

## Advice Note 04: HCS and HCV–HCSA Assessments

14 September 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 HCSA and 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 Technical Panel for input. Finally, the advice note is updated accordingly and published.

If you have a technical query, please contact the HCSA Technical Manager:  
[darren@highcarbonstock.org](mailto:darren@highcarbonstock.org)

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

<b>NOTE-2020-04-01</b>	<b>Ground truthing to produce the final land cover classification</b>
<b>Main Topic(s)</b>	Land cover classification, ground truthing
<b>Date published</b>	14 September 2020
<b>Date revised</b>	-
<b>Date(s) of applicability</b>	Applies for new assessments from 14 September 2020 and to assessment reports undergoing ALS evaluation as of this date.
<b>Document reference</b>	HCSA Toolkit Module 4 - Forest and vegetation stratification: Section B Land cover and carbon stock classification using airborne LiDAR and/or satellite imagery; Methodology (Pages 16-19)
<b>Query / request for clarification</b>	
To produce the final land cover classification, is ground truthing required for a land cover class if it cannot be accessed, due to justifiable reasons?	
<b>Response by HCSA</b>	
<p>No, so long as justification for why access is not possible is provided. Acceptable reasons are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the relevant area is not possible because the landcover type only occurs outside the proposed development area.</li> <li>• Access to the relevant area is not possible because indigenous peoples, local communities or other land users do not consent to access<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>• Access to the relevant area is not possible because it is physically difficult or dangerous.</li> </ul> <p>In such cases, the assessor can either ground truth the land cover type(s) in a similar area (outside the proposed development area or even outside the Area of Interest) that is accessible or use the preliminary land cover classification for the land cover type(s) that cannot be ground-truthed in the final landcover classification. If ground truthing is not possible, the assessor can remove these land cover type(s) from the calculation of the final accuracy assessment.</p> <p><sup>1</sup> NOTE: HCSA Social Requirements and requirements for free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) prior to and when conducting the assessment are not affected by this Advice Note.</p>	