

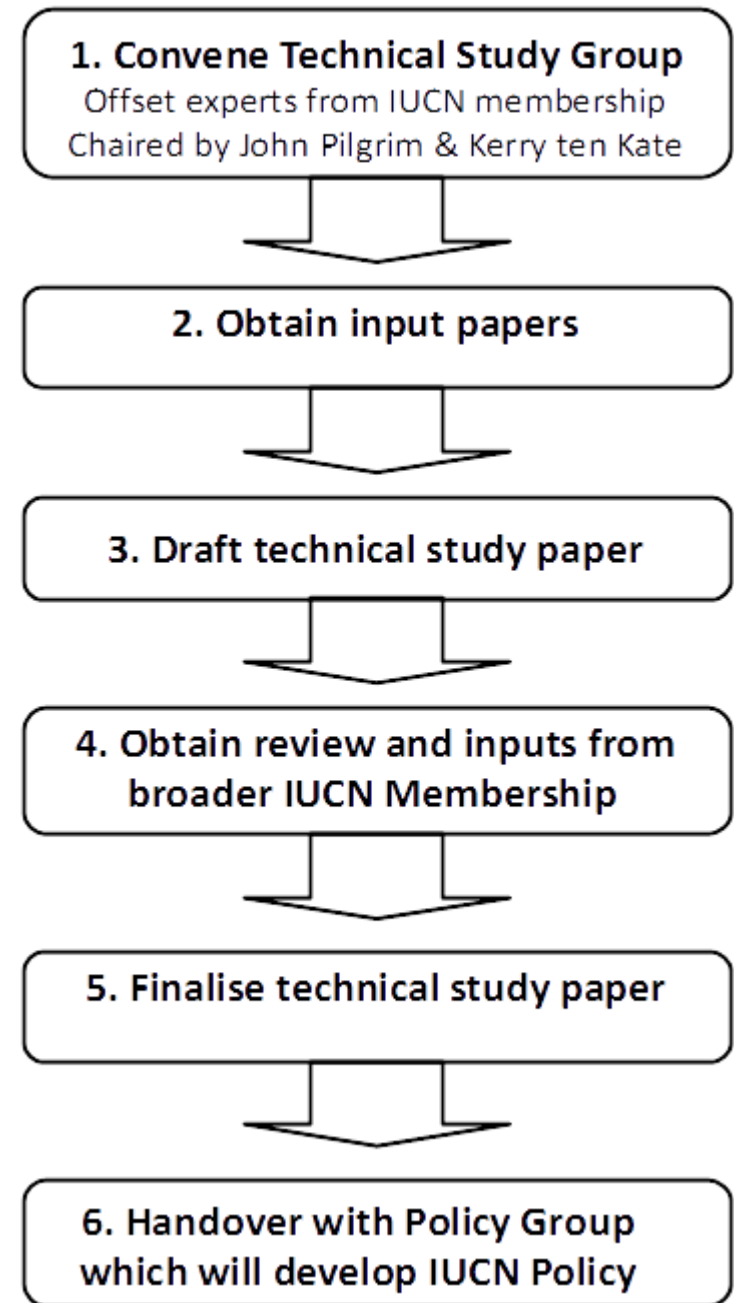
IUCN Technical Study Group on biodiversity offsets

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Aim & process

- Aim: Develop a technical study paper to inform development of an IUCN policy on biodiversity offsets



Key areas of agreement in best practice (1)

Familiar high-level principles:

- offsets should be applied within the context of the mitigation hierarchy
- offsets should be planned within a dynamic landscape context, taking into account cumulative impact scenarios
- some – perhaps many – impacts are so significant that they may not be acceptable to society or cannot be offset owing to high practical risks of failure
- conservation outcomes from biodiversity offsets should be ‘additional’
- the conservation outcomes of offsets should endure at least as long as impacts
- it is preferable to secure offset outcomes prior to impacts in order to address temporal loss and reduce the risk of offset failure

Key areas of agreement in best practice (2)

More detailed practical points:

- offsetting measures, and measurement of losses and gains, need to focus on good surrogates of broader biodiversity (often habitat) and on biodiversity of highest conservation concern that is poorly represented by those surrogates
- offset metrics should find a balance between limiting substitution and establishing a currency that is fungible enough to facilitate exchange

Less clear areas

Guidance was seen as particularly necessary on:

- how to design offsets within dynamic landscapes that may change during offset duration
- where to place offsets in relation to impacts, in varying contexts - including when and how to use composite offsets or aggregated offsets
- how to determine the additionality of activities within existing protected areas, etc.
- determining the baseline risk of loss for averted risk offsets
- tackling leakage in offset design and implementation
- appropriate timing and duration of offsets and how to secure long-term outcomes
- establishing effective monitoring and evaluation systems