

The Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP): planning policies and projects to achieve a net gain of biodiversity

BBOP Vision, Mission, Goals, Strategy, Plan

Approved by the BBOP Advisory Group and adopted by the Executive Committee on 20 January 2016

Introduction

Since its inception in 2004, the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP), has grown to become a partnership of some 80 leading organisations and individuals including biodiversity footprint companies, environmental consultancies and other service providers, governments, conservation organisations and financial institutions from around the world. During this time the BBOP partners have worked to clarify and firmly embed the role of biodiversity offsets in the broader Mitigation Hierarchy (avoid, minimise, restore and offset) with a view to achieving no net loss and preferably a net gain of biodiversity, and to develop the principles and methodologies required to support best practice in biodiversity offsets. Now in its third phase of work (2012- 2016), BBOP continues to adapt its strategy and activities. BBOP aims to meet the members' expectation that high quality mitigation, with an emphasis on avoidance and including biodiversity offsets as a last step for residual impacts on biodiversity, will become a standard part of the development process, resulting in long term and globally significant conservation outcomes. The following vision, mission, goals and strategy for the programme guide its work.

BBOP's vision

BBOP envisages a future in which the mitigation hierarchy is rigorously applied worldwide to a high standard by governments and the private sector for projects in all sectors, emphasizing avoidance and minimization, to achieve no net loss and preferably a net gain of biodiversity. Following avoidance, minimization and restoration, biodiversity offsets will be used, where appropriate, to reach this goal. BBOP also envisages that, in the future, net gain of biodiversity will be the goal of relevant policies, plans and programmes, particularly in land-use planning.

BBOP's mission

BBOP's mission is to provide leadership in the mitigation of impacts on biodiversity by developing and encouraging transparency, accountability and the wide application of best practice, science and the highest standards to strengthen avoidance, minimization, restoration and finally offsetting, based on agreed principles.

BBOP's goals

- To provide a global forum for collective learning and the dissemination of best practice in the mitigation of impacts on biodiversity and the sharing of experience on implementation.
- To assist developers in designing and implementing mitigation measures including biodiversity offsets that produce measurable and long term net positive conservation outcomes in the widest range of countries and sectors possible.
- To support the development of institutional, financial, legal and regulatory frameworks and safeguards which support no net loss and preferably a net gain of biodiversity, including biodiversity offsets.
- To strengthen avoidance and minimization practices and approaches and to improve biodiversity offset concepts and methods informed by practical experience and research, stakeholder engagement and scientific practice.
- To promote development and adoption of standards and methods for verification in the domain of no net loss and the mitigation hierarchy, such as the Standard on Biodiversity Offsets, with a view to ensuring that mitigation measures including offsets are applied when appropriate and to a high standard.
- To facilitate transparent and accountable partnerships among developers, governments, NGOs, researchers, communities and indigenous peoples that strengthen delivery of high quality and long lasting mitigation measures, including offsets, and to promote coordination among stakeholders
- To promote, in collaboration with other relevant initiatives and organizations, public accountability and transparency on managing the impacts of projects on biodiversity and fostering long-term conservation outcomes.
- To explore and communicate innovations in mitigation measures such as biodiversity offsets including market-based and community-oriented approaches.
- To align all mitigation measures from avoidance to biodiversity offsets with efforts to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and priorities for biodiversity conservation and with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- To promote the integration of mitigation measures including biodiversity offsets into national and regional development plans to deliver permanent conservation outcomes

BBOP's strategy

BBOP's goals will be pursued through the following set of interrelated and synergistic clusters of activities. The number of activities we can accomplish will depend on the funding and human resources available, including from the network of BBOP members:

1. COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Communication and Interpretation:

- **Understanding, trends and analysis:** BBOP will increase awareness and understanding among policy-makers and practitioners of trends, developments and best practices around the world in applying the mitigation hierarchy and the motivations and drivers for doing so.

- **Communicating better, based on shared language:** Drawing on its strength as the international, multi-stakeholder forum for developing and applying best practice in mitigation of impacts on biodiversity, BBOP will help its members and other companies, governments, financial institutions and members of civil society develop shared knowledge and language so they can collaborate more effectively.
- **Distilling complexity:** BBOP will prepare practical guidance materials to explain the mitigation hierarchy, including biodiversity offsets, helping people understand its complexity, so best practice becomes more accessible and do-able to as many policy-makers and practitioners as possible.

Coordination and Engagement

- **Creating an inventory of initiatives:** BBOP will compile and maintain an inventory of the relevant work (such as documents and tools) produced by initiatives working in related fields, show how these different initiatives complement each other.
- **Collaborating:** BBOP will seek to collaborate with the relevant initiatives working in related areas, when appropriate, so that together we can offer coordinated information and advice.
- **Ensuring relevance to policy targets:** In its work with policy-makers, BBOP will endeavour to show how improving mitigation measures, including biodiversity offsets, contributes to the Aichi targets, and will encourage policy-makers to create a mandate for doing so within intergovernmental agreements.
- **Coordinating:** Core to BBOP's values is to encourage coordination and collaboration in its sphere of activity, so the BBOP Secretariat will make connections between organisations whenever possible and respond to requests from Advisory Group members and others, as resources allow, to help coordinate activities.

Case Studies

- **Drawing lessons learned and sharing examples:** Acknowledging the power of inspiring examples and the demonstration of lessons learned around the world, BBOP will endeavour to find and disseminate case studies on a broad set of issues, ranging from avoidance, minimisation, restoration and various aspects of design and implementation of biodiversity offsets to coordinated landscape-level planning.

Community of Practice

- **Broadening participation:** The BBOP Secretariat will run and broaden the Community of Practice in order to provide a network and forum for the growing number of organisations and individuals (including BBOP members) working on various aspects of the mitigation hierarchy, including biodiversity offsets to share and learn about expertise and experience on relevant topics. This will principally be done through:
 - **Webinars:** On subjects requested and on subjects the Secretariat feels would be informative and useful. The webinars are open to members and non-members alike, although the Secretariat prioritises issues requested by and relevant to paying members.
 - **Meetings:** When the opportunity arises for face-to-face meetings, workshops, on-line meetings and other approaches that allow BBOP members and non-members to spend time together sharing experience, such as the Summit 'To No Net Loss of Biodiversity and

Beyond' in June 2014. In addition, BBOP will continue to encourage opportunities to collaborate with CSBI and other organisations working in this space.

- **LinkedIn forum:** Maintaining an on-line discussion forum on issues related to No Net Loss of biodiversity.

2. TOOLS, PRODUCTS AND APPROACHES:

- **Scaling-up:** BBOP will expand the focus on mitigation from individual projects towards a programmatic approach for companies and governments, offering a vision for scaling-up and considering cumulative impacts.
- **Roadmap for businesses:** For businesses, BBOP will develop a roadmap tool illustrating a pathway companies can take towards Net Gain. Using vocabulary familiar to business, this will aid practical understanding and planning of the application of the mitigation hierarchy within a company across all its operations and through its supply chain.
- **Roadmap and checklist for governments:** For governments, BBOP will develop a roadmap and checklist governments can use to develop and operate a robust system with the aim of achieving No Net Loss or a Net Gain of biodiversity. This will offer suggestions for a multi-department process involving not only the Ministries of the Environment but Ministries of Mines, Energy, Transport, Agriculture, Planning, Finance and other relevant policy-makers, as well as involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in the process. It will also refer to Strategic Environmental Assessments and integration into climate change and other relevant areas of policy.
- **Training and Standard:** The BBOP Standard provides a verifiable and auditable framework for following the mitigation hierarchy and establishing mitigation measures, including biodiversity offsets, with a view to achieving No Net Loss or a Net Gain of biodiversity. At the same time, there is a long-standing bottleneck of qualified consultants capable of designing and assessing mitigation measures (including biodiversity offsets) to the level needed to satisfy the BBOP Standard, IFC Performance Standard 6 and other similar safeguards. To build capacity and enable more individuals and organisations around the world to plan and implement measures aimed at achieving NNL/NG of biodiversity, and to use the BBOP Standard, PS6 and similar standards appropriately, BBOP will develop a curriculum and train consultants and other interested stakeholders such as conservation experts, developers and regulators. BBOP will explore the possibilities of maintaining and publishing a register of individuals trained to various levels.
- **Mainstreaming no net loss or a net gain of biodiversity into policy and practice:** BBOP Advisory Group members will seek opportunities to integrate provisions of the Standard on Biodiversity Offsets into relevant standards, social and environmental safeguards and processes, to promote best practice, including through greater uptake of the Standard on Biodiversity Offsets, and to harmonise existing standards. Examples of relevant processes include the revision of the World Bank Safeguards Policies, the revision of the IFC Performance Standard and the development by IUCN of a policy on biodiversity offsets
- **Guidance and explanation:** BBOP and others have already provided extensive guidance on a broad range of topics related to the mitigation of impacts on biodiversity, including biodiversity offsets, so the preparation of further detailed guidance is not the top priority of the group. However, there are some gaps in existing guidance and it is often long and technical, so BBOP plans to fill these gaps and provide summary, explanatory guidance on topics such as the following when possible: avoidance and restoration steps; additionality in protected areas; baselines for projects and for national systems;

integration of compensation and offsetting into EIA (including timelines and also sharing EIA data); how to follow the mitigation hierarchy during land-use planning exercises; integrating NNL planning into strategic environmental assessment; how to balance considerations of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the planning of mitigation measures; and guidelines for governments on particular aspects of mitigation and offset systems, such as: institutional arrangements for long-term implementation; accreditation of offset suppliers (individual, aggregated and conservation banks); how to set up accreditation of mitigation assessors and offset providers, and how this accreditation is monitored and enforced.