



Specification

About the ALS

The High Conservation Value (HCV) approach is widely used for identifying and maintaining the most important environmental and social values in production scenarios (e.g. forestry and agriculture). As a result, more and more practitioners are undertaking HCV assessments in a wide variety of countries and contexts. However, until now there has been very little assurance of the competence of HCV assessors, which has resulted in considerable variability in the quality of the HCV assessments undertaken and the resulting management guidelines adopted. To address this issue, the HCV Resource Network (HCVRN) Secretariat, with support from its Members and various stakeholders, developed the HCV Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS). The HCVRN Secretariat has implemented the ALS working closely with users of the HCV approach.

The ALS promotes assessor competence and more consistent implementation of the HCV approach through

- a) **the provision of guidance and standard templates for HCV assessors, and**
- b) **licensing and monitoring of the quality of HCV assessor performance based on the quality of their HCV assessment reports.**

Benefits to HCV assessors

1. Improve their understanding of the HCV approach
2. Demonstrate their competence to carry out HCV assessments and peer review HCV assessment reports
3. Be qualified to conduct HCV assessments when HCVRN licensed assessors are required
4. Be showcased in the HCV assessor database and become part of a highly-qualified group of HCV global experts
5. Have access to a forum of HCV practitioners and experts

Who can apply?

The ALS is aimed at professionals worldwide who wish to lead third party HCV assessments. It is not intended for HCV assessment team members/discipline specialists, unless they wish to lead HCV assessments and believe they are ready to do so in line with the HCV Assessment Manual. (https://www.hcvnetwork.org/als/system/files/documents/a_assessment_manual_english.pdf)

Application requirements

Applications need to be made via the ALS web portal: <https://hcvnetwork.org/als>. Applicants will be required to provide basic information, as well as evidence of:

- Participation in at least **3 HCV assessments** as a team leader or as a team member.

- **Academic and professional qualifications**, which will serve as proxy to assess subject matter knowledge and technical expertise, ability to conduct research, ability to synthesize data/information, and writing skills.
- **Other HCV experience** including undertaking HCV training courses or participating in HCV policy processes. In the future, undertaking an ‘HCV Assessor Training Course’¹ recognized by the HCVRN will be mandatory. If applicants have other HCV experience, such as participating in national interpretation processes, HCV working groups, and HCV policy work, this will be taken into account when assessing HCV-relevant knowledge but is not a mandatory requirement.

The Licensing Process

Phase 1. Application to obtain a provisional licence

Applicants will be required to open a personal account on the ALS web portal. They will then provide the required information and supporting documentation.

Once an application is completed applicants will need to:

- Confirm acceptance of the Terms & Conditions,
- Sign a self-declaration
- Pay a non-refundable application fee (see information on fees on the following page).

The ALS **Quality Manager** will then assess the applicant’s experience and qualifications and decide whether a **provisional licence** should be issued.

If an application is unsuccessful, applicants can reapply after adequately addressing the feedback received from the Quality Panel.

Phase 2. Obtaining a full licence

To obtain a full licence, assessors holding provisional licences must submit two HCV assessment reports of adequate quality for evaluation by the Quality Panel. These reports need to be submitted within three years of receiving a provisional licence².

Each HCV assessment report submitted by provisionally licensed assessors must be peer reviewed³ before it is submitted for evaluation. After addressing comments from the peer review, the HCV assessment report should be submitted with the peer review report and a letter of confirmation from the peer reviewer that their comments have been adequately addressed.

A public summary of each HCV assessment report will also be required, as well as the payment of a Tier 1⁴ report fee for each HCV assessment report submitted for evaluation.

1 The HCV Resource Network has developed a syllabus to guide the creation of HCV Assessor Training Courses by training providers. The syllabus will be available on the ALS web portal, as well as a list of organizations providing HCV Assessor Training using the ALS syllabus.

2 If the assessor fails to submit two adequate reports to the Quality Panel, the provisional licence will be deactivated and the assessor will have to reapply. Both reports need to follow the guidance and templates of the HCV Resource Network. Assessors will only have a maximum of three attempts.

3 Peer reviews must be undertaken by a member of the ALS Pool of Peer Reviewers, listed on the ALS website. Assessors are responsible for arranging peer reviews directly with a member of the Pool of Peer Reviewers. Peer reviewers will have relevant expertise, language skills and regional knowledge and will be required to follow the new HCVRN ALS Peer Review guidance and follow a Code of Conduct. Assessors holding a full licence will be able to apply to become peer reviewers.

4 HCV assessments can be classified as **Tier 1 or Tier 2**. A Tier 1 classification indicates that the project to be assessed entails a higher degree of potential risks and impacts to biodiversity or social and cultural values. For more information, see: <https://hcvnetwork.org/als/tier-assessment>

Phase 3. Maintaining a full licence

To maintain a full licence, assessors must:

- Submit all HCV assessment reports for evaluation by the Quality Panel.
- For reports categorized as Tier 1, assessors are required to submit a peer review report, which will need to be accompanied by a letter of confirmation from the peer reviewer that comments from the peer review have been adequately addressed.
- Submit a public summary of each HCV assessment report.
- Pay a Tier 1 or Tier 2 report fee for each HCV assessment report submitted to the system for evaluation.

Compliance with procedures and policies

Provisional and fully licensed assessors must comply with ALS procedures, policies and templates contained in the Supporting Documents listed as **required** in the HCV Assessment Manual. Cases of non-compliance can result in the deactivation or revocation of licences.

Fees and Costs

- Application fee:** An application fee will be charged to cover the costs of processing each application.
- Annual renewal fee:** An annual renewal fee will be charged to all account holders to help maintain the ALS web portal and information services. Annual fees are payable one year after submitting an application.
- HCV assessment report evaluation fee:** Every time an assessor submits an HCV assessment report for evaluation, a fee will be charged. Report evaluation fees will vary depending on the Tier classification of the HCV assessment. Assessors are advised to recover the report evaluation fee from clients by including it in their assessment budget. A tool for determining the Tier level is available on the ALS website.

Category	Fee
Application fee	USD \$500
Annual renewal fee	USD \$250
Report evaluation fee	Tier 1 USD \$2,000 Tier 2 USD \$900

Languages

During the launch phase, the ALS web portal and all supporting documents and guidance will be available in two languages: **English** and **Bahasa Indonesia**. In the future, the ALS web portal and supporting documents and guidance will also be available in **French**, **Portuguese** and **Spanish**.

About the Quality Panel

Evaluation of HCV assessment reports will be undertaken by a **Quality Panel**, which will verify that assessors follow good practice as set out in the **HCV Assessment Manual** and supporting documents, that findings are clearly documented, justified and presented following ALS guidance, and that there is an adequate public summary of the HCV assessment report.

The Quality Panel will be composed of experts with capacity to review materials in Bahasa Indonesia, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. The Quality Panel will follow strict procedures for report evaluation and will be bound by a Code of Conduct that includes commitments to confidentiality. All reports submitted to the ALS will be confidential and will only be utilized by the Quality Panel to verify that assessors have followed HCV assessment best practice and comply with ALS guidance.

Complaints

The ALS has a **Dispute Resolution Procedure**.

More Information

For questions regarding the ALS visit our website www.hcvnetwork.org or contact secretariat@hcvnetwork.org.