BCI Land Conversion Assessment v.2.0

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Introduction

Forests and natural ecosystems provide vital services - from carbon storage and biodiversity protection to supporting Indigenous Peoples - yet they continue to be rapidly lost, with agriculture being a major driver in these developments. In response, governments and companies are increasingly committing to halt deforestation and broader ecosystem conversion to meet global climate, biodiversity, and sustainability goals. BCI's farm-level standard, the Principles and Criteria (P&C), aligns with these developments and aims to ensure environmental and social safeguards for when new sites are planned to be cultivated for cotton.

The P&C v.3.2 Indicator 2.4.2 on land conversion – applicable to all farm categories - states:

> *Prior to any land conversion, the Better Cotton Initiative Land Conversion Assessment shall be undertaken to ensure that natural ecosystems and High Conservation Values (HCVs) are conserved. Resulting measures are fully implemented as part of the activity and monitoring plans in Principle 1.*

This Assessment aims to support Producers in their assessment on whether a conversion of land is allowed under the P&C and whether any additional mitigation measures need to be taken to protect High Conservation Values (HCVs).

This document replaces all previous versions of the Land Conversion Assessments, which had different procedures for Smallholder and Medium Farms and for Large Farms, as well as the external guidance document previously provided to support implementation of the indicator.

When the Assessment is needed

Producers who intend to expand their cotton production to land where there has been no BCI licenced or certified cotton production since 31 December 2020 shall complete this Assessment as part of their compliance with P&C v.3.2 indicator 2.4.2. The steps and questions therein shall be addressed in sequential order. The filled Assessment, as well as any supporting evidence, shall be kept and shown to the auditors upon request.

If the land proposed for conversion has previously been used for cotton production (but not BCI-licensed or -certified) and/or for any other crops, Producers only need to complete Step 1 of this Assessment.

Who Should Complete the Assessment and When

The Land Conversion Assessment v.2.0 is designed to apply to all farm contexts (Smallholder, Medium Farm and Large Farm).

For Large Farms (LFs)

The Assessment is completed at the individual farm level.

In Smallholders (SH) and Medium Farms (MF) contexts

The Assessment is completed at the Producer Unit (PU) level. The PU Management should inform farmers that if they plan to use new land for cotton, they shall provide notice of this to the PU Management during the post-harvest of the previous growing season.

The PU Management is responsible for following the Assessment by:

- Coordinating with farming households to collect information at the farm level,
- Collating this information at the PU level as required to follow the Assessment,
- Ensuring that subsequent outputs and mitigation measures are agreed and followed by the relevant farmers or the PU.

When to complete the Assessment

The Assessment shall take place prior to any land conversion and land preparation for cotton production that aims to be BCI certified.

Ideally, the Assessment should be done during post-harvest of the previous growing season. This will allow for sufficient time for any potential checks by the BCI country teams and/or external experts as per the Assessment, and for mitigation measures to be fully integrated into the management plans. In the event the assessment is not completed in time, the conversion of land should be delayed, or it will result in an assessment non-conformity.

Definitions

In general, BCI follows the definitions of the Accountability Framework Initiative and HCV Network.

Proposed Conversion Area – PCA

In this Assessment, the Proposed Conversion Area (PCA) refers to the cumulated area of land on which new cotton production is planned.

Land conversion

In this Assessment, Land Conversion refers to changes in land use or land management to allow for cotton production, that result in a significant change of species composition, structure or function of a plot of land. It includes loss of ecosystems due to its replacement with agriculture, but also significant changes of already converted land, such as changes from pastures to cotton, orchard or tree plantations to cotton, or barren land to cotton.

Natural Ecosystem

In this Assessment, a Natural Ecosystem is defined as forest and non-forest vegetation, such as woodlands, shrublands and grasslands, that is largely native and whose physical structure and species composition is determined by the natural ecological processes and/or by traditional management practices (including forest fallows as part of traditional swidden practices).

High Conservation Values (HCVs)

High Conservation Values form a set of values of critical importance for humans and nature. HCVs fall into six categories spanning environmental values for species, landscapes and ecosystems (HCV categories 1-3), and the social values, including ecosystem services and key resources for local livelihoods and culture (HCV categories 4-6). See HCV definitions for more information.

How do natural ecosystems and HCVs fit together?

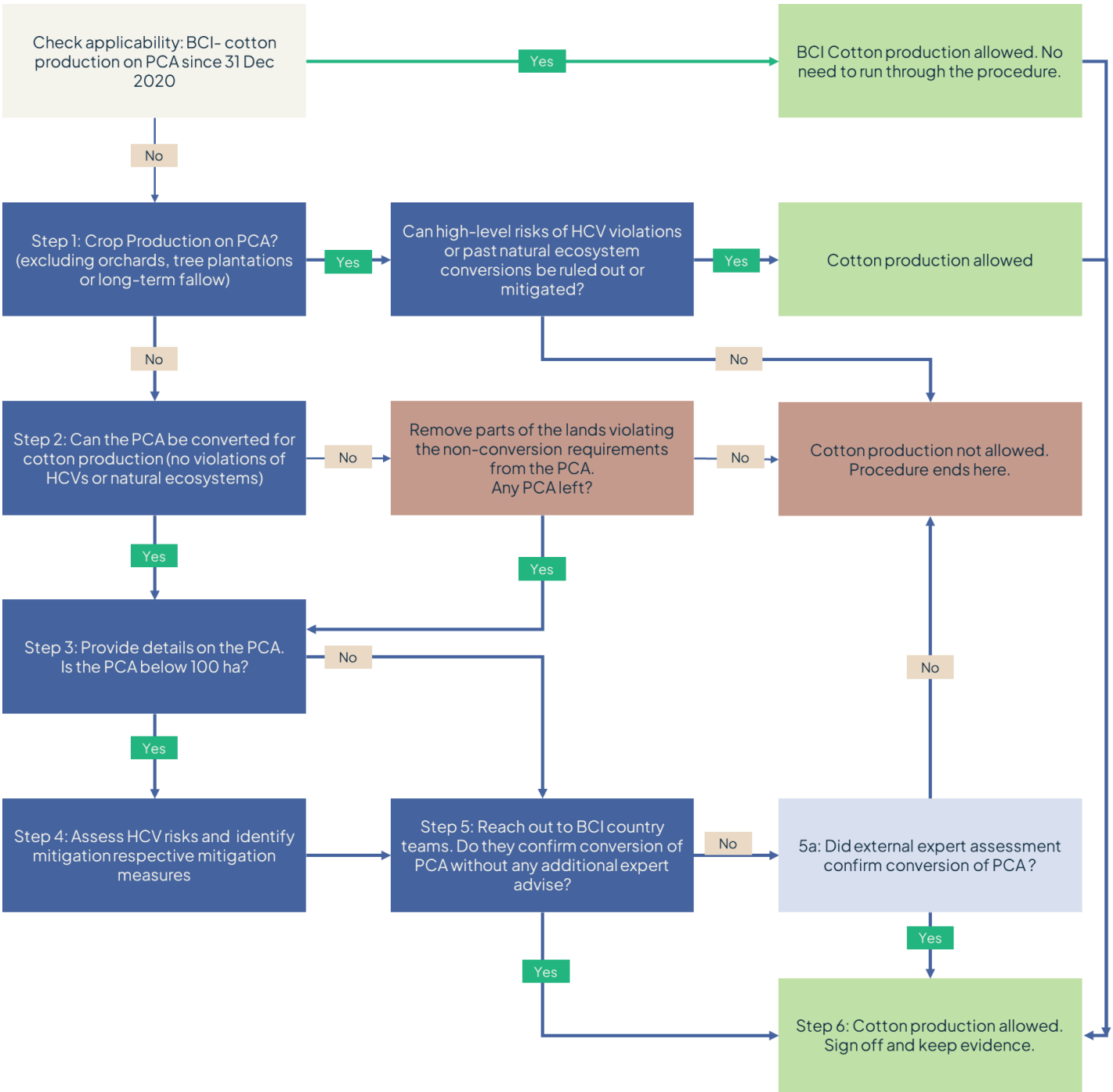
HCVs often depend on natural ecosystems, so typically there is a lot of overlap. However, protecting natural ecosystems does not guarantee the protection of HCVs, and vice versa.

Examples of HCVs that can extend beyond natural ecosystems are found in some of the social HCVs linked to local people and community needs, e.g., shifting agriculture and water access points, which occur outside of natural ecosystems.

Natural ecosystems without HCVs are more frequently encountered in production landscapes that have experienced wide-scale development and land-use change over an extended period.

Assessment Overview

Figure 1 – Land Conversion Assessment Decision Tree



Step 0

Assess applicability

0.1. Has there been BCI-licensed or certified cotton production on the PCA since 31 December 2020?

☐ YES

Action: If BCI- licensed or certified cotton has been produced on the land since 31 December 2020, no further action in this Assessment needs to be taken. You can use the land to produce cotton on it. Move to sign-off under Step 6.

☐ NO

Action: Proceed to Step 1.

Step 1

Compile information on plans for new BCI- cotton production.

This section assesses whether there was already crop production on the land newly proposed for BCI cotton production. BCI cotton production on this land is allowed if some high-level risks can be ruled out or mitigated. The user will be guided to sign-off directly, or, if there is no crop production on the land yet, to Step 2 immediately at the beginning of the Assessment.

1.1. Is all the PCA already under crop production (including non-BCI cotton and land left fallow as part of an active rotation system)?

Guidance: Crop production refers to the cultivation of plants for food, fibre, fuel, or industrial uses, involving all practices required to grow and harvest crops on agricultural land.

It excludes tree plantations, orchards, grazing, pasture, or range land, as well as long-term fallow that currently is not part of an active rotation system (e.g. land set aside for future family members, due to state subsidies, etc.). The answer to this question for these types of land should be "NO." Note that on those lands, cotton might still be produced, but the Producer will be requested to assess additional conversion risks under Step 2.

Note: If parts of the PCA is under crop production and other parts not, please fill in two separate Assessments: one for the area that is already being farmed, and one for the area which needs to be converted to cropland.

☐ YES

Action: Proceed to Question 1.2.

☐ NO

Action: If the PCA is not under crop production in any of its part, move to Step 2.

1.2. Was full or part of the PCA converted from a natural ecosystem after 31 December 2020?

☐ YES

Action: Cotton production is not allowed on land converted from a natural ecosystem after 31 December 2020, as per P&C v.3.2 Indicator 2.4.1. Remove converted parts from the PCA and then proceed to Question 1.3.

☐ NO

Action: Proceed to Question 1.3.

☐ UNSURE

Action: Reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

1.3. Would BCI cotton production on the PCA comply with legal requirements regarding land use and land tenure or ownership (including customary rights)?

☐ YES, to the best of my knowledge.

Action: Keep any available evidence and move to Step 6 (sign-off).

☐ NO

Action: Reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

☐ UNSURE

Action: Reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

Step 2

Self-assessment on whether areas not currently under crop production can be converted.

For land that has not had any crop production on it, Step 2 assesses whether it could be used for cotton production. It includes country-specific considerations for long-term fallow, land use rights, and others. Land that cannot be converted for cotton production will have to be removed from the BCI cotton production area. For the land that can be converted, the user will be guided to Step 3.

2.1. Is the BCI-licenced or -certified farmer – or the farmers in a BCI-licenced/-certified PU – the only one(s) claiming formal or informal use rights over the PCA and are there no open disputes on land tenure and land use on the PCA?

Guidance: The intent is for BCI cotton production to avoid any violation of anyone's rightful formal or informal claim on land tenure or use. This implies avoiding unilateral decisions to convert land or taking decisions over its use overriding the rights of other individuals or the wider community. Uses may include seasonal access to water, fodder, natural products, or food sources. Land may also be subject to a combination of individual and collective ownership and use rights. The Producers shall identify all parties with legitimate, formal, or informal use or rights to any part of the PCA. Parties with uses or rights may be identified by notifying neighbours, community leaders, village councils, and community members about the proposed change of land use.

☐ YES

Action: Keep any available evidence and proceed to Question 2.2.

☐ NO

Action: In case other parties have been using all or parts of the PCA, or claim it is theirs to use, evidence should be provided that these individuals have agreed to the land being used for cotton production by the Producer in question. Rightsholders shall be informed about the implications of the proposed development, and their prior consent shall be demonstrated, e.g., through documents, witnessed agreements, or recorded interviews. Reach out to your BCI country team for more information about what evidence can be considered valid and/or in case of any competing claims to the land.

Claims affecting the area shall be addressed and evaluated, and any conflicts or disputes (either through legal means or in community fora) resting on legitimate claims shall be resolved prior to conversion. Once these are resolved, collect and store evidence, add any mitigation measures you will put in place here below, and proceed to Question 2.2.

If conflicts or disputes are not resolved, the affected area of the PCA cannot be considered for conversion and hence the Assessment ends here.

List the mitigation measures you will/ have put in place to ensure any use rights are respected and/or any measures related to the resolution of the conflict that you will implement. These measures may contribute to P&C v.3.2 Indicator 1.1.6 in Medium and Large Farm contexts.

☐ UNSURE

Action: Proceed to Question 2.2 and after completion of Step 2, reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

Note: If, due to land use or tenure rights, land use and land use changes are defined by third parties (governments, agrobusinesses, etc.) and therewith impede Producers to have agency over the use of land, please reach out to your BCI country team for further advice and necessary next steps.

2.2. Is full or parts of the PCA within a nationally or internationally protected area?

Guidance: Protected areas (PAs) are lands that are recognized, dedicated, and managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature, associated ecosystem services, and cultural values. Many PAs (e.g., national parks, reserves) host nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity. PAs include reserves protected by national legislation and all six (I-VI) International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classes of protected areas – including National Parks, Forest Reserves, Community Forest Reserves, Sanctuaries, and others. BCI certified Producers are not allowed to convert land in officially designated PAs, whether or not these are legally protected. If you do not know whether the PCA is a Protected Area, you may use the guidance in Annex I to assess it and/or reach out to your BCI country team for further guidance and advice.

☐ YES

Action: Protected areas cannot be converted. Remove areas from PCA and proceed to Question 2.3. The removed areas should be added to plans and measures to conserve and enhance natural habitats and biodiversity in line with P&C v.3.2 Criterion 2.3.

☐ NO

Action: Keep any available evidence and proceed to Question 2.3.

☐ UNSURE

Action: Proceed to qQuestion 2.3 and after completion of Step 2, reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

2.3. Is full or parts of the PCA to be considered as (part of a) forest?

Guidance: Forests are defined as land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of more than 10%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. While forest include natural forests and tree plantations, the focus of this Assessment lays on natural forests, and as such tree plantations do not need to be considered as forests. More rigorous quantitative thresholds (e.g., for tree height or canopy cover) established in legitimate national or sub-national forest definitions take precedence over the generic thresholds in this definition, if they have legal relevance in a given context. If you do not know whether the PCA is part of a forest, you may use the guidance in Annex I to assess it and/or reach out to your BCI country team for further guidance and advice.

☐ YES

Action: Forests cannot be converted. Remove areas from PCA and proceed to Question 2.4. These removed areas should be added to plans and measures to conserve and enhance natural habitats and biodiversity in line with P&C v.3.2 Criterion 2.3.

☐ NO

Action: Keep any available evidence and proceed to Question 2.4.

☐ UNSURE

Action: Proceed to Question 2.4 and after completion of Step 2, reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

2.4. Is full or parts of the PCA to be considered as a natural ecosystem?

Guidance: Natural ecosystems include forest and non-forest vegetation, including woodlands, shrublands, wetlands, peatlands, grasslands, savannahs, natural deserts, and others. For a definition of natural ecosystems and more concrete examples on what needs to be considered in country contexts, see Annex I.

☐ YES

Action: Natural ecosystems cannot be converted – remove parts from PCA and proceed to Question 2.5.

☐ NO

Action: Keep any available evidence and proceed to Question 2.5.

☐ UNSURE

Action: Proceed to Question 2.5 and after completion of Step 2, reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

2.5. Is full or parts of the PCA located within a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA)?

Guidance: KBAs are areas that meet criteria related to threatened biodiversity, geographically restricted biodiversity, ecological integrity, biological processes, and/or irreplaceability. KBAs are identified through a consultative, scientific process based on a global standard with quantitative thresholds. The approach is governed by an alliance of organisations including BirdLife International, IUCN, Conservation International, Global Environment Facility, WWF, and Wildlife Conservation Society. As KBAs are identified on much the same grounds as the environmental HCVs, KBAs may be considered HCV candidates and, therefore, BCI farmers are not allowed to convert land in such areas. If you do not know whether the PCA is located within a KBA, you may use the guidance in Annex I to assess it and/or reach out to your BCI country team for further guidance and advice.

☐ YES

Action: KBAs cannot be converted. Remove areas from PCA and proceed to Question 2.6. The removed areas should be added to plans and measures to conserve and enhance natural habitats and biodiversity according to P&C v.3.2 Criterion 2.3.

☐ NO

Action: Keep any available evidence and proceed to Question 2.6.

☐ UNSURE

Action: Proceed to Question 2.6 and after completion of Step 2, reach out to your BCI country team for further advice.

2.6. After completion of the previous questions, is there any PCA left that could be converted?

☐ YES

Action: Proceed to Question 2.7.

☐ NO

Action: The Assessment is completed. Land cannot be converted, please proceed to Step 6.

2.7. Are you confident that the conversion of the remaining PCA would not convert any natural ecosystems nor any HCVs, and are there no 'UNSURE' boxes ticked under Step 2?

☐ YES

Action: Proceed to Step 3.

☐ NO

Action: Reach out to your BCI country teams for further advice.

Note: completion of Step 2 should give you the adjusted PCA, only containing the sites that are allowed to be used for cotton production under the BCI P&C v.3.2. Steps 3 and 4 will provide you with the mitigation measures you might be required to put in place for the conversion of this land, and to assess whether you need additional external expert verification of your assessment.

Step 3

Details of the total PCA

Here, the user is asked to provide details on the PCA for future reference before proceeding to Step 4.

Name of Producer (Individual farmer or Producer Unit)	
Details of decision-maker(s) on land conversion (if not the same as the Producer)	
(Estimated) Size of proposed conversion area *(If the PCA is composed of separate plots, the size of these plots should be aggregated)*	
Location(s) of proposed conversion area (Administrative unit/State/country)	
Polygon coordinates of proposed conversion area(s)	

Photographic evidence of the PCA	Please keep photographic evidence of the conversion area(s) with a photograph taken in the order of North, East, South and West directions.

3.1. Does the total PCA add up to a total of more than 100 ha?

☐ YES

Action: External expert assessment and confirmation will be needed. Skip Step 4 and move to Step 5 to get further advice from your BCI Country Teams.

☐ NO

Action: proceed to Step 4.

Step 4

Effect of Land Conversion on HCVs

Step 4 is a risk assessment on whether the allowed conversion is likely to affect any other HCVs. In the event of answering YES to any of the questions below, the risk is elevated and the Producer shall add and monitor explicit mitigation measures as part of their activity and monitoring plans under P&C v.3.2 Criterion 1.1. Evidence of this shall be kept for audit purposes.

4.1. Are any parts of the PCA closer than 100m to a permanent or temporary water body (e.g., river, stream, ditch, canal, pond, or lake)?

☐ YES

Action: Elevated risk. Add mitigation measures to your management plan and proceed to the Question 4.2.

Guidance: Cultivation close to open water may cause leakage of pesticides, fertilisers, and suspended particles, with negative impacts on water quality at and downstream of the point of pollution. Refer to P&C v.3.2 Indicator 2.3.1 for identifying appropriate measures to mitigate impacts, such as maintaining (or restoring) a buffer zone of perennial vegetation adjacent to the water body.

Mitigation measures should consider legal requirements.

List the mitigation measures you will put in place:

☐ NO: Proceed to the Question 4.2.

4.2. Are any parts of the PCA situated on a steep slope (>1m vertical in 4m horizontal)?

☐ YES

Action: Elevated risk. Add mitigation measures to your management plan and proceed to Question 4.3.

Guidance: Clearing and cultivation on steep slopes increases the risk of soil erosion, mudslides, and landslides after heavy rain. Areas on slopes may only be converted on the condition that mitigation measures, appropriate to the soil and rainfall characteristics, are identified and implemented. Measures may include terracing, minimising the amount of exposed soil without vegetation cover, channelling of rainwater, use of sedimentation traps, agroforestry to take advantage of soil stabilization by tree roots and use of perennial crops. These practices may also contribute to good soil, water, and biodiversity management practices.

List the mitigation measures you will put in place:

☐ NO

Action: Proceed to Question 4.3.

4.3. Will any parts of the PCA be irrigated by surface water (e.g., rivers, canals) or ground water sources?

☐ YES

Action: Elevated risk. Add mitigation measures to your management plan and proceed to Question 4.4.

Guidance: Use of surface or ground water to irrigate new areas of cultivation may exacerbate water scarcity and reduce water availability for other users. Measures should be taken to reduce the amount of surface or ground water needed for growing crops. Refer to P&C v.3.2 Indicator 2.2.1 for identifying appropriate measures to mitigate potential negative impacts of irrigation on water availability.

List the mitigation measures you will put in place:

☐ NO

Action: Proceed to Question 4.4.

4.4. Will the cultivation of the PCA require measures to drain excess water that could impact open wetlands?

☐ YES

Action: Elevated risk. Add mitigation measures to your management plan and proceed to Step 5.

Guidance: Open wetlands (including smaller patches) may be important habitats for amphibians and insects, as well as serving as feeding grounds for resident and migrating birds.

Measures to avoid or mitigate negative impacts include alternatives to drainage and riparian vegetation along drainage channels. Local experts can provide recommendations of locally recognised and proven measures that prevent negative impacts on wetland ecosystems from drainage.

List the mitigation measures you will put in place:

☐ NO: Proceed to Step 5.

Step 5

Submit the Assessment to BCI country team

This section asks users to submit this risk assessment - filled in all relevant parts - to the relevant BCI country team for further guidance and advice. It shall be submitted to the BCI country teams after completing Step 3 if the PCA > 100ha, and after completing Step 4 in all other cases.

Please use the text box below for any clarifications you may want to provide (**optional**).

The BCI country team will verify the information in this Assessment and suggest next steps, including advising on whether an evaluation by an external expert is needed and confirming or suggesting any additional measures necessary to mitigate existing risks.

Once feedback is received and implemented, proceed to Step 6.

Step 6

Sign-off & Evidence

In this last step, the user completes the Assessment by signing the declaration below and making sure all relevant evidence has been gathered and stored for future audits or clarifications.

I have completed this Land Conversion Assessment. I have answered all questions to the best of my knowledge, I have followed the BCI Country Team's recommendations where applicable, and I have supporting evidence for audit purposes.	
Name and Surname of Farmer or PU Manager	
Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	
Signature	

Evidence to be gathered and made available upon request by auditors or BCI staff:

- Evidence of land tenure and / or land use rights (**required for all**)
- Photographic evidence (**required for all**): Photographs of all plots of land prior to the conversion, in the order of North, East, South and West directions
- Confirmation (as per P&C indicator 2.4.1) that land has not been converted from natural ecosystems after 31 December 2020 (**required for all**)
- Document outlining BCI country team recommendations and verification of the assessment (where applicable)
- External expert reports (where applicable)
- Management plan including mitigation measures (where applicable)
- Any other evidence that can support the statements (where applicable – you can reach out to your BCI country to confirm what counts as acceptable evidence)

Annex I: Clarifications on Land Categories

Identifying Protected Areas, KBAs and Forests

Below are some guidelines to help identify protected areas, key biodiversity areas, or forests in case of doubts:

1. The first compilation can be conducted as a screening to determine if the BCI producer areas are within proximity (<10km) to any conservation designations. This can be done at the national level by BCI country teams or directly by PPs. Several online and interactive resources are available that show the location and boundaries of conservation designations. The most accessible and user-friendly resource is the Global Forest Watch (https://www.globalforestwatch.org/map/), which can be used to assess proximity to PAs (under the 'Land Use' data category), KBAs (under the 'Biodiversity' category) and IFLs (under the 'Landcover' category);

2. If the cotton production areas are within proximity to any of the conservation designations, the shapefiles should be downloaded to conduct a more detailed and accurate analysis of whether the PCA is found within the conservation area. At this point, it will be necessary to collect a sample of geolocation data points from across the PCA. Basic GIS skills are needed to overlay these PCA data points with the polygons of the conservation designation, to verify any overlap. Global Forest Watch provides information on the data sources and how to access the shapefiles. Save GIS data records, as well as maps which can be shown to auditors.

Identifying Natural Ecosystems

In addition to the generic definitions, the below indications will give you further insights on whether your PCA should be considered as natural ecosystems. If you have doubts, reach out to your Country Teams for further advice.

Natural ecosystems include:

1. Largely 'pristine' natural ecosystems that have not been subject to major human impacts in recent history.
2. Regenerated natural ecosystems that were subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging), but where the main causes of impact have ceased or greatly diminished and the ecosystem has attained species composition, structure, and ecological function similar to prior or other contemporary natural ecosystems.

3. Managed natural ecosystems (including many ecosystems that could be referred to as 'semi-natural') where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function are present; this includes managed natural forests as well as native grasslands or rangelands that are, or have historically been, grazed by livestock, but where human interference through tilling, sowing or irrigation is non-existent.
4. Natural ecosystems that have been partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species, or others), but where the land has not been converted to another use and where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function remain present or are expected to regenerate naturally or by management for ecological restoration.

The following do not count as natural ecosystem for the purpose of this Assessment:

- Land that has been used for crop cultivation, orchards, or tree plantations;
- Land that is part of an active crop management system, even if its fallow land;
- Pastureland if its tilled, sowed, irrigated or otherwise heavily managed by humans;
- Land that has been temporarily set aside motivated by economic or social dynamics or to ensure temporary restoration – with a clear goal to be eventually re-introduced for production (see below for more country-specific explanations);
- Severely degraded land: Severely degraded land is land where pronounced and sustained human impacts (whether direct or indirect) have altered the physical structure and species composition of the native vegetation to the extent that the land — in the absence of active restoration measures — is unlikely to be able to provide long-term environmental values and/or be used for productive purposes. Severely degraded land does not always look barren, and signs can be invisible.

Land that has been temporarily set aside motivated by economic or social dynamics or to ensure temporary restoration

In some countries, land may be set aside for extended periods of time either at individual, community, or state level due to economic or social reasons or to ensure temporary restoration. In BCI-cotton growing countries, there are a few occurrences of this practice, with different motivations and modalities depending on the geography. These areas are not considered natural ecosystems for the purpose of this Assessment.

Below are some known examples. If your PCA does not fit in these categories, please reach out to the BCI team in your country for advice.

West Africa

In West Africa (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin), modern law and customary law coexist in matters of rural land ownership. However, customary law is predominant. Land is considered the 'property' of families, within which it is transferred through inheritance. Each family therefore has its own

land and exploits it according to its needs. It is not uncommon for some families to leave part of their land fallow for a long period (sometimes up to 30 years), either to restore land that has been severely degraded or as part of their own management strategy (such as planning for distribution among family members in the context of inheritance, household expansion, etc.). These lands are not natural ecosystems or protected areas but rather household property under customary law. These lands are excepted from this Assessment.

United States

In the US, a common example is the Conservation Reserve Programme. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural producers and landowners to convert highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as native grasses, trees, and riparian buffers. By enrolling in CRP, participants receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative covers. The program helps to improve water quality, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat, contributing to overall environmental health and sustainability.

Long-term contracts of 10-15 years are in place to allow for adequate time for improvements. After the contract period ends, landowners may re-enrol, but others transition the land back to other uses. There is no requirement to continue the practice beyond the contract, and a study of expired CRP land from 2013 to 2016 found that 36% of land was returned to row crop production.[1] These lands are also excepted from this Assessment, but Producers are required to keep evidence of their enrolment in the Programme.

[1] See also: https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/_laserfiche/publications/95642/EIB215_Summary.pdf?v=49410