



Question Report						
Report generated time	3/4/2026 12:41					
Topic	Webinar ID	Actual Start Time	Actual Duration (minutes)	# Question		
Unpacking Biodiversity Offsets in Kwa-Zulu Natal	869 6831 8312	3/4/2026 9:02	180	35		
Question Details						
#	Question	Asker Name	Asker Email	Answer	Answer Name	Answer Email
1	how to mute	Sphe Makhwasa	sphelele.makhwasa@kznedtea.gov.za	there is an audio button on the bottom left of your screen	Sue George	operations@iaiasa.co.za
2	Is the Department planning to improve to provide Biodiversity guideline for marine and estuarine environment?	Nosicelo Biyana	viwebiyana76@gmail.com	live answered	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za



Question Report						
2	Is the Derpartment plaaning to improve to provide Biodiversity guideline for marine and estuarine environment?	Nosicelo Biyana	viwebiyana76@gmail.com	The National Department has not indicated the intent to extend the guideline into Marine or Estuarine ecosystems. It is potentially due to the complexity of these systems. It does not do away with the obligation to consider offsets, but each would have to done on a case by case basis.	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za
3	got it. thanks Sue	Sphe Makhwasa	sphelele.makhwasa@kznedtea.gov.za	great	Sue George	operations@iaiasa.co.za



Question Report						
4	Ian, thank you for the insightful presentation. From your experience, and this may sound like a simple question, when does the 30-year financial management or liability period for biodiversity offsets actually commence?	Anonymous Attendee		live answered	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za
4	Ian, thank you for the insightful presentation. From your experience, and this may sound like a simple question, when does the 30-year financial management or liability period for biodiversity offsets actually commence?	Anonymous Attendee		Good morning. The 30 year financial management would commence immediately once the offset site has been secured and established. Secured would be the gazetting of a protected area or registration of a servitude.	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za



Question Report						
5	Hi Ian, please can you 1) indicate how the Department ensures that the proposed biodiversity offset plan undergoes adequate public participation before the decision to grant authorisation is made, especially host communities and 2) how decisions are made about offsets in terms of cumulative impacts on biodiversity in the region and not just project-specific impacts. Thanks	Janice Tooley	janicetooley11@gmail.com	The biodiversity offset plan and consultation with offset receiving areas should be included with the EIA application submitted to the CA. This will inform feasibility and viability of the offsets including potential implications for "hosting" communities.	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za



Question Report						
5	Hi Ian, please can you 1) indicate how the Department ensures that the proposed biodiversity offset plan undergoes adequate public participation before the decision to grant authorisation is made, especially host communities and 2) how decisions are made about offsets in terms of cumulative impacts on biodiversity in the region and not just project-specific impacts. Thanks	Janice Tooley	janicetooley11@gmail.com	In terms of cumulative impacts, the strategic conservation plans and tools, such as defining CBA's and sensitivities in EMF's or other strategic tools provide the basis for cumulative impacts.	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za



Question Report						
6	Thanks Ian, when landowner agreements are not all in place and the applicant wishes to use a financial guarantee - is it assumed a bank guarantee? And how is the guarantee value calculated? Thanks	Monique Beukes	monique.beukesda niels@juwi.co.za	The guarantees may be bank guarantees or escrow accounts, or that funds are transferred into dedicated conservation trusts. The value is calculated based on expected management costs of the protected area for the 30 year period. There has been a fair degree of work done by conservation agencies and NGO's in determining offset management costs per hectare in various scenarios, and these can be adapted to specific circumstances.	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za



Question Report						
7	Thanks Dominic. Please can you clarify the difference between offsets and compensation	Anonymous Attendee		Offsets require demonstrable ecological equivalence and no-net-loss, whereas compensation accepts residual biodiversity loss where true offsetting is not possible. So as I mentioned, Offsets are a form of compensation, but compensation is not always offset, because they don't uphold the principles of offset as set out in the guidelines.	Dominic Wieters	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
	Thanks Dominic. Please can you clarify the difference between offsets and compensation	Anonymous Attendee		I still believe that there is much confusion around these definitions and how to handle them. Whether an "offset" or "compensation" is required, the best-practice guidelines should be applied in terms of selecting the most suitable sites and ensuring their long-term conservation as a priority. Financial contributions may be suitable in some contexts, but only after other considerations have been adequately considered...	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@eco-pulse.co.za
7	Good morning	Gugulethu Buthelezi	gugulethu.buthelezi@transnet.net	morning	Sue George	operations@iaiasa.co.za



Question Report						
9	Dominc, small offsets (applying the ratios to habitats loss resulting in small areas) have been approved by the CA. This results in small, ecologically unsustainable conservation areas. Is this better than compensation or an alternative approach? Let's assume that avoidance was exhausted and an offset was required.	Clayton Weatherall-Thomas	cweatherall-thomas@srk.co.za	If an offset results in an ecologically non-viable area, it risks being offset in name only, and approaches like compensation or consolidated offsets may achieve a more meaningful conservation outcome. But it has been my experience that reducing the footprint or aligning it slightly differently can avoid all residual impacts, particularly when they are small. Obviously the devil is in the detail and we would apply our minds to the details very carefully in how we would respond to this proposal or what the optimal outcome would be.	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
10	There are instances where the competent authority requires a draft biodiversity offset plan to be advertised during the draft scoping phase with the expectation that the final scoping report is submitted with the approved biodiversity offset report/plan. According to Ian's presentation, the biodiversity offset plan/report is expected during the the EIA phase. Aare the authorities (Province & National) aligned in this approach?	Gugulethu Buthelezi	gugulethu.buthelezi@transnet.net	live answered	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
11	What scale are we dealing with when we talk about applying the mitigation hierarchy and unavoidable impacts? I'm thinking about renewable energy projects where, at a site level, it could be argued that impacts are unavoidable, but this is more challenging when you zoom out and consider things strategically - there are plenty of alternatives (many already with environmental authorisation).	Samantha Ralston-Paton	energy@birdlife.org.za	The mitigation hierarchy is applied at the project level, but the question of whether impacts are truly unavoidable must consider the broader planning context and available alternatives at a strategic scale. Scale works both ways wherein we ensure it aligns strategically, but also at the local level.	Dominic Wieters	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
12	Thank you for the information. You mentioned that the purpose of the offsets are not to curb development, but my understanding that working in KZN is extremely difficult due to the lack of actual habitat type available to offset the development, in specific habitat types. How would one respond to this issue as it has indeed been seen as a huge stumbling block for development in specific areas in specific habitats and does that mean at the onset that certain habitat areas will need to be avoided at all costs?	Anonymous Attendee		The security of onset receiving sites is really a reflection of ecological limits rather than a regulatory barrier. Offsets only work where ecosystems are still replaceable. In landscapes where habitats are already highly transformed or critically endangered, the opportunity to offset impacts becomes very limited. In those cases the mitigation hierarchy becomes critical, because the most effective solution is often avoidance through better site selection and project design. The aim isn't to stop development, but to guide it toward areas where impacts can realistically be	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
13	What does this mean for certain areas of KZN in terms of development overall, and socio-economic benefits that could be derived in underdeveloped areas?	Anonymous Attendee		Biodiversity offsets should be considered where there is justifiable socio-economic development. Its the first test that should be passed, before we consider biodiversity offsets. Can we justify the residual impact? Biodiversity offset receiving areas can also be considered potential social and economic benefits for rural areas if done correctly and with real benefits accruing to the surrounding rural communities.	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za



Question Report						
14	Hi Dominic, please can you also assist with the below. The biodiversity guideline applies to terrestrial and freshwater. How do we then apply this to estuaries?	Anonymous Attendee		Estuaries require very careful consideration. They will always be compensation because one can never achieve like for like. Ratios in this instance can become quite hectic, in particular in estuaries providing ecosystems goods and services which are exceptional. Each must be dealt with individually, but we are meeting with DFFE to try and resolve a combined effective approach for instances of exceptional circumstances. If it is not an exceptional circumstance then we support phased retreat from estuaries and the EFZ	Dominic Wieters	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
15	Good day, is it possible to get these presentations via our emails?	Lindokuhle Nsibandwe	lindokuhle.nsibandwe@licebo.co.za			
16	Thinking of the Cato Ridge Development and similar developments: Is there any scope for high-level environmental sensitivity screening (desktop?) being required before developers are able to purchase large pieces of land. Perhaps requirements by banks, for example.	Lizette Kloppers (Registered EAP)	lizette@earthnsky.co.za	Good idea. As offsets become more mainstreamed, hopefully the importance of early screening becomes more entrenched in practice.	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za
17	what was the cost of offsets (cato ridge devt) compared with costs of the original EIA?	Ashleigh McKenzie	ashleigh.mckenzie@acerafrica.co.za	I'm not sure about the costs of the EA, but as indicated, offset costs could be more that R140 Million... A significant oblation	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za



Question Report						
18	Who should be on an offset committee ie what presence should government institutions have on those committees?	Nelanie Cloete	nelbez@gmail.com	An offset committee is not always required. It is usually in more complex larger offset obligations. The offset advisory committee should include the relevant authorities (CA / conservation authority / DWS / Forestry) the offset implementation agent and the authorisation holder (non-voting)	Ian Felton	ian.felton@kznedtea.gov.za



Question Report						
19	Slight trick question, why are offsets not recommended in CR ecosystems in the offset guidelines, but then offset ratios are provided?	Clayton Weatherall-Thomas	cweatherall-thomas@srk.co.za	Because there will be increasingly threats to CR ecosystems for Strategic Infrastructure for which some guidance would be needed to undertake compensation. We would still recommend the application of following the best practice calculations from offset approaches to compensation.	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
19	Slight trick question, why are offsets not recommended in CR ecosystems in the offset guidelines, but then offset ratios are provided?	Clayton Weatherall-Thomas	cweatherall-thomas@srk.co.za	The reality is that whilst CR ecosystems should be avoided as far as possible, some impacts will take place. It is therefore critical that some guidance for dealing with these contexts is provided.	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@eco-pulse.co.za



Question Report						
20	Mr Douglas how does the state of the wetland affect the offset obligations?	Mpolokeng Rampngalo	mpolokeng.ramongoalo@mangaung.co.za	Wetlands in poorer condition generally trigger lower offset obligations. In KZN however, EKZNW have recommended that residual impact on wetlands be based on a "realistic rehabilitated state" rather than current state. The implication then is that degraded wetlands may still trigger notable offset obligations.	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@eco-pulse.co.za



Question Report						
21	As mentioned, there's quite a number of different impact ratings around - to simplify things, shouldn't DFFE define a standard set of criteria? Then everyone would be on a similar page for medium and high impacts.	Lisa Guastella	lisa.guastella@alumni.uct.ac.za	Ideally, but the challenge is how to guide the rating across a wide range of ecosystems and contexts. I believe that using SEI is a useful approach that can strengthen ratings.	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za



Question Report						
22	What is an acceptable compensation ratio for estuarine environments since the terrestrial and aquatic guidelines are used as a basis and whether the Oceans and Coast is well aligned with the implementation of these guidelines for estuarine environment.	Gugulethu Buthelezi	gugulethu.buthelezi@transnet.net	This is a critical question but one which has not been addressed in any meaningful way to date. I believe that the Wetland Offset guidelines are most closely aligned with estuarine systems. We have developed some preliminary guidance that we can share but this has not been formalized to date.	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za
23	Can onsite conservation area that have been avoided in the mitigation hierarchy, be "banked" as potential offset areas and conserved accordingly?	Cathy Avierinos	cathy@hilland.co.za	This would be considered as Double Dipping, in my mind, and would not be supported.	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
24	What about development within an IDZ? The habitat type is threatened and there will be loss on a species and habitat level, but there is an approved EA for development that predates the guidelines. There is a Open Space Management Plan with CBAs but they are not declared. Is the OSMP considered an offset for the development? Any thoughts?	Clayton Weatherall-Thomas	cweatherall-thomas@srk.co.za	In Clayton. I have a lot of thoughts, and there was supposed to be a second presentation about case studies from Ezemvelo's side, and this was going to be one of them. The ESMP was intended to provide guidance to locating offsets, and the EA required offsets for the loss of threatened habitat etc. But there was additional loss as applications changed, or additional impacts were identified which were required to be dealt with separately. I am aware of the forest offset where the loss of forest at IDZ1D was never part of the application and had to be dealt with separately. If a proposal within the	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
25	The lack of enforcement of licence conditions has contributed to a limited urgency to implement wetland offsets, particularly within the Mpumalanga mining landscape where wetland systems are already under significant pressure from mining activities.	Anonymous Attendee		Enforcement is critical! Without the support of authorities, applicants drag their feet...	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@eco-pulse.co.za



Question Report						
26	re. Onset regulations & exclusion of estuaries, how does the panel advise we navigate a scenario where critical stormwater infrastructure with no viable drainage alternatives is deemed fatally flawed in v.High environ sensitivity, despite the project contributing to long-term ecosystem health? Currently, absence of this drainage allows recurrent flooding, scouring & pollutant carrying into the environ, directly threatening endangered sp & provision of ecosystem services. Also socio-economic impacts are significant. This 'no-go' outcome contradicts Duty of Care & negatively impacts all 3 pillars of	Kerry Stanton	stanton@ksems.co.za	Very challenging one Kerry. The need for strategic offsets has not been legislated. Authorities ultimately need to make a decision based on the information available...	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@eco-pulse.co.za



Question Report						
27	Also plan for having a universal impact significance to minimise variabilities for both EAPs and Specialists is very important.	Nyasha Mapira	nyashamapira@yahoo.co.uk	Good to see that there is support for strengthening the impact significant rating process!	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za
28	'@Doug, Could the potential for wetland banking be explored further, including the opportunities available and the processes that would need to be considered for its implementation	Anonymous Attendee		We have considered this previously. The reality is that a banking model will only work when the demand is sufficient to trigger pro-active conservation of wetland areas. We would be interested in exploring this in landscapes where significant wetland offsets have or are expected to be triggered.	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za



Question Report						
29	The lack of enforcement of licence conditions has contributed to a limited urgency to implement wetland offsets, particularly within the Mpumalanga mining landscape where wetland systems are already under significant pressure from mining activities. May I have the contact details of the individual who made this comment, I am currently studying the Highveld wetland system-Chrisssiemer and looking at the offsets and landuse issues there. I would really like to further discuss this with him/her. Thanks.	Anonymous Attendee		My contact details are dominic.wieners@kznwildlife.com	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
30	If a project is in one province, can an offset site receiving site be in another province?	Ntsebo Mkhize	mkhizesrv@gmail.com	live answered	Dominic Wiens	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com
31	Ideally the offset should be as far advanced as possible by the stage of the EA/WULA so that self-regulation through the offset mechanism e.g. NEM:PAA protection ensures implementation, otherwise post-EA it falls into the basket of non-compliances for the competent authority to address	Rhett Smart	rsmart@capenature.co.za	Agreed	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za
32	Thanks, Doug. I just feel it would help to standardize the first step ;)	Lisa Guastella	lisa.guastella@alumni.uct.ac.za	Please feel free to share your ideas: dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@ecopulse.co.za



Question Report						
33	How can the issue be resolved on how the offset requirements guidelines are being interpreted by decision making authorities? I.e. DEA&DP western cape is requesting finalised offset proposals including offset agreements etc. as part of Final EIA or Final BAR submissions where KZN is stating that the guidelines only requires the Offset Study to be submitted with the Final EIA and/or BAR? This has a huge impact on timelines.	Johmandie Pienaar	johmandie@enviro-eap.co.za	Ezemvelo strongly encourage offsets to be concluded prior to an EA, because it makes the issues far easier to monitor etc when it is included as part of the EA. If this is not entirely possible, then we do typically insist that there be some form of agreement which has timelines and responsible parties.	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
33	How can the issue be resolved on how the offset requirements guidelines are being interpreted by decision making authorities? I.e. DEA&DP western cape is requesting finalised offset proposals including offset agreements etc. as part of Final EIA or Final BAR submissions where KZN is stating that the guidelines only requires the Offset Study to be submitted with the Final EIA and/or BAR? This has a huge impact on timelines.	Johmandie Pienaar	johmandie@enviro-eap.co.za	The Western Cape has formalized a Biodiversity Offset Advisory Panel, and I agree that they have more stringent obligations. Up to authorities to provide provincial level guidance at this stage...	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@eco-pulse.co.za



Question Report						
34	If the principle of a like-for-like offset and within the same impacted catchment is applied, and the catchment spans two provinces, which authority would ultimately be responsible for authorising such an offset?	Anonymous Attendee		If you're talking about wetlands, DWS would probably be key, but would require some consultation with provincial conservation agencies.	Douglas Macfarlane	dmacfarlane@eco-pulse.co.za
34	If the principle of a like-for-like offset and within the same impacted catchment is applied, and the catchment spans two provinces, which authority would ultimately be responsible for authorising such an offset?	Anonymous Attendee		My understanding is that if a proposal spans 2 provinces DFFE can make a decision to request one or the other to be the competent authority by delegation, or DFFE would be the CA themselves. They would then also work alongside the conservation authorities.	Dominic Wieners	dom.enviroethica@gmail.com



Question Report						
35	I am a social specialist, but your presentations made a lot of sense to me and highlight potential issues relevant to social impact. thank you so much	Aurick Swartbooi	embaleshamba@polka.co.za			