HCV-HCSA Assessor Training Course Syllabus

1. Purpose and Scope

Successful completion of a High Conservation Value (HCV) Assessor Training Course and High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) Registered Practitioner Course are part of the requirements to become licensed under the HCV Network (HCVN) Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS) and lead integrated HCV-HCSA Assessments. This training course counts both as the HCV Assessor Training Course and the HCSA Registered Practitioner course. The course aims to ensure that prospective licensed assessors obtain an adequate level of understanding of ALS procedures and good practice needed to competently lead an integrated HCV-HCSA assessment.

This syllabus presents the minimum content requirements that Registered Training Providers (RTPs) must follow to develop and deliver an integrated HCV-HCSA Assessor Training Course that meets ALS and High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) requirements.

HCV-HCSA Assessor Training Courses can be developed and delivered by any training provider, subject to previous registration with the HCV Network and being a Registered Training Organisation with the HCSA. Courses may vary in structure, however, RTPs must follow the core-content requirements detailed in this syllabus, and the HCSA training course syllabus of the HCSA Training Package.

2. Change History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version number</th>
<th>Effective date</th>
<th>Description of changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>04/2024</td>
<td>Changed content to reflect updated HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual (2023) and moved modules content as Annex.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Associated Documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Reference</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Document Name &amp; Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALS_04_A</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Terms and Conditions for Training Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALS_04_B</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>HCV Assessor Training Course Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALS_04_E</td>
<td>Template</td>
<td>HCV Assessment Report Template (Training Version)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALS_04_F</td>
<td>Template</td>
<td>HCV-HCSA Assessment Report Template (Training Version)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Course objectives

   a. Provide prospective licensed assessors with in-depth knowledge of the latest guidance for integrated HCV-HCSA assessments as per the integrated HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual, the HCSA Toolkit and reporting templates, and clarity on the role and responsibility of the lead assessor.

   b. Develop prospective licensed assessor expertise on HCV interpretation and identification and practical aspects of integrated HCV-HCSA assessments.

   c. Develop the skills to oversee and apply the HCSA components (remote sensing and GIS) of the HCV-HCSA assessment.

5. Course requirements and recommendations

Registered Training Providers (RTPs) must follow the course requirements and consider the recommendations concerning content, participation, and evaluation. Requirements are indicated in **bold text**.
Course content must be based on the most recent version of the integrated HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual. The assessment steps as described in this manual must be used to plan the course modules. It is mandatory that the course uses a detailed case study, in a context relevant to the country or region where the participants are likely to be conducting HCV-HCSA assessments. This will allow the participants to go through the steps involved in an HCV-HCSA assessment and apply some of the concepts and procedures from the HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual and HCSA Toolkit V2. HCSA training materials provided through the HCSA Training Package should be introduced into integrated materials as appropriate, ensuring that the requirements in the HCSA training syllabus relating to mandatory content and permitted modifications are met.

### Participant profiles
Participants must have relevant experience in one or more of the following topics: biodiversity, ecology, community livelihoods, anthropology, GIS and conservation planning, natural resource auditing and management, social and environmental impact assessment. Although not required, the participants may already be familiar with the HCV and HCS approaches for instance as team members, or even team leaders, of HCV assessments. This previous experience amongst some participants can facilitate peer to peer learning.

### Number of participants
No strict requirement, but a classroom of 6-10 is an ideal size for this type of course. Lower numbers ensure each participant can ask questions and get responses to achieve a high level of understanding. It also enables course instructors to more readily identify subject areas or participants that require greater attention. It may also be possible to run the course with a larger group.
– if it can be effectively divided into subgroups for working on the case study. However, a larger group size would have implications for the number of trainers needed to deliver the course, as well as the venue which should provide enough space for small groups to work effectively.

- **Number of trainers**: No formal requirement, but two trainers for a class of 6-10 participants is recommended. For larger groups, a ratio of no more than 7:1, participants to trainers, should be maintained.

- **Trainer profiles**: In addition to have proven HCV expertise to develop and deliver the training (see the Terms and Conditions for RTPs), **at least one trainer must be a HCSA Registered Practitioner** who should have some practical experience in the GIS and remote sensing components of HCS Assessments.

- **Teaching methods**: Courses can be face-to-face, online or hybrid¹ and interactive. If delivered online, RTPs must ensure sessions allow for discussion, participation, and interaction. Courses may include some independent pre-course learning and web-based remote learning. Post-course write-up is required as part of the evaluation (see evaluation section). Trainers are encouraged to use a combination of teaching methods within modules, including presentations, group exercises, simulations, discussion, and role plays.

- **Course duration**: No strict requirement, but given the multiple steps involved in an HCV-HCSA assessment, and the intended emphasis on interactive learning, the ALS suggests **between 40 hours to 60 hours of course work** (including training time and assignments).

6. **Participant evaluation**

Recommendations for participant evaluation include:

---

¹ Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the HCVN Secretariat and the HCSA Secretariat decided to allow fully remote training courses.
• Participation throughout the course during discussions, punctuality, etc.

**Requirements** for participant evaluation include:

• **Exam** – brief final exam based on modules (contents of the HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual and reporting templates, possibly including simulation studies)

• **Each participant must produce a “mock” summary report of the course case study.** This brief written report should use the HCV-HCSA Assessment Report Template (Training Version) and be completed individually. In the interest of time, it is recommended that the report be submitted to the trainers after the course (up to two weeks later).

**Upon successful completion of the training course, Registered Training Providers must provide participants with a certificate or letter as proof of their successful completion of the course, within at least 14 days of receipt of the unique reference number from HCVN** (training certificate format can be provided by the HCVN Secretariat team on request). There will not be an official endorsement of the participant’s completion of training by the HCVN, nor should any HCVN or ALS logo be used on any certificate or letter without prior approval by the HCVN Secretariat ([training@hcvnetwork.org](mailto:training@hcvnetwork.org)).

**7. Participant Feedback**

It is recommended to get feedback from participants after the course, which can be through an open discussion, but also requesting that participants complete a feedback questionnaire.

The HCVN Secretariat will contact each participant directly by email to complete a standardised online feedback questionnaire. **The Registered Training Providers must provide the HCVN Secretariat** ([training@hcvnetwork.org](mailto:training@hcvnetwork.org)) the email contacts for all participants within 5 working days of the course completion, and the details and final
outcome of the successful participants within 60 days of course completion².

8. Reference materials and case study documents

The following materials should be used as key references by RTPs to plan and deliver the course:

- HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual
- Common Guidance for the Identification of HCVs
- Common Guidance for the Management and Monitoring of HCVs
- HCSA Toolkit
- HCSA Social Requirements Implementation Guide

HCVN documents are available for download in the HCVN Library and HCSA’s documents are available here.

For the simulated case study, participants should be encouraged to use or be provided with the types of reference literature recommended in the HCV Common Guidance for HCV Identification and the HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual, e.g. conservation reports, academic papers, lists of endangered species, other web-based resources, especially spatial ones, landcover cover maps.

For more information about the HCVN please visit www.hcvnetwork.org.

² RTPs must use the standard ALS Training Certificate Record Template to record participants and their details.
Annex 1. Course content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Training objective</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Reference document/materials³</th>
<th>Suggested teaching method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the HCV and HCS Approaches</td>
<td>Understand the approaches; where they came from, how they are used</td>
<td>• Origin and main uses of the approaches, and the integration of the assessment&lt;br&gt;• Origins, aims and governance of the HCV Network and HCSA SG&lt;br&gt;• Local context: application of HCV/HCSA in the region/country of the training; developments, processes &amp; organisations (e.g. HCV NIs, FSC, RSPO).&lt;br&gt;• Assessment at production management unit (including multi-site) or under group certification versus landscape and independent smallholder approaches</td>
<td>• Common Guidance for the identification of HCVs&lt;br&gt;• HCSA Toolkit&lt;br&gt;• HCSA Training Materials TP1, 2</td>
<td>Presentation, reading, &amp; discussion/quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCV-HCSA assessments</td>
<td>Understand context and process for conducting HCV-HCSA Assessments</td>
<td>• What is an HCV-HCSA assessment&lt;br&gt;• When should an HCV-HCSA assessment be conducted using this manual&lt;br&gt;• Complementary documents&lt;br&gt;• Who can conduct and HCV-HCSA assessment?&lt;br&gt;• Engaging and contracting with an Organisation</td>
<td>HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual</td>
<td>Presentation, reading, &amp; discussion/quiz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ Trainers must ensure that their materials are up to date and in accordance with the current version of HCVN and HCSA documents. For HCSA training materials the HCSA syllabus states ‘All of the slides in Topics 2, 4, 5, and 6 must be included in the training materials – the trainers may add additional information but they must include these basic slides. The other topics are also mandatory but the slides provided by the HCS Secretariat may be modified by the trainers as long as the same content is covered.’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Training objective</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Reference document/materials</th>
<th>Suggested teaching method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Key principles and concepts in HCV-HCSA assessments                   | Understand the key concepts and principles in assessments                           | • Minimum preconditions  
• Free, Prior and Informed Consent  
• Consideration of risk to HCV and HCS forests  
• Precautionary approach  
• Proportionality and practicality of HCV and HCS Forest management and monitoring recommendations  
• Significance  
• Criticality  
• Wider landscape consideration                                      | HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual                                                        | Presentation, reading, & discussion/quiz                        |
| Social requirements and introduction to FPIC in HCV-HCSA assessments  | Understand how FPIC is part of the assessment process and the social safeguards during the assessment. | • HCV and HCSA Social requirements  
• FPIC: what it is, how it is part of the assessment:  
  a) FPIC as process (role of assessor vs role of company) including assessor’s verification of company meeting preconditions through triangulation  
  b) FPIC related methods (e.g. participatory mapping)  
  c) Documenting FPIC  
• FPIC context and best practices for region/country of training         | • HCSA Toolkit (Module 2)  
• HCSA Social Requirements Implementation Guide  
• HCSA Training Materials TP3  
• Monitoring protocol for High Conservation Values 5 and 6 with guidelines on best practices in community engagement. Forest Peoples Programme and ZSL  
• Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Oil Palm Plantations: a guide for companies. 2015. RSPO and Forest Peoples Programme | Presentation, reading, & discussion/quiz                                     |
| ALS introduction                                                       | Understand the role of the ALS and how to get licensed as an assessor               | • The licensing process (application, provisional license, full license)  
• Who requires licensed assessors and why?                                | • ALS Specification                                                         | • Presentation, role play & discussion |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Training objective</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Reference document/materials</th>
<th>Suggested teaching method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being a licensed assessor</td>
<td>Understand what is expected from licensed assessors</td>
<td>• Contractual commitments with ALS and performance requirements to remain licensed</td>
<td>• Terms &amp; Conditions for Licensed Assessors</td>
<td>• Presentation, Group activity “What makes a good assessor?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What makes a good assessor (the behaviour and ethics expected from a licensed assessor)</td>
<td>• ALS Code of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Terms &amp; Conditions for Licensed Assessors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ALS Code of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Present, Group activity “What makes a good assessor?”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Suggested synchronous modules (introducing practical case study)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre assessment: What must be done?</th>
<th>Understand the activities to be done in the pre-assessment stage</th>
<th>• Conducting preconditions check and verify compliance with other HCSA requirements</th>
<th>HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual</th>
<th>Presentations, case-study, role-play &amp; discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Proposing a preliminary definition of the area of interest</td>
<td>HCSA Training Materials TP 2, 5, 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Producing the preliminary land cover classification map and using the preliminary landcover map to plan the scoping visit</td>
<td>HCSA Toolkit (Module 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Producing a scoping study plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-assessment: What information is collected?</td>
<td>Understand what information must be collected about the organisation and assessment area, and be able to assess company’s readiness and commitment</td>
<td>• Information about the organisation</td>
<td>HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual</td>
<td>Presentations, case-study, role-play &amp; discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Information about the assessment area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoping study: What must be done?</td>
<td>Understand what the objectives of the scoping study phase are, the main activities, and what</td>
<td>• Consultation with affected communities</td>
<td>HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual</td>
<td>Presentations, case-study, role-play &amp; discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consultation with stakeholders and Organisation’s staff</td>
<td>HCSA Toolkit (Module 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ground truthing of preliminary land cover map</td>
<td>HCSA Training Materials TP 4, 5, 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Preparing for full assessment</td>
<td>Common Guidance for the identification of HCVs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognise and address potential difficulties with the site (access, topography, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Budget time and resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

hcvnetwork.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Training objective</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Reference document/materials³</th>
<th>Suggested teaching method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Scoping study:** What information must be collected? | Understand what information must be collected, and be able to identify gaps and needs for a full assessment | • Documentation of scoping consultations  
• Documentation of information exchanges and meetings  
• Documentation of land cover ground-truthing activities  
• Full assessment methods, and plan | • HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual  
• HCSA Social Requirements Implementation Guide | Presentations, case-study, role-play & discussion |
| **Full assessment:** What the assessor must do | Understand what social studies and participatory mapping are necessary for identifying social HCVs and future people’s land needs  
Understand what environmental studies are necessary for identifying environmental HCVs and HCS forests | • Social fieldwork  
• Who must be involved  
• Required activities per type of affected community  
• Identification of HCVs 4-6  
• Environmental fieldwork  
• HCS stratification and carbon stock assessment  
• Identification of HCVs 1-3  
• Required surveys (flora and vegetation, fauna) | • HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual  
• HCSA Toolkit (Module 5)  
• HCSA Social Requirements Implementation Guide  
• HCSA Training materials TP6, 7, 8, 9, 10 | Presentations, case-study, role-play & discussion |
| **Full assessment:** What information is collected/produced? | Synthesise all the data to draw conclusions on the presence and location of social environmental HCVs  
Be able to draft preliminary Management and Monitoring recommendations based on assessment findings  
Translate the environmental/HCS outcomes into maps of HCV Areas and HCV | • Social and environmental field studies results  
• Analysis: qualitative and quantitative  
• Statistical relevance/robustness of the expected results, representativeness, recording and presenting data (including as maps)  
• Preliminary management and monitoring recommendations  
• Threat assessment  
• Definition of HCV Management Areas, consistency with identification and threat assessment  
• Drafting Management and Monitoring recommendations | • HCV-HCSA Assessment Manual  
• Common Guidance for the identification of HCVs  
• Common Guidance for the Management and Monitoring of HCVs  
• HCSA Training Materials TP9, TP10  
• BMP guidance from relevant certification schemes | Presentations, case-study, role-play & discussion |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Training objective</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Reference document/materials</th>
<th>Suggested teaching method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Management Areas, and HCS forests and peatlands | Understands how to conduct the final consultation with communities and other stakeholders | • How M&M recommendations will be used in the Integrated Conservation Land Use Plan  
• Final consultation of the preliminary findings  
• How should the consultation be organised and documented  
• Identifying information or consultation gaps and required next steps for the company |                              | Presentations, reading & discussion/quiz |
| Reporting requirements      | Understand how reports are evaluated, what makes a report pass, the required content for HCV-HCSA assessment reports and how the information should be used | • Report evaluation process  
• Reports accepted for quality  
• Transparency  
• Assessment report: baseline for Management and Monitoring HCVs and HCS forests  
• Reporting: quality  
• Reporting: content | ALS Specification             |                                           |