



HCV Resource Network Steering Group Safeguards Meeting:

Vienna, 27-28 May 2009

Summary of Main Discussion Points

1. Introduction

The Quality Control (QC) sub-committee of the HCV Resource Network's Steering Group (SG) held a meeting in Vienna, Austria on 27th – 28th May 2009, primarily to discuss the issue of the safeguards needed for using the HCV approach in responsible land management.

Attendance

The meeting was convened by Geri Steindlegger of WWF International, and additional members of the SG QC sub-committee present were: Marcus Colchester (Forest Peoples Programme), Peter Gardiner (Mondi), Antti Marjokorpi (Stora Enso, representing Sustainable Forest Products Industry working group of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development), Fran Price (The Nature Conservancy, and Jim Ford ("Climate for Ideas.org"); Andre de Freitas (FSC International), Christoph Thies (Greenpeace International) and Margareta Renström (WWF International, alternate to Geri Steindlegger) had also been invited to attend the meeting.

Members of the HCV Network Secretariat involved were: Christopher Stewart, (Network manager), and Nilofer Ghaffar (Network co-ordinator).

The meeting was jointly chaired by the two SG co-chairs, Peter Gardiner and Marcus Colchester.

Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were received from: Andrey Kushlin (World Bank).

Objectives

Primary objectives for the meeting were to:

- Discuss key elements of the "safeguard framework" specified in the HCV Network Charter and formulate Principles of Application for the use of the HCV approach outside the certification context for which it was originally developed, and within the context of ecosystem conversion.
- Review options for making such a framework effective.
- Consider the composition and role of the Network Technical Panel as a key instrument for providing governance and quality control of HCV concept.

The main points of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting are summarised below.

2. Discussion summary

2.1 Progress towards a framework of safeguards for the use of HCV in responsible land management

Using a summary ([Briefing: Safeguard Framework Discussions](#)) provided by the Network Secretariat, the SG considered the various discussions and Network actions taken to date around the issue of safeguards. These have included:

- Inclusion of text in the original HCV Network Charter, recognising the main issues which need to be addressed (the “safeguards framework”)
- An online discussion group on safeguards (which ran for 6 months in 2007 but failed to gain significant traction with Network participants).
- A significant revision of the Charter (2008) to recognise the importance of non-HCV areas and to introduce support for the goal of reducing and eventually reversing rates of degradation and conversion of natural ecosystems.
- Creation of the HCV Technical Panel of experts and practitioners (2008), to provide an element of quality control and governance for use of the HCV framework.
- Publication of the HCV Network’s guidelines (2008) for reviewing HCV assessments, drafted by the Technical Panel.
- Discussion papers presented to the SG (February 2009) to progress the Network’s understanding of the issues. Marcus Colchester clarified the range of topics addressed within responsible resource management standards and options for Network progress (see “[Putting safeguards into the ‘HCV approach’ – a discussion paper](#)”), and Gerald Steindlegger addressed specific challenges presented by land use conversion (see the presentation “[\(Forest\) Conversion and the HCV concept / RN : input for discussion](#)”).
- Publication of draft guidelines on [mapping conservation priorities in the wider landscape](#) to provide context for site-level HCV assessments (May 2009), based on an expert workshop in December 2008.

2.2 Establishing Principles of Application for the use of the HCV framework within responsible land management

The QC sub-committee considered the full range of safeguards which are necessary for supporting the HCV approach outside the certification context, and specific safeguards needed (even within certification) for use of HCV where land is designated for conversion.

The group drafted Principles of Application (PoA) for the use of the HCV approach in such situations, which are additional to the Charter’s Guiding Principles. These Principles represent the Network’s shared understanding of responsible land management as referenced in the Network’s stated Mission, and will be appended to the HCV Network Charter following full SG approval (Box 1):

Box 1: Principles of Application for the HCV framework:

Legality

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is compliance with all applicable international, national and local laws. <p>Secure tenure, customary rights and consent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to use the land can be demonstrated, and is not legitimately contested by local communities with demonstrable rights. • Use or management of the land does not diminish the legal or customary rights of indigenous peoples, local communities or other users, without their free, prior and informed consent. <p>Conversion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas necessary to maintain or enhance HCVs shall not be converted. • The absence of HCVs shall not be used as sufficient justification for conversion of natural ecosystems. • The HCV framework alone shall not be used to justify or endorse conversion of non HCV natural ecosystems. • Any conversion of non HCV natural ecosystems must be underpinned by net gain agreed by multi-stakeholder dialogue. <p>Other Environmental and Biodiversity Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local environmental and biodiversity values outside of HCV areas should be taken into account through responsible land use management.

There was extensive discussion of criteria and indicators related to each of these principles, both at the level of the landscape for government led land-use planning processes, and at the management unit level for individual operators; the SG requested that these should be further refined by the Network’s Technical Panel as a main task of their annual physical meeting in June ‘09. These indicators will be combined with indicators based on the Charter’s Guiding Principles to form a checklist which can be used to verify the responsible use of the HCV concept.

Agreed Actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Following approval by the SG, these additional PoA will be annexed to the Charter. 2. The Network Technical Panel is invited to develop a separate checklist of criteria and indicators for these PoA; this will also reference the Guiding Principles of the Network’s Charter, and will form a basis for assessing the responsible use of the HCV framework. 3. The aim should be to complete this work in time for a final review at the next physical meeting of the SG, scheduled for Sept/Oct 2009 (date TBC).

2.3 Making the Principles of Application effective

Using the ideas originally described in the [discussion paper](#) formulated by FPP, the QC Group discussed three basic ways to implement the Network PoA:

- The **audit** approach in which operations should be assessed against the key safeguards (PoA) when they are reviewed for compliance with the HCV approach (as verified by peer review)
- The **participation** approach in which there is a clear methodology for stakeholder engagement in HCV assessments in order to review compliance with the key safeguards (PoA)
- The **certification** approach in which HCV assessments only take place as part of a broader certification system eg: FSC, RSPO etc.

a) Integrating the Principles of Application in the Charter:

Following a discussion of the various options realistically available to the HCV Resource Network as a voluntary association, it was decided that, in addition to its Guiding Principles, the Network should recommend that:

- The Principles of Application (related to legality, secure tenure, customary rights and consent; conversion, and other environmental and biodiversity values) are integrated into land use planning and management plans and activities,
- Wherever practicable, meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders and rights-holders should be carried out
- Peer reviews of HCV assessments should check that credible efforts have been made to apply these Principles of Application.
- Where relevant, certification systems should take into account these Principles of Application.

These recommendations will be incorporated to the Charter's new Annex on the Principles of Application for the use of the HCV framework within responsible land management, pending full SG approval.

Agreed Action
Pending approval by the SG, the new Annex to the Charter will integrate recommendations for the implementation of the PoA.

b) Reviewing the role and composition of the Technical Panel

In light of the significant role of the Network's Technical Panel (TP), both in its capacity as an advisory body to the Steering Group, and as a means of implementing quality control for externally developed HCV assessments and policies through its Peer Review service, the QC group considered its roles and composition. In particular, they re-examined a previous decision to extend TP participation [to include industry experts](#), which raised concerns about perceived impartiality and potential conflicts of interest of TP members, particularly with respect to Peer Review services.

The QC group considered various proposals to resolve this issue. These included: non-admission of technical experts from an industry background to the TP, strengthening the TP's current governance to address potential bias, balancing the representation of TP members in the execution of its two main functions, separating the internal advisory and external Peer

Review services, or establishing two separate functional entities to carry out those roles. The QC group decided to consult more widely and develop various options for a future discussion.

Agreed Action
The SG QC sub-committee will develop options and a timeline for ensuring the neutral, technical role and appropriate composition of the Technical Panel.

c) A Strategic Action Plan for the Network

In light of the key decisions taken with respect to establishing Principles of Application at this meeting, the SG considered a draft Strategic Action Plan developed by the Network Secretariat and based on the Strategic Outline agreed in March 2009; this draft Plan details a number of Network activities in support of the four key strategic aims of the Network:

1. **To provide a credible central point of reference** on the HCV concept and a networking hub for anyone with a stake in HCV.
2. **To support the development and implementation of the HCV concept** across all its current land management applications, promoting consistency, comparability and appropriate local level approaches.
3. **To provide a governance and quality control function** for HCV assessment and management, supporting good practice within natural resource certification and safeguarding the integrity of the HCV approach outside certification.
4. **To promote the use of HCV in emerging and potential applications** and ensure consistency with existing approaches.

Agreed Action
The SG as a whole will consider the draft Strategic Action Plan, prioritise and consolidate ideas by email and telephone, and agree on actions to be carried out with clear responsibilities for the Secretariat and Network organisations, incorporating the discussions and decisions taken at this meeting.