



RISK INFORMATION
ALLIANCE

Country - Commodity Risk Assessment Methodology

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Objective

This document outlines the approach and methodology used by the Risk Information Alliance (RIA), via its Members, to develop and approve country risk assessments. It highlights the main steps and key requirements applied to develop consistent, credible and robust assessments.

Verbal forms of expression

[Adapted from ISO/IEC Directives Part 2: Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards]

“shall”:	Indicates requirements to be followed strictly in order to conform to the methodology.
“should”:	Indicates that among several possibilities, one option or item is recommended as particularly suitable without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required. A ‘should requirement’ may be met in an equivalent way, provided this can be demonstrated and justified.
“may”:	Indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.
“can”:	Used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical, or causal.

Introduction

The Risk Information Alliance (RIA) is a collaboration between multiple organisations. It includes Preferred by Nature, the Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP), the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™), the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR), and Assurance Services International (ASI).

Under RIA, these Members have agreed upon a framework to develop risk assessments. The RIA framework includes a set list of indicators and this methodology as well as accompanying tools and templates.

The methodology and list of indicators have been developed to address the needs of participating schemes as well as sustainability regulatory instruments and systems. This methodology outlines the requirements for conducting risk assessments under RIA.

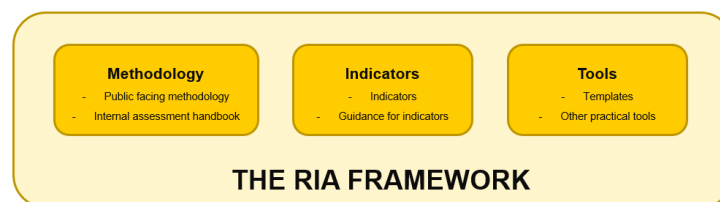


Figure 1

Overview of RIA risk assessments

RIA risk assessments consist of robust and structured information on the production of agricultural and forest-based commodities at national or sub-national level. A fixed series of indicators are assessed for a defined scope, following this methodology and specific processes and tools.

Credibility elements

Credibility is key to ensure the recognition and endorsement of data provided across all members of the RIA, so that RIA members can have trust in the veracity and impartiality of the data and confidence in the risk identification outcomes resulting from the risk assessment processes. To this end, RIA is operating under several core principles:

1. **Clarity and transparency.**
 - RIA operates under a clear and publicly available framework.
 - Risk and risk conclusions are well described and substantiated.
 - Consultation and validation processes are documented.
 - Assessments are clear about the limitations of the data available, or other relevant factors that can limit the conclusions.
2. **Quality management.** RIA strives for trustworthy, reliable and accurate findings and conclusions through robust quality management processes.
 - The detailed framework ensures consistency where assessments are developed across different commodity and country settings and by different organizations and assessors.
 - The way information is gathered and used is transparent.
 - The methodology relies on the triangulation of data and methods for reaching conclusions - this includes using a variety of data sources and using qualitative as well as quantitative approaches.
 - Assessors are required to apply a neutral stance to assessment conclusions.
 - All assessments undergo a robust quality review process.
3. **Stakeholder consultation.** The inclusion of relevant stakeholders to the process is key to RIA. Stakeholders are consulted through a robust consultation process.

RIA Modules

Risk assessments may be developed using 2 different modules. The modules may be applied as stand-alone elements or in combination (see Figure 1).

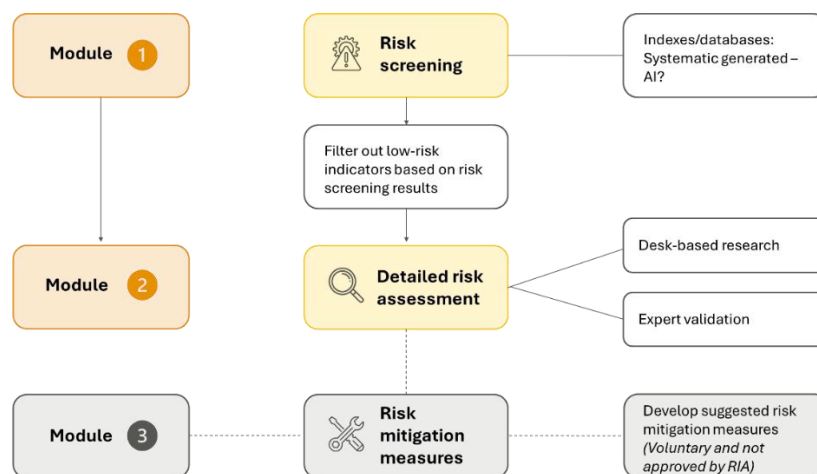


Figure 2

- **Module 1: Risk screening.** The purpose of the risk screening is to identify indicators that can be classified as negligible risk based on internationally recognised indices or data sources. Indicators designated as negligible risk do not require further research or justification in the detailed risk assessment process. Only indicators for which reliable indices or databases exist are included – this means that the risk screening is not necessarily available for all the RIA indicators.
- **Module 2: Detailed risk assessment.** The detailed risk assessment involves extensive desk-based research and/or expert interviews. It applies to indicators where negligible risk could not be determined through risk screening. Note that RIA detailed risk assessments are limited to findings on sustainability risks. They do not include risk mitigation options. Risk mitigation options should be developed and managed by RIA members or other users independently.

Risk screening methodology

Note: the application of the below methodology for the selection of the indices retained for specific indicators is described in the document “RIA Risk Screening Indices”.

The purpose of the risk screening method is to rely on existing evaluations to determine a risk level for RIA indicators at country level. This approach offers the opportunity to draw risk conclusions without having to implement a resource-intensive detailed assessment process.

Risk screening results can be either used independently, or as a preliminary step to conducting a detailed assessment.

The purpose of risk screening is to identify indicators that can be classified as negligible risk based on internationally recognised indices or data sources. Indicators designated as negligible risk do not require further research or justification in the detailed risk assessment process.

The risk screening approach is preferably applied at criteria level, which means that index or data source are identified per criterion, and that the risk conclusion applies to all indicators within this criterion. In cases where robust indices or data sources only match with the intent of RIA indicators, it is possible to apply the risk screening method at indicator level.

Risk screening is conducted at the national level, independently of the commodity in scope. Therefore, results may be applied to all commodities from the country concerned.

The risk screening process uses a pre-defined set of internationally recognised indices or databases as proxies to assess the level of risk for specific indicators. Only criteria or indicators for which reliable indices or databases exist are included – this means that the risk screening is not necessarily available for all the RIA criteria and indicators.

The overall process applied for each Risk Information Alliance criterion follows the below steps:

- Identify and select relevant sources of evaluation.
- Evaluating the pre-selected sources of evaluation.
- Selecting the relevant sources of evaluation if any, preferably at criteria level, possibly at indicator level.
- Determining threshold for negligible risk conclusions.
- Consulting with the organisations developing the indices intended to be used for risk screening to confirm the utilization of the source and the threshold(s).
- Documenting and publishing the risk screening results.

Selection of risk screening indices

For each criterion, existing sources of evaluation assessing countries worldwide are collected and examined, in particular indices grading or ranking countries on the related topic.

1. Identify and select relevant sources of evaluation

1.1. Relevant global sources of evaluation, in particular indices, are pre-selected for a specific RIA criterion, based on specific conditions:

- The index/score is relevant to the Risk Information Alliance criteria. This covers both the criterion formulation, as well as the specific topics covered by all indicators within the criterion.
- Evaluations are standardised across countries, for example in the form of grading or ranking countries based on systematic surveys conducted and/or data aggregated.
- Information is presented and available at a country level and is not restricted to a specific region of the world (preferably).
- Information and results are publicly available.
- Preferably, information is updated at regular intervals to capture changing risk levels over time.

2. Evaluating the pre-selected sources of evaluation

This step is aiming at having a clear understanding of how the available information has been developed and standardised across countries and how well it covers the Risk Information Alliance criterion.

2.1. Retained indices or evaluations must be accompanied by a clear and transparent explanation of their methodology and functioning.

- In particular, the process leading to ratings, grading, scoring or ranking countries must be available.
- Available elements of methodology should also contain what initial data or sources have been used and compiled as well as the methods used to aggregate data and measures utilized.
- If the evaluation is sorting countries in different categories (e.g. “poor”, “very good”, “not at risk”, “satisfactory status”, etc.), it must be clear what those categories represent and how countries are allocated to them, in particular if thresholds are used on quantitative measures.

2.2. Other elements of credibility and/or practicality shall be considered, including but not limited to:

- a. Whether the Organisation implementing and publishing the index is credible and renowned and whether the objectives of the index are aligned with those of the Risk Information Alliance.
- b. The geographical area covered (extent of countries for which information is available).
- c. The known update frequency for the source of information.
- d. Whether data / grading is freely available and can be downloaded in a usable format (csv, xls...).
- e. Other notable limitations or particularities.

3. Selecting the relevant sources of information

3.1. Based on the in-depth review, a choice is made on which source is used to confirm a negligible-risk list of countries. Several scenarios can present themselves and the most fitted choice is made and recorded on a case-by-case basis.

- a. The ideal scenario is where one strong and credible global index perfectly covers the intent of the Risk Information Alliance criteria and is available to determine a list of negligible-risk countries.
 - o It may be the case that a slightly adjusted approach is best suited, for instance (1) splitting an existing index or (2) using multiple indices together or (3) focusing on indicators instead of criteria.
- 3.2. In the event where there is not one specific source of evaluation available, the following scenario guidance should be followed:
- o One index is available and acceptable but has a much larger coverage than the Risk Information Alliance criterion. In such instance, it may be the case that a sub-set of the index is better suited and available (e.g. the index is aggregating measures for topics A, B and C and presenting final results of this aggregation. But the assessed Risk Information Alliance criterion is only focusing on topic B. It may be the case that the disaggregated measures for A, B and C are available, making it possible to isolate measures for topic B to determine a list of negligible risk countries).
 - o Several indices or sources are available and acceptable, in which case either one is clearly better than the others (in terms of methodology, coverage and / or practicality), or they can be considered in combination.
 - o Several indices or sources are available but not fully addressing the criterion individually, in which case the question is whether grouping them is possible and sufficient to fully address the intent of the criterion.
 - o One or several indices / sources are available but cannot sufficiently cover the intent of the whole criterion even if considered in combination. It may be the case here that those are perfectly matching one of the indicators (or group of indicators), in which case a negligible risk country list may be determined at the indicator level instead of criterion level.
 - o There is no available and acceptable source of evaluation, in which case no list of negligible-risk countries is determined at a global level and specific country risk assessments are required to determine risk conclusions.
- 3.3. The decision on retained sources of evaluation and which specific elements are used (whether data has been aggregated / split / reversed, etc.) shall be recorded in detail and made available publicly.
- 3.4. The organisation developing and maintaining the selected Index/score may be contacted. The relevant organisation can be informed of the intention of using the index/score for risk screening as well as intended thresholds. Contacting the evaluation owner is also an opportunity to raise relevant questions, in particular if some methodological elements need clarification.

Concluding on a risk screening method per RIA criterion or indicator

4. Risk screening conclusions

- 4.1. Based on the selected source(s) of evaluation, the conclusion of risk screening is expressed per criteria or indicator and is binary:
- o **Negligible risk** – supported by a short standard justification; or
 - o **Not defined** – to be further assessed in detail through the detailed risk assessment method.

4.2. Based on the data collected, a negligible-risk country list is developed for the criteria (or indicator in some instances). While a global list of negligible-risk countries is established by criterion (or indicator), it does not mean that other countries are necessarily at non-negligible risk. A negligible-risk conclusion by criterion or indicator may still be determined when developing further country / region or commodity specific risk assessments based on a wider range of country-specific available information.

5. Risk screening thresholds

5.1. To reach risk conclusion, a choice is made on which threshold is applied so that some countries qualify for a clear negligible-risk conclusion. The objective is to set a negligible-risk threshold ensuring that potential non-compliance to the Risk Information Alliance criteria (or indicator) are only temporary lapses, unusual/ non-systematic, or limited in their temporal and spatial impact.

5.2. The threshold to apply a negligible risk conclusion to a country shall be deliberately strict, since the use of detailed and specific qualitative data is limited with this method. In the process of setting the threshold, quality checks shall be conducted to ensure that there is no publicly available qualitative information contradicting the countries that are listed as negligible risk.

5.3. The threshold(s) determination is recorded with as much detail as possible on the logic applied for the decision. It is important that the threshold is clear and transparent.

Detailed risk assessment methodology

The detailed risk assessment process involves extensive desk-based research and/or expert interviews. The objective is to produce a complete and accurate depiction of the conditions of production of the target commodity in a given geographic area.

The detailed risk assessment process is particularly applied for indicators where negligible risk could not be determined through the risk screening method.

Flexibility exists in how the detailed risk assessment is implemented by RIA Members, depending on data availability, resources, and expert access. Regardless of the approach, the core requirements of this methodology shall be applied to develop a RIA risk assessment.

The overall approach to developing detailed risk assessment consist of the following steps:

- Following the relevant RIA procedures, one or several RIA Members can start developing a detailed risk assessment. The leading Organisation(s) may sub-contract all or part of the development of the assessment to external sub-contractors.
- At the start of the assessment, the scope is specified and detailed - in particular the national or sub-national area and the commodity or product to be assessed.
- The leading Organisation(s) sets-up a team of assessors, preferably including local experts and individuals with appropriate skills (analysis, interviewing, summarizing, technical writing...). A first draft is developed as per this methodology and using the associated templates and tools. At this stage, specific experts may be consulted.
- Once a first draft is finalised, stakeholders are consulted via appropriate means and formats and following this methodology. Stakeholder comments are consolidated into a final version.

Development process and main steps

6. Content of risk assessments

6.1. Risk assessments shall, at a minimum, include:

- a. The scope description (including geographical area and product or commodity in scope);
- b. An overview of the country;
- c. The established geopolitical scale and source types;
 - Geopolitical scale is determined based on geographical boundaries, such as administrative subdivisions (e.g., states, counties, provinces, etc.) and/or biological and/or geographical subdivisions (e.g., bioregions, ecoregions, water catchments, watersheds, etc.).
 - Establishing source types relevant for the area under assessment allows for distinct designation of risk depending on the possible origins of the commodity. When determining source types, several aspects shall be considered, including the type of forested area or agricultural land, tenure or ownership arrangement, management scope

and the scale and intensity of the relevant operations. Examples of source types include State-owned natural forests, smallholder plantations, large-scale industrial concessions, etc.

- d. An assessment of all RIA indicators, unless (1) risk screening results are applicable and used for negligible risk conclusion and (2) only specific themes are assessed (e.g. only human rights and labour rights assessment). In this case, the partial assessment must be clearly specified and explained. It is only possible to do partial assessment by selecting themes. All criteria and indicators within a theme must be assessed.
- e. A list of supporting documents, such as applicable legislation, information sources, and key legal documents.

6.2. For each assessed indicators, risk assessments shall, at a minimum, include:¹

- a. A description of risks identified, if any.
- b. A summary of risks identified, if any.
- c. A risk conclusion.
- d. A reference to and description of legal requirements.
- e. A list of written sources of information used.
- f. A list of experts consulted.

7. Applying risk screening results

7.1. For indicators designated as unspecified risks in the risk screening, a detailed risk assessment shall be conducted. No further assessment is required for indicators designated as negligible risk.

7.2. If new evidence is identified that contradicts the risk screening outcome, the negligible risk designation may be overruled, and a detailed assessment conducted.

8. Gathering and use of information

8.1. Sufficient information shall be gathered to assess each indicator and its respective risk threshold to justify the risk designation reached.

8.2. The assessment shall be developed based on a combination of public information sources and consultations with experts and stakeholders. Information collected during on-site visits may also be incorporated.

8.3. Information sources used in the risk assessment should be selected using objective criteria and shall be reliable and well recognised.



NOTE: Examples of objective criteria include publication indexing, credibility of the data provider, and the methodology used for data gathering.

¹ Note that RIA detailed risk assessments are limited to findings on sustainability risks. They do not include risk mitigation options. Risk mitigation options should be developed and managed by RIA members or other users independently.

8.4. All information used in the risk assessment, including expert input, shall be referenced to ensure that information sources are verifiable by third parties. Generic references (e.g., Google search results, reference to a general webpage) are insufficient for data validation.



NOTE: Names of experts are anonymised by default unless explicit permission is given. Names and records are kept on file with other methodological materials.

9. Designation of risk

9.1. Each indicator shall be assessed by taking into consideration the risk screening results, if available, the determined risk threshold, and the indicator guidance.

9.2. Each indicator under assessment shall be determined as either: 'Negligible risk', 'Non-negligible risk' or 'Not applicable'.

- a. 'Negligible risk', in the event that evidence shows thresholds for 'non-negligible' risk are not met, and no other information indicates otherwise.
- b. 'Non-negligible risk', in the event that evidence does not support negligible risk, or one or more specific risk areas have been identified.
- c. 'Not applicable', when an indicator is not considered applicable for the assessment area or commodity.

9.3. The assessment shall apply the relevant geographical scale and source type to reflect any differences in risk level within the country.



NOTE: An indicator may have different risk designations depending on the geographical scale of assessment and source types.

9.4. Risk designation shall be determined by evaluating the information in identified sources against the 'non-negligible' risk thresholds associated with each indicator.

9.5. When assessing indicators in the risk assessment, the following aspects shall be considered:

- a. All entities involved in the harvesting, production or supply of the product (e.g., contractors);
- b. The scale and intensity of the management operation within the assessment area; and
- c. The potential impact and likelihood of the risk when providing the risk designation, as outlined below:
 1. Non-negligible risks are those that:
 - i. Affect a wide area, cause significant damage, and/or continue over extended periods;
 - ii. Indicate an absence of, or breakdown in, legal enforcement;
 - iii. Are not corrected or adequately responded to upon being identified in a timely manner;

- iv. Have significant negative impacts on society, production of forest products and other services, forest ecosystems, and the people directly and indirectly affected by management activities.
2. Negligible risks are those that are:
- i. Temporary or short-term in nature;
 - ii. Unusual or non-systematic;
 - iii. Limited in their impact;
 - iv. Effectively controlled through the implementation of monitoring and enforcement measures carried out by efficient and effective government agencies.

9.6. Each risk designation shall be supported by a clear rationale based on the final conclusion (e.g. “based on findings x, y and z, it is concluded that the risk is non-negligible for this indicator”).

9.7. A precautionary approach shall be applied when assessing an indicator, and a ‘non-negligible risk’ designation shall be assigned if the following conditions are met:

- a. The assessment of criteria 6.1 conclude that there is a non-negligible risk of corruption and fraud in the country/region in question; and
- b. There is little or no evidence supporting a negligible designation.

9.8. If little or no information can be obtained to assess an indicator, a ‘negligible risk’ designation may be concluded if:

- a. The assessment of criteria 6.1 conclude there is a ‘negligible risk’ of corruption and fraud in the country/region in question; and
- b. The country/region in question scores well on international governance indicators regarding the quality of governance (e.g., WB Worldwide Governance Indicators²); and
- c. The assessment of other similar or related indicators of the risk assessment has concluded that there is ‘negligible risk’.

10. Specific requirements for High Conservation Values (HCV)

The assessment approach of HCVs shall follow the High Conservation Value Framework approach of the HCV Network .

10.1. For the assessment of RIA indicators on HCV (Criteria 3), the requirements under this section shall be followed in addition to the above sections.

10.2. The scope of the assessment of HCVs includes:

- a. The assessment of HCV presence for each HCV category;
- b. The assessment of threats to HCVs caused by management activities, including harvesting or production that occurs outside the scope of a formal management process; and

² Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators/interactive-data-access>

- c. The assessment of HCV protection.



NOTE: In the context of risk assessments, identification of HCVs is not expected at the specific forest or farm of origin, but rather whether these are possibly present in the ecosystems that could be affected by the management practices assessed.

10.3. The identification of HCVs 5 and 6 shall strive to include the engagement of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. Targeted consultation conducted with the right holders and/or experts during the risk assessment process is considered sufficient when identifying HCVs 5 and 6.

10.4. 'Threat', in the context of HCVs, shall refer to common management activities that cause or may cause loss or degradation of HCVs.

10.5. Existing nature protection schemes implemented in the country/area under assessment shall be recognised and evaluated in terms of potential usefulness for HCV identification and protection.

10.6. Spatial data documenting HCV presence shall be used whenever possible. Data meeting internationally recognised spatial standards (e.g., Open Geospatial Consortium standards) shall be prioritised.

10.7. The HCV Network Frameworks, FSC-approved HCV frameworks (or parts thereof) that have previously been developed as part of developing an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS) based on FSC Principles and Criteria version 5 (FSC P&C V5), or relevant HCV frameworks from other organisations participating in RIA, should be used as a primary source of information about HCV presence and threats in the risk assessment, provided they meet the requirements of this document.

10.8. All IFLs as defined by the maps at www.intactforests.org shall be used as IFLs unless other sources indicate that these data are not up to date or complete. In those cases, other forms of best available information shall be used, such as IFLs identified in existing HCV frameworks, historical harvesting documentation, maps and external data provided by independent organisations, scientists, and experts.

Quality management for risk assessments

11. Qualification of assessors or providers

11.1. The lead Organisation(s) strives to set-up an assessment team with the relevant skillset. It is required that the assessor or assessing team have a thorough understanding of the country or regional context being assessed, including the legal system in place. Key skills include research, analysis, critical thinking, technical writing, coordination, stakeholder engagement and consensus building.

11.2. Assessors are required to act with a neutral stance when developing risk assessments. Full objectivity in strict scientific sense is not achievable as the assessors are asked to make conclusions on risk levels based on the available data, which opens up for individual judgement. However, it is key that the assessors are able to apply a neutral stance to the conclusions and that they have not in advance of the research decided on the risk level of an indicator.

11.3. The assessors designated by the lead Organisation(s) developing the assessment should have no Conflict of Interest (COI) in the assessment results. If there is potential COI, these shall be clearly mapped and mitigated to ensure they do not influence the assessment process and results.

11.4. To mitigate potential bias of the evaluator several elements are included in the process:

- a. *Thresholds* are applied as guidance when reaching conclusions.
- b. It is required to *keep records* relevant to the evaluation, such as clear reference to sources, stakeholder lists and notes from interviews.
- c. By triangulation methods and working as a team, it is possible to identify and minimize biased findings by discussing the assessment while in development.
- d. The inclusion of *experts*, *quality review* and *stakeholder consultation* are applied to hold the evaluator accountable for the findings and allow for disputed views to be raised. External input is key to calibrate the findings.

11.5. Assessment can be outsourced to a specific expert, a team of experts or an external Organisation.

12. Expert outreach in the development phase

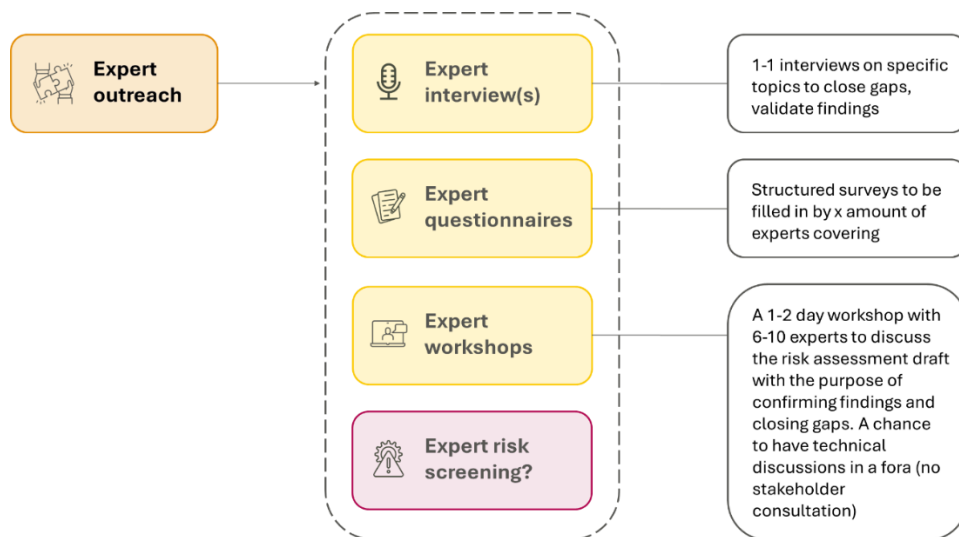


Figure 3

12.1. Experts shall be consulted on the draft risk assessment (including but not limited to selected indicators) if:

- a. there are limited publicly available sources of information to evaluate the indicator and to reach a risk conclusion; or
- b. there are doubts regarding how risk conclusions shall be graded (e.g., whether the risk is widespread, systematic, or similar).



NOTE: Expert consultation *shall* be used in the circumstances above, but it *may* be used even if the above criteria are not met.

12.2. Expert input may include, but is not limited to: sharing statistics, maps, sources; closing knowledge gaps on legislative requirements and interpretations; and providing knowledge on issues in the sector and compliance levels.

- a. Selected experts shall have knowledge and/or experience on the indicator(s) being consulted. Competence in the local language is desirable.

- b. Whether an expert has the right or sufficient knowledge on an indicator shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the topic in question. In specific cases, an expert can also be a stakeholder and possibly participate in the public stakeholder consultation. However, the expert input included shall, to the extent possible, be objective and supported by facts.

12.3. Records of each interaction with an expert shall be developed and stored, and shall include the following information:

- a. name, position and/or organisation
- b. dates for consultation
- c. means of communication
- d. notes from the interview

12.4. Outreach to experts or organisations can be conducted through, but not limited to, the following activities:

- a. Direct outreach to experts to answer specific questions, close knowledge gaps, or gather input on specific parts of the risk assessment, through emails, calls, or face-to-face meetings;
- b. Pre-defined expert questionnaires organised by topics developed based on identified needs;
- c. Expert workshops (group interview and discussion).

Stakeholder consultation

The development of risk assessments relies on input from stakeholders and on ensuring that stakeholder concerns and perspectives are considered. This enhances the legitimacy and acceptance of the assessment outcomes. The uptake of the risk assessment results is important, and respectful communication with all stakeholders on risk level and justification of risk conclusions is to be prioritized to strive for a constructive approach in addressing issues identified.

13. Principles for stakeholder consultation

13.1. Detailed risk assessments shall be put to public consultation before being finally approved as RIA assessments.

13.2. Public consultation shall be open to all stakeholders, with a specific focus on the groups identified in the following section.

13.3. Consultation material shall be made available in appropriate and accessible formats.

13.4. The stakeholder consultation shall be open for a minimum of 30 days.

13.5. Adherence to ethical standards when developing risk assessments is key to successfully engage with experts and stakeholders. This shall include informed consent by interviewed persons, especially when

being quoted or referenced. Consulted stakeholders can remain anonymous and shall be informed that this is their right.

14. Stakeholders to consult

14.1. Stakeholders representing the interests listed below shall be identified and notified of the stakeholder consultation. The list is not exhaustive, and other stakeholder groups relevant for a risk assessment under national/regional conditions should be identified and notified.

1. Economic interests

- a. Forest or agricultural plantation owners and/or managers of large, medium and small forests;
- b. Tenure and use-rights holders, including landowners;
- c. Contractors (including loggers);
- d. Representatives of forest and agricultural workers;
- e. Representatives of forest and agricultural industries; and
- f. Certificate holders relevant to the organisations in RIA.

2. Social interests

- a. NGOs involved in, or with an interest in, social aspects of forest or farm management and other related operations;
- b. Forest and agricultural workers;
- c. International, national and local trade/labour unions;
- d. Representatives of local communities involved in, or holding an interest in, forest or farm management, including those relevant for HCVs 5 and 6;
- e. Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and/or Traditional Peoples (if present and/or holding rights), including those relevant for HCVs 5 and 6;
- f. Representatives of recreation interests;
- g. Organisations working on gender issues.

3. Environmental interests

- a. NGOs involved in, or possessing an interest in, the environmental aspects of forest or farm management. Consultation should target the following areas of interest and expertise:
 - i. Biological diversity;
 - ii. Water and soil;
 - iii. High Conservation Values related to the environment; and,
- b. Local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and Traditional Peoples' representatives.

4. Other relevant stakeholders

- a. Accredited certification bodies active in the country.
- b. Relevant schemes Working Groups and/or Standard Development Groups.

- c. National and regional offices of the organisations participating in RIA.
- d. National and international members of relevant schemes (e.g. FSC, SBP, GPSNR, Preferred by Nature, UEBT, etc.).
- e. Local development projects.
- f. Government and enforcement agencies.
- g. Experts, research institutions and universities.

Risk assessment approval process

15. Approval process

15.1. Prior to the stakeholder consultation phase, the RIA Assessment Approval Committee³ shall approve that the development process has followed this methodology (up to the stakeholder consultation phase). To this end, the lead RIA Organisation(s) shall notify the Approval Committee and submit the final assessment and accompanying documentation at least two (2) weeks prior to the planned start of the consultation phase.

15.2. After the stakeholder consultation phase, the RIA Assessment Approval Committee shall approve that the consultation phase has followed this methodology. The lead RIA Organisation(s) shall notify the Approval Committee and submit the final assessment and accompanying documentation, including the

³ The RIA Assessment Approval Committee consists of one representative per RIA Members. The Approval Committee representatives are not the same individuals as those sitting in the Technical Group.



RISK INFORMATION
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The **Risk Information Alliance (RIA)** is a collaboration of organisations working together to address the growing complexity of corporate due diligence and responsible business practices. By pooling resources, funding, and expertise, RIA facilitates the joint production of credible, high-quality, and up-to-date risk data across commodities, sectors, and geographies.

Through the development of a shared methodology, indicators, and a blueprint for a risk data storage platform, RIA enables its members to share and access risk data efficiently and cost-effectively. This collaboration supports better-informed sourcing decisions, stronger sustainability investments, and more consistent due diligence outcomes.

RIA is funded through a grant from the ISEAL Innovations Fund, supported by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), and matched in-kind by SBP and Preferred by Nature. Founding members include Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™), Preferred by Nature, Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP), Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR), and Assurance Services International (ASI).

Learn more: www.riskinformationalliance.org

