



1. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide the design, implementation and governance of biodiversity offset schemes and projects. The policy also aims 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 for Policy

The intention is this policy will to be applied globally by all components of IUCN, including both State and non-governmental organisations.

This policy has been developed in response to IUCN Resolution WCC-2012-Res-110-EN *Biodiversity offsets and related compensatory approaches (Appendix 1)*, which calls for the development of an IUCN general policy on biodiversity offsets. This policy is intended to guide the work of the IUCN Secretariat, Commissions and Member organisations.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy is intended to cover activities by all sectors – both public and private – which have significant levels of impact on biodiversity, including those cited in the first paragraph of IUCN Resolution WCC-2012-Res-110-EN *Biodiversity offsets and related compensatory approaches*.

4. Context of this policy

During the IUCN inter-sessional period 2008-2012, the Council conducted an analysis to identify gaps between IUCN general policy (e.g. Resolutions and Recommendations) and emerging issues on which IUCN needed to have a clear position. One of the gaps identified was biodiversity offsets. As a result, IUCN Members at the 2012 World Conservation Congress adopted WCC-2012-Res-110-EN *Biodiversity offsets and related compensatory approaches*. It called for the Director General to establish a working group comprising experts from the Secretariat, Members and Commissions and others as required, to develop an IUCN policy on biodiversity offsets through a consultative process.

5. Policy Statement

Based upon the available evidence, IUCN has found that under certain conditions outlined in this policy, biodiversity offsets can contribute to positive conservation outcomes.



34 **However, biodiversity offsets are only appropriate for projects which have rigorously applied the**
35 **mitigation hierarchy (see section 6) and when a full set of alternatives to the project have been**
36 **considered. Biodiversity offsets must never be used to circumvent responsibilities to avoid and**
37 **minimise damage to biodiversity, or to justify projects that would otherwise not happen.**

38
39 Biodiversity offsets should be appropriately designed so that they address residual loss after fully
40 considering the alternatives, including impact avoidance and minimization. Furthermore,
41 biodiversity offset schemes should be measurable and appropriately implemented, monitored,
42 evaluated and enforced. Otherwise, they could pose a significant risk to biodiversity that
43 outweighs any benefit that may be gained.

44
45 **The mitigation hierarchy should be applied in order to achieve No Net Loss (NNL) and preferably**
46 **Net Gain (NG) of biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes.** Achievement of NNL/NG of
47 biodiversity relies upon clear and transparent application of well-designed avoidance, minimisation
48 and restoration measures, as well as biodiversity offsets when all previous steps have been fulfilled
49 to the extent feasible.

50

51 **6. The Role of Biodiversity Offsets within the Mitigation Hierarchy**

52 **Offsets must only occur after all previous steps in the mitigation hierarchy have been considered**
53 **and no alternatives are available. Avoidance is the first and most important step in the**
54 **mitigation hierarchy.**

55
56 No two areas of habitat or species populations are identical, and therefore some biodiversity (e.g.,
57 genetic combinations) and related values will always be lost in offset exchanges. Given this reality,
58 and the inherent uncertainties and risks linked to offsets, using biodiversity **offsets must be a**
59 **measure of last resort.**

60
61 An appropriate application of the mitigation hierarchy must follow the following fundamental
62 principles:

- 63 1. Explicitly consider the project within a broader landscape or seascape context.
- 64 2. Thoroughly examine lower impact alternatives in the project design, including not
65 proceeding with the project at all, recognising that not all impacts can be offset to achieve
66 NNL.
- 67 3. Give priority to avoiding any damage to biodiversity.
- 68 4. Take full account of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, geographically and over time.
- 69 5. Clearly separate impact avoidance, minimisation and on-site restoration measures from
70 offsets.
- 71 6. Design offsets to achieve at least NNL and preferably a NG of biodiversity
- 72 7. Ensure any biodiversity offsets used as part of the mitigation hierarchy secure additional
73 conservation outcomes that would not have happened otherwise.
- 74 8. Use approaches that are science-based, transparent and participatory.



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- 75 9. Follow a Rights-based Approach, as defined by [IUCN resolution WCC-2012-Res-099](#)
76 10. Identify and put in place the legal, institutional and financial measures needed to ensure
77 long-term governance of all mitigation measures (including any biodiversity offsets).
78 11. Apply a rigorous monitoring, evaluation and enforcement system that includes
79 independent verification of all mitigation measures
80

81 **7. Mitigation Hierarchy and Landscape and Seascape planning**

82 **The mitigation hierarchy must be applied at the landscape or seascape level with mitigation**
83 **measures designed and implemented at a site or project level.**
84

85 The mitigation hierarchy should first be applied at the landscape or seascape level, and then at the
86 site or project level. This is essential for moving beyond a reactive project-by-project approach to
87 mitigation to one that is pro-active in applying the mitigation hierarchy, incorporates cumulative
88 impacts, supports mitigation actions at the right ecological scale, and delivers better outcomes for
89 conservation and sustainable development. The site-level application is then needed to ensure
90 biodiversity losses and gains are assessed in detail, so mitigation measures, including offsets, can
91 be designed and implemented according to the specific context.
92

93 In order for the mitigation hierarchy to be applied effectively, national governments and multi-
94 lateral institutions should give priority to spatial planning at the landscape and seascape level,
95 including addressing biodiversity conservation priorities in the context of development, and
96 ensuring integrated planning is used in sound land use decision-making.
97

98 **8. Goal for Biodiversity Offsets**

99 **Only after applying the earlier steps in the mitigation hierarchy should biodiversity offsets be**
100 **employed to address the residual impact in order to achieve at least NNL and preferably a NG at**
101 **the project level. NNL or NG refer to the outcome achieved compared to a baseline of what is**
102 **likely to have occurred in the absence of the project and the offset. In addition, societal values**
103 **should be captured and used to inform the design and implementation of biodiversity offsets.**
104

105 The aim of biodiversity offsets is to achieve NNL and preferably a NG of biodiversity with respect to
106 species populations, the composition and inter-relationships of communities of species, habitat
107 structure, ecosystem function and associated biocultural values.

108 Compensation measures that are not designed to result in NNL and preferably NG are not
109 biodiversity offsets. Therefore, financial payments intended to achieve offset outcomes must
110 result in a direct measurable biodiversity gain equivalent to the loss arising from the impacts on
111 biodiversity associated with the project in order to be considered a biodiversity offset.
112



113 Baselines are the reference against which NNL and NG are measured. Baselines and timeframes
114 should be explicitly defined as part of offset design and prior to offset implementation.
115

116 Achieving NNL/NG at the project level should contribute to achievement of existing national and
117 international biodiversity conservation objectives and priorities, including international obligations,
118 subject to the conditions outlined below and in particular under section 10.2.
119

120 9. Limits to Biodiversity Offsets

121 **Certain impacts on some elements of biodiversity cannot be offset. Additionally, there are some**
122 **elements of biodiversity for which impacts could theoretically be offset, but with a high risk of**
123 **failure. Under such circumstances, biodiversity offsets are not appropriate.**
124

125 Offsets must not be used:

- 126 • Where impacts are likely to result in any elements of biodiversity becoming extinct;
- 127 • Where the success of the offset action is highly uncertain due to a lack of knowledge or
128 long delays between the impact happening and the offset being put in place;
- 129 • Where resources generated by offsets are likely to substitute for, rather than add to,
130 other resources for conservation;
- 131 • Where the exchanges involved in the project's residual losses and the predicted offset
132 gains are considered socially or culturally unacceptable to relevant stakeholders;
- 133 • Where the values that will be lost are specific to a particular place, and therefore cannot
134 be found elsewhere and adequately protected or re-created;
- 135 • Where the time lag between the residual loss of biodiversity caused by the project and
136 the gains from the offset cause damage that cannot be remediated and/or puts
137 biodiversity components at unacceptable risk;
- 138 • When such action is considered incompatible with IUCN policy and Resolutions, such as
139 impacts on natural or mixed World Heritage Sites and protected areas that are recognized
140 as IUCN categories I, II, III, and IV.

141
142 The above parameters align with the following IUCN Resolutions, among others:
143

- 144 • [Recommendation 2.82 Protection and conservation of biological diversity of protected areas](#)
145 [from the negative impacts of mining and exploration, adopted at the 2nd IUCN World](#)
146 [Conservation Congress \(Amman, 2000\),](#)
147
- 148 • [Recommendation 3.082 The Extractive Industries Review, adopted at the 3rd session of the](#)
149 [World Conservation Congress \(Bangkok,](#)
150 [2004\)](#)
151



- 152 • [Resolution 4.087 Impacts of infrastructure and extractive industries on protected areas, and](#)
153 [Recommendation 4.136 Biodiversity, protected areas, indigenous peoples and mining](#)
154 [activities, adopted at the 4th World Conservation Congress \(Barcelona, 2008\)](#)
155

156 **10. Key Elements of Biodiversity Offsets**

157 The following key elements and issues mentioned within this policy may be subject to further guidelines.

158 **10.1 Measuring and Exchanging Biodiversity**

159 While most mitigation measures need to address more than one species and the habitat affected
160 by a project, it is not always possible or practical to establish reliable quantities and qualities of
161 every biodiversity component affected. Therefore, as the basis for assessing affected biodiversity
162 and quantifying losses and gains, defensible and replicable measures and units of exchange are
163 sometimes needed. These should include a range of surrogates or proxies that represent
164 biodiversity overall, plus measures that separately capture rare, threatened, idiosyncratic or
165 particularly important elements of biodiversity. Depending on the biodiversity affected, different
166 surrogates may require different metrics that allow for transparent accounting of the related
167 biodiversity losses and gains.

168
169 Different types of conservation activities can be used to offset biodiversity losses, as long as they
170 are 'like-for-like or-better'. This means that ecologically equivalent biodiversity affected by the
171 project should be conserved through the offset, unless there is good scientific justification for the
172 offset to conserve a different kind of biodiversity which is of higher conservation priority than the
173 type affected.

174 In addition to conservation measures that improve the condition or state of the target biodiversity,
175 for example through restoration, activities to avert biodiversity loss may also be utilised as a way
176 to offset biodiversity losses. An 'averted loss offset' generates biodiversity gains (relative to a
177 credible reference scenario) by protecting or maintaining biodiversity that already exists at a site,
178 but which is likely to be lost or degraded without the offset's protection or maintenance activities.

179
180 Offsets should avoid simply displacing impacts that are harmful to biodiversity to other locations.
181 Such 'leakage' is an issue that should be addressed through offset policy, guidelines and above all
182 through landscape-level, integrated land-use planning.

183 **10.2 Additionality**

184 A biodiversity offset must result in a biodiversity gain that is additional to that which would have
185 occurred without the offset taking place.

186
187 The expansion of existing protected areas and creation of new protected areas can be valid
188 biodiversity offsets, so long as they do not displace or reduce other existing or future public sector



189 funding. There is high risk that the use of offsets to fund existing biodiversity conservation
190 commitments, such as the administration of protected areas, could lead to ‘cost shifting’ and to an
191 erosion of conservation funding, including budgets for the protection and management of
192 protected areas. Therefore, offsets schemes must be designed in such a way as to minimize this
193 risk. In countries where it is reasonable to expect commitments for new protected area
194 designations and improved protection and management of existing protected areas to be met and
195 adequately funded without a contribution from biodiversity offsets, there should be a commitment
196 that no cost shifting or budget displacement will take place.

197 Where existing or proposed biodiversity conservation commitments are unlikely to be met, offsets
198 may be a useful way to make progress towards meeting those commitments. In all cases, national
199 policies should be designed to move away from the use of offsets to help achieve existing
200 biodiversity conservation commitments, and ensure that that any funding for conservation is not
201 dependent on the destruction of biodiversity elsewhere.

202 **10.3 Timeframe**

203 The offset gain should last at least as long as the impact being addressed. In most cases, this means
204 in perpetuity.

205 Time delays between an impact occurring and an offset gain being realised must be minimised, and
206 any delays accounted for in the metrics and design of the offset. Moreover, offsets should be
207 avoided if the time lag itself could cause damage that cannot be remediated or if such a lag puts
208 biodiversity components at an unacceptable risk. Where possible, the offset should be in place
209 before the impact occurs.

210 **10.4 Uncertainty**

211 Biodiversity offsets must account for uncertainty by clearly documenting data sources,
212 assumptions, and knowledge gaps. There is always some uncertainty about the size and nature of
213 the loss at the impact site, and the size and nature of the gain at the offset site. Where possible,
214 uncertainty should be minimised by requiring the demonstration of offset gains before the impact
215 occurs.

216 Another major source of uncertainty concerns the likelihood of successful long term
217 implementation, monitoring and enforcement of biodiversity offsets. Impacts (and offset gains)
218 must be monitored and addressed over time.

219 **10.5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

220 To evaluate NNL and NG properly, there must be sufficient baseline surveys undertaken prior to
221 any impacts and any offset; and continued surveys after the impacts and offset activities to
222 measure the losses and gains that have actually transpired.



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223 The nature of the legal tools used in the offset system will in part define the organisations and
224 relevant stakeholders with responsibilities for enforcement and ensuring compliance.

225 Monitoring and evaluation systems should include independent verification of all mitigation
226 measures.

227 **10.6 Governance and permanence**

228 The legal, institutional and financial measures needed to ensure that the biodiversity offset
229 activities are successfully implemented for at least as long as the project's impacts last should be
230 identified and put in place.

231 There is a range of regulatory options for NNL and NG from comprehensive legal frameworks to
232 simple requirements supplemented by voluntary guidelines. Governments should, at least, set out
233 minimum requirements for NNL and preferably NG.

234
235 Conflicts of interest may arise when Governments are setting policy frameworks and/or operating
236 offsets, while seeking offsets for public sector projects and possibly benefitting from offsetting
237 schemes. Such conflicts of interest must be openly identified and addressed.

238
239 Governments must ensure that sufficient funds and expertise are available to administer NNL / NG
240 schemes effectively, including monitoring and enforcement. As such, project developers must be
241 required to demonstrate they have committed and set aside adequate funds to cover the long
242 term implementation and monitoring of NNL/NG projects.

243
244 Governments should also establish mandatory offsetting schemes incorporating at least the
245 minimum legal requirements, notwithstanding:

- 246 • A combination of mandatory and voluntary schemes may be helpful to achieve NNL/NG outcomes,
247 for example introducing mandatory requirements for prospective projects alongside voluntary
248 commitments for retrospective projects.
- 249 • In the absence of mandatory schemes being in place, as an interim measure, applying voluntary
250 best-practice standards can function in the short term

251

252 This policy may be adapted in the future, and will be supplemented by the development of detailed
253 guidance.



254 **11. Glossary**

255 Relevant literature may contain different definitions of the terms used throughout this document.
256 Additional definitions may be added. The aim of this glossary is not to determine a unique
257 definition for the terms set out here, but rather to enable the reader to understand how terms are
258 used in this policy. Further detail and full citations can be found in the IUCN study, "[Biodiversity
259 Offsets Technical Study Paper.](#)"

260

261 **Additionality**

262 The need for a compensation measure to provide a new contribution to conservation, additional to any
263 existing values, i.e. the conservation outcomes it delivers would not have occurred without it. Source:
264 McKenney & Kiesecker (2010)

265 **Baseline**

266 A description of existing conditions to provide a starting point (e.g. pre-project condition of biodiversity)
267 against which comparisons can be made (e.g. post-impact condition of biodiversity), allowing the change to
268 be quantified. (BBOP 2012c).

269 **Biodiversity offsets**

270 Biodiversity offsets are measurable conservation outcomes resulting from actions designed to compensate
271 for significant residual adverse biodiversity impacts arising from project development after appropriate
272 prevention and mitigation measures have been taken. The goal of biodiversity offsets is to achieve NNL and
273 preferably a NG of biodiversity on the ground with respect to species composition, habitat structure,
274 ecosystem function and people's use and cultural values associated with biodiversity. Source: BBOP (2012a)

275 **Compensation**

276 Measures to recompense, make good or pay damages for loss of biodiversity caused by a project. In some
277 languages 'compensation' is synonymous with 'offset', but in this paper 'compensation' is a more general
278 term of which biodiversity offsets are just one subset. Compensation may achieve NNL/NG (in which case it
279 is an offset), but in other cases, compensation can involve reparation that falls short of achieving no net loss
280 (and is therefore not an offset). This can be for a variety of reasons, including that the conservation actions
281 were not planned to achieve no net loss; that the residual losses of biodiversity caused by the project and
282 gains achievable by compensation are not quantified; that no mechanism for long term implementation has
283 been established; that it is impossible to offset the impacts (for instance, because they are too severe or
284 pre-impact data are lacking, so it is impossible to know what was lost as a result of the project); or that the



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285 compensation is through payment for training, capacity building, research or other outcomes that will not
286 result in measurable conservation outcomes on the ground. Source: BBOP (2012a)

287 **Currency**

288 Definitions of currency, offset ratios and multipliers vary and are often conflated in the literature. In this
289 paper, we consider currencies (or metrics) to be the unitary measures of biodiversity lost, gained or
290 exchanged. These vary from very basic measures such as area, to sophisticated quantitative indices of
291 multiple biodiversity components which may be variously weighted. Source: Adapted from BBOP (2012c)

292 **Ecological equivalence**

293 In the context of biodiversity offsets, this term is synonymous with the concept of 'like for like' and refers to
294 areas with highly comparable biodiversity components. This similarity can be observed in terms of species
295 diversity, functional diversity and composition, ecological integrity or condition, landscape context (e.g.,
296 connectivity, landscape position, adjacent land uses or condition, patch size, etc.), and ecosystem services
297 (including people's use and cultural values). Source: BBOP (2012c)

298 **Exchange rules**

299 A set of rules established by policy makers or offset planners to define which components of biodiversity
300 can and cannot be substituted for others in a biodiversity offset, and how such substitutions can occur.
301 These rules may be explicit, or they may be implicit within the definitions adopted of biodiversity offsets
302 and associated requirements, such as 'like for like' and 'trading up'. Source: BBOP (2012c)

303 304 **Like-for-like or better (See 'Ecological equivalence' and 'Trading up')**

305 **Metrics**

306 A set of measurements that quantifies results. See also '**Currency**'.

307 **Mitigation hierarchy**

308 The mitigation hierarchy comprises:

- 309 a. **Avoidance:** measures taken to avoid creating impacts from the outset, such as careful spatial or
310 temporal placement of elements of infrastructure, in order to completely avoid impacts on certain
311 components of biodiversity. This results in a change to a 'business as usual' approach.
- 312 b. **Minimisation:** measures taken to reduce the duration, intensity and / or extent of impacts that
313 cannot be completely avoided, as far as is practically feasible.
- 314 c. **Rehabilitation / restoration:** measures taken to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems or restore
315 cleared ecosystems following exposure to impacts that cannot be completely avoided and / or
316 minimised.



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317 d. Compensation or **Offset**: measures taken to compensate for any residual significant, adverse
318 impacts that cannot be avoided, minimised and / or rehabilitated or restored. Measures to
319 achieve NNL or a NG of biodiversity for at least as long as the project's impacts are biodiversity
320 offsets. Offsets can take the form of positive management interventions such as restoration of
321 degraded habitat, arrested degradation or averted risk, where there is imminent or projected
322 loss of biodiversity. Measures that address residual impacts but are not quantified to achieve
323 NNL or not secured for the long term are compensation, otherwise known as compensatory
324 mitigation. Source: BBOP (2012a)

325 **Mitigation measures**

326 The full set of activities covering the entire mitigation hierarchy.

327 **No Net Loss and a Net Gain**

328 A target for a development project in which the impacts on biodiversity caused by the project are balanced
329 or outweighed by measures taken to avoid and minimise the project's impacts, to undertake on-site
330 restoration and finally to offset the residual impacts, so that no loss remains. Where the gain exceeds the
331 loss, the term 'net gain' (NG) may be used instead of no net loss. Source: BBOP (2012c)

332 **Non-offsetable threshold / Non-offsetable impacts**

333 This is a level of severity beyond which impacts on biodiversity by a development project may no longer be
334 capable of being offset. For example, it is not possible to offset the global extinction of a species. Levels of
335 irreplaceability and vulnerability of the biodiversity components to be affected by the project, and the
336 degree of uncertainty with respect to severity of impacts and the probability of success of a biodiversity
337 offset, are all likely to be material factors in determining whether impacts on biodiversity can be offset.
338 Source: BBOP (2012c). See also BBOP (2012d) and Pilgrim *et al.* (2013a).

339 **Offset (See Biodiversity offset)**

340 **Trading up (or 'like-for-like or better')**

341 Conserving through an offset components of biodiversity that are a higher conservation priority (for
342 example because they are more irreplaceable and vulnerable) than those affected by the development
343 project for which the offset is envisaged. Source: BBOP (2012c)

344



345 **Appendix 1**

346 **WCC-2012-Res-110-EN**

347 **Biodiversity offsets and related compensatory approaches**

348

349 NOTING that mining and logging practices, infrastructure development and the expansion of primary
350 production for food, fibre and fuel through land conversion are often a major cause of the loss of
351 biodiversity through habitat loss and degradation;

352

353 ACKNOWLEDGING that such practices remain central to many countries' economic development and
354 poverty reduction strategies and that governments are facing the challenge of how to align economic
355 development with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services;

356

357 RECOGNIZING the growing use of biodiversity offsets, by governments, by companies undertaking
358 biodiversity offsets voluntarily for business reasons, by banks and investors requiring biodiversity offsets as
359 a condition to access credit, and by civil society encouraging developers to undertake biodiversity offsets;

360

361 UNDERSTANDING that the best practice of biodiversity offsets is to address the residual impacts only after
362 the full mitigation hierarchy is applied;

363

364 RECOGNIZING that, although biodiversity offsets are already a part of the legal framework of several
365 countries, including wetland and conservation banking in the USA and habitat compensation requirements
366 in Australia, Canada and the European Union, global and regional guidelines for application by the private
367 sector are still in development;

368

369 RECOGNIZING that although these schemes differ in their features and implementation around the world,
370 they share an aim to mitigate biodiversity loss by allowing activities that destroy or degrade biodiversity in
371 one place to be compensated by conservation in another location;

372

373 NOTING the work and products, developed by the Business and Biodiversity Offset Programme, including its
374 proposed 'Standard on Biodiversity Offsets';

375

376 NOTING the contribution of the private sector in development and implementation of biodiversity offsets
377 approaches;

378

379 NOTING that the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Decision X/21 *Business engagement* requests
380 the Executive Secretary "to encourage the development and application of tools and mechanisms that can
381 further facilitate the engagement of businesses in integrating biodiversity concerns into their work...",
382 including offsets;

383

384 NOTING also that biodiversity offset mechanisms are one of the six areas designated for further
385 development as an innovative means of mobilizing resources for the implementation of the CBD, identified
386 in CBD Decision IX/11;

387 ALSO NOTING that Ramsar Resolution X.12 "encourages decision makers, especially business leaders, to
388 develop and adopt policies, strategies and operational approaches...which avoid, remedy or as a last option



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389 'offset' adverse impacts on wetland ecosystems, including considering the potential benefits that could be
390 derived from the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme...";

391
392 NOTING that there are increasing scientific and policy questions being asked about the ecological validity
393 and practical effectiveness of biodiversity offset schemes and related mechanisms, in particular in critical
394 habitat, and that there is increasing work in this area involving the IUCN Secretariat and Members, plus
395 increasing demand from all sectors for IUCN's advice on biodiversity offsets and related mechanisms; and
396

397 ACKNOWLEDGING that the effectiveness of biodiversity offsets in practice is dependent on the existence of
398 an enabling policy environment including, *inter alia*, good governance, the rule of law, and accountable
399 government and corporate institutions;

400

401 ***The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:***

402

403 CALLS ON the Director General to:

404 a. establish a working group to develop an IUCN general policy on biodiversity offsets. The working group
405 will also consider the desirability of IUCN developing global biodiversity offset guidelines. The working
406 group's membership and mode of operating will be based on the One Programme approach involving
407 relevant experts, including from the Secretariat, Members and Commissions. It should arrive at its
408 recommendations following consideration of:

409

410 i. an evidence-based analysis of existing offset schemes and standards to identify the conceptual
411 weaknesses and strengths and the opportunities and risks associated with the practical implementation of
412 biodiversity offsets;

413

414 ii. scientific literature and expertise to ensure that policy is solidly grounded in robust ecological principles;

415

416 iii. modes of implementation given different national and regional contexts cognizant that biodiversity
417 offset schemes need to specify, among other things, (i) an appropriate conceptual framework(s), (ii) metrics
418 and other methodologies, and (iii) governance and financing mechanisms including means of verification
419 with respect to delivering no net loss, or preferably net positive, outcomes for biodiversity;

420

421 iv. the theoretical and practical meaning and utility of the terms 'no net loss' and 'net positive impacts' in
422 the context of biodiversity conservation; and

423

424 v. the particular scientific and practical challenges of applying the full mitigation hierarchy to address the
425 impact of activities in critical habitat;

426

427 b. the working group should expedite the preparation of recommendations for consideration by the IUCN
428 Council by no later than end of 2014; and

429

430 c. as a parallel activity, continue to contribute to the current state of knowledge about the practical
431 implementation of biodiversity offsets by (a) undertaking project work with partners, IUCN Members and
432 Commissions and (b) the sharing of experiences.

433