



2026

Methodology for Benchmarking Food Standards Against the Basic-Set of Biodiversity Criteria

Version 1.0

Food for Biodiversity

28.8.2026

Food for Biodiversity (FfB) benchmarks standards for the production of agricultural raw materials with the Basic-Set of Biodiversity Criteria for the Food Industry (Basic-Set for Temperate Regions [Europe], 2nd edition). The Basic-Set includes key criteria for the protection and promotion of biodiversity on farms. The goal of the comparison is to assess the extent to which a standard addresses these key requirements and thereby supports companies in procuring agricultural products in alignment with the Basic-Set. Standards whose criteria comprehensively cover these requirements are recommended by Food for Biodiversity. FfB will ensure a non-discriminatory and transparent process for evaluating and recommending standards.

Assessment

The evaluation is based on the most current standard documents, such as criteria catalogs, testing and audit documents, as well as manuals and guidelines. All evaluations are substantiated and documented with specific references to the respective standard documents. The initial comparison between the standard and the Basic-Set may be conducted either by FfB or by the standard-setting organization. Regardless of who performs the initial comparison, all evaluations, evidence, and references are reviewed by FfB against the standard documents using the same evaluation criteria.

Initial Assessment

The first step is to determine whether a Basic-Set criterion is relevant to the standard. Examples of irrelevant criteria include grassland or livestock management criteria for a viticulture standard. Each criterion in the Basic-Set that is relevant to the standard must be compared with the standard's requirements. In doing so, it must be determined whether the corresponding criteria from the Basic-Set are explicitly included in the standard, are covered in an equivalent manner in terms of content, are only partially identifiable, or cannot be substantiated based on the available documents. Following this assessment, each Basic-Set criterion is assigned to one of three categories: not relevant, fulfilled, or not fulfilled.

Feedback and Exchange

Following the initial assessment by FfB, the standards-setting organization is given the opportunity to review the assessment and provide comments. In particular, it may submit additional documents, clarify requirements that were not sufficiently described in the originally submitted materials, comment on or challenge assessments, and provide further evidence of compliance with individual criteria.

The feedback and review process takes place regardless of whether the initial assessment was originally prepared by FfB or by the standards-setting organization. Assessments conducted by the standards-setting organization itself are also reviewed by FfB and evaluated according to the same standards. Based on additional evidence,

clarifications, or further standard documents, FfB may adjust the assessments and ratings of individual criteria.

This exchange may involve multiple feedback cycles and continues until all open questions have been clarified or no further evidence is submitted. The goal is to ensure that the final assessment is based on the most complete, transparent, and well-documented information possible. The review process concludes with the final evaluation by FfB.

Recommendation of Standards

Based on the final evaluation, the percentage of criteria met is calculated; criteria classified as irrelevant are not taken into account. Standards that meet the target values defined in the Roll-out strategy for the relevant criteria of the Basic-Set (currently at least 70%) are recommended by Food for Biodiversity to its members and the public. Only positive examples are communicated publicly. Standards that do not (yet) meet the target values are communicated only on a confidential basis within the association.

Confidentiality of the Evaluation

Food for Biodiversity treats the evaluation table and the non-public documents related to the standard as confidential and neither distributes them without prior consultation nor shares them with members.