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This presentation provides a brief introduction to the Social Requirements of the High Carbon Stock Approach or HCSA. The Social Requirements are set out in module 2 of the HCSA Toolkit, and the HCSA Secretariat has also published a guide to their implementation. The latest version dates from April 2020.

2.

The aim of the Social Requirements is to ensure that companies respect human rights and achieve 'no exploitation' in relation to their Zero Deforestation commitments, and they apply to all members of the HCSA, as well as to their supply chains. There are fourteen Requirements and they relate to five main themes: gathering of information on the social context; procedures for community engagement; the creation, management and monitoring of conservation areas, and requirements for local community consent and involvement; broader social aspects of operations that have implications for local communities; and the application of the Social Requirements to existing operations. The following slides look at each of these in turn.

3.

The main requirement related to information-gathering is Requirement 1, on Social Knowledge. Information-gathering starts with a broad social background study and a land tenure and use study during the preparation stage of implementation and continues in stage 2 with the social and environmental impact assessment and the HCV-HCSA assessment. The information gathered in these four studies informs the development of an integrated conservation and land use plan and can contribute to baseline data for social impact monitoring later on. Appendix 2 of the Social Requirements Implementation Guide gives further guidance on the different studies, and later presentations in this series suggest how they can best be coordinated to minimise duplication.

In addition to Social Requirement 1, information-gathering is an important part of Social Requirement 3, on recognising land rights, and Social Requirements 4, 5 and 6, which are concerned with protecting ecosystem services, local livelihoods, and cultural diversity respectively. These three are closely related to the social High Conservation Values or HCVs, which must be identified and mapped in collaboration with local communities as part of the HCV-HCSA Assessment.

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In terms of community engagement procedures, the Requirements are related to the concept of free, prior and informed consent, or FPIC, which is the subject of Social Requirement 7. What this means is that the company must recognise local people's rights to choose whether to engage with them, and also to decide freely, based on adequate information provided in advance, whether to give or withhold consent to operations on their lands and whether or not to enter into any agreements. In addition to Social Requirement 7, Requirement 2 spells out some of the initial steps in the FPIC process, which are that communities must choose who will represent them, free from coercion, and agree the process for engagement.

There are additional procedural requirements related to participatory mapping, which is important for Social Requirement 3 (on the recognition of land rights) and for Social Requirements 4 to 6 (in relation to mapping the social HCVs). For detailed guidance on participatory mapping see Appendix 3 of the Social Requirements implementation guide.

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As part of the HCS Approach, conservation areas are set aside to conserve and maintain High Conservation Values and High Carbon Stock areas in the landscape. Where conservation areas are proposed on lands to which local communities hold rights, their creation requires the FPIC of the communities concerned, who must also agree the proposed management and monitoring measures. This is the subject of Social Requirement 9. Community FPIC and collaboration is often negotiated in return for conservation incentives and benefits for the communities, and these are the subject of Social Requirement 8. Therefore these two social Requirements are closely linked, representing the two sides of the coin during negotiations.

Negotiations may also be needed on any proposed HCS swaps. HCS swaps involve conversion of forest in one location in exchange for protection or restoration of forests elsewhere (usually to improve forest connectivity), and they may be proposed in the HCV-HCSA Assessment report. If so, the FPIC of any communities whose rights may be affected at either of the locations involved is needed in order for the swaps to go ahead. The implications for communities of such swaps is the subject of Social Requirement 14.

6.

There are also three Social Requirements related to broader aspects of social practice, namely grievance and redress procedures, protecting labour rights, and ensuring non-discrimination. These are an important part of the commitment made by HCSA members to no exploitation, and the relevant policies and operational procedures need to be agreed with communities as part of the negotiation process.

Lastly, social requirement 13 is to do with implementing the social requirements in existing operations. Further guidance needs to be developed on the practical steps involved in doing this, but meanwhile companies should prioritise the most serious aspects of non-compliance, and particularly any aspects where a delayed response would make it impossible to remedy noncompliance later on.

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Here, then, is the full list of Social Requirements. The full text can be found in Module 2 of the HCSA Toolkit, which gives the underlying principle for each Requirement and then sets out the details.

For example, here's part of the text for Social Requirement 8. The principle is that mutually agreed, equitable incentive and benefit packages are developed in return for communities' consent to the establishment of conservation areas and for their ongoing support in the conservation and management of these areas, while ensuring them continued access to natural resources on a sustainable basis. The following text gives the details of what is needed in order to meet this principle.

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The Social Requirements implementation guide gives much more detailed guidance on how to put the Requirements into practice during four broad stages of implementation. These are the preparation stage, which involves planning, information-gathering and initial engagement with local communities; the assessment stage, when on-the-ground surveys and assessments are completed; the negotiation stage, when the integrated conservation and land use plan is negotiated and at the end of which local communities give or withhold their formal consent for the planned operations, and finally the operational stage when land clearance, planting and production get under way.

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For each stage the text is divided into a series of practical steps or activities. For example, the first step in the preparation stage is to appoint or assign one or more staff members as the 'social team', who will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the social requirements. For each step there is a description of the actions, and where relevant the actors, the skills needed, and the outputs.

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The implementation guide also includes six appendices, which provide useful supplementary practical details. The first is a non-technical summary of the Social Requirements, which can be adapted for use during socialisation of company staff or with local communities. Appendix two is on social knowledge and the various studies that need to be done. There is obviously some overlap between the different studies and therefore it makes sense to coordinate them closely. Appendices 3 to 5 are on the community aspects of implementation: participatory mapping, community benefits and incentives, and community involvement in conservation management and monitoring. Finally Appendix 6 is on applying the Social Requirements to existing operations.

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In conclusion, the fourteen HCSA Social Requirements and the five themes that they cover have the overall aim of ensuring that companies respect human rights and achieve 'no exploitation' in relation to their Zero Deforestation commitments. In order to do so, they will need to ensure that their staff are familiar with the details of the Requirements and understand how to implement them, and that there are established mechanisms to ensure compliance. Central company staff and site managers should make sure that adequate resourcing for implementation is built into standard budgeting procedures, and also that measures are in place to motivate and reward good practice among local staff, for example by means of bonuses and career incentives alongside those linked to production targets.

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Finally, here is a list of the principal sources of information related to different aspects of implementation of the Social Requirements. You can also find out more by watching the other presentations in this series.