

Mitigation Hierarchy News

Dear IMEC members and friends,

This is an update for the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management's Impact Mitigation and Ecological Compensation (IMEC) thematic group. If you've any items to include in the next newsletter, please share them with me: m.maron@uq.edu.au.

As always, feel free to share this email with colleagues and encourage them to become members. They can do this by joining the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management [here](#) and select IMEC as a group of interest. If already a member of the CEM, you can join via the Union Members Portal, [here](#).

IMEC UPDATES

Training materials and policy briefs

Thank you to those of you who have offered your assistance in reviewing and helping to finalise the series of training materials and policy briefs, drafted by the COMBO+ Project team. Once complete, this will form a freely available set of plain-language materials outlining best practice implementation of the mitigation hierarchy. We will be in touch with next steps in the process soon.

Nature Positive Working Group

The Nature Positive working group is close to finalising its technical paper on Nature Positive for Businesses, which will then proceed through IUCN approval processes. The group's March meeting considered objectives and actions for 2023. These include:

- Plan for an IMEC workshop on nature positive metrics in October, potentially to align with the IUCN Leader's Forum
- Collate examples of business case studies to put on IMEC website
- Reach out to other initiatives and organisations to promote the IMEC work and share outcomes from the technical paper

The next working group meeting is April 20th.

Post-CoP15 discussion sessions

We had two excellent online discussion sessions focussed on the outcomes of CBD CoP15 including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and its implications for IMEC's work (and the work of its members). Thank you to Mark Johnston, Steve Edwards, Pippa Howard, Vinod Mathur, George Kelly and Robin Mitchell for being panellists, and to all for contributing to the discussion.

Key themes from the discussions included the energy and momentum generated by the considerable increase in business engagement (1600 businesses registered to attend), the prevalence of the concepts of Nature Positive, biodiversity credits, and Nature-based Solutions at the CoP itself, and the focus on nature disclosure requirements. Biodiversity offsets and credits are captured in the new GBF in the context of financing; the term 'nature positive' did not appear in the final GBF text, but the goals are nonetheless aligned with the concept. It was noted that business wants clarity, direction and

guidance on achieving Nature Positive, but the GBF lacks key details needed. The work of IMEC's Nature Positive Working Group will be particularly valuable in helping to provide high-level guidance. The discussion highlighted some further opportunities for IMEC to help provide guidance and clarity; we will be in touch for opportunities to get involved in the coming months.

IAIA 2023

Are you going to the [International Association for Impact Assessment Conference](#), May 8-11 in Kuching? If so, please let me know (m.maron@uq.edu.au) and I will organise a catch-up for IMEC members who are attending.

Discount for IMEC members: GEMFS 2023

The [Global Environmental Markets and Finance Summit](#) (GEMFS 2023) is on in July this year (see details below). IMEC members located outside the host country (U.S) of GEMFS 2023 can participate virtually at a significant saving. Get the virtual pass for \$129 when you use IMECVIRTUAL code on GEMFS registration payment page by 15th June. The pass allows access to the live stream, recordings and opportunities to connect with other attendees from around the world.

UPCOMING EVENTS

World Conference on Ecological Restoration (SER2023)

The [10th World Conference on Ecological Restoration](#) (SER2023) will be held in person on 26-30 September 2023 in Darwin, Australia with a separate opportunity for virtual participation and content delivery to work with the Western Hemisphere time zone during the week of 6 November 2023. These conferences provide a vital platform for knowledge exchange, discussion, and engagement on the latest trends in restoration science, practice, and policy, as well as specific tools, techniques, challenges, and strategies for restoring damaged and degraded ecosystems on all continents.

African Conference for Linear Infrastructure and Ecology (ACLIE)

The African Conference for Linear Infrastructure and Ecology has made its first call for papers. The event will take place in Kenya, in September 2023 - Submissions can be made [here](#).

Global Environmental Markets and Finance Summit

Global Environmental Markets and Finance Summit: this one-of-a-kind hybrid event is scheduled for 19-21 July 2023, in Denver (Colorado, USA), with a virtual option to join from around the world. The event links voluntary, regulatory, and program-driven markets across carbon, water, biodiversity, and finance and reaches across industry sectors, resource agencies, providers and supporters of solutions, impactors, and funders. Designed to rotate around the world on an annual basis, the program is designed for impactful sharing of proven and emerging market mechanisms, policies, data and trends, monitoring and tracking of progress to support and showcase ready and available solutions that can be implemented now, brought to scale, and are sustainable in the long-term to help slow and manage human and climate impacts. For more information visit www.environmentalmarketsandfinancesummit.com.

PUBLICATIONS

IMEC members have shared the following new papers:

- Megan Evans just published a paper entitled [‘Back-loading to extinction: Coping with values conflict in the administration of Australia’s federal biodiversity offset policy](#), in which she examines the administration of Australia’s federal Biodiversity Offset policy. The paper includes important lessons for Australia’s proposed ‘Nature Repair Market’, as well as other biodiversity offset & credit schemes worldwide.
- The importance of equivalence criteria between impacts and offsets is once again demonstrated with empirical data from wetland offsetting in the USA: [Evaluating the ability of wetland mitigation banks to replace plant species lost from destroyed wetlands](#).
- [Guidance on the creation of a ‘habitat bank’](#) (Site Naturel de Compensation) has been published by the French Government to enable third parties to provide turn-key solutions for offsetting impacts on biodiversity. This guidance was a collaborative effort involving over 150 experts spanning at least 3 years.
- In February, the French government published [Guidance on applying the mitigation hierarchy to impacts on marine habitats and species](#) (in French)
- The marine environment is getting some attention, with a paper on [coral reef offsets](#) by Shingo Takeda and colleagues who analysed a case study from Vanuatu where creating new marine protected areas was considered to offset the impacts from harbour development in Port Vila. The offsets would build on existing Community Conservation Area designations to restore degraded reefs, and the authors explored the ecosystem service repercussions of the proposed options, including those that upon which local people depend.
- Industrial fisheries were looked at by Eric Gilman and co-authors who applied the mitigation hierarchy to the design of policies aimed at [addressing fisheries bycatch](#).
- Roel Plant and Laure-Elise Ruoso published a paper on [landowner attitudes towards biodiversity offsets around Sydney, Australia](#). This is important for the successful implementation of offsets, which require access to land for restoration and conservation activities. The authors discuss how this in turn can inform the design of mitigation and compensation policies.
- The Biodiversity Consultancy has released guidance on [Biodiversity credits: design principles for high integrity outcomes](#).
- The Swedish government has released a [synthesis of research](#) addressing how to use compensatory offsets to reach No Net Loss/Net gain of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

OTHER UPDATES

Science Based Targets Network

The Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) has recently run a public consultation on their technical draft guidance to enable companies to set the first land science-based targets, focusing on the protection and restoration of ecosystems. You can access the full document [here](#).

COMBO+ Project update

Our partner project, [COMBO+](#), aims to mainstream biodiversity conservation into national development policy and practice. Below is a country-by-country update, with thanks to Amrei von Hase:

- In **Mozambique**, following the publication of the Ministerial Diploma on the implementation of Biodiversity Offsets in mid-2022, a Ministerial Diploma approving the Directive of Independent Specialist Reviewers of Environmental Impact Assessments for Category A+ activities has been [adopted](#) (21 Nov 2022). Both processes were technically and financially supported by COMBO. The latter directive enables the government to require peer review by Independent Specialist Reviewers (REI) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted for activities and projects categorised as A+ (i.e. of a certain complexity, location and/or with impacts of a high magnitude).

In addition, the country's online Biodiversity Information System ([SIBMOZ](#)) and Environmental Permitting Management System ([SGLA](#)) are up and running, providing valuable information to support application of the mitigation hierarchy. The COMBO team and partners have also proceeded with updating the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) assessment, using a finalised [map of ecosystem types](#), to establish the conservation status of each ecosystem in the country, except for lakes and coastal lagoons.

The intensive training programme in **Mozambique** is continuing as scheduled, with the National Directorate of Environment (DINAB), [BIOFUND](#) and WCS Mozambique, including the Technical Assistant seconded to DINAB, working in close collaboration (more [here](#)).

- In **Uganda**, a new MoU was signed between the **Ugandan** National Environmental Authority (NEMA) and the Wildlife Conservation Society, the COMBO+ lead in Uganda, in October 2022. The recruitment of a Technical Assistant to build capacity within NEMA, with the aim of support the Authority in reviewing EIAs and associated processes, developing further guidance on the mitigation hierarchy and similar tasks is nearly complete. In addition, the COMBO+ team held four training events on the mitigation hierarchy for EIA practitioners, civil society organisations, and local government officials in different parts of the country.
- In **Guinea**, COMBO+ was launched in late 2022 at a well-attended [event](#), opened by Madame la Ministre of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD). While this marked the formal launch of the programme, key activities have been on-going over the past year. Most recently, the COMBO+ team participated in and presented the programme's work with the Ministry at a [round table of technical and financial partners](#) hosted by the MEDD under the leadership of Minister Hadja Safiatou DIALLO. The aim of this event was to promote alignment of environmental actors with the MEDD's mission statement and its priority programmes. [A Request for Expressions of Interest](#) to provide Technical Assistance to the Guinean Agency for Environmental Evaluation (AGEE), supported by COMBO+, was launched with submissions due by 7 April 2023.
- In **Madagascar**, the COMBO+ team continues working closely with all stakeholders, including the government partners, in particular the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) and the Office National de l'Environnement (ONE). This includes initial [support at a workshop with the ONE](#) towards the planned revision of the MECIE Decree governing environmental requirements for project development (Decree 54/2015) including recommendations on the integration of the mitigation hierarchy in the Decree. In Madagascar, as in the other COMBO+ countries in Africa, capacity on decision-making based on best practice application of the mitigation hierarchy is being built with the support of a Technical Assistant seconded from WCS Madagascar to the MEDD.

- WCS is currently recruiting a new **Project coordinator to co-lead the COMBO+ team in Madagascar** jointly with Biotope Madagasikara. Please share this position, advertised [here](#), with your networks!
- The **COMBO+ international team** has just initiated a joint review process with IMEC of policy/technical briefs and training materials drafted by the COMBO team and we will have more to report on this and the outputs later in the year.