

Overview of High Conservation Value (HCV) Guidance documents

FSC has supported HCV Resource Network in developing several generic guides for so called HCV approach, which consists of (i) identification, (ii) management and (iii) monitoring of HCVs.

These guides are targeted not only to forest management, but also to other commodities, such as oil palm, soy bean, sugar cane etc.

The guides are available at <https://hcvnetwork.org> :

- *Common Guidance for the Identification of HCV*: A guide for identifying HCVs across different ecosystems and production systems. It is intended primarily for HCV assessors, resource managers, and auditors.
- *Common Guidance for the Management and Monitoring of HCV*: A guide for the adaptive management of HCVs
- *Landscape HCV Screening Guidance*: A guide for prioritising action for HCVs in landscapes and jurisdictions.
- *Forest Integrity Assessment Tool (FIAT)*: A simple and user-friendly tool for assessing and monitoring biodiversity conditions in forests and forest remnants

The Landscape HCV Screening Guidance and Forest Integrity Assessment Tool are recommended particularly to the managers of small-holder group certification schemes.

In parallel to the generic guides listed above, there has been a growing need to develop FSC-specific guides.

The HCV Technical Working Group was established for that purpose in 2014 and it has developed the following set of guidance documents to different FSC audiences to support a consistent, rigorous implementation of Principle 9 of FSC-STD-01-001 *FSC Principles and Criteria*:

- FSC-GUI-60-009 *Guidance for Standard Development Groups: Developing National High Conservation Value Frameworks*;
- FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks*;
- FSC-GUI-30-009 *High Conservation Value Guidance for Forest Managers*;
- FSC-GUI-30-010 *Intact Forest Landscapes Guidance for Forest Managers*¹.

The above listed guides have been further supplemented in June 2020 with FSC-GUI-60-004 *Guidance for Standard Developers to Develop a National Threshold for the Core Area of Intact Forest Landscapes*, which provides advice for setting indicators for protecting the vast majorities of IFLs within the FSC certified Management Units.

¹ This document is useful also for standard developers.



These five documents are part of a broader HCV normative framework. The identification, management and monitoring of HCVs are shared responsibilities across FSC including:

- FSC Performance and Standards Unit, which holds overall responsibility of all international policies, standards and procedures related to HCVs
- Standard Development Groups, which develop indicators for identification, management and monitoring of HCVs in the national context
- Certificate Holders and the workers in the forest bear the concrete responsibility to maintain and enhance HCVs within the management unit in conformity with the indicators in the national FSC standard
- Certification Bodies, which assess the conformity of the forest management against the national indicators for HCVs

The guidance documents are, by definition, informative and not normative.

In some contexts, however, they are referring to existing requirements in FSC standards and such specific elements are normative. For example:

- Standard Developers shall complete National HCV Frameworks (see: FSC-STD-60-004 *International Generic Indicators*);
- Standard Developers shall consider FSC's HCV Guidance when developing their National HCV Framework (see: FSC-STD-60-004 *International Generic Indicators*);
- Forest Managers shall meet the requirements of the National HCV Framework, once included in the valid National Forest Stewardship Standard or Interim National Standard; and
- Certification Bodies shall use National HCV Frameworks, when included in the valid National Forest Stewardship Standard or Interim National Standard, as a part of the forest management conformity assessment (see: FSC-STD-20-007 *Forest Management Evaluations*)