

## **Economics of Biodiversity Offsets and Habitat Banking**

**Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

At 5.45 pm for 6 pm start, close approximately 7 pm.

Department for Environmental Food and Rural Affairs,  
Room 808, Nobel House, London 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR  
(Nearest tube: Westminster or St. James' Park) Location 2 on accompanying map

Two significant research projects into compensation mechanisms for biodiversity damage have concluded in the last year: a scoping study on the use of biodiversity offsets in the UK<sup>1</sup> for Defra; and a report on the potential for Habitat Banking in the EU<sup>2</sup> for the European Commission. While biodiversity compensation measures involve, inter alia, a range of complex ecological, political, governance and economic issues, they are at core market-based instruments. Understanding of their economic features is a necessary part in their design as policy tools. Therefore this seminar will focus on developing offsets and habitat banking as efficient economic tools.

This seminar will be chaired by Helen Dunn of Defra, and will introduce the context for both the pieces of work above. Firstly, Dr Alex Vakrou and Helen Dunn will, respectively outline the current EC and Defra positions on offsets and habitat banking and the reasons for undertaking the two pieces of research. The economic features of offsets and habitat banking considered in the studies will then be outlined, by James Vause (from UK offsets scoping study for Defra) and Ian Dickie (for habitat banking in EU from the EC research). The seminar will conclude with 10- 15 mins for questions to the speakers.

### **Speakers**

**Alexandra Vakrou** is a forester and holds a PhD in Environmental and Forest Economics from the University of Aberdeen. She has been with the EC for the last 10 years in various Units of DG for Environment. She has an extensive experience in EU CAP, nature and biodiversity policies and prepared the Commission's Communication on *Financing the Natura 2000 network* and contributed to the Communication on *Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 and beyond*. Currently she is responsible for financial issues related to the ELD and supports the preparation of Impact Assessment of environmental proposals. She is a member of the TEEB team and contributed to the D1 Report for policy makers.

**Helen Dunn** is a Senior Economist in the Natural Environment Economics team in Defra and has been involved in providing economic advice on UK environmental policy for over 10 years. Her current role is focused on ecosystems and biodiversity, developing work on environmental valuation and use of policy instruments including market based approaches.

**James Vause** is also in the Natural Environment Economics team in Defra, where he is responsible for providing economic input into domestic and international biodiversity policy. He was on the steering group for the UK offsets report (Treweek et al, 2009) and is helping to develop the policy response to the report.

**Ian Dickie** is a Senior Consultant with eftec (Economics for the Environment Consultancy) and has been project manager and co-author of report on the feasibility of habitat banking in Europe for the European Commission. His experience includes a decade working on nature conservation economics in the UK, including the designation of Marine Natura 2000 sites and tourism impacts, environmental advice to regulators and analysis of ecosystem services.

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<sup>1</sup> Treweek et.al. (2009) Scoping study for the design and use of biodiversity offsets in an English Context. Report for Defra. <https://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/Biodiversity%20Offsets%20FINAL%20REPORT%20Defra%2012%20May%202009.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Eftec (2010) The use of market-based instruments for biodiversity protection -The case of habitat banking - *Final Report* (soon to be published on the Commission's website)