



Regional HCV Meeting in South Africa

The **High Conservation Value Resource Network** will host its second regional meeting in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa from 12-16 November 2007. The event will draw together various stakeholders to build a network of informed users, and identify regional priorities and opportunities for developing/applying the **High Conservation Value (HCV)** concept which offers a powerful framework for identifying and maintaining critical environmental and social values within a production landscape.

Specific objectives of the meeting are to: disseminate knowledge of the HCV approach to a diverse range of stakeholders; train key stakeholders in implementing the HCV concept; catalyse regional initiatives, and facilitate information exchange; support the development of the HCV concept to incorporate ecosystems other than forests, and promote and spread awareness of the HCV Resource Network to key constituencies in the region.

The HCV Concept & the Resource Network

The HCV concept was devised in the context of forest certification, but is also relevant to all kinds of ecosystems and habitats. It is a valuable, flexible conservation tool, which tries to integrate the range of conservation priorities into a framework for natural resource management, land-use planning, the design of responsible purchasing and investment policies, and conservation advocacy. High Conservation Values (HCVs) include concentrations of threatened species, rare habitats, intact ecosystems, ecosystem services and social and cultural values.

The HCV Resource Network is a network of organisations and individuals using the HCV approach, including: forest owners and managers; buyers, suppliers and certifiers of sustainable timber, palm oil, soy, and non-timber forest products; international development agencies; and environmental and social NGOs. The Network promotes practical conservation by supporting collaboration, providing information on the evolving usage of HCVs, and ensuring that a consistent approach to HCVs is understood and applied throughout the world.

More information on HCVs, the use of the HCV framework, and the structure and function of the Resource Network, is available from the Network's website at www.hcvnetwork.org.

Regional Issues

Land use change in Africa has led to concerns about appropriate ways to safeguard critical habitats, ecosystems and social and cultural values. Logging of natural forests, the expansion of plantation forestry and the need for land for both subsistence and commercial agriculture creates challenges for balancing economic development with the identification and management of critical aspects, such as valuable grasslands, natural forest areas, freshwater ecosystems, wetlands and water resources.

There is an urgent need for robust, transparent, participatory and practical tools to assist with planning and management to maintain values within a productive landscape to ensure sustainability and to meet the growing pressure from certification schemes, conservationists, buyers and investors to demonstrate responsible management.

The HCV approach provides a framework for decision-making in sustainable forest management, land use planning and the conservation of critical natural habitats in productive landscapes. The use of HCV tools and approaches allows managers to mitigate and monitor risks to biodiversity, ecosystem goods and services, and the rights and welfare of people potentially affected by development projects.

HCV Meeting Schedule: Queen Elizabeth Park, Ezemvelo KZN Head Office, Pietermaritzburg 12-16 November 2007

Monday 12 November	09:30-17:00	HCV Training Course (limited places)
Tuesday 13 November	12:00-17:30	HCV Stakeholder Meeting (open to all)
Wednesday 14 November	09:00-17:30	HCV Stakeholder Meeting (open to all)
Thursday 15 November	08:00-19:00	Field Trip: plantations/grasslands/wetlands (limited places)
Friday 16 November	08:00-16:30	Working Groups (open to interested parties)
		WG1: National HCV interpretations in Africa
		WG2: HCV-use in non-forest ecosystems



Use of the HCV approach in Africa is at an early stage, but the HCV Resource Network is committed to supporting implementation and developing capacity through activities which raise awareness, strengthen cooperation and develop regionally relevant tools and processes.

Stakeholder meeting (13-14 November, 2007)

This will disseminate the HCV concept more broadly, build capacity for using it for improved natural resource management and conservation and provide an opportunity for regional sharing of lessons learned from HCV work already undertaken. This will be a public event, and invitations will be issued to a broad range of stakeholders, including national and regional representatives from the following groups: environmental and social NGOs, indigenous peoples' representatives, forest industry (plantation and natural forest managers), forest certification bodies, national and regional governments, national/multinational investors and lenders.

On the first day, the HCV concept will be introduced and a global perspective will be provided by the HCV Network Secretariat and selected HCV experts. The second day will consist of regional updates from participating countries and discussions on the future direction and opportunities in Africa. The afternoon will be given over to the special situations existing in the region and the extension of the concept to grassland and wetland ecosystems.

Additional Capacity Building Activities

A training course, to deliver a comprehensive introduction to the HCV concept and tools, aimed at key regional actors, including forest managers, land-use planners, responsible purchasers, investors and advocacy groups, and those undertaking HCVF work as social or environmental specialists.

A field trip, to examine some of the practical challenges of implementing HCV principles.

Technical working groups, conducted as two parallel workshops of selected experts and key stakeholders.

National Interpretations of HCV guidelines for natural forests, which aims to share experience and guidance on interpretation, management and monitoring in countries where national interpretation processes have begun. In countries where no national identification work has yet started, the workshop will support the identification of key inputs, stakeholders and processes.

Application of HCV concepts to non-forest ecosystems, which aims to analyse the potential use of HCV in the context of land-use planning for grasslands, agricultural lands, freshwater ecosystems and wetlands, and plantation forestry.

Expected impacts

- 1) Increased regional awareness of the relevance of HCV implementation for natural resource management, and opportunities to support responsible development, land use planning, and the integration of conservation within a productive landscape among various stakeholders including industry, government, academics, conservation organisations, indigenous peoples representatives and social NGOs.
- 2) Increased technical capacity to implement HCV tools / identify and manage HCV areas among practitioners in the region.
- 3) Identification of opportunities and challenges to the national and regional application of the HCV approach; identification of priorities and participation needed for national interpretation of the HCV toolkits in participating countries; identification of opportunities for the early application of the HCV approach; identification of training needs in the region.
- 4) Formation of a regional network of individuals within organisations committed to the use of HCV, to join the HCV Resource Network, collaborate with other members worldwide and act as regional focal points.

The High Conservation Value Resource Network

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Secretariat

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