

1. Putting No Deforestation into Practice

The High Carbon Stock Approach submission for consideration of the Nature-Based Solution proposition for the UN Climate Action Summit

2. Context and rationale

Tropical forests are crucial for climate change mitigation and resilience and are essential to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. Conserving tropical forests plays two main roles: 1) avoiding GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and 2) sequestering and storing carbon. Additionally, forests are essential for local climate regulation, hold most of earth's terrestrial biodiversity, have hundreds of millions of people who rely on them for their basic needs including providing cultural and spiritual values, and they support critical ecosystem services such as clean water and air and stable soils.

One of the main drivers of tropical deforestation, and the consequential contribution to climate change is agricultural expansion, where it is estimated to be the primary driver of 27 to 80 percent of deforestation worldwide.ⁱ To tackle this crisis a multitude of political and private commitments to halt deforestation including the UN New York Declaration on Forests, the Bonn Challenge, as well as hundreds of major brands, commodity traders, manufacturers, plantation companies, banks and investors.

The [High Carbon Stock Approach \(HCSA\)](#) was developed to implement the 'no deforestation' commitments (also referred as Zero Deforestation or No Deforestation No Peat No Exploitation (NDPE)). In December 2018, the [UN Environment Programme recognised the HCSA as a no deforestation implementation tool](#) *"...the High Carbon Stock Approach, a new global methodology that helps answer such questions and implement No Deforestation commitments. It's a land use planning tool focused on achieving No Deforestation. It integrates social considerations—local community customary rights, livelihoods and needs, high conservation values, peatlands, riparian zones and plantation operational aspects."*ⁱⁱ

3. An overview of the contribution.

To implement 'no deforestation' commitments, the [HCS Approach](#) is a practical methodology that identifies high carbon stock forests in the humid tropics for conservation through an integrated land use plan, and allows degraded non-forest land to be developed for agricultural or plantation commodities. As of March 2019, close to 3 million hectares (ha) of HCSA assessment area was registered, over 575,000 ha of HCS forests was identified for conservation and an additional 7 million ha of tropical forest was prevented from deforestation.

From small beginnings 5 years ago with a handful of companies, HCSA is now being scaled up to engage most of the palm oil, cocoa and rubbers sectors and adapted to different regions.

4. How the contribution leverages living natural systems as a solution to avert climate change?

The HCS Approach simply and efficiently identifies tropical forest areas that are under threat from deforestation due to commodity production expansion. By protecting rather than converting these forest areas, the carbon they contain is conserved along with the other ecosystem services, and the natural system is maintained to allow continued sequestration of carbon from the atmosphere.

5. How might the contribution support both climate, mitigation and adaptation as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in coming years.

The HCSA is significantly contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Development Programme's Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15. HCSA is supporting progress through: halting deforestation, increasing carbon storage and other ecosystem services (clean water, stable soils, forests gardens), conserving biodiversity through High Carbon Stock (HCS) forest and High Conservation Value (HCV) area protection/restoration, supporting indigenous and community rights and promoting sustainable livelihoods opportunities through responsible economic development for both large and small actors.

The 575, 000 ha of HCS forest currently being conserved and prevented from being deforested contains more than 30 million t/C. This is contributing to a significant reduction in averted GHG emissions and is securing long-term carbon sequestration and storage.

Food security is a core component of the methodology to ensure livelihoods are protected and additional social benefits and impacts include supporting land tenure security, upholding indigenous, community and labour rights, establishing incentives, and benefits for community and smallholder conservation and sustainable development.

The economic multiplying effect of HCSA implementation is huge through being an enabling methodology for business while at the same time achieving environmental and social impacts.

6. Which countries and organisations are involved in the contribution?

HCS Approach is being implemented in Malaysia, Indonesia, Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, including governments of Indonesia, West Papua province and Sabah State. Note, the methodology is not country, region, nor commodity specific. The primary organisations involved are HCSA Steering Group (SG) members:

Companies: Asia Pulp & Paper, Asian Agri, Golden Agri- Resources, IOI, KLK, Musim Mas, Sime Darby, Wilmar International Ltd, BASF, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Nestle as well as the many thousands of organisations in their supply chain.

NGOs: Conservation International, Forest People Programme, Greenpeace, Mighty Earth, National Wildlife Federation, Rainforest Action Network, World Wide Fund for Nature

Technical Support Organisations: Daemeter, EcoNusantara, Ekologika, Forest Carbon, Greenbury & Associates, Proforest, Rainforest Alliance, The Forest Trust, Tropenbos Indonesia.

Small Holder Organisations: Serikat Petani Kelapa Sawit

HCSA's partners: USAID, Partnership for Forests, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, HCV Resource Network, World Resources Institute, Meridian Institute, World Cocoa Foundation, Science Nature and People Partnerships

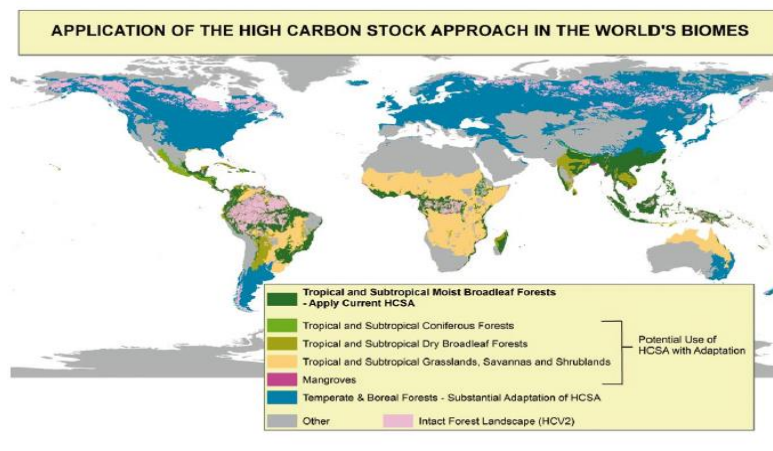
7. How have stakeholders (for example local communities, youth and indigenous peoples, where applicable) been consulted in developing the contribution?

HCSA is a multi-stakeholder initiative. The development of the methodology was done via extensive field trials and includes engagement with and the Free Prior and Informed Consent of the local community(s).

HCSA is close to finalising its complete set robust social requirements and an adapted approach for smallholders which have been developed with input from key social HCSA members, stakeholders and social experts to ensure communities will have the opportunity to fairly, equitably and comprehensively participate and benefit from the HCS Approach.

8. Where can the contribution be put into action?

The scope of the approach covers any plantation or agribusiness commodity in the humid tropics. However, initial development, trailing and implementation focused primarily on fragmented landscapes, in Asia Pacific and Africa, and with palm oil and pulp and paper plantations but now its application and trailing are expanding to work with other sectors including rubber and cocoa and in new countries/regions in Western Africa and Latin America.



9. How the contribution will be delivered? How will different stakeholders be engaged in its implementation? What are the potential transformational impacts?

HCSA is demonstrating no deforestation (and thus positive climate change mitigation/resilience and responsible land use) through identifying forests in the landscape and completing an integrated conservation and land use plan (ICLUP) that respects rights and livelihoods, thus ensuring these areas are conserved. International to local stakeholders are involved with implementation from governing the HCS Approach, facilitating its uptake through supply chain commitments and initiatives' integration and directly through engaging in HCS assessments as required by the methodology. The potential transformational impacts are on commodity production without deforestation, and conservation of forests and required indigenous and community involvement as part of an integrated conservation land use plan. For more details read: HCSA's [theory of change until 2030 and 2018 - 2021 global strategic plan](#).

10. Is this initiative contributing to other Climate Action Summit workstreams (industry transition; energy transition; climate finance and carbon pricing; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; social and political drivers; mitigation strategy)?

HCSA is a key industry transition approach to delink commodity supply chains from tropical deforestation. It links to climate finance through conserving forest areas that qualify for climate finance as well as improve the local resilience and adaptation to climate change. HCSA is also a key mitigation strategy through identifying forests for conservation and restoration as a solution to climate change.

11. How does this contribution build upon examples of experience to date? How does the contribution link with different ongoing initiatives?

In November 2018, HCSA was incorporated into the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil's [2018 standard](#) and the Climate Bonds Initiative's [forestry assessment criteria](#). The Consumer Goods Forum uses HCSA as a key tool to achieve its no deforestation supply chains. The French government strategy on importing deforestation references the HCSA toolkit. HCSA has [signed a MOU](#) with the World Cocoa Foundation to advance the cocoa sectors' no deforestation commitments.

12. What are the mechanisms for funding (with specific emphasis on potential for partnerships)?

The HCSA is a global civil society organisation registered in Singapore. It generates core funding through annual membership fees and additional programme finance from donors including Partners for Forests.

HCSA uses a collaborative and partnership framework for financing new add-on innovations or components that broaden its applicability and impact, including conservation finance mechanisms, large-scale HCS forest mapping, adaptation for smallholders and farmers, and implementation by new commodities such as cocoa.

13. What are the means of stewardship, metrics for monitoring?

The HCSA methodology is governed by its SG and an Executive Committee. Estimates of carbon storage, forest conservation, sustainable land and community use impact is demonstrated through publicly available peer reviewed HCSA assessments. HCSA's Global Forest Watch Pro monitoring platform and alert system of HCS conservation areas will be launched soon.

14. What is the communication strategy?

HCSA builds public awareness and attracts new members, implementers and partners through the toolkit being opened source, authoring scientific publications, promoting HCSA innovations, successes and impacts through HCSA's website, social media platforms, hosting bi-annual meetings, engagement in key external platforms, profiling through members and partners' networks.

15. What are the details of proponents (indicating the degree of commitment among the countries and organizations that are named)?

Hundreds of companies have committed to and are implementing HCSA, i.e., all major palm oil companies, pulpwood (incl. Asian Pulp & Paper and APRIL), rubber (11 major tyre companies in the Sustainable Natural Rubber Platform), and cocoa (30+ companies in the Cocoa and Forest Initiative) sectors.

The Indonesian government is protecting HCS forests and HCV areas through being incorporated into the Ecosystem Essential Areas Regulations. Under the Marrakesh declaration, seven African governments supported HCS forest and HCV area conservation.

ⁱ Kissinger, G., Herold, M. & De Sy, V. 2012. Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation: a synthesis report for REDD+ policymakers. Vancouver, Canada, Lexeme Consulting. Curtis, P.G., Slay, C.M., Harris, N.L., Tyukavina, A. & Hansen, M.C. (2018). Classifying drivers of global forest loss. *Science* 361, 1108–1111.

ⁱⁱUN Environment web story. Towards Zero Deforestation. 31 December 2018 <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/towards-zero-deforestation>