

## LANDSCAPE LEVEL PLANNING

The summary below of landscape level planning (LLP) is excerpted and edited from a paper that was produced in 2007 by Forest Trends' [Business and Biodiversity Offsets Program](#) (BBOP). The parent document discusses LLP as a tool for designing biodiversity off-sets by companies that have a significant impact on biodiversity. LLP is part of a larger toolkit that BBOP is developing to make biodiversity offset planning easier.

The principles and practices that are discussed in BBOP's paper on LLP pertain to many situations where the landscape measures approach applies. LLP is becoming an increasingly common practice throughout the world.

To view BBOP's parent document on landscape level planning in the context of biodiversity offset planning contact Kerry ten Kate at: [kerrytenkate@hotmail.com](mailto:kerrytenkate@hotmail.com)

### ***What is Landscape Level Planning?***

Landscape level planning (LLP) attempts to harmonize plans of various organizations by linking regional conservation and development goals to regional priorities which are usually determined through LLP. Government agencies, market interests, civic groups and land planners play active roles in constructing and implementing land use plans.

Landscape level planning, or regional planning, is a tool that can harmonize disparate goals and stakeholders while balancing economic development and conservation initiatives within the same geographic area. Landscape planning helps situate individual plans and land units within their larger economic, social, and ecological context to create optimum solutions for previously incoherent land use decisions.

A key to LLP is a focus on inter-stakeholder communication, especially between the public and private realms. The aim is to help contributors to land use and landscape planning find common interests and thereby to work toward a more cooperative rather than competitive approach. If successful, LLP should lead to optimum biodiversity conservation and economic development within the same geographic area.

### ***Landscape Level Planning for Biodiversity Off-Set Planners***

Landscape-level planning is important to ensure optimum offset design and implementation. However the complexity involved in LLP can be a challenge for offset planners because it involves acquiring many different sets of data and working with different types of people and institutions. Offset planners need to:

- (1) understand the broader socioeconomic and sustainable development context for their project and get information on conservation, development and land-use priorities; and*
- (2) plan their biodiversity offset to make the optimum contribution to national (and regional, as well as local) biodiversity and sustainable development priorities.*

Making progress with biodiversity offsets depends on: *encouraging more dialogue and developing a shared vocabulary; ensuring all stakeholders play their part; and gaining more practical experience with offsets.* Landscape-level planning brings key strategies and concepts to offset planning that would be lacking otherwise and highlights the value of developing a shared vocabulary and ensures participatory planning. It is most closely related to the site-selection stage of offset planning, but applies throughout the offset planning and implementation process.

Landscape-level planning had many advantages for biodiversity planning in general. The ability of all landscape-level efforts to integrate biodiversity into their priorities depends on the participating members of the plan, though some capacity is likely to exist at the outset. Landscape-level planning can:

- Contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem function and services,
- Identify priority lands and waters for conservation,
- Help maintain the integrity of its biological communities, habitats, and ecosystems because of its scale,
- Help maintain the dynamic and interactive nature of individual component parts.

The functionality of many ecosystem services, particularly the regulating services, often emerges at a landscape scale. Different parts of the landscape may provide food or fuel, water, pollination, or pest control. It is critical to ask:

- What features of the landscape are needed to maintain key regulating services (for example, biologically-diverse communities, water infiltration)?
- What proportion of the landscape must contain those features?
- How should they be distributed across the landscape?

### ***Characteristics of LLP (and implications for offset planners)***

By placing offsets within a landscape level planning context, stakeholders are better able to understand the real impacts of business and incorporate optimum offsets into planning. There are benefits for both the offsets and the regional planning process. Here we list characteristics and strengths of this type of planning process:

- Allows the potential impact of the development itself to be better understood,
- Gives a better understanding of the potential secondary or indirect impacts of development (honey pot and inward migration) and possible ways to manage them,
- Ensures that regional or national conservation priorities are integrated into business planning,
- Contributes to national priorities (NBSAPs, PRSPs, NEAPs, and NCSs),
- Can address local people's economic, social, and environmental needs,
- Scales up the offset planning process to a larger, more productive one,
- Helps better plan for mitigation of secondary impacts in specific regional context,
- Anticipates and accommodates medium and long term change (climate change),

- Maintains ecosystem services,
- Works along bioregional rather than political boundaries,
- Avoids hostage sites Access (for project developers) to experts skilled in the prediction and mitigation of secondary / indirect impacts in the specific regional context of the development,
- Future-proofs – anticipating and accommodating medium and long-term change (e.g. climate change),
- Frames delivery of ecosystem services – working to bioregional rather than political boundaries,
- Drives / underpins regional sustainability,
- Enhances potential to deliver long-term sustainable development outcomes,
- Improves / joins up decision making on land use / allocation,
- Improves watershed protection,
- Represents ecosystems / habitats,
- Facilitates market driven approaches,
- Can address secondary / indirect impacts,
- Recognizes cultural identity and a sense of home to local residents,
- Realizes capacity for a mosaic of land uses,
- Creates a process for informed and participatory decision making,
- Integrates top-down, with bottom-up approaches,
- Integrates internal (local) and external (expert) knowledge,
- Uses transdisciplinary approach that brings together different perspectives beyond the fine-grained site level focus,
- Mitigates trade-offs between different objectives through synergies

There are also risks and problems in LLP to biodiversity offset planners. These are discussed in BBOP's parent document on the topic.