

Session 12 Challenges for impact assessment practitioners:

Experience with mitigation including offsets.

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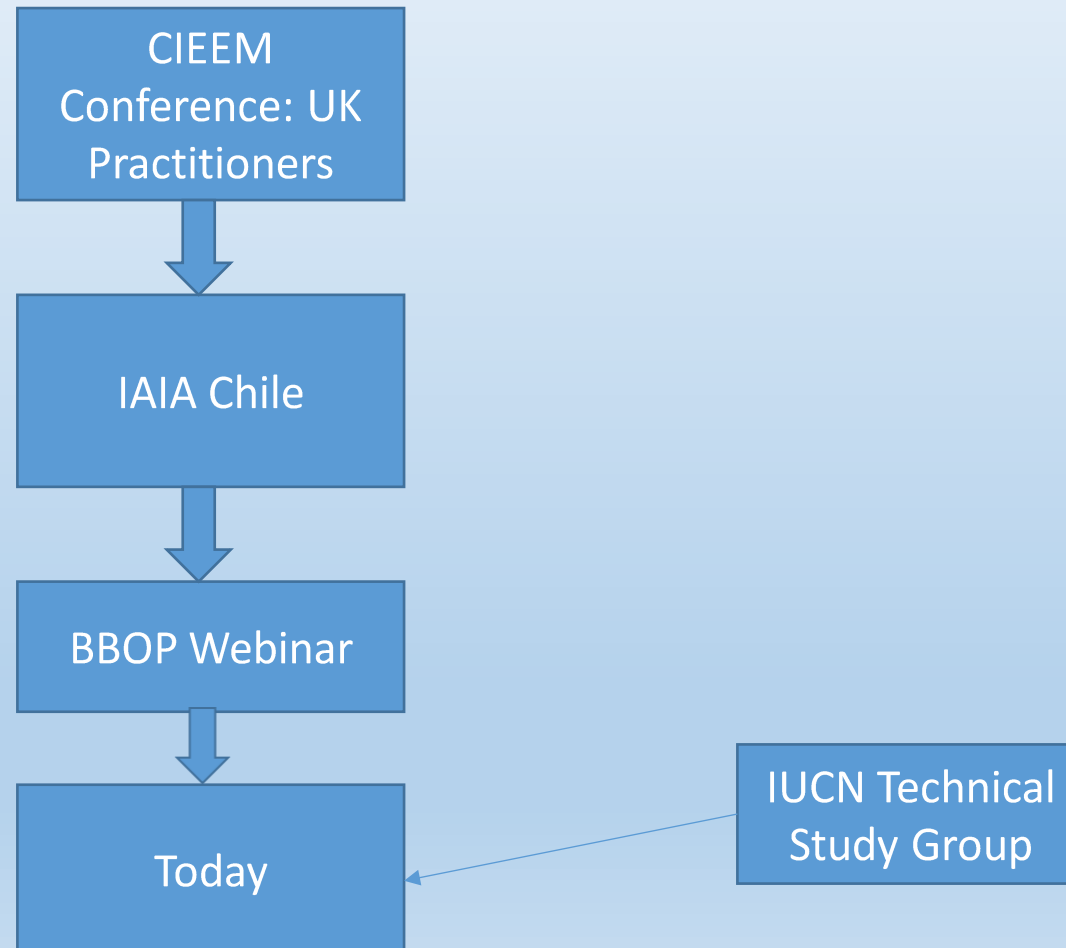
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Biodiversity mitigation and offsets: experiences and next steps

Panellists:

- Rowena Smuts, SRK
- Susie Brownlie, de Villiers Brownlie
- Derek Melton, Golder
- Fabien Quetier, Biotope
- John Pilgrim, TBC

Practitioner Engagement and Feedback



Are impact assessment professionals able to apply the mitigation hierarchy with rigour to achieve NNL/NG?

- What are the main challenges in managing an impact assessment process that involves biodiversity offsets?
- How do practitioners integrate inputs from biodiversity, social and other specialists?
- Is effective integration constrained by factors such as time, budget, confidentiality, sensitivity of markets?
- Have standards such as PS6 improved mitigation practice?
- Do impact assessment professionals have the tools, guidance or training they need? Next steps?

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Offsets: from theory to practice

- Confusion about definitions and intentions; proof of concept still needed.
- Mitigation should be used to minimise impacts before offsets are considered, but if offsets are to be effective, they need to be planned and considered early.
- Offsets should only be used if there is assurance or good evidence that residual losses can be redressed. It can be difficult to get this information. Improved precision needed for delivery risks.
- Offsets are not a substitute for proper land-use and resource planning, protected areas networks, legal protection of species at risk, and so on. Practitioners can recommend NNL measures to contribute to conservation goals, but may not be able to control critical success factors.
- More advice needed on mechanisms for long-term revenue funding for management and monitoring.
- Standards might help to raise the bar and create a more level playing field.