

Foreword

Biodiversity loss is one of the major environmental challenges facing humankind today. Despite the invaluable benefits provided by biodiversity and associated ecosystems, current and projected trends show continued decline. It is widely acknowledged that concerted policy efforts will be needed to reverse these trends. The aim of this volume is to provide policy makers and practitioners with good practice insights on how to effectively design and implement one particular instrument that has recently been gaining traction from governments and business alike, namely biodiversity offsets. Typically undertaken as the last step in the mitigation hierarchy (i.e. avoid, minimise and then offset loss), successful biodiversity offset programmes are those that are environmentally effective, economically efficient and distributionally equitable.

This book, prepared under the oversight of the OECD Working Party on Biodiversity, Water and Ecosystems, draws on the literature and on lessons and insights from more than 40 case studies on biodiversity offsets worldwide, including three in-depth chapters from the United States, Germany and Mexico. It examines the opportunities, as well as the challenges, that have been encountered with the design and implementation of biodiversity offset programmes and how they may be addressed. The following questions are examined:

- What are biodiversity offsets and how do they fit within the broader framework of no net loss and the mitigation hierarchy?
- What are the key design and implementation features that need to be considered to help ensure that biodiversity offsets are environmentally effective?
- What are the lessons learned from existing biodiversity offset programmes and what are the good practice insights for existing and future programmes?