

Advice Note 02: HCV – HCSA Assessments

9 June 2020

About this HCSA Advice Note:

The purpose of this document is to respond to technical queries that arise from the implementation of the HCSA methodology and the evaluation of HCV-HCSA assessment reports. Queries are gathered through HCSA or HCVRN and centralised in a query tracker. Then, subject area experts propose a response. Next, the query and draft response are shared with the HCSA Quality Assurance Working Group for input. Finally, the advice note is updated accordingly and published.

If you have a technical query, please contact the HCSA Technical Manager:

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If your query is related to an HCV-HCSA assessment currently under ALS evaluation, contact the ALS Quality Manager: qualitymanager@hcvnetwork.org

ADVICE NOTE-02-01	Requirement for preparation phase Social Requirements to be met to obtain a satisfactory evaluation outcome for HCV-HCSA assessment reports
Main Topic(s)	Social Requirements, assessment preparation, social background Study, land tenure and use study
Date published	9 June 2020
Date revised (if relevant)	-
Date(s) of applicability	Applies to all HCV-HCSA assessments initiated before 9 June 2020. From 9 June 2020, developers must complete the Land Tenure and Use Study (and other HCSA Preparation Stage requirements) <i>before</i> an HCV-HCSA assessment can begin.
Document reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCSA Toolkit Module 2 (Version 2.0, February 2020): Social Requirements 1 and 3 • Implementation Guide for the Social Requirements of the HCS Approach (Version 1.1, February 2020): Stage 1 – Preparation (Pages 12-17); Appendix 2 contains details of what is expected from growers regarding the Land Tenure and Use Study and Social Background Study
Query / request for clarification	
The HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual and HCSA Toolkit Module 2 refer to the Land Tenure Assessment ^[1] as required before the HCV-HCSA assessment can begin. If the grower/company commissioned an HCV-HCSA assessment without having completed a Land Tenure Assessment, can the HCV-HCSA assessment report proceed through the ALS evaluation process and obtain a satisfactory marking– or must the company complete a Land Tenure and Use Study before the ALS evaluation can proceed?	
Response by HCSA	
<p><u>Background and discussion</u></p> <p>The HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual (2017) includes references to the land tenure assessment (now known as the Land Tenure and Use Study), including the following statement in section 2.3.4.2: “If the land tenure assessment has not been conducted, then the assessment must not proceed.” This was written into the manual to align with the HCSA Social Requirements (Module 2) and the draft Implementation Guide for the Social Requirements of the HCS Approach.</p> <p>However, it was noted in HCSA Advice Note 01 (21/10/2019) that: “in practice companies and assessors are not familiar enough with the HCS Toolkit (Social Requirements), and in some cases they have moved forward to complete assessments and submit reports to ALS without having met all the preparation stage requirements (e.g. social background study, land tenure study) and preconditions.”. The advice note focused on the due diligence preconditions and did not explicitly mention the land tenure study, therefore there was a need to provide an answer to this query.</p>	

^[1] Now known as the Land Tenure and Use Study

In February 2020 HCSA published an updated version of HCSA Toolkit Module 2 and the Implementation Guide for the Social Requirements of the HCS Approach. Together, these two documents make it clearer that the Preparation Stage activities (e.g. initiation of FPIC processes and Land Tenure and Use Study and Social Background Study) must be conducted before the HCV-HCSA Assessment begins.

Conclusion

Before 9 June 2020:

For any HCV-HCSA assessments commenced before 9 June 2020, where growers/companies did not complete the LT&U Study before commissioning the HCV-HCSA Assessment, the assessment report can be submitted to ALS and marked as satisfactory. For those cases (commenced before 9 June 2020), from the date of publication of this advice note, the assessor must include in the report a statement on any pending studies and a recommendation to complete them. The growers/companies are expected to close out any gaps of outstanding requirements during ICLUP development.

From 9 June 2020:

From 9 June 2020, companies/growers must complete the Land Tenure and Use Study (and other HCSA Preparation Stage requirements) *before* an HCV-HCSA assessment can begin.