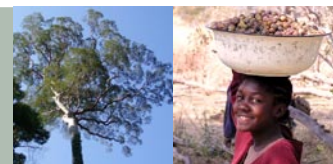


HCVs in Land-Use Planning

HCV HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE *resource network*



The High Conservation Value (HCV) framework is a valuable, flexible conservation tool with practical applications in natural resource management, land-use planning, the design of responsible purchasing and investment policies and conservation advocacy. The HCV approach was developed in the context of FSC forest certification but is relevant to all kinds of ecosystems and habitats.

The High Conservation Value Resource Network is a network of organisations and individuals using the HCV approach, including: forest owners and managers; suppliers, buyers 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.



The HCV framework provides a practical toolkit for land use planners to balance the needs of expanding human economies with the maintenance of critical ecosystem values.



Pine plantations planned to maintain ecological connectivity within a high biodiversity grassland, South Africa
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Why use HCVs for land-use planning?

Natural ecosystems are under ever increasing pressure from economic development, resource extraction and agricultural expansion. At the same time, they contain critical biodiversity values, provide humanity with ecosystem services including clean water and climate regulation, and support the basic subsistence needs and the cultural identity of a large proportion of the world population. Some of these values are protected in national protected area networks, but the majority exist within the production landscape, in areas with multiple uses.

Planners need to know which areas to prioritise for conservation management, and which can be used for other purposes. The HCV framework provides a practical toolkit for land use planners to balance the needs of expanding human economies with the maintenance of critical ecosystem values.

Natural resource managers seeking certification against a standard which specifies HCV protection (e.g. FSC, RSPO, CCBA) also need large-scale HCV maps in order to make wise decisions about conservation at the site scale.

The HCV Resource Network has developed draft guidelines (www.hcvnetwork.org) for HCV mapping which should increase the consistency and replicability of HCV mapping and planning processes worldwide.

HCV in land-use planning at a national and regional level

Several countries have already formally incorporated the HCV framework into national or regional planning processes.

In **Bulgaria**, the government has endorsed the national HCV Toolkit for use in the national forest management planning standards, whilst in **Romania**, the government has committed to bring all state forests under certification. The HCV toolkit is being promoted at the national level and has so far been used by the National Forest Administration to certify over a million Ha of state forests against the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standard.

China's State Forestry Administration incorporated HCV prioritisation into the national guidelines on sustainable forest management planning in 2006, and two provincial governments have integrated the concept into their planning process.

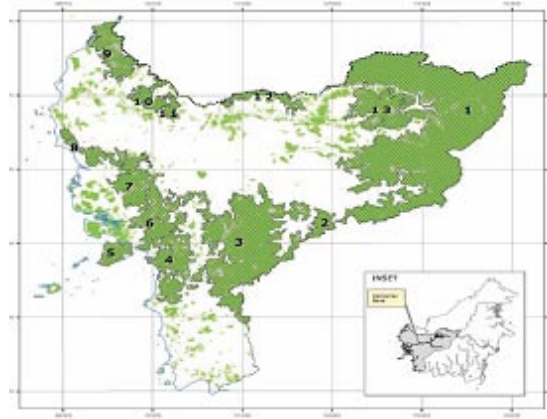
In **Russia**, the Arkhangelsk federal region and the Komi Republic incorporated HCV concepts into regional legislation, and carried out HCVF inventories over several million Ha.

In **Indonesia**, the Governor of West Kalimantan has endorsed the identification of HCV Forests (HCVF) as a strategically important planning tool and recommended the use of HCV maps in



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restructuring the Provincial and Regional Spatial Planning Arrangements.



HCV2 – intact landscape-level forest blocks in W. Kalimantan © WWF Indonesia

HCV planning in responsible land use

The uncontrolled expansion of plantations and agriculture threatens biodiversity and other conservation values, and producers are increasingly using the HCV framework in responsible plantation design.

For example, the certification standard for palm oil (Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil, RSPO) requires that new plantations must not replace any area required to maintain HCVs. A great strength of the HCV framework for landscape planning is that it can use a huge range of existing information. However, effective conservation also requires a supportive legal and governance framework.

HCVs and carbon asset management

There is an increasing need for a rational method for balancing the carbon storage potential and multiple ecosystem values of carbon-rich ecosystems (e.g. peat swamps and forests), against economic development needs. The HCV framework provides a ready-made toolkit for such planning needs, and combined landscape level mapping of HCVs and carbon assets is already underway in critical areas of Indonesia.

What HCV planning tools exist?

HCVs are defined at a national level by multi-stakeholder working groups, which define the categories and thresholds of critically important values. Many such national interpretations of HCV toolkits are already available from the HCV network website.

HCV mapping employs GIS techniques to integrate a huge range of possible data sources, e.g. government data on physical geography (elevation, watersheds, soils) settlements, infrastructure, and regional land use plans, combined with remote sensing data, social surveys, biological distribution maps, and regional biodiversity priority maps produced by international conservation NGOs e.g. Ecoregions (WWF), Biodiversity Hotspots (CI) Ecoregional Assessments (TNC), Frontier Forests (WRI), Intact Forest Landscapes (Greenpeace), Last of the Wild landscapes (WCS), Key Biodiversity Areas (IUCN, Birdlife Intl, UNEP-WCMC), and many others.

Wherever possible, data are interpreted according to national HCV definitions. Some countries (e.g. Indonesia) have produced detailed guidelines for HCV mapping within the national HCV toolkit. Each of the six HCVs is mapped in turn and summary maps identify overlapping HCV areas. The process requires open consultation and ground truthing for key values.

Safeguards: The HCV Resource Network Charter specifies Principles of Application for the use of the HCV approach. These require **legal compliance** and respect for **tenure, customary rights and consent** procedures; prevent any **conversion** activities which could adversely affect HCVs, and require rigorous and balanced stakeholder consultation prior to any other conversion; and call for responsible management of **other (non-HCV) biodiversity and environmental values**.

