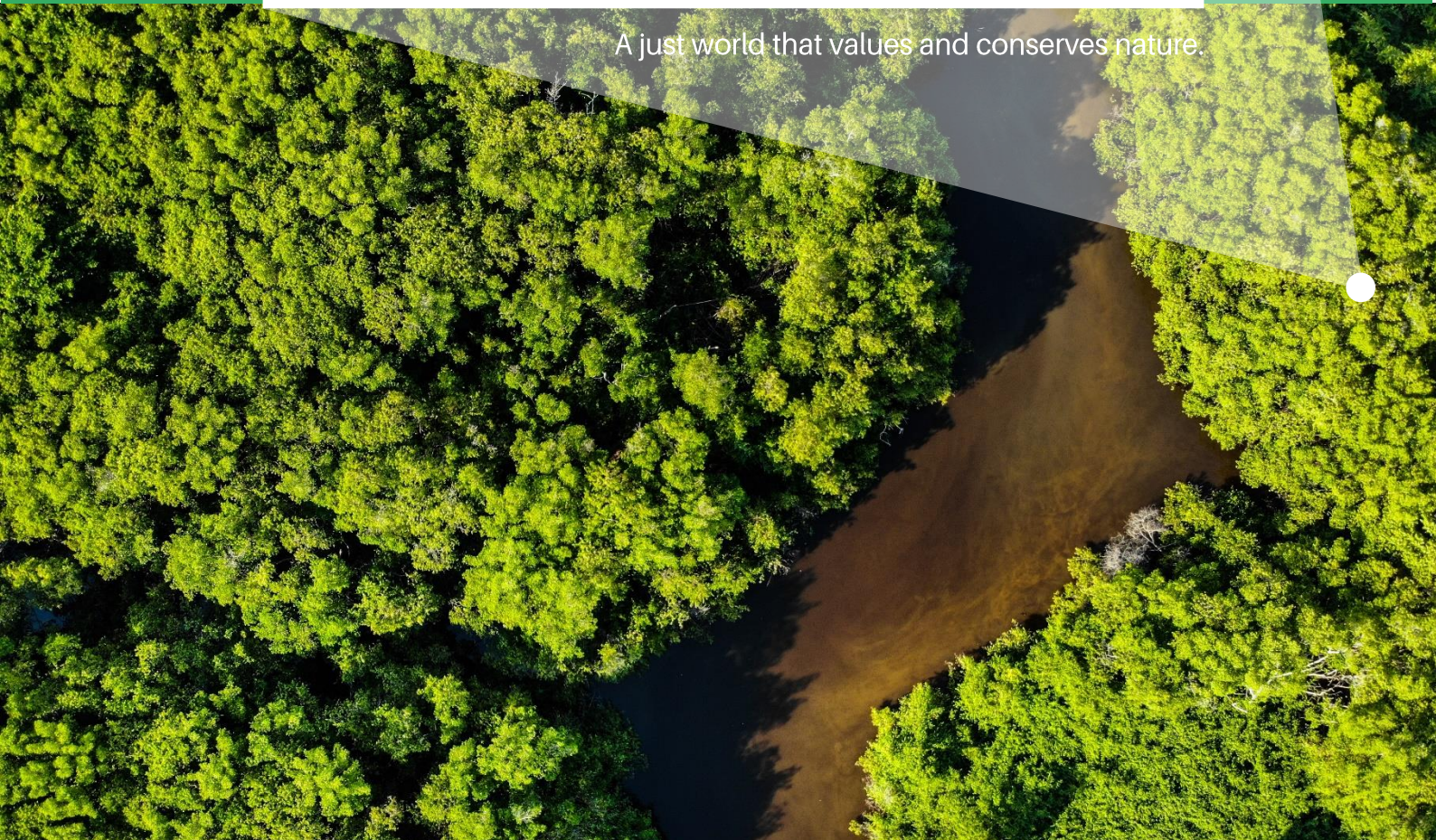


## **IUCN NL POSITION**

INDUSTRIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
DEVELOPMENT  
IN PROTECTED AREAS, OTHER  
EFFECTIVELY CONSERVED AREAS  
AND IMPORTANT BIODIVERSITY  
AREAS

A just world that values and conserves nature.



# IUCN NL POSITION

## INDUSTRIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS, OTHER EFFECTIVELY CONSERVED AREAS AND IMPORTANT BIODIVERSITY AREAS

### What is the issue?

To meet the growing global demand for abiotic resources (minerals, metals, fossil fuels), an extractive industries boom is driving an unprecedented expansion of mining exploration/exploitation and accompanying infrastructure into sparsely populated areas. Despite the Paris Agreement and the need for decarbonisation, we notice how the fossil fuel industry is continuing its expansion, tapping not only into proven reserves but also investing in new oil sites which will impede the rest of the world's ability to manage climate change effectively. It is the pursuit for richer deposits and higher yields with lesser compensations, combined with the recent search for minerals (a.o. Rare Earth Elements) needed for the energy transition, which continues to push companies to some of the world's most remote and biodiverse regions. The continued investments in fossil fuels and the shift to a clean energy economy will thus increase the scramble for "old and new" mineral deposits and consequently new mining activities.

In this context:

- IUCN NL is concerned that current discourses on existing and new energy sources and technologies that are regarded as "clean" and/or renewable typically focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions without fully accounting for biodiversity and livelihood impacts along the global supply chain of its parts.
- IUCN NL is worried that the new funds committed by big oil and gas companies to "support the transition towards a low-carbon future" through reforestation projects, for instance, might be a way of offsetting negative impacts of their activities, while they should be focusing on leaving fossil fuels in the ground and safeguarding protected areas, other effectively conserved areas and important biodiversity areas.
- IUCN NL stresses that, while solar and wind energy inherently pose lower greenhouse gas emissions and water and air pollution risks than fossil fuels, wildlife and habitat loss and land use are challenges that need to be addressed by the sector. The same can be said of hydropower, which impacts biodiversity up- and downstream of production.
- IUCN NL underlines that, by definition, extractive industries are not sustainable: i.e. once the resource has been extracted, it is gone from that area. This places a special burden of responsibility on companies, governments and investors in these sectors.

## Why is it important to address these threats?

Protected areas, other effectively conserved areas and other areas of particular importance for biodiversity play an essential role in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set out in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020<sup>1</sup>, and support a number of Sustainable Development Goals. These areas contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation and to water provisioning. Additionally, the areas are important to the livelihoods and rights of the people living there. As such, it is vital to prevent their continued degradation and fragmentation to maintain their function and value globally.

Due to the rapid growth of environmentally damaging industrial activity and infrastructure development with often irreparable damage, a risk-based approach cannot be applied on a case by case basis. Rather, a strict avoidance approach must be taken to protect important biodiversity areas. The IUCN Policy on Biodiversity Offsets [1] clearly states that any damage to Protected Areas is inherently not offset-able as current efforts to mitigate impacts are insufficient to reduce biodiversity decline<sup>2</sup>.

Table 1 Overview of strict no-go areas and high priority areas to avoid / restrict activities in

Scope: applies to activities inside the areas detailed below, but also to any activities and developments located outside these areas that have a direct or indirect negative impact on them.		
Types of activities:	Strict no-go areas:	High priority areas to avoid / restrict activities in:
Damaging industrial activities, including <b>mining, oil &amp; gas and agriculture</b> , and environmentally damaging infrastructure, such as <b>dams, roads and pipelines</b> [2, 5, 4]	All categories of IUCN protected areas [2, 6]	Sacred sites or territories, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), World Heritage sites and other areas of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystems services identified by governments as essential to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (for example: Key Biodiversity Areas) and areas under Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures. [2, 3, 5]  For mining and mineral exploration:  Any high conservation value areas, critical ecosystems, water catchment areas and biological corridors [7]

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/sp/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iucn.org/theme/business-and-biodiversity/our-work/business-approaches-and-tools/biodiversity-offsets>

## What can be done?

There is a number of actions that should be taken to address the threats that industrial and infrastructure development pose to protected areas and other effectively conserved areas:

- Environmentally damaging industrial activities or infrastructure development should be prohibited in all IUCN categories of Protected Areas and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and their designations should not be altered to allow these activities.
- Activities that may have a negative impact on protected areas, other effectively conserved areas and other areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services should also be prohibited.
- Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), sacred sites or territories and other important biodiversity areas should also be avoided.
- The private sector is asked to withdraw from, and not conduct or fund future activities in protected areas and other effectively conserved areas, e.g. ICCAs, and to make commitments to that effect.

To realize this, IUCN NL has a number of calls to business and governments, which are based on existing IUCN resolutions on the issue. Each call refers to one of these resolutions, which are linked at the end of this document.

### Calls to business

- Respect all categories of protected areas as no-go areas for the activities described in the above table [2].
- Withdraw from those activities in these areas and associated large-scale infrastructure or extractive industry developments (other than those oriented to the conservation-related management of their sites) that are on-going or proposed in areas immediately adjacent to protected areas [2, 6].
- Don't conduct future activities mentioned above in protected areas [2].
- Don't conduct, invest in, or fund environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development within above described areas or that negatively impact the no-go and avoidance areas described above<sup>3</sup> [2].
- Make public commitments with respect to the above [2] and voluntarily avoid these activities until prohibitions or restrictions come into place [6].
- Avoid mineral exploration and mining activities that will affect the long-term integrity of any high conservation value areas (protected or not), critical ecosystems, water catchment areas and biological corridors [7].
- Compensate and offer other appropriate and feasible livelihood options to workers and others whose livelihoods are affected by the closure of ongoing large scale infrastructure or extractive industry developments within or adjacent to protected areas [6].

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<sup>3</sup> Financial institutions (including multilateral and bilateral institutions), public sector bodies and relevant certification bodies as well as relevant industry groups are also asked not to conduct, invest or fund these activities and to make commitments to this effect [2, 9].

## Calls to governments<sup>4</sup>

- Ensure the appropriate, transparent and rigorous **pre-emptive** appraisal processes, such as international best practice Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments and appropriate regulation are in place, implemented and respected [2, 5, 7, 8, 10].
- **Prohibit** environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development in all categories of protected areas [2, 10].
- **Review** large-scale infrastructure or extractive industry developments (other than those oriented to the conservation-related management of their sites) that are ongoing or proposed in areas immediately adjacent to protected areas<sup>5</sup> [6].
- Adopt and implement policies that **restrict** activities that may have negative impacts on protected areas, other effectively conserved areas or any other areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services when preparing development and infrastructure plans [2].
- Give high priority to **avoid** environmentally damaging activities and developments impacting ICCAs<sup>6</sup> [2].
- **Ensure** free, prior and informed consent when considering activities in ICCAs<sup>7,8</sup> [2].
- Respect the status and designations of established protected areas [9] and keep all categories of protected areas whole: they **must not be de-gazetted, downgraded nor have their boundaries altered** to enable environmentally damaging activities [2].
- As signatories to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, governments are expected to **cut their Greenhouse Gas Emission** and limit the global temperature rises to less than 2 degrees Celsius or to pre-industrial levels of less than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Fossil fuels are the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, oil exploitation itself contributes to the carbon footprint that governments must limit per commitments under the Paris Climate Change Agreement.
- **Compensate and offer** other appropriate and feasible livelihood options to workers and others whose livelihoods are affected by the closure of ongoing large scale infrastructure or extractive industry developments within or adjacent to protected areas [6].

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<sup>4</sup> Calls in the original resolutions and recommendations may be in the form of requests, recommendations, calls or urges.

<sup>5</sup> This request also applies to indigenous/local communities.

<sup>6</sup> This call also applies to decision makers, community and private land owners.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> This call also applies to decision makers, community and private land owners.

## Referenced IUCN resolutions

1. [WCC 2016 Res 059](#) IUCN Policy on Biodiversity Offsets
2. [WCC 2016 Rec 102](#) Protected areas and other areas important for biodiversity in relation to environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development
3. [WCC 2016 Res 067](#) Best practice for industrial-scale development projects
4. [WCC 2012 REC 174](#) Offshore oil drilling in the Mediterranean
5. [WCC 2012 RES 088](#) Responsible renewable energy sources
6. [WCC 2008 RES 087](#) Impacts of infrastructure and extractive industries on protected areas
7. [WCC 2008 REC 136](#) Biodiversity, protected areas, indigenous peoples and mining activities
8. [WCC 2004 REC 087](#) Financial institutions and the World Commission on Dams recommendations
9. [WCC 2000 RES 034](#) Multilateral and bilateral financial institutions and projects impacting on biodiversity and natural features
10. [WCC 2000 REC 082](#) Protection and conservation of biological diversity of protected areas from the negative impacts of mining and exploration