

Achieving No Net Loss for Communities and Biodiversity in Uganda



*Nile River and Kalagala Offset; community members
(V Griffiths 2016)*



In brief

Governments, financial institutions and businesses worldwide are adopting the target of No Net Loss (NNL) of biodiversity resulting from developments, and using biodiversity offsets to achieve this. The Convention on Biological Diversity highlighted how offsets can help its member states to achieve conservation goals. The technical challenges of NNL are widely explored from an ecological perspective. But while international guidance calls for offsets not to make local people worse off, there is a fundamental lack of understanding of how to achieve NNL with regard to people's interactions with biodiversity. These include people's use of, and cultural value placed upon biodiversity, and the social, economic and ecological trade-offs involved in NNL. This is a major challenge for countries like Uganda where poor people depend on natural resources, where biodiversity offsets may exacerbate poverty unless carefully planned and implemented, and where the costs and benefits of NNL vary by gender and livelihood.

Our aims

This project will support government, NGOs and business to integrate local poverty alleviation, equity and cultural heritage into biodiversity offsets for national economic development. Based on research into the biggest hydropower offset in Uganda, it will produce and support implementation of local and national policy guidance for Uganda, and internationally.



Community members near the Nile River (V Griffiths 2016)



Why now?

Uganda is adopting biodiversity offsetting to help address biodiversity losses from large-scale development. However, the national importance of these types of development can over-shadow their significant impacts on poor people, and Uganda and other nations must address issues of human rights, livelihoods and wellbeing of the individuals, households and communities affected by both developments and offsetting.

The World Bank-funded [Bujagali Hydropower Project](#) was completed in 2012, and an offset (Kalagala) was designed to address biodiversity and human impacts.

The new Isimba Hydropower Project is located downstream of Bujagali and construction will be completed in 2018.

This whole area has high cultural, livelihood and biodiversity value. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the responsible Government agency, and Nature Uganda, a leading conservation NGO, identified an urgent need to understand how the Isimba project may affect the Kalagala offset while they can still influence its implementation – this project directly addresses that need.

Our work

Our project goal:

Government, developers and NGOs work collaboratively on 'No Net Loss' biodiversity offsets that genuinely reflect local people's needs and values, support poverty alleviation in the long-term and are implemented equitably.

Our objectives:

1. To support government, NGOs and business in integrating poverty alleviation, wellbeing, equity and cultural heritage into biodiversity offsets, to ensure NNL for both biodiversity and communities in Uganda.
2. To draw out lessons learned that have international applicability.

Outcomes

Research – and the outputs it delivers – are intended to lead to six key outcomes:

- Offset activities that take into account biodiversity and local communities will be suggested for the Kalagala offset.
- Development of stronger links between business, government and conservation organisations in Uganda to support improved biodiversity and poverty outcomes.
- Increased capacity to implement biodiversity offsets in Uganda.
- Draft national biodiversity offset guidelines for Uganda.
- Draft international guidelines for incorporating social costs and benefits into biodiversity offsetting.
- Two international businesses committing to implement these new guidelines.

Our research has three key activities:

a) Research on the costs and benefits that the Bujagali and Isimba Hydropower Projects have on local people and biodiversity in the study area.



- a) Review of the existing Kalagala Offset Sustainable Management Plan and the Isimba Management Plan
b) Provision of recommendations on how to address key gaps and aid their implementation.



- a) Draft new national and international guidelines on incorporating social costs and benefits into biodiversity offsetting.
b) Establish a Business and Biodiversity Forum, enabling government, NGOs and businesses to work together on NNL of biodiversity goals for development which better account for local people's needs and priorities.
c) Work with NEMA and Nature Uganda to improve their understanding on how to achieve NNL through biodiversity offsetting so that they are better equipped to design, implement, monitor and evaluate biodiversity offsets.

Advisory committee

An Advisory Committee of Ugandan and international experts has been appointed to oversee the project. They will monitor progress, provide technical input and help disseminate lessons learnt.



Kerry Ten Kate: Director, BBOP (Forest Trends)



Panta Kasoma: Executive Director, Jane Goodall Institute Uganda. Convenor, Uganda Poverty and Conservation Learning Group



Mark Infield: Cultural values expert, Ministry of Water and Environment



Paul Mafabi: Director of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Water and Environment



Derek Pomeroy: Department of Environmental Management, Makerere University



Project partners

The University of Oxford (Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science). Oxford is the lead organization and will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing the delivery of the project outputs to time and budget. It will also be responsible for leading the analysis of the social impacts of the hydropower/offsets project.

E.J. Milner-Gulland (Project leader) ej.milner-gulland@zoo.ox.ac.uk Victoria Griffiths (Project researcher) victoria.griffiths@bnc.ox.ac.uk Carlyn Samuel (Project coordinator) carlyn.samuel@zoo.ox.ac.uk

NEMA: NEMA is the in-country project lead and will organize in-country workshops and be responsible for the production, implementation and dissemination of the new national guidelines.

Sabino Francis Ogwal (Project leader in Uganda) sabinofrancis@gmail.com fogwal@nemaug.org

Nature Uganda: Nature Uganda will lead the ecological component of the research, undertaking follow-up surveys of the Kalagala offset to understand changes in biodiversity over the project period, as well as potential impacts on ecological features from the Isimba Hydropower Project. It will also assist with the dissemination of results to local people.

Achilles Byaruhanga achilles.byaruhanga@natureuganda.org

IIED: IIED will provide technical support and guidance, assist with capacity building, review project outputs and lead dissemination of project findings internationally. It will also assist with Oxford's research design and support NEMA to implement the research recommendations as well as helping coordinate the business engagement aspects.

Dilys Roe dilys.roe@iied.org Julia Baker (Technical lead) Julia.Baker2@balfourbeatty.com

Wild Business Ltd: Wild Business will provide technical guidance based on extensive international experience working with NNL policies and projects (including Uganda). It will also provide advice to Nature Uganda on biodiversity data collection and analysis, especially on ensuring research outcomes are relevant to biodiversity offset implementation.

Joseph Bull joe@wildbusiness.org

WCS-Uganda: WCS-Uganda will assist with the technical and capacity building components, as well as with the dissemination of the project findings and resulting guidelines, and bringing results into national-level policy. Its involvement in this project will also ensure synergies with its work on offsetting in Uganda.

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Find out more

Project updates will be made available online as the project progresses. Please visit the project website at: www.iccs.org.uk/achieving-no-net-loss-for-communities-and-biodiversity-in-uganda/

Funding:

This project is funded by the UK Government's [Darwin Initiative](#), which assists countries that are rich in biodiversity but poor in financial resources to implement their commitments under the international biodiversity conventions.

