

Group exercise

Identifying HCVs in AfricOil's Gaberoon concession*¹ - TRAINER'S GUIDANCE

Day 1:

Instructor: RSPO-Approved Assessor; TP Expert

Email:

Phone:

We will use this example throughout the training workshop to illustrate various points of the assessment and decision-making process. The identification of HCVs is a particularly important step.

Recommended working group size: 4-6 (depending on overall group size)

Timing: 1.5 – 2 hours:

- 20-30 minutes to read the description and familiarise themselves with the map at the end (individual work)
- 45 minutes to make a decision on presence or absence of HCVs (Group work)
- 10 minutes for each group to feed back decisions on HCV status to Plenary
- 20-30 minutes discussion on important points (see below)

Most groups should converge on similar results. Encourage them to explain how they made their decisions and highlight the data that they used. The main point of the exercise is to make sure everyone understands what each HCV is and how you interpret data. **You should use the exercise to highlight:**

- Importance of National Toolkits to make decisions on 'significance' (for example, is the presence of elephants by itself an HCV 1? Are submontane forests an HCV 3?). We deliberately used an 'unknown' example so that assessors have to think about how HCV decisions are made.
- Importance of *reliable* data – for example, the forestry data are reliable but the mammal data are very flawed – no methodology, and unlikely distribution of animals (did they just sample next to the river...?)
- Importance of missing data – here there is very little about the surrounding landscape, and no information on National Parks or Protected areas. Absence of data does not mean absence of HCVs.
- Importance of the precautionary principle: if the data are suggestive, then you should assume that the HCV is present and do further work to find out how important this attribute is and where it is found.

Other discussion points:

- Did the groups identify the importance of the delta downstream as a potential HCV for biodiversity (e.g. concentrations of migratory birds etc?) or the flooded forest as seasonal spawning grounds for fish?
- Did the groups spot the possible biodiversity AND cultural importance of waterfalls and caves in the 'transition zone' between Zones A and B?
- Does the socio-economic study meet RSPO criteria (**Note:** not independent, no participatory mapping, insufficient engagement with weak/underprivileged groups)?

For the *next* exercise (**NOT this one!**) we recommend that you issue the following guidance (print separately and distribute to the Groups). You can use this as a reference point for this exercise in the final plenary:

¹ Note: Gaberoon doesn't really exist, but if it did, it would be on the Western coast of Central Africa between Gabon and Cameroon, enjoying a permanently humid tropical climate with high rainfall, ideal for palm. 10 million ha or 60% of 'Gaberoon' is forested. Of this, 10% is in protected areas, 60% is zoned as permanent forest estate for timber production, and 20% is zoned for agricultural conversion. The rest (10%) is in community ownership for mixed use, usually conversion.

Some important features of the Gaberoon HCV Toolkit

(Note – this is only a partial summary of the toolkit, to help you make more definitive HCV presence/absence decisions for HCV management and monitoring!)

- **HCV 1.2. and HCV 1.3:** Concentrations of biodiversity in Gaberoon are defined as presence in a single location of 10 or more nationally endemic or globally threatened (VU, EN, CR) species, or nationally significant populations of a single EN or CR species. Additionally, great apes of any sort are HCVs – i.e. chimpanzee presence alone is an HCV but elephants by themselves are not.
- **HCV 1.4:** Seasonal concentrations in Gaberoon include migratory resting places nesting areas for RTE bird and bat species, including bat roosting caves, and seasonal spawning grounds for fish, as well as seasonally important resources for protected or threatened mammals and birds.
- **HCV 2:** In Gaberoon HCV 2 is defined as an area of forest within one of the CARPE Landscapes, with <10% fragmentation by human activities (logging, agriculture or settlements), and with an area in excess of 50,000ha.
- **HCV 3:** includes 1) areas of old-growth forest equal or greater than 5000ha, in a condition close to the natural composition and structure of unlogged forest; 2) montane and submontane forest > 600m, of any quality; 3) remarkable ecosystems on unusual substrates (e.g. inselbergs, cliffs, karst formations).
- **HCV 4:** Includes drinking water where no other alternative is available; protection of fisheries and important biodiversity resources; and prevention of catastrophic erosion or land sliding.
- **HCV 5:** Includes natural resources which form an important or essential part of traditional communities' food provision, medicine, building materials or domestic economy. This includes traditional and subsistence hunting, and explicitly excludes commercial hunting. It also excludes agricultural land, which is treated as a rights and access issue.
- **HCV 6:** Includes culturally important areas and resources, where communities show a continuing and strong attachment to sites and features including gravesites, sacred forests, waterfalls, ancestral villages, and plants or animals with magic and religious significance.

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You are provided with a forest scenario, and the generic list of the six HCVs. You need to decide which of the HCVs are **definitely present**, **potentially present**, or **absent** in this forest. You must complete the table on page 4 with a justification of your reasoning. Think about the quality of data and your own knowledge of comparable situations.

Description of the concession

Summary of an EIA written by Jacques Hirsute, Tropical Botany M.Sc. Student from the University of Montpellier, for Green-Consult Gaberoon.

Description of the area:

AfricOil palm oil company has been leased Concession 101 for industrial palm development. It covers 35,000 hectares of shifting agricultural lands, secondary forest, and logged and unlogged closed-canopy evergreen forest in the west of the country, about 50km east of the Coast. To the west and south of the Concession, there is a road with several villages (7.000 inhabitants in total) along with their permanent agriculture and agroforestry plots (cocoa, smallholder palm, rubber and food crops).

The Eastern boundary of the concession is a forest license belonging to the forestry company Kuttit&Kwik Co., which has a history of poor practice and social conflicts. It is part of the permanent forest estate. North of the concession is an area of forest degraded by repeated cuts, which is has just been reclassified into an agricultural development zone (rubber plantation) for RubberGold Holdings Inc.

Flora: Concession 101 is divided into five main vegetation classes (see letters on the map), based on a pre-stratification and systematic forest inventory carried out by well-reputed forestry consultancy Botanika, with support from the Gaberoon National Herbarium.

- **Vegetation Type A:** The western part of the concession is part of the coastal sedimentary plains. This part of the concession is very flat, ca.150m a.s.l., and has been heavily exploited in the past 50 years both by repeated logging and shifting agriculture. It has a mixture of small-scale subsistence farming and fallows, young secondary forest (*Macaranga* and *Musanga* spp.), and Marantaceae forest (a very open type of tall secondary forest with thick herbaceous undergrowth). There are some areas of closed forests with a strong dominance of Okoumé *Aucoumea klaineana*, and Ozouga *Sacoglottis gabonensis* (common, long lived pioneer species).
- **Vegetation Type B:** In the east we pass rather abruptly onto a low, rolling inland plateau of Precambrian sedimentary and metamorphic rock, which is the main geological feature of Gaberoon. The interface between Zones A and B is marked by a sharp rise of 50 to 200m over a width of 300m to 2km, where the slopes can be steep. Forests in Class B have been logged repeatedly and some areas are severely degraded (30-40% canopy cover); areas which were logged in the 60s and 70's are now closed-canopy forest dominated by large, common pioneer trees (Okoumé, Olon *Zanthoxylum heitzii*,

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Bilinga *Nauclea diderrichii*, Limbas *Terminalia sp.*, Movingui *Distemonanthus benthamianus*, Ozigos *Dacryodes buettnerii*, as well as many shade-tolerant species).

- **Vegetation Type C:** Moderately steep hills and ridges between 500-700m; these forests are transitional hill forests and submontane forests. Such hills are rarely found so far to the west, and could show interesting features of endemism; however they have not been inventoried.
- **Vegetation Type D:** In the north east there are 4-5,000 ha of so-called 'old-growth forest', with a strong dominance of Caesalpiaceae, Myristicaceae and Olacaceae, which are typical of relatively undisturbed areas. Approximately half of this area has been logged at least once, very selectively, in the last 50 years.
- **Vegetation Type E:** The River Movingui (up to 50m wide) runs east to west through the concession and gives rise to dramatic waterfalls at the point where the plateau meets the sedimentary plains. It divides into two great branches below the falls on the flat coastal plain, and spreads downstream into a large delta (swamps, lakes and coastal lagoons). Seasonally flooded forests of Rikio *Uapaca sp.*, *Hymenostegia* and *Gilbertiodendron* are found along the river with large areas of swamps and *Raphia* palm.

Besides the major vegetation types noted above, there are several endangered or protected tree species, including three species classified by IUCN as EN (Endangered) - the Douka *Tieghemella africana*, the Izombe *Testulea gabonensis* and Pau Rosa *Swartzia fistuloides*). These species are scattered throughout the concession, but there is a particular concentration of Douka and Pau Rosa in Zone D (north-west of the concession).

Mammals: The analysis for Concession 101 is based on a wildlife assessment dated 2004, by the NGO 'Gaberoon Wild'. The methodology was not published but the map data are very clear: the concession has low densities of mammals such as elephants *Loxodonta africana* (VU), buffalo *Syncerus caffer* (LC), and occasional presence of primates including chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (EN) and Black colobus *Colobus satanas* (VU). The named species are all completely protected from hunting under Gaberoon Law. According to the study, the indices of all these animals are concentrated along the River Movingui. In 2009 a population of 20-30 chimpanzees was reported to use forests in Zone D by Professor Norbert Fruidemer, a zoologist from CIRAD working in the neighbouring Kuttit&Kwik concession. Elephants are also reported to feed in fields and fallows near populated areas in the south and west of the concession, where the local villagers sometimes shoot them. Scoping surveys by Mr Hirsute showed abundant evidence of hunting (shotgun cartridges, traps) especially south of the river and in forest type A.

Reptiles and birds: The same 'Gaberoon Wild' assessment noted the presence of three species of crocodiles in the Movingui River: the African Gharial *Crocodylus cataphractus* (DD), Dwarf Crocodile *Osteolaemus tetraspis* (VU), and the Nile crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* (LC). No doubt the area is also rich in snakes and amphibians. According to the literature search, no studies of birds have been performed in the area. The presence of endangered birds is therefore unknown.

Socio-economic study:

A socio-economic study was completed by qualified members of AfricOil's Company social team, who speak the local dialect. This was based on official censuses, and meetings in each village, where the village chief and notables led a discussion and invited participation by the assembled villagers. The villages practice small-scale cash crop agriculture for their economic needs, and subsistence agriculture supplemented by hunting, fishing and gathering for their basic food needs. Almost all farming activities occur within 5km of permanent villages, but some families set up seasonal camps deep into the concession, especially in Zone A, to clear forest for slash and burn agriculture. Hunting is essentially unregulated; smaller ungulates such as duiker and forest antelope, as well as porcupines and pangolins are the most frequent hunted species, and are mainly hunted within 5-10 km (a day's walk) of the village, but all kinds of primates are also taken.

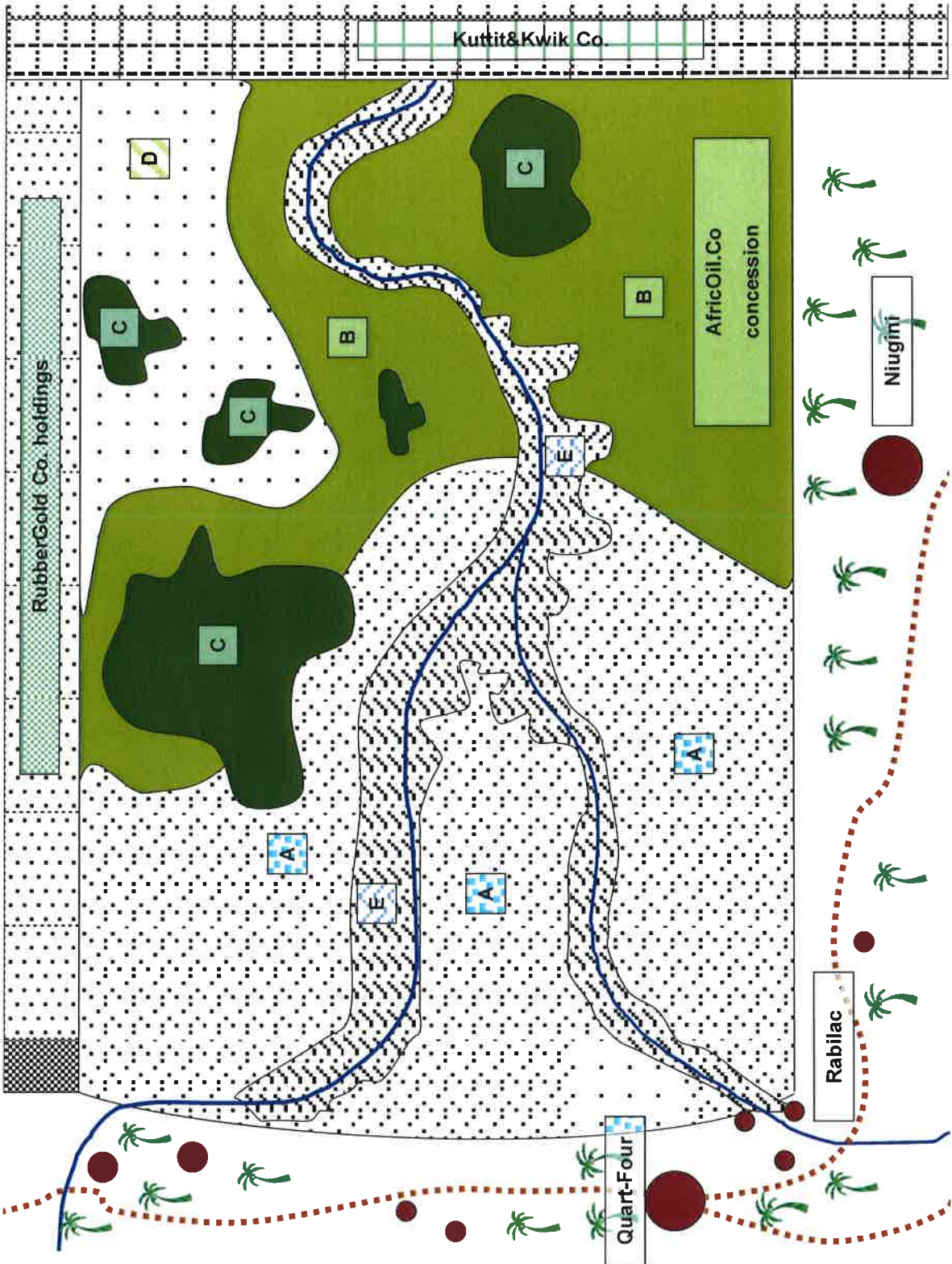
The villages of Niugini and Quart-Four are mainly populated by an ethnic group from Southeast Congo, brought there since the 1940s for logging. These villages are also the most economically dynamic in the area, with larger and more diverse farms, and some villagers are believed to operate a significant commercial hunting trade as

far as the country's capital. The other villages have a stronger cultural attachment to the forest, including sites of traditional worship especially along the river, at the waterfalls, and a few caves in the steep slopes between zones A and B. The village of Rabilac specializes in fishing and most men spend several months of the year in fishing camps within the concession; these villagers consider the Nile crocodile to be their ancestor; they consider crocodile meat to be taboo, and they collect crocodile eggs for annual ritual feasts.

HCV* ²	Description
1	HCV 1 - Species diversity. Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered* species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels.
1.1	Protected areas
1.2	Concentrations of threatened or endangered species
1.3	Concentrations of endemic species
1.3	Temporal concentrations of species
2	HCV 2 - Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics. Large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.
3	HCV 3 - Ecosystems and habitats. Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia.
4	HCV 4 - Critical ecosystem services. Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.
4.1	Areas critical to water catchments
4.2	Areas critical to erosion control
4.3	Areas providing barriers to destructive fire
5	HCV 5 - Community needs. Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with these communities or indigenous peoples.
6	HCV 6 - Cultural values. Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or indigenous peoples
6.1	Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance
6.2	Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of critical importance for the traditional cultures of local communities

² HCV Global definitions from the revised FSC Standard V5.0, developed with the participation of the HCV Resource Network, and subheadings from the Global HCV Toolkit, adapted to the updated HCV definitions

HCV	Pres/Abs/ Potential	Justification
1.1		
1.2		
1.3		
1.4		
2		
3		
4.1		
4.2		
4.3		
5		
6.1		
6.2		



Group exercise 2

Assessing HCVs in AfricOil's Gaberoon concession –TRAINER GUIDANCE

Day 1:

Instructor: RSPO-Approved Assessor; TP Expert

Email:

Phone:

Group composition:

If the Exercise 1 groups worked well, stick with these but make the groups change rapporteur. You may decide to have biodiversity and social groups separately – be flexible and adjust timing to suit the level of competence.

Timing: 1.5 – 2hrs

- 1) Data gap analysis: 20 minutes
- 2) Meeting RSPO NPP guidelines: 10 minutes
- 3) Assessment methods: 40 minutes
- 4) Plenary feedback and discussion – allow 10 minutes per group and 20 minutes for plenary discussions

The purpose of this exercise is to devise robust, credible and defensible HCV assessment methods. You need to ensure that the groups cover all the HCVs and present practical solutions to each problem. Some indicators are provided to help you:

- 1) HCV 3: Habitat description (i.e. HCV 3 data) is probably adequate but groups could add remote sensing analysis for better mapping. Additional surveys might be needed in the hilly areas (standard botanical inventory methods).
- 2) Fauna data is notably deficient and the methods were inadequate. The precautionary principle would say that many more species have not been discovered, and that the species that are known may well be more widespread than the data suggest. A good faunal survey is needed, based on linear or recce transects. Assessors may defend an assessment of absolute densities (difficult and expensive), but an encounter rate giving the relative abundance and distribution of key species would be a very good start. At the very minimum, mammal and bird data should be collected in situ. Data on other groups may be collected in situ or derived from regional species lists. Fish and freshwater fauna collection is very important in this context (likely biodiversity importance and dependence on fisheries)
- 3) Ecosystem services need to be determined together with the social surveys and mapping, together with a hydrological survey (including water quality and river dynamics), slope and soil mapping.
- 4) Social surveys to date do not meet RSPO requirements. The survey needs to be redone by an independent assessment team and should include household interviews, focus groups with key population segments (e.g. women, hunters, healers, farmers etc. as well as headmen). A participatory mapping process is essential. An FPIC process should follow or run in parallel to the HCV assessment.
- 5) Results of the different surveys should be submitted to a consultation process at the local and provincial/national level, and ideally to a peer review process.

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For this exercise, you will use the description of the area from Exercise 1 to explore good practices for assessing HCVs. You should use the summary of 'important features of the Gaberoon HCV Toolkit' to finalise the interpretation of results, as far as possible.

You will present and discuss your results in plenary.

Group tasks:

- 1) Analyse the gaps in the data and data collection methods for each HVC (you can draw up a table if it helps) – guideline: 20 minutes
- 2) Decide whether data collected meets the RSPO requirements for the New Planting Procedure. – guideline: 10 minutes
- 3) For each HCV *either* justify why no further data are needed before a management decision is made for planting palm *or* devise an assessment plan for collecting sufficient data for a decision. If you have time, provide *approximate* resources and time required to reach an actionable decision (40 minutes).

Important note: What will you do to validate your results?

For each HCV, and according to your best available knowledge, MAP the HCVs you have agreed on, on a large sheet of paper, to present back to the group. (You can also use this map to discuss areas that you would like to investigate further with different methods).

Remember that for each HCV you need to know the LOCATION, EXTENT and STATUS of the value. This is what you will use to design HCV Management Areas and monitoring steps in the next exercise.

Group exercise 3

Managing and monitoring HCVs in AfricOil's Gaberoon concession

Day 2:

Instructor: RSPO-Approved Assessor; TP Expert

Email:

Phone:

You will use your expert knowledge of the HCVs in AfricOil's concession to devise a spatial plan and a set of management and monitoring practices which meet the goals of RSPO's standard.

For the purposes of this exercise, the following key HCV decisions were made based on the further studies you recommended in Exercise 2. You should spend the first five minutes of this exercise mapping these decisions.

HCV 1.2 and HCV 1.3:

- Chimpanzees are restricted mainly to the 'old growth' forests and rarely venture into the logged over areas, although they have been seen in the flooded forest in Zone B and in the submontane forests. They never cross south of the Movingui River.
- Several large mammals including elephants and buffalo appear to have been hunted out in these forests since the previous survey, since no trace of them was found in a systematic fauna survey.
- Colobus monkeys are more frequent than was thought, but restrict themselves to inaccessible forest areas including the swampy zones, steeper cliffs and submontane areas.
- The forests support a rich bird fauna, typical of the region. A national icon, the grey-necked rockfowl *Picathartes oreas* was found in area D and at the waterfalls, where it nests in rocky areas. This was highlighted by national experts as being of exceptional conservation interest.

HCV 1.4:

- The seasonally flooded forests are important spawning areas for fish swimming upstream from the delta.

HCV 4:

- All the local villagers use rivers and streams for their daily water use and have no wells or pumps.
- The steep slopes between Zones A and B are on highly erodible soils and are likely to be severely impacted by clearance.

HCV 5 and 6:

- Generally speaking the natural resources collected by villagers come from the 5km band nearest their village, with some hunting and collecting deeper in the forest. They do not want industrial palm within 5km of the villages. Generally speaking they are willing to accept compensation for traditional lands and activities beyond the 5km band, subject to a suitable FPIC procedure.
- Villagers have collectively identified 5 sites of critical cultural significance (1-10 ha each) across all of Zones A, and in Zone B south of the river, that may not be converted.
- The people of Rabilac are extremely worried about their fisheries and the survival of their totem animal, the crocodile.

Group tasks:

- 1) Map the final HCV areas as best you can (5 minutes)
- 2) Discuss and prioritise the threats to each HCV in terms of severity and urgency, from the company's plans and from external sources (20 minutes)
- 3) Devise a spatial plan (HCV Management Areas and suitable areas for palm plantation) that is likely to maintain or enhance the HCVs that were identified. If you still cannot make a decision, then outline the principles that you would use and the additional data that you need to finalise the decision (20 minutes).
- 4) For each HCV, set out the appropriate management activities and decide who should be involved in decision-making and in implementation (20 minutes).
- 5) If you make good progress with these tasks, also add the monitoring recommendations.

Who should be consulted in finalising these plans?

You will present your results back in Plenary.

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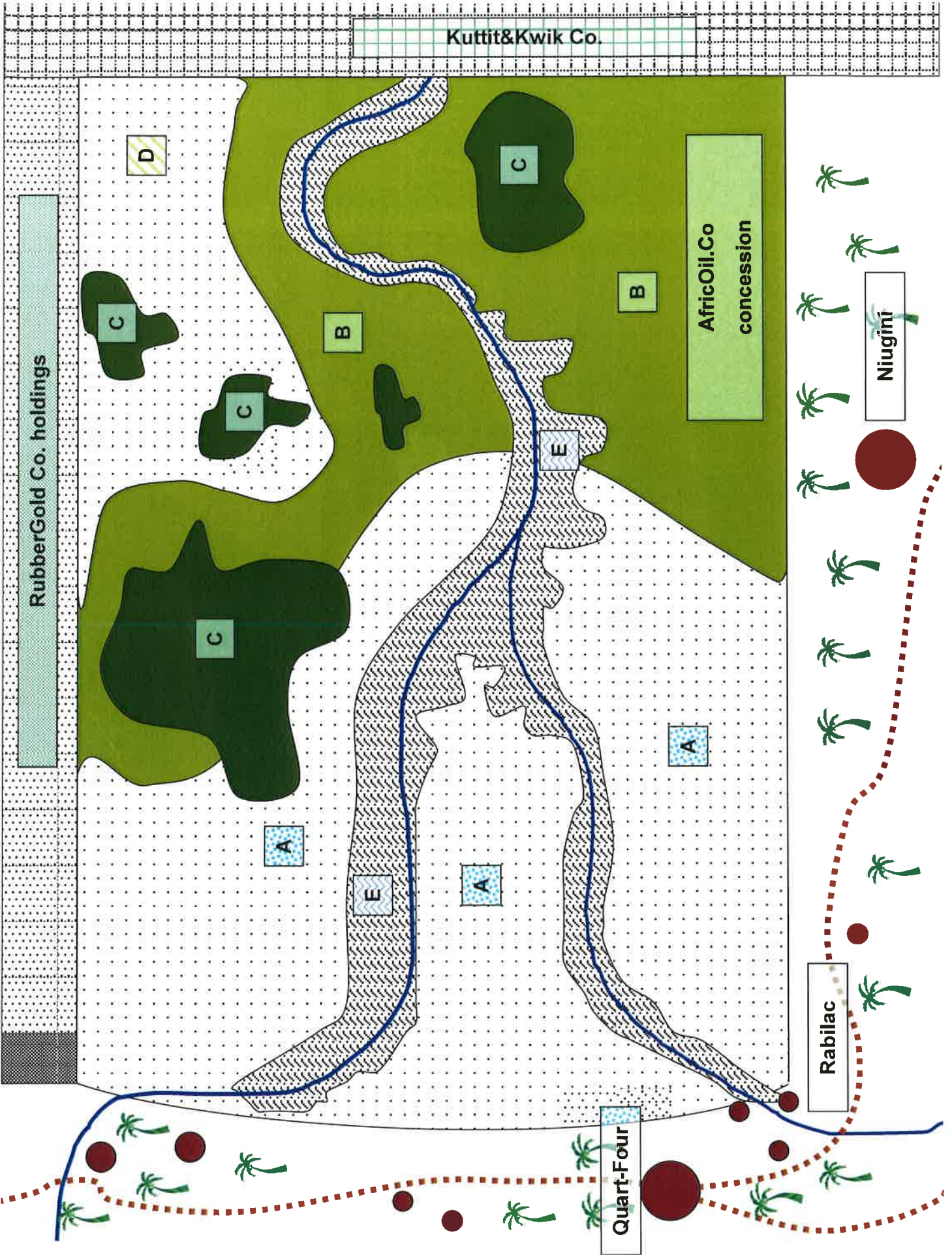
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You will present your results back in Plenary.



Kuttit&Kwik Co.

RubberGold Co. holdings

AfricOil.Co
concession

Quart-Four

Rabilac

Niugini

D

C

C

C

A

E

A

B

B

E

C

A

