HIGH CARBON STOCK APPROACH

HCS Approach Trialling Protocol

Version 1.0

September 2018

1.0 Introduction

The High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) is an adaptive tool that provides technical guidance on how to implement no-deforestation commitments through an integrated conservation land use planning process by identifying HCS forests for conservation and areas for appropriate development while ensuring the rights, livelihoods and aspirations of local communities are respected.

A key component of the HCSA is its innovative and adaptive nature. The Approach's development, refinement and innovations are commonly tested and adapted/completed through trials and tests. This protocol outlines the set of rules for governing the trialling of the HCS Approach including scoping visits, field tests, adaptation trials and any other testing methods to encourage collaboration between HCSA Secretariat, HCSA Steering Group (SG) members and other relevant partners in the development and testing of the HCSA.

2.0 Protocol Scope

The scope of this protocol is applicable to trialling methodologies and procedures for incorporation into the HCSA's toolkit/guidance and other relevant HCSA outputs across different scales, commodities, regions and forest ecosystems.

This Protocol does not preclude the possibility of non-member organisations trialling the HCSA and sharing the results with the HCSA Steering Group. Non-member trials and tests are not permitted to link any HCSA claims to the results unless there is a request and approval by the HCSA SG Executive Committee (HCSA EC) to conduct a trial according to this protocol and any subsequent HCSA claims are approved by the HCSA communications task force.

Note: HCSA strongly supports independent scientific research on the Approach's impacts and effectiveness. Whilst HCSA may collaborate with scientific research institutions on projects, scientific research conducted or commissioned by the HCSA is independent of the organisation and thus this protocol is not applicable to HCSA related scientific research.

3.0 Protocol Objectives

i. To gain better understanding of the practical application of the HCSA toolkit (current V2.0 or adapted) and/or draft toolkit requirement/guidance, including at an early stage of development and use learnings to improve the final output and outcomes sought;
ii. To ensure the HCSA SG is aware and supports a consistent approach of HCSA trials;
iii. To encourage active involvement of HCSA SG, interested stakeholders and partners in HCSA development.

4.0Set Up Requirements

i. Any trials of the HCSA will need to be authorised by the HCSA EC.[1] Any EC members with a potential conflict of interest or lack of impartiality to a trial proposal will recuse themselves from any respective formal Trialling Protocol EC decisions.
ii. The decision to authorise HCSA trials will be based on a short-written proposal including the following:

[1] The HCSA Secretariat will oversee the processing of the trials proposals, evaluation and reporting and claims and provide recommendations to the EC for formal approval of trial proposals and claims.

1. A description of the specific goals[2] of the trial;
2. A description of the trial scope and methodology;
3. A description of participants involved, including identifying the principle participants[3], and their roles and responsibilities;
4. A description of how the trial results will be evaluated and reported upon;
5. A description of time line for managing the project and the final report (also see section 5.0);
6. Overview of indicative project resources and budget.

iii. The HCSA EC will make a decision on a trial proposal within 30 days upon its receipt[4].

5.0 Conditions for Trial Participation

i. Participation in a HCSA trial study is based on approval by the HCSA EC based on recommendations from the HCSA secretariat;
ii. Principle participants agree to abide by the specific terms of the HCSA Trial Protocol and will sign an approved trial proposal.

6.0 Evaluation and Reporting

The principle participants are required to share a end report or produce a summary evaluation report[5] on the trial together with identified recommendations for changes to the draft HCSA guidance/toolkit (if applicable). The trial report will be submitted to the HCSA secretariat, EC and any other relevant HCSA stakeholders as agreed and identified in the trial proposal. Any corresponding HCSA guidance/toolkit decisions from the trial will need formal approval from the HCSA Executive Committee or Steering Group, as appropriate.

7.0 Claims

As HCSA trials are conducted to learn and adapt the Approach, the project results and recommendations will not be managed for external publication nor HCSA claims unless agreed and approved under the trial proposal by the HCSA Executive Committee. Any HCSA claims must be approved by the HCSA communications task force.

Non-member organisations trialling and testing the HCSA will not be able to make result HCS Approach claims unless there is a request and approval by the HCSA EC to conduct a trial according to this protocol. Any HCSA claims must be approved by the HCSA communications task force.

[2] If available include a copy of the draft guidance/toolkit being tested in the trial proposal.
[3] Principle participants are those the leading coordination and reporting on the trial.
[4] HCSA recognises that organisations conducting trials may be restricted by their own deadlines and does not expect trials to be put on hold during the HCSA trial authorisation process. However, organisations cannot refer to the trial as HCSA endorsed until approved through the HCSA Trialling Protocol process.
[5] This required if no other trial report is planned to be produced.