

Sustainable Development and Environmental Economics Seminar

Faced with a growing demand for infrastructure and territorial planning, the conservation of biodiversity is under threat. In this context, offsetting biodiversity is often presented as a “win-win” solution, reconciling biodiversity protection and development. But, instead, could it be a right to destroy? This seminar, co-organised in cooperation with the [INVALUABLE](#) research project, takes stock of this complex and crucial debate.

Fabien Quétier (Biotope)*

Biodiversity offsetting and sustainable development: a right to destroy, a fool’s bargain or a tool for reconciliation?

Discussant: Harold Levrel (AgroParisTech)**

Tuesday 30 September 2014, from 12:30 to 14:30

Reid Hall – 4, rue de Chevreuse – 75006 Paris
(Vavin Métro station)

French regulations require that any impacts of development projects on natural areas that have not been sufficiently avoided or reduced must be offset “in kind”. The components of biodiversity covered include forests, wetlands and the habitats of many protected species. A series of reforms launched in 2007 has resulted in the considerable reinforcement of this requirement, which had previously been ignored in many cases. These are the relatively recent foundations underpinning the biodiversity bill currently being discussed in the French Parliament.

These changes are part of an international movement based on the objective set by numerous states and organisations to halt the “net loss of biodiversity”. This is the case of the European Commission, whose options for its “no net loss” initiative have been submitted to public consultation. It is also the case of some multinationals and major financial institutions, including the Agence Française de Développement (on deforestation). Civil society, on the other hand, takes a different view: is mitigation a tool for enhancing biodiversity, or is it a “right to destroy” that is misused by planners?

The reality is more complex than these contrasting positions. Both in France and elsewhere, the “no net loss” objective and the use of offsetting activities raise a number of difficulties, whether technical and institutional or political and ethical. This seminar will be the opportunity to address these issues.

[Registration online on the IDDRI website](#)

The seminar will be held in French without interpretation

* **Fabien Quétier** is a senior adviser at Biotope, a French engineering and consultancy firm specialising in biodiversity. Biotope develops and applies technical solutions to avoid and reduce the adverse impacts of human activity on ecosystems and their biodiversity, and to offset residual impacts. It develops tools to determine the equivalence between these impacts and the ecological results of offsetting. Biotope’s experience in this field is also mobilised within the framework of ecological restoration projects, whether in protected areas or for the sustainable use of natural resources, both in France and elsewhere. Fabien Quétier is also a consultant on mitigation and investment in natural capital to the European Commission, the

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

****A lecturer at AgroParisTech, Harold Levrel** is an environmental economist at the Centre International de Recherche sur l'Environnement et le Développement (CIRED). The comparative analysis of environmental policies aimed at biodiversity conservation and the management of exploited or protected ecosystems is his main area of expertise. His research concerns the monetary and non-monetary valuation of ecosystem services, the institutional analysis of regulatory mechanisms based on mitigation and ecological restoration measures, and the study of the role of transaction costs in methods for coordinating the uses of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

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