



EU LIFE Food & Biodiversity

Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry

Opportunities for Companies



Background

The loss of biodiversity is one of the biggest challenges of our time. Species loss driven by human intervention occurs around 1,000 times faster than under natural circumstances. Many ecosystems that provide us with essential resources are at risk of collapsing. 60 % of all ecosystem services have suffered major damage in recent decades. Conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity is an environmental issue and, at the same time, a key requirement for nutrition, production processes, ecosystem services and the overall good quality of life for mankind.



Biodiversity is defined as the diversity within species (genetic diversity), between species and of ecosystems.

The food sector, with agriculture as the most important supplier, can substantially contribute to biodiversity conservation. At present, biodiversity, ecosystem services and their protection are not yet as important in the industry as they should be.

The EU LIFE Project Food & Biodiversity "Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry" aims at improving the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements within the food industry by

- Supporting standard-setting organisations to include efficient biodiversity criteria into existing schemes; and encouraging food processing companies and retailers to include biodiversity criteria into respective sourcing guidelines
- Training for advisors and certifiers of standards as well as product and quality managers of companies
- Implementation of a cross-standard monitoring system on biodiversity
- Strong communication to raise awareness among all stakeholders in the industry

A Europe-wide sector initiative "Biodiversity Performance in the Food Sector" will further develop the activities after the end of the project in 2020.

The success of the initiative depends on the participation of companies and standard organisations in the food industry, which on the one hand can support the development of the instruments with their practical view and on the other hand can apply the outputs in order to improve their biodiversity performance.

Companies have the following opportunities to participate:

1. Initial information for your company

2. Review of sourcing guidelines

3. Training on aspects of biodiversity

4. Testing of Biodiversity Performance Tool (BPT)

5. Participation in biodiversity monitoring

6. Sector initiative „ Biodiversity Performance in the Food Sector“

7. Joint public relations

The following companies and standards already collaborate with us:



1. Initial information for your company

The project partners provide free information on how quality and sustainability labels address biodiversity. How do effective criteria look like? Which instruments help with auditing? We will assess these and other questions with you. As a first step, you can find out more on www.food-biodiversity.eu. Experts of the partner organisations are available to provide further insights – via webinar or in person.

2. Review: Improving the biodiversity performance of sourcing guidelines for producers and suppliers

Together with representatives of food standards, companies, certification organisations, scientific institutions, authorities and NGOs, we published the „[Recommendations to improve biodiversity protection in policy and criteria of food standards and sourcing requirements of food companies and retailers](#)“.

This comprehensive catalogue of recommendations presents the entire range of possible courses of action: How negative impacts on biodiversity can be avoided or reduced and how the protection of existing biodiversity and the creation of potentials for more biological diversity can be enhanced. All recommended criteria and measures have been tested in pilot projects and programmes for the harmonisation of agriculture and nature conservation.

Join: We support your company free of charge in reviewing the sourcing guidelines with relevance for biodiversity and make concrete proposals for integrating or improving biodiversity performance. We also support companies in the discussion of suggestions for improvement with suppliers as well as other stakeholders.

3. Biodiversity training for product, procurement and quality managers

Your employees who are responsible for product groups, quality assurance, purchasing or sustainability should know what is important in the field of biodiversity: Which criteria should a standard cover and what is the current situation? How should an ambitious plan for the protection of biodiversity on the farm look like? How can the company support the farmer? As part of the project, we developed training modules as webinar and training seminar.

Join: We are looking for companies that are participating in the test phase of our biodiversity training (beginning of 2019) and are providing feedback on the training courses. The final modules are then available to the companies free of charge and can be integrated into existing training activities.

4. Test of the Biodiversity Performance Tool (BPT)

The BPT supports advisors and farmers as well as certifiers in drawing up and implementing a sound Biodiversity Action Plan. This plan includes measures for biodiversity management (e.g. protection and creation of habitats, biotope corridors, measures to protect species) and VERY good agricultural practices to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity. The aim is to establish and implement good quality Biodiversity Action Plans to achieve continuous improvement in biodiversity performance on the farm – and taking into account the immediate surroundings. The BPT also collects and evaluates information and data for long term monitoring.

Join: The BPT is currently tested on 70 pilot farms in Germany, France, Spain and Portugal; we will expand the test phase in March 2019 to other certified farms. By the end of 2019 the BPT is available free of charge to all companies and their suppliers and producers.

5. Participation in cross-company and cross-standard biodiversity monitoring

Up to now, biodiversity monitoring was carried out on a selective basis – if at all – within the framework of programmes or pilot projects. Most standards and food companies do not have a databased overview of whether producers are particularly biodiversity-compatible, whether challenges require special action or which measures with relevance for biological diversity are implemented frequently.

As part of the project, we are developing a two-stage monitoring system: Stage one focuses on key figures and indicators to evaluate the creation of potential for biological diversity (every 2–3 years). Stage two uses a few key indicator species identified on regional level to determine the actual effects on biodiversity. This second stage is only carried out every 3–5 years on selected representative farms. The monitoring system will have an easy to maintain database. The project team is in discussion with database operators who have been operational for a long time.

Join: Starting in March 2019 we are looking for certified farms that will work with us to collect data using the set of indicators for the first stage to carry out a monitoring. The data is evaluated anonymously; the companies receive a monitoring report. Based on practical experience, the monitoring system will be adapted (if necessary). It is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2019.

6. Participation in the industry initiative “Biodiversity Performance in the Food Sector”

A joint initiative, which will continue even after the end of the project, is needed in order to improve the protection of biodiversity in the industry as a whole, e.g. by recognising and implementing a basic set of biodiversity criteria. The initiative will implement and further develop the monitoring system and sensitise consumers regarding the value of biodiversity.

Join: We are looking for pioneering companies to join us in launching a sector initiative: setting up an initiative group, finding the right organisational form, defining the main tasks, etc.

7. Joint public relations

To inform and sensitize representatives of the food industry, we take part in numerous events, send out newsletters and cooperate with sector specific media. Public relations work on biodiversity is particularly effective when standards organisations, companies and NGOs act and communicate together.

Join: We look forward to companies who organize an event and/or a press conference together with us. The dissemination of information and the reference to www.food-biodiversity.eu in newsletters, websites etc. as well as information to suppliers and producers contribute to sensitize the actors of the food sector.

European Project Team



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A „Core Initiative“ of



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