

## 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](mailto: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

#### CEM steering committee meeting

The Commission on Ecosystem Management held its steering committee meeting in Sydney, Australia, and I was able to attend and present on IMEC's activities and achievements, which were well-received. In particular, there was strong interest in the work of the Nature Positive Working Group and the CEM will support dissemination of its report once released (see below).

#### Nature Positive Working Group update

The Nature Positive Working Group has finalised its report "**Nature-positive for business: Developing a common approach**", after some last-minute updates (e.g. to include reference to the newly-released [Nature Positive Initiative](#) definition). Once IUCN approves the release, we will share details of the launch and will be grateful for the assistance of IMEC members in sharing the report and its message far and wide.

#### Cumulative Impacts Working Group update

This group is seeking to provide clarity to impact assessment practitioners and policy makers on the complicated matter of cumulative impacts to biodiversity. It is in the early stages of working through the 'what, why, how and who' of cumulative impacts to biodiversity. Its overarching goal is to systematically lay out the process of (biodiversity) impact accumulation, in order to provide guidance on how accumulation can be curtailed, and crucially, who should be responsible for addressing impacts along the accumulation pathway. The group met this week and has started by developing a flow chart on where and how to improve EIA practice with regards to cumulative impacts, and will start drafting a white paper that articulates what needs to be done above and beyond improved EIA practice to adequately address "death by a thousand cuts".

Please feel free to join these discussions! If you are keen to participate, please contact group lead Jeremy Simmonds: [jsimmonds@2rog.com.au](mailto:jsimmonds@2rog.com.au)

#### IMEC webinars

It has been a while since our last webinar, but we are seeking to restart the IMEC webinar series with a focus on shorter sessions, more focussed topics, and usually a

single presenter. We are hoping to be able to announce a joint IMEC/IAIA presentation shortly. However, we are also seeking expressions of interest from those keen to either present a webinar in 2024 themselves, or recommendations for speakers and topics we ought to include (biodiversity metrics and credits are already on the list!) – please let me know if you have any suggestions ([m.maron@uq.edu.au](mailto:m.maron@uq.edu.au)).

### Training materials and policy briefs update

A huge thank you to those of you who have provided valuable assistance in reviewing and helping to finalise the series of training materials and policy briefs, drafted by the COMBO+ Project team. The team is currently finalising and testing these documents, which will then be made freely available via the IMEC and COMBO+ websites.

### The Global Environmental Markets and Finance Summit 2024

The Global Environmental Markets and Finance Summit (GEMFS), of which IUCN's IMEC was a Sustaining Partner, convened a diverse group of nearly 200 leaders in July in Denver, Colorado (USA) and virtually to inspire, educate and drive progress for meaningful environmental outcomes. Carlene Taggart Bahler shares this update:

GEMFS made the critical connection of voluntary, regulatory, and program driven markets across carbon, water, biodiversity, and finance and across industry sectors around the world. “We need to urgently change the relationship between our economies and nature” declared the keynote speaker Ed Barbier, distinguished professor, and author of “Economics of a Fragile Planet” as he explained the five principles from his book that are key to achieving the desired sustained and scalable progress in conserving, protecting and restoring our natural assets.

GEMFS was successful in bringing awareness to potential intersects across carbon, biodiversity and water and the essential role of private investment in this space with participants describing the summit as “thought-provoking”, “educational”, and “an important convening event”. Keep an eye out [here](#) for presentation recordings, the calls for action generated from the summit and plans for GEMFS24.

If interested in a deeper dive into many of GEMFS topics, emerging trends and technological advancements, you can attend the affiliated [Environmental Markets Conference](#) scheduled for April 29 – May 2, 2024 in Pittsburgh, USA (in-person and virtual).

### 2024 IAIA sessions

IMEC members are organising several sessions at the [2024 International Association for Impact Assessment](#) (IAIA) meeting in Ireland, next April, including on Biodiversity credits (Steve Edwards) and Nature positive outcomes through a just transition (Amrei von Hase, Fabien Quétier). If you're planning to attend the IAIA conference, please let us know so that we can organise an IMEC catch up during the event.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### IPBES assessment report

Mark Johnston is one of the lead authors in the [ipbes methodological assessment](#) on the impact of business on biodiversity and nature contributions to people. He is seeking

potential contributory authors to assist with focused literature reviews on specific topics including:

1. Effectiveness of disclosure mechanisms
2. Business decision making: why have businesses not integrated management of biodiversity impacts into decision making?
3. Trade-offs and synergies: assess trade-offs and the business impact this is having on biodiversity, include review of the SDGs delivery across different business sectors (global analysis of SDG effectiveness not needed as already covered) - how effective have SDGs been in driving businesses to manage their impacts potential trade-off analysis across different sector).

If interested, please contact Mark via [MAJ1004@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:MAJ1004@hotmail.co.uk) and he can share the details, including the specific requirements for authors.

### **World Biodiversity Forum**

The [Call for Abstracts](#) of the World Biodiversity Forum 2024, in Davos, Switzerland. is currently open. The deadline for abstract submission is November 19th at 6 pm. Hanna Fiegenbaum ([Hanna.Fiegenbaum@imise.uni-leipzig.de](mailto:Hanna.Fiegenbaum@imise.uni-leipzig.de)) is co-organizing a session on biodiversity and impact monitoring with Kristy Deiner from ETH Zürich. This session is titled “MONMOD\_10.7 Unleashing the Power of Blockchain, IoT, and eDNA to Create a Paradigm Shift for Global Biodiversity Monitoring,” and there are many other interesting sessions as well. Jonty Knox is also considering a session around co-designing protected area plans and the co-management of forest resources in an area of biodiversity and mineral significance; if interested, contact Jonty via [jonty.knox@riotinto.com](mailto:jonty.knox@riotinto.com).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

IMEC members have shared the following new papers:

- Agnes Mechin and co-authors have published a paper titled [‘Offset sizing tools: A review of practices used in the field and their operationality’](#) that examines the usefulness of offset sizing methods within the mitigation hierarchy.
- Martine Maron and several IMEC co-authors have published a paper in Nature Ecology and Evolution. [‘Nature positive’ must incorporate, not undermine, the mitigation hierarchy’](#). The paper reveals the poor ways that the terminology ‘nature positive’ is already being misused. An [article in The Conversation](#) summarises the key points.
- Shuo Gao and others looked at [China’s eco-compensation policy and its performance](#) for biodiversity.
- [‘How to fuel an energy transition with ecologically responsible mining’](#) by Laura Sonter and several IMEC co-authors addresses ecologically responsible mining and the value of clear guidance in managing trade-offs.
- [‘Disentangling the “net” from the “offset”’: learning for net-zero climate policy from an analysis of “no-net-loss” in biodiversity’](#) has been published by Duncan McLaren and Lousie Carver. The article explores the concept of net zero in climate policy.
- Todd BenDor and co-authors have updated their 2015 paper [‘Estimating the Size and Impact of the Ecological Restoration Economy’](#) with findings in the new paper [‘Assessing the size and growth of the US wetland and stream compensatory mitigation industry’](#).

- [‘Data on transnational ecological compensation under a ‘no net loss’ biodiversity policy’](#) has been published in Data in Brief. Anna Lou Abatayo and co authors present the results of their international surveys on ecological compensation for forest cover.
  - [‘Performance of habitat offsets for species conservation in dynamic human-modified landscapes’](#) by Jonathan Rhodes and IMEC co-authors tests the assumptions behind current offset regulation in Australia.
  - [‘The impact assessment: A hidden form of flexibility in the mitigation hierarchy’](#) has been published by Zoe Pelta and co-authors. The article examines the practical assessment of environmental impacts within the mitigation hierarchy.
  - Katherine Salés and colleagues explore the implications of contrasting NNL objectives between French and Peruvian offset schemes in [Tackling limitations in biodiversity offsetting? A comparison of the Peruvian and French approaches](#).
  - Simas Gradeckas has authored a great series of [blog posts on biodiversity credits](#).
  - Emily Rampling colleagues’ latest paper [Achieving biodiversity net gain by addressing governance gaps underpinning ecological compensation policies](#) concludes England’s Biodiversity Net Gain policy is very susceptible to governance risk, estimating that 27% of all the ‘biodiversity units’ delivered by the policy (in early-adopter councils) are at very high risk of non-delivery.
- Please keep sending through any publications you’d like featured.

## OTHER UPDATES

### Nature Positive Initiative launched

‘The ‘Nature Positive Initiative’ was launched’ in September 2023 by a wide coalition of NGOs and business networks wishing to ensure the term was not misused by the growing number of business, finance, government and civil society actors that have picked it up. Ensuring clarity and preserving the integrity of the definition is essential to avoid greenwashing and truly further nature’s recovery.

### Development of a ‘biodiversity credit’ market

[Numerous organisations are rallying around the development of a ‘biodiversity credit’ market](#), with a competing high-level [international advisory panel also established by the French and British governments](#). There is still some confusion as to whether or not such credits could be used to offset corporate (or government) impacts on biodiversity and make claims of neutrality or positivity. This is one of the key points to consider in [the public consultation of VERRA’s biodiversity framework \(deadline for feedback is 19<sup>th</sup> November\)](#)

### Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures recommendations

The [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\) also released its recommendations in September](#). Ecosystem condition and species extinction risk are required disclosure indicators, but the guidance doesn’t specify which particular metric is preferred. In a crowded metrics marketplace, TNFD has said it would continue to seek increased alignment. Some suggestions can be found in their [LEAP approach](#).

