

Terms of Reference

Pass/fail Process and Review Template for Standalone HCSA Assessment Reports

1. Introduction

The No Deforestation Task Force (NDTF) was established shortly after the acceptance of the Principles & Criteria 2018 (P&C 2018) in order to provide guidance and procedures for the implementation of Criteria 7.12 of the P&C 2018.

Indicator 7.12.2 mentions the identification of HCS forests using the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) v2.0 toolkit, where members are required to conduct either a standalone HCSA or an Integrated HCV-HCSA assessment (depending on scenario) prior to any land clearing after 15 November 2018. While HCV-HCSA assessments are required to undergo the HCVRN ALS Quality Assurance process; which includes a pass/fail mechanism for assessments reports, standalone HCSA assessments undergo a peer review process by the reviewers engaged by the HCSA.

The existing HCSA peer review process does not include a pass/fail mechanism as part of its process, opting instead to provide recommendations which may be unclear to the quality/usability of the assessment for the purpose of New Planting Procedure (NPPs) submissions. This causes issues as:

- a) Since recommendations do not result in a pass/fail marking, it is possible that there are peer reviewed HCSA assessments not meeting HCSA toolkit requirements being used for NPP submission.
- b) RSPO already includes a review process by RSPO Secretariat (refer figure 1) to ensure completeness of the NPP submission. The current HCSA peer review process would require addition of another layer of review by an external expert (for quality review) prior to the NPP submission causing delays to the NPP process.

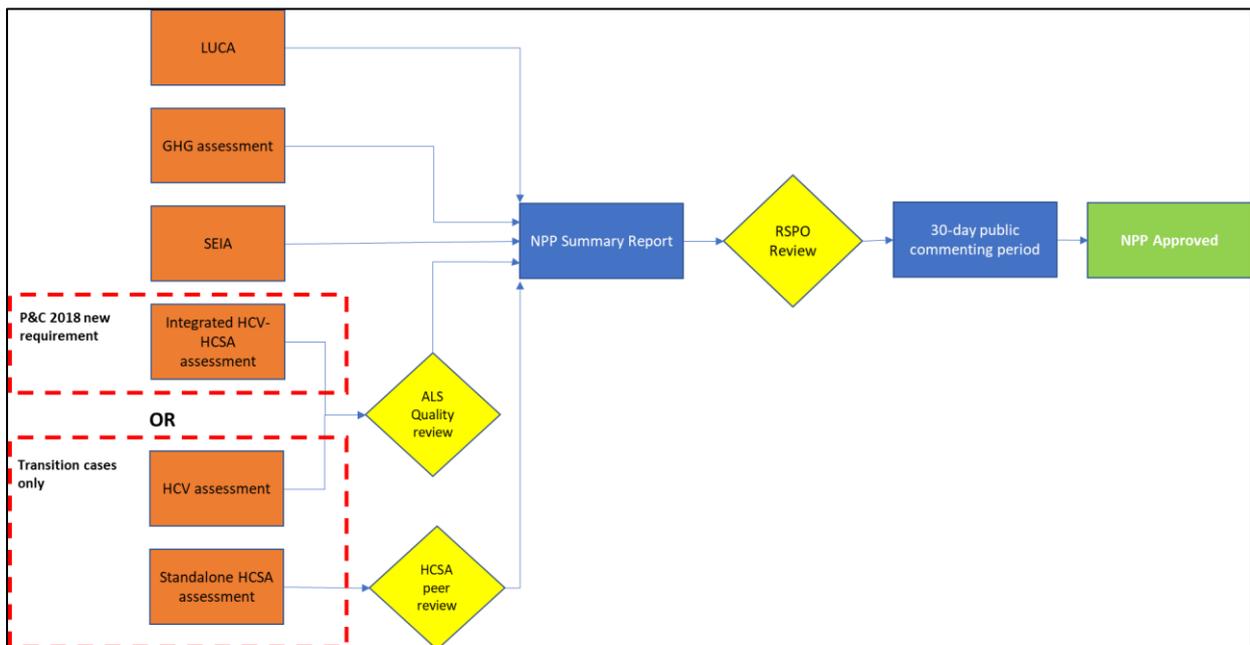


Figure 1: Simplification of NPP process

The RSPO propose work together with the HCSA to revise the HCSA peer reviewers' template to include a pass/fail mechanism for the forest identification section, and clear categorisation of the follow up measures/requirements for each recommendation depending on the severity of the issues found. This will provide a clear guidance for RSPO reviewers on the compulsory measures required prior to NPP submission.

The pass/fail mechanism for the forest identification section is currently being undertaken by the HCSA. The purpose of the consultancy in this ToR is to revise the remaining sections as per item 2 above.

2. Main Purpose

Revision of the existing HCSA peer reviewers' template for standalone HCSA assessments which shall provide clearer a guidance to ensure that new land clearings by RSPO members comply with the P&C 2018 and the HCSA toolkit by providing:

- a) A clear and verifiable process (what/who/when/how – including the related review template) to determine when a peer reviewed standalone HCSA assessment report is ready to be used in the NPP
- b) Clear guidance to RSPO members on what is required to be compliant with P&C 2018 and HCSA toolkit prior to submitting the NPP.
- c) Clarity for RSPO Secretariat in approving/rejecting NPPs submitted and on what will be the scope of post-NPP monitoring during the development phase.
- d) Clarity for Certification Bodies (CBs) when verifying that the final development plan and management & monitoring plans as per the approved NPP are adhered to during development phase.

The revised template shall be used for all new standalone HCSA assessments which are submitted to the HCSA for the Peer Review process for the purpose of NPP submissions.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant shall engage with both NDTF & HCSA throughout the contract period to ensure a mutual understanding of both the revised review process and reviewers' template. The work(s) shall include the following:

- a) Incorporate the pass/fail mechanism of the forest identification section [as developed by HCSA]
- b) Revise process of the remaining sections to categorise the follow up measures required for each respective recommendation depending on severity of findings. Proposed categorisation as following:
 - i. **Revise assessment** – For critical gaps causing clear non-compliance to the HCSA toolkit and cannot be resolved post assessment.
 - ii. **Submit verification documents** – Gaps that can be resolved post assessment, however, require documented evidence prior to development.

- iii. **Submit plan addressing issues** – Gaps found within the assessment which can be resolved through mitigation/management & monitoring/negotiation post assessment.
- c) Crosscheck with HCV-HCSA quality review guidance to ensure alignment with HCV-HCSA manual.

The consultant is required to provide a progress update every two (2) weeks to both the NDTF and the HCSA secretariat during the contract period.

4. Expected Outputs

The consultant shall develop a pass/fail process and review template for standalone HCSA assessment reports intended for the NPP. The works shall be broken down according to the following progress milestone:

- a) Milestone A: Submission of 1st draft of the revised documents to the NDTF & HCSA secretariat
- b) Milestone B: Submission of the final document based on input provided by both the NDTF and HCSA secretariat.

5. Payment terms

Payment shall be done by two (2) progress payments, being:

- a) 1st progress payment: USD 2,000/- upon 30 days of completion of milestone A.
- b) 2nd progress payment: USD 500/- per man day limited to a maximum of four (4) man days, within 30 days upon completion of milestone B.

6. Timeline

The consultant shall ensure the completion of the works as below:

- a) Milestone A: Within one (1) month from commencement of contract
- b) Milestone B: Within three (3) months from commencement of contract

7. Proposal submission requirements

Applicants may submit their expression of interest to the RSPO Secretariat by emailing their CV or company profile to tender@rspo.org by **6PM MYT (GMT +8) 3 March 2020**.