

HIGH CARBON STOCK APPROACH

Quality Assurance Process

Version 1.0
December 2018

Integrated HCV and HCSA Assessments

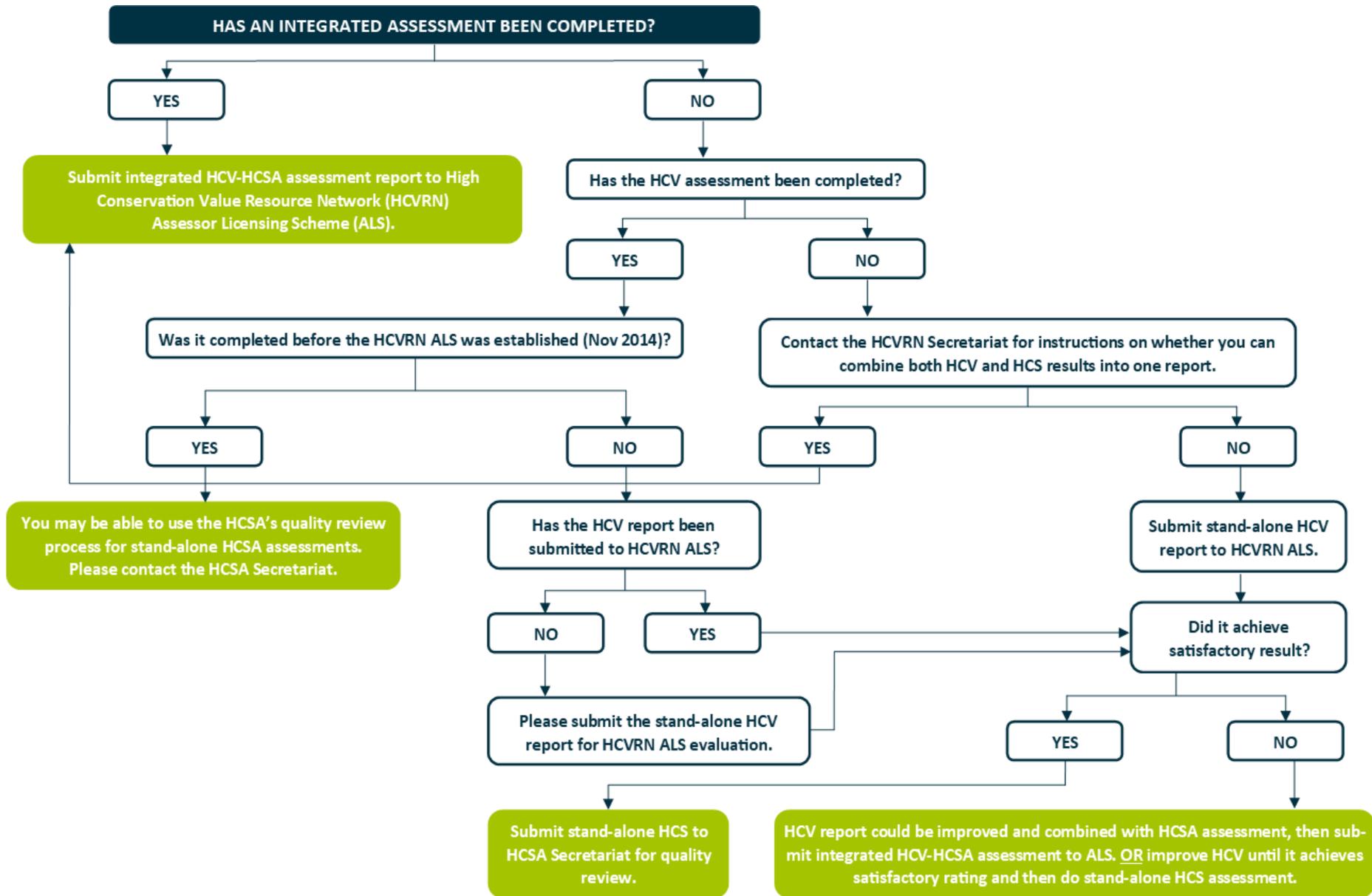
Please refer to the guidance below to understand which channel of quality assurance applies to your case, depending on when you started to conduct or have conducted the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) assessment. In 2016, both HCSA and High Conservation Value Resource Network (HCVRN) Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS) agreed to collaborate because there was a recognition that there were overlaps between HCV and HCSA assessments. Part of the agreement was that HCVRN ALS would take on the quality assurance of the Integrated HCV-HCSA Assessments. An integrated manual was developed and published in November 2017, which serves as a key cut-off date for understanding the quality assurance process for the Integrated HCV-HCSA Assessments. Moving forward, the HCSA peer review will eventually be phased out as all new assessments will be Integrated HCV-HCSA Assessments. Both HCSA and HCVRN ALS are collaborating to align on the assessor guidance and requirements to smooth the transition to integrated assessments and quality assurance and capture lessons learnt for improvement of the overall system. HCVRN has published several documents for the guidance of companies and ALS assessors [here](#).

Currently, the HCSA Secretariat is conducting peer reviews of HCS assessments with HCV reports completed before November 2017; while after November 2017, companies are required to conduct/commission Integrated HCV-HCSA Assessments which are evaluated by the HCVRN ALS. For HCV assessments which started before November 2017, but which have not yet been submitted to ALS, companies are encouraged to hire assessors who can integrate the HCSA and HCV findings into the integrated template and submit to ALS, as there are efficiencies to be gained in terms of reporting effort and evaluation fees. If this is not possible, two stand-alone HCV and HCSA assessments can be reviewed by ALS and HCSA Secretariat, respectively.

Prior to beginning the HCSA peer review process, the Secretariat checks with the companies on their submission of HCV report. For HCV reports submitted to HCVRN ALS, the HCV report must achieve a Satisfactory result with HCVRN ALS before the HCSA Secretariat can proceed with the HCSA peer review. If the result of the HCV report is deemed Unsatisfactory by HCVRN ALS, the Secretariat cannot start the peer review process and the assessor needs to rework the HCV report until it achieves a Satisfactory rating.¹ The table below shows the comparison between HCSA peer review and the HCVRN ALS quality assurance process:

	HCSA Peer Review	HCVRN ALS evaluation
Result of the Assessment	Recommendations given, but not a pass/fail system.	Pass/fail system. Assessor has three attempts to achieve a Satisfactory score.
Report Submission	Company submits report.	Assessor submits report.
Registration	Company registers the study with the HCSA Secretariat while the study is ongoing.	Assessors are encouraged to inform the ALS that an assessment is underway and the tentative date for report submission. This will enable the ALS to coordinate evaluators for the report.

¹ If the HCV report receives an unsatisfactory rating, the company is advised to use a new HCV licensed assessor who can then lead an integrated HCV-HCS assessment.



The HCSA Peer Review Process

The HCSA Peer Review Process starts with the registration and submission of the company's HCSA report and other supporting documents to the HCSA Secretariat for processing. The cost for standard submission of HCSA peer review is USD 3,000 for all standard assessments, which includes payable fees to the Peer Reviewers and the Secretariat administration fees. The payment needs to be made before the peer review process can begin.² As soon as the payment is complete, the HCSA Secretariat will inform the company and start the peer review process. Please refer to the Quality Review Process document [here](#) for more information.

During the peer review period, the Peer Reviewers will gain access to a SharePoint folder where all completed documents will be made available. The peer review process includes: First Round of Peer Review, Company Review, Final Peer Review, Public Response, and finally for the HCSA Secretariat to publish the completed reports onto the [HCSA website](#). The steps are outlined below; each stage of the review takes approximately two weeks' time for the review process to complete.

- During the **First Round of Peer Review**, the Peer Reviewers will complete the Peer Review Report with their findings and recommendations based on the HCSA Report and supporting documents.
- During the **Company Review**, the Company can address the findings/recommendations and provide their company responses in respect to the Peer Reviewers findings/recommendations; they may also update their HCSA report.
- At the **Final Peer Review** stage, the Peer Reviewers need to finalise the findings and recommendations based on the updated HCSA report together with the information provided by the company before producing a final Peer Review Report.
- Lastly, the company is provided an option to make additional statement in response to the peer review findings. They may add a **Public Response** to the published Peer Review findings, either as an accompanying letter or inline comments embedded within the Peer Review Report, which will be published onto the HCSA website.

During the HCSA peer review process, it is important to note that the Peer Reviewers does not formally approve the HCS assessment. Instead, it provides an independent review of the assessment's quality and alignment with the HCS Approach Toolkit, as well as suggestions for improvement, before the company publishes the results. If the Peer Reviewers find major problems, these can be corrected prior to publication on the HCSA website.

For further information on the HCSA Quality Review Process, please refer to the HCSA website [here](#) or contact the HCSA Secretariat at info@highcarbonstock.org.

For information on the HCVRN ALS, please refer to the ALS Specification [here](#) or contact the ALS Quality Manager at qualitymanager@hcvnetwork.org.

² For companies requiring the Certificate of Domicile of Non-Resident for Indonesia Tax Withholding (Form DGT-1), the process of acquiring the approved form will take minimum 14 working days.