

The High Carbon Stock Approach: 'No Deforestation' in Practice

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Tropical forests hold large stores of carbon, are packed full of important biodiversity, and are critical for millions of people from indigenous and local communities who depend on forests for their livelihoods. Companies that have been converting tropical forests to plantations for commodities like palm oil or paper have come under increasing pressure to prove their operations and supply chains are not causing deforestation.

Defining deforestation is complex, as it has to factor in carbon and climate, biodiversity and local communities. However, the urgency to halt deforestation increases every day as more and more of our irreplaceable forests are destroyed.

The High Carbon Stock Approach is a methodology to identify areas of land suitable for plantation development and forest areas that can be protected in the long term. The methodology was originally developed by Greenpeace, The Forest Trust (TFT) and Golden Agri-Resources (GAR), and is now governed and will be further refined by a multi-stakeholder body called the High Carbon Stock Approach Steering Group. NGOs including Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature, Rainforest Action Network and Forest Peoples Program, palm oil companies like Cargill, GAR, New Britain Palm Oil, Agropalma and Wilmar, pulp-and-paper company Asian Pulp and Paper, and TFT all actively participate in this process.

The HCS approach is designed to protect and restore viable areas of natural tropical forests within landscapes undergoing forest conversion for plantations and agriculture, while ensuring the land use rights and livelihoods of traditional communities are secured.

HCS Forest Methodology

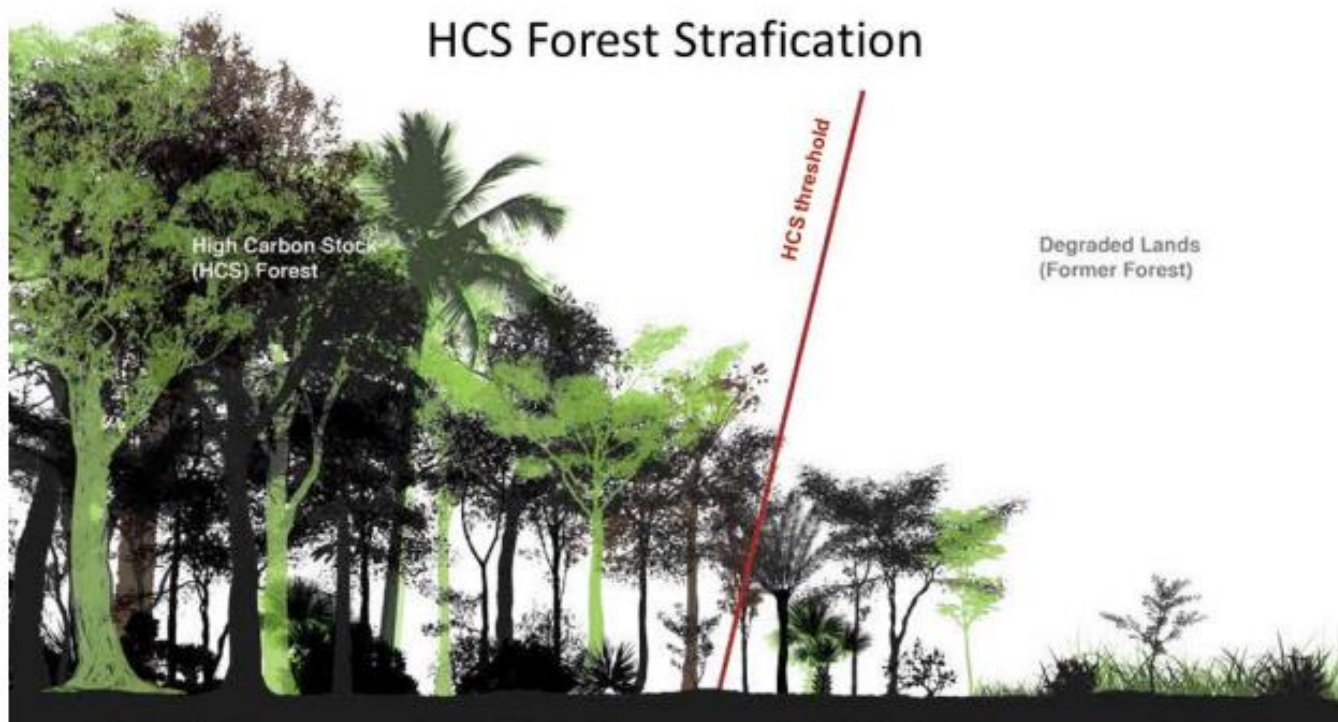
The methodology distinguishes natural forest areas from degraded lands (former forest) that now contain only small trees, shrubs or grasses. HCS forests store a lot of carbon that would be released if converted into plantations, as well as having rich biodiversity values.

The first phase of the HCS Approach uses high quality satellite images of a concession together with ground plots to divide vegetation into classes to identify potential HCS forest areas. Degraded areas that are not HCS forest that may be able to be developed to balance social and economic needs are also identified. Traditional communities need to give their Free, Prior and Informed Consent for HCS forest conservation, just as they do for any areas that are developed for commercial purposes.

Areas in the lower vegetation classes (low carbon and biodiversity), such as shrub and grassland can be considered for conversion into plantations. This means that areas with young regenerating forest and secondary forest containing more carbon and higher biodiversity are considered HCS, and tagged for conservation.

The next phase is to identify viable forest patches that can be maintained or revert to their ecological function as forests. This begins with a participatory mapping process with communities to identify their land uses such as gardens.

Then conservation science principles are used to assess forest patch size, shape, 'core' area, connectivity to other forest areas, including those adjacent to a concession, and biodiversity values in smaller patches. HCS forest areas are then integrated with High Conservation Value (HCV) areas, peat land, riparian (streamside) zones and other areas for protection to propose a conservation plan for the concession. The final phase is gaining the consent and support of traditional and local communities for the forest conservation and the ongoing management and protection.



POTENTIAL HCS AREAS				MAY BE DEVELOPED	
High-Density Forest Remnant forest or advanced secondary forest close to primary condition	Medium Density Forest Remnant forest but more disturbed	Low Density Forest Appears to be remnant forest but highly disturbed and recovering	Young Regenerating Forest Mostly young regrowth forest, but with occasional patches of older forest	Scrub Recently cleared areas, some woody regrowth and grass-like ground cover	Cleared/Open Land Very recently cleared land with mostly grass or crops, few woody plants

Putting the HCS Approach to Work

The HCS Approach is now a practical and robust tool used by plantation companies that have made a commitment to exclude deforestation from their supply chains. Cargill, Wilmar, Asian Agri, Musim Mas, Golden Agri Resources in Indonesia and GVL in Liberia, and consumer companies like Unilever, Nestlé, L'Oréal, Delhaize, Kellogg's, Procter & Gamble, and Johnson & Johnson are all using the HCS Approach to put their ambitious commitments in practice.

Greenpeace calls on all companies involved in the palm oil industry to commit to 'No Deforestation' and implement a Forest Conservation Policy that protects forests and peat land areas while also respecting the rights of indigenous people and local communities. Companies must implement an immediate moratorium on any clearance of potential HCS forest and all peat land areas, and demand the same from their third party suppliers.

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