



# Procedure and Checklist for Evaluating High Conservation Value Assessment Reports

## HCV Resource Network (HCVRN), Assessor Licensing Scheme, Quality Panel<sup>1</sup>

This procedure and checklist are for use by the Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS) Quality Manager (QM) and Quality Panel (QP) for evaluation of HCV assessment reports and supporting documents (referred to here as the report package) submitted by licensed assessors.

Key objectives for the evaluation of report packages are to respond to the following:

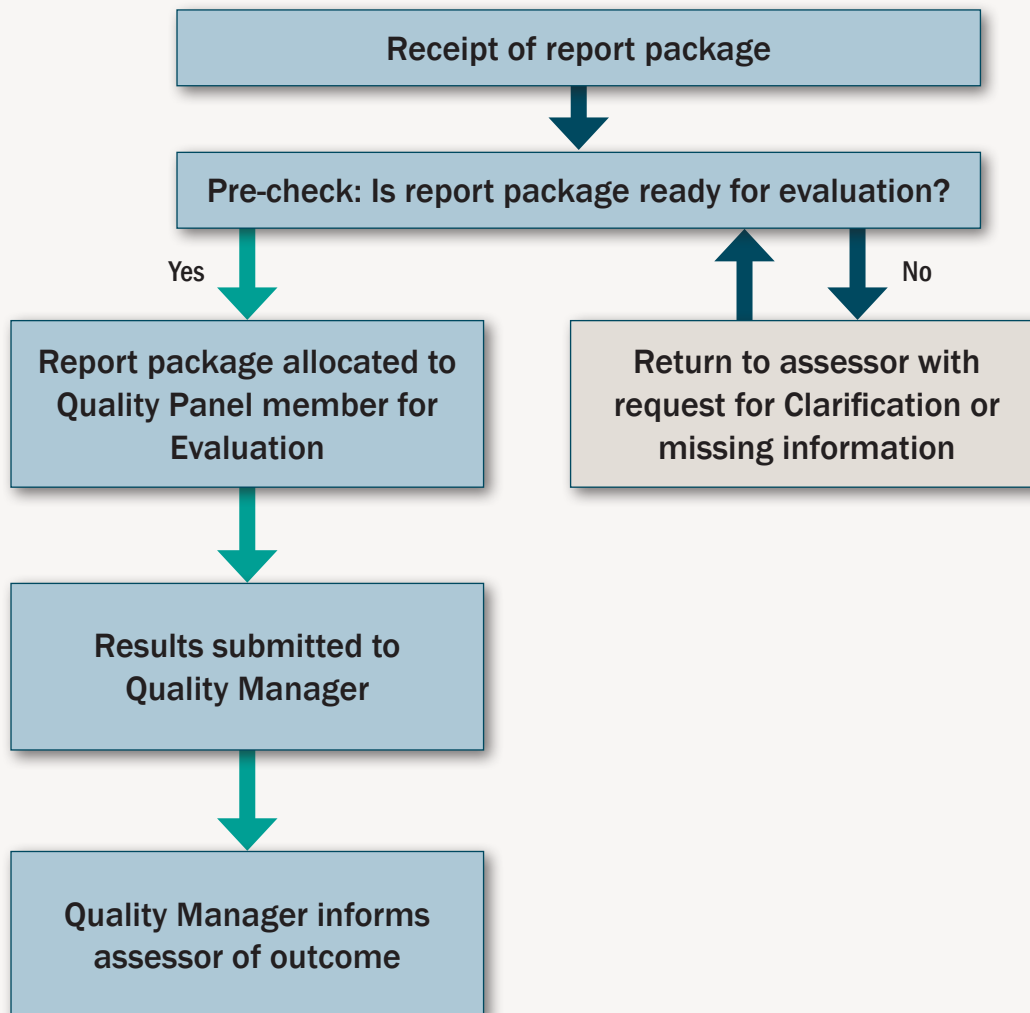
1. Are the assessment report and supporting documents in approved formats?
2. Have the assessment report and supporting documents covered all the required information in terms of content?
3. Is the content consistent with the HCVRN guidance ([HCV Assessment Manual](#) and [HCVRN Common Guidance](#))?

Only those reports, and supporting documents, which comply with HCVRN guidance in terms of structure and content will be accepted as satisfactory by the QP. The QM and QP are responsible for evaluation of the entire report package in terms of structure, format and general content. This differs from a peer review which is a thorough technical evaluation of the full HCV assessment.

<sup>1</sup> The Quality Panel is chaired and coordinated by a Quality Manager.

## Steps in evaluation of HCV assessment reports and supporting documents

### Procedure for evaluating HCV assessment reports



**Figure 1:** Procedure for evaluating HCV assessment reports

#### 1. Receipt of report and supporting documents

The Quality Manager receives notification that a new report package has been uploaded by a licensed assessor. Once an assessor uploads their report package and pays a fee, the assessor receives an automatic message that their report package and fee were successfully received.

#### 2. Pre-check by Quality Manager: are documents ready for evaluation?

The Quality Manager, or someone they designate, will verify the following:

- Licence status of assessor (Provisional or Full? Annual fees paid?)
- The peer reviewer does not work for the assessor or end user that commissioned that HCV assessment
- If a Tier 2 assessment, that it is within a certification scheme
- Are report and supporting documents complete and legible and has fee been paid?

Document	Pre-check guidance notes
HCV assessment report	Required in HCVRN template
Public summary	Required in HCVRN template
Peer review report and sign off letter	Required for all Tier 1 assessments. If there is a concern with a peer review report or letter, the Quality Manager should contact the peer reviewer directly.
Cover sheet for non-standard HCV assessment reports	Must be used if non-standard report is submitted, but needs prior approval from Quality Manager
Annex material (if report size exceeds 20MB)	If there are any links to file sharing platforms (e.g. Dropbox), download all files and save as part of report package

**Table 1:** Documents included in the report package uploaded to the ALS web platform

The Quality Manager checks that all required documents have been submitted. If something is missing or the standard templates were not used, the Quality Manager contacts assessor and requests any missing information or resubmission using standard templates, if applicable. Evaluation of the report package can only proceed once the package is complete.

Once the report package has undergone a pre-check and it is ready for evaluation, an automatic message is sent to the assessor confirming that the report package is complete and evaluation process will proceed. At this point, the Quality Manager posts the title of the public summary report on the HCVRN ALS website.

### 3. Quality Manager allocates reports to Quality Panel member

The Quality Manager allocates the relevant part of the report package to a QP member for evaluation; this includes the full HCV assessment report and the public summary. This allocation is based primarily on availability of QP member and on relevant language skills.

In accordance with the QP Code of Conduct, the QP member confirms in writing to the QM that they have no conflict of interest with the assessment. If there is a conflict of interest that the QM judges cannot be managed then the QM instructs the QP member not to evaluate the report.

### 4. Evaluation of reports by Quality Panel member

Check that the structure and content of the reports are consistent with HCVRN ALS procedures and the [HCV Assessment Manual](#). This will require that QP members are familiar with the overall HCV approach including the interpretation of key terms such as significant and critical. As QP members gain more experience in report evaluation, it is assumed that this skill will improve.

This is not meant to be as in depth or technical as a peer review but, the QP member should be able to comment on:

- The quality of the justification for why an HCV is, or is not present.
- Whether the Assessor provided sufficient evidence to support their decision on HCV presence/absence.

Evaluation of the reports will take place on the ALS web platform. The Assessor should expect a result (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) within 30 days.

Guidance is provided below for evaluation of an HCV Assessment Report and Public Summary:

#### 4.1 HCV Assessment Report

Evaluation of the HCV assessment report includes:

- cover sheet contents
- overall structure and length of report
- report content and findings

	Is element present and in the correct location? Yes or No If No, briefly explain issue (e.g. missing or incomplete)
<b>Date of report</b>	
<b>Name of lead assessor</b>	
<b>Contact information of lead assessor</b> (organisation, address)	
<b>ALS licence</b> Type: (provisional or full)	
<b>Organisation commissioning HCV assessment</b> (name & contact details)	
<b>Location of assessment</b> i.e. country, region/ province, district/municipality, nearest town or city <sup>2</sup> (if applicable)	
<b>Dates of assessment</b> (month/year)	
<b>Size of assessment area</b> (ha)	
<b>Total number of hectares allocated as HCV management areas</b> (ha)	
<b>Current or planned land use(s) for assessment area</b> (e.g. forestry, oil palm plantation, soy, sugar)	
<b>Certification scheme</b> (specify certification scheme or N/A if taking place outside of a widely recognised scheme, if outside scheme, what is motivation for assessment?)	
<b>Tier rating</b> <sup>3</sup> (1 or 2) with a brief description. State whether a peer review was conducted	
<b>Number of pages</b> < 45 (If number of pages exceeds 45, note number of pages and give feedback to assessor)	

**Table 2:** Checklist for evaluation of cover page of HCV Assessment Report

<sup>2</sup> If there are multiple towns around a MU, the UTM coordinate for centroid may be more appropriate. See HCV Assessment Manual for details.

<sup>3</sup> See the HCV Assessment Manual for details

	<b>Structure and format</b> Does the report follow the format of the HCV assessment report template? Mark “satisfactory” - if not, briefly describe which sections are not compliant (i.e. missing, in the wrong order, or exceeding the page limit)	<b>Quality of Content<sup>4</sup></b> Mark as satisfactory or unsatisfactory and provide a brief explanation of scoring	<b>Key issues</b> Some sections are considered key issues, and must score as “satisfactory” for report to pass
<b>Introduction and background</b>			
<b>Site description</b>			
<b>Landscape context</b>			
<b>National and/or regional context</b>			
<b>HCV assessment team</b>			
<b>Methods</b>			
<b>HCV FINDINGS<sup>5</sup></b>			
<b>HCV 1</b>			Key Issue
<b>HCV 2</b>			Key Issue
<b>HCV 3</b>			Key Issue
<b>HCV 4</b>			Key Issue
<b>HCV 5</b>			Key Issue
<b>HCV 6</b>			Key Issue
<b>Stakeholder consultation<sup>6</sup></b>			Key Issue
<b>Threat assessment</b>			
<b>Management and monitoring recommendations</b>			
<b>Synthesis</b>			
<b>HCV maps<sup>7</sup> and HCV management area maps</b>			Key issue
<b>References</b>			
<b>Annexes</b>			

**Table 3:** Checklist for evaluation of HCV assessment report structure/format and content

<sup>4</sup> See above for guidance on how to evaluate content. These boxes should include brief notes from the QP member.

<sup>5</sup> If any of the HCV findings are not sufficiently well justified or supported with evidence, mark as unsatisfactory

<sup>6</sup> Note: if documentation is missing or inadequate, mark as unsatisfactory

<sup>7</sup> Maps must be appropriately scaled, clear and legible, and include a title, date, GPS coordinates and legend, if this is not the case mark as unsatisfactory

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>Report structure/format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report section present</li> <li>Section follows template order and recommended page limit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section missing from report</li> <li>Section out of order or exceeds recommended page limit</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is well-aligned with HCVRN guidance</li> <li>Any results or findings are adequately justified and supported by evidence (e.g. desk or field study, consultation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is not aligned with HCVRN guidance</li> <li>Justification of findings/recommendations is not supported by evidence</li> </ul>

**Table 4:** Description of report scoring as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, this should be considered separately for each section in Table 3

## 4.2 The Public Summary

The licensed assessor needs to complete the public summary so that it is consistent with the full report.

The public summary is a crucial part of the HCV report – often the only part of the report that the general public will read. Therefore the public summary must be presented such that a layman without any background in HCV or the project can understand the important outcomes of the assessment and pass a considered opinion on the social and environmental values presented. For this purpose, public summaries must:

- be brief and concise (up to 15 pages, excluding tables, figures, maps and references) without oversimplifying or eclipsing facts;
- be able to ‘stand alone’ without requiring references to the rest of the report;
- briefly cover all relevant issues and essential information of the project, in particular provide an overview of the HCVs identified;
- inform the reader of the major factors considered in decision-making, including the major findings and conclusions of the assessment and explain any remaining uncertainty or unresolved issues.
- include the main concerns from stakeholder consultations
- include a map of HCVs and HCV management areas
- statement of acceptance of responsibility and signatures of company and assessor (required only for RSPO New Planting Procedure assessments).

	Is element present and in the correct location? Yes or No If No, briefly explain issue (e.g. missing or incomplete)
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Name and contact details of lead assessor</b>	
<b>Location of assessment e.g. nearest town, region, country (could also include geographic coordinates if more relevant)</b>	
<b>Size of assessment area (ha)</b>	
<b>Total number of hectares allocated as HCV management areas (ha)</b>	
<b>Current or planned land use for assessment area (e.g. forestry, oil palm plantation, soy, sugar, etc.)</b>	
<b>Certification scheme (specify certification scheme or state if taking place outside of a widely recognised scheme)</b>	

**Table 5:** Checklist for evaluation of public summary cover sheet

Document ID	ALS_04_D
Date	16/03/2016

<p><b>Score as:</b>  <b>Satisfactory:</b> Consistent with full report, all key information presented, maps comply with HCVRN guidance  <b>Unsatisfactory:</b> Not consistent with full report - important information missing  <b>With brief explanation of scoring</b></p>	
<b>Introduction and background</b>	
<b>Site description</b>	
<b>Landscape context</b>	
<b>National and/or regional context</b>	
<b>HCV assessment team</b>	
<b>Methods</b>	
<b>HCV outcomes and justification</b>	
<b>HCV 1</b>	
<b>HCV 2</b>	
<b>HCV 3</b>	
<b>HCV 4</b>	
<b>HCV 5</b>	
<b>HCV 6</b>	
<b>Stakeholder consultation outcomes</b>	
<b>HCV management and monitoring</b>	
<b>Threat assessment</b>	
<b>Management and monitoring recommendations</b>	
<b>Map(s)<sup>8</sup></b>	
<b>References</b>	
<b>Statement of acceptance of responsibility and signatures of company and assessor</b>	For assessors working in the context of the RSPO New Planting Procedure (NPP)*
<b>Does the Public Summary Follow the ALS template?</b>	Key Issue
<b>Overall: Is the Public Summary an adequate summary of the main report?</b>	Key Issue

**Table 6:** Checklist for evaluating quality of public summary

<sup>8</sup> Maps must be appropriately scaled, clear and legible, and include a title, date, GPS coordinates and legend

## 5. Quality Manager informs Assessor of evaluation results

Once the QP member has finished evaluation of the HCV assessment report and public summary, their findings are submitted to the Quality Manager through the web platform. The Quality Manager will now consider the entire report package: HCV assessment report, public summary, peer review documents (if applicable) and contact the Assessor with one of the following outcomes:

- The report package was accepted and received a satisfactory mark from the QP evaluation.

OR

- The report package did not pass, i.e. received an unsatisfactory mark from the QP evaluation. If this is the result the report can be revised and resubmitted once. If the main report needs to be revised then the public summary must also be revised to reflect the changes in the main report.
- If this is the result the report can be revised and resubmitted once. If the main report needs to be revised then the public summary must also be revised to reflect the changes in the main report.

OR

- The Quality Manager and or QP member is unable to reach a final decision about the report; other QP member(s) are engaged, coordinated by the Quality Manager; this could extend the time frame for report package evaluation to three months.