# High Carbon Stock Approach

## Quality Review Process Guide:

For Companies & Practitioners

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## About this Guide

Thank you for your interest to submit your HCS Assessment to the Quality Review Process of the High Carbon Stock Approach Steering Group!

This document aims to provide guidance for companies/practitioners on submitting HCS assessments to the HCS Approach Quality Review Process for peer review. A full description and top-level explanation of the Quality Review Process can be found in the Quality Review Process document on the HCS Approach website[1]. For further questions and assistance, please contact: QA@highcarbonstock.org.

## Key information about the HCS Approach Quality Review Process

### What is the HCS Approach Quality Review Process?

The HCS Approach Quality Review process can be used for any completed HCS assessments; both members and non-members of the HCSA Steering Group can use it. The procedure was launched in November 2015 with the objective to align the quality of HCS assessments being conducted, and provide guidance and feedback on the quality of assessments to companies and practitioners. The procedure is for HCS assessments conducted before 1 August 2017. Any HCS assessments conducted after 1 August 2017 will be conducted jointly with HCV assessments according to the HCV-HCS Assessment Manual and will need to follow the HCV Resource Network (HCVRN) ALS Quality Review system. More information available here.

### What does the HCS Approach Quality Review Process entail?

The HCS Approach Steering Group does not require third-party certification in order to verify that HCS assessments were carried out according to the methodology explained in the HCS Approach Toolkit. Instead, companies must use trained practitioners to conduct their assessments and submit each assessment to a small peer review panel. The panel will conduct a desk-based review[2] and their feedback will be published alongside a summary of the assessment. Stakeholders can then enter into a dialogue with the company about the results.

Overview of the process

1. The concession-holder selects a Registered Practitioner Organisation to lead the HCS assessment, and together they select the team. The team leader must be a registered practitioner from a Registered Practitioner Organisation[3], and at least one other team member must also be a registered practitioner. The team must have expertise in image analysis, forest inventory, conservation, and social issues/community engagement.
2. The concession-holder contacts QA@highcarbonstock.org to lodge basic information about the HCS assessment with the Secretariat for publication on the Secretariat website.
3. The HCS assessment is carried out.
4. The concession-holder fills out the Summary Report template and submits the assessment to the HCS Approach Secretariat to organise a peer review. The concession-holder pays the Secretariat the quality review fee, but does not hire the reviewers directly.

[1] For more information on the Quality Review Process, please visit: http://highcarbonstock.org/about-the-quality-review-process/

[2] The Peer Review process is intended to be desk-based. However, the Steering Group may request field verification visits to be undertaken at an additional cost.

[3] To view the full list of HCS Approach Registered Practitioner Organisations, please visit: http://highcarbonstock.org/hcs-approach-quality-review-process/hcs-approach-registered-organisations/

5. The Secretariat selects the Peer Review Panel, a group of 2-3 people with expertise in image analysis, forestry and social issues/community rights. The company may request different panel members if it perceives a conflict of interest.
6. The Peer Review Panel sends its findings to the company, which can submit new information or correct mistakes for further review by the Peer Review Panel.

## Peer review

For the majority of the submissions, the actual peer review process starts from point 4 and ends at point 6 in the aforementioned overview[4]. The scope of information outlined in this section will mainly cover guidance for the peer review portion, however, we have also included steps for the HCS assessment registration phase (point 2 in the overview) in the Step Plan (page 5) to ensure coverage of the full engagement process with the HCS Approach Secretariat. In addition, please note that a separate Step Plan (page 6) has been provided for first time submissions from Registered Practitioner Organisations that have paid a registration fee, as the procedure will be slightly different.

To submit an HCS assessment to the HCSA Peer Review Process, please contact the HCS Approach Secretariat at: QA@highcarbonstock.org.

### Costs

- Organisations not listed as Registered Practitioner Organisations: **USD 2500** for each assessment submitted for peer review.
- Registered Practitioner Organisations: **USD 1750** for first time submissions[5]. **USD 2500** for each assessment submitted thereafter.
- Payment for review is submitted to the HCS Approach Secretariat. The Secretariat will coordinate payment of the respective fees to the peer reviewers.

### Timeline

- The actual review time for each assessment submitted can vary from 1-3 months, as each review will depend on the availability of the appointed peer review panellists. The review period starts from the submission date of the assessment to the Secretariat and is finalised once the Summary Report and accompanying documents have been published on the HCS Approach website.
- For first-time submissions from Registered Practitioner Organisations, it is recommended to use the Peer Review Panel before the assessment is completed.

### Description of roles

Reviewee

The company that submits their assessment to be reviewed by the Peer Review Panel. The reviewee does not have to be a member of the HCS Approach Steering Group to submit their assessment for review, however, **all Steering Group members must submit their assessments for review**.

[4] For first time submissions from Registered Practitioner Organisations that have paid a registration fee, the peer review process may start during the assessment implementation phase. The fee covers mentorship opportunities by the Peer Review Panel during the HCS assessment.

[5] The registration fee (USD 750) paid during your participation in the HCS Approach Practitioner Training is deducted from the total. Not applicable to organisations that did not pay the registration fee.

Peer Review Panel

This is the panel of experts that will review the assessment submitted.

- The panel will consist of one lead reviewer and 1-2 additional expert reviewers (total 2-3)[6].
- The lead reviewer summarises the overall/final review of the assessment.
- The reviewee cannot select the review panel; this is decided by the HCSA Quality Assurance Working Group to ensure a fair and independent review.

Facilitator

The HCS Approach Secretariat (Helikonia) will take on the role of facilitating the peer review, and will:

- Receive submissions, provide guidelines and other supporting documents, correspond with reviewees and peer review panellists, and provide support for all parties throughout the process.
- Liaise with the HCSA Quality Assurance Working Group in selecting the peer review panellists.
- Coordinate payment of the review fee and allocate fees to the panellists.
- Ensure that the required peer review documentation is submitted by the reviewee, host data/documents related to review, and provide access/instructions for uploading documents/data.
- Check that the HCS assessment was led by a Registered Practitioner Organisation.
- Publish the results of the review on the HCS Approach website. Once the review is published, it is the responsibility of the reviewee to handle all further feedback/comments from their stakeholders with regards to the result of the review published.

## What am I expected to submit?

HCS assessment registration phase (beginning of study)

In this phase, the Secretariat will ask you to fill in the HCS Assessment Registration template, which will request information such as: product, country/region, size of the development, nature of land use rights/tenure/ownership, details of any FPIC or HCV processes, details of relevant certifications, outside organisations contracted to help undertake the HCS assessment, HCS assessment team composition, timeline for assessment, status of HCV assessment submission to HCV Resource Network Assessor Licensing Scheme.

Please note: the information listed above may be published on the HCSA website.

Peer review phase (once assessment is completed)

Once the assessment has been completed, the reviewee will be asked to fill out the HCS Assessment Summary Report template. If you are a Registered Practitioner Organisation and are submitting your assessment for the first time, you will be asked to fill in and upload sections and information as they are ready. All of the information you will be required to submit is outlined in the Summary Report template. The template will require such information as: land cover stratification map, shape files of community land use maps showing any garden/farmland areas, satellite images from which stratification was made, methods of stratification forest inventory results. For a checklist of documents/files/data, please see Appendix II.

To gain a better understanding of how the information provided in the report will be reviewed, please see the Peer Review Report template[7]. The different sections of the template will be filled out by the peer review panellists, and reviewed/finalised by the lead reviewer to form the final Peer Review Report.

[6] To view the requirements of the Peer Review Panel, please see Appendix I.
[7] All Quality Review templates can be downloaded from: http://highcarbonstock.org/**how-to-submit-an-assessment/**

## Publication of results on the HCSA website

The final results will be published on the HCSA website and will include:

- HCS Assessment Summary Report – provides all relevant information related to the assessment. The published Summary Report will exclude all supplemental information provided to peer review panellists.
- Peer Review Report – contains results of the HCSA peer review process.
- Company's public response – if a company wishes to make an additional statement relating to the assessment or in response to the findings, they may submit a letter to be published alongside results (within the two weeks prior to publication of results of the review).

## Step Plan – Regular process

| Process Overview – Steps | Documentation / Timeline |
|---|---|
| **Registration of HCS assessment**<br>1. Company contacts HCSA Secretariat (QA@highcarbonstock.org) with interest to submit HCS assessment to peer review process (prior, ongoing or completed assessments are accepted).<br>2. HCSA Secretariat sends company (reviewee) links to: HCSA Assessment Registration template, HCSA Quality Review Process Guide, Summary Report template, and Peer Review Report template (for reference).<br>3. Reviewee submits basic information to the HCSA Secretariat using the registration template. The Secretariat receives the registration form and publishes basic information on the HCSA website. | 1. HCS Assessment Registration template<br>2. Summary Report template<br>3. HCSA Quality Review Process Guide<br>4. Peer Review Report template<br>(Expected timeline: 1-2 weeks) |
| **Submission of HCS assessment for peer review**<br>1. Once the assessment has been completed, the reviewee informs the Secretariat.<br>2. Secretariat provides reviewee with access to specific assessment folder on HCSA Peer Review Process SharePoint site, and refers them to: Instructions for using HCS Approach Peer Review Process Site (Appendix III).<br>3. Reviewee uploads filled in Summary Report and other relevant data/documentation (according to instructions). Secretariat checks that data/documentation is complete.<br>4. Secretariat requests invoicing details from reviewee. | 1. Completed HCS Assessment Summary Report<br>2. All supplemental documents/data for peer reviewers (provided separately)<br>3. Instructions for using HCS Approach Peer Review Process Site<br>(Expected timeline: 1-3 weeks) |
| Secretariat sends peer reviewee the panel roster and invoice for USD 2500. The reviewee is requested to inform the Secretariat of any conflicts of interest with reviewers on the list. The reviewee must submit payment in order for the review to commence. | 1. HCSA peer reviewer roster<br>2. Invoice to company<br>(Expected timeline: 2-4 days) |
| **Peer review (PR) panellist selection**<br>1. PRs selected by Secretariat and Quality Assurance Working Group, taking into consideration response on conflicts of interest by reviewee. Secretariat sends proposed list of PRs to reviewee.<br>2. Secretariat contacts PRs to check availability.<br>3. List of PRs & lead reviewer (LR) confirmed. Secretariat sends PRs Peer Review Report template.<br>4. Secretariat double checks Non-disclosure Agreement has been signed by selected PRs and provides access to assessment folder on HCS Approach Peer Review Process SharePoint site. | 1. List of selected peer review panellists<br>2. Peer Review Report template<br>3. Non-disclosure agreement<br>4. Instructions for using HCS Approach Peer Review Process Site<br>(Expected timeline: 1 week) |
| **Peer review by panellists**<br>1. PRs conduct review, and upload feedback onto SharePoint and/or sends to LR. LR does overall/final review of assessment, and uploads Peer Review Report.<br>2. Secretariat informs reviewee that results are available, and reviewee may, within a two week timeframe, submit a response and/or make changes and re-submit Summary Report before findings are published*.<br>3. PRs finalise review in light of comments/new evidence and uploads final Peer Review Report.<br>4. Secretariat collects invoice from PRs and allocates payment.<br>**Note: One round of revisions is included in the peer review fee; any further rounds might require additional fees to pay for reviewing time.* | 1. Peer Review Report<br>2. Re-submission of Summary Report from company (if applicable)<br>3. Final Peer Review Report<br>4. Invoices from PRs<br>(Expected timeline: 2-3 weeks) |
| **Finalisation of peer review**<br>1. Secretariat informs reviewee that review is complete and that they may submit a public response to the findings, to be published alongside Summary Report on HCSA website with final Peer Review Report.<br>2. Results are published on HCSA website, and Secretariat changes the status for the company in HCSA assessment list. Reviewee may now state publicly that they have completed the HCS Approach Steering Group's Quality Review Process. They can also refer people to website to show their status of completion*.<br>**Note: No official 'approval' will be provided as this is not certification.* | 1. Final Summary Report – for publication. Supplemental information/data not included.<br>2. Final Peer Review Report<br>3. Company's Public Response (if applicable)<br>(Expected timeline: maximum 2 weeks) |
| **HCSA peer review process completed** | |

## Step Plan – Process for first-time submissions by Registered Practitioner Organisations

| Process Overview – Steps | Documentation / Timeline |
|---|---|
| **Registration of HCS assessment**<br>1. Registered Practitioner Organisation (RPO) contacts HCSA Secretariat (QA@highcarbonstock.org) to submit **upcoming** or **ongoing** HCS assessment to the Peer Review Process, and indicate that they wish to engage in the mentorship opportunities that were included in their registration fee. Six hours of peer review is included in this fee and is discounted from the quality review fee, but only for the first HCS assessment submitted. The six hours can be collected at any of the major stages in the HCS assessment: 1) pre-forest inventory, 2) post-forest inventory, and 3) post-Decision Tree/final land use map.<br>2. HCSA Secretariat sends RPO/reviewee links to: HCS Assessment Registration template, HCSA Quality Review Process Guide, Summary Report template, and Peer Review Report template (for reference). Secretariat also checks that the company is a Registered Practitioner Organisation, that the submission is the first one, and that they have previously paid a registration fee.<br>3. Reviewee submits basic information to the HCSA Secretariat using the registration template, as well as the expected timeline for the assessment. Secretariat publishes basic information on the HCSA website. | 1. HCS Assessment Registration template<br>2. Summary Report template<br>3. HCSA Quality Review Process Guide<br>4. Peer Review Report template<br>(Expected timeline: 1-2 weeks) |
| **Submission of HCS assessment for peer review**<br>1. Secretariat provides reviewee access to specific assessment folder on HCSA Peer Review Process SharePoint site, and refers them to: Instructions for using HCS Approach Peer Review Process Site (Appendix III). Reviewee indicates the stages of the assessment they wish to receive guidance on and the timelines attached to each of these stages.<br>3. Using site instructions provided by Secretariat, reviewee uploads Summary Report with the section(s) filled in where they first wish to receive guidance and/or the sections for which they already have information. Other relevant data/documentation may also be uploaded. Secretariat checks that data/documentation is complete for the relevant section(s).<br>4. Secretariat requests invoicing details from reviewee. | 1. HCS Assessment Summary Report (relevant sections filled in)<br>2. All supplemental documents/data for peer reviewers (provided separately)<br>3. Instructions for using HCS Approach Peer Review Process Site<br>(Expected timeline: 2-3 weeks) |
| Secretariat sends peer reviewee the panel roster and invoice for USD 1750. The reviewee is requested to inform the Secretariat of any conflicts of interest with reviewers on the list. The reviewee must submit payment in order for the review to commence. | 1. HCSA peer reviewer roster<br>2. Invoice to company<br>(Expected timeline: 2-4 days) |
| **Peer Review (PR) panellist selection**<br>1. PRs selected by Secretariat and Quality Assurance Working Group, taking into consideration response on conflicts of interest by reviewee. Secretariat sends proposed list of PRs to reviewee.<br>2. Secretariat checks availability of PRs according to timelines and selected stages indicated by reviewee.<br>3. List of PRs & lead reviewer (LR) confirmed. Secretariat sends PRs Peer Review Report template, and introduces PRs to reviewee.<br>4. Secretariat double checks Non-disclosure Agreement has been signed by selected PRs and provides access to assessment folder on HCS Approach Peer Review Process SharePoint site. | 1. List of selected peer review panellists<br>2. Peer Review Report template<br>3. Non-disclosure agreement<br>4. Instructions for using HCS Approach Peer Review Process Site<br>(Expected timeline: 1 week) |
| **Peer Review by panellists**<br>1. PRs conduct review for assigned sections as they are ready, and maintain contact with reviewee, providing guidance and answering questions. Once assessment is completed, and all assigned panellists have conducted reviews, LR does overall/final review, and uploads Peer Review Report.<br>2. Secretariat informs reviewee final results are available, and reviewee may, within a two week timeframe, submit a response and/or edit and re-submit report before findings are published*.<br>3. PRs finalise review in light of comments/new evidence and uploads final Peer Review Report.<br>4. Secretariat collects invoice from PRs and allocates payment.<br>**Note: One round of revisions is included in the Peer Review fee; any further rounds might require additional fees to pay for reviewing time.* | 1. Peer Review Report<br>2. Re-submission of Summary Report from company (if applicable)<br>3. Final Peer Review Report<br>4. Invoices from PRs<br>(Expected timeline: will depend on assessment timeline) |
| **Finalisation of Peer Review**<br>1. Secretariat informs reviewee that review is complete and that they may submit a public response to findings, to be published alongside Summary Report on HCSA website with final Peer Review Report.<br>2. Results are published on HCSA website, and Secretariat changes the status for the company in HCSA assessment list. Reviewee may now state publicly that they have completed the HCS Approach Steering Group's Quality Review Process. They can also refer people to website to show their status of completion*.<br>**Note: No official 'approval' will be provided as this is not certification.* | 1. Final Summary Report – for publication. Supplemental information/data not included.<br>2. Final Peer Review Report<br>3. Company's Public Response (if applicable)<br>(Expected timeline: maximum 2 weeks) |
| **HCSA peer review process completed** | |

## Frequently asked questions

### What if I am not an HCS Approach Steering Group member? Can I still submit HCS assessments for review?

You do not have to be a member of the HCS Approach Steering Group to submit your assessment for review.

### What if I did not use a Registered Practitioner Organisation to lead my HCS assessment?

You may still use the HCS Quality Review Process, although this will be noted in the Peer Review Report. The Steering Group has allowed this to be able to review HCS assessments which occurred before the Quality Review Process was developed.

### How long will the peer review take?

The actual review time for each assessment submitted can vary from 1-3 months, as each review will depend on the availability of the appointed peer review panellists. The review period starts from the submission date of the completed assessment to the Secretariat and is finalised once the Summary Report and accompanying documents have been published on the HCSA website.

### What type of capacity will I need to dedicate to the review?

The reviewee will need to communicate with their assessors to prepare all relevant information needed to be uploaded into the SharePoint folder that will be assigned for the review. In addition, the company will also need to liaise with the HCSA Secretariat for any correspondence with regards to the review.

### How are the peer review panellists chosen? What if there is a conflict of interest with the selected panellists?

The selection is made by the Quality Assurance Working Group to ensure a fair and independent review. The panel is selected from a roster of experts identified by the Steering Group. The selection is made based on type of expertise and geographical/regional experience. The various parts for review is coordinated/assigned by the Secretariat and the Quality Assurance Working Group.

The reviewee is asked to check the short-list of selected candidates prior to the commencement of the review, and may request different panel members if they perceive a conflict of interest. For information on the requirements of the Peer Review Panel, please see Appendix I.

### How is confidentiality/ non-disclosure ensured?

All reviewers in the roster are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement via the Secretariat prior to their acceptance as an official peer review panelist. This non-disclosure agreement is applicable for all assessments and associated documents/information for which they are engaged to review. However, please do note that much of the information provided in the Summary Report will be made public.

### How will the final results be shared? Which data/documents will be made public?

The final results will be shared on the HCSA website and will include: the Summary Report (excluding supplemental information), the Peer Review Report, and the company's public response to peer review (if provided). Please review Appendix II for a more detailed guide on documents/information to be published.

### What if I do not agree with the results of the Peer Review Panel?

For each assessment submitted, the reviewee has the opportunity to make changes and re-submit the report to the Peer Review Panel before their findings are published. One round of revisions is included in the peer review fee; any further rounds might require additional fees to pay for reviewing time. If the reviewee is still not in agreement with the findings of the Peer Review Panel, they may also add a public response to the published peer review findings.

**What if my company is a Registered Practitioner Organisation? How can I claim the mentorship opportunities that was included in the registration fee for the HCSA Practitioner Training?**

The registration fee paid by Registered HCS Approach Practitioner Organisations during their training will be deducted from the total fee of their first submitted HCS assessment, and the mentorship opportunities can be collected during the review. It is thus recommended to use the review process before the final assessment is complete, in order to gain feedback/guidance while conducting the assessment.

**Once the review is complete, is my assessment considered 'approved' by the HCS Approach Steering Group?**

No official 'approval' will be provided as this is not certification.

## Appendix I: Requirements for Peer Review Panel

The panel will consist of one lead reviewer and one to two additional expert reviewers (total 2-3). The panel must have the following expertise:

1. Forest-related Remote Sensing/GIS, inventory and statistics
2. Tropical forest ecology, forest disturbance and regeneration
3. Social values, community rights and participatory mapping

It is also recommended that the panel have the following expertise:
4. Conservation planning

***In Addition:***

- All should preferably have experience on ground within the country of the HCS assessment.
- The lead reviewer should have experience of the whole HCS Approach process and in-country experience
- All should have been involved with a HCS assessment
- All should have an understanding of the principles of Forest Patch Conservation and Land Use Planning for plantation development.
- All should have a working knowledge of HCV assessments/procedures

**Suggested division of labour:**

| Section of HCS assessment | Estimate of maximum hours for review |
|---|---|
| Initial image classification (using ArcGIS or similar), refining classification after forest inventory, and Patch Analysis Decision Tree | 6 |
| Forest inventory and statistics (carbon calculation) | 4 |
| Review of community mapping/social integration process, Social Impact Assessment, social sections of HCV assessment | 4 |
| HCV quality review, Rapid Biodiversity Assessment (if any) | 4 |
| Summary of findings of Peer Review Panel and whether the assessment followed the HCS Approach (lead reviewer) | 2 |

## Appendix II: HCSA Peer Review Process Documents & Data Guide

### Summary of HCSA Peer Review Process templates/documents

| Template/Document | Location on HCSA website | Will this be published on the website? |
|---|---|---|
| HCSA Assessment Registration template | How to submit an assessment web page on HCSA website | Yes |
| Summary Report template | How to submit an assessment web page on HCSA website | Yes, but will exclude all supplemental information provided separately to the Peer Review Panel (see next table for more details). |
| Peer Review Report template | How to submit an assessment web page on HCSA website | Yes |
| Company's Public Response | Not Applicable | Yes, if the company wishes to submit a public response for the website publication of results. |

### Documents/data/information checklist for submission (outlined in full in Summary Report template)

| HCS Assessment Information Required for Peer Review Panel | Published on HCSA website? |
|---|---|
| **1. Project description:**<br>1.1 Location and size of study area<br>1.1 Overview of proposed plantation development<br>1.2 Description of surrounding landscape<br>1.3 Map of the site within the region,<br>1.4 Relevant data sets available: *e.g. forest inventory records, satellite or other remote sensing data, biomass/carbon studies*<br>1.5 List of any reports/assessments used in the HCS assessment | **YES** |
| **2. HCS assessment team and timeline:**<br>2.1 Names and qualifications of HCS Assessment Team members<br>2.2 Time period for major steps in the study | **YES** |
| **3. Community engagement/FPIC:**<br>3.1 Summary of community engagement, FPIC, participatory mapping<br>3.2 Summary of Social Impact Assessment (if any) | **YES** |
| **3.A. Supplemental information provided to peer reviewers:**<br>3.3 Full Social Impact Assessment (if any)<br>3.4 Details of meetings held and findings<br>3.5 Shape files of community land use maps | **NO** |
| **4. High Conservation Value assessment:**<br>4.1 Summary and link to public summary report | **YES** |
| **4.A. Supplemental information provided to peer reviewers:**<br>4.2 Full HCV report | **NO** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **5. Environmental Impact Assessment:**<br>5.1 Summary | **YES** |
| **5.A. Supplemental information provided to peer reviewers:**<br>5.2 Full Environmental Impact Assessment (if any) | **NO** |
| **6. Land cover image analysis:**<br>6.1 Area of Interest and how it was defined<br>6.2 Description of images used for classification<br>6.3 Sample image - provide one sample image of land cover (300 dpi).<br>6.4 Method of stratification and software used<br>6.5 Map of initial vegetation classes, with legend<br>6.6 Total hectares per vegetation class<br>6.7 Summary of which areas are potential HCS forest, subject to further analysis | **YES** |
| **6.A. Supplemental information provided to peer reviewers:**<br>6.8 Images, with sufficient resolution to re-do analysis (including geo-coordinates) | **NO** |
| **7. Forest inventory results:**<br>7.1 Inventory sample design and plot rational<br>7.2 Map indicating plots<br>7.3 Forest inventory team members and roles<br>7.4 Methodology used for forest sampling<br>7.5 Methodology used for carbon calculations<br>7.6 Indicative photos of each vegetation class – 5 images (N, S, E, W, and canopy views) per class.<br>7.7 Statistical analysis (allometric used, confidence tests, justification)<br>7.8 Summary of statistical analysis of carbon stock results per vegetation class<br>7.9 Forest inventory results | **YES** |
| **7.A. Supplemental information provided to Peer Reviewers:**<br>7.10 Complete forest plot data | **NO** |
| **8. Land Cover Classification:**<br>8.1 Refined land cover map with title, date, legend and any HCS forest patches identified | **YES** |
| **8.A. Supplemental information provided to Peer Reviewers:**<br>8.2 Shape files of land cover map and forest patches | **NO** |
| **9. Patch Analysis Result:**<br>9.1 Results of Decision Tree<br>9.2 Comments on Decision Tree outcome | **YES** |
| **10. Indicative Land Use Plan:**<br>10.1 Summary of results of final ground verification (if any)<br>10.2 Final HCS map<br>10.3 Overview of forest conservation management and monitoring activities to be included in the Conservation and Development (land use) Plan<br>10.4 List of activities still to be carried out before Conservation and Development Plan can be finalised | **YES** |

## Appendix III: Instructions for using HCS Approach Peer Review Process Site (Microsoft SharePoint)

The HCS Approach Peer Review Process site is a secure Microsoft file sharing site set up to house the Summary Reports, peer review results and all other relevant data/documents pertaining to the submissions of HCS assessments to the HCSA Peer Review Process. As some of these documents and data files can be quite large, the site will also ensure that the various files are transferred from reviewee to peer reviewer (and vice versa) in a smooth and standardised way.

Companies/Practitioner Organisations**:** will use the site to upload the completed Summary Report and all associated documents and data files that need to be submitted to the Peer Review Panel. They can also use the platform for re-submission (if applicable), and to view the results once the process is complete (prior to the final reports being launched online).

Peer Review Panellists: will use the site to access the submitted Summary Reports and all documents/data files related to the specific assessment they are assigned to review. They will also use the site to upload their sections of the Peer Review Report, which will contain feedback on the HCS assessment. The final Peer Review report will be uploaded by the lead reviewer or the HCSA Secretariat.

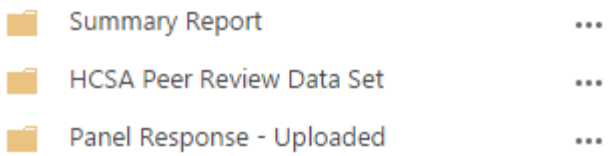
### Gaining Access to the Site – For Companies & Peer Review Panelists

1. Once you have indicated to the HCSA Secretariat that you are ready to upload your Summary Report and data (for reviewees), or your assigned sections of the Peer Review Report (for peer review panellists), the Secretariat will send you an invitation to access a folder, where you may upload all relevant files for the review of the HCS assessment.
2. You will then receive the invitation email from the Microsoft Online Services Team (msonlineservicesteam@email.microsoftonline.com). You will only be provided access and editing rights to the specific folder relating to the submitted HCS assessment.
3. In the invitation, click on the web link, and you will be taken to the Microsoft SharePoint log-in page. You are required to log in with a Microsoft account or a Microsoft Office 365 account. If you do not have one, you may sign up for one at the bottom of the webpage.
4. The sign-up process is quick and simple. You may use your company/personal email address to create the Microsoft account.
5. Once you have completed the sign-up process, log in with your Microsoft account.
6. You may now upload your documents (see uploading instructions on the next page).

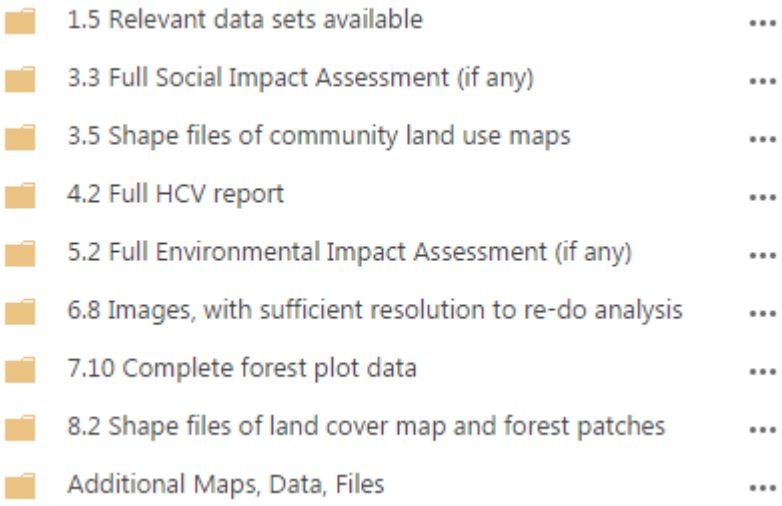
**PLEASE NOTE:** The invitation to access the site will expire after seven days. Please log in as soon as possible to complete the process (there is no expiration of access after the first time you log in). If your invitation has expired, please contact QA@highcarbonstock.org for the invite to be re-sent.

### Uploading instructions – For Companies

1. Once logged in, you will see three folders as shown below:



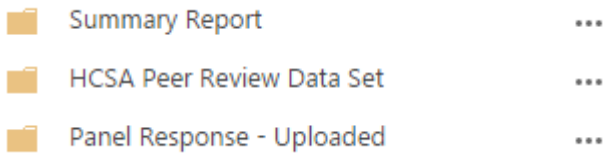

2. Please upload your completed Summary Report in the "Summary Report" folder[8]. You may then click on "HCSA Peer Review Data Set" to upload the accompanying files/data that the Summary Report template has indicated to be provided separately.
3. In the "HCSA Peer Review Data Set" folder, you will see a list of folders labeled according to the data/files you have been asked to provide separately in the Summary Report Template (see below). Please upload the various files and label them clearly, keeping in mind that the peer review panellists will need to navigate the files with limited instructions.




4. If you have additional maps, data, files, you may upload them in the "Additional Maps, Data, Files" folder. Please label these clearly, or create new sub-folders if needed.

### Downloading and uploading instructions – For peer review panellists

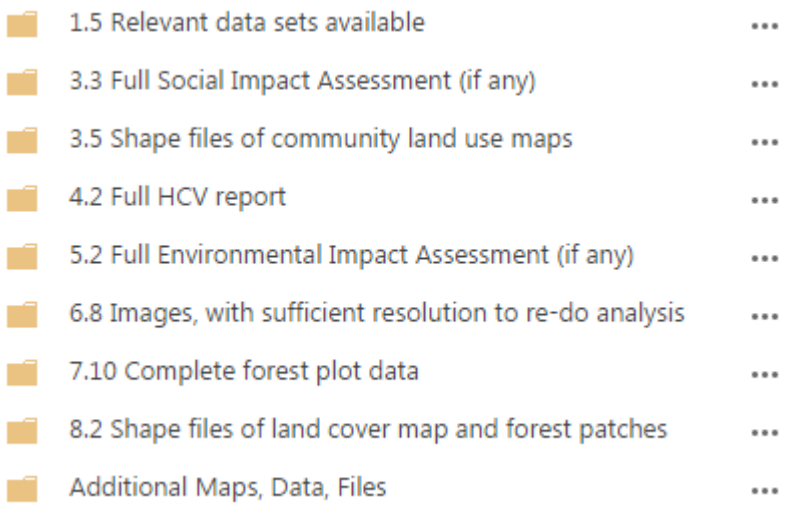
1. Once logged in, you will see three folders as shown below:

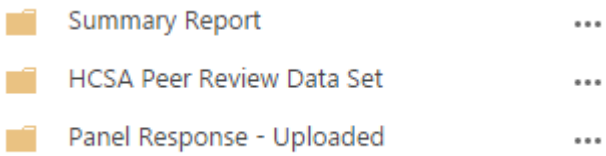



2. You will find the completed Summary Report for the assessment in the "Summary Report" folder. In the folder labeled "HCSA Peer Review Data Set", you will find all other accompanying files/data that the

[8] If you are a Registered Practitioner Organisation, and are collecting your mentorship/peer review opportunities, you will unlikely be able to provide a completed version of the Summary Report. Please provide the relevant information available for the sections of the Summary Report that you wish to be reviewed, and continue to complete sections as the assessment progresses.

Summary Report template has indicated to the company to be provided separately (see next page for folder titles). The folders have been labeled according to the section numbers in the Summary Report.




3. There may be additional data/files relevant to your section of the review in the "Additional Maps, Data, Files" folder. Please check the folder to ensure you have all of the information you need for the review.
4. Once you have completed your section of the review, you may upload the Peer Review template document with your section filled in. Please include your name and date in the title of the file and upload this in the "Panel Response - Uploaded" folder.