The HCV approach
The High Conservation Value (HCV) approach was created in 1998 by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as a tool to protect outstanding environmental and social values in certified forests. It has since been expanded to other ecosystems and adopted also by certification schemes for palm oil, soy, sugarcane and biofuels, so that over the last decade maintaining HCVs has become a key component of responsible production and resource use.

Global consistency
The wide uptake of the HCV approach makes it necessary that users share a common understanding of what HCVs stand for and rely upon a common methodology. The HCV Resource Network (HCVRN), set up in 2006 to promote best practice of the HCV approach, brings together a wide range of stakeholders all of which adhere to the same, global set of HCV definitions. The HCVRN provides supporting guidance on how to interpret the definitions and how to identify, manage and monitor HCVs. An associated Technical Panel provides quality control through peer reviews. Another powerful HCVRN tool to promote consistency, a global scheme for licensing HCV assessors and for monitoring their performance, will become operational in 2014.

Regional perspectives
National and regional perspectives differ, as do situations in different commodity sectors, and even with common definitions and guidance there is need for national dialogue and for nationally adapted HCV interpretations and application guidance. The HCVRN encourages organisations, companies and individuals with a stake or an interest in quality application of the HCV approach to get together and form national HCVRN Partners.

National Partners may:
• Serve as national hubs for HCV dialogue and information sharing;
• Organise HCV trainings, workshops or capacity-building sessions;
• Facilitate contacts across sectors;
• Link national stakeholders to the wider HCV community through the HCVRN;
• Use the HCVRN’s newsletter to disseminate information;
• Initiate HCV national interpretation processes.