

## Sustainable production that protects HCVs

Global commodity production relies on the natural environment in ways that have destructive impacts on the planet. Considering the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss we need to produce commodities in a way that minimises risks to environmental and social values. It is no longer feasible for companies to focus on their farms and plantations in isolation of the surrounding landscape and communities. Governments and multilateral institutions around the globe are setting sustainability targets and implementing green growth plans.

The High Conservation Value (HCV) Approach is widely used to ensure that commodity production is not conducted at the expense of critical conservation values – or HCVs (see Figure 1). And though the Approach was first developed within the context of certification it is now integral, not only to a wide range of sustainability standards, but also to private sector commitments, government procurement policies, sustainability initiatives, and investment policies.



## HCV Screening

In response to increasing interest to scale up the use of the HCV approach in landscapes and jurisdictions, the HCV Network has developed HCV screening guidance to bring consistency to large-scale application. HCV screening is a tool to assess large areas such as landscapes and jurisdictions, to understand what HCVs are likely to be present and how those values are threatened, thereby allowing for priority setting. Screening results provide a basis for important multi-stakeholder discussions on planning, policy making, land management and meeting sustainability targets.

### HCV screening considers

The likelihood that HCVs are present

Possible threats to those HCVs

How to set priority actions

### HCV screening is a flexible tool comprised of 6 steps:



#### Step 1

##### Define purpose and scope

State the purpose of the screening exercise and define the area to which screening will be applied.



#### Step 2

##### Gather information for analysis

Gather information including literature review, spatial data, and stakeholder and expert consultation to provide the basis for estimating which HCVs and threats are likely to be present in the landscape.



#### Step 3

##### Determine likelihood of HCV presence

Process available information, consider which HCVs may be present in the screening landscape and make some initial groupings of different types of HCV within each of the six categories. Consider how detailed the information is and whether it can be differentiated (e.g., spatially) across the landscape – this will lead to decisions about when mapping is appropriate. Produce probability maps where relevant.



#### Step 4

##### Determine likelihood of threats to HCVs

In addition to determining which HCVs are likely to occur in the landscape the screening team must identify potential threats to those HCVs. As long-term maintenance or protection is the ultimate HCV management goal, analysing threats to values helps direct attention to where and how threat mitigation can be carried out.



#### Step 5

##### Identify priorities in the landscape

Step 5 produces the 'results' of the screening exercise, which should be interpreted and presented in relation to the purpose and objectives. The screening results should be shared with stakeholders during the process to gather input. This step is essential for prioritising and planning interventions and next steps.



#### Step 6

##### Present results

Pulling together the results of the screening exercise to share and communicate those results (and accompanying data) is the final step. The results should be developed into a final report with accompanying data and references. A detailed description of the screening process is available in the [full document](#) on the HCV Network website in English, Bahasa Indonesia, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

## Who can benefit from using the HCV screening tool?

The screening tool offers benefits to a wide variety of stakeholders involved in jurisdictional and landscape sustainability initiatives including government technical staff, NGOs, donors and investors, and multi-stakeholder platforms. Screening can support governments and companies to find out what HCVs may exist in a landscape and how to set priorities to protect or restore them. Screening can be used by civil society and non-governmental organisations to influence government and industry. Participation in a screening exercise also enables a community to express concern about environmental issues (e.g., pollution of rivers) and elicit action from land managers. It can also be used by industry forums who want to align their objectives and implement land management and sustainability plans that are consistent with one another.

## How can screening be used?

### Supply chain risk management

Screening can help plan and implement sustainable sourcing initiatives. Knowing which areas are suitable for commodity production based on risk to HCVs means that production and sourcing can avoid risks and actively protect HCVs. HCVs represent values widely agreed to be of utmost environmental and social significance. As such, protection of HCVs may form minimum responsibility criteria separating 'acceptable' from 'unacceptable' produce.

### Land use planning and management

HCV screening can inform and guide land use planning, by compiling social and environmental information to help identify priority values for conservation and livelihoods, and to plan for intervention and engagement. It can also inform the revision of spatial plans or green growth initiatives.

## Jurisdictional certification

Commodity certification schemes usually rest on certification of individual or groups of management units. Neighbouring management units often share environmental and social features in a wider landscape context. If all management units have separate site-level assessments, it will inevitably generate a significant amount of overlap and repetition and incur higher costs. Jointly commissioned HCV screenings could reduce duplication and create cost-effective frameworks for simpler, streamlined follow up assessments at the management unit level.

## Screening has been used in several landscape initiatives including:

- Identification of potential conservation values and threat mapping in cocoa production landscapes in Ghana and Cameroon.
- In Brazil, screening was used to identify the likelihood of HCVs being present in a watershed and to understand to what extent potential HCVs were affected by an environmental disaster.
- To map risks (fires, habitat loss) to HCVs in soy production. Understanding this risk allows for engagement with growers and investors on how to improve practices.
- In Indonesia, screening has been used to map HCVs in relation to oil palm mills to characterise risks to HCVs from oil palm production and to guide landscape management plans and farmer engagement.
- Several districts in Indonesia are using HCV screening to inform land use planning and provide a baseline and recommendations for implementing commitments in jurisdictional sustainability initiatives.

## The HCV Network

The HCV Network sets the standard for implementation of the HCV Approach in areas where HCVs are at risk from commodity development and other land use changes. The HCV Network includes the participation (through membership and collaboration) of commodity producers, companies, certification schemes, and conservation and social organisations. The HCV Network Secretariat helps people understand and use the HCV Approach – with the aim to contribute to critical climate and sustainable development goals. To find out more please visit <https://hcvnetwork.org/>

## The role of the HCV Secretariat in jurisdictional projects

The Network Secretariat actively engages with different jurisdictional projects to understand how screening works in practice and to gather lessons to feed back into global guidance. As screening is increasingly picked up and implemented in different places, the Secretariat wants to track and understand how coarse-scale indicative HCV mapping and screening can help lay the foundation for more detailed HCV assessments. Additionally, the Secretariat is interested in linking village-level planning instruments (e.g., participatory mapping, FPIC, etc.) with more remote or coarse-level indicative mapping of ecological and environmental values.

### **The Secretariat provides the following services:**

- Development of guidance and case studies
- Coordination of screening projects
- Training on the HCV approach and screening
- Quality assurance checks and provision of feedback on screening methods and outputs
- Independent technical advice to link landscape projects to global best practice
- Connecting people with similar experiences to facilitate knowledge exchange

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**To learn more about the HCV screening methodology, learning opportunities or to collaborate with the HCVN Secretariat, contact Ellen Watson: [ellen@hcvnetwork.org](mailto:ellen@hcvnetwork.org)**