



Forest Stewardship Council®



# Guidance for Standard Development Groups: Developing National High Conservation Value Frameworks

FSC-GUI-60-009 V1-0 EN

**Title:** Guidance for Standard Development Groups: Developing National High Conservation Value Frameworks

**Document code:** FSC-GUI-60-009 V1-0 EN

**Approval:** FSC Board of Directors

**Contact for comments:** FSC International Center  
- Performance and Standards Unit -  
Adenauerallee 134  
53113 Bonn, Germany

 +49-(0)228-36766-0

 +49-(0)228-36766-30

 [psu@fsc.org](mailto:psu@fsc.org)

© 2020 Forest Stewardship Council, A.C. All rights reserved.

No part of this work covered by the publisher's copyright may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means (graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, recording taping, or information retrieval systems) without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed copies of this document are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy on the FSC website ([www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)) to ensure you are referring to the latest version.

**Guidance for Standard Development Groups:  
Developing National High Conservation Value Frameworks**

FSC-GUI-60-009 V1-0 EN

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is that the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	3
List of Figures .....	4
1 Preamble .....	5
1.1 Context and Objective .....	5
1.2 Scope .....	5
1.3 Objectives of National HCV Frameworks .....	5
1.4 FSC Network Roles and Responsibilities .....	7
1.5 Normative Aspects of HCV Guidance .....	9
1.6 How FSC Performance and Standards Unit assess HCV Frameworks .....	10
1.7 Effective Date and Validity Dates .....	11
1.8 References .....	11
2 Instructions for SDGs for using the Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks .....	12
2.1 Terminology .....	12
2.2 General Instructions .....	13
2.3 Identification of High Conservation Values .....	15
2.4 Assessment of High Conservation Values .....	17
2.5 Management Strategies to Maintain and / or Enhance HCVs .....	18
2.6 Monitoring High Conservation Values .....	20
3 General HCV Guidance for SDGs .....	22
3.1 Support for HCVs Throughout the FSC's Principles and Criteria .....	22
3.2 Methodology for the Maintenance and/or Enhancement of HCVs .....	23
3.3 Key Elements of the HCV Methodology .....	24
3.4 The use of Experts .....	24
3.5 Precautionary Approach .....	25
3.6 Applying a Risk Based Approach .....	25
3.7 Incorporating Risk into National HCV Frameworks .....	27
3.8 Precautionary Practices .....	28
Annex 1: Notes on development of this Guidance .....	31

## List of Figures

Figure 1. FSC Normative Framework aligned with the HCV Framework .....	6
Figure 2: HCV Guidance and Support Documents .....	8
Figure 3. Complementary roles in developing and using the HCV Framework .....	9
Figure 4. Sample Designations and Best Available Information for HCV-1 .....	15
Figure 5. Management Strategies to be considered by Standard Developers for the maintenance and / or enhancement of HCVs.....	20
Figure 6. Case Study of Adaptive Management of Darwin's Fox in Chile .....	21
Figure 7. Support for HCV Protection throughout the FSC's Principles and Criteria .....	22
Figure 8. The HCV methodology .....	23
Figure 9: Key Elements of the HCV methodology .....	24
Figure 10. Risk as Function of Probability and Consequence.....	26
Figure 11. Relative Protection Required for Conservation Values .....	27
Figure 12. Risk-Based Approach to HCV Assessments .....	28
Figure 13. Case Study of Smallholders and Risk in Tasmania .....	30

# 1 Preamble

## 1.1 Context and Objective

Principle 9 requires extra safeguards and extra levels of protection, additional to those already provided under other FSC's Principles and Criteria, by requiring:

- Greater efforts to identify and assess High Conservation Values (HCVs) including environmental and social values not covered elsewhere in the FSC's Principles and Criteria;
- Respect the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of affected rights holders;
- Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, local communities, stakeholders and experts;
- Management strategies that include, at times, full protection; and
- Rigorous monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the management strategies and the maintenance, enhancement and / or restoration of HCVs.

This Guidance directs Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to develop National HCV Frameworks, consistent with the normative requirements of the International Generic Indicators.

Specifically, this Guidance provides detailed instructions and guidance to SDGs to develop National HCV Frameworks so that forest managers of FSC certified Management Units can:

- Assess the presence of each HCV;
- Engage with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other stakeholders;
- Develop and implement strategies and action plans for maintaining and/or enhancing HCVs;
- Monitor the impacts of forest operations on HCVs; and
- Ensure these strategies and monitoring are consistent with a risk-based approach.

## 1.2 Scope

This Guidance is written to support SDGs in the development of National HCV Frameworks and aims to clarify the specific requirements for the identification, management planning, operations, monitoring and restoration of HCVs in FSC certified forests.

## 1.3 Objectives of National HCV Frameworks

This Guidance accompanies FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks*, to be used by SDGs to complete their National HCV Frameworks that are intended to provide nationally- or regionally-specific:

- Interpretations of the six HCV categories;
- Methodologies to support the identification, protection and monitoring of HCVs; and
- Best Available Information (BAI) for identifying, protecting and monitoring HCVs.

HCV Frameworks also provide an opportunity to clarify how measures to address HCVs relate to recent changes and developments in the FSC system. For example, FSC-GUI-30-003 *Guidelines for the implementation of the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)* is included in FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks* lists of Best Available Information that Standard Developers are to consider and adapt in their National HCV Frameworks. Intact Forest Landscapes and landscape-level cultural values are also addressed in FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks*.

The Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks can also be used to indicate where expectations for the use of Best Available Information may be adjusted, proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk or management activities. Likewise, FSC-PRO-30-006 *Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstrations and Market Tools* proposes approaches for monitoring that may also be useful in the HCV context and can be considered by Standard Developers. If forest managers employ these they may provide access to market benefits of ecosystem services certification.

HCV National Interpretations or Toolkits may exist for some regions or countries, and those should also be observed when drafting National HCV Frameworks.

The National HCV Framework is part of the broader normative framework as illustrated in Figure 1:

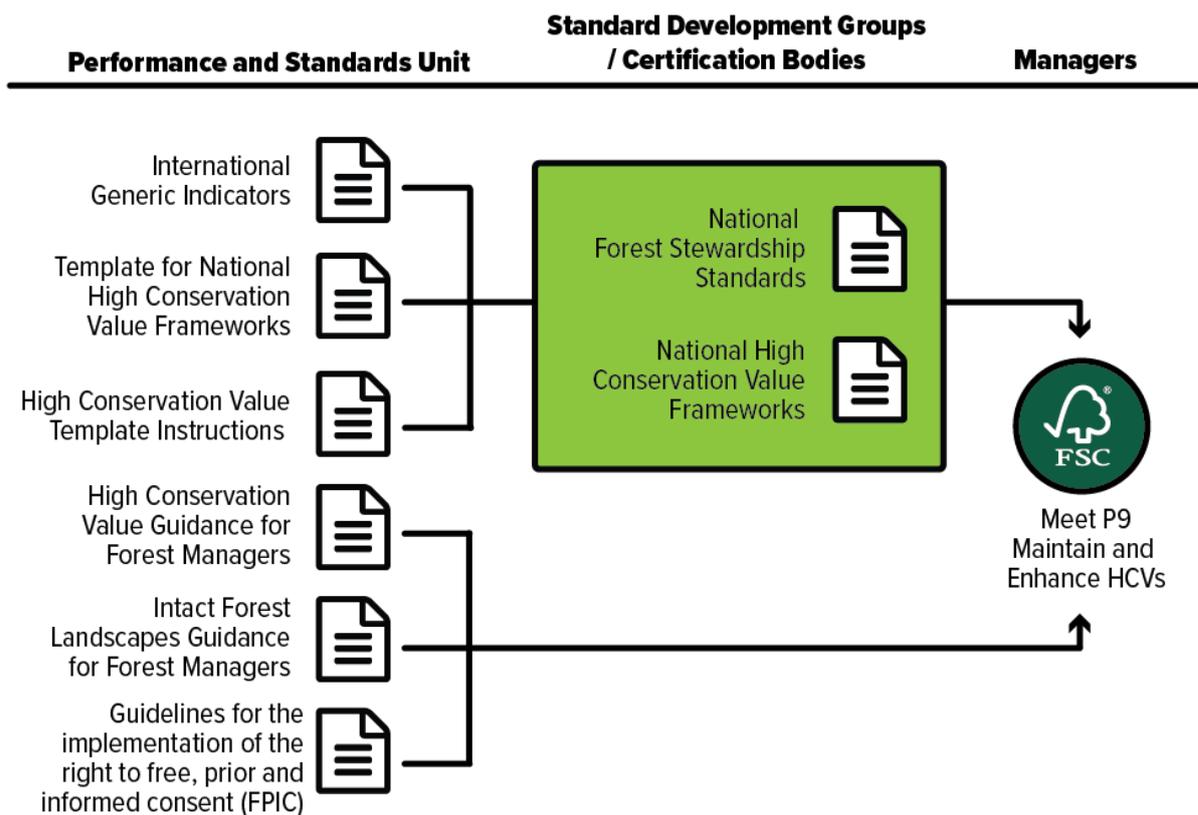


Figure 1. FSC Normative Framework aligned with the HCV Framework

## **1.4 FSC Network Roles and Responsibilities**

A number of different documents are used to provide guidance across the FSC Network on the effective implementation of Principle 9, including the development of National HCV Frameworks, as follows in Figure 2:

Author	Document	Audience	Purpose
HCV Technical Working Group	 Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks	SDGs/CBs	Provides structure for SDGs to develop national HCV Frameworks
	 High Conservation Value Template Instructions	SDGs/CBs	Describes how to use the HCV Template to produce the national HCV Framework Introduces risk based approach, empowers SDGs to set thresholds and links directly to existing tools as examples Provides a cross reference to HCV Guidance for Forest Managers and IFL Guidance for Forest Managers
	 High Conservation Value Guidance for Forest Managers	Managers	Tells Managers how to identify, assess, maintain and/or enhance and monitor HCVs Includes specific Guidance for Small, Medium and Large Managers developed in collaboration with Smallholder / New Approaches / Motion 83 Working Groups.
	 Intact Forest Landscapes Guidance for Forest Managers	Managers	Tells Managers how to implement FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators to protect Intact Forest Landscapes
SDGs / CBs	 National High Conservation Value Frameworks	Managers / Stakeholders Certification Bodies	Tells Managers how to conduct HCV Assessment to maintain and/or enhance HCVs Provides the basis for conformity assessments

Figure 2: HCV Guidance and Support Documents

The identification, protection and enhancement of HCVs are shared responsibilities across the FSC Network. Figure 3 summarizes the complementary roles and responsibilities in developing and using the HCV Frameworks:

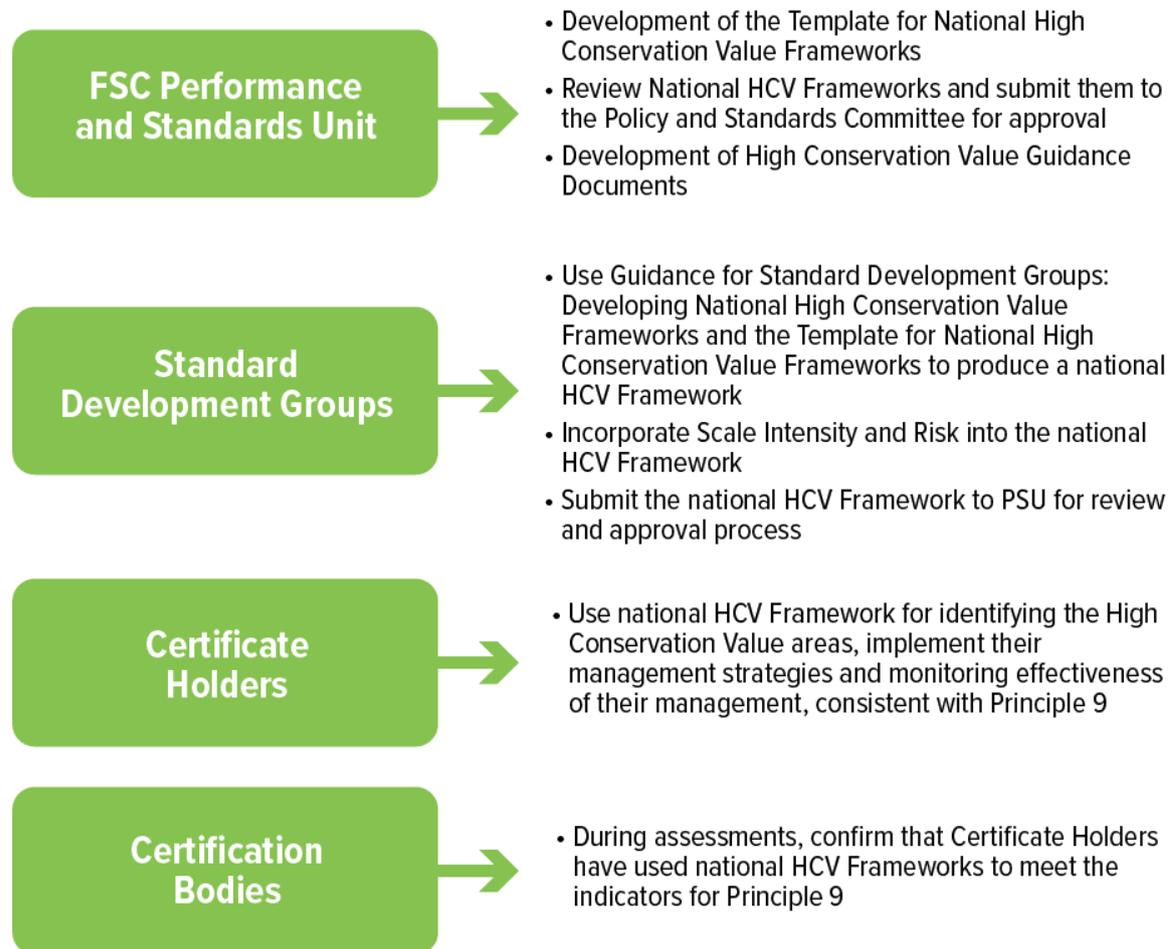


Figure 3. Complementary roles in developing and using the HCV Framework

## 1.5 Normative Aspects of HCV Guidance

FSC frequently produces guidance material in support of its Standards, Policies and Procedures, often referencing or even quoting those sources. For the sake of clarity, any FSC Policy, Standard or Procedural requirement referenced or quoted in a guidance document retains its normative status.

This guidance is, by definition, informative and not normative. However, in order to maintain consistency across the global network, and to ensure that Standard Developers and Managers understand their respective responsibilities, in the context of HCVs the following elements are normative:

- Standard Developers shall complete National HCV Frameworks;
- Standard Developers shall consider FSC’s Guidance for Standard Development Groups: Developing National High Conservation Value Frameworks including FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks* when developing their National HCV Framework; and
- Forest Managers shall meet the requirements of the approved National HCV Framework, as included in the approved national standard.

Standard Developers may develop a National HCV Framework using a different format. Use of the FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks* is not required but shall be used for guidance.

## 1.6 How FSC Performance and Standards Unit assess HCV Frameworks

PSU checks that National HCV Frameworks are informed by this Guidance for Standard Development Groups: Developing National High Conservation Value Frameworks and that they are clearly targeted to the certificate holder.

In addition, PSU checks that National HCV Frameworks are:

- Complete: FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks* shall be used for the identification and assessment of each HCV category, including a description of Best Available Information, stakeholders to engage, strategies for maintaining and/or enhancing HCVs and monitoring.
- Measurable: The National HCV Frameworks shall specify measurable outcomes or thresholds of performance;
- Achievable: The National HCV Frameworks shall support the maintenance and/or enhancement of HCVs. National HCV Frameworks shall not favor a particular technology or patented item and should be realistic to achieve;
- Relevant: National HCV Frameworks shall only include elements that contribute to achieving the requirements of Principle 9.
- Tangible: National HCV Frameworks shall be written using a clear and consistent vocabulary, free from subjective elements. The use of such phrases as “ordinarily”, “substantial”, “proactive”, “appropriate to”, “minimize”, “wherever possible”, “thorough” or “best available” should be avoided

PSU also checks that the requirements are structured in a way that is consistent with the FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks* so that the forest managers and certification bodies can record the conformity assessments and target potential Corrective Action Requests. Once this check is completed satisfactorily, PSU recommends approval of the National HCV Frameworks to the Policy and Standards Committee who undertake a technical review on behalf of the Board of Directors.

## 1.7 Effective Date and Validity Dates

Approval date	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Publication date	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Effective date	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Period of validity	Until replaced or withdrawn

## 1.8 References

The following referenced documents are essential for the application of this document. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

<i>FSC-STD-01-001</i>	<i>FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</i>
<i>FSC-STD-01-002</i>	<i>FSC Glossary of Terms</i>
<i>FSC-STD-01-003</i>	<i>SLIMF Eligibility Criteria</i>
<i>FSC-STD-20-006</i>	<i>Stakeholder consultation for forest evaluations</i>
<i>FSC-STD-20-007</i>	<i>Forest management evaluations</i>
<i>FSC-STD-30-005</i>	<i>FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups</i>
<i>FSC-STD-30-010</i>	<i>FSC Controlled Wood Standard For Forest Management Enterprises (2006)</i>
<i>FSC-STD-60-004</i>	<i>International Generic Indicators</i>
<i>FSC-PRO-30-006</i>	<i>Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact demonstration and market tools</i>
<i>FSC-GUI-30-003</i>	<i>FSC guidelines for the implementation of the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)</i>
<i>FSC-GUI-60-002</i>	<i>Guideline for Standard Developers for addressing risk of unacceptable activities in regard to scale and intensity</i>
<i>FSC-GUI-30-009</i>	<i>High Conservation Value Guidance for Forest Managers</i>
<i>FSC-GUI-30-010</i>	<i>Intact Forest Landscape Guidance for Forest Managers</i>
<i>FSC-PRO-60-010</i>	<i>Incorporating a Risk-Based Approach in National Forest Stewardship Standards</i>

## 2 Instructions for SDGs for using the Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks

### 2.1 Terminology

This Guide provides both normative instructions for SDGs as well as informative Guidance on how to develop HCV Frameworks.

Instructions for Standard Developers provide specific directions that shall be considered in developing HCV Frameworks. The compulsory nature of each Instruction is reflected in its language, expressed according to the ISO 'verbal forms for the expression of provisions':

- "shall": indicates Instructions strictly to be followed.

Orange boxes contain normative language from the Principles and Criteria and International Generic Indicators

Non-normative Guidance for Standard Developers provides general directions that may be considered in developing the National HCV Framework. The informative nature of Guidance is reflected in its language expressed according to the ISO 'verbal forms for the expression of provisions':

- "should": indicates possibilities that Standard Developers can implement in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.
- "may": indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the standard.
- "can": is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

Guidance, on the other hand, is non-normative and is intended to:

- Explain the intent of the FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks*, for example how to complete a specific section; and
- Introduce key terms and concepts that require national adaptation such as 'best available information'.

Where the definitions provided in the FSC-STD-01-002 *Glossary of Terms* do not provide nationally or regionally specific detail for identifying and / or assessing HCVs, Standard Developers shall use Best Available Information, including recognized scientific, government and expert definitions. Terminology that will be practical and readily understood by Organizations and Certification Bodies should be used wherever possible.

## 2.2 General Instructions

To the extent possible, Standard Developers shall provide nationally or regionally specific designations for each HCV element. HCV elements are a sub-section of each of the HCV 1-6 categories, focusing on one specific component. An HCV designation is identified by SDGs at a regional or national scale and may encompass either a broad or specific level of detail.

HCV designations shall be listed for each HCV element that occurs at the national or regional level. These HCV designations, sometimes called interpretations, are intended to provide clarity on what HCV elements are likely to occur within the region or country. These can range in level of detail from being a more regionally or nationally specific description or definition of the HCV element, such as Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs), to a list of types of forest that are HCV, such as old growth, to being a dataset or inventory of occurrences of that HCV element, such as rare, threatened or endangered (RTE) species, to being information on site-specific occurrences of the element, such as community watersheds.

For each HCV Standard Developers shall also provide nationally or regionally specific Best Available Information for identifying and assessing HCV designations, as well as appropriate management strategies, and monitoring methodologies.

Specific guidance on Best Available Information has been developed as a starting point for each of the six HCV categories. Additional guidance for Best Available Information to consider for all six HCV categories is also provided. Standard Developers shall ensure that Best Available Information is refined at the national or regional scale in order to provide clear direction to Organizations and Certification Bodies (e.g., by naming databases, resource inventories, government agencies, etc.).

Standard Developers may also indicate in the completed Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks which Best Available Information is applicable to Management Units with Low, Medium and High-risk designations. Standard Developers may add specific Best Available Information for each of these risk designations.

Standard Developers shall ensure that the content of the National HCV Framework is specific, practical, and straightforward for use by Organizations and Certification Bodies. Standard Developers shall also minimize redundancies across HCV categories.

Excerpt from International Generic Indicators, Principle 9:

Standard Developers *shall*\* specify the *Best Available Information*\* that *The Organization*\* *shall*\* use when identifying *High Conservation Values*\* (Indicator 9.1.1) including:

- *High Conservation Value*\* surveys and *Intact Forest Landscapes*\* assessments of the *Management Unit*\*;
- Relevant databases and maps;
- Global Forest Watch *Intact Forest Landscapes*\* maps (2015) [www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org), or other maps based on a more recent and accurate *Intact Forest Landscapes*\* inventory using a refined methodology;
- *Culturally appropriate*\* *engagement*\* with affected *rights holders*\*, *affected*\* and *interested stakeholders*\*, and relevant local and regional experts;
- FSC guidelines for the implementation of the right to free, prior and informed consent \* (2012);
- FSC Scale, Intensity and Risk Guidelines for Standard Developers (2016);
- Other available sources; and
- Review of the results by knowledgeable expert(s) independent of *The Organization*\*.

One way to do this is to indicate where Best Available Information applies to multiple HCV categories, in Section 1 of FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks*. National HCV Frameworks are intended to reduce the amount of subjectivity and interpretation needed for maintaining and/or enhancing HCVs to meet the requirements of Principle 9.

An example of what a completed grey box in the Template might look like is provided below. The content in this example is hypothetical, and not the only approach to providing information on HCVs and Best Available Information in the FSC-GUI-60-009a Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks.

The number of national or regional HCV interpretations that are appropriate, and types of Best Available Information for identifying and addressing occurrences of those HCVs, are likely to vary significantly by country and region, and also amongst the six HCV categories.

**Element 1: Concentrations of *biological diversity*\* that are *significant*\* at global, regional, or national levels**

<b>Regional or national designations of this HCV element</b>	<b><i>Best Available Information</i>* to identify this HCV designation</b>
Old growth forests and stands.	Scientific descriptions and/or practical field guides for old growth forests (based on stand age and structure), relevant to the forest types in the management unit.
Dipterocarp forests and other forest types/habitats that are prioritized for protection in national conservation plans.	National Assessment of Biodiversity. Forest type inventories of the management unit.

<b>Regional or national designations of this HCV element</b>	<b>Best Available Information* to identify this HCV designation</b>
Rare ecological communities listed by federal or state agencies or expert organizations.	NatureServe and State Natural Heritage Programs (see natural communities ranked as S1, S2, and S3). State wildlife, fish, and game agencies. Federal wildlife agencies.
Ecosystems on the IUCN Red List.	<a href="http://iucnrle.org/assessments/">http://iucnrle.org/assessments/</a> ; and <a href="http://iucnrle.org/resources/published-assessments/">http://iucnrle.org/resources/published-assessments/</a>
Other ecosystems that are threatened, greatly reduced in extent or function, or poorly protected at bioregional scales.	Consultation with local and regional experts, stakeholders, and government agencies.

Figure 4. Sample Designations and Best Available Information for HCV-1

Standard Developers may also provide a definition of “expert” in their Frameworks, based on national or regional expertise, skills and experience. See section 3.4 below for more information.

A blank References section is provided at the end of FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks*, for supporting references and documentation for information included in the Framework. For example, endnote numbers can be attached to sources of Best Available Information, with the endnotes then placed in the References section.

## 2.3 Identification of High Conservation Values

Designations of HCVs shall include sub-national, national or regional locations and occurrences of HCVs 1 to 6, and their component elements. These elements are reflected in the titles of Sections 2 through 7 of FSC-GUI-60-009a *Template for National High Conservation Value Frameworks*, and as the column headings for the grey boxes for each of the HCV elements.

The HCV designations and Best Available Information provided in the HCV Framework should be as clear as possible and not require additional interpretation by forest managers or auditors. For subjective terms such as “significant”, “concentrations”, “landscapes,” “critical” and “fundamental” either provide more specific interpretations or thresholds, or ensure the Best Available Information and interpretations for HCV 1 provide clarity on which HCV occurrences are significant, etc.

Because HCVs are often defined in terms of how to identify them, the Template’s grey boxes for HCV designations include Best Available Information for identifying the HCV. As a result, there is potential overlap with the Best Available Information that forest managers will use during the HCV assessment process to determine whether these HCVs are present in their management units. In such cases, Standard Developers can include the Best Available Information for both the identification and assessment of HCVs or include the Best Available Information in separate sections.

National HCV designations can include:

- HCV1: Specific species or ecosystems that qualify as HCV1, specific lists of species or ecosystems, specific data sets from resource inventory that qualify, types of habitats essential for the species, specific areas that qualify (whether mapped or described), and/or specific land use designations that qualify. This can include populations or concentrations of more significant individual RTE or endemic species;

- HCV2: Examples of landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics to consider include: native forests with successional stages, forest structures, and species composition that are similar in distribution and abundance to native forests that have experienced minimal human disturbance, excluding traditional Indigenous management regimes; forests recognized as being regionally significant at the bioregion or larger scale in formally recognized reports or peer-reviewed journals, due to the unusual landscape-scale biodiversity values provided by size and condition of the forest relative to regional forest land cover and land use trends; forests that provide regionally significant habitat connectivity between larger forest areas and/or refugia; and wilderness areas, forests that are roadless, and/or have not been affected by forest management activity;
- HCV3: Examples of RTE, habitats or refugia to consider include, but are not limited to: Old growth forests; mature forest remnants in degraded landscapes; ecosystems that are threatened, greatly reduced in extent or function, or poorly protected at bioregional scales; areas important for the conservation of important genes or genetically distinct populations;
- HCV 4: Ecosystem services are defined as the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include: provisioning services such as food, forest products and water; regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation, air quality, climate and disease; supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling; and cultural services and cultural values such as recreational, spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits. Criticality refers to the importance and risk for natural resources and environmental and socio-economic values. An ecosystem service is considered to be critical where a disruption of that service is likely to cause, or poses a threat of, severe negative impacts on the welfare, health or survival of local communities, on the environment, or on HCVs;
- HCV5: Examples of sites and resources fundamental for the basic necessities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities can include: sources of water for drinking or other daily uses; water sources for irrigation; traditional foods and medicines; and other forest resources that communities or Indigenous Peoples and local communities depend on for their livelihoods. These must be identified through culturally appropriate engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Particular attention should be given to areas where whole communities or significant portions of them are heavily dependent on forest ecosystems for their livelihoods, or where Indigenous Peoples and local communities are dependent on Indigenous or traditionally managed ecosystems; and
- HCV 6: The significance, criticality and importance of sites, resources and habitats must be identified through culturally appropriate engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

## 2.4 Assessment of High Conservation Values

9.1 The *Organization\**, through *engagement\** with *affected stakeholders\**, *interested stakeholders\** and other means and sources, *shall\** assess and record the presence and status of the following *High Conservation Values\** in the *Management Unit\**, proportionate to the *scale, intensity and risk\** of impacts of management activities, and likelihood of the occurrence of the *High Conservation Values\**.

Because they are developed at the national or regional scale, the HCVs designated in HCV Frameworks are unlikely to be exhaustive. Rather, they represent a minimum requirement of what must be considered proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk of management activities. SDGs shall ensure that the National HCV Frameworks enable Managers to identify and assess additional HCVs at the scale of the Management Unit.

HCV Frameworks can also provide nationally specific information on methodologies and Best Available Information for assessing the national designations of the six HCV categories to ensure a minimum level of performance to support forest managers.

HCV assessments shall identify specific threats to the maintenance and/or enhancement of identified HCVs. Threats may include those from forest management activities such as road building and logging as well as from activities external to forest management such as climate change, poaching, rotational agriculture, and invasive species. If there are specific methodologies or factors that managers should consider for specific HCVs, they can be listed in the Assessments sections of the National HCV Framework.

If there are nationally or regionally specific methodologies that are important or helpful for assessing the types of HCVs identified then this information should be provided in the grey boxes for HCV Assessments. Examples that may be helpful include: guidance for identifying the specific type of HCV, information important to evaluating the status and condition of specific types of HCV, guidance for expert and stakeholder consultation, and guidance for field surveys, habitat evaluations, or threat assessments

Standard Developers shall ensure that forest managers engage Indigenous Peoples, local communities, rights-holders, other stakeholders, and experts when identifying and assessing HCVs.

Best Available Information for Assessment of HCVs shall include:

- High Conservation Value surveys of the Management Unit;
- Relevant databases and maps;
- Engagement with rights-holders, consistent with Criteria 3.5 and 4.7 of the FSC's Principles and Criteria;
- Culturally appropriate engagement with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and affected and interested stakeholders; and
- Consultation with relevant local and regional experts; and
- For HCV 2, Global Forest Watch Intact Forest Landscapes maps (2017) [www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org);

Best Available Information for Assessment of HCVs may also include:

- Databases, maps, resource inventories and government listings of archaeological, historical, religious, and cultural sites;
- Databases, maps and government listings of traditional communities located within forest areas or with other connections to forest areas, and Indigenous Peoples' organizations familiar with the location of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- Interactive mapping with Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- Published reports by governments, research institutions, or conservation organizations; and
- For HCV 2, Mapping and other data on forest cover, age, succession, structure, species composition, habitat connectivity, anthropogenic disturbance, roadless areas and wilderness areas.

## 2.5 Management Strategies to Maintain and / or Enhance HCVs

9.2 The *Organization\** shall\* develop effective strategies that maintain and/or enhance the identified *High Conservation Values\**, through *engagement\** with *affected stakeholders\**, *interested stakeholders\** and experts.

Management strategies should be as specific as possible about the minimum level of performance required to maintain and / or enhance the HCVs. Strategies must be effective, and sufficient to prevent damage and avoid risks to HCVs, even when scientific information is incomplete or inconclusive. Strategies, when implemented, should prevent reductions in the extent, integrity, and quality of HCVs over both the short and long-term. Strategies should also address specific threats to HCVs, including threats caused by forest management and those caused by activities external to forest management. Where relevant, quantitative targets should be included in management strategies. For land use designations to be used as proxies for HCV protection, their management should be evaluated to ensure protection of the specific HCV element.

Frameworks shall clearly reflect the expectation that all HCV occurrences in a management unit are maintained and / or enhanced, per the FSC's Principles and Criteria, except where Standards explicitly allow very limited portions of HCVs to be impacted. Where such specificity is not possible, Best Available Information sufficient to identify and evaluate management and protection strategies should be indicated.

If nationally or regionally specific Best Available Information exists to develop management strategies for HCVs then this information should be provided in the grey text box for HCV Strategies. Where the Best Available Information for management strategies is the same as the Best Available Information for HCV identification or assessment, this information can either be referenced or copied.

Standard Developers shall ensure that forest managers engage Indigenous Peoples and local communities, rights-holders, other stakeholders and experts when developing their management strategies.

As part of providing direction on management strategies in HCV Frameworks, Standard Developers shall consider the approaches to management strategies listed in Figure 5, and ensure Managers consider these strategies.

HCV Category	Management Strategies
<b>HCV 1-6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management strategies such as protection zones; target-based protections; landscape-scale protections; harvest exclusions, and/or retention in harvest areas;</li> <li>• Broader HCV areas that may be needed to buffer or otherwise maintain the integrity of HCVs;</li> <li>• Landscape scale protections, connectivity planning, or other measures may also be needed for some HCVs; and</li> <li>• Other strategies as may be required to address identified threats</li> </ul>
<b>HCV 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection zones, harvest prescriptions, and/or other strategies to protect threatened, endangered, endemic species, or other concentrations of biological diversity and the ecological communities and habitats upon which they depend, sufficient to prevent reductions in the extent, integrity, quality, and viability of the habitats and species occurrences; and</li> <li>• Where enhancement is identified as the objective, measures to develop, expand, and/or restore habitats for such species are in place.</li> </ul>
<b>HCV 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies that fully maintain the extent and intactness of the forest ecosystems and the viability of their biodiversity concentrations, including plant and animal indicator species, keystone species, and/or guilds associated with large intact natural forest ecosystems. Examples include protection zones and set-aside areas, with any commercial activity in areas that are not set-aside being limited to low-intensity operations that fully maintain forest structure, composition, regeneration, and disturbance patterns at all times;</li> <li>• Where enhancement is identified as the objective, measures to restore and reconnect forest ecosystems, their intactness, and habitats that support natural biological diversity are in place; and</li> <li>• The core area of each Intact Forest Landscape within the Management Unit is protected, comprising at least 80% of the Intact Forest Landscapes within the Management Unit .</li> </ul>
<b>HCV 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies that fully maintain the extent and integrity of rare or threatened ecosystems, habitats, or refugia; and</li> <li>• Where enhancement is identified as the objective, measures to restore and/or develop rare or threatened ecosystems, habitats, or refugia are in place.</li> </ul>
<b>HCV 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies to protect any water catchments of importance to local communities located within or downstream of the Management Unit, and areas within the unit that are particularly unstable or susceptible to erosion. Examples may include protection zones, harvest prescriptions, chemical use restrictions, and/or prescriptions for road construction and maintenance, to protect water catchments and upstream and upslope areas;</li> <li>• Where identified HCV 4 ecosystem services include climate regulation, strategies to maintain or enhance carbon sequestration and storage are in place; and</li> <li>• Where enhancement is identified as the objective, measures to restore water quality and quantity are in place.</li> </ul>
<b>HCV 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies to protect the community's and/or Indigenous Peoples' needs in relation to the Management Unit are developed in cooperation with representatives and members of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.</li> </ul>
<b>HCV 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies to protect the cultural values are developed in cooperation with representatives and members of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Standards Development Groups may establish Thresholds above or below 80% consistent with considerations outlined by FSC. For details on these considerations, and more specific recommendations for IFL protection strategies, see the draft revised FSC International Generic Indicators, FSC-STD-60-004 V1-1 EN, and Advice Note 20-007-018 V1-0

Figure 5. Management Strategies to be considered by Standard Developers for the maintenance and / or enhancement of HCVs

## 2.6 Monitoring High Conservation Values

9.4 The *Organization*\* shall\* demonstrate that periodic monitoring is carried out to assess changes in the status of *High Conservation Values*\*, and shall\* adapt its management strategies to ensure their effective *protection*\*. The monitoring shall\* be proportionate to the *scale, intensity and risk*\* of management activities, and shall\* include *engagement*\* with *affected stakeholders*\*, *interested stakeholders*\* and experts.

A variety of monitoring techniques exist, and HCV Frameworks can provide information on specific methodologies, experts, and other Best Available Information that is helpful for HCV designations.

If there are nationally or regionally specific considerations or methodologies that are important or helpful for monitoring HCVs then this information should also be provided in the grey boxes for monitoring. Where the Best Available Information for monitoring is the same as the Best Available Information for HCV identification and assessments, that information can be referenced or copied.

Standard Developers should also consider the cost and level of effort required for some monitoring approaches, and focus monitoring requirements and guidance on approaches that will be effective, efficient and of greatest priority.

Monitoring programs for HCVs must monitor the implementation of management strategies, monitor the status of HCVs, monitor the effectiveness of management strategies, and be sufficient to detect changes in HCVs, relative to the initial assessment. Figure 6 provides a case study of monitoring demonstrating this.

Best Available Information for Monitoring of HCVs shall include:

- Engagement with rights-holders, consistent with Criteria 3.5, 4.5 and 4.7;
- Culturally appropriate engagement with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and affected and interested stakeholders;
- Information on engaging with representatives of the Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- Monitoring conducted by the Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and
- Engagement with experts

SDGs may also consider the following Best Available Information for Monitoring of HCV 4:

- FSC-PRO-30-006 *Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact demonstration and market tools*.



## CASE STUDY

# DARWIN FOX ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

### BACKGROUND

- This endemic fox for Chile is listed as Critically Endangered by IUCN, and Endangered by the Ministry of Environment
- Forestal Arauco has extensive areas of forest plantations that cover part of the northern boundary distribution of the Darwin Fox.
- Forestal Arauco has carried out a monitoring plan for the species.
- There are sightings in the vicinity of the National Park Nahuelbuta and Quebrada Caramávida.
- The highest concentrations are found on the island of Chiloé.
- The monitoring plan has obtained records in the Quebrada de Caramávida that indicate the existence of subpopulations 25-30 km from the National Park, associated with native forest, forest plantations adjacent to the forest and other territories affected by human activities, that form an interface habitat occupied by the species.
- This has allowed Forestal Arauco to develop a model of habitat and corridors using LiDAR images and new registers to adapt the management of pine plantations to provide more suitable habitat.
- The monitoring of the fox has been complemented with the capture of some specimens, the analysis of their physical condition, the use of radio collars for monitoring and the use of photo traps to verify the use of habitats and biological corridors

### MONITORING

- Is engagement with relevant stakeholders, communities, indigenous people and experts included?  
Yes, NGOs (local and global), local communities, and indigenous peoples.
- Is it systematic, transparent and repeatable?  
Yes, Camera Traps are a well established method
- Does it defines thresholds and management objectives?  
Not at the beginning since it was a test of the method conducted while precautionary principle was applied: There were no management (logging) activities in the surrounding areas. Now the objective is to increase the number of individuals and populations.
- Is it sensitive enough to detect changes and inform managers?  
Direct sight was insufficient to provide systematic, transparent and credible information. More effort required in the use of techniques like camera traps.

### Lessons Learned

- Time and spatial scales are considered relevant to the value being monitored.
- Management decisions taken because of monitoring information include: dog vaccination, restoring habitat, corridor design and survey of new populations to the south.

Figure 6. Case Study of Adaptive Management of Darwin's Fox in Chile

### 3 General HCV Guidance for SDGs

#### 3.1 Support for HCVs Throughout the FSC’s Principles and Criteria

**PRINCIPLE 9: HIGH CONSERVATION VALUES\***

The *Organization\** shall\* maintain and/or enhance the *High Conservation Values\** in the *Management Unit\** through applying the *precautionary approach\**.

The HCV methodology is set out in Criteria 9.1 to 9.4. Support for the identification, assessment, management and monitoring of ecological and cultural HCVs are established throughout the FSC’s Principles and Criteria, as summarized in Figure 6.

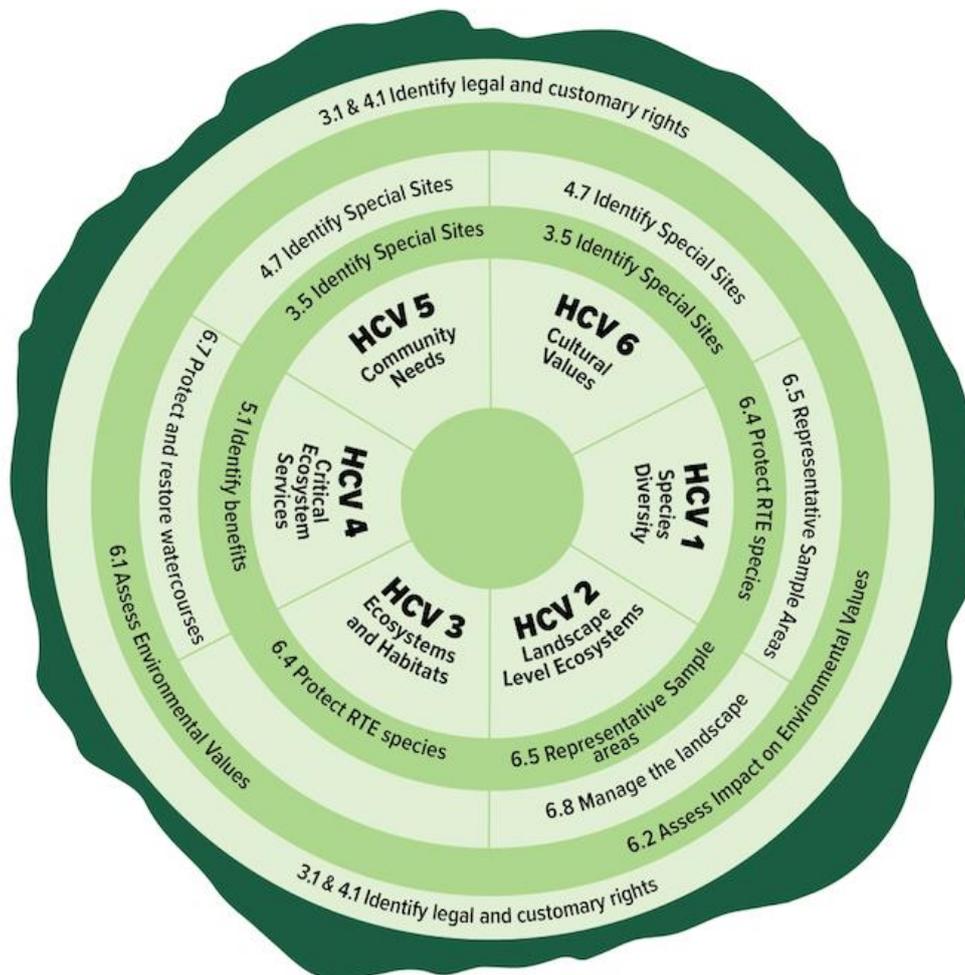


Figure 7. Support for HCV Protection throughout the FSC’s Principles and Criteria

For additional information, please refer to FSC-GUI-30-009 *High Conservation Value Guidance for Forest Managers*, FSC-GUI-30-010 *Intact Forest Landscapes Guidance for Forest Managers*, FSC-GUI-60-002 *Guideline for Standard Developers for addressing risk of unacceptable activities in regards to scale and intensity*, and FSC-GUI-30-003 *Guidelines for the implementation of the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)*.

### 3.2 Methodology for the Maintenance and/or Enhancement of HCVs

The HCV methodology includes identification, assessment, management strategies, implementation and Monitoring. These management activities are supported by requirements in other FSC's Principles and Criteria.

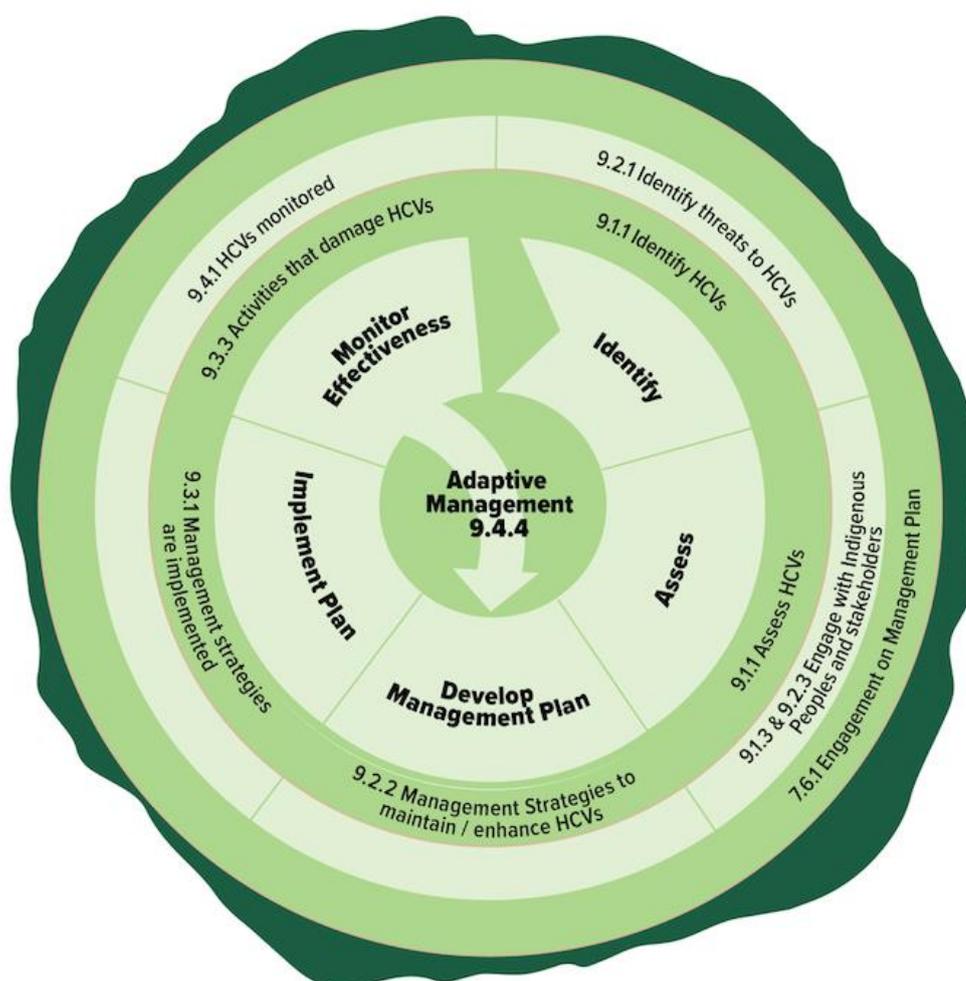


Figure 8. The HCV methodology

### 3.3 Key Elements of the HCV Methodology

The key elements of the HCV methodology are well established in the Criteria for Principle 9 and are comprised of: the precautionary approach, the use of experts, engagement and scale, intensity and risk (SIR). Figure 8 illustrates how these elements are shared between the Criteria in Principle 9.

Elements	Experts	Engagement	Precautionary Approach	SIR
<b>9.1</b> Assess and Record • HCV status and presence according to SIR • Impacts of management activities on HCVs		✓		✓
<b>9.2</b> Develop Management Strategies	✓	✓		
<b>9.3</b> Implement Management Strategies			✓	✓
<b>9.4</b> Monitor Effectiveness	✓	✓		✓

Figure 9: Key Elements of the HCV methodology

### 3.4 The use of Experts

The use of experts to assist with developing management strategies and monitoring of effectiveness is unique to Principle 9. The characteristics of experts are as follows:

- Independent,
- Professional and adequately trained,
- Guided by performance monitoring with quality control

#### Regarding experts

These characteristics of ‘Expert’ for Principle 9 expand on the FSC Glossary definition. The intent is to encourage SDGs to adopt as part of their national standards and National HCV Frameworks a definition that incorporates these characteristics.

The level of trust and acceptability to other stakeholders can be a measure of the expert’s independence from the organization.

Specific to Principle 9, the following characteristics of expert exists:

An expert:

- Has knowledge or skill that is specialized and profound as the result of substantial practical or academic experience; and / or
- Is a recognized authority on a topic by virtue of published material on this topic, their stature within the professional community, and the broadly recognized related experience; and / or
- Possesses a wealth of experience on a topic, possibly through practical means including the accumulation of traditional knowledge.

### 3.5 Precautionary Approach

The precautionary approach is unique to Principle 9, specifically Criterion 9.3 for the implementation of management strategies. Avoiding risks when scientific information is incomplete or inconclusive is appropriate for Principle 9, especially given the vulnerability and sensitivity of the values in question.

When implementing the precautionary approach, HCVs are understood to be critical, fundamental or significant and therefore any threat to a HCV is considered to be a threat of severe or irreversible damage.

The HCV methodology is elaborated here to provide guidance for SDGs.

#### **Precautionary Approach**

An approach requiring that when the available information indicates that management activities pose a threat of severe or irreversible damage to the environment or a threat to human welfare, The Organization will take explicit and effective measures to prevent the damage and avoid the risks to welfare, even when the scientific information is incomplete or inconclusive, and when the vulnerability and sensitivity of environmental values are uncertain.

HCVs are understood to be critical, fundamental or significant and therefore any threat to a HCV is considered to be a threat of severe or irreversible damage.

### 3.6 Applying a Risk Based Approach

Risk refers to the likelihood or probability of an event with negative consequences, and also the seriousness of those consequences. Within the FSC system, risk refers especially to the probability of an unacceptable negative impact, caused by any activity in the MU, sufficiently serious to result in non-compliance at the Criterion level.

Risk is an inherent in forest management generally. The key is to identify risk with potential unacceptable negative impacts. Figure 10 provides examples of this. Note that these examples are context dependent and should not be interpreted in absolute terms.

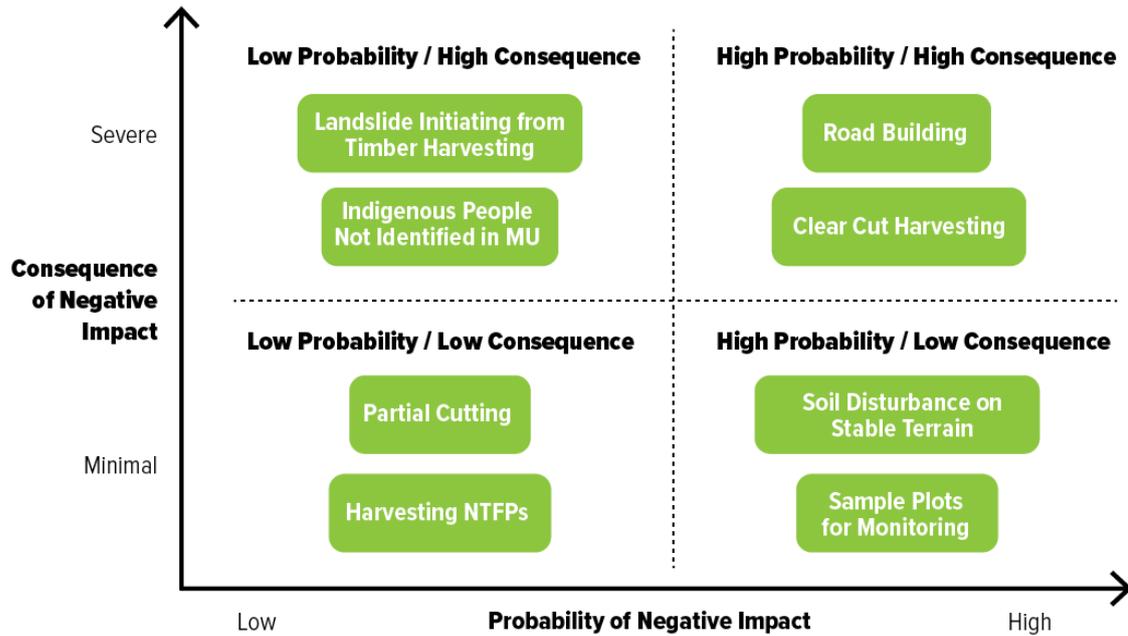


Figure 10. Risk as Function of Probability and Consequence

An activity's risk is based on the likelihood of negative impacts combined with the consequence of negative impacts. This means that the higher the probability of negative impact, the greater the risk. Likewise, this means that the more severe the potential consequence, the greater the risk.

National HCV Frameworks should take into account the proximity of management activities to HCVs as well as the inherent vulnerability, resilience and sensitivity to disturbance of HCVs. The identification of uncertainties and the adequacy of data and information used in setting risk thresholds should also be considered. Where significant uncertainties exist, risk determinations should be guided by the precautionary approach.

Central to the risk-based approach is the notion that as conservation values become more concentrated, threatened or rare, the strength of HCV management strategies must also increase. As the concentration of, threat to, or rarity of, conservation values increases these management strategies must provide greater conservation, leading to outright protection. Intact Forest Landscape core areas are an example of values that require strong protection. Figure 11 provides a conceptual diagram to illustrate this continuum for conservation values.

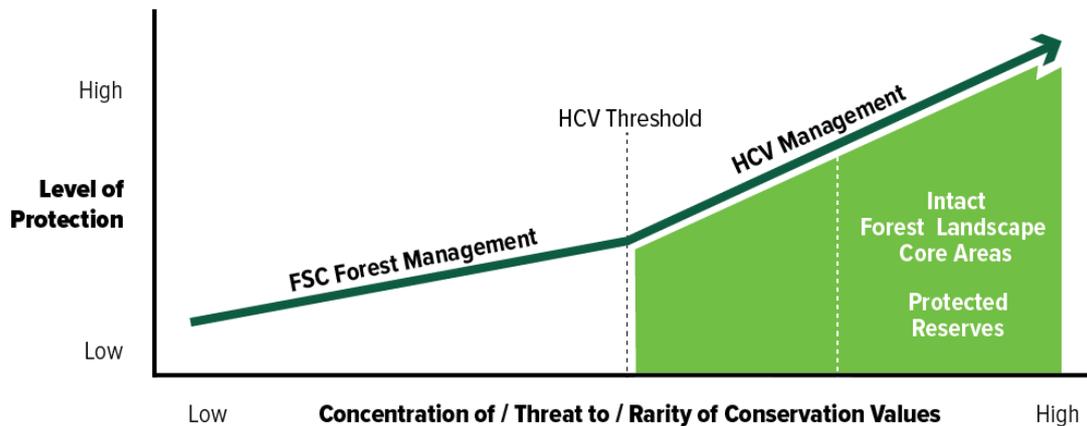


Figure 11. Relative Protection Required for Conservation Values

Figure 11 shows the relationship between the level of effort of management required to protect and maintain cultural and ecological values and the concentration of, threat to or rarity of those values. As the threat to conservation values increases, so too must the level of protection of these values. This level and type of protection can elevate from management activities as set out in Principle 9 right up to excluding human activities in the form of protective reserves. The Intact Forest Landscape Core Areas are shown as an example in Figure 11, and reserves may need to be used to protect other HCVs.

### 3.7 Incorporating Risk into National HCV Frameworks

The main rationale for adopting risk-based approaches is to match management measures with the level of risk in each particular setting. In the case of Principle 9, this may:

- Simplify application of the HCV concept, remove barriers to certification and reduce costs in situations where there is little risk that HCVs will be negatively impacted by forest management activities; and
- Add extra rigour, consistency and transparency to HCV identification, management and monitoring in situations where HCVs and risk of negative impact are particularly high.

Fundamental to reducing the potential unacceptable negative impact of management activities is incorporating a risk-based approach to management, FSC-GUI-60-002 *Guideline for Standard Developers for addressing risks of unacceptable activities in regards to scale and intensity* contains several default assumptions:

- Activities with low potential of an unacceptable negative impact will require a reduced administrative burden to demonstrate conformance. This includes a reduced requirement for documenting engagement, conducting and documenting certain assessments, developing complex management plans and conducting and documenting monitoring.

- Activities with high potential of an unacceptable negative impact will be required to demonstrate their compliance with a higher level of effort and/or more robust management strategies; and
- Activities with medium potential of an unacceptable negative impact must meet the requirements listed in the IGI, or as adapted in national standards through the transfer process.

The variable levels of performance required under different circumstances shall be specified in FSC National Standards. These assumptions are summarized in Figure 12.

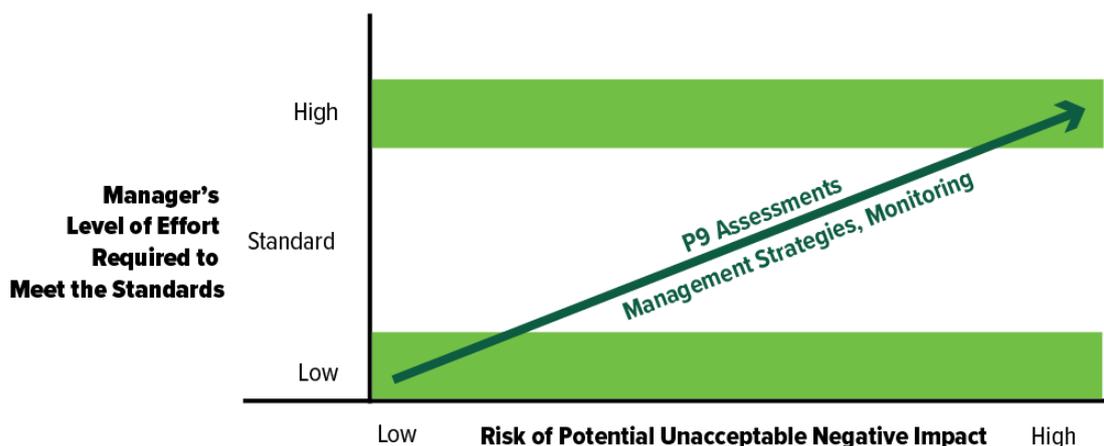


Figure 12. Risk-Based Approach to HCV Assessments

FSC-PRO-60-010 *Incorporating a Risk-Based Approach in National Forest Stewardship Standards* provides the process steps for conducting and incorporating a risk-based approach in National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS), to assess, identify and designate risk considering the likelihood and impact of nonconformity with indicators of the NFSS. This voluntary procedure thereby aims to focus the FSC certification system for forest management on the most relevant aspects of the NFSS, thereby making the system more cost-effective, while maintaining credibility and integrity.

This procedure is for use by registered Standard Development Groups (SDGs) when incorporating a risk-based approach in their NFSS. The decision to incorporate a risk-based approach is at the discretion of the SDG. SDGs may conduct this process during the development of a new NFSS, during the transfer of an existing NFSS to the P&C V5-2, or retroactively incorporate it into an approved NFSS.

### 3.8 Precautionary Practices

Precautionary practices may be developed by Standard Developers to maintain HCVs while reducing the administrative burden of smallholders. Precautionary practices are a set of locally-adapted best management practices (BMPs) designed by Standard Developers to maintain 'by default' HCVs where they occur, thereby circumventing some of the need to identify and verify the actual presence of HCVs.

Adopting and agreeing to comply with an adapted set of precautionary practices would be a precondition for using the low risk approach. The practices below may be helpful and important in some contexts. If Standard Developers develop precautionary practices, they shall adapt those practices for specific HCV designations, and ensure these precautionary practices maintain and / or enhance specific HCVs.

A tentative list of generic precautionary practices may include:

- No buying, handling or eating bush meat of focal, rare, threatened and endangered species;
- No harvesting or road building within IFL Core areas;
- No harvesting or road building when there is conflict or disputes over rights or management practices;
- No use of poison, or collection or trapping that may affect focal rare threatened and endangered species;
- Human-wildlife conflict resolution measures as agreed with Group Manager;
- No blocking access or mobility of wild animals (beyond fencing livestock);
- No use of pesticides or fertilizers close to rivers, ponds and lakes;
- No dumping of waste or sewage into rivers, ponds or lakes;
- Maintain / restore forest cover close to rivers, ponds and lakes (any logging must be low-impact and selective)
- No draining of natural wetlands or peat areas;
- Maintain / restore forest cover on steep slopes (any logging must be low-impact and selective); and
- Respect the traditional use / access rights of others.

Figure 13 provides a case study for this in Tasmania.



## CASE STUDY

# SMALLHOLDERS AND RISK

TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

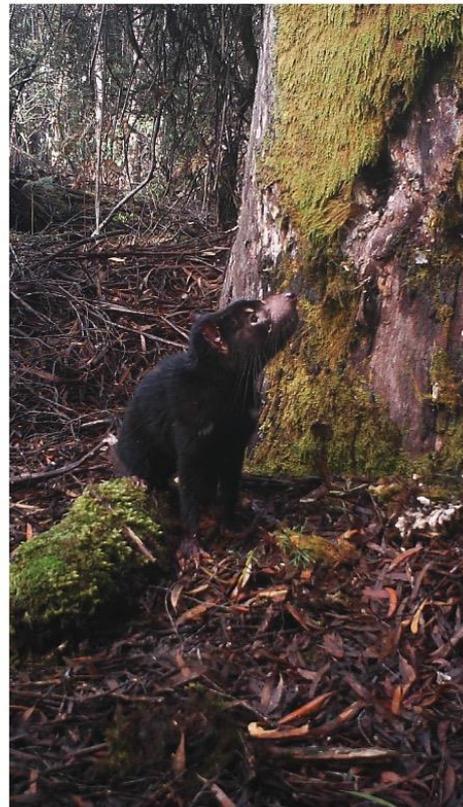
### BACKGROUND

Australia is a mega diverse continent with many centres of endemism where there is a very high concentration of locally endemic species. In addition, some of these occur in areas that have become highly fragmented by agriculture. As a result so many of these species are listed as rare threatened or endangered.

A few years ago a company that manages forests on behalf of smallholders started working in a Tasmanian bioregion with both high endemism and very large numbers of threatened species and a number of threatened forest communities.

Based solely on thresholds of size and intensity, the management units could have been considered low risk in the Australian context (the individual parcel sizes were often less than 50 hectares, and management practices did not include clear felling). However, the likelihood of HCVs being present was high, as is the sensitivity and vulnerability of the endemic and threatened species to management practices. Thus it was necessary for the management company to modify its management plans to more effectively protect the species.

This highlights the importance of considering the likelihood of HCV presence and impacts when addressing risk.



Endangered Tasmanian Devil

Figure 13. Case Study of Smallholders and Risk in Tasmania

## **Annex 1: Notes on Development of this Guidance**

This document has been developed for FSC purposes and is based on the document discussed at the FSC HCV2 / IFL Workshop in Bonn, in October 2012 and revised according to the participants' feedback at 2013 by FSC IC Performance and Standards Unit. Subsequently, FSC formed the HCV Technical Working Group in June 2015 to revise existing HCV Guidance, develop International Generic Indicators consistent with Motion 65 for Intact Forest Landscapes and develop an HCV template to support the development of National HCV Frameworks by Standard Development Groups

Parallel to this, the HCV Resource Network has produced Common Guidance for the Identification of HCVs (2013), intended to provide a holistic identification of High Conservation Values, both for FSC stakeholders as well as for the wider audience.



Forest Stewardship Council®

---

**ic.fsc.org**

FSC International Center GmbH  
Adenauerallee 134 · 53113 Bonn · Germany



All Rights Reserved FSC® International 2018 FSC®F000100

---

FSC-GUI-60-009 V1-0 EN

GUIDANCE FOR STANDARD DEVELOPMENT GROUPS: DEVELOPING NATIONAL HIGH  
CONSERVATION VALUE FRAMEWORKS

– 32 of 32 –