Loss and Beyond Summit in London, June 2014

Technical report and two input papers released at World Parks Congress, Nov 2014



www.iucn.org/offsets



Biodiversity Offsets Technical Study Paper

A report by the IUCN Biodiversity Offsets Technical Study Group



International Union for Conservation of Nature



Biodiversity Offsets: Policy options for governments

An input paper for the IUCN Technical Study Group on
Biodiversity Offsets

Kerry ten Kate and Michael Crowe



Technical conditions for positive outcomes from biodiversity offsets

An input paper for the IUCN Technical Study Group on
Biodiversity Offsets





Progress to date (Phase 2)

- Policy Working Group launched in September 2014
- October workshop of Policy Working Group:
 - Described a proposed scope of IUCN’s biodiversity offsets policy
 - Defined proposed elements of the policy
 - Developed strategy for advancing the policy to the final approval, in Council as well as in the 2016 WCC
- PWG and drafting committee developed draft policy for consultation
- Online Consultation of draft IUCN biodiversity offsets policy- **Ongoing**



Proposed process going forward

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Sept 2015: | PWG meeting to revise document |
| Oct 2015: | Policy draft finalized |
| Nov 2015: | Council motion prepared for Honolulu World Conservation Congress |
| Sept 2016: | Policy voted on by IUCN members in WCC |



Elements of the draft policy:

Background

- 1. Purpose:** "...to provide a framework to guide the design, implementation and governance of biodiversity offset schemes and projects.... to help identify when offsets are and are not an appropriate conservation tool, and ensure that when offset schemes are used they lead to positive conservation outcomes compared to business as usual and minimize the risk of negative conservation outcomes. Biodiversity offsets should also advance national conservation goals and international biodiversity commitments."
- 2. Audience:** "The intention is this policy will to be applied globally by all components of IUCN, including both State and non-governmental organisations. This policy is intended to guide the work of the IUCN Secretariat, Commissions and Member organisations."
- 3. Scope:** "...intended to cover activities by all sectors – both public and private – which have significant levels of impact on biodiversity..."
- 4. Context:** already described earlier in this presentation

Elements of the draft policy:

5. Policy statement

- “...under certain conditions...biodiversity offsets can contribute to positive conservation outcomes.”
- “...biodiversity offsets are only appropriate for projects which have rigorously applied the mitigation hierarchy....”
- “...must never be used to circumvent responsibilities to avoid and minimise....or to justify projects that would otherwise not happen.”
- “...biodiversity offset schemes should be measurable and appropriately implemented, monitored, evaluated and enforced.”
- “The mitigation hierarchy should be applied in order to achieve No Net Loss and preferably Net Gain of biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes.”

6. Biodiversity offsets within the Mitigation Hierarchy

- Description of fundamental principles

Elements of the draft policy:

7. Mitigation Hierarchy and Landscape and Seascape Planning

- “The mitigation hierarchy must be applied at the landscape or seascape level with mitigation measures designed and implemented at a site or project level”

8. Goal for Biodiversity offsets

- “...to achieve NNL and preferably NG of biodiversity...”
- “...compensation measures that are not designed to result in NNL and preferably NG are not biodiversity offsets.”
- “Achieving NNL / NG at the project level should contribute to achievement of existing national and international conservation objectives and priorities...”

9. Limits to Biodiversity offsets

- Where impacts are likely to result in any elements of biodiversity becoming extinct;
- Where the success of the offset action is highly uncertain due to a lack of knowledge or long delays between the impact happening and the offset being put in place;
- Where resources generated by offsets are likely to substitute for, rather than add to, other resources for conservation;
- Where the exchanges involved in the project’s residual losses and the predicted offset gains are considered socially or culturally unacceptable to relevant stakeholders;

Elements of the draft policy:

9. Limits to Biodiversity offsets (continued)

- Where the values that will be lost are specific to a particular place, and therefore cannot be found elsewhere and adequately protected or re-created;
- Where the time lag between the residual loss of biodiversity caused by the project and the gains from the offset cause damage that cannot be remediated and/or puts biodiversity components at unacceptable risk;
- When such action is considered incompatible with IUCN policy and Resolutions, such as impacts on natural or mixed World Heritage Sites and protected areas that are recognized as IUCN categories I, II, III, and IV.

10. Key Elements of Biodiversity Offsets

- Measuring and exchanging biodiversity
- Additionality
- Timeframe
- Uncertainty
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Governance and permanence

11. Glossary



Consultation process:

- ✓ Accepting comments through Sept 15
- ✓ Comments will be made publically available on IUCN website
- ✓ Visit www.iucn.org/offsets to learn more and participate
- ✓ Write: steve.edwards@iucn.org and rachel.asante-owusu@iucn.org if you would like to know more.

Many thanks!