# Felling the Future

IKEA's Sourcing Threatens Romania's Irreplaceable Forests


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# Executive Summary

Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe's (CEE) new report, *Felling the Future: IKEA's Sourcing Threatens Romania's Last Irreplaceable Forests*, presents new evidence that reinforces and deepens the alarming findings of the environmental organisation's 2024 report, *Assemble the Truth*. This follow-up investigation confirms that IKEA's wood sourcing practices are still linked to the degradation of Romania's High Biodiversity Value Forests (HBVFs), including some of the last ancient forests remaining in the Carpathians.

Satellite analysis and field verification reveal that forest canopy loss in areas proposed by Greenpeace CEE and forest scientists for strict protection is occurring at an accelerated pace — 2.5 times faster in Romania than in neighbouring countries such as Poland and Ukraine. Despite their exceptional ecological value, these forests remain outside legally protected areas and are being actively logged. In 2024 alone, nearly 59 km² of such forests were lost.

IKEA, one of the world's largest industrial consumers of wood, is estimated to source 408,000 m³ of virgin wood from Romania each year — equivalent to the loss of around 20 km² of precious forest. **Investigations conducted between October 2024 and summer 2025 show that, despite being informed of the irreversible damage risks, IKEA's suppliers continue to source wood from forest areas of exceptional biodiversity value.**

The report highlights the failures of the forest certification system IKEA uses, which remains out of step with the EU Biodiversity Strategy targets for 2030. Although IKEA promotes itself as a sustainability leader, it continues to rely on an outdated sourcing policy that fails to protect Europe's most precious forests.

IKEA has dismissed concerns about these forests, justifying ongoing logging by citing past human interventions. This approach contradicts European conservation science, which emphasises the ecological importance of forest continuity and structural complexity, even in areas previously disturbed.

**Greenpeace CEE calls on IKEA to:**

- **Immediately suspend** sourcing from forests identified by Greenpeace CEE as No-Logging Areas, as a precautionary measure, at least until the official process for designating 10% of Romanian land for strict protection is completed.
- **Revise its sourcing policy** to align with EU biodiversity targets, which require the strict protection of at least 10% of land and waters by 2030. This would recognise the value of forests with high biodiversity and restorative potential, even if they have been disturbed in the past.

Protecting these forests is not only a matter of biodiversity and climate integrity — it is also a test of corporate responsibility in the face of escalating ecological collapse.

# New Evidence Deepens IKEA's Ties to Carpathian Forest Destruction

Since Greenpeace CEE released its report, *'Assemble the Truth: Old-Growth Forest Destruction in the Romanian Carpathians',* in 2024[1] — which linked IKEA's manufacturers to the destruction of one of Romania's most biodiverse forests — new data from spring and summer 2025 has come to light. This confirms that the situation in Romania's forests is far more alarming than previously thought. As Greenpeace CEE investigators returned to Romania, they discovered that IKEA's manufacturers are still sourcing wood from one of Romania's most biodiverse forests.

The latest analysis of forest canopy loss reveals that areas rich in biodiversity and climate value are being lost at a disproportionately higher rate than the national average in the Carpathians. In fact, **canopy loss in these forests with high biodiversity value outside protected areas is occurring 2.5 times faster in Romania than in neighbouring countries** such as Poland and Ukraine.

Despite being identified by Greenpeace CEE and forest scientists as priority areas for strict protection under the EU Biodiversity Strategy[2], based on harmonised analysis of multiple data sources[3], these forest stands are disappearing at an accelerated pace.

The ongoing degradation of these forests not only undermines the Strategy's target of placing 10% of EU land under strict protection by 2030, but also threatens the ecological integrity and long-term resilience of the Carpathian mountain ecosystem.

[1] Greenpeace International (2024): Nature Crime Files – Romania
[2] EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and Annex
[3] Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe (2024): *Proposal for NO-LOGGING AREAS as a precautionary measure for the official designation of High Biodiversity Value Areas or Potential*

# Legal and Ecological Context

Greenpeace CEE, together with independent forest experts, has identified numerous High Biodiversity Value Forests (HBVFs) outside national parks in Romania's Carpathians[4]. These forests provide vital ecosystem services, such as carbon storage, water regulation and biodiversity conservation. Protecting them is not only an ecological necessity, but also a game-changer for the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which aims to place at least 10% of EU land and seas under strict protection by 2030.

IKEA remains one of the world's largest industrial consumers of wood[5], sourcing around 408,000 $m^3$ of so-called virgin wood from Romania each year[6]. Assuming a harvesting rate of 40,000 $m^3/km^2$ [7], this corresponds to the loss of approximately 20 $km^2$ of precious forest each year, with 50% representing furniture-grade wood (see Appendix 2).

**Logging in High Biodiversity Value Forests (HBVFs), or in areas with the potential to be designated as such, remains legal in Romania,** even though experts are working to designate at least 10% of the country's land for the strict protection of ecological processes. **However, legality does not equal sustainability.** Exploiting these forests simply because it is allowed by law ignores the long-term environmental risks. **Companies like IKEA, which position themselves as leaders in sustainability, have an ethical and environmental responsibility to act when informed of high conservation value and associated risks.** In such contexts, adherence to the precautionary principle is not optional but essential.

[4] Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe (2024), *No-Logging Areas, High Biodiversity Value Forests or Potential outside national parks.*
[5] IKEA Museum (2025), *Good for the forest. Good for people*
[6] IKEA *Sustainability Report FY 2024*, p. 34.
[7] Knorn, J. et al. (2013): *Continued loss of temperate old-growth forests in the Romanian Carpathians despite an increasing protected area network.* Environmental Conservation 40(2), pp. 182–193.

# IKEA's Certification Shortcomings

IKEA claims that nearly 98% of its wood is FSC-certified[8]. However, the FSC standard in Romania has not been revised since its approval in 2017[9], nor does it integrate recent EU policies, including the strict protection target framework of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Therefore, **FSC certification cannot be relied upon as a guarantee of sustainability or compliance in this context.**

On 16 September 2024, Greenpeace CEE formally notified IKEA's CEO of the critical biodiversity value of specific Romanian forests and requested that the company immediately cease sourcing wood from these areas. This request was based on various pieces of independent scientific analysis and was presented as a precautionary measure to help achieve EU policy goals.

IKEA responded by suggesting that Greenpeace CEE should continue its efforts via multi-stakeholder platforms rather than taking unilateral action. **While Greenpeace CEE has engaged with both the Romanian FSC and expert panels advising the Romanian government, it maintains a position that IKEA has a duty of care to act proactively and prevent sourcing from High Biodiversity Value Forests or Potential** — especially when multiple credible sources have flagged these risks.


[8] IKEA *Sustainability Report FY 2024*, p. 34.
[9] FSC International Center - Performance and Standards Unit (2017), *The FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard of Romania*

# Quantifying the Impact: 2024/25 Data

Greenpeace CEE conducted a comprehensive reassessment of forest loss in 2024 as part of the Carpathian Environmental Outlook, using satellite imagery and canopy loss datasets. In a subsequent phase, areas proposed for strict protection in the same year were examined in greater detail through a harmonised analysis of multiple data sources[10] (see Appendix 1). In the final stage, the findings were compared across Poland, Ukraine and Romania.

The IKEA supply chain in Romania was investigated from October 2024 — after IKEA had been requested to stop sourcing wood from No-Logging Areas for precautionary reasons — until summer 2025.

The key findings include:

**In 2024 alone, 58.9 km² of forest canopy, an area larger than 8,200 football pitches, was lost within High Biodiversity Value Forests or areas proposed by Greenpeace CEE for strict protection outside national parks in Romania.** The rate of canopy loss in these areas is 2.5 times higher in Romania than in Poland or Ukraine, indicating a significantly more severe challenge.

The area adjustment to overall canopy loss in the Romanian Carpathians (138.95 km² in 2024) indicates that forests with high conservation value are degraded at a rate approximately 80% faster than other forested areas.

IKEA suppliers source wood from Romanian forests of outstanding biodiversity value that have been proposed for strict protection. However, the company has declined to acknowledge their ecological value or apply a precautionary measure to designate 10% of High Biodiversity Value Areas or Potential for strict protection. **Greenpeace CEE's latest analysis of logging permits from October 2024 to April 2025 reveals connections between the loss of forests of outstanding biodiversity value, including ancient and other precious forests, and IKEA manufacturers.**

[10] Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe (2024): *Proposal for NO-LOGGING AREAS as a precautionary measure for the official designation of High Biodiversity Value Areas or Potential*

# IKEA's Position on Forests is Flawed and Risky

IKEA has dismissed concerns raised in Greenpeace CEE's 2024 report[11] regarding logging in old forests that both parties jointly inspected. The company argued that previous human interventions mean these forests are not eligible for strict protection. However, this contradicts the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, which defines strict protection as covering both areas of very high biodiversity value, as well as areas with the potential to restore such values if safeguarded.

On 14 August 2025, Greenpeace submitted three case studies to IKEA and its Romanian suppliers, providing new evidence of their involvement in the ongoing destruction of ancient and other precious forests. At the time of publication, IKEA's suppliers had not provided any response. IKEA responded that one of the forests was not used in their supply chain, according to their business partner. Regarding the other two sites, IKEA stated that due to earlier logging, *the wood sourced from these two sites does not qualify as Old Growth Forests according to Romanian legislation, and they therefore comply with all applicable requirements, including FSC standards*. One of these case studies is presented later in the report.

This response amounts to an acknowledgement by IKEA that it sources wood from forests identified by Greenpeace as High Biodiversity Value Forests[12], or ones with high potential, proposed for strict protection under Romania's ongoing process to designate 10% of land for safeguarding ecological processes. It also highlights a dangerous misreading of European conservation guidelines. The Commission's 2023 guidance on primary and old-growth forests states that stands which once met the criteria for old growth but later lost certain features due to human activity "should also be strictly protected so they can redevelop."[13] Similarly, the guidance on the 10% strict protection target under the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 requires Member States to designate areas for their current and potential values for future restoration. The purpose of strict protection is precisely to halt further degradation and allow ecosystems to recover their ecological integrity.

The argument that earlier interventions erase the value of these forests is questionable from a sustainability perspective. European conservation science makes it clear that the removal of a certain percentage of wood does not, in itself, determine whether natural processes are significantly disturbed. Despite past logging, many Carpathian stands continue to host complex age structures, abundant deadwood, and species that depend on these habitats. These elements demonstrate the continuity of ecological processes and, critically, the capacity of such forests to restore full natural function once the pressure is removed. By dismissing this potential, IKEA's interpretation contradicts the spirit and letter of EU conservation policy[14].

[11] Greenpeace International (2024): Nature Crime Files – Romania
[12] Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe (2024): Proposal for NO-LOGGING AREAS as a precautionary measure for the official designation of High Biodiversity Value Areas or Potential
[13] EU Directorate-General for Environment (2023), *Guidelines for Defining, Mapping, Monitoring and Strictly Protecting EU Primary and Old-Growth Forests*
[14] European Commission (2022), *Criteria and guidance for protected areas designations*

This position also undermines the precautionary principle, which is a cornerstone of EU environmental law and of responsible corporate conduct[15]. Treating forests that have already been affected by logging as expendable encourages a destructive cycle. As they are deemed "compromised," they can be logged even further, ensuring that they never recover their ecological value. This approach not only endangers irreplaceable biodiversity at risk but also normalises the ongoing exploitation of Europe's last great wilderness at the very moment when EU policy calls for its protection and restoration.

For IKEA, this stance poses significant reputational and operational risks. Instead of leading the way in sustainable sourcing, IKEA is implicated in practices that actively hinder Europe's biodiversity and climate goals.

[15] COM(2000) 1 final — European Commission, *Communication on the Precautionary Principle,* Brussels, 2 February 2000.

# Conclusion and Ecological Implications

In light of Greenpeace's identification of High Biodiversity Value Forests (HBVFs) or Potential under accelerated exploitation, and IKEA's continued reliance on inadequate certification standards, the company's share of responsibility for Romanian forest degradation has increased further compared to previous years.

Furthermore, **IKEA risks being perceived as complicit in the erosion of Europe's remaining rare forest ecosystems** by failing to adopt precautionary sourcing policies despite being made aware of the ecological importance of these forests. This contradicts the company's sustainability commitments and disregards EU guidance recommending precautionary measures when biodiversity is at risk.

Given the continued inaction, Greenpeace CEE is urging IKEA to take the following immediate and concrete steps, as outlined in this report:

- **Immediately suspend** sourcing from forests identified by Greenpeace as No-Logging Areas, as a precautionary measure, at least until the official process for designating 10% of Romanian land for strict protection is completed.
- **Revise its sourcing policy** to align with EU biodiversity targets, which require the strict protection of at least 10% of land and waters by 2030. This would recognise the value of forests with high biodiversity and restorative potential, even if they have been disturbed in the past.

By taking these actions, IKEA could demonstrate authentic leadership and make a meaningful contribution to conserving some of Europe's most vulnerable forest ecosystems. However, continued inaction would mean IKEA would bear responsibility for the destruction of one of Europe's last great wilderness areas.

# Showcasing the Destruction

Greenpeace CEE's CEE *Assemble the Truth* report (2024)[16] traced timber used in IKEA products back to logging sites through detailed supply chain analysis. The investigation showed that furniture manufacturers source roundwood and sawn timber either directly from forests or indirectly via intermediary suppliers and depots. IKEA representatives questioned the ecological value of the logged forests, arguing that they did not meet the criteria for strict protection.

In 2024/25, Greenpeace CEE investigators reviewed over 150 logging permits associated with IKEA suppliers in Romania, with geographic references to High Biodiversity Value Forests or Potential[17]. Fifteen permits were selected for closer examination, based on overlaps with independent expert data sets. Field inspections were carried out at ten of these sites, all of which were confirmed by at least two separate expert sources as having high biodiversity value. Every inspected forest unit showed clear signs of fresh logging and ongoing destruction of its values.

IKEA and its Romanian suppliers were given the opportunity to comment on three examples of destruction. IKEA responded that no wood from one of the presented logging sites is used in their supply chain, according to their business partner. At the same time, in the other two examples, they disputed the biodiversity value of the forests by referring to rough calculations of the wood volume that had already been removed in the past.

After reviewing IKEA's response, Greenpeace CEE concludes that IKEA's sourcing practices remain unchanged, and Romanian precious forests are being turned into "fast furniture". Furthermore, **the pace of logging in areas proposed for strict protection is accelerating, making the situation more alarming than before.**

Ultimately, this is not only about numbers or volumes. It is about the irreversible loss of natural heritage: living, complex forest ecosystems that represent some of Europe's last remaining ancient and precious forests. At the time of publishing this report, further destruction of such forests is imminent.

[16] Greenpeace International (2024): Nature Crime Files – Romania
[17] Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe (2024), *No-Logging Areas, High Biodiversity Value Forests or Potential outside national parks.*

## Rusca Montană Ancient Forest - Case Study

Rusca Montană is an ancient forest ecosystem that has maintained continuity of natural processes for centuries. It is characterised by structural complexity and a full range of tree age classes, including trees over 180 years old. The forest contains significant amounts of standing and decaying deadwood, which provides critical habitat for invertebrates and supports rare indicator species of old-growth ecosystems, including saproxylic insects and sensitive lichens.

According to the official forest management plan, these 180-year-old stands represent less than 0.5% of all forest stands in the Romanian Carpathians, making Rusca Montană ecologically rare and nationally significant. At least two expert groups have independently confirmed its conservation value:

→ It is included on Greenpeace CEE's No-Logging Map for the Carpathians and has been proposed as a High Biodiversity Value Forest for strict protection.[18]
→ It has been identified as a Primary High Conservation Value Forest in a peer-reviewed study in Conservation Biology by an international team of scientists.[19]

Recently, logging was reopened in this forest under permit ID: 2400162600300. The planned extraction volume is 4,200 $m^3$, part of which has already been transported to Masifpanel, an IKEA manufacturer. According to logging permits, more than 700 trees are still scheduled to be felled when logging resumes after 15 September 2025.

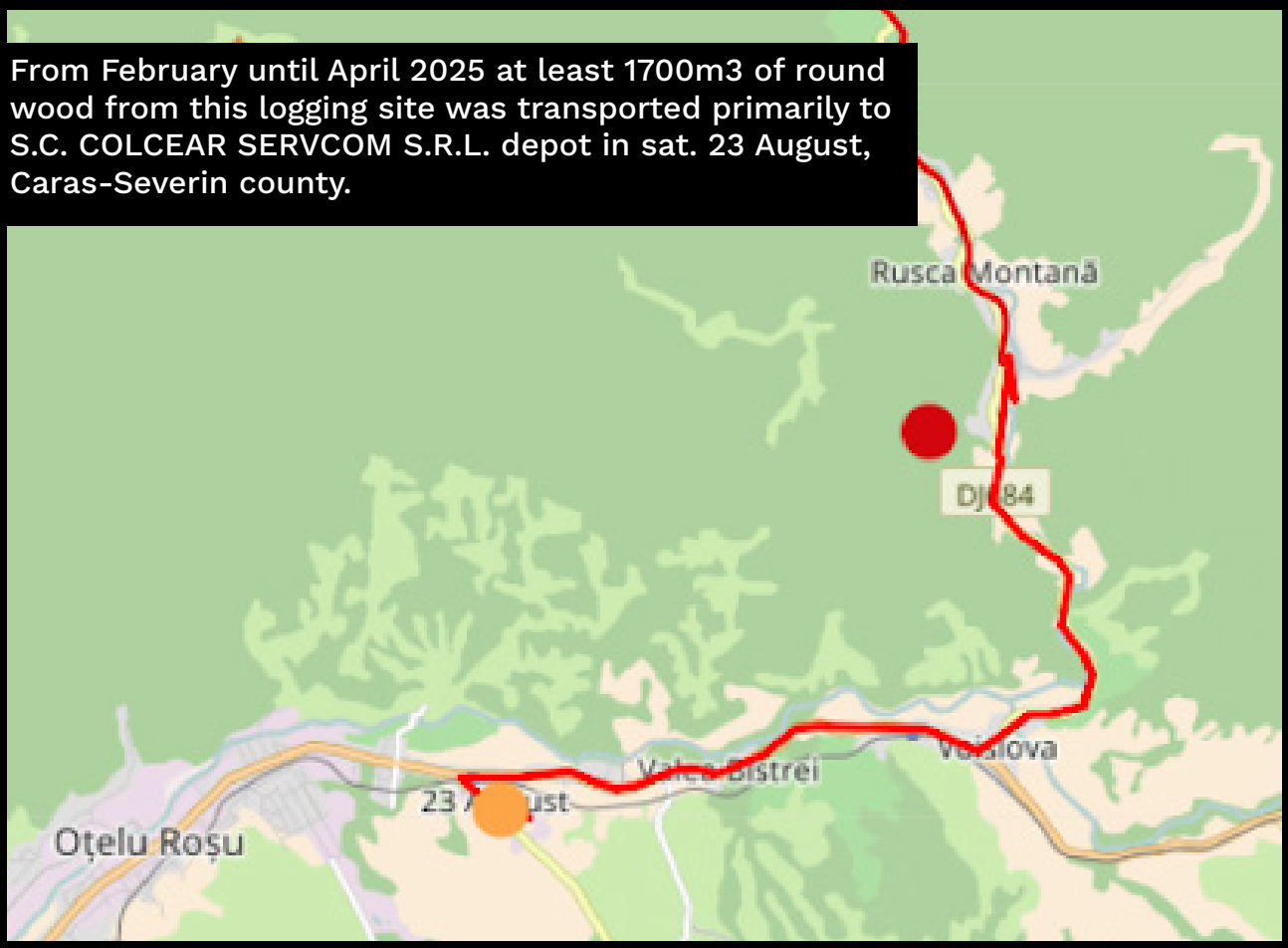
These ongoing activities underscore the immediate need for IKEA's management decisions to prevent further loss of this unique forest patch and to ensure the protection of the entire Rusca Montană Forest as an integral part of Romania's remaining ancient forest ecosystems.

[18] Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe (2024): *Proposal for NO-LOGGING AREAS as a precautionary measure for the official designation of High Biodiversity Value Areas or Potential*
[19] Munteanu, C., Senf, C., Nita, M. D., Sabatini, F. M., Oeser, J., Seidl, R., & Kuemmerle, T. (2021). Using historical spy satellite photographs and recent remote sensing data to identify high-conservation-value forests. Conservation Biology, 1–11.


Logging site 2400162600300
1000 m above sea level
Dominating species: beech (coniferous trees present too)
Total harvest planned: 4207.48m3
Logging planned until December 2025
IKEA
Hej!
New at IKEA...
Ancient forest
destruction


Logging site 2400162600300
1000 m above sea level

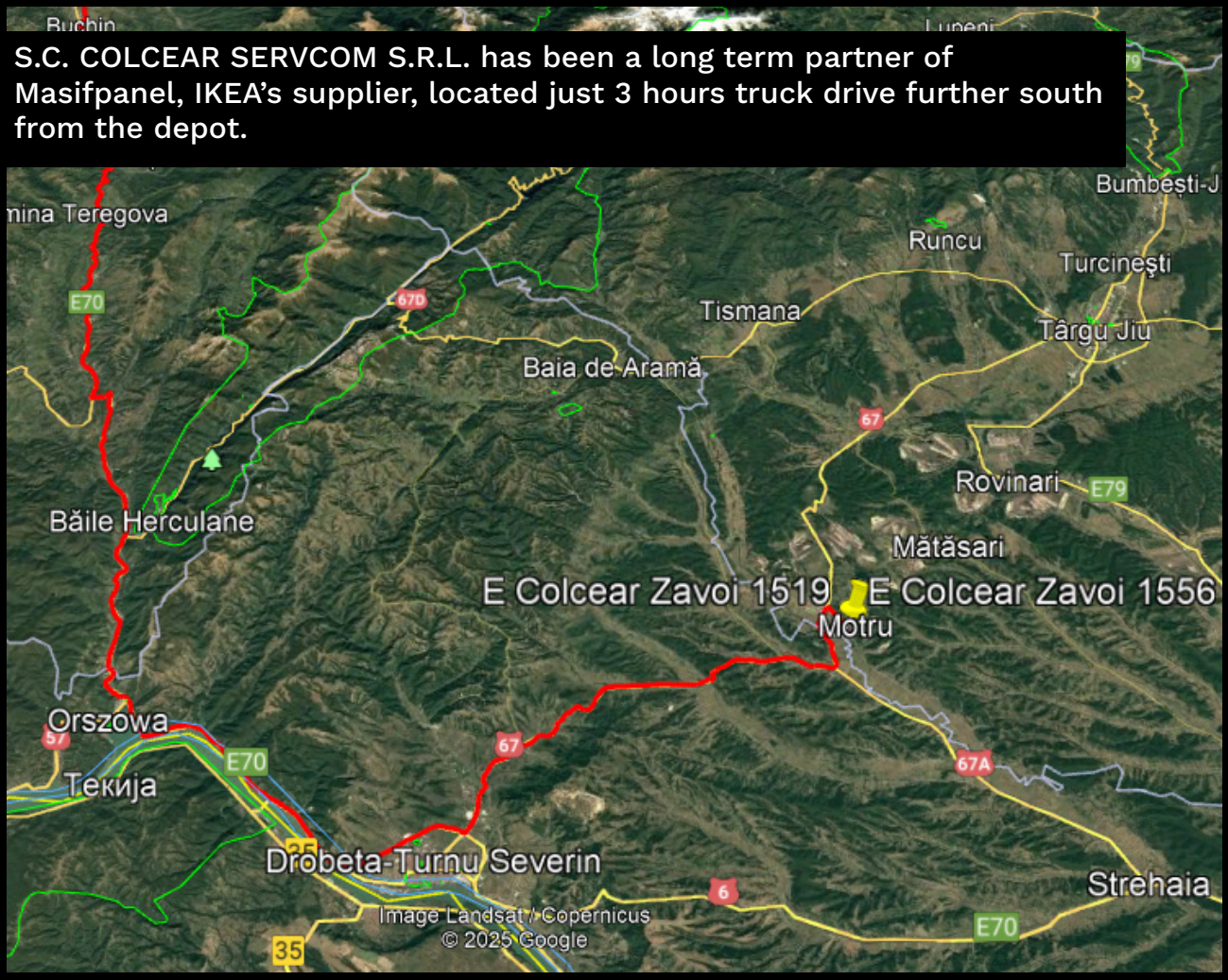
From February until April 2025 at least 1700m3 of round wood from this logging site was transported primarily to S.C. COLCEAR SERVCOM S.R.L. depot in sat. 23 August, Caras-Severin county.






Colcear has been supplying roundwood to Masifpanel since at least 2023.

S.C. COLCEAR SERVCOM S.R.L. has been a long term partner of Masifpanel, IKEA's supplier, located just 3 hours truck drive further south from the depot.




Only within one month 16 March-16 April 2025 at least 1059 m3 of round wood was shipped from S.C. Colcear Servcom S.R.L. depot to the Masifpanel factory in the town of Însurăței.


Kaj iščeš?

Izdelki Prostori Ponudbe Ideje in nasveti Načrtovanje in storitve Podpora za kupce Več





Masifpanel SRL product example code 500.871.66 spotted in IKEA store in Ljubljana, Slovenia.




Top Seller

Masifpanel SRL product example code 702.403.51 spotted in April 2025 in IKEA retail store in Janki, PL

# APPENDIX 1

## Forest Canopy Loss in 2024 in the Carpathian KEO

### Processing of tree cover loss data within the Carpathian KEO

The Hansen et al. (2013) Global Forest Change dataset (v1.12, updated to 2024) was used to assess annual forest cover loss.[20] The dataset provides global, high-resolution (~30 m) information on tree cover extent in 2000, annual tree cover loss (2001–2024), and related forest change metrics derived from Landsat imagery.

### Data source & download

The data were accessed and downloaded from:
https://storage.googleapis.com/earthenginepartners-hansen/GFC-2024-v1.12/download.html

### Filtering by year and region

Tree cover loss data were extracted for the Carpathian region by downloading four loss-year raster tiles (50N_20E, 60N_20E, 50N_10E, 60N_10E). These tiles were mosaicked into a single image and clipped to the Carpathian Environmental Outlook (KEO) area of interest.

The loss year data were then converted into vector format, and the area of tree cover loss was calculated per year. The dataset was further divided by national borders within the KEO to calculate the annual forest canopy loss for each country-specific KEO region.

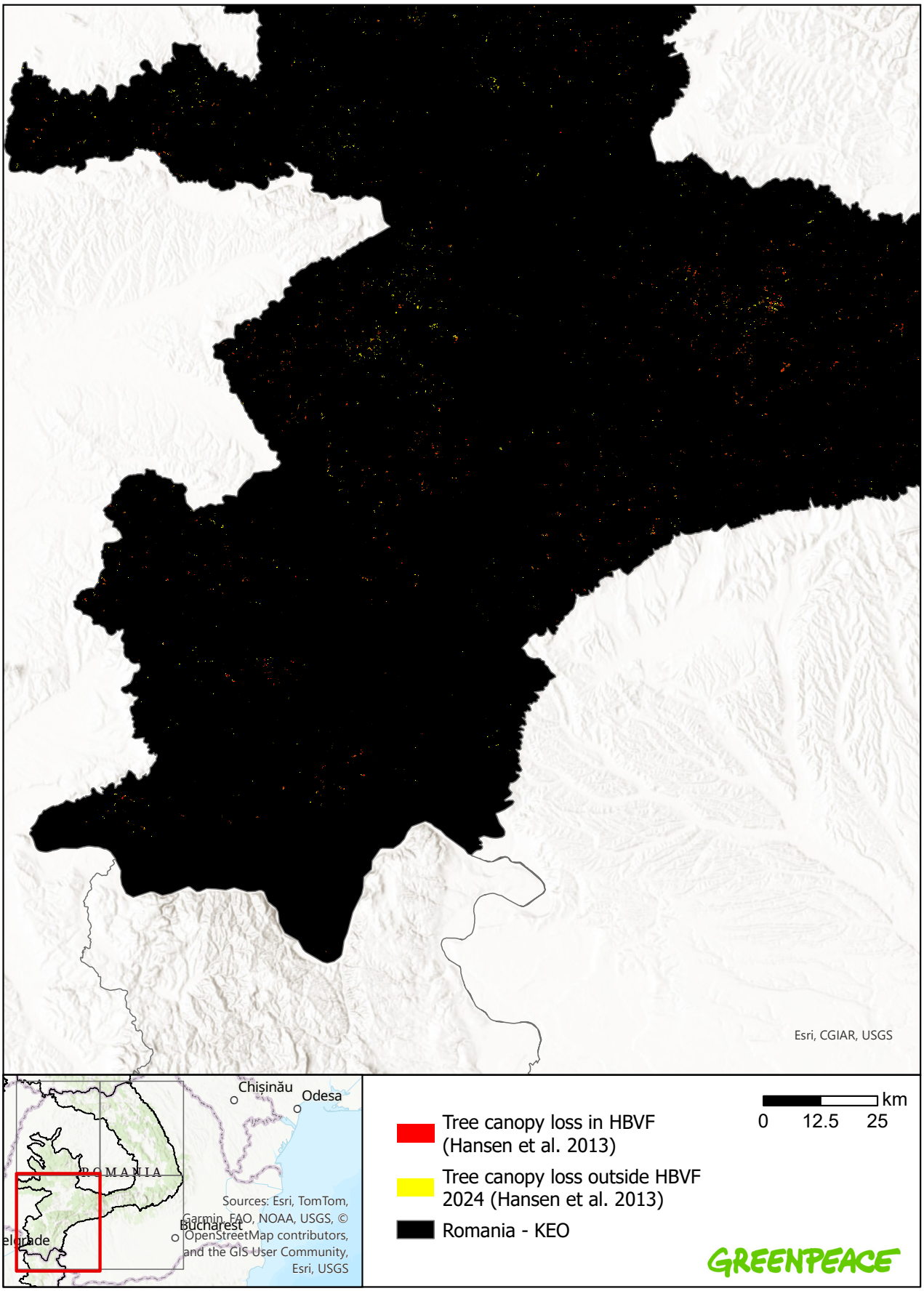
### Analysis of High Biodiversity Value Forest canopy loss

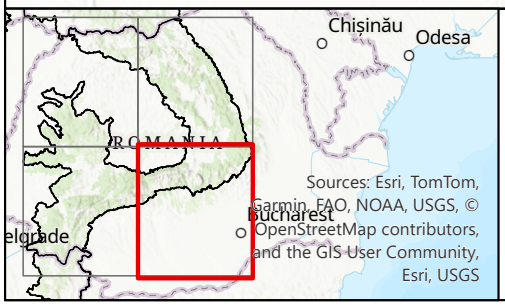
To determine the baseline forest extent within High Biodiversity Value Forests or Potential, tree cover for the year 2023 was derived by erasing cumulative tree cover loss (2001–2023) from the tree cover 2000 dataset, using a canopy cover threshold of ≥50%. This dataset was used to estimate forest extent before the 2024 loss.

To quantify recent tree cover loss, the loss data for the year 2024 were extracted and spatially erased from the High Biodiversity Value Forests layer for the Romania KEO region. A new column was added to the attribute table to calculate the updated forest area. The difference between the pre- and post-loss area indicated the amount of tree cover lost in 2024.

A map of the canopy lost in the background of the Romania Carpathian Outlook / Hansen Forest and HBVF/No-Logging in Romania.

[20] Hansen, M.C., et al. (2013). High-resolution global maps of 21st-century forest cover change. Science, 342(6160), 850–853. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1244693.


Esri, CGIAR, USGS
Chișinău
Odesa
ROMANIA
Bucharest
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS
km
0
12.5
25
Tree canopy loss in HBVF (Hansen et al. 2013)
Tree canopy loss outside HBVF 2024 (Hansen et al. 2013)
Romania - KEO
GREENPEACE


Tree canopy loss in HBVF (Hansen et al. 2013)

Tree canopy loss outside HBVF 2024 (Hansen et al. 2013)

Romania - KEO

km
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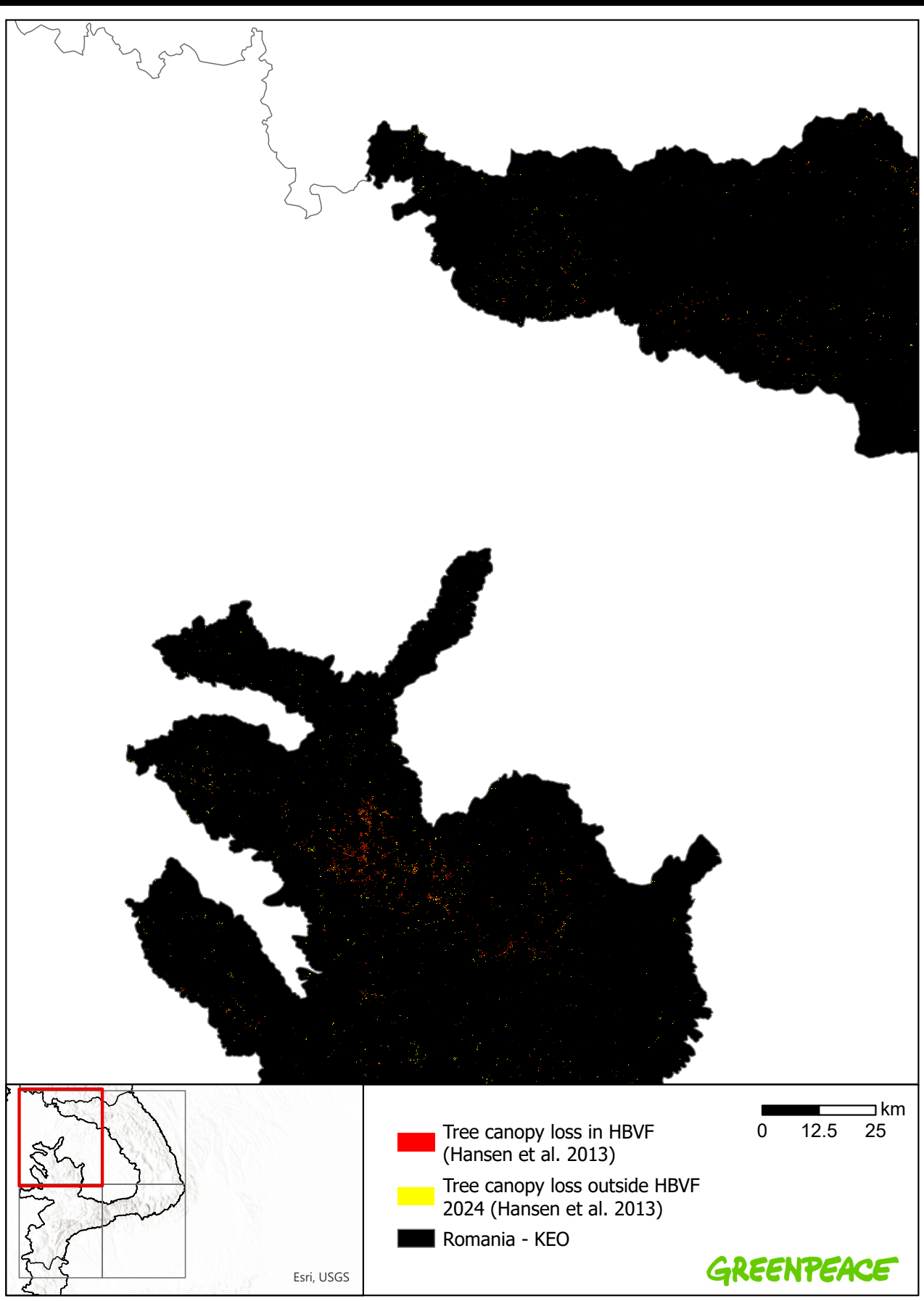
Esri, USGS
Tree canopy loss in HBVF (Hansen et al. 2013)
Tree canopy loss outside HBVF 2024 (Hansen et al. 2013)
Romania - KEO
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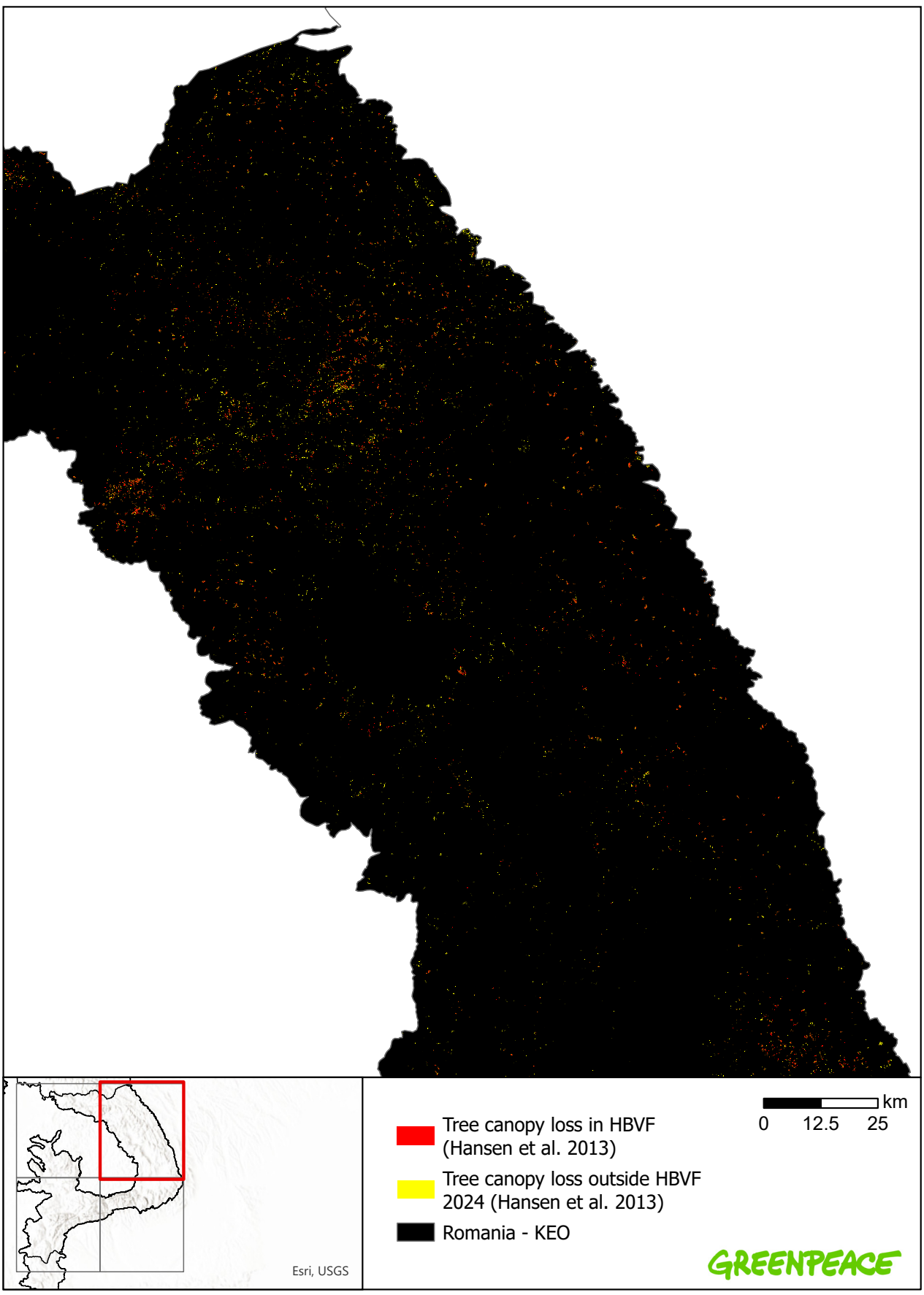
Esri, USGS
Tree canopy loss in HBVF (Hansen et al. 2013)
Tree canopy loss outside HBVF 2024 (Hansen et al. 2013)
Romania - KEO
km
0
12.5
25
GREENPEACE

# Statistical Data Used in the Report:

| Canopy loss<br>KEO Romania<br>Hansen 2024 | Canopy loss in HBVF/P<br>KEO Romania<br>Hansen 2024.<br>Greenpeace 2024 |
|---|---|
| 138.95 km2 | 58.91 km2 |
| Canopy loss<br>KEO Poland<br>Hansen 2024 | Canopy loss in HBVF/P<br>KEO Poland<br>Hansen 2024.<br>Greenpeace 2024 |
| 14.71 km2 | 3.19 km2 |
| Canopy loss<br>KEO Ukraine<br>Hansen 2024 | Canopy loss in HBVF/P<br>KEO Ukraine<br>Hansen 2024.<br>Greenpeace 2024 |
| 48.74 | 3.4 km2 |

# APPENDIX 2

## Virgin Wood Calculations

The amount of wood per square kilometre in the Romanian Carpathians can vary based on forest type, elevation, and age, but scientific studies and inventories provide a solid estimate.

A) Average wood volume in Romanian Carpathian forests above 100 years old:

- Average standing volume for age class VI: ~373 $m^3$ per hectare
- Virgin forests estimated wood volume: 350–500 $m^3$ per hectare
- 1 $km^2$ = 100 hectares
- Therefore, per 1 $km^2$, you can expect approximately:
  - 35,000 to 50,000 $m^3$ of standing timber

This estimate reflects standing volume, not harvested yield, and includes both living and deadwood — important for biodiversity.

Sources and context:

- Romania's forest inventory table for age class VI
- Romanian forestry and biodiversity assessments (e.g. PIN-MATRA reports, Greenpeace Romania inventories)
- The National Catalogue of Virgin Forests often references wood volumes around 400–500 $m^3$/ha for Fagus sylvatica (beech) and mixed beech-spruce forests
- Comparable values in similar Carpathian virgin forests across Ukraine and Slovakia

B) Estimated conversion rate from standing timber to usable virgin wood

| Step | Description | Conversion Factor |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Standing volume | Total above-ground tree volume | 100% |
| 2. Merchantable volume | Usable wood after removing tree tops, branches, and unusable logs | ~65–75% |
| 3. Sawn wood/logs | Processed wood is suitable for construction, furniture, etc. | ~40–50% of standing volume |
| 4. High-grade timber (e.g., veneer, furniture-quality wood) | Only a subset of the sawn wood | ~10–20% of standing volume |

C) Estimates of old forest loss to wood extraction

Providing you source 40,000 $m^3$ of standing timber from logging of 1$km^2$ of forest (not virgin forest, but forest stands above 100 years old), from which you can extract ~50% of virgin wood suitable for furniture production, you can estimate that from 1 $km^2$ of forest above 100 years old in the Carpathians, you can extract ~20,000 $m^3$.


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