Understanding barriers and opportunities to develop biodiversity offsets

Project description

Biodiversity offsets are measurable conservation outcomes developed to compensate for unavoidable residual impacts to biodiversity resulting from project development to ensure no net loss or even a net gain in biodiversity. This is an emerging area and is subject to ongoing trials and improvements, so represents a priority for science-policy groups such as CCI to actively engage in.

On the 1st June 2009, Shared Challenges helped to bring together organisations from CCI and beyond to discuss offsetting in a UK, EU and international context. This allowed CCI to input directly to a technical report for the European Commission on habitat banking in the EU. The scoping study carried out by the EU followed one of the group’s key recommendations by including a no-net-loss policy.

Work in this rapidly changing area is ongoing, including running a joint CCI and CCF workshop in July 2011 to consolidate an expert review of version 1 of the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Program (BBOP) Standard (published in January 2012), including Principles, Criteria and Indicators for biodiversity offsetting. The Programme also helped Samir Whittaker, a student on the Conservation Leadership Masters course, to convene a workshop to assess alternative governance models for developing a BBOP draft standard as part of his dissertation.

Aims

The general aim of this project is to identify and strengthen a network of people interested and involved in biodiversity offsetting and to use their contacts, knowledge and experience find ways in which CCI can engage with ongoing policy and scientific developments in this area.

Key activities

- A meeting with organisations from CCI and beyond (1st June 2009) to discuss offsetting in a UK, EU and international context.
- A consultation meeting (10th July 2011) to discuss and consolidate feedback on the Draft Principles, Indicators and Criteria being produced by the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP).
- A discussion meeting (31st May 2012) to discuss alternative governance models for BBOP as it develops into a draft standard as part of a student project for the Masters in Conservation Leadership.
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**Outputs**

An unpublished review paper was prepared for the workshop in 2009 highlighting ‘Key science themes in biodiversity offsets and the concept of no net loss’ (this was circulated internally to CCI partners and for more information, please contact the project leads).

Collated comments stemming from the joint CCI and CCF workshop in 2011 were incorporated into the BBOP Standard on Biodiversity Offsets (Principles, Criteria and Indicators).

**Conservation impact**

The meeting in June 2009 allowed participants to input directly to a technical report for the European Commission on habitat banking in the EU. This scoping study followed one of the group’s key recommendations by including a no-net-loss policy.

BBOP incorporated feedback from the meeting in July 2011 into the new Principles, Criteria and Indicators. This was recognized as a valuable contribution to this public consultation process and as a result, BBOP are likely to call on CCI for similar input in the future.

**CCI partners involved:**

- UNEP-WCMC
- The Departments of
- Fauna and Flora International (FFI)
- BirdLife International
- RSPB
- Departments in the University of Cambridge, including Zoology and Geography

**Other organisations**

- The Business and Biodiversity Offsets Program (BBOP)
- The Biodiversity Consultancy

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