

## **Common Guidance on Interpreting and Identifying HCVs and HCV Training Module**

High Conservation Value (HCV) areas are natural habitats of outstanding significance or critical importance. These could include the presence of rare or endemic species, sacred sites, or resources harvested by local residents. The concept was originally devised in the context of forest certification but it has become applicable to other ecosystems and habitats. Today, it has evolved into a set of explicit criteria (the six 'HCVs'), an assessment process for conservation priorities, a management decision tool, and a key component of major sustainability standards such as RSPO.

In order to ensure the consistent application of the HCV approach, a group of organizations including environmental and social NGOs, international development agencies and timber and forest product certifiers created "The HCV Resource Network" in 2006. The Network is governed by a Charter and is overseen by a Steering Group (SG) composed of representatives from seventeen organizations including FSC International, WWF, Mondi, Greenpeace and IUCN. To provide quality control for the ongoing development of the HCV approach, the SG established a Technical Panel (TP) composed of HCV experts who frequently provide advisory services to industry, policy-makers and other stakeholders. Since its creation, the Network has made available a wide-range of documents and guidance on the application of the HCV approach and has conducted numerous HCV Assessment peer reviews with far-reaching consequences.

In order to continue the cross-sectorial and scheme-neutral approach to HCV, the Network created a "2012-2015 Strategic Framework" that will guide its transition into a financially sustainable platform, focusing on five key components: 1) the development of common guidance on the effective application of the HCV concept, 2) the provision of training in the use of the HCV concept, 3) HCV Assessment Report peer reviews, 4) the creation of an "HCV Professional" registration system, and 5) the maintenance and enhancement of the Network's core services. Recent updates include the publication of RSPO's "HCV Assessments for RSPO Certification: Reporting Requirements", the HCVRN-RSPO joint training of HCV assessors, and the development of an initial proposal of the HCV Professional Registration System.