

PRESS RELEASE

High Carbon Stock (HCS) Approach Steering Group launches Toolkit for deforestation-free plantations

The Toolkit will enable the widespread adoption of the HCS Approach

Singapore: Major plantation companies and NGOs including Golden Agri-Resources, Asia Pulp and Paper, Wilmar International Limited, Greenpeace, Agropalma, WWF, the Forest Peoples Programme, Rainforest Action Network, Unilever and TFT have today endorsed the publication of the first version of a Toolkit which will give commodity-producing companies worldwide practical guidance on how to identify tropical forests for conservation and degraded lands for potential plantation development.

The HCS Approach was developed to help companies implement their commitments to end deforestation in their supply chains. The Toolkit provides guidance for producers on how to identify High Carbon Stock (HCS) forests and integrate them with other land use planning approaches such as High Conservation Value areas, the protection of peatlands, and respect for the rights of indigenous and traditional communities to their lands.

The Toolkit has been developed by members of the HCS Approach Steering Group, a group of leading plantation companies with commitments to eliminate deforestation, NGOs and technical support organisations. Established in Singapore in 2014, the Steering Group is working to oversee the governance and standardisation of the HCS Approach to achieve a halt to deforestation.

Speaking at the launch of the toolkit, Grant Rosoman, Forest Solutions Coordinator at Greenpeace, said: “The HCS Approach breaks new ground by providing a practical way to achieve No Deforestation together with recognition of community land rights. The publication of this Toolkit should enable the widespread adoption of the HCS Approach in key tropical forest regions where oil palm and pulp and paper plantations are being developed.”

Peter Heng, Managing Director of Communications and Sustainability at Golden Agri-Resources and member of the Steering Group said: “Golden Agri-Resources pioneered the HCS approach in collaboration with The Forest Trust and Greenpeace when we announced our Forest Conservation Policy in early 2011, which focuses on No Deforestation. As a leading player in the palm oil industry, we worked with multi-stakeholders to develop the HCS Approach that is tested and acknowledged. We look forward to the support from multiple players including governments, communities, producers, consumer companies and NGOs to achieve success in HCS forest conservation.”

“It's absolutely brilliant for me to see this toolkit in all its colour,” said Scott Poynton, CEO of TFT. “I remember our very first discussion about HCS between TFT, GAR and Greenpeace way back in November 2010. Since then, tens of thousands of trees have been measured in lands as diverse as Indonesia, Liberia and Papua New Guinea, satellite data has been pored over, ground checks have followed and forests have been set aside and we have spoken with communities, NGOs, scientists, other experts and governments. This toolkit distils the knowledge we have developed together to

date and sets a great platform to expand the application and expansion of that learning to a more global audience.”

Aida Greenbury, Managing Director for Sustainability at Asia Pulp and Paper and also member of the Steering Group said: “As the industry moves towards Zero Deforestation, it is vital that we have an agreed method for defining what forest is. We hope that the development of the HCS Approach will form the foundation for forest conservation over years to come and we invite Government, industry and other stakeholders to follow.”

Marcus Colchester, Senior Policy Advisor at the Forest Peoples Programme, said that “the HCS Approach is also about people. As major players in the palm oil and pulp industries seek to implement their new commitments, this tool, properly used, holds the potential to protect forests as well as secure the land rights and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities.”

Jeremy Goon, Wilmar’s Chief Sustainability Officer, said: “Removing deforestation from commodity supply chains has gained momentum in the past two years with many major resource-based companies now sharing the same commitment. Along with established conservation approaches like High Conservation Value (HCV) areas, the High Carbon Stock (HCS) framework is a cornerstone for sustainable plantation development. We now look forward to transitioning the framework from concept to field implementation through a defined Toolkit. Wilmar’s No Deforestation commitment covers its entire supply chain, including its third-party suppliers; our next step is to work with key actors in the palm oil industry, including with the relevant government authorities and our suppliers towards equitable solutions to forest preservation and socio-economic development.”

The HCS Toolkit

The Toolkit will enable experienced practitioners to undertake their own HCS assessments, integrate them with HCV and FPIC considerations and create an integrated land use plan for a plantation concession in a forested area.

It has been tested in pilot palm oil and pulp and paper concessions in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Liberia and is expected to be widely adopted by companies in other countries and products in 2015.

The toolkit includes:

Chapter 1: Background on the methodology and the HCS Approach Steering Group

Chapters 2 – 6: Practitioner guidance on how to undertake and integrate HCS assessments

Chapter 7: Conclusions and areas for further study

The HCS Approach was first developed by Golden Agri Resources, TFT and Greenpeace in 2011. Since then, it has been adopted by other major producers including Asia Pulp and Paper and Wilmar, who both announced No Deforestation policies in 2013.

The approach has attracted support from global consumer companies, including Unilever, Nestlé, Ferrero, Mars and Nestlé, as part of a suite of actions to deliver on their commitments to prevent further deforestation in the supply chain.

In conjunction with the publication of the toolkit, the HCS Approach Steering Group is opening a consultation period on the methodology through participation in the HCS Consultative Forum. The Forum will be open to parties with an interest in the approach including plantation companies, manufacturers, retailers, financial institutions as well as industry bodies, academia and civil society groups.

Feedback can be provided via the Consultative Forum of the HCS Approach: <http://highcarbonstock.org/consultative-forum/>. Further editions of the HCS Toolkit will include revisions based on stakeholder feedback as well as recommendations from further field trials and new scientific information.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

- The HCS toolkit is available for download at <http://highcarbonstock.org/the-hcs-approach-toolkit/>.
- Background to the High Carbon Stock Approach can be found here: www.highcarbonstock.org
- The HCS Approach Steering Group was established in Singapore, in August 2014, and has established a Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It is leading a process for the further development and global standardisation of a methodology for deforestation-free development.
- Members of the HCS Approach Steering Group include:
 - **Corporate:** Agropalma, Asia Pulp and Paper, Cargill, Golden-Agri Resources, Golden Veroleum (Liberia) Inc., Musim Mas, New Britain Palm Oil Ltd., Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Wilmar
 - **NGOs:** Forest Heroes, Forest Peoples Programme, Greenpeace, National Wildlife Federation, Rainforest Action Network, Rainforest Alliance, Union of Concerned Scientists, WWF
 - **Technical supporter organizations:** Daemeter, Proforest, TFT
 - **Observers:** World Resources Institute.