

Code of Conduct for members of the ALS Quality Panel

1. Introduction

The HCV Resource Network (HCVRN) Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS) aims to promote quality and consistency of HCV and HCV-HCSA assessments. A key part of this scheme is independent report evaluation by a Quality Panel (QP) composed of experts in the interpretation and use of the HCV approach, and with relevant environmental and social expertise.

Upon successful completion of the application process (see the Application guidelines for prospective Quality Panel members) and following approval of the HCVRN Management Committee, QP members must sign the Terms & Conditions and this Code of Conduct. Initial acceptance to the QP includes a paid trial period. If at the end of that period, HCVRN is satisfied with the quality and timeliness of the work, registration as a QP member will be confirmed. However, any breach of the Terms & Conditions (QP T&C and HCV Network Ltd. T&C for Contractors) or the Code of Conduct will end QP membership. Work of the QP member is overseen by the Quality Manager with support from other ALS staff and the Secretariat as needed.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The primary role of the QP member is to evaluate the quality of HCV or HCV-HCSA assessment reports produced by ALS licensed assessors, providing scoring (unsatisfactory or satisfactory) and specific advice where relevant to help the assessor comply with HCVRN guidance and ALS procedures.

QP members are engaged through agreements for services by the HCVRN Secretariat to conduct report evaluations as requested. QP members may take on additional work if requested by the Secretariat but are under no obligation to do so. QP members are remunerated for their work by the HCVRN Secretariat.

3. Commitments

QP members commit to:

- Support the mission of the HCVRN;
- Meet all agreed deadlines as per the Agreement for Services;
- Make explicitly clear that any other HCV-related work (besides evaluation of HCV and HCV-HCSA assessment reports on behalf of the QP) is carried out independently of membership of the QP and, unless agreed otherwise, independently of the HCVRN;
- Respond to communication from the ALS team and HCVRN Secretariat as matters arise and give general feedback to the Secretariat on request to help improve the Assessor Licensing Scheme;
- Inform the Quality Manager if no longer available to perform as a QP member. In such cases, the name of the former QP member will be removed from the webpage. He/she may re-apply the QP at any time in the future when his/her availability changes.

4. Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest may arise when there is a connection between the QP member and the ALS assessor (or assessment team members) whose report is to be evaluated, between the QP member and the organisation that commissioned the assessment, or between the QP member and a stakeholder significantly affected by the outcome of the assessment. Examples include where QP members:

- Have been directly involved in an HCV or HCV-HCSA assessment they are asked to evaluate;
- Are currently working for, or have worked within the last two years for the ALS assessor or organisation that commissioned the assessment;
- Have financial or personal connections to the ALS assessor or organisation that commissioned the assessment;
- May personally benefit from the outcome of the evaluation (other than the contractual remuneration for serving on the QP);
- Are directly affected, or have close associates who are directly affected, by the proposed activities covered by the assessment.

Whenever a potential conflict of interest has been identified, the QP member must take adequate measures to remove or manage the conflict before agreeing to the evaluation. If, after implementing such measures, the Quality Manager concludes that a significant conflict of interest remains, the Quality Manager will allocate another QP member to evaluate the report.

5. Claims

Members of the QP are encouraged to become licensed assessors and are free to work on HCV and HCV-HCSA assessments and other applications of the HCV concept, in the spirit of the HCVRN Charter, independently of their function as QP members. In contexts other than evaluation of reports by licensed assessors, QP members may legitimately state their membership of the QP as evidence of their HCV competence. However, whenever making such a reference, QP members must also clearly state that they are acting wholly independently of their membership of the QP, and of the HCVRN, and must make no claim to act or speak on behalf of the QP or the HCVRN.

I agree to fully abide by this Code of Conduct

Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____