Document ID	ALS_02_D	ENGLISH
Date	20/09/2021	

HCV Assessment Manual

Updated Version for use and feedback

The first edition of the HCV Assessment Manual was published in 2014, with the launch of the ALS. Since then, we have all (assessors, Quality Panel members, ALS staff) gained experience on how report evaluation works in practice. Building on this experience and the fact that in December 2018, the HCV Network launched a new website and ALS web platform for report evaluation – it was necessary to update the manual and templates.

As a reminder, in October 2018, we shared a draft version of this manual for comments, which were received and addressed.

In September 2021 we updated this document to reflect changes to the publication of public summaries.

We intend to work on further improvements to this manual as it is used in practice. Upon publication of this manual and the accompanying reporting templates (HCV assessment report template), any HCV assessments beginning after the publication of the new documents, must use the new manual and templates.

HCV Network

secretariat@hcvnetwork.org
www.hcvnetwork.org

Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

ALS	Assessor Licensing Scheme
AOI	Area of interest
ESIA	Environmental and social impact assessment
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
HCV	High Conservation Value
HCVMA	HCV management area
MU	Management unit
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NI	National Interpretation
PM	Participatory mapping
RTE	Rare, threatened, or endangered
SIA	Social impact assessment

Who is this manual for?

This manual is for HCV Network licensed assessors. This manual is to be followed during all steps of a High Conservation Value (HCV) assessment (see Figure 1) and is designed to be used along with other supporting documents (see Table 1). It is expected that the licensed ALS assessor will be leading and coordinating the entire assessment process,

including substantial time in the field during primary data collection and mapping. The HCV Assessment Manual, along with the HCV Assessment Report Template aim to ensure that HCV assessment reports are well-structured and follow the same format. This will facilitate report evaluation by the Quality Panel.

How to use this manual

Part 1 of the manual provides background information for licensed assessors and important considerations for conducting a good quality HCV assessment. Part 2 takes the assessor through the different steps of the assessment: pre-assessment, scoping study, and full assessment. Part 3 provides an overview of the ALS reporting and evaluation process.

Finally, there are annexes to provide more information on important topics such as: assessment team qualifications, planning and information needs.

The manual should be used alongside other guidance documents, toolkits, and templates (see Table 1). When starting a new assessment always make sure you are using the latest document versions, by checking the website.

Table 1 Supporting documents for use with the HCV Assessment Manual

Document title	Brief summary
HCV Network Charter	The Charter is the foundation document for the HCV Network, declaring the Network's intention for how the HCV approach should be implemented. It is important for licensed assessors to read and abide by the Charter.
Common Guidance for HCV Identification	This document provides the most recent HCV definitions (also found on the website) and explains theoretical aspects of the approach (e.g., significance, precaution) and gives practical guidance on methods, indicators, and information sources for HCV identification.
Common Guidance for HCV Management and Monitoring	This document provides guidance on threat assessment and different kinds of management prescriptions and monitoring considerations.
HCV Assessment Report Template and Guidance	Licensed assessors must use this template for all HCV assessment reports submitted to the ALS.
HCV National Interpretations	Several countries have developed HCV National Interpretations (NI) or toolkits where the HCV definitions are further interpreted. For example, a national toolkit can explain what/where the rare ecosystems are, and which parts of the country have high levels of endemism. National guidance is most useful for national lists of important species, ecosystems, etc. for understanding local social contexts, and defining nationally relevant thresholds. However, the global HCV definitions must still be used. Where a national interpretation contradicts the Common Guidance, the HCV Network global guidance text must be used.

Part I Introduction and key concepts

The first part of the manual covers some fundamental concepts such as HCV interpretation, FPIC and stakeholder consultation; it also covers important considerations for planning an HCV assessment.

1.1 HCV definitions

It is fundamental that all licensed assessors share a common understanding of the HCV definitions, their interpretation in practice and the overall HCV approach. The HCV definitions included in the Common Guidance for HCV Identification and on the website, always take precedence over national interpretations.

An HCV is a biological, ecological, social, or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. The six categories of HCVs are:

Box 1: HCV definitions (HCV Network 2017)

HCV 1 - Species diversity: Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened, or endangered species (RTE), that are significant at global, regional, or national levels.

HCV 2 – Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics: Intact forest landscapes and large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional, or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

HCV 3 - Ecosystems and habitats: Rare, threatened, or endangered (RTE) ecosystems, habitats or refugia.

HCV 4 - Ecosystem services: Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.

HCV 5 - Community needs: Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for

livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with these communities or indigenous peoples.

HCV 6 - Cultural values: Sites, resources, habitats, and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological, or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic, or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or indigenous peoples, identified through engagement with these local communities or indigenous peoples.

1.2 The Organisation commissioning the HCV assessment

Throughout the manual, we use the term Organisation as the entity that commissions the assessment, acknowledging that it may be a company, land owner, grower, etc. who commissions an HCV assessment. HCV Network believes that it is important for Organisations to be active participants and fully aware of the assessment process and ALS requirements. It is the responsibility of the to ensure that the Organisation has a clear understanding of the following:

- The process and activities involved in an HCV assessment and the time scales that may be required to carry out the various stages of the assessment, including the scoping study, full assessment and quality control, also allowing for enough time for consultation with affected communities.
- The principles of FPIC, as the company is ultimately responsible for FPIC
- The purpose and requirements of the ALS, including costs of report evaluation, time required for ALS evaluation, potential outcomes of evaluation and use of the ALS web platform to monitor status of reports. Be sure that your contact person from the Organisation is familiar with the ALS Specification document.
- Recommendations for management and monitoring will be made based on the assessment and these will need to be further developed, refined, and implemented by the Organisation outside the scope of the HCV assessment.

The ALS communicates directly with Organisations which have commissioned HCV assessments. It is required that you provide contact information along with your report package so that ALS can keep the Organisation contact person informed of the status of the report evaluation.

Recommendation: The contract between the assessor and the Organisation must clearly state the roles and responsibilities of both parties. It is recommended that assessors use one contract for the scoping study and another contract for the full assessment. If this is not possible, then the contract should have a clause that will allow the assessor to exit the contract after the scoping study if results show that the preparation work for a full assessment has not been conducted (e.g., FPIC not properly initiated, consent not given for full assessment, etc.).

1.3 Forming the assessment team

The main role of an HCV assessment team is to analyse all the available data (desk and field) and information from consultees and, based on this, identify:

- What HCVs are present (or potentially present) and where
- What conditions are necessary to maintain those HCVs (e.g., habitat requirements of a certain species)
- The main threats to the HCVs
- What management and monitoring strategies or activities may be used to maintain and/or enhance HCVs?

The HCV assessment team must have sufficient skills and experience to assess all six HCV categories and to communicate appropriately with a range of stakeholders. See Annex 1 for guidance on HCV Assessment Team terms of reference. Depending on the assessment context, there may be a need for knowledge and expertise in e.g., botany, ecology, hydrology, participatory mapping and socio-economics (including an understanding of local culture and language). It is also important to include expertise in landscape level conservation and GIS mapping – this is because maps are a key output of the assessment. Other team members, besides the leader, may also be ALS licensed assessors, but this is not compulsory. HCV Network recognises that it may not always be feasible to assemble such teams of

experts, especially in cases where human and financial resources are constrained. However, in this case, the assessor must invoke the precautionary approach (see Box 2) and recommend conservation of all potential HCVs.

HCV assessment team members need to have sufficient competence within their specific subject area to contribute to the assessment as required, and the willingness and ability to work as a team under the direction of the lead assessor. **Good communication amongst assessment team members, land managers and other relevant stakeholders is necessary to ensure that the purpose of the HCV assessment is clear, and that access to key people and data can be secured.** HCV assessments require considerable time in data analysis and discussion, and team members need to have regular meetings to exchange information.

Box 2: Precautionary Approach

The precautionary approach means that when there is a threat of severe or irreversible damage to the environment or a threat to human welfare, responsible parties need to take measures to prevent the damage and risks, even when the scientific information is incomplete or inconclusive, and when the vulnerability and sensitivity of values are uncertain. In the context of HCV identification, this means that if an HCV assessment uncovers credible evidence that an HCV may exist (e.g., the suspected presence of several threatened species, as revealed by species distribution maps, expert opinion or anecdotal evidence provided by credible witnesses), the precautionary approach requires the assumption to be made that the value is potentially present, until and unless further evidence can conclusively demonstrate its absence.

1.4 Community engagement and FPIC

Assessors must explain the purpose and proposed activities of the assessment. It is important that communities have a conceptual understanding of the HCV approach and the activities involved in the assessment and the implications for future land and natural resource use, including their role in

management and monitoring. Assessors must clearly explain the assessment process during site visits to communities/villages, including fieldwork, the consultation steps, and the final consent (or not) of the local communities.

1.4.1 FPIC and the HCV assessment

Implementing FPIC principles is primarily the responsibility of the Organisation and must begin before the HCV assessment and continue after the assessment. However, **the HCV assessment team must have a clear understanding of FPIC principles and how to use them during the assessment**. This manual does not explain the FPIC principles, nor the process, of FPIC in detail. Please see Box 3 for a list of FPIC resources.

Box 3: FPIC Resources

Colchester, M. and S. Chao. 2013. Monitoring protocol for High Conservation Values 5 and 6 with guidelines on best practices in community engagement. Forest Peoples Programme and ZSL. http://www.sustainablepalmoil.org/files/2013/10/HCV-5-and-6-Monitoring-ProtocolFINAL-DRAFT.pdf

FSC guidelines for the implementation of the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). Version 1, 30 October 2012. https://ic.fsc.org/guides-manuals.343.htm

Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Oil Palm Plantations: a guide for companies. October 2008. RSPO and Forest Peoples Programme. http://www.rspo.org/file/FPIC%20and%20the%20RSPO%20a%20guide%20for%20companies%20Oct%2008_cover.pdf

The manual identifies points along the assessment process where local people may grant or withhold consent; these points are summarised in Figure 1. Very broadly, the FPIC responsibilities of the assessor vs. the responsibilities of the Organisation can be described in the following way:

Table 2 FPIC responsibilities of the Organisation and the ALS Assessor

Organisation's FPIC responsibility	**Assessor's FPIC responsibility**
• Conduct initial engagement and stakeholder consultations according to the principles of FPIC. • Secure community agreement to conduct the HCV assessment. • Decide with each community the procedure by which overall consent for the proposed development and conservation plan will be sought. • Reach an agreement on the final HCV management areas and their management and monitoring activities. • Discuss the potential incentives and benefits for integrated conservation and development. • Agree how local people will be represented in the project and how they will give their consent. • Staff training.	• Proceed with assessment activities (e.g., participatory mapping, flora/fauna surveys) only once consent has been granted. • Use FPIC principles during participatory mapping and stakeholder consultations. • Provide information for consultations and discussions with the communities in a clear and easy-to-understand manner. • Present for consultation, the preliminary HCV areas and management areas, and their proposed management and monitoring recommendations. • Consult with community and social NGO representatives to gather opinion on the quality of the Organisation's FPIC process.

1.5 Stakeholder consultation

Stakeholder consultation is an important part of the assessment process, and it is important to understand how good quality consultation is conducted. The purpose of consultation during the early phase of the assessment (e.g., during the scoping study) is to inform stakeholders of the purpose of the assessment, gather information on the social and environmental situation in the assessment area, and identify concerns and recommendations regarding the assessment and potential HCVs.

In relation to local communities, it is important to note that consultation is not just the passing of information from assessor to community member or from the Organisation to a community member. Instead, throughout this manual, **when community consultation is referred to, the intention is that it is a two-way communication involving active participation and joint decision-making processes**. Consultation should be fair, representative, and non-discriminatory. Subgroups should be consulted. Assessment results need to be presented to affected communities for feedback and validation.

Stakeholder identification should be done during the pre-assessment and scoping study phases. The assessment team identifies the different stakeholders to be consulted and worked with during the assessment. For example, it is important to meet and discuss the proposed project and the assessment with:

- Affected communities (consider subgroups e.g., men, women, youth, elders, minorities)
- National and local government
- NGOs and civil society
- Development project leaders
- Other private sector actors with interests in the area
- Social and environmental experts

Part 2: The HCV assessment process

The HCV assessment process is divided into a pre-assessment phase, a scoping study, and a full assessment phase.

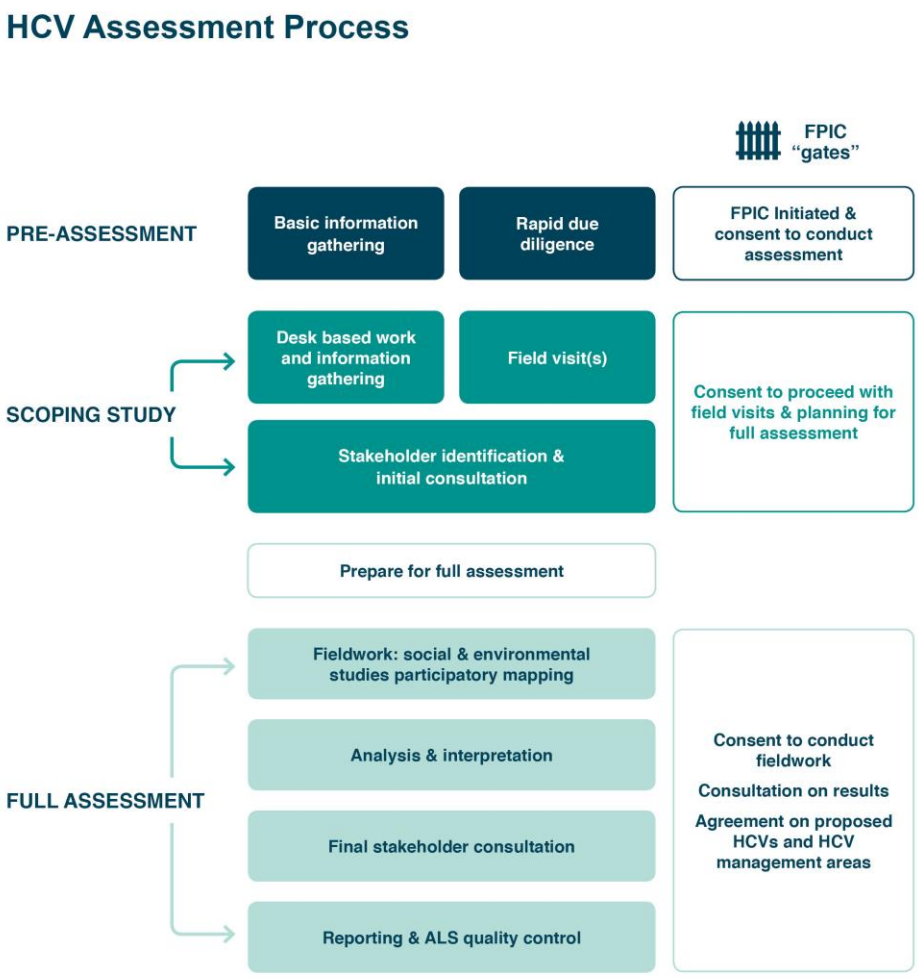

Figure 1 Illustration of the different steps of the HCV assessment process.

2.1 Pre-assessment phase

The first steps of the HCV assessment consist of desk-based activities that are generally accomplished remotely. It can involve emails, phone calls, internet searches and literature review. This step can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks depending on the information available and the assessor's level of familiarity with the country or assessment site. The pre-assessment

phase is a time for gathering basic information to determine the characteristics of the AOI and the activities that have taken place to date.

2.1.1 Basic information gathering

When an assessor is contacted by an Organisation interested in commissioning an assessment, the assessor needs to compile the following basic information:

1. What is known about the Organisation requesting the HCV assessment? E.g., geographic scope of operations, commodities produced and/or processed, location in the supply chain (is the Organisation a subsidiary in a larger group?), reputation, existing commitments regarding environmental and social issues, target of any campaigns from NGOs and civil society, etc.
2. Details on the Area of Interest (AOI) including at minimum: an accurate spatial file of the boundaries (geographic coordinates and area).
3. Current land cover/land use maps are required, using the most recent images available (i.e., less than 12 months old).
4. The type of project (current or future), e.g., whether it is for oil palm, forestry plantation, etc.
5. Reason for the HCV assessment (e.g., certification scheme requirement, Organisation policy).
6. Land tenure status (initial information on who controls/owns/uses the land).
7. Summary of FPIC processes that have already taken place (e.g., how the communities' consent to proceed with assessment has been obtained), including key stakeholders (communities, others) involved.
8. Information about communities within or adjacent to the MU, if available.
9. Does the Organisation already have a permit to explore and/or operate? (Permit boundaries – with geographic coordinates).

2.1.2 Define the Area of Interest

Clearly defining the geographic scope of the assessment is crucial to the overall assessment and the subsequent report - this is called the Area of Interest (AOI).

The AOI is the management unit (MU)[1]and the wider landscape surrounding or adjacent to the MU. The wider landscape may be determined by identifying a single or combination of social or environmental features that are connected to and extend beyond the MU boundaries such as a watershed or a geographical land unit containing a cluster of interacting ecosystems, and community lands. Rationale for the determination of the wider boundary must be provided, along with a map showing the boundaries of the MU and the wider landscape. The HCV assessment is primarily conducted on the MU, but the assessor must include a strong analysis of how the MU fits within the AOI and even beyond (e.g., provide information on protected areas in the region).

2.1.3 Conduct due diligence

During the initial desktop study, the assessor must conduct a so-called “due diligence” exercise to get a sense of: what commitments the Organisation has made to sustainability, what activities are happening on the ground, what right the Organisation has to explore or develop the area, and how far the Organisation has progressed with the FPIC process. These basic “preconditions” should be in place before the HCV assessment goes ahead.

Table 3 provides examples of evidence the assessor can use to determine if the preconditions have been met, however the examples given in the table are not mandatory and actual evidence gathered will vary. This is a desktop exercise, where the assessor must request information from the Organisation to determine whether the preconditions are met. **Once in the field, e.g., as**

[1] The term management unit (MU) may be interchanged with concession, permit area, etc. It just refers to the area under some form of ownership, lease rights, exploration rights, etc. of the Organisation commissioning the assessment. This is the area where current and/or proposed commodity production activities take place or will take place

part of the scoping study, assessors must use triangulation[2] to further investigate whether these preconditions have indeed been met.

Table 3 Examples of evidence to gather for different preconditions during the due diligence exercise

Precondition to be met by the Organisation	**Examples of evidence the Assessor can gather**
Commitment to environmental and social safeguards	• Organisation policy and/or a statement committing Organisation operations to the core values engrained in the HCV and FPIC processes: e.g., biodiversity and habitat conservation, respect for community tenure and rights, promotion of sustainable livelihoods • If the Organisation is a member of a certification scheme, this would also show a level of commitment to environmental and social safeguards (however, scheme membership is not mandatory)
Commitment to postpose or halt any land clearing or land preparation until the HCV assessment has been completed	• Declaration by Organisation (e.g., email, policy on website) • Recent land cover maps or land use change analysis (which show that clearing has not taken place) • Historic maps (land use dynamics), or a quick Google Earth history analysis
Demonstrated legal right or permission to explore or develop the Area of Interest	• Before Organisations can start acquiring land, they must understand who already has rights to land as owners and users, including those

[2] For example, through interviews with experts and local people, and through field visits to the assessment site.

	with statutory rights, those with customary rights and those with informal rights. Check whether the Organisation has conducted a general study to understand which institutions have authority over lands, and who controls how lands are acquired, inherited, and transferred. • Title, lease, planning permit, concession agreement, exploration permit, permission from current land owners, etc. • Agreement or MOU from the landowners that give permission to conduct the assessments that will inform development potential on their land.
FPIC process has been initiated with full disclosure of the proposed project with all potentially affected communities and stakeholders, and the process for negotiation and consent going forward has been agreed, with representatives appointed through a fair process	• Timeline of FPIC process initiated by the Organisation <u>Potential documentation can include</u>: • Explanation of project to affected communities and other stakeholders (e.g., meeting minutes) • How communities and other stakeholders will represent themselves and how they will be involved in the assessment processes • Consent from affected communities to proceed with the HCV assessment • Signed MOU between Organisation and communities

2.1.4 Proceeding with the HCV assessment

At the end of the pre-assessment phase, the assessor determines whether to proceed with the scoping study. **If any of the above preconditions have not been fulfilled (at least to a preliminary degree), the assessor must not proceed with the HCV assessment.** Instead, if appropriate, he/she must first discuss a process with the Organisation through which the preconditions can be met prior to conducting a scoping study or full assessment.

2.2 Scoping study

The scoping study phase consists of continued information gathering and a field visit(s). The main objectives of the scoping study are to:

- begin verifying information gathered during the pre-assessment phase
- identify topics to cover during the full assessment phase
- contact stakeholders and local community representatives and plan for participatory work such as mapping
- determine the expertise required in the HCV assessment team and meet potential team members or consultants; this is especially important if social experts are needed (e.g., people who speak local languages, are familiar with the social context and are trusted by local people).

2.2.1 Continued information gathering

There are three main types of information required for an assessment: environmental, social, and geospatial. The first step is to collate all information sources relevant to the AOI. This includes data from published and unpublished studies, research reports and other relevant sources. Social and environmental experts in the country are valuable resources and can be consulted at this stage and again during the analysis step. **Primary data collection by the assessment team will form the basis for HCV identification. However, it is also acceptable to use secondary data (e.g., recent ESIA report), so long as the use of secondary data is well-justified and documented**.

A gap analysis is then conducted to identify remaining data needs. Information gaps will inform team composition and the requirements for field studies and consultations. Where the information available is outdated and/or insufficient to make informed decisions about the presence or absence of HCVs, further studies are advisable, but if resources are not available for field studies, assessors should use the **precautionary approach** (Box 2).

National context

It is useful to provide an overview of the national or relevant regional context in which the HCV assessment was conducted. Region may refer to subnational or international areas. For instance, it may be useful to consider the subnational level for very large countries, or it may be useful to refer to larger (e.g., biogeographic) regions which cover multiple countries (e.g., the Congo Basin) depending on what scale is most relevant for understanding the significance of the HCVs identified.

Understanding the landcover in the AOI

A good landcover map is the basis on which decisions should be made about such topics as fieldwork locations, HCV designation and management recommendations. Assessors can either use an existing landcover classification or develop a landcover map through remote sensing. The following are required:

- Satellite image of the MU and surrounding area at certain time/date.
- Interpretation result of that satellite image (in this case it may be the land cover, but other layers can be also produced from the satellite image) - this must be ground-truthed, otherwise the interpretation may be inaccurate. For example, if the assessment was conducted in 2018, the assessor must show the land cover in 2018. The layers must be relevant to the types of information the assessor wants to display (i.e., ecosystem types, governmental land cover classes, legal land use status, etc.).
- Use classifications relevant and recommended for the country e.g., by government authority or an NGO, should distinguish between major

land cover types e.g., forest, and if possible, highly degraded forest, agriculture/plantations, urban areas, and open habitats.

- The image(s) should be at an appropriate resolution for the scale of the MU and should involve some ground-truthing during the assessment field work.

Biodiversity and environment context

Landscape level data needs to be gathered to determine potential biodiversity and ecosystem values, to place the MU and AOI within a national, regional, or even global context. Some information pertaining to the occurrence of protected or rare species or ecosystems may be available remotely at this stage and can complement this analysis. Information may include land cover and ecosystem maps, lists of rare, threatened, or endangered (RTE) species and species distributions, conservation priority maps, protected area information, and studies carried out in and around the area. Refer to the **Common Guidance for HCV Identification** for recommendations on information sources.

Social context

Similarly, information on the human context should also be gathered during this early step. Useful sources of information include population census data, socioeconomic reports, and social impact assessments (if available). See the **Common Guidance for HCV Identification** for more recommendations.

The assessor should identify people who need to be consulted about social values (e.g., different groups of local people, holders of specialist knowledge such as healers, and social NGOs). It is important to note that **participatory mapping must be carried out by the HCV Assessment Team whenever local people live in, and/or use resources in, the assessment area** (i.e., people have claims to land and resources within the HCV assessment area). The exception is when, there are results available from participatory mapping exercises carried out no longer than six months before the HCV assessment, in which case, participatory consultation should include the validation of these pre-existing maps, and the confirmation that such maps were produced in a participatory manner. Participatory mapping will take place later during the

assessment phase, but it is important to begin engaging with local people at an early stage to gain their consent for mapping and to agree on a schedule and approach for the mapping activities.

2.2.2 Field visit

The scoping study field work is conducted by a small team of experts (generally at least two experts). This may include the lead assessor, but it is not necessary if there is another team member with the relevant experience and expertise to lead the scoping field work. The scoping team must be accompanied by people with local knowledge (e.g., language skills, community facilitation, know the local terrain), whenever possible. Logistical considerations such as the size and accessibility of the site (e.g., state of the roads) will influence the scoping study planning, and generally the Organisation commissioning the assessment will help with logistics.

Note: It is imperative that Organisation staff have already visited communities, prior to the assessors' arrival, to discuss via a two-way dialogue the proposed project, the mutually agreed process for reaching consent for the project, and the project development phases including the forthcoming visit of the assessors.

The following activities should be carried out during the scoping study field visit:

- Discussion with Organisation representatives
- Meet with a selection of relevant local and national stakeholders to introduce the purpose of the HCV assessment – this will set a good standard for later consultation at the time of the full assessment, and will enhance the level of transparency
- Obtain maps and studies that were not available during online research or through email
- Hold discussions with a sample of local communities potentially impacted by the planned operations – described in more detail below

- Do a transect or reconnaissance walk through part of the assessment area to characterise major vegetation classes and land forms and to prepare methods for biological inventories.
- Visit any non-forest ecosystems (e.g., savanna, rivers, wetlands).
- Understand/map access points to the assessment area (roads, rivers) to help planning of the full assessment.

Visiting a sample of communities

Visiting communities will allow the assessment team to check the status of FPIC and to prepare for field work (e.g., social studies to identify HCV 5 & 6). Assessors must be well-prepared for meetings with local communities, for example, it may be necessary to have independent interpreters. Deciding which communities (e.g., villages) to visit during the scoping study can depend on several factors, including:

- Visit human settlements whose land or areas of customary use will be impacted by the project (i.e., communities leasing some, or all, of their lands to the Organisation).
- Visit human settlements listed as already engaged in FPIC process (according to information provided by the Organisation during the due diligence step).

Stakeholder identification and consultation

Consultation during the scoping study is used to gather information on the social and environmental situation in the assessment area and identify concerns and recommendations regarding the assessment and project (i.e., commodity production).

This is a time to conduct initial consultations such as with:

- Local people (see details below)
- Social and environmental experts who may join the full assessment team or who have data or information and/or concerns to share
- Stakeholders, more generally, to understand initial concerns over project

Check on the status of FPIC and previous social studies

The assessment team needs to verify that the communities have been informed of the proposed project by the Organisation and that they have understood the location, scale and objectives of the proposed development and conservation and have given their consent to the HCV assessment. Detailed documentation must be kept of all consultations. This verification can be done by meeting with a sample of communities to check that initial engagement and information disclosure, aligned with the requirements of the FPIC principles, has been conducted. Checking for example:

- Did the community nominate their own representatives?
- Is there specific reference to the customary owners being made aware that they can say no to the development or to conservation plans?

Note: Even if the Organisation has obtained consent for the assessment to take place, it is important to gain consent from local communities before entering into their farms or (communal) forested lands to conduct ground-truthing and vegetation studies. Even for assessments conducted on private property, it is good practice to engage with any local people who use land or natural resources in the AOI. It is good practice to have local people accompany field teams wherever possible. This applies to field/community visits during all stages of the assessment.

2.2.3 Scoping study outcome

The outcome of the scoping study is some form of scoping report. It could be a written report or a presentation that is shared with the Organisation and other interested stakeholders. The scoping report is useful for communicating with the Organisation and for planning the full assessment. The scoping report can be brief, but it must include information on the following:

- Overall summary of conclusions from the scoping study and information gaps that will require attention and efforts during the full assessment

- Recommendations (if any) for what the Organisation must complete prior to full assessment, such as participatory mapping of community use areas to be excluded from development
- Timeline and activities of scoping study
- Summary of sites visited (e.g., villages, vegetation classes, exploratory walks through the area, other sites of interest, key biophysical and ecological features)
- Consultations
- Due diligence verification
- Ground-truthing and observations of land cover map
- Proposal for field studies, including methods

The scoping report is not submitted to the ALS for quality control.

2.2.4 FPIC gate: Decision to proceed (or not)

The decision to proceed with the full assessment after the scoping study must be based on:

- Evidence that the company has initiated FPIC, and
- Community consent to continue with the full assessment, in which case it is useful to provide examples of the form this consent could/should take; e.g., signed meeting notes from community consultations, statement from the communities' legal representative. It should be clear that it is mandatory to provide evidence of this FPIC gate.

2.3 Preparation for the full assessment

Once the scoping study is complete, and the decision has been made to proceed, the team must now prepare for the full assessment. This section highlights some of the key tasks to accomplish before the assessment, but assessors are encouraged to use the HCV Assessment Planning Checklist (see Annex 2) and consider all relevant topics.

Preparation and planning are crucial to a well-executed HCV assessment. Planning work must be done in advance of fieldwork, and consideration should be given to who will be involved in the process (team members or independent specialists) and when it will be undertaken.

Assessors should refer to the **Planning Checklist** (Annex 2) and consider all the relevant topics.

Once the assessor knows that the full assessment will proceed, he/she is encouraged to **register the assessment with the ALS**. This will allow the ALS to plan and be prepared to receive the assessment report and review it in a timely manner.

The timing of the assessment will depend on several factors including:

- **Availability of team members** – it is often necessary to organise dates around the availability of the team leader or key team members.
- **Methods** – the choice of methods and the sampling intensity will affect the duration of the assessment.
- **Seasons** - it is important to consider factors such as the weather, as this can affect access to the site. If seasonal movements of species are important, field visits should be conducted in different seasons if possible. If time constraints do not allow adequate coverage of different seasons, this should be followed up in monitoring recommendations.
- **Terrain** – e.g., habitat assessment in hilly areas takes much longer than in floodplains, due to variety of habitats and difficulty of access.
- **Sociocultural considerations** – if possible, avoid carrying out work around a major national holiday or religious events and be aware of any local traditions.

2.3.1 Methods and survey design

The lead assessor must coordinate the preparation of methods for collecting and analysing relevant data for HCV identification. The assessment report will be evaluated based on:

- Description of methods (with full methods provided as annexes), including a map displaying sampling points and survey areas.
- Justification for choice of methods (referring to strengths or limitations of method, suitability for context)

The assessor must choose methods and sampling strategies, with attention to the following:

- Site characteristics
- Efficient use of time and other resources: Field studies are to be organised, whenever possible, to maximise time and resources. Efficient field data collection is also appreciated by local communities and other stakeholders who can avoid multiple, often repetitive, consultations and visits. HCV assessments may also be coordinated with national requirements such as ESIAs.
- More than one field visit during the full assessment will likely be required and beneficial, such as where consent is necessary to access a site (e.g., land owners not present, boundaries not fully clear, land conflict, etc.).

Sampling design and methods must be prepared before the start of fieldwork, and qualified team members or independent specialists must carry out the work. In general, the choice of methods is left to the discretion of the assessor, with the following exception:

- **Participatory mapping of community land use and natural resource use is required and must be GIS based**. The HCV Network plans to conduct trainings with licensed assessors and develop more detailed guidance on a minimum set of activities that must be conducted. See Box 4 below.

Box 4: Participatory Mapping

In participatory mapping (PM), local people are supported to make a map of the lands and resources they use or own, based on their knowledge and use of the area and on their values and priorities – this should be the basis for identification of HCVs 5 and 6. PM encompasses many different methods of varying degrees of complexity (which has implications for the time and resources needed to conduct PM to a high standard). The ALS recognises that there is currently a wide degree of variation in the quality of PM conducted by licensed assessors. The ALS is working on a strategy to clarify what minimum requirements of PM must be met by licensed assessors. In the meantime,

the following information should be useful and incorporated into assessment methodology as much as possible. PM is required, and therefore the methodology used must be explained and justified in the assessment report.

PM should ideally be initiated by the Organisation during the initial engagement with communities prior to the beginning of the HCV Assessment – however if this was not the case – assessors will need to begin community workshops to develop to-scale maps based on people's knowledge and perceptions. These should then be developed into more detailed, geo-referenced maps during the assessment, through a participatory process involving further community workshops, ground-truthing and ongoing community consultation and discussions.

PM must be carried out with all communities who may be affected by the proposed development. Commonly, mapping is carried out with each community separately. All sub-groups within the community must have the opportunity to be represented in the mapping process, including men and women, different ethnic groups or clans, and different age groups. Representatives of neighbouring communities should also be involved and the final product should show any areas where there are disagreements over boundaries or uses.

Annex 4 provides some useful information on PM.

Typical primary data collection falls into two parts: social fieldwork and environmental fieldwork.

2.3.1.1 Social fieldwork methods

Design social field studies so that results can help e.g.:

- Understand livelihoods, tenure, and resource use framing community's satisfaction of basic needs, for all the communities directly involved with/affected by the current or proposed development.
- Identify important sites and resources for natural resource use – HCV 4 and 5 (e.g., water, fishing, hunting, gathering non-timber forest products (NTFPs)).
- Identify important cultural sites and resources (e.g., places for ceremonies, totem species - HCV 6).

- Identify how the proposed project will impact people's resources use and access.

Social studies must be conducted in a participatory and inclusive manner with affected communities and other local stakeholders, with due consideration given to responsible and sensitive engagement to avoid raising expectations. Depending on the context, information would be available from social studies, such as an SIA and/or a land tenure assessment carried out in the AOI. If this is the case, these studies are valuable contributions to the HCV assessment and can be used as secondary data for identifying local people's lands and HCVs. However, the assessment team will need to use triangulation to validate the main outcomes of these studies and check on the quality of the participatory mapping.

Planning for social studies, participatory mapping and community consultations will generally involve:

- Understanding how the communities are organised and contacting the appropriate people, who in turn will organise meetings and invite relevant people to attend. In doing this, the assessment team must verify this selection includes representatives from minority, vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Identifying whether there are days or times when it would not be advisable to organise meetings e.g., religious days or times when everyone is at work.
- Organising mapping teams.

During the HCV assessment, participatory mapping is the tool to use for identification of HCVs 4, 5 and 6. Participatory mapping must be GIS-based so that the maps can be overlaid with other assessment results. Communities identify the areas to which they have customary rights and which are important to them, for historical reasons, for their current If communities have the capacity to lead on participatory mapping, this is ideal.

In addition to participatory mapping, the assessment team can conduct social studies to better understand local resource use and livelihood strategies. Various participatory learning and action methodologies – including focus

groups, seasonal calendars, and ranking exercises – can be used to ensure that information is collected with full community involvement. The assessment team needs to make full use of all available social studies (recent and of good quality) such as the Social Impact Assessment (SIA). Some information from these studies can be validated during the assessment, and where there are gaps in information needed to identify HCVs, then the assessment team proceeds with primary data collection.

2.3.1.2 Environmental fieldwork methods

The environmental studies conducted during the assessment will be determined by information learned during the scoping study. Design field studies so that results can help e.g.:

- Identify rare, threatened, or endangered species and ecosystems (HCV 1 and 3)
- Evaluate whether large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics are present (HCV 2)
- Identify different ecosystem types

Species lists must be organised into lists of nationally and/or internationally protected species and endemic species, as well as species that are particularly useful for local livelihoods, as identified during participatory mapping with local people.

All ecosystem types in the AOI must be identified and described. The assessment team is expected to have researched the characteristics and potential values present in these areas during the scoping study (aided by the land cover map). It is also important to consult with experts to understand whether these ecosystems are of conservation concern.

If desk-based study or expert consultation has revealed a potential value, then fieldwork is required to better understand the potential values present. The following may trigger the need to conduct more detailed fieldwork:

- Desk-based review of rare, threatened, or endangered databases reveals the likely presence of an herbaceous species of interest

- Consultation with expert (e.g., tropical botanist) reveals concern over presence of species of interest
- Ecosystem used by rare or important faunal species
- Ecosystem contains important species for local livelihoods

Faunal studies

Identification of rare, threatened, and endangered animal species (HCV 1) or the habitats they use (HCV 1, 2 and 3) can be done through a combination of desk-based research, consultation, and field studies. The decision on what field studies to undertake should be based on what information is already available. For example, if a recent bird survey has already been done, then there is no need to repeat the process, but the assessor can instead focus on taxonomic groups that have not been well documented, e.g., aquatic fauna. In addition, species of conservation importance (e.g., mentioned during consultation with biologists) and species that would be particularly affected by the proposed project require more information to make sound management recommendations. Results from field studies (or secondary sources used to justify findings) should be clearly presented, using maps to support the presentation of results. Consider how migratory species can be considered, and if presence is seasonally limited this should be taken into consideration, e.g., consult with communities and relevant experts on presence.

Biophysical studies

It is important to describe the main biophysical characteristics of the assessment area including soil, geology, and hydrology. The Organisation usually has soil data, and they may have other relevant data sets as well. This section can be brief in the report, but the main value of this kind of data is that it allows the assessor to understand patterns of seasonal flooding, erosion risks, and presence of ecosystem types or species that may be tied to particular soil types or flooding regimes.

The following are suggestions to bear in mind:

- Coordinate the order and timing of different field studies in a way that maximises time and resources, while still collecting information in a robust and socially responsible way.
- It is good practice for local community representation to accompany the biological and biomass data collection teams when they go to the field.
- Ideally, social studies and mapping can be completed prior to the biodiversity data collection for a variety of important and logical reasons (e.g., so that botanical sampling does not occur in sacred sites). However, so long as consent has been granted to conduct biological or ecological studies, field teams may conduct their studies at the same time others conduct the social studies and mapping.
- HCV fieldwork is often carried out simultaneously and in full collaboration with the ESIA, as required by both national legislation and many certification standards.

Box 5: Before the full assessment, the following should have been completed or prepared:

- Organisation has obtained consent to proceed with the full assessment activities (study plots, data gathering, mapping, additional meetings)
- Pre-assessment (e.g., due diligence) completed
- Scoping study (field exercise) completed
- Methods and survey designs are prepared
- Assessment team is formed and ready
- Assessment calendar has been communicated to team members, Organisation, relevant experts, and stakeholders
- All necessary logistical preparations (and budgetary implications) have been considered
- Land cover map and other base maps are prepared and distributed to relevant stakeholders
- Stakeholders have been identified and contacted as required and given information relating to the upcoming assessment, the assessment team's responsibilities, and the timing

2.4 Full assessment

The main outputs of the fieldwork are reports from environmental and social fieldwork and maps that will allow the assessment team to proceed with analyses and draw conclusions about the presence and locations of HCVs and recommend potential areas suitable for development. During fieldwork, if the assessment team finds evidence that communities are still not adequately informed about the project, the assessor must inform the Organisation and the communities and recommend additional engagement efforts.

2.4.1 Analysis and interpretation

The analysis and interpretation step is when HCV identification is carried out. It is a time to look at all the data gathered, to synthesise and draw conclusions. The goal is to identify HCVs within the AOI (MU and wider landscape) that must be conserved for biodiversity and livelihood outcomes. It is recommended that the assessment team communicates regularly with the Organisation and with key stakeholders (e.g., affected communities), so they are well informed along the way. Rights-holders must be invited to provide input to the draft maps and recommendations prior to wider stakeholder consultation.

The main tasks in this step include:

- Analyse and interpret results of fieldwork and participatory mapping (leading to the identification of HCVs)
- Overlay relevant data sets to develop a draft conservation map
- Draft management and monitoring recommendations including proposed designation of HCV management areas (HCVMAs) for all values identified (draft HCVMAs must consider legal and certification scheme requirements for management areas, for example regarding how to calculate buffers for protected riparian forests).
- Preparing maps of HCVs and HCV management areas
- Prepare for consultation with stakeholders

2.4.1.1 HCV identification

The assessment team, in consultation with stakeholders and experts, reviews the relevant biological, ecological, and social data (primary and secondary) to carry out the identification of HCVs. The assessor must provide explanation and justification, backed by evidence from the assessment, on why each HCV (1-6) is present, potentially present, or absent. For detailed guidance on HCV identification including explanations of definitions, indicators, recommendations for methods and sources of information and case study examples, see Common Guidance for HCV Identification.

Assessors must consider all elements of the HCV definitions, provide clear decisions on presence, potential presence, or absence of HCVs, supported by evidence (i.e., literature review, fieldwork, consultation). It is insufficient to declare “potential presence” of an HCV without providing an evaluation of the likelihood of presence and the limitations of current knowledge. If a value is deemed potentially present, the precautionary approach should be used, otherwise a detailed outline of what needs to be done to confidently identify the HCV is required. The identification of HCV 1, 2 and 3 must refer to the field assessment results, supporting the discussion with the presentation of HCVs sightings and specific locations and the corresponding maps. The identification of HCVs 4, 5 and 6 must be supported by evidence from participatory mapping and stakeholder consultation.

2.4.1.2 Preparing maps of HCVs and HCV management areas

Maps are a key outcome of the HCV assessment and it is vital that they are clearly presented.

Box 6: Map requirements

Maps must be clear for the reader (e.g., of adequate resolution and clearly labelled). All maps must include legend, gridlines, scale, orientation (i.e., north/south arrow), data sources, datum/projection, creation date, map version and coordinates on the borders of the map. Maps must be marked as draft if applicable and there must be an

explanation of what is recommended to move from a draft to a final map version. This must be part of the recommendations or next steps section of the report.

The assessment report must contain maps of HCVs and HCV management areas. When information about HCVs precise location may be sensitive, only HCV management area maps must be included in the published report, avoiding specific references to the type of HCVs, if such disclosure will put them at greater risk.

It must also be clear which draft HCV maps and HCV management area maps were used during consultations. These maps must be included in the report annex on stakeholder consultation.

2.4.1.3 Threat assessment

Understanding threats to HCVs is a critical step in making management recommendations to maintain and/or enhance the values. The HCV assessor is expected to conduct a threat assessment for the HCVs identified during the assessment. There are several methods available for threat assessment, and a sample is provided in Table 4 below[3]. Though these threat assessment approaches come mainly from a biodiversity conservation context, they are still useful and can be adapted for use with HCVs in production landscapes. The method used by the assessor for the threat assessment must be described in the report.

Table 4 Threat assessment approaches that can be used in the context of HCV management.

Threat assessment method or approach	Scope and context
IUCN Threats Classification Scheme – A comprehensive and widely used approach for classifying the type of direct threats to species. It was jointly developed by the IUCN, WWF, TNC, ZSL, WCS and Birdlife in order to have a single unified classification system and builds	This scheme covers only direct threats to threatened species but is applicable to habitats and ecosystems. It does not provide

[3] The HCV Network does not endorse a certain approach over others

on many of the approaches listed below. The current version can be found here: http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes/threats-classification-scheme (Salafsky *et al*. 2008).	guidance on how to prioritise threats. Resources discussing definitions of direct threats and stresses are referenced here.
Rapid Assessment and Prioritisation of Protected Area Management – Broad methodology for testing the effectiveness of a protected area (PA) but includes a threat (future) and pressure (past or present threat) prioritisation scheme based on their extent, impact, and permanence (Ervin 2003).	Assessment of overall PA management, including threat prioritisation.
Threat Reduction Assessment – A broad strategy developed to assess the effectiveness of conservation and development projects. It describes ultimate (indirect) and proximate threats (direct), and it also separates threats as either internal or external to the project.	Threat assessment for combined conservation and development projects.
ZSL threat monitoring protocol – The only protocol listed here that was developed specifically for use in a production context. It is intended for use by managers that are responsible for managing and monitoring HCVs but provides useful advice for assessors. For example, threats are defined according to their state and intensity (ZSL 2013).	Monitoring threats to HCV areas in oil palm concessions.
Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) – A simple tool to assess the environmental impacts of smaller-scale forestry operations	Risk assessment for FSC-certified forests

(e.g., community forests and SLIMFs[4]). This tool is designed to minimise costs for low-risk situations, where there are no reasons to expect that operations cause unacceptable environmental damage. The tool is not HCV-specific, but covers aspects pertinent to HCVs, such as threatened species (Synnott and Wenban-Smith 2009).	

Threats to HCVs can have internal sources, from the land manager's own operations (e.g., road building, habitat fragmentation, poor harvesting practice, pollution, conversion etc.), or external sources (e.g., encroachment, illegal logging and hunting, armed conflict, poor governance, land zoning plans incompatible with conservation). Threats can also be direct such as vegetation clearance or hunting, or they may be indirect such as increased migration to the project area which places pressure on the natural resource base. Understanding threats to HCVs is a critical step in making management recommendations to protect and/or enhance the values. The assessor should recommend management options for these threats and consult with experts and stakeholders on their feasibility.

The threat assessment must be included in the report, and it must refer explicitly to each of the values identified

2.4.1.4 Draft management and monitoring recommendations

After analysing findings from the desktop study and fieldwork, identifying the HCVs, and completing the threat assessment for all values identified, the assessment team must produce a set of management recommendations aimed at maintaining the social and environmental values over time. Management recommendations must be specific to the values identified at the assessment site and linked to maps showing the location of values and management areas. While draft management and monitoring

[4] Small or low-intensity managed forests

recommendations need to be validated with all relevant stakeholders, in preparing the report the final management recommendations must be included and presented linked to maps and descriptions of HCV management areas. Maps must adhere to ALS requirements.

Management areas are those areas that must be managed (e.g., protected, actively maintained) to conserve the values which they harbour. Management areas may often be larger than the area where a value occurs. For example, the management area for an endangered species could include nesting and feeding areas. The rationale for designing the management area must be presented in the report, with HCV management area maps that reflect the rationale, and referring to regulations, guidance, or best practice. Though management recommendations must be as specific as possible to the values present, the assessor is not expected to present detailed management objectives and targets as would be elaborated in a full management plan. HCVMAs may extend beyond the concession boundaries, and although the company does not have management control over these areas, they can identify the neighbouring stakeholders who they should be engaging with, in order to help protect the identified values

To provide sound management recommendations, the assessor must understand 1) the conditions necessary to maintain social and environmental values over time and 2) the risks or threats facing those values. Monitoring recommendations follow on from the overall management goals. If the aim of management is to maintain values over time, then the goal of monitoring is to track and measure whether the management goals are being met. Assessors must provide information on potential impacts of operations on HCVs and identify possible approaches for avoiding, mitigating, or compensating for negative impacts of operations and gather different perspectives and recommendations on threats and management options.

2.4.2 Final stakeholder consultation

After initial HCV assessment findings are available, preliminary designations (including preliminary maps of HCV locations and HCV management areas) should be shared with affected communities and other concerned

stakeholders to obtain their views and recommendations through a consultation process. Though consultation, in some form, has taken place throughout the assessment (e.g., consultation during scoping, consultation during participatory mapping, consultation with experts to discuss results of field studies), this final stakeholder consultation is an opportunity to discuss the overall assessment results and management recommendations. This implies that in most cases final stakeholder consultation about HCV location and management areas cannot be carried out at the same time as the field study (unless the team has the time and means to produce and share maps reflecting the results from field work, which should be clearly documented in the report).

The final stakeholder consultation is an opportunity to discuss the HCVs identified, potential threats to the HCVs and management recommendations. The objective of this consultation is to seek consensus on the values that have been identified and on the locations of the HCV management areas, but if this is not the case, the assessor must make the final decisions with strong justifications and be guided by the precautionary approach.

The negotiation of incentives, benefits, or compensation packages due to the communities is beyond the scope of the assessment.

Who should be consulted?

For findings concerning HCVs 1, 2, 3 and 4 it is important to consult with environmental NGOs and other parties concerned with conservation of biodiversity. For findings concerning HCVs 4, 5 or 6, the assessment team should always consultant with the affected communities during the assessment phase. Consultation should involve all affected communities and a sample of each of them, including but not limited to their formal representatives. Otherwise, a documented justification should be presented. If some key stakeholders cannot be meaningfully involved, the reasons for this should be presented, and it is likely that HCV maps may have to be labelled as drafts until consultation is completed. In these cases, the assessor must include recommendations to complete pending consultation and state whether this must take place before development begins. It is not enough to meet with

village leaders or to meet with people from some villages, it is vital to meet with a wide range of people from every affected village or community including generally under-represented groups such as women, ethnic minority groups and economically marginalised groups as they can be most adversely affected by change. It is helpful to carefully describe the makeup of the local population to ensure that all parts of it are consulted.

What must be presented for consultation?

To ensure that consultations are productive and that stakeholders are well informed, at a minimum, the assessment team must prepare the following for consultation sessions:

- Overview of proposed development project
- Key steps of assessment process
- Main findings
- Description and justification of HCVs identified
- Maps of HCVs and proposed HCV management areas
- Identified threats to social and environmental values
- Management and monitoring recommendations
- Concerns or issues (with assessment process, findings, operations, etc.)
- Any overlapping HCV management areas (for social and/or environmental conservation objectives) and how to harmonize their management.

For example, implications for community use or access if HCV 4, 5 or 6 areas are designated also for HCV 1-3 management.

How should final consultation be organised and documented?

Consultations may be organised in varying formats including village meetings, large presentations to government and NGOs, individual meetings with experts or NGO leaders, etc. Assessors are responsible for documenting and addressing (where relevant and possible) stakeholder concerns.

The assessment report must describe the methods used for stakeholder consultation, e.g. how was consultation organised, where did it take place,

who participated (a summary of the types of participants, such as number of communities represented, by how many members, number and types of NGOs or government officials, etc.), what materials (e.g. maps) and topics were presented for consultation and provide summary outcomes of consultations, including how (where applicable) stakeholder concerns were addressed and/or incorporated into the final results and recommendations. See Annex 4 for consultation documentation requirements. Before including stakeholder names and their concerns or recommendations in the final report, it is necessary to confirm that their concerns and recommendations have been understood and that permission is granted to list their names; this can be done for example by asking people to approve written notes via email. However, in cases where people wish to remain anonymous, this must be respected. Assessors can include stakeholder opinions, concerns and recommendations whilst respecting their anonymity. Detailed documentation must be kept of all consultations, including:

- Date
- Stakeholder details
    - title or role
    - organisation or social group (e.g., farmers, elders, companies, government, village administration, etc.)
    - method of consultation - i.e., the type of interaction: group meeting, individual meeting, phone call, etc. as well as description of information that was shared with the individual/audience and mode of presentation (e.g., written, visual presentation).
    - summary of key concerns/recommendations
    - assessment team response

From this detailed documentation, a summary table of stakeholder consultation outcomes (see Table 5) must be presented in the body of the assessment report.

Table 5 Example of how to present the summary table of stakeholders consulted and their key concerns and recommendations.

Name	Title /role	Organisation / social group	Key concerns & recommendations / assessment team response
Pedro Perez	Chief	Las Rosas indigenous community	We are worried that once the plantation is established the company will not follow up on its commitments with our community. Management recommendations to include establishing a permanent community liaison within the company and to agree on a monthly meeting (date/location)
Jane Smith	Biologist	University ABC	How will the project manager ensure that the habitat of the endangered bird will not be fragmented by their operations? Ensure that important nesting sites are included in the conservation areas during spatial planning. This was included in the management recommendations.

2.4.3 Next steps

In addition to providing management and monitoring recommendations, in a more general sense, the assessor must provide a list of activities or processes which need to happen, or are still underway, for example:

- Some communities may not have consented to participatory mapping and therefore their territories/lands are unmapped, and development cannot proceed until pending mapping exercises have been completed (i.e., once communities decide to re-engage with the Organisation and request mapping and assessment activities to proceed).

- Organisations must recognise and respect people's rights as they negotiate for access, use or restrictions on the use of lands. Organisations shall fully inform communities of the legal implications of accepting the proposed developments and conservation areas and explore options for tenure, management, and monitoring. Organisations shall also clarify what restrictions and compensatory benefits would apply to communities' livelihoods and land use options because of areas being classed as conservation areas (e.g., HCV areas).
- The Organisation shall accept the agreed maps (made during participatory mapping) as the basis for negotiations about proposed land use for commodity development, the maintenance of livelihoods and conservation HCVs and their management areas. Such maps are to remain the property of the communities and only be used subject to their agreement.
- Roles and responsibilities of different actors in management and monitoring.
- Additional capacity building needed for different actors, specifying who (Organisation staff, community leaders, etc.) and what kind of training or support is needed for which management and monitoring recommendations or activities. For example, the Organisation may not have the expertise in house to develop nor carry out, the detailed management and monitoring plan, so expertise and a plan to build necessary capacity may be necessary.

Part 3: ALS report evaluation

3.1 Introduction

Evaluation of HCV Assessments is conducted by the ALS Quality Panel; see the ALS website for more detailed information. Once you have finalised all the reporting requirements, you are ready to submit report package, along with a report evaluation fee, to the ALS. The **report package** includes:

- the **HCV assessment report**, using the latest version of the **HCV Assessment Report Template** and accompanying guidance

Some certification standards make specific requirements about public review processes for HCV assessments, and these should be followed where applicable – in addition to HCV Network requirements.

The Assessor must provide the ALS with a contact name and address within the Organisation commissioning the assessment, who will receive automated updates on the status of the report evaluation at the same time as the licensed assessor.

3.2 Key issues

Report evaluation focuses on a set of key issues, listed in Table 6. Key issues are those topics or sections of the report which are of fundamental importance to the use and understanding of the HCV approach. All key issues must be marked as satisfactory for the overall report to be marked as satisfactory.

Table 6 Key Issues for ALS assessment report evaluation

Key Issue	Brief description
Scoping study	A scoping study (including fieldwork) is mandatory for all HCV assessments. The scoping study is an opportunity to confirm that there is consent to conduct the full assessment and to begin preparations for the full assessment.

Description of the AOI – boundaries of the AOI	The Area of Interest (management unit and its wider landscape) is clearly defined and shown on a map. This AOI should be referred to in all findings sections.
Methods	Methods form the basis for results/evidence upon which HCVs will be identified. Methods for primary data collection and analysis must be clearly explained with a justification for why the method and sampling strategy (where relevant) were used and maps representing how the methods and sampling strategy were applied (map must include landcover layer).
Identification of HCV 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6	HCVs 1-6 must be evaluated, with evidence (including that collected during fieldwork) and justification for decisions on presence or absence. HCVs 1-6 must be evaluated, with evidence (including that collected in the field assessment) and justification for decisions on presence or absence. Location of HCVs and HCV areas (where relevant) must be shown on maps.
Management and monitoring recommendations	M&M recommendations must be specific to all identified values and include reference to threats and to outstanding activities which require follow up. M&M must include discussion and justification for HCV management areas, specifying if and why these are identical to the areas where HCVS are found, providing the HCV management area (in hectares) for each value found, inside the MU only. The total overall management area (in hectares) must be provided (excluding overlaps). A clear explanation must be included for all HCV MA about whether they are go or no-go areas.
Stakeholder consultation	This refers to the "final" stakeholder consultation once all values are identified and then presented along with M&M recommendations. The assessor must show a summary of and justification on who was consulted and how. Documentation to

	be submitted on people/groups consulted along with their concerns and recommendations (e.g., lists, meeting minutes in report annex).
Required maps	For example, maps of: AOI, landcover map, HCVs, HCV management areas, etc. For full list of required maps, refer to the HCV Assessment Report Template

References

Ervin, J. 2003. WWF: Rapid assessment and prioritization of protected area management (RAPPAM) methodology. WWF, Gland, Switzerland.

Salafsky, N. et al. 2008. A standard lexicon for biodiversity conservation: unified classifications of threats and actions. Conservation Biology 22: 897–911.

Synnott, T and M. Wenban-Smith. 2009. Environmental Risk Assessment for FSC certification in the Selva Maya (Maya Forest). Supported by the ICCO.

Zrust, M., L. D'arcy, L. Sadikin, A. Suhada, E. Hermawan, L. Leonald, Rudiyanto, S. Wahyudi, R. Amin, O. Needham and D. Priatna. 2013. HCV Threat Monitoring Protocol. Zoological Society of London, Indonesia. http://www.sustainablepalmoil.org/files/2013/05/Threat_Monitoring_Protocol_FINAL-VERSION.pdf

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of reference for HCV assessment team

This is meant as a general guide to the kind of expertise necessary for most HCV assessments. All team members should meet the general requirements and where specified, the additional specialist requirements as listed:

General requirements

- Applied conservation/social training and/or practical field experience
- Appropriate background in one of the fields required for HCV assessment
- Local experience within the country or at least region is recommended
- Understanding of the 6 HCV categories, how they relate to each other, and how they relate to other principles in the standard being followed (e.g., FSC, RSPO standards, as applicable)
- Ability to relate the findings of HCV identification to management and monitoring recommendations

Team leader

Lead assessors must possess a provisional or full ALS license and:

- Demonstrate understanding of the HCVs and HCV assessment experience
- Have an appropriate background in applied conservation (ecological or social experience)
- Demonstrate ability to synthesise a variety of data from desk research and field assessments
- Have an ability to reach workable consensus on management decisions (ability to understand the impact of management decisions on HCVs and for various stakeholders)
- It is desirable, but not an absolute requirement, that the leader has local experience within the country of the assessment. If they do not, then it is important to include other team members who do have that experience.

The lead HCV assessor has overall responsibility for the assessment. The role requires:

- Good communication skills and transparency to communicate with the Organisation
- Compliance with the ALS T&C and Code of Conduct
- Assessing quality, reliability, and relevance of existing data
- Assessing the level of risk of a proposed HCV assessment
- Identification of qualified HCV assessment team members
- Planning of field activities, consultation, and surveys
- Overall coordination and oversight of the assessment
- Compilation, writing and delivery of the HCV report
- Submission of required documents and fees to ALS

Team leaders can also have specialised discipline knowledge and could therefore have overlapping qualities with the experts below.

Social experts

Anthropology, social impact, community livelihoods, etc.

- Knowledge and practical field experience within the local context compulsory
- Be able to speak fluently one or more relevant local languages
- Knowledge of and practical experience in the use and application of participatory mapping methods and social science methods
- Understanding of GIS is ideal

Biodiversity/ecology experts

Botany, forest ecology, hydrology, species experts, landscape ecology, etc.

- Practical experience in applied conservation biology
- Understanding of landscape conservation approach
- Some specialisation in ecology of important species groups is useful
- Knowledge of and practical experience in the use and application of relevant ecological survey methods
- Understanding of GIS is ideal

GIS expert

- Ability to apply GIS techniques to conservation biology and community land use issues
- Ability to incorporate results in real time and advise the team on GIS methodology

Annex 2: HCV Assessment Planning Checklist

This checklist is intended to provide reminders and guidance for the assessor when planning and preparing for the various stages of the HCV assessment. It is by no means exhaustive but includes several key planning issues commonly encountered by assessors.

Planning topics	**Notes**
Assessment team: ToR, qualifications, availability, contracts	
Communication with client: is the client helping to arrange logistics or cover certain costs? Clarify this in advance	
International travel: flights, visas, vaccinations	
Domestic travel: flights, vehicles, road safety, boat travel, etc. Also consider access challenges due to security, terrain, weather, etc.	
Transport in the field: Ensure adequate transport to carry out the sampling plan (i.e., cut transects, set up plots, etc.). This needs to be communicated to the logistics	

manager well in advance, especially for very large concessions.	
Accommodation: staying on site or in a nearby town, are field teams camping? Access to food and water.	
Health and safety: vaccinations, health insurance, protective equipment if necessary (e.g., life jacket for boats)	
Preparation of data sheets, questionnaires, etc.	
Equipment: compass, GPS units, measuring tapes, etc.	
Reference documents: Copies of HCVN guidance and national interpretation of HCVs if available, Assessment Manual, etc.	
Supplies: food rations for the field, fuel,	
Documents/data: Access to any data and documents identified as crucial for assessment	
GIS mapping facilities and maps: maps are available for team members and provide adequate detail for field work. Everyone	

should be working from the same map. This should be geographically accurate and incorporate available data (e.g., elevation, Landsat data). Where relevant, ensure that everyone involved in mapping has a GPS unit and is using the same coordinate system.	
Calendar: plan for all assessment activities, with due consideration of seasons, national holidays, etc.	
Team meetings: plan time for regular team meetings to discuss progress and address any challenges	
Language: any materials need to be translated? Team members speak local languages, availability of interpreters	
Local customs: someone available to advise team on local customs if necessary	
Consultation: access to stakeholders is organised and timetabled	
Budget: includes all activities, report submission fee and margin for unforeseen costs	

Annex 3: Information Needs Checklist

This checklist provides guidance to the assessor on what kind of information is needed to complete an HCV assessment. Some of the information is fundamental and will help the assessor to complete the tier rating and to determine whether a scoping study is needed. Other information may be relevant depending on the assessment context. During the **Pre-assessment Phase**, it would be useful to fill in the checklist during the **Information Gathering** step. The information gaps identified during these early steps, will help the assessor to plan the scoping study and the full assessment phase (e.g., to design or commission studies).

Project characteristics	Notes on what is known	Information gaps (to fill during Scoping Study and/or Assessment Phase)
Location		
Size of the operational area (ha)		
Description of project (e.g., forestry operation, oil palm plantation, etc.)		
Current land cover/land use		
Is the planned land use a continuation of existing use (e.g., forestry within a forested landscape, agricultural production within a mainly agricultural landscape) or		

does the planned land use involve conversion of natural vegetation?		
What is the intensity of land/resource use (e.g., community forestry, artisanal logging, industrial selective logging, rotational clear felling, agricultural plantation, etc.)?		
Data sources	**Notes on what is known**	**Information gaps (to fill during Scoping Study and/or Assessment Phase)**
Is there an HCV National Interpretation (toolkit)?		
Has an ESIA[5] been conducted at the site?		
Identify and compile relevant websites and publications		
Existing maps		

[5] Environmental & Social Impact Assessment

Relevant studies or reports (often unpublished)		
Landscape	**Notes on what is known**	**Information gaps (to fill during Scoping Study and/or Full Assessment Phase)**
Does the surrounding landscape contain protected areas, key biodiversity areas or well managed ecosystems?		
Does the surrounding landscape contain extensive agriculture, heavy industry, pollution sources, dense human settlements etc.?		
Are there large natural landscape features (forests, grasslands, rivers, watersheds, etc.)?		
Biodiversity & ecosystem context	**Notes on what is known**	**Information gaps (to fill during Scoping Study and/or Full Assessment Phase)**
Ecosystem types and quality (including freshwaters)		

Does the area support ecosystems/habitats which are rare or poorly protected in the country?		
Flora and fauna (including presence of rare, threatened, and endangered species and nationally protected species)		
Production of maps – which maps are needed? What information is needed?		
Social context	**Notes on what is known**	**Information gaps (to fill during Scoping Study and/or Full Assessment Phase)**
Location and size of human settlements (e.g., isolated settlement, seasonal camps, villages, towns, cities, etc.)		
General population information: size, ethnic groups, migration trends		
Livelihood activities: reliance on natural resources (e.g.,		

agriculture, fishing, gathering, hunting, water)		
Land and resource claims overlapping assessment area		
Infrastructure (roads, education, healthcare, markets, dams)		
Cultural sites, cultural values and beliefs linked to natural resources and overlapping with assessment area		
Production of maps: participatory mapping is required in all cases where people live in or have resource claims overlapping with the site.		

Annex 4: Participatory Mapping

This annex provides guidance on steps for participatory mapping. It is very detailed and to undertake this whole process would be time consuming. It is not expected or required that this annex is fully followed from the publication of this manual. However, this is a very useful explanation of the overall process of how very good quality PM would take place. This may help to guide the PM activities that the assessor undertakes during the assessment and to recommend additional PM activities for the Organisation to pursue after the assessment. Much of this material is adapted from the Implementation Guide

for the Social Requirements of the High Carbon Stock Approach (which includes a requirement for integrated HCV-HCSA assessments).

1. Securing initial agreement

The participatory mapping process must be explained in initial meetings with each community, when FPIC for the mapping activities and assessment to go ahead is sought. Ideally this is done by the Organisation commissioning the assessment.

2. Preparation of a base map

Prior to community mapping workshops a topographic map, or an aerial or satellite image showing basic geographic features, is prepared for use as a base map. If necessary, the base map can be compiled from multiple sources such as published maps, land titling documents, aerial photographs, and open access web-based sources. The map must be simple, clear, and easy to interpret and must cover the whole of the geographical area that could be influenced by the proposed development. It must be at a scale that is suitable for detailed mapping with individual communities (for example in the example at the end of this appendix the scale is 1:100,000). The base map normally includes the following:

- Prominent geographical features such as rivers, roads, towns, villages and hills or other elevation features.
- The location of the proposed development area.
- Legal boundaries of areas under different forms of ownership, if accurate locational data are available on this.
- Place names may be included on the base map, but only if they are accurate and up to date. Even then, facilitators should be aware that they may not be the names that are used by local people and that extra time may be needed to elicit local names.

3. Community mapping workshops

- Mapping workshops must be carried out with each community, or where the communities so choose, with clusters of neighbouring communities.

- Prior to the workshops, multiple copies of the base map should be printed on A0 or A1 sheets of paper at an appropriate scale for use in mapping.
- The workshop participants must be chosen freely by the community. Every effort should be made to ensure equity, particularly in relation to gender and ethnicity, and to ensure that all subgroups within the community are represented. Neighbouring communities must also be consulted on boundaries, and on any rights and responsibilities they have in the area being mapped.
- Each workshop should begin with a brief explanation of the aims, a summary of what has been agreed in terms of procedure, and a non-technical description of the steps in the mapping process.
- Any final points of procedure should be agreed, including the features to be mapped and the symbols that will be used to represent them. Presentation of a participatory map produced elsewhere can help with this process.
- The mapping itself begins with the identification and naming of the most prominent features on the base map. This may be done by a smaller group of community members, freely chosen by the community in advance. Ample time should be allowed during this step for community members to orient themselves in relation to the map.
- Community members can be invited to mark in the trails that they follow and the areas that they use in different ways (for example for farming, and for hunting, fishing, and collection of forest resources). This is often done in small groups working in parallel (for example men and women, different ethnic groups, or hunters, fishermen and other kinds of natural resource users). They can draw in the features either on a copy of the base map itself or on tracing paper or a clear plastic sheet lain on top of the map.
- During this process additional information may be noted down, including who has authority over lands, how lands are acquired, inherited, and transferred, and any customary or informal rules related

to access to and use of natural resources (such as taboos, quotas, and seasonal or permanent restrictions).

- As people become more comfortable with the process, additional kinds of use and value may emerge and be mapped. More detail will arise in successive mapping sessions and particularly during field work and validation, which is one reason why it is important to allow time between mapping activities. In this way a detailed map and information set can be built up over time.
- Following the mapping session, one or more people from the community copy the results onto a 'clean' base map to produce a single master copy, which is then presented back to the full workshop for comments and amendments.
- At the end of the workshop, the community must formally approve the resulting perception map as a valid representation of their contributions - a step known as 'validation'. Validation of boundaries by neighbouring communities is also needed. Evidence of validation is required for the HCS Approach. For example, participants can sign or thumb-print a copy of the map, or statements could be recorded or photos or video footage taken of an event.
- Copies of the validated map must be left with the community after the workshop and be made available for all community members to view. This will enable the community to continue to discuss the map and reflect on their options for future land use, which is an important part of the process of FPIC.

4. Digitisation of workshop results

- Digitisation of the information collected during the workshop may be done either prior to validation, or else by the HCV assessment team at the start of the assessment.
- The data are copied into a GIS project, using points of reference and the coordinate reference system in the base map. Data styles (colours, icons, fills etc.) are based as closely as possible on the style of the maps that were produced during the workshops.

- Features and attributes should be entered and structured according to pre-agreed thematic data layers (for example for different types of customary land / resource rights and use, and for HCV 4, 5 and 6).

5. Consultation meetings

- The assessment team meets with each community (or their representatives) to make sure that FPIC has been given for the assessment to go ahead. At this stage they may also review the digitised maps with each community, agree any necessary amendments and agree the details of the next steps. Further participatory mapping workshops may then be arranged, or where maps are already well-developed, it may be agreed to move straight to fieldwork.

6. Fieldwork: gathering GPS data

- Fieldwork involves walking the land in order to collect accurate geographical coordinates of key features and routes, using GPS technology. In addition to mapping current use and tenurial boundaries, areas of importance for future use must also be identified and mapped. Additional information can be collected on the attributes of different features, and on tenurial arrangements and rules related to resource use. This information can either be inputted electronically in the field (technological constraints allowing) or recorded systematically in a notebook.
- The community members who will take part in field work must be agreed by the community freely, in advance, and should represent different subgroups from the community (including both men and women where possible).
- The most appropriate technology for use during field work depends both on the technical capacity of those taking part and on logistical factors, such as network availability and battery life. In relation to technical capacity, some GPS units use images rather than text and do not require literacy.

- Training is usually required prior to fieldwork, to familiarise the participants with the GPS equipment and make sure that they are confident to collect data in a standardised manner. Showing people the methods for processing and visualising the data often improves the quality of data collection, and means that the maps are more likely to be used effectively during the subsequent stages.

7. Data work-up

- After fieldwork the datasets must be downloaded from handheld machines, 'cleaned' and incorporated into the GIS project. It is useful to rename the raw datasets prior to their incorporation so that they can be related back to the units that they came from.
- Additional attributional data collected in notebooks must be inputted manually. Where possible this should be done by, or with help from, those who collected the data, while it is still fresh in their minds.

8. Community validation workshops: review and finalisation of the geo-referenced maps

- The purpose of the validation workshops is to present the draft geo-referenced map back to the community for review, adjustment, and eventual validation. Map validation should involve the broadest cross-section of community members possible, and where appropriate, members of neighbouring communities should also be present to validate any points relating to boundaries and inter-community dynamics.
- Multiple large printout maps and pens can be used to capture any edits. The original perception map should be to hand during the workshop to allow comparisons to be made. It can also be useful to have some more basic plenary digitisation setups on hand (for example just showing the basic shape outlines over aerial imagery). Another option is to use a portable projector to present the maps, which allows changes to be captured directly into the GIS platform and fed back instantaneously to the participants.

- The process of validation starts with a group exploration of the map, its implications in terms of the proposed development, and discussions of future land use options. Participants may decide on alterations or additions to the data, or they may decide that some features or attributional information should be omitted. Breakout groups with multiple facilitators can be used to achieve this.
- If major issues arise from the workshop, then a further round of fieldwork and data workup may be needed. If so, another validation workshop must be held to present back and validate the results.
- In relation to HCV 5 and HCV 6, there may be points concerning future land use that cannot be decided at this point. These should be identified and follow-up steps should be agreed in order to advance a process of community land-use planning.

9. Post-validation: Leaving the map with the community

At the end of the assessment process, enough paper copies of the validated map should be distributed to community members to ensure that everyone can continue to view them. Where communities wish, they or their representatives or advisors should also be provided with electronic copies of the data from the map (e.g., shape files). Even where this is not the case, communities retain the right to access and/or request copies of the data, and the procedures for this should be agreed. How the company can use the map and who it can show or give the map to should also be agreed with the community.