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Is Biodiversity Impact Assessment Effective?


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SUMMARY

- IFC PS6 and Equator Principles
- Challenges and opportunities
 - General observations
 - Time - The challenge of schedules
 - Is there a way around taxonomy?




June 10, 2014 2







IFC PS6 AND EQUATOR PRINCIPLES

- IFC PS6 (2006 & 2012) and Eps provide incentive and framework for deciding scope of biodiversity IA and positive biodiversity outcomes
- Incentive / influence
 - Has become global good practice.
 - Used as benchmark in **non-high income OECD**, including when not required for financing
 - Influence being felt in **high income OECD** countries
 - Banks can consider IFC PSs as additional aid in determining risk
 - NGOs and other stakeholders can refer to them
 - Industry interested in gap analysis between national legislation and IFC PSs
 - Global portfolios
 - Global environmental / biodiversity policy
 - Governments are interested as regulations develop





June 10, 2014 3




 **IFC PS6 AND EQUATOR PRINCIPLES** cont.


- Framework
 - PS6 Critical Habitat requirements especially help early on in EIA process:
 - Help decide baseline RSAs to serve as CHAA / DMU
 - Facilitate development project site fine tuning





June 10, 2014 4 

 **OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGES**


- General Observations
 - IFC PS6 and linked guidance (ie BBOP) really pushed full use of mitigation hierarchy for biodiversity
 - Practitioners need to be able to simply explain requirements and have schedules manageable for project proponents
 - Guidance has increasingly focused on technical refinement, less so on time implications
 - Practitioners often mainly either work in regulated or non-regulated environments for offsetting
 - More cross fertilization between these two camps would likely facilitate improved biodiversity outcomes for each
 - Successful outcomes re scope and commitment dependent more on senior proponent lead(s), than on corporate policy





June 10, 2014 5 

 **TIME – THE CHALLENGE OF SCHEDULES**

- Governments
 - Project proponents like certainty from regulations
 - **Regional land use plans or SEA** in high biodiversity areas, to clarify no go areas.
 - Seeing development proceed in **protected areas** lessens opportunities for positive biodiversity outcomes.






June 10, 2014 6 

 **TIME – THE CHALLENGE OF SCHEDULES** cont.

- Private Sector:
 - Clearer early guidance / decisions on which **projects not to develop**
 - Real analyses of alternatives for whole projects
 - Are private sector drivers for ESIA schedule well understood?
 - More early discussion of schedule for EIA between all main players
 - Advancing **offset design** during the ESIA has many benefits, but challenges re:
 - Baseline data requirements
 - Stakeholder engagement at potential offset sites
 - Crucial activities likely non-technical
 - I.e negotiating area protection / management with stakeholders over fine tuning loss-gain calculations

June 10, 2014 7



 **IS THERE A WAY AROUND THE TAXONOMY?**

- Often taxonomy is main schedule limitation in high biodiversity areas
 - Global extinction of presumed local endemic new to science main threshold as to what cannot be offset
- Coping in a consistent / pre-cautionary way with species potentially new to science is a big challenge within the timeframe of a project ESIA.
 - Assessed under criterion 2
- If taxonomy requires research level work to complete an EIA, then:
 - Is Project in the wrong place?
 - Can less taxonomically intensive approaches work?:
 - Evolutionary Significant Units
 - Habitat quality
 - Others?

June 10, 2014 8

