Food for Biodiversity

Basic Set Biodiversity Criteria for the Food Sector

Basic Set for temperate regions (Europe)

2nd Edition

Imprint

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INTRODUCTION / PREAMBLE

The **Basic Set of Biodiversity Criteria for the Food Sector (2nd edition)** for the cultivation of agricultural raw materials in temperate regions is a central component of the German association **Food for Biodiversity - Biodiversität in der Lebensmittelbranche e.V.**. It was developed in collaboration with representatives from the food industry, agriculture, food standard setting organisations, scientific institutions and environmental organisations and is based on the revision of the 2022 version.

The Basic Set is not a new " biodiversity standard"! Rather, it serves as a reference for reviewing existing food standards and company guidelines and - if necessary - adapting your own criteria and/or integrating additional measures to promote *biodiversity*.

The agreement of the industry initiative to implement the Basic Set of Biodiversity Criteria is a significant contribution to halting the dramatic loss of *biodiversity* and the associated ecosystem services. In addition, unfair competition to the detriment of the environment and nature is avoided. The general aim is to improve the *biodiversity* performance of the entire industry.

All actors in the food sector are called upon to implement the requirements and measures of the Basic Set or to promote and support their implementation. This includes

- Farms and producer organisations
- Voluntary standards at international, national and regional level
- Companies in the food industry with their own procurement requirements
- Associations in the food sector
- Political decision-makers responsible for agricultural legislation, policies, programmes and subsidies.

Implementing the criteria of the Basic Set ensures the protection of *biodiversity* on agricultural land, creates potential for the development of new habitats and species and helps to avoid or minimise the negative impacts of agricultural practices on *biodiversity*. We call this VERY good agricultural practice.

Standards sometimes differ by geographical focus, target specific products, or are tailored for large producers or small farmers; food companies have requirements for both regional and global supply chains. Therefore, the criteria of this Basic Set must be adapted to geographical, product-specific, or company-specific conditions as needed. A special Basic Set of Biodiversity Criteria has been developed specifically for the cultivation of agricultural raw materials in tropical and subtropical regions. You can find it here.

High environmental and social standards, including *biodiversity* protection, are investments in the future and come at a cost. Responsible implementation will entail expenses and/or reduced earnings, which should not fall solely on farmers. All stakeholders along the supply chain, from producers to food manufacturers and retailers, must share these costs or losses fairly. This is a core aspect of corporate responsibility and a duty of care toward producers and biodiversity as a shared, valuable resource.

Biodiversity protection, climate protection, and climate change adaptation are closely interconnected, with many measures addressing all three challenges. The Basic Set includes various nature-based solutions that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, store CO_2 in the soil, and mitigate extreme weather events.

Additionally, *biodiversity* measures yield positive socio-economic benefits, such as safeguarding water resources and maintaining fertile soils as foundations for life and economic activity.

Requirements for standards / companies and farms

The Basic Set is structured into two levels. The first level outlines requirements for standard-setting organizations or companies, suggesting overarching measures for *biodiversity* protection. For example, this may include integrating a *Biodiversity Action Plan* into existing procurement criteria or providing clear guidelines. Both standards organizations and companies are addressed with materials and information to support this. Food industry companies, in particular, are encouraged to offer financial support to farmers or provide expert consultation free of charge. The timeframe at this level indicates how quickly these criteria should be adopted within a standard's or company's internal systems. (More details on the next page.)

The second level specifies requirements for Agricultural farms, providing criteria for standards and procurement guidelines that focus on agricultural production practices. These measures aim to prevent negative environmental impacts and safeguard e*cologically valuable structures.* This level often builds on the foundational requirements of the first level. Here, the timing refers to how quickly farms should implement the proposed measures once they are required by the standard or company. Key figures and indicators are sometimes suggested to monitor both the implementation and outcomes of these measures.

Effective *biodiversity* management relies on documentation and monitoring. Therefore, the Basic Set includes several types of 'plans'. However, we advocate for minimizing administrative burdens on farms, emphasizing that a simple yet effective plan is sufficient and that plans can be consolidated when appropriate. It is essential that standard-setting organizations and companies define the structure and content of these plans to ensure all key aspects are covered, making plans comparable and verifiable.

Further Development and Support Programme for the Basic Set

Food for Biodiversity will regularly update the Basic Set to reflect new research, legal requirements, and practical insights. To encourage widespread adoption, Food for Biodiversity is also launching a support programme that includes training and technical assistance for farmers, examples of appealing incentives to enhance *Biodiversity* efforts, advocacy for supportive political frameworks, and consumer awareness campaigns. Food for Biodiversity will provide access to existing guidelines, factsheets, and other resources, ensuring that each standard or company can avoid 'reinventing the wheel'.

Members of Food for Biodiversity are also dedicated to shaping favourable political frameworks at both national and European levels, such as the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, to foster positive outcomes for *biodiversity* protection and ensure that agricultural producers receive effective incentives for their biodiversity efforts. Swift and comprehensive action is essential to halt the dramatic loss of *biodiversity*. The stakeholders in this sector initiative call on all actors in the food industry to take action by adopting the criteria in the Basic Set and supporting the initiative as members.

Roadmap for implementing the Basic Set

- The members of Food for Biodiversity aim to make a concrete contribution toward achieving the 2030 Biodiversity Goals.
- To this end, the members commit to applying the Basic Set of Biodiversity Criteria (at least 95 % of the relevant criteria for a given raw material) for as many biodiversity-relevant focus raw materials as possible.
- The members have tested the first editions of the Basic Set as part of pilot projects. The experiences from the pilot projects have been incorporated into

this revised version.

- In the beginning of 2025, the members of Food for Biodiversity will adopt a framework for the comprehensive consideration (roll-out) of the Basic Set. This framework will, among other things, identify the relevant raw materials for which the Basic Set should be applied. Additionally, the framework also defines the timeline, documentation and monitoring of the roll-out activities. The organisation will report regularly on the progress of the roll-out.
- New members test the Basic Set as part of at least one pilot project and join the roll-out after three years at the latest.
- The Basic Set is to be developed further on a regular basis, including consideration of the CSRD E4 standard "Biodiversity and Ecosystems" and the sector-specific standards for food and beverages as well as agriculture and fisheries. In addition, six Basic Sets are to be published for specific raw materials that pose a high risk to *Biodiversity* and are important for the European market.

Each requirement for standards / companies and each criterion for agricultural farms has been assigned a **time frame** by which the criterion should be met. The breakdown is as follows:

- **Short-term**: Within three to six months
- **Medium-term:** Within six to 18 months
- **Long-term**: Within 18 to 36 months

This time frame provides orientation for the implementation of the Basic Set and helps to prioritise.

Integration into the legal framework

The Basic Set should primarily be applied for relevant raw materials: those considered relevant due to their importance for the company (e.g. volume) and due to the negative effects of cultivation on *biodiversity* (e.g. large areas, high use of pesticides, high water consumption). Negative effects on *biodiversity* are avoided or at least reduced with the help of the Basic Set. The Basic Set thus makes an important contribution to fulfilling the new legal requirements relating to *biodiversity* for companies. Legal requirements such as the *Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)* and the *EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)* require a plan to avoid or reduce the identified risks and the Basic Set is a suitable instrument for achieving this in agricultural cultivation / production. The Basic Set thus complements instruments such as Science Based Targets for Nature or the Global Reporting Initiative as an important measure for the continuous improvement of *biodiversity* protection.

A. Biodiversity Action Plan for the Agricultural farm

	A ***Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)*** comprises measures relating to the protection of *biodiversity* on a farm and its surroundings. It contains a description of the initial situation, an overview of the potential for improvement and, where possible, measurable targets to enable the implementation of the *BAP* to be monitored. For small farms that are part of a regional producer group or co-operative, it makes sense to choose a *landscape approach* and develop a *BAP* for the entire producer group/co-operative. Examples of collective approaches can be found in the glossary. Large and medium-sized farms are encouraged to integrate measures beyond the farm boundaries into their individual *BAP*, i.e. to support the protection of *biodiversity* in the landscape.

A 1. Biodiversity Action Plan

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
A.1.1	▪ requires the implementation of a *Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)* by certified and supplying farms and supports the development and implementation of the *BAP* The standard organisation provides quantitative, qualitative and operationalizable guidelines for the content of the *BAP*. Additionally, the standard organisations provide a guide with explanations and links to further information (e.g. descriptions of measures) as well as positive examples. Guidelines for the *BAP* can be found in the appendix. The company does not make its own specifications but refers to the standard and supports the agricultural sector operation in the implementation of the *BAP*.	Medium term
A.1.2	▪ supports farmers in the development and implementation of a *BAP*, for example with ○ advice, training, and guidelines; reference to existing biodiversity advisory services (public/private) ○ reference to existing funding programmes for *biodiversity* measures ○ free provision of expert knowledge on aspects of *biodiversity* ○ free provision of tools, such as the *Biodiversity Performance Tool Insects* (BPTi) ○ regular exchange of experiences on *biodiversity* measures ○ **companies**: financial support for the implementation of a *BAP*, compensation for loss of earnings and financing of measure costs	Medium term

	Agricultural farm	
A.1.3	▪ prepares an initial assessment of its *biodiversity* status (see A.2. Baseline), identifying strengths and weaknesses, and develops a *BAP* based on these findings. In this process, the farm ensures that the requirements of the standard are fully considered ▪ It is advisable for cooperatives or producer groups of smallholders to draw up a *BAP* at the level of the cooperative, i.e. for all members, who then implement the measures collectively The *BAP* is typically developed with a three-year timeframe. The implementation and outcomes of the measures are reviewed by the end of the period, with a thorough documentation of the process. The findings and insights gained are then integrated into the updated *BAP*	Short term

A 2. Defining the Baseline

The *Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)* measures are aligned with the farm's baseline conditions and address all key opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity. Farm-specific data relevant to *biodiversity* is documented and mapped to describe the baseline situation accurately.

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
A.2.1	▪ supports farmers in developing an overview of *protected and endangered species* on their farm and in the immediate surroundings by providing ○ organisation of exchanges between farms and nature conservation authorities ○ mediation in conflicts between species conservation and production ○ **companies:** free advice and/or provision of experts	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
A.2.2	▪ maps all *ecologically valuable structures / areas* on the farm and in its immediate surroundings in the form of a farm map. The *ecologically valuable structures* include *protected areas* (e.g. Natura 2000 areas) and *semi-natural habitats*	Short term

A 3. Selection and implementation of measures

The *Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)* proposes measures and defines targets to protect and promote *biodiversity* on the farm. These measures are based on the initial situation (baseline) and aim to minimise the farm-specific risks to *biodiversity*.

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
A.3.1	▪ supports farmers in the selection and implementation of *biodiversity* measures, e.g. through ○ fact sheets with the description of measures ○ guiding materials with measures tailored for specific regions ○ guiding material with measures for specific cultivation practices ○ **companies:** free access to expert advice	Medium term
	Agricultural farm	
A.3.2	▪ takes measures to protect and promote *biodiversity* on the farm. These measures include both direct protection actions and nature-compatible adaptations of management practices. The selection is based on the initial situation (baseline) and the measures recommended in the *BAP* Special attention is given to protecting and supporting populations of endangered and protected animal and plant species, while also considering other species to ensure they are not put at risk.	Medium term

A 4. Monitoring of biodiversity measures

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
A.4.1	▪ conducts monitoring of key *biodiversity*-related factors and systematically analyses the aggregated data. The key figures and indicators suggested in the Basic Set serve as a guide	Medium term
A.4.2	▪ derives average values and benchmarks (best in class) for *biodiversity*-related factors from the monitoring results to offer guidance for farms, companies and standards	Long term
A.4.3	▪ records which *biodiversity*-promoting measures are implemented and their frequency, while documenting any obstacles and challenges encountered in the implementation process	Medium term

	Agricultural farm	
A.4.4	▪ collects the necessary data for the standard monitoring system and makes it accessible	Medium term

B. Measures to Enhance Biodiversity Potential

B.1 Creation and Maintenance of Semi-Natural Habitats

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
B.1.1	▪ develops quality criteria for *semi-natural habitats* and *ecologically valuable structures* with the expert's assistance. These criteria provide support for farmers and guidance for auditors. While it may not be feasible to develop criteria for all habitat types, guidelines should be available for the most common habitat types in key sourcing regions. Measures for promoting *key species* are also outlined, along with information on *key species* associated with specific habitats	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
B.1.2	▪ uses only seeds from native, site-appropriate plants wherever possible for sowing field margins, flower strips and greening fallow land. The natural development of linear structures and biotopes without active planting and sowing is allowed	Medium term
B.1.3	▪ conducts maintenance work on *ecologically valuable structures* in a way that minimises the impact on biotopes and the animals and plants inhabiting them* *Consider the timing and intensity of maintenance (e.g., hedges should be trimmed every ten years; flowering areas should not be mowed during breeding season and only after winter). Alternate maintenance schedules where possible.	Short term
B.1.4	▪ refrains from fertilising or treating *natural habitats* and *semi-natural habitats*, as well as *ecologically valuable structures* with pesticides, unless otherwise specified in management agreements with nature conservation authorities. Moderate fertilisation to maintain extensive meadows is not considered problematic	Medium term

B.2 Minimum Proportion and Connectivity of Natural and Semi-Natural Habitats

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
B.2.1	▪ informs farmers about the advantages of natural and *semi-natural habitats* as well as *ecologically valuable structures* for the farm, e.g. for adaptation to climate change, habitats for beneficial organisms, protection of water resources.	Short term
B.2.2	▪ **Standard-setting organisation:** demands a minimum proportion of *semi-natural habitats* and *ecologically valuable structures* on farms that exceeds the legal requirements and a continuous increase in this proportion within the implementation period of the *BAP*. **Standard-setting organisation**: For agricultural regions within EU countries, a minimum target of 10 % of the total farm area should consist of natural and *semi-natural habitats* by 2030. In agricultural regions in countries without government support for agriculture, farms must demonstrate a continuous increase in the proportion of these habitats over time.	Short term
B.2.3	▪ **Company**: supports the maintenance of *natural habitats* and the creation/maintenance of *semi-natural habitats* and *ecologically valuable structures* beyond legal requirements by covering costs and compensating for income loss due to reduced harvests. Additionally, it promotes the connectivity of natural and *semi-natural habitats* across farms. Assistance in planning the network is available from the official advisory service, member organizations of Food for Biodiversity, or other relevant organizations.	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
B.2.4	▪ ensures that *natural* and *semi-natural habitats* and *ecologically valuable structures* within the farm are connected to adjacent *natural* and *semi-natural habitats* outside the farm, for example, through *stepping-stone biotopes* or *biotope corridors***.** Experts should be consulted in the planning of complex ecological networks.	Medium term

B.3 Protection of primary (natural) ecosystems, semi-natural habitats and protected areas

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
B.3.1	▪ supports the legally authorised sustainable use of *semi-natural habitats* and *protected areas* (e.g. Natura 2000) by providing information (e.g. contacts in nature conservation authorities) and showcasing positive examples	Short term
B.3.2	**Company:** promotes and supports the restoration of *natural ecosystems*, such as peat soils, by providing expert knowledge and financial assistance	Medium term
	Agricultural farm	
B.3.3	▪ includes relevant measures in the *BAP* to protect *semi-natural habitats*, promote sustainable use, and restore *natural ecosystems* where possible	Medium term

B.4 Conservation and maintenance of permanent grassland

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
B.4.1	▪ Provides farms with information on *protected areas*, in collaboration with relevant nature conservation authorities, and encourages measures to restore the ecological health of grassland habitats managed by the farms ▪ **Company**: provides financial support for the measures	Short term
B.4.2	▪ requires farms to draw up a management plan for grazing and provides support in preparing the plan	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
B.4.3	▪ restricts the ploughing or conversion of permanent grassland, including when creating new grassland, to ensure net zero loss	Short term
B.4.4	▪ may only apply pesticides and biocides as needed in response to *problem plants* and then only on a maximum of 10 % of the grassland area	Short term
B.4.5	▪ manages 15 % of the grassland with a focus on nature conservation, incorporating practices such as extensive use, maintaining old grass strips, and staggered mowing	Short term

B.5. Water Protection; Management of Riparian Buffers

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
B.5.1	▪ requires farms to establish buffer strips (*buffer zones*) along the banks of both permanently and intermittently flowing water bodies and provides guidance on implementation, along with positive examples	Short term
	The Agricultural farm	
B.5.2	▪ establishes *buffer zones** with autochthonous (native) vegetation along the banks of permanently flowing bodies of water and intermittently flowing water bodies, ensuring that the minimum width of these zones always exceeds legal requirements. For permanently flowing water bodies, the buffer zone must be at least 10 meters wide, measured from the top edge of the water body. These *buffer zones* serve as valuable *biotope corridors.* *The application of pesticides, biocides and fertilisers must be avoided in the *buffer zones*.	Medium term
B.5.3	▪ implements measures to prevent fertilizers and pollutants (such as animal manure, plastics, oil, and pharmaceuticals) from entering surface waters, watercourses, or groundwater	Short term

B.6. Preventing the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species (Neobiota)

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
B.6.1	▪ provides auditors, certifiers, and agricultural farms—ideally with support from experts such as those from nature conservation authorities—with information on *invasive alien species* and effective methods for preventing or controlling their introduction	Short term
B.6.2	▪ **Company**: offers agricultural farms free expert guidance on managing *invasive alien species*	Medium term
	Agricultural farm	
B.6.3	▪ identifies *invasive alien species* on the farmland and reports their presence to the relevant nature conservation authority. If invasive species are detected, appropriate control or mitigation measures are implemented, in coordination with the nature conservation authority or a relevant *NGO*	Medium term

B.7. Wild Collection

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
B.7.1	▪ explicitly emphasizes that *protected and endangered species* must not be collected, and that *protected areas* must remain unaffected	Short term
B.7.2	▪ informs the farm management of the standards and guidelines mentioned in B.7.3.	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
B.7.3	▪ not only complies with national regulations but also meets the criteria of one of the following standards, or comparable ones: ○ *FairWild Standard* ○ *UEBT* (Union for Ethical BioTrade) Standard ○ Naturland Standard ○ *GACP guideline* (Good Agricultural and Collection Practice) ○ *Bioland Standard*	Short term

C. Measures for very Good Agricultural Practices for more Biodiversity

C 1. Soil / Erosion

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.1.1	▪ encourages the creation of grassed tramlines in permanent crops, agroforestry systems, and speciality crops wherever feasible ▪ **Company**: promote the use of grassed tramlines	Short term
C.1.2	▪ provides guidelines outlining key factors related to erosion, such as slope length, heavy rainfall events, wind, and mitigation measures like ground cover, shrub planting, and soil cultivation practices	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
C.1.3	▪ maintains soil cover for as long as possible, especially during periods when nutrient leaching may occur. Soil cover can be achieved in winter through methods such as catch crops, stubble fallow, or mulching. When using films for covering (e.g., in vegetable cultivation), nature-based solutions are preferred	Medium term
C.1.4	▪ implements measures to maintain and promote soil functions and soil biodiversity. Special protective actions are applied to areas at high risk of erosion, such as ploughing or cultivating across the slope, undersowing, minimum tillage (using mulch or direct sowing), and adapted crop management practices	Medium term
C.1.5	▪ carries out greening of the tramlines on permanent and special crop areas	Medium term

C.2 Fertilisation

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.2.1	▪ requires field balances, *nutrient balances*, *fertiliser requirement* calculations, and *humus balances* and supports the farm in preparing these, for example, by providing consultancy services For material flow balance, *humus balance* and *fertiliser requirement calculations*, the use of a recognised balancing and recommendation system should be demonstrated	Short term
C.2.2	▪ provides information on positive examples, including best practices for storage, good practice in spreading and the production of organic fertiliser	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
C.2.3	▪ documents all fertilizer applications and nutrient values of the fertilisers	Short term
C.2.4	▪ ensures that *ammonia, methane and nitrous oxide emissions* are reduced	Short term
C.2.5	▪ prepares *nutrient balances* according to a recognised method and documents all fertiliser applications and nutrient values of the fertilisers (at least N and P)	Medium term
C.2.6	▪ carries out an annual field-related fertiliser requirement assessment, if necessary, with additional soil samples before the application of significant quantities of nutrients* and complies with the maximum possible fertiliser doses in accordance with the *fertiliser requirement* assessment. *e.g. fertiliser ordinance (N=50kg/ha; P2O5=30kg/ha).	Short term
C.2.7	▪ considers the nitrogen requirement values provided by a regional official advisory service as the maximum limit for nitrogen fertilization. In the absence of official guidance, other recognized values may be used as a reference	Short term
C.2.8	▪ prepares a *humus balance* for its agricultural land in line with the requirements of the standard/company. Field-based balancing* is preferred over whole-farm balancing**. This balance is supported by humus analyses conducted every six years, ensuring that the *humus balance* is never negative.	Short term

	* humus balance per field / crop rotation: This balance looks at a field section over an entire *crop rotation*. It is the classic form of *humus balance* and provides information on the expected long-term trend towards the humus optimum. ** humus balance per farm / year: This balance assesses the humus levels on a farm's arable land over a one-year period. It provides insights into the actions taken to support the *humus balance* during that specific year.	
C.2.9	▪ analyses all soil-related data and strives for continuous improvement	Medium term

C 3. Crop rotation

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.3.1	▪ Encourages the cultivation of a wide variety of crops on the farm, thereby supporting diverse agriculture	Long term
	The Agricultural farm	
C.3.2	▪ implements a *crop rotation* of at least four years on the same field*. This includes the cultivation of four different main crops, as well as the cultivation of catch crops such as grasses, oilseeds or legumes *Perennial crops, fallow land or permanent crops are excluded here.	Long term
C.3.3	▪ cultivates legumes or mixtures containing legumes on at least 10 % of the arable land (excluding grassland). Legumes are not included in the biodiversity area (B2.2)	Long term

C 4. Plant protection

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.4.1	▪ **Standard-setting organisation**: defines a negative list (a list of prohibited pesticides and active substances) and establishes a strategy with a clear timeline for reducing active substances that pose a risk to *Biodiversity*. The following lists serve as references: *PAN*, *Prior Informed Consent* (PIC), *POPS*, *EU Prohibited List*, and *FiBL Farm Input List*	Medium term
C.4.2	▪ **Standard-setting organisation**: aims to harmonise its own negative lists with existing negative lists from other standards and organisations	Long term
C.4.3	▪ **Standard-setting organisation/company:** Creates a guide to integrated pest management, offers regular training sessions, and shares information on new developments (such as preventive measures, use of beneficial insects, organic farming alternatives, and new precision farming technologies)	Short term
C.4.4	▪ **Company**: promote measures for integrated plant protection, e.g. the acquisition of new precision technologies or the use of beneficial organisms	Short term
C.4.5	▪ **Standard-setting organisation:** checks the consistent implementation of all eight principles of *Integrated pest management*	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
C.4.6	▪ consistently implements and documents the eight principles of *Integrated pest management*	Short term

C 5. Use of water

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.5.1	▪ expands its advisory service for farmers on efficient water use and irrigation ▪ **Standard-setting organization** provides farms with information about organizations or experts who can offer guidance and support on sustainable water use	Short term
C.5.2	▪ supports the exchange between nature conservation organisations, water authorities and farmers for the common goal of sustainable water use	Medium term
C.5.3	▪ **Company**: promotes the purchase of efficient irrigation systems	Medium term
C.5.4	▪ offers guidance on conducting a *Water risk analysis* and developing a *Water management plan*. This guidance includes positive examples of measures for saving and using water efficiently, as well as strategies for protecting water sources	Short term

	▪ **Agricultural farm**	
C.5.5	▪ is aware of the condition of water sources in its area. If water sources are in critical condition, it engages in dialogue with authorities or local initiatives to contribute to finding solutions or supporting research efforts	Medium term
C.5.6	▪ sources water for company-specific activities exclusively through legal means. The amount of water consumed is carefully measured, aligns reasonably with demand, and does not exceed the withdrawal limits set by authorities	Short term
C.5.7	▪ documents water consumption for each irrigation practice and demonstrates measures to save and use water efficiently, such as implementing appropriate technology, optimizing irrigation timing, and utilizing rainwater	Short term
C.5.8	▪ carries out a risk analysis for the water used for production and post-harvest activities	Short term
C.5.9	▪ has a *Water management plan* in risk areas for water scarcity	Medium term
C.5.10	▪ identifies and documents the different sources and types of wastewater. It also assesses various options for preventing, reducing, and effectively managing wastewater. Wastewater is only discharged into aquatic ecosystems and the soil after treatment, ensuring that the treated wastewater meets legal quality standards	Short term

C 6. Microplastics

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.6.1	▪ defines effective criteria for the responsible use of plastic (avoidance, recycling, proper disposal) and *sets standards durable plastic products and single-use plastic products*	Medium term

	The Agricultural farm	
C.6.2	handles plastics responsibly. This includes: ▪ agricultural plastics with a longer lifespan, such as greenhouse films or hail protection nets, should be reused for as long as possible ▪ plastic fragments and small pieces of packaging material and other plastic waste are removed from the field and recycled or disposed of properly ▪ For *durable plastic products and single-use plastic products items* (seasonal plastics) used in agricultural production, proof must be provided in accordance with standard requirements	Medium term

C 7. Heritage varieties and breeds and new site-adapted varieties

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.7.1	▪ **Company**: initiates or supports projects and initiatives aimed at improving market access for traditional crop varieties and livestock breeds. Certified companies and suppliers are encouraged to cultivate traditional crop varieties and breed livestock, for example, through a bonus point system or other incentives ▪ cultivates traditional crop varieties and breeds livestock, for example, by implementing a bonus point system or offering other incentives	Long term
C.7.2	▪ **Company**: supports projects and initiatives aimed at developing new or adapted varieties, such as fungus-resistant wine varieties that require less pesticide use, or soybeans cultivated using agroecological methods. Additionally, farmers receive assistance in the marketing process	Medium term
	Agricultural farm	
C.7.3	▪ where possible, promotes agro-biodiversity by cultivating traditional plant varieties and utilizing a diverse range of varieties, including improved varieties, while implementing practices that minimize negative impacts on *biodiversity*	Long term
C.7.4	▪ promotes genetic biodiversity through the breeding of traditional livestock breeds wherever possible	Long term
C.7.5	▪ refrains from keeping, rearing, propagating, planting and using (including as animal feed) *genetically modified organisms* (GMOs)	Long term

C 8. Animal feed

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
C.8.1	▪ continuously encourages an increase in the proportion of sustainably produced animal feed, ensuring that, whenever possible, this feed is certified	Medium term
C.8.2	▪ prohibits the use of *genetically modified organisms* in animal feed	Medium term
C.8.3	▪ Has established criteria for a continuous process that prevents the destruction of *natural habitats* and ecosystems for the purpose of producing animal feed	Medium term
	Agricultural farm	
C.8.4	▪ aims for *feed autonomy* by ensuring that all feed not produced on the farm comes, whenever possible, from the local farm region* *The region for feed collection covers a radius of 100 km around the farm, unless otherwise defined by the standard / company.	Long term
C.8.5	▪ Continuously seeks to increase the proportion of certified feed, such as soy from Europe, when achieving *feed autonomy* is not feasible for understandable reasons	Medium term
C.8.6	▪ links the livestock population to the farm's own forage area For intensive livestock systems, the maximum number is 2.0 Livestock units/ha. For extensive livestock systems, the maximum number is 1.4 Livestock units/ha.	Long term

D. FURTHER TRAINING AND COOPERATION

	Standard-setting organisation / company	
D.1.1	▪ **Company**: ensures that employees in relevant departments (such as product and quality management, purchasing, and corporate social responsibility) receive adequate training on *biodiversity* aspects and provides opportunities for further training based on identified needs	Short term
D.1.2	▪ requires the management of the agricultural farm to regularly participate in further training on aspects of *biodiversity*	Short term
D.1.3	▪ **Company:** supports at least one *biodiversity* project within its supply chain in collaboration with agricultural enterprises. This project is related to critical raw materials and contributes to the objectives of the *EU Nature Restoration Law*	Short term
	Agricultural farm	
D.1.4	▪ regular exchange with *NGOs*, nature conservation authorities or scientific institutions on aspects of *biodiversity* in the region (general development, problems related to agriculture, ongoing projects/activities in which the region is involved). ▪ farmers could participate, etc.).	Medium term
D.1.5	▪ the company management participates in further training on *biodiversity* aspects at least once a year	Medium term
D.1.6	▪ employees receive regular training (at least once a year) on aspects of *biodiversity*	Medium term

GLOSSARY

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	The BAP is a structured action plan outline for the conservation and improvement of biodiversity, aligned with general guidelines.
Biodiversity Performance Tool Insects (BPTi)	The Biodiversity Performance Tool Insects (BPTi) is an assessment tool for measuring and evaluating the impact of agricultural practices on insect diversity. It takes into account factors such as habitat diversity, food resources and conservation measures and offers recommendations for optimising biodiversity on agricultural land. BPTi website
Bioland Standard	The Bioland Standard is a set of rules for organic farming that goes beyond the EU Organic Farming Regulation and sets strict requirements for the cultivation and processing of food. It includes specifications on the use of natural fertilisers, *Crop rotation*, species-appropriate animal husbandry, the avoidance of chemical-synthetic pesticides and genetic engineering. The standard promotes the preservation of soil fertility, the protection of biodiversity and the welfare of farm animals. Products that are certified according to the Bioland Standard bear the Bioland seal and fulfil high sustainability and quality criteria.
Biodiversity	Biological diversity, also known as biodiversity, encompasses the entire diversity of life on earth. It refers to (1) the diversity of species, (2) the genetic variation within these species and (3) the diversity of the ecosystems in which these species live.
Biotope corridors	Biotope corridors are landscape features that connect isolated habitats, allowing wildlife to move between populations. This movement fosters genetic diversity and reduces the risk of inbreeding. In agricultural areas, these corridors are crucial for bridging habitats separated by farmland. Examples include hedgerows, flower strips, small woodlands, riparian zones, and fallow land. These natural elements form pathways across fields, meadows, and forests, enabling safe passage for wildlife and supporting ecosystem connectivity.
Buffer zones	Buffer zones are protective strips or areas that are established between sensitive areas and potential sources of danger in order to minimise negative impacts. In agriculture, they are used to reduce harmful impacts such as pesticide or fertiliser run-off on adjacent *Natural habitats*, water bodies or *Protected areas*. Examples of buffer zones in agriculture are • Riparian buffer: Vegetation strips along rivers, streams and lakes that prevent nutrient inputs and erosion. • Field margins: Uncultivated strips between fields that serve as a The *Landscape approach* links

	ecological structures across farm boundaries in order to promote the coherent and sustainable use of land and natural resources. It integrates different land uses and stakeholders in order to harmonise ecological, social and economic objectives in a landscape unit and strengthen the resilience of the entire landscape. Examples of *Landscape approaches* in Europe include the insect responsible sourcing regions project, the agricultural support system in the Netherlands and EU agricultural support in Brandenburg. habitat for wild animals and to reduce soil erosion. - Hedges: Dense shrubs or trees that act as windbreaks, create habitats and reduce the input of chemicals into neighbouring areas. - Flower strips: Strips of wild flowers that provide food for insects such as bees and butterflies and also act as a buffer against agricultural activities. - Grassland strips: Uncultivated grasslands that prevent soil erosion and protect water quality.
Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)	The EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) requires large companies to comply with human rights and environmental standards throughout their supply chain. The directive applies to: - From 2025: Companies with more than 1,000 employees and a global net turnover of over 300 million euros. - From 2026: Companies with more than 500 employees and a global net turnover of over 150 million euros. - From 2028: Companies in high-risk sectors with more than 250 employees and a turnover of more than 40 million euros. The directive also applies to non-European companies operating within the EU. European Commission
Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)	The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is an EU directive that requires companies to engage in comprehensive sustainability reporting. It came into effect on January 5, 2023, replacing the previous Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD). The goal is to enhance transparency in the areas of Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) by requiring companies to disclose detailed information on these aspects. Timeline for Implementation: - From 2024: For companies previously covered by the NFRD. - From 2025: For large companies that were not previously required to report. - From 2026: For publicly listed SMEs and certain small institutions. European Commission
Crop rotation	Temporal succession of different crops in the field. Each main crop in the crop rotation should belong to one of the following functional plant groups, or to a similar group. Catch crops/green manures are excluded from this

	definition. The functional plant groups are: • Winter cereals and grasses • Summer cereals and grasses • Legumes • Oilseeds • Root crops
Determining fertiliser requirements by field	The field-related fertiliser requirement calculation is a precise method for determining the fertiliser requirement for individual agricultural fields. The specific conditions of each field are taken into account, such as soil type, current nutrient content, yield targets, previous crops and climatic conditions. This detailed analysis makes it possible to precisely target fertilisation to meet the specific needs of each field in order to avoid over- or under-fertilisation. Determining fertiliser requirements (Bavarian State Office for Agriculture)
Ecologically valuable structures	Ecologically valuable structures or areas are landscape elements that are of great importance for biodiversity and the ecological balance. Examples include semi-natural structures such as hedges, field margins, flower strips, wetlands, orchards and deadwood areas. Ecologically valuable areas are also Protected areas(e.g. Natura 2000 areas) and natural ecosystems. You can find care instructions here.
EU Prohibited List	The EU Prohibited List includes substances whose use is prohibited in the European Union due to their harmful effects on the environment, health or biodiversity. These include certain pesticides, chemicals and other substances that have been categorised as hazardous. The list is updated regularly to ensure the protection of humans and nature. EU Pesticide Database
FairWild Standard	The FairWild Standard is a certification system that ensures sustainable and fair practices in the collection and trade of wild-collected plants. It defines requirements for the protection of biodiversity, the conservation of natural resources, fair working conditions and fair remuneration for collectors. The standard aims to ensure the long-term conservation of wild plants and the livelihoods of local communities. FairWild Standard
Feed autonomy	Feed autonomy refers to a farm's capacity to produce most of its required feed independently or source it locally, reducing reliance on external suppliers. This approach enhances control over feed quality and supports the farm's nutrient cycle by returning nutrients from animal husbandry back into the soil. In doing so, it helps maintain soil fertility and reduces the need for external fertilizers.

FiBL Farm Input List	FiBL is a leading institute promoting organic agriculture through research and innovation for sustainable farming worldwide. The list can be found under the following link: www.betriebsmittelliste.de
GACP guideline (Good Agricultural and Collection Practice)	The GACP guidelines (Good Agricultural and Collection Practice) are an internationally recognized standard outlining best practices for sustainable, high-quality agricultural production and collection of plant materials. These guidelines cover safe handling, storage, and processing of plants, along with adherence to environmental and social standards. The primary goal is to ensure the quality and safety of plant-based raw materials used in the food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics industries. GACP guideline
Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)	An organism whose genetic material has been altered in a way that would not occur naturally through crossing or natural recombination (Naturland Standards on Production). It is important to note that scientific recommendations are considered, and this criterion is adjusted as needed.
Humus balance	In Germany, the LFL (**Bavarian State Research Center for Agriculture**) accounting method is recommended, offering two balancing approaches: **Field/Crop Rotation Humus Balance**: This method assesses humus levels over an entire *Crop rotation* for a specific field section, providing insights into the expected long-term trend toward an optimal humus level. **Annual Farm Humus Balance**: This method evaluates humus levels across a farm's arable land within a single year, indicating measures taken for humus management during that period.
Integrated pest management (IPM)	In the EU's Plant Health Framework Directive (2009/128/EC), integrated pest management refers to: the careful consideration of all available plant protection methods and the subsequent incorporation of appropriate measures that counteract the development of populations of harmful organisms and maintain the use of plant protection products and other defence and control methods at a level that is economically and ecologically justifiable and reduces or minimises risks to human health and the environment. Integrated pest management aims to promote the growth of healthy crops while minimising disruption to agricultural ecosystems and encouraging natural mechanisms to control pests. The aim of integrated pest management is to combine the various methods of biological and chemical pest management as well as physical and biotechnical measures as optimally as possible. National Action Plan for Plant Protection - IPS General principles of integrated pest management (PDF) (see questionnaire, p. 8) (in German)
Invasive alien species	An alien species whose introduction and/or spread threatens biodiversity. (Convention of Biological Diversity).

Key species	A species whose status contains information about the overall state of the ecosystem and other species in that ecosystem. They reflect the quality and changes in environmental conditions and aspects of community composition.
Landscape approach	The landscape approach links ecological structures across farm boundaries in order to promote the coherent and sustainable use of land and natural resources. It integrates different land uses and stakeholders in order to harmonise ecological, social and economic objectives in a landscape unit and strengthen the resilience of the entire landscape. Examples of landscape approaches in Europe include the Insect-Responsible Sourcing Regions project, the agricultural support system in the Netherlands and EU agricultural support in Brandenburg.
Livestock units (LU)	A reference unit that allows for the aggregation of animals of different species and ages under the Convention, using specific coefficients based on the nutrient or feed requirements of each species (Eurostat).
Natural habitats/areas/ecosystems	Ecosystems that could exist or would naturally occur in a given area if there were no significant human impact. This includes all types of flowing and still waters (such as streams, rivers, ponds, pools), naturally occurring wetlands and forests (including rainforests, lowland, montane, deciduous, and coniferous forests), as well as other native terrestrial ecosystems like woodlands, scrublands, and peatlands
NGO	Non-governmental organization. You can view the NGO members (environmental associations) of Food for Biodiversity here: Members
Nutrient balance	Annual nutrient assessment for nitrogen and phosphate at the farm level, based on an area balance (also known as a field-to-farm balance) or an aggregated field balance. (LfL Bavarian State Research Centre for Agriculture)
PAN	PAN stands for Pesticide Action Network, an international coalition of NGOs working to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of hazardous pesticides. PAN maintains two key lists: • **PAN List of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs)**: Initially developed by PAN Germany in 2009, this list includes pesticides that meet criteria based on acute toxicity, long-term health impacts, environmental risks, and their status under global pesticide conventions. Long-term health effects considered include endocrine disruption, carcinogenicity, and reproductive/developmental toxicity, while environmental criteria cover toxicity to bees and aquatic organisms, environmental persistence, and bioaccumulation potential. • **PAN International Consolidated List of Banned Pesticides (CL)**: This consolidated list identifies pesticides banned by specific countries, as no other comprehensive source exists for this information. It's recommended to download and review the explanation before examining the country table. Additionally, the Pesticide info database is available as a resource.

POPS	Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are organic chemicals that are based on carbon and remain intact for an exceptionally long time after being released into the environment due to their special physical and chemical properties. They spread by natural processes over long distances in soil, water and air, accumulate in living organisms, including humans, and reach the upper levels of the food chain in higher concentrations. These substances are toxic to both humans and wildlife. List of POPs
Prior Informed Consent (PIC)	PIC is an international procedure that ensures that countries are informed and must give their consent before importing certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides. This procedure is part of the Rotterdam Convention, which aims to regulate trade in hazardous chemicals and pesticides and protect the environment and human health. Through the PIC procedure countries can better decide which chemicals they want to authorise and which they want to reject. List of chemicals
Problem plants	Problem plants are plant species that can cause damage to agricultural land and crops due to their vigorous growth and ability to spread. These plants, often invasive species, compete with crops for resources such as water, nutrients and light, which leads to yield losses. Examples of such problem plants in agriculture are creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), couch grass (*Elymus repens*), black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) and common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*). These plants require targeted control measures to ensure agricultural productivity.
Protected and endangered species	Species of plants, animals or fungi that are categorised by national legislation as threatened or endangered or that are listed in classification systems (e.g. Annex II of the Habitats Directive) or in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and/or in Annex I, II or III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
Protected areas	Protected areas are special areas of land or water that are protected from human intervention and harmful activities by legal measures or international agreements. Examples include national parks, nature reserves, landscape conservation areas, biosphere reserves, Natura 2000 areas, marine protected areas, Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) and FFH areas (flora-fauna-habitat areas).
Reduce ammonia, methane and nitrous oxide emissions	Approaches to lowering emissions: • Reduced fertilizer usage; maintain low barn temperatures

	• Storage: quick separation of urine and feces, covered storage for farm fertilizers, and acidification of liquid manure • Effective manure management**:** Quick manure incorporation, biogas plant fermentation, grazing techniques, and weather-adapted application • Feed management: Nitrogen-optimized feeding and regenerative practices, such as carbohydrate-rich diets with high intake, to support rumen digestion and reduce methane emissions Further information can be found under Clean Air Farming
Semi-natural habitats/ areas/ ecosystems = Semi-natural habitats	Semi-natural habitats (NNL) are areas influenced by human activities but with a structure that closely resembles natural habitats, such as afforested areas. They can also include artificially created habitats that have largely been allowed to develop naturally, supporting typical native plant and animal species. Permanent grassland and agroforestry, however, are excluded from this category. Examples include, but are not limited to: • Hedges, shrubs, rows of trees, avenues, • Individual trees (living and dead), buffer strips, fallow land, flower strips, slopes, rains, afforested areas, water elements (ravine, stream, ditch), • uncultivated edges or strips that are not used for grazing. For the purposes of biodiversity monitoring and the associated indicators, the following distinction is made between NNLs: • Temporary NNL: Are NNL areas that will change in short periods of time (≤ 1 year), e.g. fallow land, flower strips, field margins. • Permanent NNL: NNL areas that are implemented and designed as permanent structures (≥ 1 year), e.g. individual trees, hedges, forest edges, shrub and wooded areas, extensively managed grassland (< 1.5 tonnes dry matter production per ha/year), riparian strips, water bodies, rows of trees, avenues, reforestation areas.
Specifications for durable plastic products and single-use plastic products	Employees are trained in procedures and practices to minimize the release of plastics into the environment: • Manufacturer specifications are followed to ensure the durability of plastics during use and reuse. This includes regular inspection, maintenance, and replacement of plastic materials as needed • Recovered plastics are stored secularly and disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner

	• Wherever possible, plastics are reused or recycled after use • Biodegradable plastics (adapted to the local climate and microorganisms) are used whenever feasible • Where possible, environmentally friendlier alternatives to plastics are chosen
Stepping stone biotopes	Stepping stone biotopes are small, isolated habitats that serve as "stepping stones" for the movement of animals and the dispersal of plants. They are located in an otherwise fragmented or intensively utilised landscape and enable species to move from one larger habitat to the next without having to cover long unprotected distances. In the agricultural landscape, stepping stone biotopes can be, for example, small wetlands, ponds, field woodlands, groups of trees or flowering areas.
UEBT (Union for Ethical BioTrade) Standard	The UEBT (Union for Ethical BioTrade) standard ensures that natural ingredients are sourced in an ethical and sustainable manner. It requires the preservation of biodiversity, fair labour conditions and traceability in the supply chain. Companies that fulfil this standard undertake to apply responsible practices in procurement and trade. The UEBT standard helps to protect the environment and improve the living conditions of people in the supply chain. UEBT
Water management plan	The water management plan includes the following points: • The water restrictions outlined in permits and licenses are strictly followed. Permits often specify conditions such as maximum allowable water abstraction volumes or usage rates on an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis. Monitoring equipment must be correctly positioned to ensure accurate measurements. Records are maintained and made available as proof of compliance with these conditions • Methods are applied to forecast water demand and estimate water loss due to evaporation and transpiration • Evaluation of maintenance needs for irrigation systems and other water-bearing equipment • Identify necessary staff training to support maintenance and repair • Refer to the water analysis and outline any corrective measures taken to improve water quality • Implement methods for water recirculation, reuse, and/or recycling This can be an individual water management plan or a regional plan if participation in a communal irrigation system is documented. The plan must be reviewed annually, incorporating updated risk assessments. Key data and indicators for monitoring are included in the plan, with results analysed each year and used to guide revisions. (Adapted from GLOBALG.A.P. Biodiversity Add-On FV-SMART 30.01.02, FV-SMART 30.01.03, Fairtrade Hired Labour 4.3.10)

Water risk analysis	The assessment should consider the following environmental impacts: Water sources, methods for efficient and rational use of water sources, distribution systems; Irrigation methods; Major water uses for other activities on the farm; impact of own agricultural activities on the environment outside the farm. The risk assessment must be reviewed annually or whenever the risks change.

GUIDELINES FOR THE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (BAP)

Description of the

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a strategic framework for enhancing biodiversity in agriculture. It helps certified farms and advisors assess existing biodiversity management practices in relation to local fauna and flora. The BAP provides a solid foundation for advising managers and consultants, enabling them to refine biodiversity measures and improve their effectiveness. By establishing a baseline, the BAP guides targeted actions to support biodiversity on farms.

Scope

A Biodiversity Action Plan should focus on the two main areas of biodiversity conservation, biodiversity management (Chapter A) and VERY good practice (Chapter C) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Fields of action of the BAP

Procedure

The BAP comprises four main steps. As shown in Figure 2, it begins with describing the initial situation (1), which serves as the foundation for subsequent actions. These include setting realistic biodiversity protection targets (2), selecting appropriate measures (3), and monitoring the impact of these measures (4). Monitoring helps track progress toward goals and allows for adjustment of objectives as needed.

A Biodiversity Action Plan comprises four steps:

1. Description of the initial situation (baseline)
2. Objective
3. Selection, timeframe and implementation of measures to promote biodiversity
4. Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the BAPS should be reviewed annually by the BAP Monitor. Targets should be updated every three years.

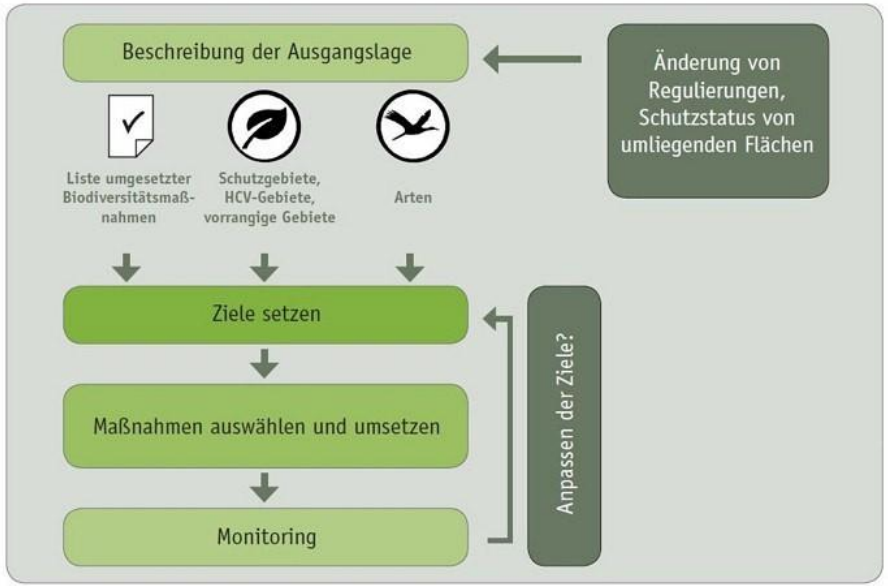

Figure 2 The four stages of a BAP © Didem Senturk

Notes on continuous improvement:

Farmers are not required to implement all selected measures at once; they can begin with a few activities and work toward continuous improvement over the coming years. Each farm or cooperative should designate a person responsible for the BAP, ideally someone with practical and theoretical knowledge of agriculture and biodiversity and a strong position within the organization to support BAP implementation. Additional resources on the BAP are being developed by the association and published on the website: https://food-biodiversity.de/en/criteria-and-tools/#basic-set

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