

## Putting No Deforestation into Practice

### The High Carbon Stock Approach A Nature-Based Solution Contributor

December 2019

One of the main drivers of tropical deforestation, and the consequential contribution to climate change is agricultural and plantation expansion, where it is estimated to be the primary driver of 27 to 80 percent of deforestation worldwide.<sup>i</sup> The [High Carbon Stock Approach](#) (HCSA) is a practical methodology to implement 'no deforestation' commitments by companies, governments and communities. It identifies high carbon stock forests in the humid tropics for conservation, through an integrated land use plan, and allows degraded non-forest land to be developed for agricultural or plantation commodities while ensuring the rights and livelihoods of local peoples are respected.

The HCS Approach effectively identifies tropical forest areas that are under threat from deforestation due to commodity production expansion. By protecting rather than converting these forest areas, the carbon they contain is conserved along with the other ecosystem services and social values, and the natural system is maintained to allow continued sequestration of carbon from the atmosphere.

In December 2018, the UN Environment Programme recognised the HCSA as a no deforestation implementation tool “...the High Carbon Stock Approach, a new global methodology that helps answer such questions and implement No Deforestation commitments. It’s a land use planning tool focused on achieving No Deforestation. It integrates social considerations—local community customary rights, livelihoods and needs, high conservation values, peatlands, riparian zones and plantation operational aspects.”<sup>ii</sup> The HCSA has also been recognised as a Nature Base Contributor (NBS) and was presented in an NBS compendium at the Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019.

The HCSA methodology is neither country nor commodity specific and is governed by its multi-stakeholder steering group members. From small beginnings 5 years ago with a handful of companies, HCSA is now being scaled up to engage most of the palm oil, cocoa and rubbers sectors and adapted to different regions, including with small farmers. It is being implemented in 10 countries in Asia Pacific and Africa, including by local governments in West Papua province, and expanding into Latin America.

As of November 2019, close to 2.55 million hectares (ha) of HCSA assessment area was registered with 669,950 ha of HCS forests identified for conservation and an additional 7 million ha prevented from deforestation. This is contributing to a significant reduction in averted GHG emissions and is securing long-term carbon sequestration and storage. Forest conservation and community use impacts are reported via publicly available peer reviewed HCSA assessments and HCSA’s Global Forest Watch Pro platform will be used for monitoring conservation areas.

The primary organisations involved are HCSA Steering Group (SG) members:

**Companies:** Asia Pulp & Paper, Asian Agri, Golden Agri-Resources, IOI, KLK, Musim Mas, Sime Darby, Wilmar International Ltd, Barry Callebaut, BASF, Ferrero, Nestle, Procter & Gamble, Unilever as well as the many thousands of organisations in their supply chains.

**NGOs:** Conservation International, Forest People Programme, Greenpeace, Mighty Earth, National Wildlife Federation, Rainforest Action Network, Worldwide Fund for Nature

**Technical Support Organisations:** Daemeter, Earthworm, EcoNusantara, Ekologika, Greenbury & Associates, Proforest, Rainforest Alliance, Tropenbos Indonesia.

**Small Holder Organisations:** Serikat Petani Kelapa Sawit (SPKS)

**HCSA’s partners:** USAID, SPKS, Partnership for Forests, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, HCV Resource Network, World Resources Institute, Meridian Institute, World Cocoa Foundation, Science Nature and People Partnerships

## High Carbon Stock Approach Achievement Highlights

Nov 2016 – December 2019

### Government Engagement:

- **Marrakesh declaration (2016) – African Palm Oil Initiative:** 7 African nations support HCV & HCS.
- **Indonesian government:** Technical expert support in the Ecosystem Essential Areas guidance
- **Jurisdictions adopting HCSA:** e.g. Sabah State, South Sumatra, West Papua, West Kalimantan.
- **EU biofuel regulations** towards 2030 phase out includes a study on emissions and indirect land use change including High Carbon Stocks.
- **French government** strategy on importing requirements (Nov 18) in relation to deforestation references the HCSA toolkit.

**HCSA Integration into Leading Sectoral Schemes & Commitments:** HCSA requirements were integrated into the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) standard (Nov 18); Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI) Forestry criteria (Nov 2018); tyre sector ‘Sustainable Natural Rubber Platform’; Cocoa Forest Initiative Framework for Action – Ghana (2017); Côte d’Ivoire (2017); Cameroon (2019)

### Financial Institutions:

- **Morgan Stanley report** (June 2016) on ESG Valuation Opportunities on ASEAN Plantation & Commodity Traders factor HCSA commitments under Supply Chain Management Transparency & Traceability Analysis;
- **ShareAction ‘Banking on a Low-Carbon Future’ ranking report** (Dec 2017) of the 15 largest EU banks’ responses to Climate Change uses HCSA as No Deforestation implementation benchmark.

### HCSA Toolkit & Smallholder adaption:

- HCSA Toolkit V1 launched (March 2015), HCS+ process & convergence to one global methodology, (Nov 2016) and Toolkit version 2 launched (May 2017)
- In collaboration with the Indonesian Palm Oil Farmers Union (SPKS) a simplified approach to Identify, Manage and Monitor HCS forest and HCV areas is in development. The intention is to extend this to pulpwood, rubber and cocoa.
- To speed the adoption of HCSA, particularly with small farmers and by governments, large-scale indicative mapping of HCS forests is being carried out in key regions.
- A comprehensive set of ‘Social Requirements’ are in the process of being finalised, piloted and added to the HCSA Toolkit.
- To address the long-term conservation of HCS forest and HCV areas, conservation financing approaches are being developed and tested.

**HCSA GFW Pro platform** activated for monitoring HCSA’s conservation achievements & verifying a halt in deforestation in areas of HCSA implementation

**HCSA Restoration** a technical working group will be established to develop HCSA restoration requirements and guidelines

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<sup>i</sup> Kissinger, G., Herold, M. & De Sy, V. 2012. Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation: a synthesis report for REDD+ policymakers. Vancouver, Canada, Lexeme Consulting. Curtis, P.G., Slay, C.M., Harris, N.L., Tyukavina, A. & Hansen, M.C. (2018). Classifying drivers of global forest loss. Science 361, 1108–1111.

<sup>ii</sup> UN Environment web story. Towards Zero Deforestation. 31 December 2018 <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/towards-zero-deforestation>