



FSC RISK ASSESSMENT EVALUATION REPORT FOR GERMANY

2/12/2024



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Unit Responsible for Drafting this Report:	Performance and Standards Unit (PSU)
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Risk Assessment Being Reviewed:	FSC Risk Assessment for Germany
Scope:	Summarizes the results of a completed round of Risk Assessment Review
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Name of Reviewer(s) responsible:	Nicolas Mesia Girma Kelboro Carey Bhojedat Nuhu Salasala Dinda Trisnadi Yadid Ordonez Ilia Osepashvili Willy Lawyer

INTRODUCTION

This document is an evaluation report of the Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) reviewer, based on appraisal of FSC Risk Assessments. The report summarizes the result of Risk Assessment evaluation conducted on the Risk Assessment Platform using the Risk Assessment Templates (RAT).

The process and content parts of Risk Assessments, as defined in the FSC Risk Assessment Framework (FSC-PRO-60-006b V2-0), are outlined in the report. The suggestions for improvement made in the report are crucial to the approval of the FSC Risk Assessment.

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1. GENERAL COMMENTS

Summary of Identified Issues, Remaining Questions, and Areas for Improvement

Response of the process lead

Country Overview:

1. Short summary is missing under Country overview section.
2. Not all thematic areas from the drop-down list under the "full description" category have been used.
3. The description provided in the full description is not consistent with the information provided on other sheets of the Risk Assessment.

Country Overview:

1. The summary has been supplemented
2. The missing key aspects have been completed and filled in
3. The description was synchronized with the information in the other spreadsheets

Supply Chain:

4. Only "Supply chain transparency and traceability" section is filled, while the key reference documents are missing.
5. Although the description generally matches the key questions related to the supply chain, the conclusions are very brief and not backed up by sufficient further information or evidence.

Supply Chain:

4. The key documents have been added
5. The description has been supplemented and more detailed explanations have been provided. The summary is described in more detail.

Geopolitical Scale:

4. While the assessment lists specific legislative differences for each state, it doesn't explicitly connect these differences to potential risks.

Geopolitical Scale:

4. The potential risks for individual federal states may still emerge in the expert survey and will be supplemented if necessary. The results of the expert consultation will be included in the second draft of the risk assessment accordingly.

Source Type:

6. The ownership types (State, Community Forest, Private) are generally consistent with the source type descriptions. However, the management regime for some source types (Foundation forest, Church forest) is left blank. Please provide a justification on such decision.

Source Type:

6. The management regime has been supplemented. The specification of the regime is only an indication and depends on the size and objectives of the respective company, especially in the church forest and foundation forest.

Summary of Identified Issues, Remaining Questions, and Areas for Improvement

Response of the process lead

References:

- 7. Not all fields have been filled in for some of the listed references. For example, dates of publication, short name are missing in some cases.
- 8. Justification for using sources older than 5 years is missing in some cases.

References:

- 7. The list has been supplemented. In case the source is based on website information, we added the time of access (most cases 2024).
- 8. The justification has been supplemented

Experts:

- 9. No experts have been listed. Please provide a justification, especially taking into consideration that the assessment of several indicators is lacking evidences to justify the negligible risk designation.

Experts:

- 9. The experts for the respective indicators are derived from the expert survey, which has not yet been conducted and will be included in the second draft of the risk assessment accordingly.

Legislation:

- 10. Not all fields have been filled in for some of the listed applicable legislation. For example, effective dates and authority implementing the legislation.

Legislation:

- 10. The list has been supplemented

Assessment of indicators:

- 11. In the assessment of several indicators, only a description of legal requirements has been provided in the description of risks, without making a connection to evidences on whether there are or not issues in the country or only relevant to specific geopolitical scales or source types.
- 12. The summary of legal requirements is not complete for several indicators. In some cases, a detailed summary has been provided (e.g. indicators 16, 22, 24), but for other indicators is incomplete or it has been written more as a description of the enforcement of the legislation than a summary of legal requirements.

Assessment of indicators:

- 11. For each indicator, an attempt was made to establish links to evidence as to whether or not there are risks in the country or whether they are only relevant for certain geopolitical areas or source types. The expert survey may provide further clues.
- 12. The description of the legal basis has been harmonised.

Risk Mitigation:

- 13. Please take into consideration the comments made in the assessment of indicators. It is not yet justified the negligible risk designation for several indicators.

Risk Mitigation:

- 13. The risk mitigation was supplemented for indicator 55. However, as we do not consider the indicator as non-negligible risk, but follow FSC International recommendation to use the precautionary

Summary of Identified Issues, Remaining Questions, and Areas for Improvement

Response of the process lead

approach to set it to negligible risk, we cannot fill more specific concept or actions how to mitigate as included in the current version of the risk assessment. We will include the results of the expert consultation in the second draft.

2. FIRST DRAFT CONTENT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Requirement(s)	Related Section in Risk Assessment Template	Reviewer's Comments	Response of the Process Lead
1. Draft Risk Assessment			
<p>The process lead has submitted a draft Risk Assessment, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The scope description; (b) An overview of the country; (c) A description of the supply chain; (d) The establishment of geopolitical scale and source types; (e) An assessment of each indicator, including the risk designation; (f) The establishment of mitigation measures; and (g) Supporting documents, such as applicable legislation, sources of information, and/or risk mitigation related documents. 	<p>Country Overview, RAT; Supply Chain, RAT; Geopolitical Scale, RAT; Assessment of Indicators, RAT; Risk Mitigation Measures, RAT; Sources, RAT; Experts, RAT; Risk Mitigation Documents, RAT</p>	<p>All sections are filled out in the Risk Assessment template following each of the sheets, although some specific fields inside each of the sheets are missing. A High Conservation Value Framework is currently attached to the Forest Stewardship Standard for Germany <FSC-STD-DEU-03.1-2024>, however it is not referred to in the sources.</p>	<p>Reference is made to the High Conservation Value Framework.</p>
2. Specification of Scope and Scale			
<p>2.1 The geopolitical scale relevant for the area under assessment is determined.</p>	<p>Geopolitical Scale, RAT</p>	<p>All geopolitical scales have been determined and listed accordingly, including the information regarding the difference in legislation, as well as other relevant characteristics. Nonetheless, the assessment of risks for all indicators has been concluded only at the national level, but provided evidences in the assessment of several indicators are not sufficient to conclude negligible risk at country level. Please consider if risk differentiation using geopolitical scales or source types may apply.</p>	<p>We have examined whether risk differentiation based on geopolitical criteria is an option. The final assessment is expected from the expert survey and will be included in the second draft of the risk assessment</p>

2.2 Source types covered by the risk assessment are determined.	Source Types, RAT	There is inconsistency in one of the source type. On source type "community forest" the Description column provided is "corporate forest" and in the Other Comments column is about "municipality forest". Please check and provide information or justification for different terminology used.	The terminology has been standardised.
2.3 When applicable, the spatial boundaries of ecoregion(s) used to represent homogeneous risk areas within the area under assessment are defined.	Geopolitical Scale, RAT	Geographical data not required because risk is concluded at the national level. Nonetheless, please take into consideration the comments done regarding the fact that it is not yet strongly justified for several indicators whether the risk is negligible for the whole country.	We have formulated the reasons more clearly. As mentioned above, the risk assessment for individual federal states also depends on the outcome of the expert survey, the results will be included in the second draft.
2.4 The process lead has provided ISO codes that pertain to the Geographical boundaries of the area of the assessment.	Geopolitical Scale, RAT	While the assessment lists specific legislative differences for each state (e.g., clear-cutting restrictions in Baden-Württemberg), it doesn't explicitly connect these differences to potential risks. For example, it doesn't state how stricter clear-cutting regulations in Bayern might affect the risk of illegal harvesting or forest degradation.	As mentioned above, the risk assessment for individual federal states also depends on the outcome of the expert survey and the results will be included in the second draft.

3. Gathering and assessing information

3.1 All sources of information used in the risk assessment are reliable and well recognized.	References, RAT; Experts, RAT; Legislation, RAT	Requirement satisfactorily met.	
3.2 Information sources older than five (5) years are not included or, in case they are included, their continued relevance and reliability are confirmed.	References, RAT; Legislation, RAT	The rationale provided for using references older than 5 years is relevant and convincingly supports their use. However, some older references lack justification (e.g., R20, R22, R23, R158, R159, R160, R161, R162, R163, R164). This makes it difficult to validate the rationale for these missing references. Please ensure that justification for using references older than 5 years is provided.	The justification has been supplemented.
3.3 For the assessment of each indicator, general sources of information provided by key topics in the Risk	Assessment of Indicators, RAT	The references and legislation are listed. In some cases (such as indicator 1, 7, 12, etc.), specific aspects of the	The information on references and legal provisions has been supplemented.

Assessment template are considered, and additional sources of information specific to the area under assessment are gathered and documented.		sources being utilized are shown. However, in many cases, they are not specified. Therefore, please show the specific aspects of the sources being utilized to explain the risk conclusions for each of the indicators. In the case of references, for example, it can be an idea taken from an important source, which should be indicated specifically; in the case of legislation, this could be citing a specific article and/or clause, to elucidate the link between the risk assessment and the sources.	
3.4 Information used in the risk assessment is referenced to ensure that sources of information are verifiable by third parties.	Assessment of Indicators, RAT; Experts, RAT	A webpage (e.g., Homepage in R181, R182, R184 and R185) does not fit into a list of references, considering, that a webpage is constantly changing contents. Such types of information source should be presented somehow separately.	The references were checked again and adjusted.
3.5 Whenever possible, information relevant to the specific context of forest- or farm-level management in the area under assessment should be used.		Please indicate if this requirement has been met. The majority of information used to assess the possible risks connected to each indicator is very general focusing mainly at the national level. If information specific to forest or farm level management exists, it should be used.	Specific sources were added (e.g. Spiegel Report Dannenröder Forst (2020)).
3.6 Any existing conflicts between indicator requirements and applicable legislation identified for the area under assessment shall be identified and described.		A thorough list of legislation has been listed and used in the assessment of the indicators as applicable. Nonetheless, please confirm there are no conflicts between applicable legislation and the requirements of the indicators, where applicable. There is no justification on this regard, so it is assumed this is not applicable in the case of Germany. If there are conflicts, then please reflect this in your assessment for every indicator where this is applicable.	No conflicts were found between legislation and the requirements of an indicator.

4. Assessment of indicators and risk designation

4.1 In cases where the country/region already has an approved FSS, the risk		Although a Review Report has been provided explaining how information of the CW Risk Assessments has been used, please indicate if you did	Relevant legislation from the approved FSS have been referenced and listed under legislation, e.g. the Federal Forest Act, the
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assessment has cross-referenced the relevant and up-to-date legislation identified in the FSS for the country/region under assessment.		a cross-reference of the relevant legislation with the ones identified in the FSS for Germany.	Forest Reproductive Material Act, the Act on the Implementation of Measures of Occupational Safety and Health ("Arbeitsschutzgesetz"), EUDR, and the Forest Acts of several federal states, among others.
4.2 RA includes a justification for considering an Indicator labelled as "Not applicable".	Assessment of Indicators, RAT ("Long Description of Risk" Column)	A justification has been provided for all indicators labelled as 'not applicable'. Nevertheless, in the case of indicator 51 regarding legal requirements for classification of products, part of the assessment is incomplete (i.e. text added in the description of legislation), and it is not yet clear if not mandatory requirements for classification of products apply at all in Germany. Please address the comments made on this regard in section 4.	The legal requirements for indicator 51 have been supplemented.
4.3 Risk designations are provided for each indicator included and corresponding scale of assessment used.	Assessment of Indicators, RAT	The indicators are numbered and clearly identifiable, and risk conclusion is selected for each indicator. Risk conclusions, which are designated in this case as "Negligible" and some "Not applicable", have been made for each of the indicators assessed. However, no explanation is provided on why that particular risk conclusion is reached. Please connect the risk conclusion with the available evidence. Please make sure that source(s) of information you provide are included and the information is relevant to your risk conclusions. For example, you mentioned percentages of tenure insecurity under indicator 4, but you have not provided the source of the data. Also, how this data relates to your risk conclusion as "Not applicable" is not clear.	The risk conclusions have been revised.
4.4 Each identified risk(s) related to the indicator under assessment is described.	Assessment of Indicators, RAT	All indicators have been designated as negligible risk at the country level. Nevertheless, as can be observed in the detailed comments provided in section 4 below, the assessment of several indicators is mostly focus on explaining the existence of a strong legal framework but does not provide sufficient evidences on the enforcement of	Evidence of enforcement of legislation or evidence that the risk is not widespread or systematic has been added (e.g. via the Global Governance Indicator or the Corruption Perception Index for Germany).

		legislation or evidences to confirm that the risk is not widespread or systematic.	
<p>4.5 Quality of risk designations: For each Indicator, evidence is provided to sufficiently enable the definition of a risk threshold. Negligible risk' designations are backed up with evidence that a) risk thresholds are not exceeded and b) there is no information that would indicate a 'non-negligible risk' &</p> <p>4.6 Non-negligible risk' designations are based on sound information that identifies one or more specific risk areas.</p>	Assessment of Indicators, RAT	<p>Given that all indicators have been assessed as either negligible risk, or in few cases as not applicable, none of the risk thresholds apply. Nevertheless, taking into consideration all comments we have made regarding the assessment of indicators, some risk conclusions may change. In such cases, please make sure to indicate all risk thresholds that apply when concluding 'non-negligible' risk.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the case of geopolitical scale and source types, the sources used in the assessment, in several cases, do not provide any evidence or clarity on whether there are differences in issues/risks depending on the scale or source type. They are very general regarding the country. Please check again whether there are differences depending on scale and source types and reflect them in the assessment of each indicator and supported by the relevant sources, wherever relevant.</p>	The risk thresholds were supplemented if a 'non-negligible' risk was identified.
<p>4.7 A precautionary approach has been applied to designate a risk as 'non-negligible' in case(s) when:</p> <p>(a) The assessment of indicators 10, 11 and 12 of the Risk Assessment conclude that there is a risk of corruption and fraud in the country/region in question; and</p> <p>(b) Little or no evidence can be obtained to indicate that the risk is negligible.</p>	Assessment of Indicators, RAT	<p>Taking into consideration the status of the assessment of several indicators, the application of the precautionary approach may be required. Please address all comments and assess on each case if this requirement applies.</p> <p>If you cannot find sufficient evidence to justify negligible risk designation in the RA draft going to consultation, then please apply the precautionary approach. This way stakeholders will have the chance to provide evidence if they do not agree with the risk conclusion.</p>	Comment accepted.
4.8 Risk designations for the area under assessment have been compared		Although this is one of the first Risk Assessments done following the requirements under FSC-PRO-60-006b and there are no risk assessments from similar areas to	The risk assessment for Germany has been compared with the risk assessment for

against the risk designations of risk assessment(s) of similar areas.		compare with, please indicate if you have considered risks in similar areas (e.g. neighbouring countries) and whether they have any relevant connection to Germany context. Also, you can use the results of the CW Risk Assessments for similar areas, wherever applicable.	Austria and comes to a similar risk conclusion.
4.9 Explanations have been provided in case where the risks identified in the assessment of the corresponding indicator under comparison are similar but resulted in a different risk designation.		Please consider the comment made in 4.8 above.	The risk designation of indicators for similar areas is the same as for Germany.

5. Establishment of mitigation measures

5.1 For risks designated as 'non-negligible', mitigation measures are established according to each risk and source type identified.	Risk Mitigation Measures, RAT; RM Docs, RAT	Please take into consideration the comments made in the assessment of indicators. It is not yet justified the negligible risk designation for several indicators. After you address all PSU comments, if some indicators are designated with non-negligible risk, then please provide recommended mitigation measures for each identified risk, where applicable.	The risk mitigation was supplemented for two indicators.
5.2 When applicable, the mitigation measures are distinguished as recommended or mandatory.	Risk Mitigation Measures, RAT	So far, this requirement does not apply in the case of the RA for Germany because all indicators have been designated with negligible risk at the country level. Nonetheless, taking into consideration this is a risk assessment developed through a centralized type of process, any proposed mitigation measure can only be recommended.	Comment accepted.

6. Indigenous and Traditional Peoples

6.1 Indicators relating to Indigenous and Traditional Peoples have been assessed in line with the requirements of PRO-60-006b	Indicators 42, 43, 44, 45, and 48	For indicators 42, 43, 44 and 45: In general, the assessment of this indicator is comprehensive, and provides a clear justification on why this indicator is not applicable for Germany. Nonetheless, there is a	The assessment of this indicator has been formulated more clearly.
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		<p>sentence that creates confusion: Germany does not have significant indigenous or traditional population within its border. What does this mean? Are there any minorities that identify themselves as Indigenous or Traditional Peoples? As far as I understand this is not the case, but then I would like to ask you to please make this very clear in the assessment of this indicator, as supported by the available sources.</p> <p>For indicator 48: It is not clear whether applicable legislation in the country covers requirements on interaction with local communities. Although it is clear in the case of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Peoples it does not apply, in the case of local communities is not clear.</p> <p>Also, in the 'Description of issue/risk' column, although a comprehensive information is provided on what are key values and measures that are implemented in Germany when interacting with local communities, it is not clear whether evidence exist that can confirm that no issues have been raised in the last years. I would suggest consulting this with relevant experts so it can support the negligible risk conclusion. You can also add a specific question for stakeholders to respond during consultation.</p>	<p>Interacting with local communities will be discussed with experts.</p>
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7. Forest conversion and degradation

<p>7.1 Indicators relating to forest conversion and degradation have been assessed in line with the requirements of PRO-60-006b</p>	<p>Indicators 55, 56, and 57</p>	<p>For indicator 55: Following Clause 16.3 of FSC-PRO-60-006b, indicator 55 shall be designated by default as 'non-negligible risk'. It is only possible to change risk designation in the case of FSC Risk Assessments developed through a chamber balanced process, so in the case of Germany this is not possible, and the indicator needs to remain as non-negligible, independently on the assessment done to the indicator.</p>	<p>For Indicator 55 and 56: comments and suggestions for revision accepted and implemented in the revised draft. Yes, it is confirmed that our assessment was done following the correct wording of the indicator 55, including transformation of plantations to agriculture. Yes, it is confirmed that expert consultation will be important to validate the assessments about enforcement of legislation. We still maintain that because</p>
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	<p>In addition, in the column containing the description of evidence, the assessment provided is using the approach applicable to indicator 56 and not for indicator 55. In the case of indicator 55, there is no numerical threshold that applies. In the case of conversion from natural forest or transformation of plantations to agriculture any type of demonstrated conversion of this type (even if small) would be already considered as a risk.</p> <p>Can you please confirm that your assessment was done following the correct wording of the indicator 55, including transformation of plantations to agriculture?</p> <p>Also, you have provided as a conclusion on enforcement of legislation that because Germany scored well on international indexes on governance and corruption, is enough evidence to conclude that enforcement is sufficient to prevent conversion. This evidence along is not enough to arrive at such conclusion, and especially taking into consideration that Germany has different systems of enforcement depending on the authority (state, municipal, etc.). Please provide further evidence to confirm that this is the case. Expert consultation would be very important evidence.</p> <p>Please modify the assessment of this indicator and indicator 56, addressing all the comments provided above.</p> <p>For indicator 56: Although the 'Description of risk/issue' column provides a general overview on the strong legal framework against conversion and measures in Germany, and shows that the country scored well regarding governance and enforcement following international indexes, the risk threshold that applies for the assessment of this indicator is 0.02% gross annual loss of natural forest area, and the provided information does not clarify whether the enforcement of applicable</p>	<p>Germany scores well on international indexes on rule of law, governance and corruption, this is solid evidence to conclude that enforcement is sufficient to prevent conversion in line with the applicable German laws. There is a clear causal effect, as described by scientific and practical knowledge, when the rule of law and administrative capacity are high (respectively corruption is low) the implementation of applicable laws regarding forests, will be sufficient.</p> <p>As per FSC own definition, negligible risks are those risks that among others are effectively controlled through monitoring and enforcement carried by efficient and effective government agencies, limited in their impact, unusual or non-systematic, or temporary. Much of this applies to Germany and is summarized in the national risk assessment, among others for indicators 55, 56 and 57. But as requested by FSC and in line with its precautionary principle, for indicator 55 the level of risk is assigned as non-negligible.</p> <p>For indicator 56: the comments and requests for revisions are not relevant or appropriate. In our assessment we clearly show that there are no NATURAL forest areas in Germany that are converted into agriculture or other land uses or plantations or planted forests. We provide data on both gross and net forest changes, but this data concerns mainly managed forests which dominate in Germany; this data does not refer to natural forests. There are no natural forests in Germany. Ca. 2-3 % of forests are set aside to become natural forests someday, but they are usually designated</p>
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		<p>legislation ensures conversion to land uses other than agriculture below this threshold. The data provided in the description is mostly looking at the net conversion, but gross conversion is the one applicable to assess this indicator. Taking this into consideration, the provided evidence are not sufficient to justify a negligible risk designation.</p> <p>Following the comments provided above, please complement the assessment of this indicator.</p> <p>For indicator 57: The assessment done apart from the GIS solution provides lot of important information beyond spatial data, especially when it comes to the enforcement of applicable legislation. Nonetheless, it is not clear why is concluded that the enforcement of legislation prevents total natural forest degradation to 0.02% of the total natural forest area. Especially, when there are reports regarding certain concerns of areas that may be facing degradation because of lack of clarity in the use of certain normative requirements.</p> <p>Also, please provide further clarification on why is it considered that semi-natural forests would not be part of the assessment of this indicator.</p>	<p>as strictly protected areas which are effectively protected and not converted. There is hence not a question of gross or net conversion other than agriculture. So, there is no further need to complement the assessment.</p> <p>For indicator 57: we do not accept all the comments and suggestions. As explained above, there are no NATURAL forests in Germany, so there cannot degradation of natural forests as they basically do not exist in Germany. Semi-natural forests are managed forests that do not meet criteria for natural forests. We inserted all applicable definitions from the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) which serve as definitions for the FSC national risk assessment reports. No further definition is needed but the reader is directed to official international reports for Germany that provide definitions and statistical data about this question (FAO, Forest Europe, National Forest Inventory etc.). We thank the reviewers for their appreciation of all useful information we provide.</p>
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8. High Conservation Values (HCVs), where applicable¹

<p>8.1 Indicators relating to HCVs are assessed, where applicable, in line with the requirements of PRO-60-006b</p>	<p>Indicators 58-63</p>	<p>For indicator 58 on HCV1: In the FSC RA Germany review report, the importance of assessing HCV-specific risk assessment, including threats arising from forest management practices, is underlined. This argument is also supported with the advances made in scientific research in this area. Please address this proposal, by showing the existing and potential risks on HCV1. Further, the section in the legal requirements is filled with more technical measures; please specify the legal requirements in relation to protection of biological</p>	<p>We added existing research, for instance on the conservation of habitat trees in different old-and-deadwood concepts implemented in the federal states. The legal requirements were already added in the very first round of the assessment, however due to technical failures of the templates the legal sources were not added to the specific indicator. This has been solved.</p>
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¹ If a country does not have a current High Conservation Value (HCV) Framework as part of an existing, approved FSS, then the consultant is required to submit an HCV Framework along with the Risk Assessment as per PRO-60-006b.

	<p>diversity, from threats to habitats, and introduction of alien/invasive species. The information should clearly show the link with the specific law by mentioning your legal document you are referring to, for example, as Bundeswaldgesetz (BWaldG), and by specifying the requirement set to protect species of national regional or global significance.</p> <p>Also, the legal frameworks supporting protection of HCV1 (biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened, or endangered species that are significant at global, regional or national levels are identified and protected, maintained or enhanced) is described well. Mainstream conservation measures, which include protected areas such as national parks, nature reserves and biosphere reserves, are listed. However, information is needed on how changes in the biological diversity are monitored and what measures exist in the legislation to deter violations in management practices that may negatively affect HCV1. Please show by indicating some examples of articles/clauses, which mention possible legal actions on management measures which could be risky to endemic, rare and threatened or endangered species in the country. This approach proves that the risk on HCV1 is negligible, in a more concrete way.</p> <p>For indicator 59 on HCV 2: The measures taken by the country to protect IFL and large landscape-level ecosystems are described. Germany being a country with a highly developed infrastructure and access road system, more information is needed on the risks for the habitats arising from roads, which may result in fragmentations, and/or commercial logging activities, though the risks could be "negligible."</p> <p>In addition, please confirm that IFL maps for Germany are considered up to date and complete and there is no need to add any other sources for the delineation of IFLs, following requirements under the Clause 15.10 of FSC-PRO-60-006b.</p>	<p>For indicator 59, we added the requested information on roads. However, Germany has historically one of the highest rates of forest roads and further fragmentation through construction of highways or similar is only marginal at national scale (sources added).</p> <p>For indicator 60-64 we added information from national statistics on legal cases where court cases were filed. It is however difficult to discriminate in detail, to which kind of violation of the specific law these cases refer. However, there were several cases listed, and we added them to the risk assessment. On a national level, these cases are still in very low numbers and do not reflect a non-negligible risk.</p>
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	<p>For indicator 60 on HCV3: The European and national legislative setting is presented, which shows the strength of the legal framework. From the risk perspective, please include the challenge of implementation, which could be a risk factor. For example, although Natura 2000 areas exist in the country, it is necessary to clarify what is the level of protection and effectiveness of the actions implemented by the relevant authorities and stakeholders in those area.</p> <p>For indicator 61, on HCV 4: Although Germany has a strong legal framework that covers HCVs, evidence about the implementation of the actions to ensure such protection are missing in the assessment of the indicator. For example, if management plans exist and are implemented, then information about the reports of the implementation of such plans around the country is needed. Are there any reports or articles raising any issues or confirming risks are negligible? Probably there are differences depending on the geopolitical scale or source types, please also consider this when evaluating HCVs as it may be crucial when assessing threats.</p> <p>For indicator 62, on HCV 5: Although Germany has a strong legal framework that covers HCVs, evidence about the implementation of the actions to ensure such protection are missing in the assessment of the indicator. For example, if management plans exist and are implemented, then information about the reports of the implementation of such plans around the country is needed. Are there any reports or articles raising any issues or confirming risks are negligible? Probably there are differences depending on the geopolitical scale or source types, please also consider this when evaluating HCVs as it may be crucial when assessing threats.</p> <p>For indicator 63, on HCV 6: Although it is clear that Germany has a strong legal framework that covers</p>	
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		<p>HCVs, evidence about the implementation of the actions to ensure such protection are missing in the assessment of the indicator. For example, if management plans exist and are implemented, then information about the reports of the implementation of such plans around the country is needed. Are there any reports or articles raising any issues or confirming risks are negligible?</p> <p>Probably there are differences depending on the geopolitical scale or source types, please also consider this when evaluating HCVs as it may be crucial when assessing threats.</p>	
9. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)			
<p>9.1 Indicators relating to GMOs are assessed in line with the requirements of PRO-60-006b</p>	Indicator 64	<p>For indicator 64 on GMO: The assessment of this indicator is incomplete. It does not provide any evidence to confirm that use of GMO in the forest sector does not happen.</p> <p>No description of the evidence has been provided, and the summary of legal requirements does not give any indication on the type of requirements, whether the use of GMO is forbidden or not in the forest sector. Only the relevant legislation has been listed, but this is not enough to confirm there are no issues connected to this indicator.,</p> <p>Please reassess this indicator and provide a complete assessment, including filling in each of the columns in the 'Assessment of indicators' tab.</p>	The indicator was reassessed.
10. Overall Quality			
<p>10.1 The process lead has maintained the high quality of the risk assessment draft version, including by ensuring the drafts are proofread and edited prior to submission to the reviewer.</p>	Overall	<p>Please confirm the draft was proofread before submission.</p> <p>Although in general the overall quality of the explanation provided for each of the required sections/fields is clear and understandable, the sentences in few parts were incomplete. Also, a clear justification is missing in the risk conclusion in the description of issues in connection to the available evidence for each of the indicators.</p>	The draft was proofread before submission.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW SUMMARY BY TOPIC

The table below summarizes the review results, based on the evaluation of each item of the Risk Assessment pertaining to the extent and precision (completeness and accuracy), depth/thoroughness and relevance of the information and methodology (quality of assessment), documentation of information that includes clarity and organization (quality of documentation), and the depth and relevance of the analysis to the information gathered and conclusions (quality of analysis). If the concerns/comments raised by the reviewer in this first review are addressed, the corresponding changes will be reflected in the same table after reviewing the second/final draft RA.

Item	Completeness and Accuracy	Quality of Assessment	Quality of Documentation	Quality of Analysis	Overall
Country Overview	Unsatisfactory	Fair	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Insufficient
Supply Chain	Unsatisfactory	Fair	Unsatisfactory	Good	Insufficient
Geopolitical Scale	Good	Excellent	Fair	Excellent	Insufficient
Source Type	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Fair	Insufficient
References	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Fair	Fair	Insufficient
Experts	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Insufficient
Legislation	Unsatisfactory	Excellent	Fair	Excellent	Insufficient
Assessment of Indicators	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Insufficient
Specific Indicators	See Compiled Comments in Section 4 below.				
Risk Mitigation Measures	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Insufficient
Risk Mitigation Documents	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Insufficient

4. DETAILED COMMENTS

The table below contains all the comments made during PSU review for each of the sheets of the Risk Assessment document for Germany. The second column specifies the criteria used by PSU to assess the content of each sheet, and the third column contains the detailed comment.

NOTE: Some of the information provided below is already specified in the section 2 'Content Assessment Summary' of this report.

Detailed Comments in Risk Assessment Template (By Sheet)

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Country Overview	All fields in the sheet are filled out that are applicable.	Short summary is missing under Country overview section. All other applicable parts are filled correctly, including, for example, commodity name - "Wood" which is in line with EUDR Annex I. See also the comment below regarding NTFPs.
Country Overview	If, under "Indicator Coverage", it is specified that certain indicators will be left out of the Risk Assessment, a justification is provided.	All indicators have been included in the risk assessment scope.
Country Overview	Both a short summary and a full summary are included.	No short summary has been included in the Country overview section.
Country Overview	The description of the country context is reflective of the general picture of risk in a country as it relates to the commodity(ies) specified, accounting for multiple dimensions and elements while developing a coherent narrative.	Not all thematic areas from the drop-down list under the "full description" category were included under Country overview Section. For example, "International trade and market dynamics", "Land use / agricultural characteristics" are missing. That might be a problem in terms of obtaining broad and multidimensional understanding of potential risks. The description provided here is not correct and not consistent with the information provided in other excel sheets of this Risk Assessment. Besides, FSC Germany has expressed the following concern, regarding the forest ownership categories: "Classification here is different to the one used for the description of source types and the supply chain. Most common classification would be „the state (Staatswald)“, „the municipalities (Kommunalwald)“ and „private (Privatwald)“ which is also used in most forest laws to define different requirements. Alternatively, just the two types „public“ and „private“ would be a good solution. Communities and state are both public, the church is classified as private owner in most states. Cooperatives are also a special type of private forest". PSU understands that concern. A simpler and more consistent ownership classification (as suggested by FSC Germany) would be helpful.
Country Overview	The relationship between the country info sheet and the risks identified in the Assessment of Indicators sheet is well-developed and rationalized.	Even though this criterion can be classified as satisfactorily met (relationship between the risk and country info), some improvements in the Country overview sheet could be made for better consistency across the thematic sections. Specifically, Indicator # 51 (Legal requirements related to the classification of products are complied with) is classified as "Not applicable", based on the argument that "Germany has no Acts or laws relating to the classification of timber". However, this is not mentioned in the Country overview section.

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Country Overview	Assessment of country context is supported by sources of information that are relevant, verifiable, and represent the consensus of expert opinions on the topic.	In some sections (e.g. "Geographic context" under Country overview), references are missing, or are not easily traceable (e.g. reference to the year of 2016, without further details; 2016 by itself is a bit outdated source).
Country Overview	Country level information is supported by relevant facts and figures where relevant.	There is not appropriate up-to-date information on production and export products under Country overview. Sources are more than five years old and may be out of date; sources cannot be reached for verification.
Country Overview	Commodities impacted as part of the scope of the risk assessment are clearly identified and listed.	Not all products affected as part of the scope of the risk assessment are clearly identified and listed. Only reference to W1 is included, but W1.1, W1.2, W2, N6.3.1 are not considered. Besides, according to the feedback from FSC Germany, it might be helpful to clarify, why Non-Timber Forest Products were not included in the scope.
Country Overview	Analysis links observed trends to specific risks.	Some of the key aspects under Country Overview section (e.g. "Ownership, Management, and Tenure") do not include information that would be significantly helpful in justifying the assigned risk categories.
Country Overview	Economic factors are analyzed in relation to risk levels.	Even though the economic analysis (Country Overview) contains significant and useful information, it fails to clearly relate to risk levels. The three main socio-economic drivers mentioned under "Industry size and economic impact" section were not clearly specified and not linked quite appropriately to potential risks.
Country Overview	Historical and cultural contexts are included in the risk analysis.	The "Cultural considerations" section (under Country overview) only refers to the absence of Indigenous Peoples in Germany, without indicating any source of information (e.g. the currently valid NFSS). No further justifications were included. FSC Germany, for instance, suggested the following: "There exist two officially acknowledged minorities (Dänen und Sorben), none of them would classify themselves as indigenous. But this fact could be mentioned here".
Supply Chain	All relevant fields are filled out.	Only "Supply chain transparency and traceability" section is filled, while the key reference documents are missing. But the references are included in the text of the "Supply chain transparency and traceability".
Supply Chain	Descriptions align with key guidance questions.	Although the description under generally matches the key questions related to the supply chain, the conclusions are very brief and not backed up by sufficient further information or evidence.
Supply Chain	Information is specific to the country context.	Even though the description of Supply chain is generally tailored to the country context, a bit of further detail and evidence to back up conclusions regarding the supply chain transparency and traceability, is needed (see above).
Supply Chain	Assessment of supply chain transparency is comprehensive.	All key aspects of supply chain are included. However, the entire Sub-section "Structure of the forest sector supply chains" consists of the text copied from the "Industry side and economic impact" of the Country overview sheet. That does not seem to be a very good approach, since those two sub-sections should consider slightly different aspects and thematic areas.
Supply Chain	Risks associated with cross-border trade are identified.	Even though some details of Supply chain are provided (e.g. import of potentially illegal timber via third countries), a bit more specific information or examples are needed on potential other scenarios or mechanisms of illegal timber entering German markets.

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Supply Chain	Entities inhibiting transparency are evaluated.	The review concludes that there is no evidence of entities inhibiting supply chain transparency or traceability. However, there is a lack of thorough examination and critical evaluation of those entities.
Supply Chain	Relevant documents are identified and correctly referenced, as needed/where relevant.	None of the references included in the text describing the Supply chain (e.g. Federal Statistical Office, Series 3, Series 3, 2013 and Bundeswaldinventur 3, 2014) can be found in the "References" sheet.
Supply Chain	The description of the supply chain details issues relevant to the assessment of risk as a whole in the country.	The description of Supply chain supports the risk assessments only generally. For instance, the specification of recent Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index for Germany is missing. The documents that are referenced in the description seem relevant. However, they cannot be found in the references list.
Supply Chain	If multiple commodities are mentioned in the scope ("Country Overview" sheet), the context and risks related to the supply chain of those specific commodities are detailed.	Wood is the only commodity listed in the scope. Country overview and the description of supply chain provides sufficient information for that commodity.
Supply Chain	Analysis links transparency challenges to specific risks.	In the description of supply chain system, it is claimed that basically there are no problems associated with the transparency and traceability. However, this claim is supported with too general statements such as "there is not clear evidence that many market operators exist which frequently inhibit transparency and traceability of the products". More specificity is needed.
Supply Chain	Risk mitigation strategies are discussed.	In the Supply chain section, it is mentioned in the analysis that "non-compliant timber importing companies are screened by a risk-based approach by the BLE and non-compliance is regulated by corrective measures such as warning letters, fines, and seizure of products".
Supply Chain	Contextual factors are considered in the analysis.	The overall contextual factors are described sufficiently in the Supply chain section.
Geopolitical Scale	Differences in the legislation between the subnational area and the national level are noted.	While the assessment lists specific legislative differences for each state (e.g., clear-cutting restrictions in Baden-Württemberg), it doesn't explicitly connect these differences to potential risks. For example, it doesn't state how stricter clear-cutting regulations in Bayern might affect the risk of illegal harvesting or forest degradation.
Geopolitical Scale	Additional characteristics/comments are provided as necessary.	The 'Source Types' tab lists additional forest ownership categories like Community Forest, Foundation Forest, and Church Forest. However, these categories are not included in the 'Other Characteristics/Comments' column of the 'Geopolitical Scale' tab. Please explain why these categories were omitted. Are Community Forests considered equivalent to Corporate Forests? If so, please ensure consistency by using only one term

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
References	Short name for the reference is provided.	References provided are relevant for the Risk Assessment in Germany, however, the consultant should complete all fields such as type of references, and justification of source especially when the reference used is older than 5 years (e.g., of R22, R23, R46, R48, R49). The type of evidence chosen aligns well with the nature and purpose of the reference, however, if "other" is selected as the type of evidence (e.g., in R1, R5, R8, R14, R52) then provide a clear description of the reference in the "Other Comments" section.
References	Date of publication is indicated.	Provide dates for R12, R169, R216, R227 and R252.
References	Type of evidence is selected.	Missing a clear description in the "Other Comments" section, refer to the first comment.
References	All required fields are completed.	Incomplete information e.g., R71, R72, R73, R74
References	Justification is provided for references older than 5 years.	Justification provided for using references older than 5 years, however some old references missing justification e.g., R20, R22, R23, R158, R159, R160, R161, R162, R163, R164. Please make sure justification for using references older than 5 years is provided.
References	Short name is appropriate and reflective of the reference.	Some references miss short names e.g., R90, R91, R92, R93, R93, R108, R109. There is inconsistency in the titles of the references. The titles should reflect the topic rather than the agency or ministry's name, e.g., R71, R72, and R73. The consultant should also verify that the titles are translated correctly.
References	Author/source name is clearly and fully indicated.	Please write the full name of the author or source.
References	Type of evidence is correctly identified.	Provide evidence type for all references.
References	All relevant fields are comprehensively completed.	Not all relevant fields are filled, e.g., missing short names, incomplete information e.g., R71, R72, R73, R74, missing dates e.g., R12, R169, R216, R227 and R252 which shows validity of the reference since reference older than 5 years need to be justified when they are used. Complete all relevant fields.
References	Justification for older references is relevant and detailed.	The rationale provided for using references older than 5 years is relevant and convincingly supports their use. However, some older references lack justification (e.g., R20, R22, R23, R158, R159, R160, R161, R162, R163, R164). This makes it difficult to validate the rationale for these missing references. Please ensure that justification for using references older than 5 years is provided.
References	References can be easily located by external parties.	A webpage (e.g., Homepage in R181, R182, R184 and R185) does not fit into a list of references, considering, that a webpage is constantly changing contents. Such types of information source should be presented somehow separately.
References	Comprehensive understanding demonstrated in documentation.	Incomplete fields e.g., R108, R109, R169, R184, R185.

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
References	Additional comments are meaningful and provide further clarity.	Enhance clarity of "other comments", by giving detailed information if needed. Short comments such as "Convention" (R158, R159, R160) do not provide an understanding of what it means. Is it the convention homepage? Also, use the English language "Vorschrift" (R98, R99, R100) & Geschäftsordnung (R74), Rahmenvereinbarung (R195).
Source Type	All applicable fields are filled out completely.	<p>The assessment mostly fulfills this criterion. Most fields relevant to the source types are filled out.</p> <p>However, some columns are left blank such as the "Type of Forest" column, the "Related License/Permit" column, and the "Management Regime" for "Foundation Forest" and "Church Forest".</p> <p>Please fill in the blank or provide clarification or justification why the column is left blank.</p> <p>Classification of ownership is not consistent with the description in the other sheets. Please ensure that the classification of ownership is consistent throughout the Risk Assessment, in all sheets where applicable.</p>
Source Type	The ownership type and management regime information are consistent and accurate.	<p>The assessment mostly fulfills this criterion. The ownership types (State, Community Forest, Private) are generally consistent with the source type descriptions. However, the management regime for some source types (Foundation Forest, Church Forest) is left blank.</p> <p>Please fill in the blank or provide clarification or justification why the column is left blank.</p>
Source Type	Relevant licenses or permits related to the source type are documented and accurately described.	<p>The "Related License/Permit" column is left blank.</p> <p>Please fill in the blank or provide clarification or justification why the column is left blank.</p>
Source Type	Unique name reflects the source type appropriately, and the description of the source type is clear and specific.	<p>There is inconsistency in one of the source types. On source type "community forest" the Description column provided is "corporate forest" and in the Other Comments column is about "municipality forest".</p> <p>Please check and provide information or justification for different terminology used.</p>
Source Type	Land Classification and Type of Forest designations are sensible and appropriate for the scope of the Risk Assessment.	<p>Type of forest is left Blank. Please fill in the blank or provide clarification or justification on why the column is left blank.</p>
Source Type	Ownership types and Management regimes are clearly indicated for each source type.	<p>The assessment mostly fulfills this criterion. Ownership types are clearly indicated for all source types. However, the management regime is not specified for "Foundation Forest" and "Church Forest."</p> <p>Please fill in the blank or provide information or justification on why The Management Regime information is left blank for "Foundation Forest" and "Church Forest."</p>

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Source Type	Relevant licenses or permits are comprehensively listed.	The "Related License/Permit" is left blank. Please fill in the blank or provide clarification or justification on why The Related License/Permit is left blank.
Source Type	The type of forest(s) listed correspond to recognized ecological/geographical forest types	The Type of Forest is left blank. Please fill in the blank or provide information or justification on why The Type of Forest is left blank.
Source Type	Documentation for management regime is thorough.	The assessment mostly fulfills this criterion. The management regimes for "State Forest," "Community Forest," "Federal Forest," and "Private Forest" are adequately documented, with explanations and references to legal frameworks. However, the management regime for "Foundation Forest" and "Church Forest" is left blank. Please fill in the blank or provide information or justification on why The Management Regime is left blank for "Foundation Forest" and "Church Forest".
Source Type	Licenses or permits are accurately referenced.	The "Related License/Permit" column is left blank. Please fill in the blank or provide information or justification on why Related License/Permit section is left blank.
Source Type	Relevance of documented characteristics to risk assessment is clearly articulated.	The assessment partially fulfills this criterion. While the descriptions and additional comments provide valuable information about each source type, the explicit link between these characteristics and their implications for risk assessment could be further strengthened. The analysis could benefit from more direct statements on how specific ownership types, management regimes, or legal frameworks influence the potential risks associated with each source type.
Experts	Experts have been consulted for the purposes of assessing indicators or proposing risk mitigation measures, based on the conditions established in PRO-60-006b.	Why is this sheet empty. Please let us know if you intend to include the list of experts. As pointed out in the 'Assessment of indicators' Tab, the evidence provided in the assessment of several indicators is not yet sufficient, and consultation with experts may be required. If you intend to do this in parallel to consultation phase, we suggest preparing a list of questions for those indicators where it clear that further information/evidence is required.
Legislation	The date of the legislation is indicated (when the date was signed/formally approved and/or when the date became effective. (If no longer valid, the date since when it was last valid is indicated.)	Please ensure that effective dates are provided throughout.
Legislation	Additional information is provided on relevant authorities responsible for implementing the legislation.	Missing authority implementing legislation in L11, L15, L20, L26, L35 and L83.

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Legislation	An accessible link to the legislation is provided.	Please provide links for L19 and L41.
Legislation	Documentation is thorough, consistent, and complete.	Ensure that all fields are fully completed. Also, L1 and L2, L4 and L5 are identical, only the list of affected indicators is different, why this repetition? Please merge and add the list of indicators applied to this legislation. Moreover, L11, L12, L15 and L16 are not law but rather internal documents of just one enterprise such documents should not be part of this list. Additionally, State laws are missing, all state laws for environmental protection. (Landesnaturschutzgesetz). See list of laws in German FSC Standard – many of the documents listed in the standard are missing.
Legislation	In cases where legislation differs between a subnational level and the national level, such local/subnational legislation is listed and the differences with national level legislation are explained.	Thank you for providing additional comments that highlight the application of the legislation to specific indicators. However, PSU recommends explicitly detailing the differences between the national legislation and the subnational/city legislation in the "Additional Comments" section. E.g., are these two legislations the same? L22 (Forest Act for the state of Bremen and L23 (State Forest Act), if not, is there any implication to risks?
Assessment of Indicators	The indicators specified in the scope of the Risk Assessment are each assessed for all geopolitical scales.	Only in the case of the corruption related indicators (10, 11 and 12), evidence of the overall situation of the country has been provided based on international indexes such as CPI which helps to have an overall understanding of the country's context. Nonetheless, for the other indicators, only a description of legal requirements has been provided in the description of risks, without making a connection to evidences on whether there are or not issues in the country or only relevant to specific geopolitical scales or source types.
Assessment of Indicators	The indicators being assessed are clearly identifiable, with each row given a unique number, and a risk conclusion selected for each.	The indicators are numbered and clearly identifiable, and risk conclusion is selected for each indicator. Risk conclusions, which of are designated in this case as "Negligible" and some "Not applicable", have been made for each of the indicators assessed. However, no explanation is provided why that particular risk conclusion is reached. Please connect the risk conclusion with the available evidence. Please make sure that source(s) of information you provide are included and the information is relevant to your risk conclusions. For example, you mentioned percentages of tenure insecurity under indicator 4, but you have not provided the source of the data. Also, how this data relates to your risk conclusion as "Not applicable" is not clear.
Assessment of Indicators	All indicators in the Risk Assessment are assessed at each Geopolitical Scale in the Risk Assessment.	The 16 Federal States in the country are listed, and the analysis is conducted at the national scale, which is not problematic on its own. However, an explanation is needed why the conclusions are made at the national scale while there are differences in the legislation between the Federal States. For example, clear-cutting is prohibited in Schleswig-Holstein whereas clear-cutting of one to two hectares is allowed in Hessen, Niedersachsen and Nordrhein-Westfalen. If this is because of the absence of differences between the Federal States in forestry practices, this should also be clarified.
Assessment of Indicators	All relevant source types are listed.	The sources are listed, but not used in assessing the indicators. Also, there is no indication about absence of differences in the risk between the different types of sources. If there are no differences, this has to be indicated and explained. Therefore, please show the link between the sources used and the assessment of the risk indicators.
Assessment of Indicators	A short description, as well as a long description, of the risk provided.	The risk conclusion as "negligible" for all indicators is ok; what matters is the explanation. "Negligible risk" does not mean that there is no risk. For example. in several cases, the low corruption rate of Germany is mentioned by referring to Transparency International reports. Germany is known to have low corruption. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no corruption and this risk, though it is low, should be clarified. Looking at the openings in the enforcement, for example, when cases are brought to courts and so on could be brought up. Therefore, please explain your risk conclusion tuning the detailed information on the risk situation, even if it is "negligible" for all indicators assessed.

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Assessment of Indicators	Relevant sources, experts and legislation are provided as evidence for the assessment of the indicator.	The references and legislation are listed. In some cases (such as indicator 1, 7, 12, etc.), specific aspects of the sources being utilized are shown. However, in many cases, they are not specified. Therefore, please show the specific aspects of the sources being utilized to explain the risk conclusions for each of the indicators. In the case of references, for example, it can be an idea taken from an important source, which should be indicated specifically; in the case of legislation, this could be citing a specific article and/or clause, to elucidate the link between the risk assessment and the sources.
Assessment of Indicators	Limitations of sources, if any, are addressed.	Please confirm if the existing sources are sufficient, which means no gaps exist, and there is no need to include expert consultation.
Assessment of Indicators	Indicators meriting special attention have been assessed according to relevant criteria as outlined in the procedure.	For indicators 58-63 (HCV indicators), I have seen that references and/or legislation considered as relevant are listed in relation to each of the indicators that require special attention. This shows the richness of the legislation on the national and European levels, which support conservation. However, the connection made with the risk conclusion would be clearer if some interesting articles or clauses are cited. Please do that.
Assessment of Indicators	Current and relevant sources are used.	<p>Although several sources have been used and listed in the assessment of the indicators, as already indicated in the review of the 'References' tab, justification for using sources older than 5 years is missing in some cases. Providing this justification is very important, especially in cases where the source contains key evidence for justifying a negligible risk designation.</p> <p>Furthermore, the sources used for assessing an indicator cannot be only focused on explaining the legal framework of the country in connection to the topic covered by the indicator, but sources also need to contain evidence to describe if there are relevant issues/risks in the area under assessment. For example, for indicator 1, only 3 sources have been used, of which one of them is from 1999, and the other two are general webpages providing general information about land tenure rights in Germany without providing any specific reports/articles that describe the current situation.</p>
Assessment of Indicators	Experts which are relevant to the assessment of the indicators are listed.	<p>Taking into consideration the comments I made above, please include further sources that are relevant and up to date for the assessment of the indicators, where applicable.</p> <p>No experts have been listed for the assessment of the indicators. As mentioned in other parts of this review, for several indicators the sources used in the assessment are not sufficient to reach a risk conclusion. In such cases, following Clause 2.6 of FSC-PRO-60-006b, experts shall be consulted.</p>
Assessment of Indicators	Legislation which are relevant to the assessment of the indicators are listed.	<p>If you have considered doing this during the consultation process, please make sure to contact the selected experts in parallel to the general consultation, focusing on the specific indicators or elements of the risk assessment where you need their expertise.</p> <p>Although for several indicators the applicable legislation has been listed, there are indicators for which this has not been done. For example, in the case of indicator 56 on conversion from natural forests to land uses other than agriculture, no legislation has been listed in the 'Legislation' column even though the 'Description of risks/issues' column is indicating that a strong legal framework exists in the country.</p> <p>Please review the column 'Legislation' for all indicators and make sure to consistently list the relevant legislation.</p>

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Assessment of Indicators	Summaries of legal requirements are accurate.	<p>The summary of legal requirements is not complete for all indicators. In some cases, a detailed summary has been provided (e.g. indicators 16, 22, 24), but for other indicators is incomplete or it has been written more as a description of the enforcement of the legislation than a summary of legal requirements. For example, in the case of indicator 51, it is mentioned that there are no legal requirements applicable for the classification of products, but there are conventions used as best practices, but the text is not finished, and not further information was provided. Also, in the case of indicators 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, and 63, instead of a summary of legal requirements, the provided information is more a description of threats to HCVs or framework to identify HCVs that would better correspond to the column 'Description of issue/risks'. The same for the indicator 64, it is mentioned that use of GMOs are regulated but no information is provided on what are the requirements, does it mean use of GMOs in forest sector is not allowed or is allowed under certain conditions or circumstances?</p> <p>Furthermore, in other cases, the 'Long description of issue/risk' column is providing a summary of legal requirements instead of description of the evidences to confirm whether there are or not issues in the area under assessment in connection to the specific requirements covered by the indicator. For example, in the case of indicators 49, 50, 51, among others. Finally, there are other cases like for indicator 51 on classification of products, for which no legislation applies, but as indicated in the column 'Description of legal requirements' there are conventions used as best practices. The text is very short and does not provide any insights on those conventions and the text itself is an incomplete sentence which is missing some words.</p>
Assessment of Indicators	The risk conclusion is well-evaluated and appropriate.	<p>Please check the summary of legal requirements for all indicators and ensure they are addressing the issues raised above and ensure consistency along all indicators.</p> <p>As indicated in other parts of this review, the 'Long description of issue/risk' column does not provide sufficient evidence to justify a negligible risk designation for several indicators. Even though, in the column 'References' a thorough list of references has been provided for several indicators, the 'Description of issues/risks' does not provide details on the evidence and their connection to the risk conclusion. I would suggest explaining how the available sources support the proposed risk conclusion by indicating that, for example, together with the strong legal framework, the available monitoring reports in the (e.g.) last 5 years did not raise any issues of non-compliance with the legal requirements, or although few cases have been reported, they are minor, are not widespread or systematic, or are focused on a specific area of the country, etc.</p> <p>To make my point more clear, I would like to use the assessment of indicator 38: in the column 'Description of risk/issue' it is very clear that Germany has a strong legal framework for protecting against discrimination of workers, and there are several measures that companies have to follow. Nonetheless, in the description it is not mentioned whether there are any reports or articles or experts confirming that no major issues have happened in the forest sector in the last years for example. Also, by looking at the sources listed, most of them are about international indexes and applicable Conventions, but evidence about the enforcement of the applicable legislation is missing.</p> <p>Please review the description of evidence for each indicator and amend accordingly, following the comments provided above.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the case of indicator 55, as per Clause 16.3 of FSC-PRO-60-006b, the default risk designation is non-negligible and cannot be changed in centralized processes. Even though consultants are expected to provide a complete assessment of this indicator, the risk designation shall be non-negligible.</p>

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Assessment of Indicators	The analysis in the long description is detailed and comprehensive.	As already mentioned in other parts of this review, for several indicators, the assessment (especially in 'Long description of risk/issue' column) is missing a clear connection between the evidence and the conclusions drawn. Please review the assessment of each indicator and amend where considered relevant.
Assessment of Indicators	References and experts chosen strongly support the analysis.	There are indicators for which only one reference has been used to assess the indicator. For example, in the case of indicators 49, 50, 51, 52. It is not possible to reach a risk conclusion by using only one source of information. A combination of sources needs to be used. In addition, using few sources and most of them being 3-4 years old or older is also not sufficient to assess the indicator. Sources used to assess an indicator cannot be only focused on explaining the legal framework. Sources providing evidence on the overall situation of the country in connection to the topic under assessment also need to be used. Furthermore, given that you are providing risk conclusions at the country level, the sources used need to, by combining them, cover all the country. You can also use sources focusing on specific geopolitical scales or source types, but all together, if the risk conclusion is the same for the whole country, they need to confirm that the situation in all geopolitical scale/source types is the same. Please review the sources used for the assessment of all indicators and modify/add accordingly.
Assessment of Indicators	Legislation used in the analysis is relevant, and any potential conflicts between the legal requirements for the given area and the indicator under assessment are identified and described.	Given the fact that several indicators need stronger justification/evidence to reach a negligible risk conclusion, I would suggest creating a list of questions for the consultation, focusing on the indicators/elements of the risk assessment where further evidence/sources are needed. A thorough list of legislation has been listed and used in the assessment of the indicators as applicable. Nonetheless, please confirm there are no conflicts between applicable legislation and the requirements of the indicators, where applicable. I do not see any justification on this regard, so I am assuming this is not applicable in the case of Germany. If there are conflicts, then please reflect this in your assessment for every indicator where this is applicable.
Assessment of Indicators	The conclusions are clear and provide a definitive understanding of the risk.	Several indicators do not contain a complete description of evidence to justify the negligible risk designation. The description of evidence is focused on describing how the requirements are managed in the country following applicable laws, but it does not link the description to evidences on whether there are or not issues relevant to the requirements covered by the specific indicator. Thus, no substantiated conclusion is provided. In such cases, when available evidence is limited and there are doubts on how risk conclusion shall be graded (e.g. risks are widespread, systematic, etc.) expert consultation may be required, following Clause 2.6 of FSC-PRO-60-006b.
Assessment of Indicators	Risk thresholds and geopolitical scales are applied consistently.	Please check the whole assessment and modify the assessment of each indicator accordingly. Given that all indicators have been assessed as either negligible risk, or in few cases as not applicable, none of the risk thresholds apply. Nevertheless, taking into consideration all comments we have made regarding the assessment of indicators, some risk conclusions may change. In such cases, please make sure to indicate all risk thresholds that apply when concluding 'non-negligible' risk. Furthermore, in the case of geopolitical scale and source types, the sources used in the assessment, in several cases, do not provide any evidence or clarity on whether there are differences in issues/risks depending on the scale or source type. They are very general regarding the country. Please check again whether there are differences depending on scale and

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
		source types and reflect them in the assessment of each indicator and supported by the relevant sources, wherever relevant.
Specific Indicators	Indicator 42. Legal requirements related to the rights of Indigenous Peoples are complied with.	For indicator 42: In general, the assessment of this indicator is comprehensive, and provides a clear justification on why this indicator is not applicable for Germany. Nonetheless, there is a sentence that creates confusion: Germany does not have significant indigenous or traditional population within its border. What does this mean? Are there any minorities that identify themselves as Indigenous or Traditional Peoples? As far as I understand this is not the case, but then I would like to ask you to please make this very clear in the assessment of this indicator, as supported by the available sources.
Specific Indicators	Indicator 43. The rights of Indigenous Peoples, including land tenure and management, are respected and upheld according to the principles of FPIC.	For indicator 43: Same comment as the one provided for indicator 42 applies in this case because the assessment is the same.
Specific Indicators	Indicator 44. Legal requirements related to the rights of Traditional Peoples are complied with.	For indicator 44: Same comment as the one provided for indicator 42 applies in this case because the assessment is the same.
Specific Indicators	Indicator 45. The rights of Traditional Peoples, including land tenure and management, are respected and upheld according to the principles of FPIC.	For indicator 45: Same comment as the one provided for indicator 42 applies in this case because the assessment is the same.
Specific Indicators	Indicator 48. Interaction with Indigenous Peoples, Traditional Peoples and local communities is conducted in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner.	<p>For indicator 48: It is not clear whether applicable legislation in the country covers requirements on interaction with local communities. Although it is clear in the case of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Peoples it does not apply, in the case of local communities is not clear.</p> <p>Also, in the 'Description of issue/risk' column, although a comprehensive information is provided on what are key values and measures that are implemented in Germany when interacting with local communities, it is not clear whether evidence exist that can confirm that no issues have been raised in the last years. I would suggest consulting this with relevant experts so it can support the negligible risk conclusion. You can also add a specific question for stakeholders to respond during consultation.</p>

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Specific Indicators	Indicator 55. There is no conversion from natural forest and no transformation of plantations to agricultural use since 31 December 2020.	<p>For indicator 55: Following Clause 16.3, indicator 55 shall be designated by default as 'non-negligible risk'. It is only possible to change risk designation in the case of FSC Risk Assessments developed through a chamber balanced process, so in the case of Germany this is not possible, and the indicator needs to remain as non-negligible, independently on the assessment done to the indicator.</p> <p>In addition, in the column containing the description of evidence, the assessment provided is using the approach applicable to indicator 56 and not for indicator 55. In the case of indicator 55, there is no numerical threshold that applies. In the case of conversion from natural forest or transformation of plantations to agriculture any type of demonstrated conversion of this type (even if small) would be already considered as a risk.</p> <p>Can you please confirm that your assessment was done following the correct wording of the indicator 55, including transformation of plantations to agriculture?</p> <p>Also, you have provided as a conclusion on enforcement of legislation that because Germany scored well on international indexes on governance and corruption, is enough evidence to conclude that enforcement is sufficient to prevent conversion. This evidence along is not enough to arrive at such conclusion, and especially taking into consideration that Germany has different systems of enforcement depending on the authority (state, municipal, etc.). Please provide further evidence to confirm that this is the case. Expert consultation would be very important evidence.</p>
Specific Indicators	Indicator 56. There is no conversion from natural forest to land uses other than agriculture since 31 December 2020.	<p>Please modify the assessment of this indicator and indicator 56, addressing all the comments provided above.</p> <p>For indicator 56: Although the 'Description of risk/issue' column provides a general overview on the strong legal framework against conversion and measures in Germany, and shows that the country scored well regarding governance and enforcement following international indexes, the risk threshold that applies for the assessment of this indicator is 0.02% gross annual loss of natural forest area, and the provided information does not clarify whether the enforcement of applicable legislation ensures conversion to land uses other than agriculture below this threshold. The data provided in the description is mostly looking at the net conversion, but gross conversion is the one applicable to assess this indicator. Taking this into consideration, the provided evidence is not sufficient to justify a negligible risk designation.</p>
Specific Indicators	Indicator 57. There is no degradation of natural forests since 31 December 2020.	<p>Following the comments provided above, please complement the assessment of this indicator.</p> <p>For indicator 57: The assessment done apart from the GIS solution provides lot of important information beyond spatial data, especially when it comes to the enforcement of applicable legislation. Nonetheless, it is not clear why is concluded that the enforcement of legislation prevents total natural forest degradation to 0.02% of the total natural forest area. Especially, when there are reports regarding certain concerns of areas that may be facing degradation because of lack of clarity in the use of certain normative requirements. Also, please provide further clarification on why it is considered that semi-natural forests would not be part of the assessment of this indicator.</p>

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Specific Indicators	Indicator 58. Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened, or endangered species that are significant at global, regional or national levels are identified and protected, maintained or enhanced (HCV1).	<p>For indicator 58 on HCV1: In the FSC RA Germany review report, the importance of assessing HCV-specific risk assessment, including threats arising from forest management practices, is underlined. This argument is also supported with the advances made in scientific research in this area. Please address this proposal, by showing the existing and potential risks on HCV1. Further, the section in the legal requirements is filled with more technical measures; please specify the legal requirements in relation to protection of biological diversity, from threats to habitats, and introduction of alien/invasive species. The information should clearly show the link with the specific law by mentioning your legal document you are referring to, for example, as Bundeswaldgesetz (BWaldG), and by specifying the requirement set to protect species of national regional or global significance.</p> <p>Also, the legal frameworks supporting protection of HCV1 (biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened, or endangered species that are significant at global, regional or national levels are identified and protected, maintained or enhanced) is described well. Mainstream conservation measures, which include protected areas such as national parks, nature reserves and biosphere reserves, are listed.</p> <p>However, information is needed on how changes in the biological diversity are monitored and what measures exist in the legislation to deter violations in management practices that may negatively affect HCV1. Please show by indicating some examples of articles/clauses, which mention possible legal actions on management measures which could be risky to endemic, rare and threatened or endangered species in the country. This approach proves that the risk on HCV1 is negligible, in a more concrete way.</p>
Specific Indicators	Indicator 59. Intact forest landscapes and large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional, or national levels, and which contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance, are identified and protected, maintained or enhanced (HCV2).	<p>For indicator 59 on HCV 2: The measures taken by the country to protect IFL and large landscape-level ecosystems are described. Germany being a country with a highly developed infrastructure and access road system, more information is needed on the risks for the habitats arising from roads, which may result in fragmentations, and/or commercial logging activities, though the risks could be "negligible."</p> <p>In addition, please confirm that IFL maps for Germany are considered up to date and complete and there is no need to add any other sources for the delineation of IFLs, following requirements under the Clause 15.10 of FSC-PRO-60-006b.</p>
Specific Indicators	Indicator 60. Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia are identified and protected, maintained, or enhanced (HCV3).	<p>For indicator 60 on HCV3: The European and national legislative setting is presented, which shows the strength of the legal framework. From the risk perspective, please include the challenge of implementation, which could be a risk factor. For example, although Natura 2000 areas exist in the country, it is necessary to clarify what is the level of protection and effectiveness of the actions implemented by the relevant authorities and stakeholders in those area.</p>
Specific Indicators	Indicator 61. Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including the protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes, are identified and protected (HCV4).	<p>For indicator 61, on HCV 4: Although Germany has a strong legal framework that covers HCVs, evidence about the implementation of the actions to ensure such protection are missing in the assessment of the indicator. For example, if management plans exist and are implemented, then information about the reports of the implementation of such plans around the country is needed. Are there any reports or articles raising any issues or confirming risks are negligible? Probably there are differences depending on the geopolitical scale or source types, please also consider this when evaluating HCVs as it may be crucial when assessing threats.</p>

Sheet Name	Criteria	Comment
Specific Indicators	Indicator 62. Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic needs of local communities or Indigenous Peoples are identified and protected (HCV5).	For indicator 62, on HCV 5: Although Germany has a strong legal framework that covers HCVs, evidence about the implementation of the actions to ensure such protection are missing in the assessment of the indicator. For example, if management plans exist and are implemented, then information about the reports of the implementation of such plans around the country is needed. Are there any reports or articles raising any issues or confirming risks are negligible? Probably there are differences depending on the geopolitical scale or source types, please also consider this when evaluating HCVs as it may be crucial when assessing threats.
Specific Indicators	Indicator 63. Sites, resources, habitats, and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological, or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or Indigenous Peoples are identified and protected (HCV6).	For indicator 63, on HCV 6: Although Germany has a strong legal framework that covers HCVs, evidence about the implementation of the actions to ensure such protection are missing in the assessment of the indicator. For example, if management plans exist and are implemented, then information about the reports of the implementation of such plans around the country is needed. Are there any reports or articles raising any issues or confirming risks are negligible? Probably there are differences depending on the geopolitical scale or source types, please also consider this when evaluating HCVs as it may be crucial when assessing threats.
Specific Indicators	Indicator 64. There is no commercial use of GMO.	For indicator 64 on GMO: The assessment of this indicator is incomplete. It does not provide any evidence to confirm that use of GMO in the forest sector does not happen. No description of the evidence has been provided, and the summary of legal requirements does not give any indication on the type of requirements, whether the use of GMO is forbidden or not in the forest sector. Only the relevant legislation has been listed, but this is not enough to confirm there are no issues connected to this indicator., Please reassess this indicator and provide a complete assessment, including filling in each of the columns in the 'Assessment of indicators' tab.
Risk Mitigation Measures	Each mitigation measure directly addresses a specific identified risk.	Please take into consideration the comments made in the assessment of indicators. It is not yet justified the negligible risk designation for several indicators.
RM Docs	All required documents related to the proposed mitigation measures are listed.	After you address all PSU comments, if some indicators are designated with non-negligible risk, then please provide recommended mitigation measures for each identified risk, where applicable. Please take into consideration the comments made in the assessment of indicators. It is not yet justified the negligible risk designation for several indicators. After you address all PSU comments, if some indicators are designated with non-negligible risk, then please provide recommended mitigation measures and the associated documents for each identified risk, where applicable.

5. ADDITIONAL ISSUES SPOTTED DURING RAPID CHECK

Sheet Name	Comments
Country overview	<p>Ownership types: Public Forest, Private Forest</p> <p>Looking at the other ownership types defined under Source Types and Assessment of Indicators (please see the next rows), it is difficult to understand which approach is correct. Lack of consistency could confuse a reader; please define ownership as established formally in the country and use that consistently in the analysis the risk indicators and in making risk conclusion/designation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We adjusted accordingly: There are private forests, and three types of public forest: National, State and Municipal
Source types	<p>Ownership types: State Forest, Private Forest, Community Forest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We adjusted accordingly: There are private forests, and three types of public forest: National, State and Municipal
Assessment of indicators	<p>Ownership types: State Forest, Private Forest, Community Forest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We adjusted accordingly: There are private forests, and three types of public forest: National, State and Municipal
References	<p>Justification for using sources older than 5 years is still missing in some cases. For example, references R3, R9, R32, R102, R158, among others. Please add the justification wherever relevant. Justification is provided mainly for those listed here. The list is only to show examples. There are still remaining references for which justification should be provided. Please provide justification for all references which are older than 5 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We added the justifications, please be aware, that there are sources also older than 5 years that are generally relevant, including original documentation of certain processes as well as scientific publications
References	<p>The date of some of the references is incorrect. For example, for source R225, the date provided is 45497. Please review and amend where applicable. There are still references with no correction to the date. For example, R41, R113, R114. Also, please edit the year of R64 (delete the comma). Kindly follow this principle: not only the ones mentioned as examples but have a look at all references and make corrections where needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We added the required dates, some of the issues relate to Excel formatting issues (45497 obviously), now everything should be correct. Many of the dates are set to 2024, as time of access to the respective website.
References	<p>Many of the references are clear and relevant to the issue. Among the many good examples, I would like to cite R194, R195, etc. which are direct and specific to the source.</p> <p>However, some sources cited from websites are general and they are not specific to the topic being considered. For example, R238 is expected to be dealing with tax system in Germany. But the link provided takes to the website of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. This is only an example, and we expect that all sources will be revised accordingly before submitting the second draft RA document. Please do the</p>

	<p>same with some of the sources which are general and not clear which document to refer to – instead of simply providing the website, provide the link the specific article or report relevant to the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We quality checked all references. All of them should be providing the correct information, few cases had to be removed. Please note that in several cases when accessing data bases, the reader has to specifically select the information for Germany in the portal.
Legislation	<p>The implementing authority is missing for some of the listed applicable legislation. For example, in the case of L15. Also, in the case of L11, why is FSC Certification listed as applicable legislation? Have you deleted L11? It is not found in the list of the revised first draft you submitted to us. If so, please make sure that it is not relevant and not cited anywhere in the RA document.</p> <p>Please review all listed legislation and complete/amend where applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See comment above, FSC was not correctly listed here as legislation.
Legislation	<p>Please revise and complete all missing information on the “Legislation” tab of the template. Please also prove correctness of the whole information provided about each legislation. Just to cite two examples where errors are found: (1) Take the case of Mutterschutzgesetz (MuSchG). For this law, the date of signature/date of approval was 23/05/2017 but this information is not filled-in at the cell where it should have been filled-in. Also, the effective date for this law was 01/01/2018, but this information is missing. (2) The other example is that Bundeswaldgesetz (BWaldG) entered into force on the date of approval. Not only these examples, but all errors should be corrected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have added and revised the dates accordingly.
Assessment of indicators	<p>The assessment of indicators has to be reviewed to ensure it is targeting all applicable source types. For example, in the case of indicator 5 Legal requirements for land use planning are complied with, the assessment provided only applies to state forest, community forests and private forests, but according to the ‘Source Types’ Tab, there are other type of source types applicable in Germany like foundation forests and church forests. If the assessment applies to all source types, then please specify this in the assessment, otherwise you need to provide a row(s) with the assessment of the other source types, in case the risk conclusion is different.</p> <p>There is still lack of clarity about the Source Type and Indicator Assessment combination in the analysis. We always attempt to understand how the Source Types defined are considered in the risk indicator analysis and risk conclusion/designation. There is still unclarity about what the Source Types are and how they are covered in analysing each of the risk indicators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We redefined the source type and clarified the forest types accordingly.
Assessment of indicators	<p>The assessment of indicators should be complete and provide clear information/evidence. For example, in the case of indicator 5, the following is mentioned: “Only private forests of a minimum size (depending on federal state) are required to undertake planning activities. For small private forests, this type of planning is recommended but not mandatory”.</p> <p>First of all, what is the different between minimum size private forests and small private forests. This seems contradictory, especially when the assessment indicates that for minimum size forests planning legal requirements apply, but for small private forests is only recommended. Second, what happens with the other source types, are legal requirements applicable or not? This needs to be clearly explained in the assessment.</p>

	<p>Finally, the conclusion for this indicator is as follows: “Taking all information into account, the risk is classified as negligible. The risk cannot be classified as negligible due to a lack of information”. Both sentences contradict each other. If there is a lack of evidence, then please apply precautionary approach. Even if you expect expert consultation to support negligible risk conclusion, if at this moment the available evidence is not sufficient, then you need to designate the indicators as non-negligible.</p> <p>Taking into consideration all the aspects highlighted above, please review the assessment of every indicator where this type of inconsistencies happens and amend as applicable.</p> <p>Based on the information that is added to the template to show the difference between the minimum size private forests and small private forests, “only private forests of a minimum size (depending on federal state) are required to undertake planning activities. For small private forests, this type of planning is recommended but not mandatory (area below 100ha).”</p> <p>There is another question that arises from the information related to the difference between federal states regarding the difference in defining the minimum size private forests, which again affects the size of the small private forests. That means the small size forests also differ between federal states and cannot be uniformly defined as area below 100ha. You may explain this to us by illustrating this with the case of two federal states which have different minimum size private forests, but they still have the same size definition for small private forests, if it is the reality in Germany.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Here we added the example of Baden Württemberg where larger private forest owners above 100ha must have a forest management plan. In general, there are no specific requirements for private forest owners to have a management plan everywhere in Germany. It is not possible to summarize this information on a national level, therefore we cannot add further information here. There is no legal definition of exact sizes of small vs. large private forest owners. We can remove this section if it is unclear, but the experts will know this, and we think it is important to highlight the difference between small and large private owners.
<p>Assessment of indicators</p>	<p>In the “Long description of the risk/issue for Indicator 57” there is a phrase that states “Given that there are by definition no natural/primary or intact forest landscapes that are subject to forest management in Germany, ...” in the “Assessment of Indicators” tab of the template. This implicitly devalues the conservation measures mentioned in the “Short description of risk” and “Long description of the risk/issue” for Indicator 59 in the “Assessment of Indicators” tab of the template. Please revise this and make the argument and information compatible with each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The information provided here is correct, we removed “intact forest landscapes” from indicator 57 description. It is important to notice the difference between primary forests (that do not exist in Germany) and intact forest ecosystems that do exist. Where intact means that even with human influence, the ecosystems are large enough to develop mostly naturally including natural regeneration and other processes, such is the case in national parks.
<p>Risk Mitigation</p>	<p>The risk mitigation measure in column J for indicator 55 is still missing. Field verification is proposed as the type of verifier, but what exactly has to be applied as a measure is not provided. Also, in the column I, as associated documents it is indicated document checks for enforcement of applicable legislation, but not clear which documents have to be checked.</p> <p>Please review this section and complete the information. Also, in case there are any related documents with the proposed mitigation measures, then please list them in the ‘RM Documents’ Tab.</p>

It is still expected that these comments should be addressed. While addressing the comments, please clarify what you mean by field verification. How field verification can be operationalized is not clear. If we think in the context of monitoring the effectiveness of the mitigation measure, what does that mean? What will one look at and assess effectiveness of the measure?

- This comment has been addressed. We added the documentation accordingly. According to the national forest act, no forest may be converted to other land use types without prior consent of the public authorities [(Bundeswaldgesetz) § 9 Erhaltung des Waldes. (1) Wald darf nur mit Genehmigung der nach Landesrecht zuständigen Behörde gerodet und in eine andere Nutzungsart umgewandelt werden (Umwandlung)]. Please understand, that in German context the risk designation is highly disputable, as no conversion is possible. Therefore, we cannot add more on mitigation measures than referring to the law. We don't share FSC International opinion on risk designation as there are no cases known and no court reports have been filed and there is national law in place that virtually prohibits this risk.



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