

# HIGH CARBON STOCK APPROACH

Membership Requirements

Code of Conduct

Membership Application Form

*Version 2 – 20/12/2016*

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## Membership Requirements

The High Carbon Stock Approach Steering Group (HCSA SG) is the governing body for the High Carbon Stock (HCS) Approach methodology. This document lays out the requirements and conduct expected of members<sup>1</sup>.

### Eligibility

Full membership of the Steering Group is open to organisations which meet the following requirements:

- **NGOs**, defined as not-for-profit organisations with a stated social and/or environmental mission and supporting and promoting the HCS Approach with growers and relevant stakeholders.
- **Smallholder/farmer support organisations** whose members are implementing the HCS Approach.
- **Plantation companies** with a public commitment to halt deforestation and to implement the High Carbon Stock Approach across its operations and in their supply chains as well as in operations of investments, regardless of shareholding and either;
  - o with active implementation of the HCS Approach across their operations /concession areas.or
  - o declare a moratorium on clearance of potential High Carbon Stock areas until they can fully implement the HCS Approach.

In addition, it is a requirement for membership that this category of companies makes public, maps of operations, including plantations, forest cover, HCS forest protected and HCV areas, mills, refineries and factories, including through submitting these as shapefiles to the HCSA SG and to the WRI database. Best available maps of peatland will be submitted. These maps are for reference use only.

- **Commodity users** that are implementing the HCS Approach for commodities at risk of driving deforestation in their supply chains.
- **Technical support organisations** which have demonstrated technical expertise in the HCS Approach implementation and/or relevant fields

All members must demonstrate a commitment to constructively work towards achieving no deforestation and active support of the HCS Approach.

Until the HCSA methodology allows it, all members do not link in any way the HCS Approach with project-level carbon trading, including in assessments, reports and communications. This does not include government mandated carbon related submissions and registrations.

Organisations which do not meet the eligibility requirements to be a member can, on invitation, observe and contribute to the work of the Steering Group as part of the Consultative Forum.

### Membership of the Executive Committee

The HCSA SG is guided by the Executive Committee whose members are elected by the Steering Group. Decision-making for HCS Approach governance and organisational issues are taken by this Committee

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<sup>1</sup> The structure, objective and scope of the Steering Group is described in the Terms of Reference available at [www.highcarbonstock.org](http://www.highcarbonstock.org)

through consensus, with the exception of changes to the HCS Approach methodology where all full members of the Steering Group will strive to achieve consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved in the Steering Group, then the decision is passed to the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee are elected among their sector peers in the Steering Group.

### Application procedure

To apply for membership, organisations may fill out the attached membership form and submit to the HCSA SG Secretariat. The Executive Committee of the HCSA SG will review the application and revert with a decision and/or clarifying questions within one month from application.

## Code of Conduct for Members of the High Carbon Stock Approach Steering Group

The robust development, implementation and adoption of the High Carbon Stock Approach relies on the support, promotion and efforts of all Steering Group members. All members are therefore required to adhere to this Code of Conduct in good faith:

### High Carbon Stock Approach Implementation

Members in plantations and commodity sectors will actively implement the HCS Approach across their own operations, in their supply chains and in investment holdings regardless of stake. In cases where implementation is not currently possible, a full moratorium must be in place for potential high carbon stock forest areas.

Members undertaking HCS Approach assessments must ensure that these are undertaken by HCS Approach Registered Practitioner Organizations, that any HCV assessments are submitted to a quality check using the HCVRN Assessor Licensing Scheme and that all assessments meet the HCSA Quality Assurance requirements, and that HCS assessments are submitted to the HCS Approach peer review process.

Members who are in commodity user sectors must require suppliers with a risk of contributing to deforestation to apply the HCS Approach, including ensuring these are undertaken by registered HCS Approach assessors, that HCV assessments go through the ALS, and all assessments meet the Quality Assurance requirements and are submitted for peer review via the HCS Approach.

### Promotion of the High Carbon Stock Approach

All members will acknowledge their commitment to 'No Deforestation' and the HCS Approach through explicit endorsement. This must include the proactive promotion and education of the methodology both internally within members' own organisations, in communication and publicity materials (including web), and externally to their value chains and wider stakeholder groups.

Members will not make any misleading or unsubstantiated claims about the use of the methodology, including relating to linking the HCS Approach with project-level carbon trading, including in assessments, reports and communications until the HCS Approach methodology allows it. This does not include government mandated carbon related submissions and registrations.

Members will – normally in advance of publication - share information on external communications on HCS Approach related issues which may affect other members directly. This may include public campaigns or commercial actions which adversely affects the reputation of other members.

Any disagreement or dispute over commitments and external communications will be addressed by the Executive Committee.

### Active participation and funding

Members are expected to ensure that appropriate resources are set aside to support the initiative and must make every effort to participate in meetings and respond to written communications in a timely manner. Physical meetings will be held at least twice a year, initially in Southeast Asia.

Members are responsible for ensuring that their commitment to the objectives of HCSA SG is underpinned by adequate resources within its organisation.

Members are expected to contribute to the funding of necessary and agreed administrative or technical work required to evolve and promote the HCS Approach. Budgets for such activities are determined annually by the Executive Committee. Membership fees are according to size and sector annually.

### Grievance resolution

Breaches of this Code of Conduct may lead to exclusion from the HCSA SG.

Members will seek to resolve grievances directly with other member organisations in a timely fashion, and will not make unsubstantiated allegations of breaches against other members.

Members which are alleged to be in breach of this Code of Conduct will be given up to one month to respond and up to three months to rectify the breach or put in place a timebound plan that outlines the steps that the member will take to achieve compliance with the Code of Conduct. The timebound plan will need to be approved by the Executive Committee.

Prior to taking public action in cases of unresolved or contested allegations of breaches of this Code of Conduct, members must report breaches to the Executive Committee, which will deal with the alleged breaches. Only in the situation where the Executive Committee is unable to resolve the matter under dispute in a reasonable time, will any party be entitled to go public with allegations.

Members can be excluded from the Steering Group only once the Executive Committee has reviewed the alleged breaches and agreed to exclusion in consensus. The member affected by the potential exclusion or dispute does not take part in the decision.

### Anti-competitive behaviour

Members will refrain from any behaviour which can be construed as anti-competitive practice.

### Validity of the Code of Conduct

This document is subject to ongoing review and may be changed to suit the evolution of the Group. All changes must be reviewed and approved by the HCS Approach Executive Committee.

## Membership application

To: High Carbon Stock Steering Group,

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ I am officially applying for membership of the High Carbon Stock Approach Steering Group. As a member organisation, we support the objective and purpose of the Group and commit to adhering to the Code of Conduct.

I also permit the HCS Approach Steering Group to list our organisation name and logo as a member on public documents.

I understand that my organisation will be invoiced an annual member fee on approval of this application. The membership fee varies according to size and sector.

I hereby provide details of past or current HCSA assessments (as per the template) and agree to submit all assessment to the HCSA Quality Assurance process.

Sincerely yours

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of representative*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name and title of representative*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Applicant organisation's address*

*Tel:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Fax:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_