

Achieving biodiversity benefits with offsets Research gaps, challenges, and needs

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Abstract

Biodiversity offsets are becoming increasingly common across a portfolio of settings: national policy, voluntary programs, international lending, and corporate business structures. Given the diversity of ecological, political, and socio-economic systems where offsets may be applied, place-based information is likely to be most useful in designing and implementing offset programs, along with guiding principles that assure best practice. We reviewed the research on biodiversity offsets to explore gaps and needs. While the peer-reviewed literature on offsets is growing rapidly, it is heavily dominated by ecological theory, wetland ecosystems, and U.S.-based research. Given that majority of offset policies and programs are occurring in middle- and low-income countries, the research gaps we identified present a number of risks. They also present an opportunity to create regionally based learning platforms focused on pilot projects and institutional capacity building. Scientific research should diversify, both topically and geographically, in order to support the successful design, implementation, and monitoring of biodiversity offset programs..

Keywords

Conservation, Design, Mitigation, Offsets.