

## **PRESS RELEASE: Strategic HCSA-HCVRN collaboration to strengthen conservation of tropical forests and boost critical values for nature and people**

24 September 2020 - HCV Resource Network (HCVRN) and the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) have signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their collaboration to conserve forests and uphold community rights in tropical forests. The two approaches [1] can be used together [2] to identify and conserve forests and their values - greatly contributing to efforts to mitigate climate change, build climate resilience, protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, and support livelihoods and respect community rights and cultural values.

The HCS and HCV approaches are cornerstones of corporate no deforestation and conservation commitments for many companies, and increasingly for actors working at different scales. The collaboration aims to further support effective implementation of these commitments through increased uptake of the HCV and HCS tools.

Through this MoU, HCSA and HCVRN are pursuing two main strategic goal to:

- Strive to promote the application of the two approaches in tropical moist forest landscapes and explore further opportunities for collaboration.
- Ensure that, where the two approaches are applied together, this happens in a coordinated, robust, credible, and efficient manner, so that HCS forests and HCVs are conserved, and local peoples' rights are respected.

"This MOU formalises our 7-year relationship with the High Carbon Stock Approach Steering Group. I really look forward to continuing to build on our existing collaboration in the interest of ensuring that High Carbon Stock forests and High Conservation Values are adequately identified and protected by supply chain actors who jointly apply our methodologies" said Paulina Villalpando, Executive Director of the High Conservation Value Resource Network.

"In this time of planetary crisis strengthening our cooperation with HCVRN is more important than ever," says Judy Rodrigues, Executive Director of the High Carbon Stock Approach. "We are driven to identify new opportunities for where the two approaches can work together at scale to maximise the forest conservation and social impacts of our tools with the highest integrity."

To achieve the MoU goals, HCSA and HCVRN joint work will focus on:

- Capacity building for understanding and using the HCS and HCV approaches across companies, smallholders and practitioners.
- Delivering efficient and credible quality assurance to ensure that integrated assessments and reports meet requirements.
- Simplifying approaches and facilitating the long-term conservation of HCS forests and HCV areas overseen by independent smallholders.
- Developing a harmonised procedure for scaling up the approaches for use across landscapes and jurisdictions.
- Developing guidance for long-term protection, management, and monitoring of HCS forests and HCVs.

**Notes:**

[1]

*The HCV Approach is a methodology to identify, manage, and monitor important environmental and social values in production landscapes – across any ecosystem or habitat type. There are six categories of HCVs covering biodiversity, rare ecosystems, ecosystem services, large landscapes, and natural resources which provide livelihoods and cultural values.*

*The HCS Approach is an integrated conservation land use planning tool to distinguish forest areas in the humid tropics for conservation, while ensuring local peoples' rights and livelihoods are respected. There are four main classes of HCS forests which range from high to low density forests and young regenerating forests.*

[2] At plantation scale, High Conservation Values (HCVs) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) forests are identified through combined HCV-HCSA assessments. The assessments are conducted by qualified assessors, whose reports undergo independent evaluation and an Integrated Conservation Land Use Plan for long-term management and monitoring to maintain HCS forests and HCVs must be developed and agreed.

For more information on how the HCS and HCV approaches work together see our new joint briefing note *Coupling HCS and HCV Approaches to protect forests, biodiversity and livelihoods*.

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