Terminology

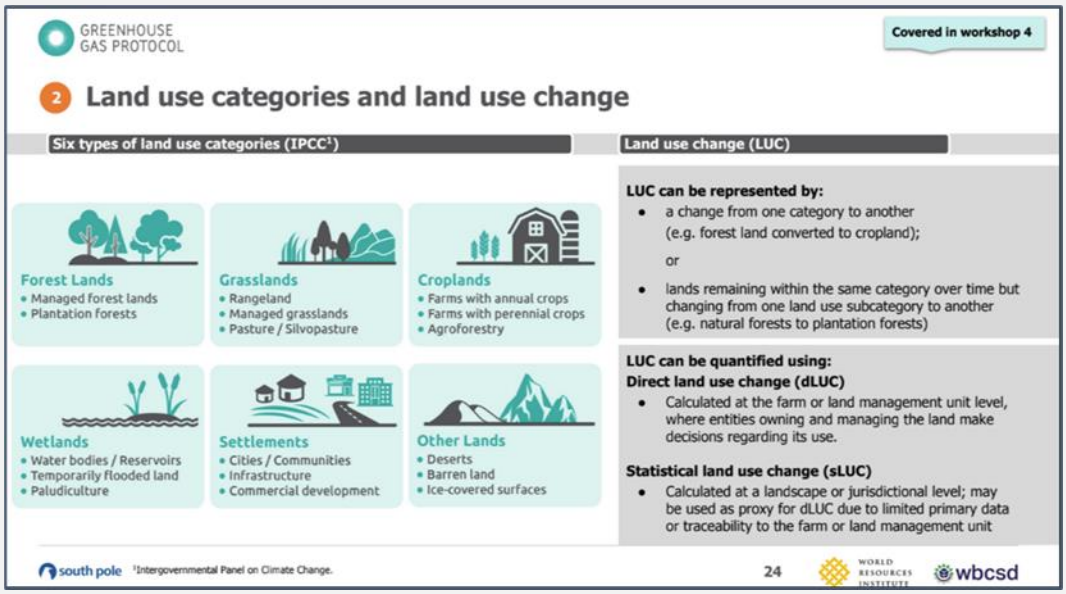
Choosing the appropriate terminology and defining it clearly is crucial. Common terms like 'conserve' and 'restore', while they may be broadly recognizable, drive certain actions and imply certain resource requirements. These terms and definitions were harmonized with key partners (e.g., Ducks Unlimited) and to ensure clear communication and alignment with disclosures.

Term	Definition
Conservation Includes multiple approaches– protection, preservation, restoration, improvement/enhancement – all with the intent of maintaining or improving the natural environment for long-term future benefit.	• **Protection/preservation** indicates that a legal instrument, such as a land trust or an easement, has been applied to safeguard the land's conservation value for the long term. • **Restoration** assumes that land conservation value is returned to "a close approximation of its condition prior to disturbance"[1]. In situations where a baseline of prior conditions may not be possible to determine the concept of ecological integrity may be useful as a proxy. Ecological integrity includes "a critical range of variability in biodiversity, ecological processes and structures, regional and historical context, and sustainable cultural practices"[2] • **Improvement/enhancement** is the addition or modification of site features or functions to increase the inherent value of the site, based on the desired objectives for the site. For example, changing elevations or increasing the proportion of open water[3] on a wetland site could be considered an improvement, as the modifications enhance the function of the wetland. Evaluating the trade-offs of such improvements to other conservation factors – in this example, critical habitats or cultural practices – is key to ensuring an increase in the inherent value of the site.
Land management **Land-use change** **Land conversion** All describe the effect of human interventions on land, its ecosystems and its natural resources.	**For the purposes of Dow's target, land management describes the work of managing a portfolio of land and its ecosystem value.** • **Land management** is typically used to represent gradual improvement or stabilization of the lands and ecosystems. • **Land-use change** represents significant shifts in land status (i.e., grassland to wetland). • **Land conversion** is a subset of land-use change that indicates a long-lasting or permanent degradation of natural environment and social systems.

[1] National Research Council. 1992. Restoration of Aquatic Ecosystems: Science, Technology and Public Policy. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.; Higgs, E.S., 1997. What is Good Ecological Restoration? Conservation Biology 11 (2), 338–348.

[2] Society for Ecological Restoration. 1996. Ecological integrity: a definition. Available at ser.org

[3] Gwin, S.E., M.E. Kentula, and P.W. Shaffer. 1999. Evaluating the Effects of Wetland Regulation through Hydrogeomorphic Classification and Landscape Profiles. Wetlands 19(3): 477-489.



High Conservation Value Areas

Considered critically important for the inherent value they deliver in biological, social, cultural, or ecological significance (e.g. health, diversity, preservation)[4].

Methodology

- Screening and/or assessment of high conservation value areas will be aligned with the best practices recommended in the Common Guidance for the Identification of HCV [5].
- Six categories are evaluated to determine the relative risk and value of an area: species diversity; landscape-level ecosystems; ecosystems and habitats; ecosystem services; community needs; and cultural values.

Harmonization

- The HCV methodology was initially developed by the Forest Stewardship Council to address deforestation. Over the last two decades, the multipartite HCV Resource Network has evolved to support HCV assessment and certification. The Network promotes consistent practices across sectors, geographies, and ecosystems.
- HCVRN partner organizations include the World Benchmarking Alliance, the Accountability Framework Initiative, IUCN and the Task Force for Nature-related Financial Disclosures. These partnerships drive harmonization and promote common practices towards achievement of the Sustainability Development Goals.

[4] Jennings, S., Nussbaum, R., Judd, N., Evans, T., Iacobelli, T., Jarvie, J., ... & Yaroshenko, A. (2003). The high conservation value forest toolkit. *Ed. ProForest Oxf. OX*, *12*, 1-62.

[5] *Common Guidance for the Identification of HCV | HCV Network*. https://www.hcvnetwork.org/library/common-guidance-for-the-identification-of-hcv-english (accessed 2025-11-24).