THE MISSING MANUAL: WHAT IKEA MUST DO TO PROTECT EUROPE'S FORESTS

Ikea's Biodiversity Accountability Gap: Certified but still degrading vital forest ecosystems.

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Executive Summary

Companies contributing to the climate and biodiversity crisis are in urgent need of a crisis response manual. Climate impacts like wildfires and floods are accelerating at an alarming rate. As tipping points are reached, weather patterns are changing all over the planet, and it seems inevitable that temperature rise will exceed the 1.5 degree threshold.[1] Climate change, exacerbated by logging and other extractive industries, is damaging forest ecosystems, affecting natural habitats, biodiversity and peoples' livelihoods.

So-called sustainable forestry practices and industrial agriculture are accelerating ecosystem destruction across our planet, making it vital to reduce these human drivers of biodiversity loss. Governments need to do more to stop the ongoing mass extinction of species, but the big logging companies and consumers of wood must also step up and take accountability for their impact and update their own manuals on how to reduce their biodiversity footprint and become a real part of the solution. This report puts a spotlight on Ikea's role in doing just that, and the need to put in place urgent measures to stop its involvement in forest destruction.

The importance of biodiversity protection should come as no surprise to the leadership of Ikea. Around 1 million species around the world are threatened with extinction, while the global extinction rate is already tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the past 10 million years.[2] Scientists warn that we are entering a human-driven sixth mass extinction.[3] For this reason, biodiversity protection is increasingly embedded in a range of international agreements and regulatory frameworks, most notably the Convention on Biological Diversity's Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), as well as the EU's Biodiversity Strategy, Nature Restoration Regulation, the Birds and Habitats Directives, and rules on supply chains and corporate due diligence, with measurable indicators of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity loss already existing or under development at international, EU and national levels. This regulatory architecture increasingly applies to companies.

The GBF itself requires States to ensure that large and transnational businesses monitor, assess and disclose their impacts on biodiversity across their value chains, and requires biodiversity to also be integrated into private sector decision-making.[4]

Ikea claims that it uses its 'size, scale and reach' to help halt deforestation and enhance biodiversity, but when it comes to biodiversity conservation and forest governance, it is coming up short.[5] There are a few missing pieces from the flatpack!

This report reviews Ikea's sustainability reporting, including its official corporate disclosures and other publicly available information, and finds that it falls a long way short of showing leadership. On biodiversity protection targets the message is simple: "No targets are set".[6] We have identified five accountability gaps directly related to Ikea's approach to biodiversity and ecosystem protection, which need to be urgently addressed. The first of these relates to insufficient measurement, since Ikea does not seek to assess changes in the condition of the forests it draws on. The second is a target gap, with no measurable or timebound goals for ecosystem protection and restoration. The third is a mapping gap, in which there is often no data on forest areas of high biodiversity value or potential. The fourth is a certification gap, which falls way short of providing adequate assurances that ecosystems are protected. Finally, there is an influence gap, as Ikea has not brought its weight to bear on the EU when biodiversity policy is decided. Taken together, these gaps leave a gaping hole in the company's sustainability portfolio.

We have also examined 25 years of tree cover loss across five countries (Poland, Sweden, Germany, Romania, and Finland) that together supply almost half of Ikea's virgin wood consumption, and highlight the gap between forest protection in these countries, and the company's rhetoric around global leadership in sustainability. We explore Ikea's continued sourcing of wood from forests of high biodiversity value or from areas with the potential to develop such value. We focus on unprotected forests across Europe

that should be protected, but remain open for logging by those who choose to exploit them. The findings show alarmingly high loss of tree cover in these areas, and establishes that protection only saves forests from logging in strictly protected areas, but not necessarily in areas under the EU's Natura 2000 network. In Poland for example tree cover was lost in areas identified for future protection or inside Natura 2000 areas almost just as fast as, or even faster than everywhere else. Tree cover loss rates in Romania were mostly higher inside Natura 2000 than outside of them, and alarmingly high in areas identified for future protection. And in Finland, tree cover loss rates inside Natura 2000 sites are very low, mainly because these areas had received strict protection status even before their Natura 2000 designation. Losses in areas proposed for protection, however, were still running at roughly 50 % – 90 % of logging in other areas.

The time has come for Ikea and other corporations that consume forests to take on their fair share of responsibility for meeting global biodiversity goals. This requires moving beyond simply measuring whether forest cover is maintained, towards maintaining ecosystem integrity: ensuring that forests retain and regenerate the composition, structure, ecological processes, stability and self-organisation that enable them to function as resilient living systems, sustain biodiversity, regulate climate and water systems, store carbon and adapt to environmental change over time.

In short, our analysis demonstrates that strict protection provides the clearest safeguard against logging, while other protection designations, including Natura 2000, do not necessarily prevent significant tree-cover loss. However, outside long-established protection areas, forests of documented or potential high-biodiversity value continue to suffer severe tree cover loss, frequently at rates higher than in other forests. These need urgent protection; without it, these irreplaceable ecosystems will be lost forever.

Ikea needs to locate their missing manual, open it, and follow the instructions, step by step to:

1. **Immediately suspend sourcing from forest areas of high biodiversity value or potential (proposed moratorium areas)** at a minimum until governments complete the area designation processes required to deliver the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy's 30 per cent land protection targets, including 10 per cent strictly protected.[7] The exemption in Ikea's supplier Code of Conduct (IWAY F9.3(b)), which permits sourcing from Intact Forest Landscapes and High Conservation Value Forests where FSC-certified, should be removed.[8]

2. **Adopt a Corporate Biodiversity Accountability Framework with measurable 2030 targets** covering the entire supply chain, aligned with the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and owned at board level rather than treated as a mere due diligence formality.

3. **Establish ecosystem integrity as a principle of Ikea's approach to governance,** moving from monitoring forest cover to monitoring forest condition, with measurable indicators for composition, structure, biodiversity, ecological processes, independent monitoring, and assessment of the effects of extraction on surrounding ecology.

4. **Publicly advocate for ambitious implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the EU Biodiversity Strategy,** including effective protection of at least 30 per cent of land and strict protection of at least 10 per cent. Ikea should fully disclose its forest and biodiversity related lobbying positions, and advocate to recognise ecosystem integrity and forest degradation as measurable implementation outcomes in the 2030 Forest Roadmap and other relevant policy processes.

1. Introduction

Ikea claims to be the world's largest home furnishing retailer,[9] and one of the world's largest consumers of wood in the retail sector.[10] It consumed around 11.9 million cubic metres of fresh roundwood in 2025.[11] Using wood is inherently not a bad thing. It needs to be kept in mind, though, that this wood comes from forests which are a home to millions of plants and animals, which protect us from heat, storms and secure our livelihoods. In short: Forests which are crucial for biodiversity and climate. Being crucial for our survival, we cannot log forests indiscriminately.

As a Swedish-founded Dutch company[12] with an extensive presence across the world, Ikea's market position and brand recognition give it significant influence on forest management practices and how corporations define their role in meeting climate, biodiversity and sustainability goals. This is particularly true in the EU, which is the source of 81 % of the virgin wood used in Ikea home furnishing products.[13] Ikea claims to be a force for stopping deforestation and enhancing biodiversity,[14] but when it comes to biodiversity, conservation and forest governance, it is coming up short.

Ikea claims "sustainability is part of the way we develop products, source materials and do business".[15] The company has made some of the timber and furniture industry's most ambitious claims related to forests and biodiversity, even stating that it hopes to use its size and reach to help eliminate forest degradation and deforestation around the world.[16] Ikea has made public commitments to improve biodiversity, support the rights of forest-dependent people, and address climate impacts beyond the company's own footprint.[17] It has not been shy in promoting this promise, placing sustainability and fairness at the core of its corporate image.

It should come as no surprise that Ikea's role in protecting biodiversity is attracting increased scrutiny as new international obligations and legal frameworks are developed. Multinational corporations like Ikea have an important role to play in implementing international biodiversity targets, due diligence and corporate disclosure rules. Ikea's business model is heavily reliant on turning forests into cheap furniture, so meaningful corporate action is needed to protect forests, to preserve biodiversity and the climate.

The biodiversity crisis is also increasingly being seen as a matter of national security.[18] 2026 is shaping up to be another disastrous year of wildfires with about twice the average area burnt across the EU. By Sep 8, 2026, wildfires had burnt an area of 656,000 ha in the European Union[19], over half of which affected forests.[20] This year's fire season is second worse only to record setting 2025 when a total of over one million hectares was burnt and over 50 million tonnes of CO_2 were emitted[21] – more than the annual GHG emissions of Sweden, Finland or Bulgaria.[22] Natural, biodiverse and non-degraded forests are far less prone to wildfires than degraded forests and intensively managed forest plantations.[23] As such, if corporate actors like Ikea are to take their responsibility for mitigating climate change and reducing biodiversity loss seriously, they need to drastically transition away from harmful forestry and land-use practices that fuel the climate crisis and pose an increasing danger to society.

Ecosystem Integrity is the capacity of an ecosystem to maintain and regenerate the composition, structure, ecological processes, stability and self-organisation that enable it to function as a resilient living system under prevailing environmental conditions. High ecosystem integrity allows ecosystems to sustain biodiversity, regulate climate and water systems, store carbon, provide ecosystem services and adapt to environmental change over time.

See: Rogers B.M., Mackey B., Shestakova T.A., Keith H., et al, 2022, Using ecosystem integrity to maximize climate mitigation and minimize risk in international forest policy. Front. For. Glob. Change 5:929281.

Despite increasingly ambitious commitments from government and corporations alike, Europe's forests continue to experience degradation, fragmentation, and declining ecological conditions, which reveal significant accountability gaps.[24] Political institutions and corporations are collectively failing to implement the ambitious targets they set for themselves.[25] Even in cases where legal requirements, certification, and reporting systems are strong on paper, remaining loopholes combined with inconsistent enforcement mean that results still fall a long way short of ensuring ecosystem integrity.[26]

This report **– The Missing Manual: What Ikea must do to Protect Europe's Forests –** looks at how Ikea's positions fit within the EU's suite of biodiversity, forest and corporate regulations, and within broader international legal and policy frameworks, and shows that legal compliance and sustainability certification by corporate actors fall short of what is required to ensure ecological protection. Building on recent field and desktop investigations undertaken by Greenpeace Nordic, Germany, Romania and Greenpeace Poland (henceforth 'Greenpeace') this report examines how Ikea's actions fall short of implementing measurements to protect ecosystems and what more it should do to protect biodiversity.

The report draws on spatial evidence of tree cover loss, field visits, tracking timber to Ikea's producers, scientific literature on forest degradation, ecosystem integrity, carbon, and biodiversity; and governance evidence looking at the legal policy frameworks, including Natura 2000,[27] the EU Biodiversity Strategy (EUBDS), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, and corporate due diligence systems. The report takes a deep dive into Ikea's own Biodiversity Framework and explores whether it measures up to the leadership role in protecting and restoring ecosystem integrity that it claims to hold.

2. When Protection fails to Protect

Several EU and global laws and regulations have been introduced in recent years that aim to enhance ecosystem protection in response to the climate and biodiversity crises. International courts have also clarified States and corporate obligations under international law. In 2025, the International Court of Justice issued an Advisory Opinion on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change (ICJ-AO).[28] In the same year the Inter-American Court on Human Rights put out an Advisory Opinion on the Climate Emergency and Human Rights (IACtHR-AO) in support of enforcing stronger environmental protections.[29] Further, the development of the Brazil-led COP 30 Forest Roadmap to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 provides an opportunity to improve how forest conditions are measured, and strengthen governance and corporate accountability for ecosystem integrity.[30]

Global targets were set in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which require governments to "encourage and mandate large and transnational businesses" to monitor, assess and disclose risks and impacts on biodiversity, while the 30 x 30 goal seeks to effectively conserve and manage at least 30 per cent of land and sea areas by 2030.[31] At the EU level, the Biodiversity Strategy, the Nature Restoration Regulation, and the Birds and Habitats Directives seek to restore nature, expand protected areas, improve ecological conditions, and strengthen implementation.[32] In parallel, the European Union Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products (EUDR), the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), and the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) require stricter control on corporate supply chains.[33]

This biodiversity protection architecture assumes that European forests should become progressively healthier if governments make commitments and ensure that corporations operating within their jurisdiction meet their responsibilities. But there are significant accountability gaps that hold this back.

While the EU's headline targets are ambitious, the legal continuation of industrial and extractive logging practices are often allowed in nominally protected areas, including parts of the Natura 2000 network. Gaps in mapping and monitoring enable ongoing forest degradation and fragmentation, leading to the continued decline of old growth and other forests of high biodiversity value.[34] Due to globally accepted definitions, forests can remain legally classified as forests, and logging can remain legally permitted, even when their ecological condition and functioning is substantially deteriorated.[35] The widely used FAO definition, for example, defines 'forest' principally through thresholds of more than 0.5 hectares, trees higher than five metres and canopy cover of more than 10 %, and has influenced forest definitions used within EU regulatory and statistical frameworks.[36] As the FAO defines deforestation as 'the conversion of forest to other land use' (usually agriculture), clear cut forests are still absurdly classified as forests, as long as the plan is to allow for forest regrowth.[37] The EUs support[38] for sustainable forest management (SFM),[39] a concept historically focused on economic sustainability, appears to be lacking the needed reform in many parts of the EU due to outdated forestry standards and respective laws that continue to allow intensive forest degrading forestry practices and clear cuts alike.[40] SFM should not be treated as an ecological outcome in itself. Whether forest management is genuinely sustainable should ultimately be assessed against forest condition and whether ecosystem integrity is maintained over time.

3. Logging rates in valuable forests across Europe

Europe's remaining primary and old-growth forests are among its most valuable ecosystems, yet much of what remains is still at risk of degradation or loss. In 2021, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) assessed the distribution of primary and old-growth forests in the EU, highlighting their "paramount importance for biodiversity" and the critical ecosystem services they provide.[41] The assessment identified around 1.35 million hectares of mapped primary and old-growth forest, while estimating that a further 4.4 million hectares may remain unmapped. This is an area larger than the Netherlands. Although around 93 % of the mapped forests were within the Natura 2000 network and 87 % were reported as strictly protected, the JRC cautioned that these figures should be treated carefully given the substantial mapping deficit and the unclear legal framework for strict protection.

However, Europe's biodiversity crisis extends beyond these rare remnants. Protecting primary and old-growth forests alone cannot fulfil the EU's 10 % strict protection target.[42] Achieving this objective will require expanding protection to additional forest types possessing high biodiversity value and restoration potential. Even when forests do not meet the strict definitions of primary or old-growth, they often harbour significant biodiversity value by offering mature structural complexity, critical habitat connectivity, and rare ecosystem functions. These forests are also disappearing. Tall, mature forests, which play a vital role in storing carbon and supporting biodiversity are declining significantly in some parts of Europe.[43] According to the World Resources Institute, Europe's mature forests have experienced a disproportionate increase in harvesting and natural disturbance in recent years,

mainly in Sweden and Finland, reducing overall forest health in these areas.[44]

To better understand the state of forests of high biodiversity value or potential in key Ikea supply countries, Greenpeace International's mapping unit looked at 25 years of tree cover loss in 5 selected European countries.[45] The selected countries collectively supply nearly half of Ikea's total global virgin wood consumption — Poland (29 %), Sweden (8 %), Germany (6 %), Romania (3 %), and Finland (2 %).[46]

Tree cover loss provides a useful spatial indicator of forest disturbance and canopy disruption, allowing us to identify where forest cover has been lost over time and assess the pressures affecting different areas. However, it is only a partial indicator of forest condition and needs to be interpreted alongside structural and ecological information.[47]

This analysis compares losses in Natura 2000 areas or in those identified as areas for future protection ('moratorium areas') with losses in areas outside these two categories. The comparison allows us to assess whether forests of high biodiversity value or having the potential thereof are under greater pressure from tree cover loss than other forest areas, and whether this pressure is occurring both within existing protected areas (Natura 2000) and in forests that have been identified as priorities for future protection (so called 'moratorium areas').

The scope of 'moratorium areas' is based on mapping exercises conducted at a national level by government authorities, scientists or civil society stakeholders and consists of forest areas of high biodiversity value or that have the potential to develop such values. In addition to biodiversity values, the selection of these areas considers their importance for ecological connectivity, wildlife corridors, their size and spatial distribution, and their ability to support healthy and functioning ecosystems. These areas urgently need to be protected from exploitation, allowing nature the space and time it needs to recover and thrive. They are also key to achieving the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy's targets of protecting 30 % of land, including 10% under strict protection.

In Poland, these maps have been compiled by Greenpeace Poland using the proposals for new forms of protected areas created by scientists and several non-governmental organisations (see country section for more details). In Sweden, the maps use data produced by Metria on behalf of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket)[48] for Northern Sweden and environmental organisations for Southern Sweden.[49] In Germany, forest areas of high biodiversity value or potential have not been precisely mapped to implement the EU's strict and effective biodiversity protection targets in forests. Data for Romania were provided to Greenpeace Romania by the corporate consortium contracted by the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests to map areas for protection according to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 10 % strict protection target. In Finland, data was compiled by environmental organisations together with the Luonnonmetsä working group.[50]

It should be noted that the EU is now less than four years away from the 2030 deadline, yet the European Commission's official Biodiversity Strategy dashboard still lacks operational indicators to track progress on strict protection and the protection of primary and old-growth forests.[51] The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) notes that, due to gaps in mapping, it is currently impossible to assess whether all remaining primary and old-growth forests can be strictly protected by 2030, and that the designation of strictly protected areas needs to accelerate drastically to reach the 10 % target.[52] While forests are not expected to account for the entire 10 % target, primary, old-growth and other forests of high biodiversity value are very important to achieving it. We analysed whether forests that should be protected from logging are experiencing higher levels of tree-cover loss while governments delay their designation, potentially leaving forests of high biodiversity value exposed to continued exploitation. This is particularly concerning as some of these forests are already within Natura 2000, which does not necessarily prevent logging Europe's vital forest ecosystems. The following analyses outline the current situation in each country as well as the shortcomings of existing national efforts to map and protect high biodiversity valuable forests.

3.1 Poland

Poland is Ikea's single largest global source for virgin wood, supplying nearly 29 % of its total consumption.[53] Across the country, the total forest area exceeds 9.2 million hectares, which corresponds to a forest cover of 30 %. The vast majority of these areas – 7.15 million hectares – are state-owned forests, managed by a governmental organization called State Forests Holding.[54] In total, Ikea and its suppliers account for approximately 8 % of Poland's total annual timber harvest.[55] Over the past 30 years, harvesting in Polish forests more than doubled, from 18.7 million cubic meters in 1990 to over 40 million cubic meters in the last decade.[56]

The current government has committed to protecting 20 % of Polish forests from logging.[57] Processes to achieve this goal were initiated in early 2024 but they have not yet yielded satisfactory results.[58] Meanwhile, the area of permanently protected forests remains insufficient. A prime example is the fact that no new national parks have been established in Poland for 25 years,[59] even though experts estimate that their area should at least triple.[60]

As the analysis conducted for this report shows, Natura 2000 areas do not seem to offer any real protection from logging to forests in Poland. Wood extraction inside Natura 2000 areas has been found to be almost the same as outside for most years in the period covered (2001–2025).

Poland – TCL in Natura 2000 areas

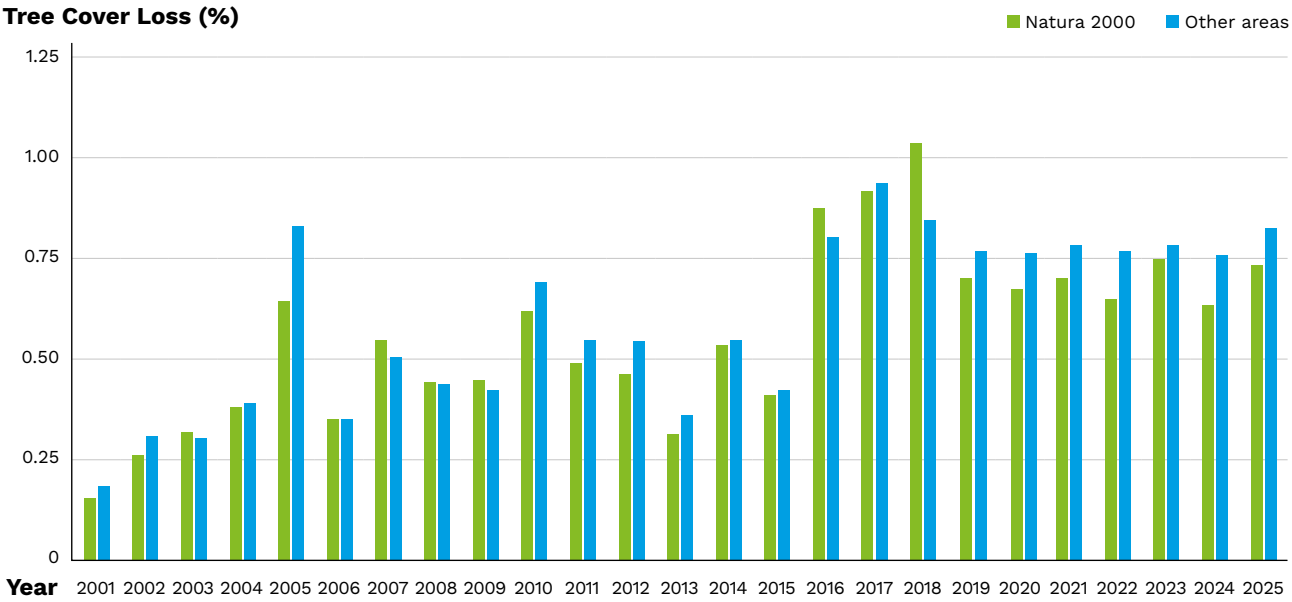

Figure 1: Tree cover loss inside and outside Natura 2000 areas in Poland for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

In Poland, scientists and forest experts have identified areas of exceptional biodiversity value that should be considered for protection. Greenpeace Poland has compiled these expert recommendations into a map and proposes a temporary halt to logging in these forests until their natural values are verified and decisions on permanent protection are made.

We refer to these as "moratorium areas." They include forests currently being assessed for protection, such as old-growth and forests important to local communities, as well as valuable areas where logging continues, including forests proposed for new national parks.

Our analysis shows that tree cover loss in these moratorium areas remains worryingly high and has increased over the study period. Rates have largely caught up with those in forests outside the proposed moratorium areas, with a particularly strong spike in 2017–2018, driven mainly by storm damage.[61] This shows the urgency of securing protection for valuable forests before they are further degraded to ensure implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy target to strictly protect 10 % of EU land.

Poland – TCL in proposed moratorium areas

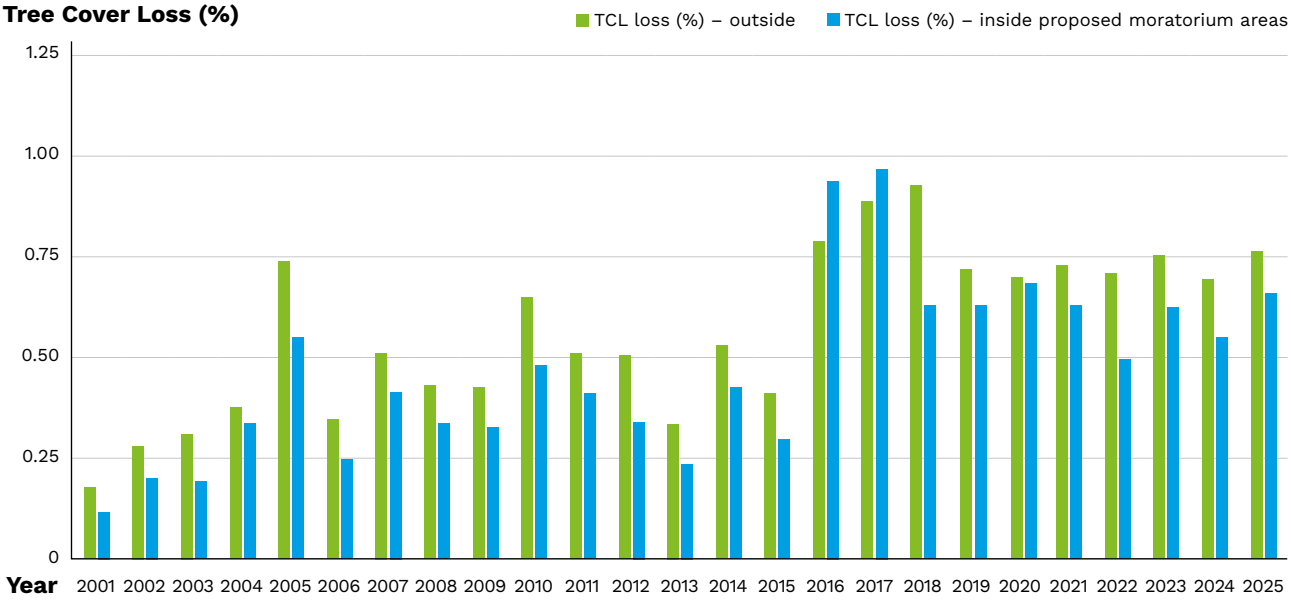

Figure 2: Tree cover loss inside and outside proposed moratorium areas in Poland for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

The proposed moratorium areas include:

1. HBVF within KEO Polish Carpathians.[62]
2. Potential old-growth forests currently undergoing environmental verification, coordinated by the Ministry of Climate and Environment.[63]
3. Nature reserves proposed by scientists, but not yet established.[64]
4. Areas that, according to experts, should be protected as national parks or should be extended to include existing national parks.[65]
5. The proposed community forests around 10 major Polish cities – these forests aren't necessarily the most valuable in terms of biodiversity, but they do provide a vital recreational area for thousands of people. Local residents have been campaigning for years to have these forests protected due to their significant importance to the community. Work is currently underway, coordinated by the Ministry of Climate and Environment, to establish management methods for these forests.[66]
6. Forests that, by decision of the Minister of Climate and Environment in 2024, were subject to a temporary suspension of logging due to their exceptional biodiversity values – should ultimately be placed under permanent protection.[67, 68]

3.2 Sweden

As Ikea's third-largest European source of virgin wood, Sweden accounts for 8 % of the company's total consumption.[69] The case of Sweden highlights how industrial timber demand directly intersects with severe biodiversity decline to leave forest ecosystems in a critical state. Many forest-dwelling species are threatened as their habitats have been lost, fragmented or degraded.[70] The decline in forest biodiversity is primarily driven by intensive forestry, with clear-cutting as the dominant management method.[71]

A particular concern is the ongoing loss of Sweden's remaining 'continuity forests'. Unlike the majority of Sweden's intensively managed forest landscape, these forests have never been clear-cut and have retained a long and largely unbroken ecological continuity, making them especially important for biodiversity as they contain ecological structures and habitats that can take centuries to develop.[72]

In a 2026 report, the Swedish Forest Agency (Skogsstyrelsen) states that "significant logging of forests with high conservation values and continuity forests results in irreversible losses for species conservation. At present, approximately 26,000 hectares of forest with known high conservation values and probable continuity forests[73] are logged each year."[74] At the current rate of logging and formal protection, estimates by the Agency point to scenarios that there will be none of these ecologically irreplaceable forests left outside protected areas within just 26 years.[75]

The Swedish Forest Agency estimates that an additional 1.56 million hectares of forest with high biodiversity values need to be protected from logging, and in many cases restored, below the mountain forest boundary. This is the amount needed to reach even the minimum threshold of conserving 20 % of the area that existed before modern forestry for each relevant forest habitat type.[76] This 20 % threshold, which reflects earlier conservation targets that have since been updated, is not a level at which biodiversity is considered secure, but rather a critical minimum below which the risk of species loss and further ecological degradation increases significantly.[77] This threshold falls short of the current 30 % international biodiversity goal,[78] but the dire reality is that around 1.2 million hectares of known high conservation value forests or probable continuity forests (below the mountain border) remain without any form of protection[79] (compared to the 1.56 million hectares that would need protection to meet even a 20 % threshold). There is evidently no room for further losses. On this basis, the Swedish Forest Agency concludes that all logging of known high conservation value forests and probable continuity forests needs to stop.[80]

According to the analysis conducted for this report by Greenpeace International's mapping unit, the share of tree cover loss in Sweden's Natura 2000 areas between 2001 and 2025 were just a tenth of the rates outside of them. This low rate of forest harvesting inside Sweden's Natura 2000 areas needs to be interpreted with caution, however. More than 80 % of Natura 2000 forest areas overlapped with national parks or nature reserves upon creation.[81] In these areas forestry had already been restricted or prohibited before they got designated Natura 2000. The Natura 2000 network also overlaps extensively with Sweden's northern and mountainous protected landscapes, large areas of remote, low-productivity forests, or forests already subject to other forms of protection.[82] Consequently, the lower rate of harvesting cannot be attributed to the Natura 2000 designation alone.

According to the same analysis, Sweden's continuity forests lost a larger share of their tree cover in 2025 compared to other forests (1.08 % against 0.97 %).[83] This has been a consistent pattern for the past decade, a clear indication that these forests are under intense pressure from the forest industry.[84]

A moratorium on forestry in continuity forests is therefore vital. The extent of continuity forests is based on a 2016 mapping exercise conducted on behalf of the government.[85] As such, there is no comparable data on tree loss cover rates before 2016, so continuity forests logged before that date could not be covered by the analysis.

Sweden – TCL in Natura 2000 areas

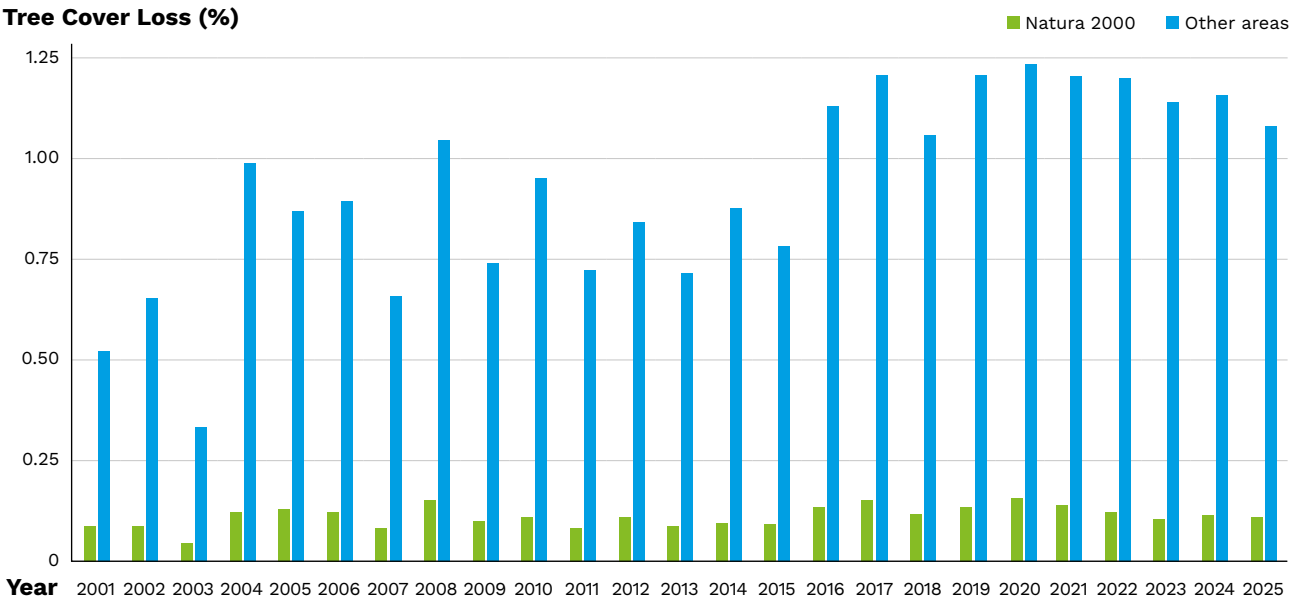

Figure 3: Tree cover loss inside and outside Natura 2000 areas in Sweden for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

Sweden – TCL in proposed moratorium areas

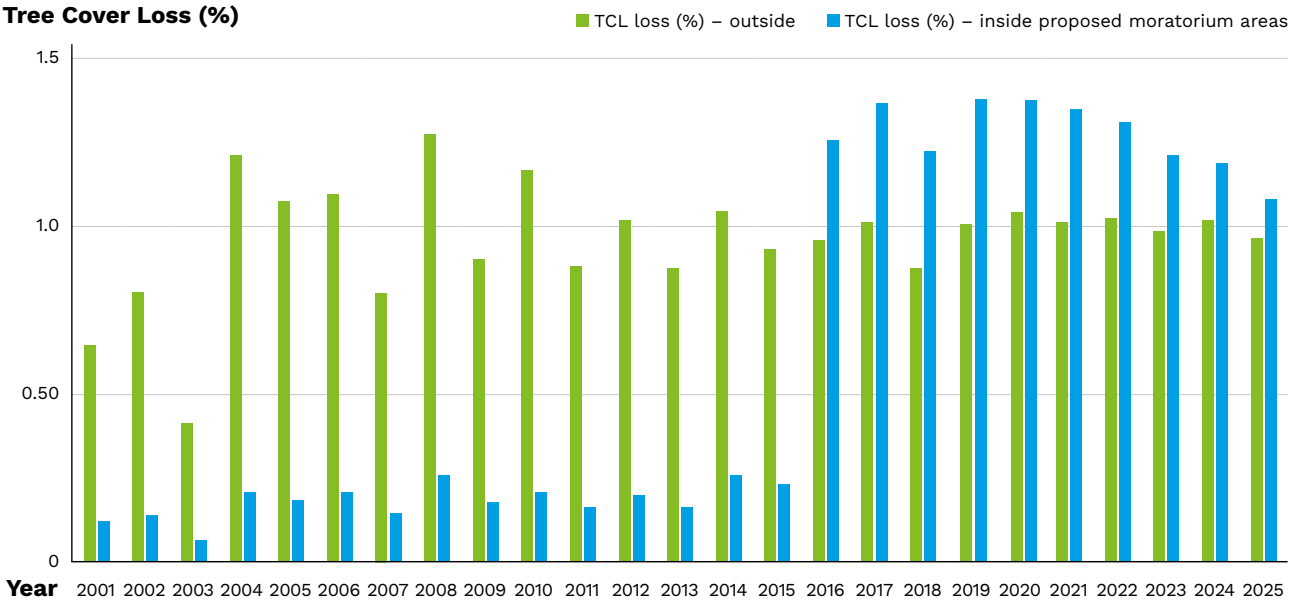

Figure 4: Tree cover loss inside and outside proposed moratorium areas in Sweden for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD). Note: Results from before 2016 and 2016 onwards are not comparable, as the moratorium areas map used here is based on satellite imagery from mainly 2015.

The importance of conserving these forests extends beyond biodiversity. Forests with long ecological continuity can contain large carbon stocks accumulated over long periods, including in living trees, dead wood and soils.[86] Studies comparing primary and intensively managed forests in Sweden indicate that less-disturbed forests store substantially more carbon, particularly in soils.[87] Harvesting these forests by clear-cutting results in a double climate loss: it causes carbon emissions and disrupts the forest's function as a carbon sink[88], while exposing carbon stocks accumulated over centuries to significant loss.[89]

Moreover, forests with long ecological continuity are vital to Sámi culture and nature-based reindeer herding.[90] Research shows that lichen-rich forests, which provide an important winter grazing resource for reindeer, have declined by more than 70 % in the Swedish parts of Sápmi (the traditional territory of the Sámi people) since the 1950s, as forest landscapes have been increasingly transformed by clear-cutting and intensive forestry.[91]

3.3 Germany

Germany is the origin of 6 % of Ikea's global virgin wood supply. It has a wide array of forest areas with some level of legal protection status, though most of these do not offer protection from industrial logging, highlighting how administrative fragmentation creates an illusion of protection.[92] There are more than 20 categories of protected areas, frequently overlapping, not necessarily compatible with IUCN categories, and neither centrally recorded nor transparently mapped.[93] A 2021 analysis by Greenpeace Germany found that while 67 % of German forest lies inside nominally 'protected' areas, only 2.8 % of forests are strictly protected from industrial logging, while at least 15 % of forests were found to be suited for this level of protection.[94]

Existing Natura 2000 protected areas do not ensure effective forest protection. A study on the vitality, damage and rise of temperature in Germany's forests after the extreme droughts from 2018 – 2020 revealed that the loss of vitality and the increase in water stress was at least as great within Natura 2000 forests as outside of these areas.[95]

The analysis conducted for this report confirms the concerns laid out above. Tree cover loss in Natura 2000 areas is mostly on a par with areas outside this designation and, at most, in some areas it is up to a third lower. This indicates only limited protection from a Natura 2000 designation, while it has to be noted that the analysis cannot provide causes for observed tree cover loss, making the interpretation of the results difficult without additional analysis.

Germany – TCL in Natura 2000 areas

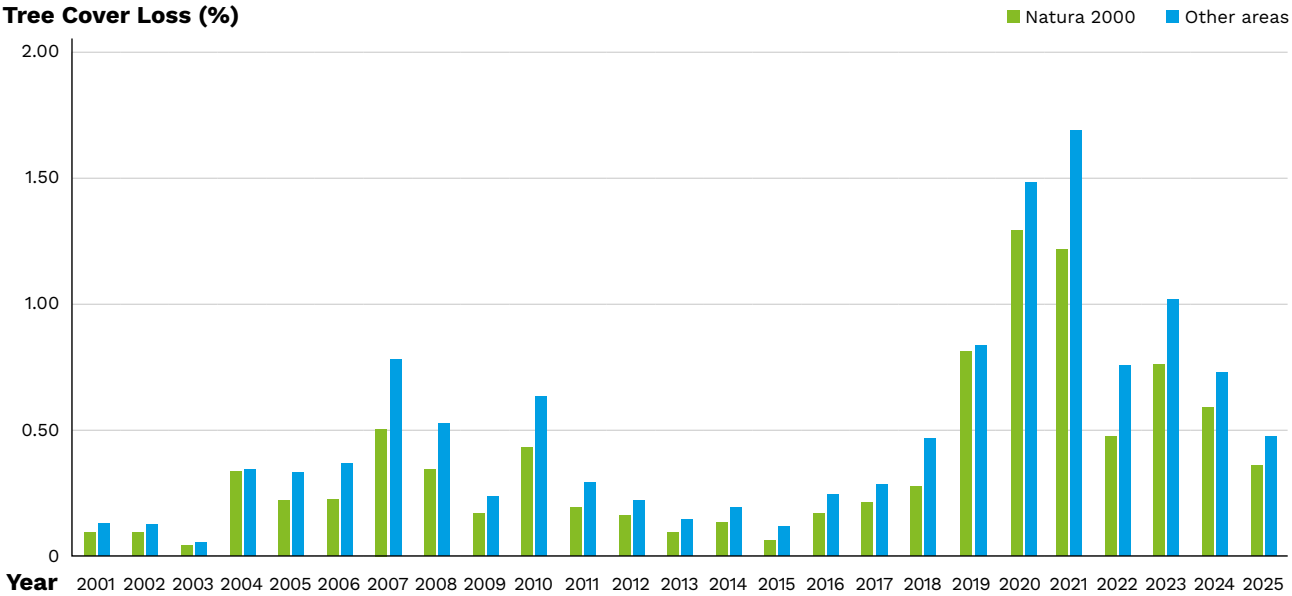

Figure 5: Tree cover loss inside and outside Natura 2000 areas in Germany for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

Furthermore, compliance with the Habitats directive – a key legislative framework to achieve the protection of the most valuable and threatened biodiversity – has been a challenge for Germany. In September 2023, the Court of Justice of the European Union declared that Germany had failed to designate certain sites as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC areas) and to adopt detailed conservation objectives for a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC sites).[96]

The combined effect of inadequate designation and lax compliance is that Germany even missed its own National Biodiversity Strategy 2020 target of leaving 5 % of forest area to natural development.[97]

The German government's approach to implementing the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy's 30 % and 10 % land protection targets has so far failed to define exactly how these areas will be selected or where they should be located.[98] Since agricultural land will largely be unavailable for strict protection, the majority of these areas will have to be designated within forests.

In the absence of a clear pathway for the implementation of the 10 % strict protection target and the 30 % effective protection target in Germany, the German government should immediately follow the precautionary approach and strictly protect forest areas that are likely to qualify for strict protection under the terms of the relevant EU guidance.[99] Based on currently available information, the majority of these forests should be located within Natura 2000 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), as these have already been officially designated to protect the most valuable and threatened biodiversity as part of the Natura 2000 network.

3.4 Romania

Although Romania accounts for 3 % of Ikea's global virgin wood supply, and its suppliers consume roughly 2 % of the country's total timber harvest,[100] its supply chain footprint carries an exceptionally heavy ecological cost, as detailed in field investigations published by Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe in 2024[101] and 2025[102].

Greenpeace CEE have exposed Ikea's ties to the destruction of forests of high biodiversity value in its supply chain (including two Natura 2000 protected sites) by tracing timber from felling sites through wood depots and via transport permits to processing plants. They have documented links to at least seven Ikea suppliers, producing at least 30 Ikea products. The forest stands concerned were between 120 and 180 years old according to publicly available forest management plans.[103] One supplier, Masifpanel SRL, was found to source beech from the Rusca Montana old-growth forest. The area had been opened for logging in 2025 despite it being part of a Natura 2000 site and providing critical habitats for rare and protected species.[104] When formally asked to stop sourcing from these forests in September 2024, Ikea contested the request, urging Greenpeace CEE to engage through multi-stakeholder platforms rather than taking unilateral action.

The analysis conducted for this report shows that these are no isolated incidents. Natura 2000 designation does not offer meaningful protection against logging in Romanian forests, underscoring systemic procedural gaps in the forest management frameworks currently under scrutiny by the European Commission.[105] Tree cover loss rates inside Natura 2000 areas have been even higher than outside for most years in the period covered (2001 – 2025). This could be interpreted as a direct result of decades of illegal logging and poor forestry management, which have severely degraded Romania's woodland. Today, less than about 10 % of its forests are over 120 years old.[106] This has led to a dangerous clash between nature protection and industry, as the few old forests that remain hold both the highest ecological value and the highest value timber. With mature wood depleted elsewhere, commercial logging is now heavily concentrated in the fragile ecosystems that need protection the most.

In areas identified in Romania as 'moratorium areas'[107] tree cover loss rates have been lower than in other forests, although they increased over the study period and are still alarmingly high, getting close to the rate on other forests in some cases. Moratorium areas encompass the 1.9 million hectares of high-conservation-value ecosystems mapped under the Romanian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) to fulfill the 10 % strict protection target under the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

In accordance with the precautionary principle, these areas require an immediate administrative freeze on all approved management measures, especially logging in forest habitats. Establishing a temporary moratorium is the only way forward to prevent irreversible ecosystem degradation across candidate areas while the formal designation process is effectively finalized.

Romania – TCL in Nature 2000 areas

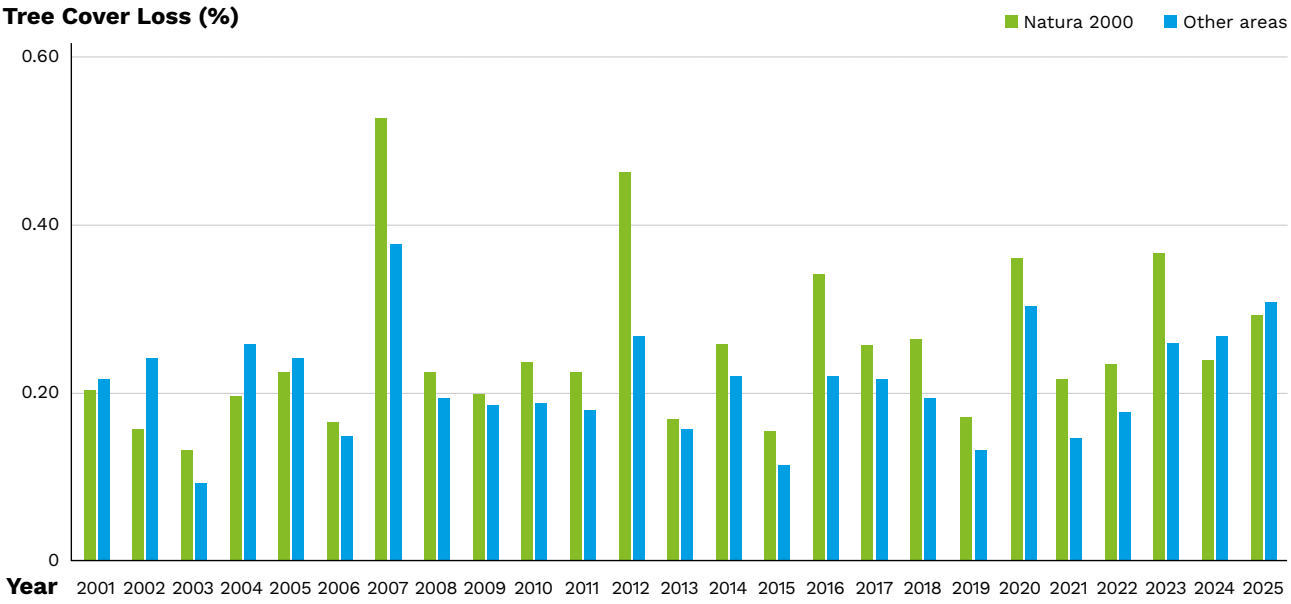

Figure 6: Tree cover loss inside and outside Natura 2000 areas in Romania for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

Romania – TCL in proposed moratorium areas

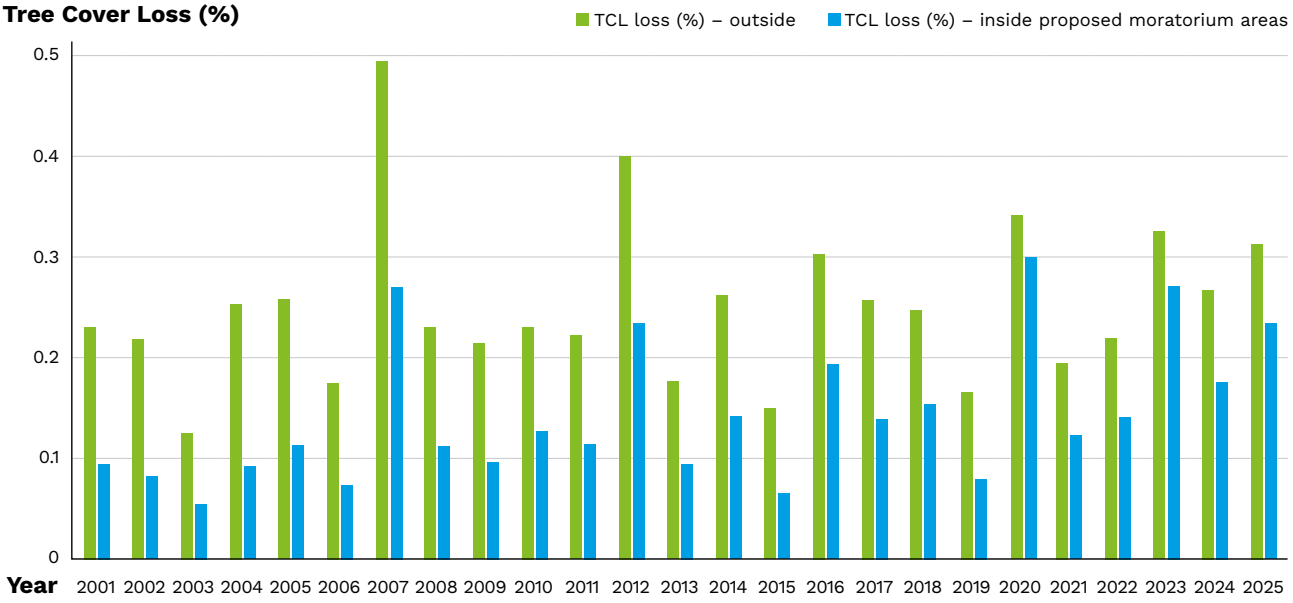

Figure 7: Tree cover loss inside and outside proposed moratorium areas in Romania for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

3.5 Finland

Supplying 2 % of Ikea's global virgin wood, Finland illustrates how deep-seated industrial priorities compromise EU conservation goals.[108] Despite being Europe's most heavily forested nation, with woodland covering over 75 % of its territory,[109] fewer than 7 % of Finland's forests are strictly protected from commercial logging. The primary goal of traditional forest management in Finland was raw material supply for the forest industry, a focus that has left no clear pathway for implementing effective forest protection.

The lack of mapping and information, particularly on privately owned forest land, is a serious obstacle to effective protection.[110] There is not even a comprehensive forest survey showing where old-growth and other forests with high biodiversity value are located. Therefore Greenpeace Nordic and other environmental organisations, together with the privately funded Luonnonmetsä working group, have mapped high biodiversity value forests on mainly state lands.[111] The results of this extensive mapping exercise have been used as the basis for the organisations' demand for a logging moratorium in Finland's most valuable forest areas. According to the Finnish Nature Panel, the rate of biodiversity loss increased in 2012 – 2018 compared to earlier periods, with the ecologically most valuable forests particularly affected.[112]

Analysis conducted for this report found that the rate of tree cover loss in Finland's Natura 2000 areas is roughly a tenth of that outside those areas (0.05 % to 0.2 % against 0.4 % to 1.6 %). A large proportion of Finland's Natura 2000 forest areas are located in northernmost Finland[113] and most of the areas were already protected as nature reserves, wilderness areas or sites of conservation programs prior to their inclusion in the Natura 2000 network.[114] In the more economically productive forests in southern Finland the share of the Natura 2000 areas is comparatively small.

Finland – TCL in Natura 2000 areas

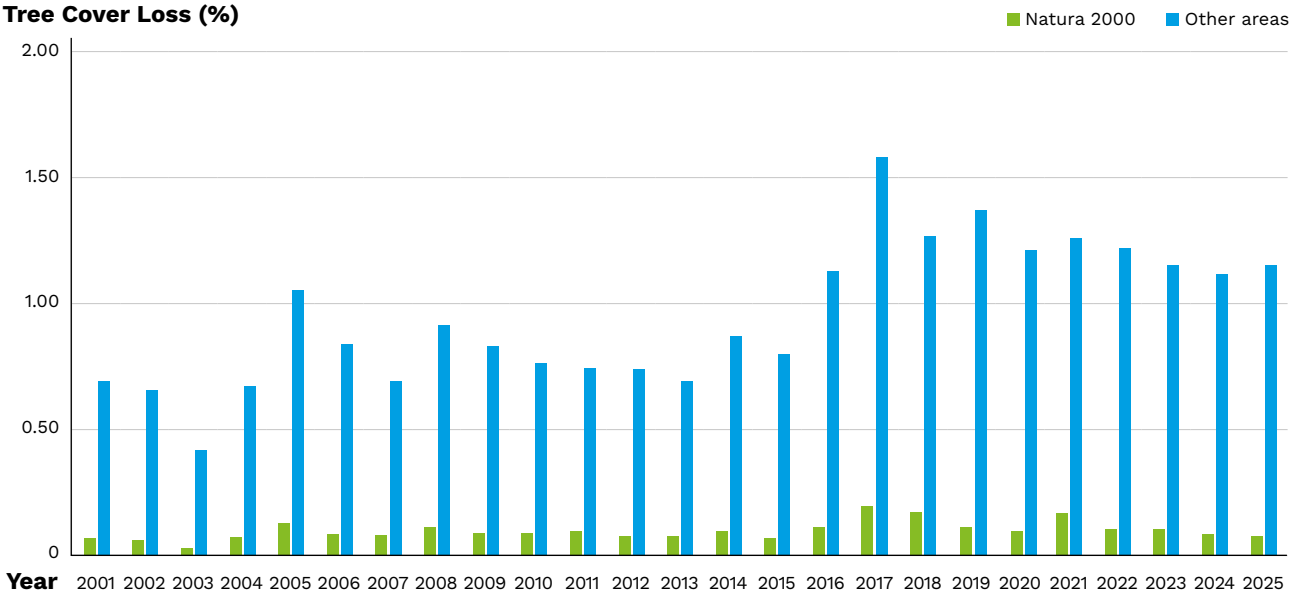

Figure 8: Tree cover loss inside and outside Natura 2000 areas in Finland for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

The rate of loss in 'moratorium areas' is not as high as in other forest areas. However, it fluctuates alarmingly between about 50 % and nearly 90 % of the rates in other forests, underlining the urgent need to stop logging in these areas until strict protection in line with the 10 % goal has been ensured. It is worth noting that privately owned forests, accounting for over 80 % of all logging in Finland, were not included in the 'moratorium area' mapping.[115] Hence, areas with high biodiversity value in these privately owned forests are not included in the analysis presented here. This particularly affects regions in southern Finland. A complete mapping of forests with high biodiversity value must urgently be conducted for the entire country.

Finland – TCL in proposed moratorium areas

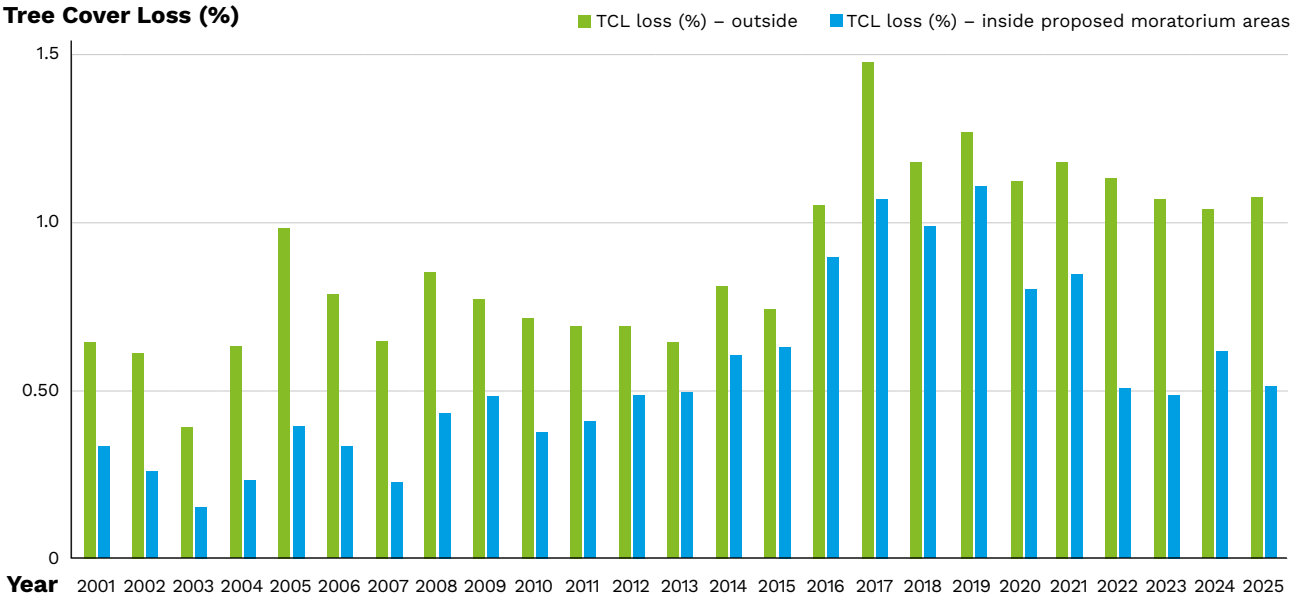

Figure 9: Tree cover loss inside and outside proposed moratorium areas in Finland for 2001 to 2025 (mapping analysis by Greenpeace International based on data by Hansen et al, UMD)

4. From Biodiversity Commitments to Corporate Accountability

The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) calls for biodiversity protection to be integrated in corporate decision-making and across whole supply chains. Target 15 of the framework calls on governments to ensure that companies monitor, assess and disclose their biodiversity-related risks and impacts, while Target 14 calls for biodiversity to be fully integrated into decision-making by private companies whose activities impact biodiversity, as well as by governments.[116] Globally, implementation remains way off track, with the CBD's own 2026 progress review finding that 2030 targets would be missed if things continue at the current pace.[117] It finds only limited progress in reducing the negative impacts of businesses on biodiversity, promoting sustainable and equitable production and consumption, and developing corporate disclosure and reporting frameworks.[118] The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' (IPBES) Business and Biodiversity Assessment backs this up, noting the central role that business plays in driving biodiversity loss,[119] as well as its potential to promote transformative change.[120]

Voluntary initiatives can supplement these efforts. The Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosure (TNFD)[121] provides a framework for corporate assessment and disclosure of nature-related impacts, risks and opportunities, while the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN)[122] has also developed methodologies to track performance. However, voluntary commitments alone are increasingly recognised as inadequate, unless they are embedded within an international legal framework that demands corporations do more to identify and prevent harms to biodiversity and ecosystems.[123]

A recently published Greenpeace International paper **– Beyond Deforestation: Ecosystem Integrity and the Emerging Legal Paradigm[124] –** argues that developments in international science, biodiversity policy, and international law all point towards ecosystem integrity becoming the benchmark against which forest governance, due diligence and implementation should be assessed. The paper highlights convergence between the GBF, the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on Climate Change (ICJ AO), the Inter-American Court on Human Rights Advisory Opinion on the Climate Emergency and Human Rights (IACtHR-AO), as well as the expanding expectations placed on companies through environmental due diligence, biodiversity disclosure and nature-related target-setting frameworks.[125]

The most compelling emerging legal finding of the ICJ and IACtHR advisory opinions (AOs) is that, in the context of the climate emergency, States are expected to adopt stringent standards of due diligence to achieve greenhouse gas reductions, and protect the climate system and ecosystems.[126] This requires States to adopt and effectively implement legislative, regulatory and administrative measures governing public and private activities that contribute to climate change, including measures capable of delivering the deep, rapid and sustained emissions reductions necessary to limit warming to 1.5 °C, supported by effective enforcement, monitoring.[127] The IACtHR further extends this logic to corporate conduct, requiring States to regulate business activities and ensure effective environmental, climate and human rights due diligence across supply chains.[128] This is all to be considered within the context of the multiple

political pledges and commitments at the highest levels of governments, including the EU's obligation under the GBF and the UNFCCC first Global Stocktake outcome that countries need to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.[129]

Whilst these AOs are directly relevant to State obligations, the protection of ecosystem integrity, the climate system and the human rights that depend on it cannot be achieved through State action alone.[130] The IACtHR clarified that not only States but also business enterprises have obligations and responsibilities with respect to climate change and its human-rights impacts.[131] This finding builds on different instruments, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as the jurisprudence of courts worldwide which has upheld that corporations are expected to apply human rights and environmental due diligence standards.[132]

To comply with these obligations, States need to adapt their regulatory landscapes to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of standards on the production, financing, and trade in commodities, with relevant provisions extending across the whole supply chain.[133] States should impose stricter obligations on companies that have a greater historical or ongoing contribution to environmental harm and climate change.[134]

The evolution of corporate accountability is fundamentally changing the way in which Ikea and other major timber consuming companies should be doing business. Whilst it has been standard practice for companies to adopt environmental and biodiversity policies, and to rely on voluntary certification schemes, or in some cases demonstrate legal compliance, the emerging expectation is that a company must now be able to demonstrate that their governance, sourcing policies, due diligence processes and disclosure frameworks are capable of using suitable indicators to disclose the impacts on ecosystem integrity, evaluate the implementation of the GBF targets and maintain ecosystem integrity along their supply chains to prevent degradation, protect biodiversity and contribute to the implementation of the GBF and the Paris Climate Agreement.[135]

5. Ikea must close its biodiversity Accountability Gap in the EU

5.1 Table: What Ikea says, and what Ikea does

Claim	Reality
2030 objective for nature: "Reduce negative pressures and impacts on nature across our value chain, while contributing to the protection, improvement and enhancement of natural ecosystems in our sphere of influence."[136]	"No targets are set" – no biodiversity or ecosystem-specific target sits beneath the objective, and no baseline or indicator.[137]
"We are currently in the process of developing a science-based performance framework with indicators and goals specific to biodiversity."[138]	Stated in October 2024 but this framework has not yet been implemented.
"The IKEA business is dependent on and impacts nature throughout the IKEA value chain. To support nature, we are committed to regenerating resources, protecting ecosystems and improving biodiversity."[139]	Site-level biodiversity assessments are to be made "according to an internal working method, which is currently under development". Ikea's control of biodiversity impacts is a procedural one – conformity to third-party FSC certification, which has several flaws and limitations.[140]
"At IKEA, we want to make responsible forest management the norm, to stop deforestation, enhance biodiversity and support people who depend on forests for their livelihood."[141]	In 2024 alone 58.9 km² of canopy was lost inside Romanian forests of high biodiversity value or potential. Greenpeace CEE traced timber from two Natura 2000 sites to at least seven Ikea suppliers, producing at least 30 Ikea products.[142]
"IKEA is committed to no deforestation and no forest degradation across our primary deforestation-linked commodities... with a target date of December 31, 2025. All wood used in IKEA products is sourced from responsibly managed forests which do not contribute to deforestation."[143]	In Europe the main risk is degradation rather than deforestation, and the assurance against it rests on FSC. But Earthsight traced beech illegally felled in the Ukrainian Carpathians to Ikea's Terje and Ingolf chairs; successive FSC audits of the same suppliers found no irregularities.[144]
Ikea has urged European leaders to "adopt regulations that promote nature protection, restoration, and sustainable use of natural resources, with clear implementation roadmaps."[145]	Ikea has avoided calling for efforts to encompass the roadmap for strict protection.

Ikea claims sustainability is embedded into every stage of their business and has sought to back this up with a series of time-bound, quantified climate commitments. Ikea has pledged to halve greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 2016 levels) by 2030 across its entire value chain, and to achieve a reduction of at least 90 % by 2050 without using carbon offsets.[146] However, the devil is in the detail, and many of its other commitments have significant loopholes. For example, Ikea only pledges to "strive towards" 100 % renewable energy across the value chain by 2030, or through the adoption of intensity rather than absolute targets.[147] In the case of its materials pledge, Ikea has committed to raising the share of recycled and renewable content in its products to at least 90 % by 2030, while remaining silent on the remaining tenth and on the transition period, and defining "renewable" in a way that excludes virgin wood taken from forests of high biodiversity value or potential that ought to be protected.[148]

Ikea's sustainability claims fall particularly short in relation to nature restoration and biodiversity.[149] Underpinning this is IWAY, Ikea's supplier Code of Conduct, which has a forest materials specification that is mandatory for every supplier.[150] IWAY however, lacks quantitative targets and clearly defined metrics for ecosystem protection,[151] and pays relatively little attention to ensuring alignment with national biodiversity strategies and targets. A revised forest materials specification (version 1.3) took effect on 1 September 2026 but this still contains no ecosystem or biodiversity requirements.[152]

We have identified five accountability gaps in how Ikea approaches biodiversity and ecosystem protection. The first of these relates to measurement of biodiversity, since Ikea does not seek to assess changes in the condition of the forests it draws on. The second is a targets gap, with no measurable and timebound goals for ecosystem protection and restoration. The third is a mapping gap, in which there is often no data on forest areas of high biodiversity value or potential. The fourth is the gap left by certification, which falls way short of providing adequate assurances that ecosystems are protected. Finally, there is an influence gap, as Ikea has not brought its weight to bear on the EU when biodiversity policy is decided. Taken together, these gaps paint a picture of a company that has not yet built the means to deliver the biodiversity that it claims to be protecting as part of its approach to sustainability.

5.2 The biodiversity measurement gap

Ikea does not track its biodiversity performance against a dated baseline on the grounds that methods for measuring impacts, dependencies, and opportunities for nature "are still evolving."[153] Ikea's justification here is extremely thin, however, given that various indicators to assess the ecosystem integrity of forests of high biodiversity value already exist. At international level, the GBF monitoring framework sets out headline indicators on ecosystems that have a direct bearing on forest condition, while its complementary indicators include a Forest Landscape Integrity Index as a measure of how far forests have been modified by human pressure.[154]

The GBF framework relies in turn on the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), adopted as an international statistical standard in 2021, to make several of these indicators operational. The newly developed GBF SEEA ecosystem accounting indicators can serve as a blueprint to assess ecosystem extent, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services, which are designed to record whether an ecosystem's characteristics are improving or deteriorating over time.[155]

At EU level, the Nature Restoration Regulation already obliges Member States to achieve an increasing trend in at least six of the seven forest biodiversity indicators it names: standing deadwood, lying deadwood, the share of forests with uneven-aged structure, forest connectivity, the stock of organic carbon, the share of forests dominated by native tree species, and tree species diversity. These are defined by EU law for the restoration of degraded forest ecosystems, complete with units and methodology, and bind the very states from which Ikea buys most of its wood.[156]

National indicator sets used to assess biodiversity and biodiversity loss in the context of National

Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) can be more specific still. The indicator development of relevant environmental agencies and institutes working on scientific biodiversity assessments should be considered for advancing suitable indicators for corporate biodiversity accountability frameworks. Sweden's environmental quality objective Sustainable Forests, for example, is assessed through indicators covering formally protected forest land, voluntary set-asides, old forests, breeding forest birds, environmental consideration in forestry, and structures in the forest landscape. The latter of these measures the area of productive forest land holding dead wood, large trees and older deciduous-rich forest, each against a defined threshold and drawn from the national forest inventory, and is reported by the Swedish Forest Agency.[157] These indicators demonstrate that established, measurable metrics for important aspects of forest condition and conservation already exist.

Ikea has acknowledged that it still needs "to expand our policies related to direct impact drivers on biodiversity loss over and above climate change and pollution"[158] but the September 2026 revision to its Forest Materials guidance fails to do so.[159] The same absence runs down to site level. Site-level biodiversity assessments are carried out "according to an internal working method, which is currently under development", while effectiveness is defined as compliance with laws and certification processes rather than through any specific measure of whether degraded forests are restored and forest ecosystem integrity is secured.[160]

Using existing international, EU and national indicators as a guide, Ikea has a responsibility to measure the biodiversity impacts of its own operations and extend the same guidance across its supply chains.

5.3 The ecosystem targets gap

Ikea's ecosystem targets gap arises from the fact that it has not yet set out biodiversity and ecosystems-specific targets, alongside policies to address ecosystem protection for raw materials other than wood, or specific guidance for sites in or near biodiversity-sensitive areas. At present Ikea only makes a vague and non-committal statement that by 2030 it will seek to "reduce negative pressures and impacts on nature across the Ikea value chain, while contributing to the protection, improvement and enhancement of natural ecosystems in our sphere of influence."

Global biodiversity commitments and international legal obligations should provide the starting point for Ikea's attempts to create meaningful biodiversity targets naming a baseline, a metric and a date in accordance with its share of overall responsibility. Amongst these, Target 15 of the GBF asks States to ensure that large and transnational companies "regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity" along their supply and value chains.[161] In particular, Ikea draws almost 80 % of its virgin wood from EU Member States, and as one of the bloc's largest consumers it should be prioritizing targets that align with its existing biodiversity regulations and commitments.[162] The EU Biodiversity Strategy sets targets to protect 30 % of EU land, strictly protect 10 %, and strictly protect all remaining primary and old-growth forests.[163] The Nature Restoration Regulation obliges Member States to demonstrate an increasing trend in at least six of the seven forest biodiversity indicators it names, which could also be used as a guide for corporations like Ikea that are major players within several EU Member States.[164] The LULUCF Regulation sets an EU target of 310 million tonnes of CO_2e in net land-sector removals by 2030, which forest condition directly determines.[165]

Ikea says it is currently developing indicators and goals specific to biodiversity, and that it has made a science-based assessment of parts of its value chain, but it has yet to develop a Corporate Biodiversity Accountability Framework with specific targets.[166] Without these science-based specific and measurable targets and measures, it is not possible to credibly claim that it is doing its part to implement the EUBDS or GBF, including the reduction of destructive forest degrading practices and the protection of areas of very high biodiversity value or potential.

5.4 The map gap

Ikea's biodiversity measures also suffer from a mapping gap. The company's risk assessment relies on tools such as ENCORE and IBAT, which draw on official designations and datasets that can be outdated, or that omit ecologically valuable forests not yet identified, mapped or protected.[167] As a result, there can be situations where no material risk is registered, even when forests of high biodiversity value or potential are logged as commercial timber or under "sanitary logging" provisions.[168]

In 2024 alone, 58.9 km^2 of canopy was lost within Romanian forests of high biodiversity value or potential.[169] The revised IWAY specification does not close this gap. For wood harvested inside the EU, geolocation assessment either falls away – suppliers outside the EU need not perform one at all – or migrates into suppliers' own EUDR systems. As the five country examples earlier in this report demonstrate, better data is already within reach. Even without being fully harmonized, existing scientific and national datasets can effectively identify forests of high-biodiversity value or potential and track other areas proposed for protection. The problem is not simply a lack of information, but that these datasets remain fragmented and are not systematically incorporated into corporate sourcing decisions.

Ikea currently treats traceability as a biodiversity safeguard. Its Forest Agenda states that "[s]ecuring traceability in geographical areas, including where our raw materials are sourced, is critical to enable us to assess, mitigate, remediate (where necessary) and safeguard impacts on biodiversity in accordance with regulatory requirements."[170] IWAY obliges suppliers to know the origin of their wood, and supply chains are mapped to the forest roadside.[171] While traceability is an important step towards accountability, it is ultimately just a logistical instrument to establish where a log came from and the legality of felling it. Traceability offers no insights on whether the extraction was ecologically defensible. In countries where felling a centuries-old stand and replacing it with a monoculture plantation is lawful, a consignment can be fully traceable and fully legal, despite the massive erasure of biodiversity that this entails. For example, logging in forests of high biodiversity value or potential can remain legally permitted in Romania despite being inconsistent with achieving the protection objectives of the EUBDS. Legality therefore does not necessarily equate to ecological sustainability.[172]

5.5 The certification gap

Ikea's sustainability claims still rest largely on certification. In the 2025 financial year, over 95 % of the wood and paper it used were FSC-certified or recycled, with the company presenting FSC as "an additional level of assurance."[173] The problem is that certification was not built to demonstrate ecosystem integrity.[174] While the FSC remains the most ambitious voluntary certification scheme available at a global scale, it has serious and even fundamental weaknesses, including inconsistent protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs), heavy reliance on mixing non-certified "controlled wood" into labelled products, insufficient traceability, and an entrenched conflict of interest within the system itself because certification bodies are contracted and paid directly by the companies they audit.[175]

This limitation reflects a wider problem with how Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is interpreted and implemented. FSC certification is one of the principal voluntary mechanisms through which forest management is assessed against sustainability standards. However, neither the designation of the continuous economic benefits of forest management as 'sustainable' nor FSC certification should, in itself, be treated as sufficient evidence that ecosystem integrity is being maintained.[176] This requires a more holistic measurement of ecological condition and change over time.

This is particularly important because FSC has become one of the principal mechanisms used by companies such as Ikea to demonstrate sustainable and responsible forest management. Founded with good intentions, FSC is to date not structured as a sufficient tool to demonstrate ecosystem integrity or achieve the needed transformation of forestry practices to halt and reverse forest degradation and deforestation, nor to support large-scale forest protection efforts. It does not require conservation-area maps to be disclosed, and most of its standards

do not require permanent protection of the areas set aside for conservation.[177]

The consequences of this reliance are written into IWAY itself. Its forest materials requirements bar suppliers from sourcing virgin material from Intact Forest Landscapes or other geographically identified High Conservation Value Forests "unless the area is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council." This locks Ikea into a system whose adequacy is in question.[178]

5.6 The influence gap

Ikea presents itself as a company that uses its size to make a positive difference.[179] It was one of the early adopters of Targets for Nature-Related Financial Reporting, and it has set measurable, offset-free climate targets.[180] Yet Ikea and Ingka Group (by far the largest Ikea franchisee) have not followed this through with influence on EU decision-makers.[181]

Inter Ikea Systems and Ingka Group declared EU lobbying costs of €700,000 – €799,999 and €1,250,000 – €1,499,999 respectively for the financial year ending August 2025, and are recorded in 25 and 57 high-level meetings with the European Commission.[182] Yet there is no evidence that their lobby efforts have been directed at supporting the EU's strict protection target. Only around 3 % of EU land is strictly protected at present, against a commitment of 10 % that should be extended to other areas of high biodiversity value or potential.[183]

Moreover, while Ikea says that it has urged European leaders to "adopt regulations that promote nature protection, restoration, and sustainable use of natural resources, with clear implementation roadmaps" it has conspicuously avoided calling for these efforts to encompass the roadmap for **strict** protection.[184]

6. Solutions to Increasing Corporate Biodiversity Accountability

Ikea and other corporations need to take further action to close the corporate biodiversity accountability gap, and help ensure that the goals and requirements of the GBF, the Paris Agreement, EUBDS, the EU's climate-related Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) targets and other forest and due diligence regulations are met.

As the IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment finds,[185] corporate biodiversity targets are most effective when aligned with national and global biodiversity objectives and grounded in a company's own impacts and dependencies. Ikea is a significant corporate actor that could play a leadership role in moving beyond minimal approaches to legal compliance and certification as the measure of its biodiversity performance to adopting measurable targets aligned with the GBF targets and the 1.5 °C goal, as well as embedding ecosystem considerations across its supply chain.

Governments and EU regulators will need to support these efforts, setting out rules to ensure that corporate sector monitoring moves beyond forest cover towards forest ecosystem integrity, as well as strengthening due diligence requirements. This would smooth the passage from minimum standard legality certification and compliance

towards legitimate prevention of degradation, protecting biodiversity, and compliance with relevant international and regional legal obligations and responsibilities.

6.1 Corporate Action Ikea need to take

Closing the gaps identified above requires action across four areas: corporate biodiversity targets and accountability; measurement of ecosystem integrity and ecological outcomes; precautionary action where mapping and protection remain incomplete; and alignment of Ikea's political influence with its biodiversity commitments.

1. **Immediately suspend sourcing – at a minimum – from forest areas of high biodiversity or potential (proposed moratorium areas) until governments finalize the designation processes required to implement the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy's 30 % and 10 % land protection targets.**

Ikea must urgently put in place a logging moratorium concerning forest areas with high biodiversity value or potential to be protected under EU 2030 biodiversity targets until mapping and legal and effective protection of these areas is complete. The 'map gap' we identify establishes that inadequate mapping results in forests of high biodiversity value with potential for effective and strict protection may become degraded simply because an area is not included in tools and datasets used by Ikea such as ENCORE and IBAT.

Ikea should lead by example while mapping and legal and effective protection of the areas is being completed. Further, the loophole identified above in IWAY F 9.3 which specifies that sourcing from IFL / HCVF is prohibited unless it is FSC-certified should be closed. FSC certification should not override this prohibition. In other words, the FSC exemption in IWAY 9.3 (b) should be removed.

2. **The Ikea Board should adopt a Corporate Biodiversity Accountability Framework with measurable 2030 targets.**

Ikea has no GBF and EUBS aligned biodiversity targets. There is now an opportunity for Ikea to show leadership and alignment across its sourcing policy, with the GBF and the EUBDS. Ikea should therefore adopt a Board level Corporate Biodiversity Accountability Framework with measurable 2030 biodiversity targets, applicable to the entire supply chain.

Extensive legal consensus establishes that regulations at the global, regional and national level should require due diligence that prevents environmental harm.[186] This due diligence requirement provides an important legal basis for such an accountability framework. It should therefore not be a mere box ticking exercise,[187] and compliance with legal requirements or achieving certifications or simply the existence of a 'Due Diligence Plan' should not in themselves demonstrate that responsibilities have been met.[188]

The Corporate Biodiversity Accountability Framework should provide a practical approach for translating these responsibilities into measurable corporate action. Ecosystem integrity should be at its core. Corporate performance should be assessed against the ecological condition of forests, rather than simply whether forest cover remains, timber is legally sourced, or certification requirements have been met. The Framework should include measurable biodiversity targets with a defined baseline, metric, date and scope across the value chain, supported by spatially explicit assessment and mapping capable of identifying degradation and fragmentation, including in forests of high biodiversity value or potential that have not yet been formally protected.

Accountability also requires companies to be able to demonstrate that these commitments are producing ecological outcomes. This means monitoring forest condition to the point of harvest, transparent reporting of impacts and failures, independent verification of performance, and precautionary no-sourcing requirements for forests of high biodiversity value or potential. Certification can provide supporting evidence but should not substitute for due diligence or demonstrate ecosystem integrity in itself, while restoration should complement rather than justify continued degradation elsewhere.

Ultimately, the Framework should shift corporate biodiversity accountability away from demonstrating that procedures have been followed towards demonstrating that biodiversity loss is being reduced and ecosystem integrity maintained or restored.

3. Establish Ecosystem Integrity as a Principle of Ikea's approach to governance

Compliance with applicable forestry and environmental requirements, and certification, does not in itself demonstrate that ecosystem integrity is being maintained.[189] To ensure ecosystem integrity and related services there is a need for Ikea to shift away from measuring and monitoring forest cover loss alone, towards measuring and monitoring forest condition.

Drawing on the definition of ecosystem integrity used in this paper, this corporate governance principle should guide the assessment as to whether sourcing and forest-management activities maintain and regenerate the composition, structure, ecological processes, stability and self-organisation that enable the ecosystem to function as a resilient living system under prevailing environmental conditions. This should be translated into measurable indicators of forest condition, including, as appropriate, forest composition and structural complexity, connectivity and fragmentation, standing and lying deadwood, age structure, carbon stocks, hydrological condition, regeneration and species or habitat condition, drawing where relevant on indicators already established under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, the GBF monitoring framework or the UN SEEA indicators for the implementation of the GBF.[190]

To close the biodiversity measurement gap, such systems should be capable of detecting changes in forest condition through multiple causes of degradation and fragmentation such as roads, industrial logging and other human-driven activities, and should include independent monitoring systems. The impact of extraction on surrounding ecology should also be embedded within corporate responsibility requirements, including through assessment of ecological conditions to avoid ecosystem degradation.

Such an approach should strengthen the definition and industry understanding of 'responsible forestry', to be defined by ecosystem condition rather than compliance with existing systems. Current forest management and corporate accountability systems are not capable of demonstrating that ecosystem integrity is being maintained and, in the landscapes examined, the evidence identifies disturbances and degradation that are inconsistent with maintaining high ecosystem integrity.

4. Ikea should publicly advocate for an ambitious implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the European Biodiversity Strategy to halt biodiversity loss by 2030, particularly through the effective protection of at least 30 % of land, including the strict protection of at least 10 % of EU land.

The influence gap arises from the disconnect between Ikea's claimed commitment to using its considerable influence to drive systemic change and the absence of equivalent advocacy for stronger forest protection and biodiversity regulation, despite its substantial access to EU decision-makers and influence over European forest supply chains. There is no evidence that Ikea's general claims in favour of biodiversity protection have been followed up by advocacy in favour of the EU 10 % strict protection objective. Ikea should urge the EU to effectively implement its 30 % protection and 10 % strict protection commitments, not limited to protection of all remaining primary- and old growth but including all forests of high biodiversity value and potential.

Further, for the purpose of transparency, Ikea should make public disclosure of its forest and biodiversity related lobbying positions, and ensure that the company takes a systems wide approach to ensuring that no advocacy is undertaken which may weaken or delay environmental protection, and due diligence legislation.

The 2030 Forest Roadmap process being led by Brazil as the UNFCCC COP 30 Presidency provides an important opportunity here. Ikea should advocate in that process for the Roadmap to recognise ecosystem integrity and forest degradation as implementation outcomes and for strengthened corporate due diligence and accountability across commodity supply chains.

7. Conclusions

As one of the largest corporate users of wood, Ikea has considerable influence over industry approaches to forest management and has itself made very public commitments to use its size, scale and reach to help halt deforestation and to make responsible forest management and wood sourcing the norm across the world.[191] The position the company has taken publicly prevents Ikea from reasonably claiming that mere compliance with existing rules is sufficient and cannot expect that adherence to minimum legal requirements is sufficient.

Measures such as legality, certification and protected-area designation are critical governance tools but they do not in and of themselves ensure that ecosystem integrity is being maintained. Forests of high biodiversity value or potential can be legally logged, the wood products certified sustainable, and yet degradation of forests, ecosystems and biodiversity continues. Ikea can comply with FSC-certification, yet still cause ecosystem destruction and biodiversity loss inside areas covered by existing sustainability frameworks.

The country examples identified in this report clearly illustrate the point that formal protection and ecological protection do not always coincide. In many cases formal protection still allows industrial logging driving degradation and the loss of forests of high biodiversity value or potential. Insufficient mapping, weak implementation and ongoing industrial harvesting are allowing highly biodiverse forests to continue to be degraded despite the EU's current governance architecture. The missing piece is the extent to which these policies are being implemented and enforced in a way which ensures the maintenance of functioning ecosystems.

The definition of ecosystem integrity being utilised within the context of this paper requires consideration of ecosystem composition, structure, ecological processes, stability and self-organisation. By taking a corporate governance approach which ensures the integrity of ecosystems, Ikea has an obligation to ensure that especially forests of high biodiversity value or potential remain functioning, whether these areas exist within or outside formally protected and mapped areas.

Our analysis of the approach taken by Ikea identifies a list of gaps which need to be addressed if the company truly wants to use its size and reach to make a positive difference as they claim. Gaps exist in relation to metrics, targets, mapping, certification and influence, which prevent Ikea from being able to show that the sustainability systems and frameworks put in place within the context of its governance have the ability to ensure ecosystem integrity and alignment with the GBF and EUBDS across the entirety of the forests upon which the business depends. There is a need for a Corporate Biodiversity Accountability Framework to be put in place by Ikea that closes these gaps and supports the achievement of the targets as needed.

As a final point, when we look at the circumstances in Europe and as one of the leading wood users that wants to influence, or even transform, the forestry industry, we should be alarmed. For Ikea to consistently profit from a position of claiming to make a positive change under these circumstances raises serious concerns: especially as its business model is based on turning forests, essential for climate and biodiversity and home to millions of plants and animals, into cheap furniture for sale.

Ikea should appreciate that part of leadership requires finding solutions to their business model which support halting and reversing deforestation and degradation by 2030 rather than the opposite. It should use its position as one of the leading wood users to identify insufficiencies in existing frameworks and use its political influence and purchasing power as a leader to increase the bar and do better. The European approach to address forest degradation and biodiversity protection is important globally to inform the development and implementation of initiatives such as the Brazil-led 2030 Forest Roadmap as it highlights the challenges associated with putting adequate

systems of governance in place. Europe is a clear example that claiming to have a sophisticated system of environmental governance can remain insufficient to ensure ecosystem integrity and halt and reverse biodiversity loss where the incentives for enforcement and best-practice implementation are insufficient for both States and corporations alike.

Response from Inter IKEA Group

In the spirit of transparency and constructive dialogue, Greenpeace Nordic submitted a draft of this report to Ikea for review and comment prior to its publication.

In its response, the Inter Ikea Group welcomed the dialogue aimed at strengthening biodiversity but largely rejected the report's key conclusions and recommendations for action.

While Ikea welcomed the report's acknowledgment of its compliance with legal requirements, it rejected the call for an immediate logging moratorium in the areas proposed for protections. Ikea argues that procurement exclusions should not be based solely on proposals from interest groups until the legal status has been assessed through recognised scientific, legal or certification processes – that in our view ignores the fact that the proposed moratorium areas in the report are grounded on best available science established by a broader coalition of organisations and authorities. Furthermore Ikea cites the legality of forestry activities and defends its existing due diligence system (IWAY) and the use of certification schemes.

However, this statement highlights precisely the "accountability gap" emphasized in the report: relying solely on procedural due diligence obligations, formal legality, and voluntary certifications does not prevent ecologically valuable forest ecosystems from continuing to be damaged within Ikea's supply chain.

In response to Ikea's clarification that it presents its work as a contribution to biodiversity challenges rather than a claim of global leadership, we have revised our framing accordingly.

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