

Appendix 4 - Biodiversity Offsetting Framework

Introduction

The following sets out a framework for the use of biodiversity offsets. It should be read in conjunction with the New Zealand government Guidance on Good Practice Biodiversity Offsetting in New Zealand, New Zealand Government et al., August 2014 (or any successor document).

APP-4.1. All biodiversity offsets must be consistent with this framework:

- (a) Restoration, enhancement and protection actions offered by an applicant will only be considered a biodiversity offset where they are used to offset the reasonably-measurable residual effects of activities that are likely to remain after appropriate avoidance, remediation and mitigation measures have been applied in accordance with Policies ECO-P3 and RPROZ-P2. For the avoidance of doubt, biodiversity offset must not be used as a sole measure to mitigate the adverse effects of activities; and
- (b) The proposed biodiversity offset must contain a qualitative assessment of losses and gains commensurate with the scale of effects of the activity and should demonstrate the manner in which no net loss of biodiversity at a regional scale can be achieved; and
- (c) The biodiversity offset must recognise the limits to offsets due to irreplaceable and vulnerable biodiversity (including effects that must be avoided in accordance with Policy 11(a) of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. The design and implementation of the proposed biodiversity offset must include provisions for addressing sources of uncertainty and risk of failure of the delivery of no net loss of biodiversity at a regional scale; and
- (d) Restoration, enhancement and protection actions undertaken as a biodiversity offset must be demonstrably additional to what otherwise would occur, including being additional to any remediation or mitigation undertaken in relation to the adverse effects of the activity; and
- (e) In relation to a significant natural area (SNA), biodiversity offset actions will be undertaken within the SNA as a first priority, or where this is not practicable, as close as possible to the location of development within the same ecological district as a second priority; and
- (f) Biodiversity offset actions must prioritise the protection and enhancement of existing areas of biodiversity and ensure those actions produce additional biodiversity gains commensurate with the biodiversity values lost; and
- (g) The values to be lost through the activity to which the offset applies must be counterbalanced by the proposed offsetting activity which is at least commensurate with the residual adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity, so that the overall result is no net loss of biodiversity at a regional scale; and
- (h) The biodiversity offset must be applied so that the ecological values achieved through the offset are the same or similar to those being lost, unless an alternative ecosystem or habitat will provide a net gain for indigenous biodiversity and the ecological values lost are not irreplaceable or highly vulnerable; and

- (i) There must be a strong likelihood that the positive ecological outcomes of the offset are permanent. Adaptive management responses must be incorporated into the design of the biodiversity offset to ensure that positive ecological outcomes are maintained over time; and
- (j) The biodiversity offset must be designed and implemented in a landscape context, incorporating understanding of both the donor and recipient sites' roles, or potential roles, in the ecological context of the area; and
- (k) Any application intending to utilise a biodiversity offset must include a biodiversity offset management plan commensurate with the scale of the effects of the activity that:
 - (i) Sets out the baseline information on indigenous biodiversity that is potentially impacted by the proposal at both the donor and recipient sites; and
 - (ii) Demonstrates how the requirements of the framework set out in this appendix will be addressed; and
 - (iii) Identifies the monitoring approach that will be used to demonstrate how the matters set out in this framework have been addressed, over an appropriate timeframe.