

Excerpt from the Bio Suisse Standards

Areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity (ADEB)

Based on part II, section 2.3

Bio Suisse certified producers manage their whole farming operation in a manner that protects the environment and its plants, animals and microorganisms to the greatest extent. They endeavour to maintain as diverse an operation as possible, where there is room for a variety of organisms and habitats both on and beyond areas of production.

The farm operations manager is obliged to maintain, enlarge or create near-natural habitats (areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity, ADEB) and to care for them in a professional manner. ADEB must constitute at least 7% of a farming operation's utilized agricultural area (including special crops). ADEB are natural landscaping elements that serve to nurture flora and fauna.

Landscaping elements that may be counted include:

- Species-rich permanent meadows and pastures that do not receive any external fertiliser (except for fertiliser that occurs naturally during grazing)
- Species-rich wildflower strips (for at least 18 months). Wildflower strips are areas of uncultivated rotational fallow land where natural or sown, species-rich plant communities grow
- Conservation headlands: unfertilised, species-rich strips along the edge of fields, parallel to the furrows. Minimum width: 3 m
- Species-rich strips to promote beneficial organisms
- Areas with natural communities of indigenous plants (species-rich ground vegetation in extensively cultivated orchards or vineyards may be counted as such)
- Single indigenous trees suited to the location (each tree counts as 1 are) and tree-lined avenues
- Hedges, copses and riparian trees
- Ditches, pools, ponds and moorland. Ponds that were installed for irrigation purposes may be counted if the banks were planted with indigenous plants
- Ruderal areas and ruins of buildings
- Dry stone walls, stone mounds and embankments
- Unpaved natural paths covered with vegetation for at least 1/3
- Species-rich woodland, except for intensively managed plantations with little biodiversity value (e.g., eucalyptus or poplar)

Requirements regarding the quality of ADEB

The following three points regarding the quality of areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity must be met by all BSO operations:

- Uncultivated, species-rich strips of at least 6 m width must be maintained around natural stretches of surface water (e.g., rivers, streams and lakes).
- The destruction of 'high conservation value areas' is prohibited (as per section 3.5).
- At least 2 of the following quality standards must be met:
 1. On larger plots (> 50 ha) the BFF are widely distributed on the farm, this means, that they contain at least 3 ADEB elements of at least 0.1 ha per plot, .
 2. On operations with smaller plots of land, the ADEB are located on > 50% of all operational plots.
 3. The areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity are connected (e.g., via hedges or uncultivated strips) to create favourable living conditions for the dispersal of naturally occurring animals and plants. A sketch showing the ADEBs and connecting landscaping elements is attached.
 4. The ADEB exceed 20% of the operational acreage.
 5. At least 5 of the landscaping elements (see above) are present on the farming operation.
 6. At least 3 bee (*Apis* spp.) colonies are kept on the farming operation throughout the entire vegetation period.
 7. Endangered crop species or varieties (e.g., khorasan wheat, flax, heirloom vegetables, fruit and grapes, landraces, and locally bred and/or propagated varieties) are cultivated on at least 0.5 ha.
 8. The farming operation manages diverse agroforestry systems.
 9. In the cultivation of field crops, the operation largely abstains from using the plough (ploughing is permitted at most 2x within a 5-year crop rotation period).
 10. In the cultivation of permanent crops, the operation largely abstains from tillage (max. 1x annually).
 11. Nesting boxes / nesting opportunities for birds, bats and wild bees are provided on the operation (> 2/ha).
 12. Compost is used in order to promote soil organisms.
 13. Other biodiversity enhancement measures not listed above are carried out by the operation.
 14. Naturally occurring epiphytes on permanent crops are not removed.

Rules for derogations

If the following criteria are met, then the 7% ADEB need not involve the operational acreage of the farming operation nor its usual cultivation area:

- The vicinity of the farming operation is still in its natural state (woodland, desert, steppe directly adjoining at least 30% of the farming operation's perimeter); or
- Dedicating 7% of the UAA to the enhancement of biodiversity would not significantly increase its diversity since the agricultural system and farming structure are already highly diversified (e.g., agroforestry systems); or
- The operational acreage of a producer group collectively applying for certification according to Bio Suisse standards has been consolidated. The 7% ADEB will be calculated on the basis of the total operational acreage farmed by the group.

The quality standards listed above need not be met by smallholder groups (defined under producer groups). This also applies to operations where at least 30% of the farming operation's perimeter directly adjoins land that is still in a natural state.