

# Extract from the 2030 Organic Strategy

National Strategy for 30 % Organic Food and Farming by 2030



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## 1 Introduction

Climate change is having a significant impact on agricultural productivity (Okolie et al., 2023) and is consequently threatening food security and the livelihoods of millions of people (IPPC, 2014). Rising temperatures and dynamic rainfall patterns, with considerable fluctuations in the intensity and frequency of extreme events such as drought and floods, are hampering agricultural production - both in Germany and worldwide. We need agriculture and food systems to be adapted more dynamically to the planetary boundaries so that they are ecologically compatible, resilient and economic in their use of limited resources.

The governing parties therefore set themselves the goal in the coalition agreement of aligning the entire agricultural sector, in all its diversity, to the goals of environmental protection and resource conservation.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, they are following the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Agriculture (Zukunftskommission Landwirtschaft – ZKL 2021) and the Scientific Advisory Board on Agricultural Policy, Food and Consumer Health Protection at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat für Agrarpolitik, Ernährung und gesundheitlichen Verbraucherschutz - WBAE 2020). The Federal Government is providing interministerial support for this transformation with wide-ranging measures. One element is organic farming, as this production system can help protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change, in particular because it reduces nitrogen inputs, dispenses with highly soluble mineral nitrogen fertilisers and increases soil carbon sequestration (Weckenbrock et al., 2019, Sanders & Heß, 2019, Hülsbergen et al., 2022 and Chiriaco et al., 2022). Regulation (EU) 2018/848<sup>2</sup> defines and legally regulates organic farming, with a particular focus on resource conservation and environmental compatibility.

However, the yields in organic farming are lower than in conventional systems. The more intensive conventional farming is, the greater this difference (de Ponti et al., 2012). However, in view of the continual increase in the global population and the fact that certain planetary boundaries are being transgressed (cf. fig. 3, page 9), this status quo poses an equal challenge to both farming systems.

In order to think through both the advantages and the challenges of organic farming systems (Azarbad, 2022) and to then act accordingly, the Federal Government has, as set out in the coalition agreement, decided to expand the percentage of agricultural land under organic farming in Germany to 30 percent<sup>3</sup> by 2030. There are also efforts at Laender level to expand organic farming (for example in Baden-Württemberg (30-40 percent by 2030), Bavaria and Saarland (30 percent by 2030), Hesse (25 percent by 2025) and Brandenburg (20 percent by 2024)).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2021 to 2025 coalition agreement: “Sustainable agriculture simultaneously serves the interests of the holdings, of animal welfare and of nature and is the basis for a healthy diet” (page 43). “We will align the entire agricultural sector, in all its diversity, to the goals of environmental protection and resource conservation (organic farming).” (Page 46).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007. Official journal of the European Union L 150/1 of 14.6.2018.

<sup>3</sup> 2021 to 2025 coalition agreement: “We will align the entire agricultural sector, in all its diversity, to the goals of environmental protection and resource conservation (organic farming). We aim to develop agriculture in harmony with nature and the environment. We aim to achieve 30 percent organic farming by 2030. To this end we intend to increase federal funds for the Federal Organic Farming Scheme and, in accordance with the expansion goal, provide agricultural research funds for research related to organic farming. We are expanding the Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming to include the entire organic value chain.” (Page 46).

<sup>4</sup> The German Sustainable Development Strategy states the aim of expanding organic farming to 20 percent of agricultural land by 2030 (2021 German Sustainable Development Strategy). The 30 percent goal set out in the current government’s coalition agreement is reiterated in Germany’s Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan; this is higher than the goal the European Commission laid down in its Farm to Fork Strategy of 25 percent of agricultural land across the EU under organic farming by 2030.

It is not just the organic sector itself which profits from the expansion of organic farming; this expansion also creates added value for the entire agricultural sector and beyond. The Commission on the Future of Agriculture attests to organic farming's high innovative strength, citing as examples mechanical weeding and mobile housing for laying hens, both of which have long been adopted in conventional farming.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, organic farming must also continue to make use of scientific findings in order to compensate for disadvantages, for example the lower yields of specific crops (Azarbad, 2022). Research findings, for example on site-adapted crop rotation systems, nutrient management, soil fertility and breeding, should therefore be used to determine and meet the need for further research and innovations to assist the development of organic farming.

To ensure that supply and demand for organic products grow equally, we need at the same time to develop the organic food industry and increase the consumption of organic products. However, high inflation recently put the food trade under increasing pressure, showing more clearly a shift from classic health food retailing and direct sales towards organic products being sold by discount stores and supermarkets. Nevertheless, organic farming and the organic food industry represent an important path of development for the entire food and agricultural sector. EU Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski therefore considers organic farming to be an integral part of the EU's Green Deal for the entire agricultural sector. He regards organic farming as an "important ally in the transition to a more sustainable food system and a better protection of our biodiversity"<sup>6</sup>. The European Commission attaches great importance to organic farming, and the aim to have 25 percent of the EU's agricultural land (around 40 million hectares) under organic farming by 2030 is laid down in both the Farm to Fork Strategy (COM 2020a) and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy (COM 2020b). The global challenges, as set out in the United Nations sustainable development goals, guide policy in this regard. To achieve the European Green Deal's aim, the European Commission launched an Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production in the EU in March 2021. This has initiated the transformation to more sustainability in agriculture and food systems at EU level as well. The transformation of agriculture and food system is being driven forward at global level under the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) process. National dialogues are an important component for the development and implementation of country-specific solutions and approaches, also in respect of global challenges. Instruments and measures for the implementation of a sustainable supply of agricultural food are one key aspect of the national dialogue in Germany.

We will only be successful in leveraging the potentials of the organic food and agricultural sectors as a contribution to ecologically compatible agriculture if all stakeholders in the Federation, the Laender, the value chain and civil society understand the seriousness of the situation and their potential to act. The Commission on the Future of Agriculture states in this regard that "Greening an economically profitable farming sector in Germany, which has excellent land for agriculture, comes at a price. Not to do so would be even more costly. Much more costly - for agriculture, for the national economy and for social cohesion in society, both now and in the future." It also follows from this that the true value and the true cost of (organic) food for society should be communicated transparently and ultimately also reflected on the market. Ultimately, this would mean that instruments to internalise external costs would need to be considered. This would support citizens in following a sustainable, resource-conserving diet geared to the public interest.

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<sup>5</sup> Commission on the Future of Agriculture (2021): The future of agriculture: a task for society as a whole. Recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Agriculture, Berlin, 160 pages, (cf: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/re-source/blob/997532/1939908/7f01d1f39e6d5885c144e51051f6508f/2021-07-06-zukunftskommission-landwirtschaft-data.pdf?download=1> (p. 103) [accessed on 15.12.2023]).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. in this regard: <https://www.euractiv.de/section/landwirtschaft-und-ernahrung/news/kommission-startet-konsultation-zum-bio-landwirtschaft-plan/> [accessed on 15.12.2023].

The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) can lay the groundwork for this through targeted measures and has drawn up the **2030 Organic Strategy - a National Strategy for 30 % Organic Food and Farming by 2030**. It foregrounds four key approaches:

- providing better remuneration for services of general interest rendered by the organic farming and food sector;
- supporting the processing of and trade in organic food and increasing the amount of organic food in away-from-home catering;
- strengthening research, knowledge transfer, data availability and infrastructure for the organic food chain; and
- drawing up solutions to remove bureaucratic obstacles.

Six action areas, comprising 30 measures, were derived from these approaches. The aim is to have an organic food and agricultural sector that uses its innovative strength to make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of the entire food and agricultural sector.

## 2 Overview: the development, aims and content of the Strategy

### 2.1 The Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming and its evolution

In order to drive organic farming forward at national level, the BMEL presented the Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming, which was drawn up in 2017, to the public and used it as a basis for its work (BMEL, 2017). The Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming has the goal of having 20 percent of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. This Strategy for the Future identified five action areas. A total of 24 measures were developed to implement the action needed. This strategy has provided important impetus in recent years and consequently led to changes in the structure of the sector (Sanders et al., 2020). For detailed information on what the Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming initiated and achieved, please go to the BMEL's website.<sup>7</sup>

The current political, economic and socio-political conditions differ greatly from conditions in previous years, due for example to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022), the impact of the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine since 2022, the climate crisis, the ongoing loss of soil and the extinction of species. This necessitates rigorous action to evolve the strategy.

At the same time, the aim must be to qualitatively develop the organic food and agricultural sectors. For instance, the resilience (Azarbad, 2022) and production potential of organic farming could be better exploited, and the scientifically documented, societally relevant environmental services that organic farming provides could be enhanced (Sanders & Heß, 2019).

The intended aim of 30 percent of organic farming by 2030 corresponds to practically a threefold increase in the area under organic farming. We therefore need fast-acting, evidence-based methods and technologies that can be put into practice rapidly. We need to create a target-oriented environment for the various different levels, sites, goals and production systems. These must support all stakeholders in the organic food and agricultural industries in their efforts to achieve the objectives. The 2030 Organic Strategy aims to help motivate and mobilise all stakeholders involved along the entire value chain to participate in developing the organic food and agricultural sector and achieving the 30 percent goal.

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<sup>7</sup> Accessible at: <https://www.bmel.de/DE/themen/landwirtschaft/oekologischer-landbau/zukunftsstrategie-oekologischer-landbau.html> [accessed on 15.12.2023].



The 2030 Organic Strategy supports many other national policy instruments, for example the Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity, the German Sustainable Development Strategy, the National Water Strategy, the National Biodiversity Strategy, the National Livestock Husbandry Strategy, the Climate Change Act, Germany's Strategic Plan to implement the Common Agricultural Policy (GAP), the development of rural areas and, not least, the goals agreed on in the concept paper for the Food and Nutrition Strategy.

## 2.2 What process was used to develop the Strategy?

To develop the 2030 Organic Strategy, the BMEL initiated a multi-stakeholder and participative process that facilitated broad participation and integration of all interested stakeholders. The stakeholders included, for example, representatives from the Länder, several ministries, science, the food and agricultural sector, agricultural practice and the general public. Excellence teams working in parallel assessed the status quo on a number of different issues and drew up proposals for measures. Expert forums were held to present and discuss the interim results. The BMEL reported transparently on this process and the results on its website and in this way provided all interested parties with an opportunity to participate.<sup>8</sup> The BMEL also picked up on ideas and comments in talks and discussions at many different events. Overall, around a thousand individuals and a hundred groups or institutions participated. The process was developed and coordinated by the BMEL and supported by the Thünen Institute, one of the BMEL's ministerial research institutes, and the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (the BMEL's project executing agency).

## 2.3 What are the main points in the 2030 Organic Strategy?

The 2030 Organic Strategy is based on the Federal Government's goal of aligning the entire agricultural sector, in all its diversity, to the goals of environmental protection and resource conservation. The goal of having 30 percent organic farming is, according to the European Commission, an important contribution to the transformation of the entire food and agricultural sector. The following key points and approaches are the main focus of the Federal Government's activities:

- **Adequate remuneration of service of general interest.** The provision of services to society must be worthwhile for the agricultural enterprises and must offer them a sufficient and **competitive economic base**. What is needed is an evidence-based methodology that assesses the services of general interest provided by agricultural measures and creates incentives for all farmers, including those that would like to change to organic farming. Organic farming has so far not received sufficient remuneration for the services of general interest it provides, such as animal welfare, climate change mitigation and the protection of biodiversity, soil and waters (Hülsbergen et al., 2023).
- **Strengthening sustainability along the value chain.** Expanding organic farming to 30 percent of German agricultural land requires sustainable development of the entire value chain. **Strengthening inputs** (seed, fertilisers, plant protection agents, hygiene products, feed, machinery and livestock housing systems) through alignment to the requirements of organic farming, and strengthening organic food processing and trade, in regional value chains wherever possible, safeguards existing jobs and creates new jobs. It also strengthens the economy, which may be of particular benefit to structurally disadvantaged areas.
- **Increasing the amount of organic products in away-from-home catering.** Organic food in **away-from-home catering** is an underdeveloped market segment which, however, offers great opportunities for sales. The aim must be to leverage unexploited potential without neglecting social aspects.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. at: <https://www.bmel.de/DE/themen/landwirtschaft/oekologischer-landbau/zukunftsstrategie-oekologischer-landbau.html> [accessed on 15.12.2023].

- **Supporting the development of the organic food and agricultural sector through more research, knowledge transfer and data.** To date, research has not been geared to adequately support the goal of 30 percent organic farming. The BMEL will therefore focus its **ministerial research** more strongly on the organic food and agricultural sector, and devote more of the federal funds for the BMEL's **research schemes** to this sector. In collaboration with other research stakeholders (for example the Laender), the research infrastructure will be expanded to benefit research into the organic sector. There will be a targeted focus on expanding synergies with other farming systems based on evidence-based methods and procedures. **Knowledge transfer** and data are essential for business decisions and sustainable development; the BMEL will therefore seek to expand **practice research networks** and "real laboratories" as locations for knowledge transfer and transformation research. Access to **data** from research and market data will be improved for practitioners and for advisory services.
- **Legal obstacles and bureaucratic hurdles** for the organic food and agricultural sector **will be addressed** and stakeholders supported in overcoming them. Agriculture, as almost all sectors in Germany, faces ever greater bureaucratic challenges. This also applies to enterprises in the organic sector. The requirements, and also the cost of approvals, applications and documentation, are particularly high in the organic sector, due for example to the fact that organic products need to be certified and traceable along the entire value chain. In order to persuade farms to convert to organic farming, and to keep those who have already gone organic, we need to examine how to reduce existing obstacles and prevent the introduction of new obstacles. Reducing red tape was one of the tasks the governing parties set themselves in their coalition agreement.<sup>9</sup> The Federal Government's key issues paper will outline the next steps towards a further law on reducing red tape.<sup>10</sup> The supporting infrastructure, such as points of contact for practical advice and internet-based platforms for applicants, documentation and information, will be established and expanded to provide assistance in coping with bureaucracy along the entire value chain.

These four main aspects led to **six action areas with a total of 30 measures**; these are intended to help expand the organic food and agricultural sector:

#### **Action areas focused on the links in the value chain:**

1. Align the **input markets** for the food and agricultural sector to the growth goal for organic farming.
2. Exploit the **production** potential of organic farming.
3. Strengthen **processing** and **trade** in organic foods.
4. Promote more sustainable **diets** through organic foods; this also includes **society** strengthening, supporting and appreciating organically produced food.

#### **Additional action areas:**

5. Expand **research** relating to the organic food and agricultural sector, improve networking, create **infrastructures** and make **knowledge** and **data** available to stakeholders.
6. Make the **legal** and **support framework** consistent and align it firmly to the 30 percent organic farming goal.

<sup>9</sup> 2021 to 2025 coalition agreement: "We aim to simplify procedures and rules and to create more time for industry, in particular the self-employed, to deal with their core duties." (Page 32).

<sup>10</sup> Accessible under: [https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Gesetzgebung/Eckpunkte/Eckpunkte\\_BuerokratieentlastungsG.html?nn=148026](https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Gesetzgebung/Eckpunkte/Eckpunkte_BuerokratieentlastungsG.html?nn=148026) [accessed on 15.12.2023].



## 2.4 How will the measures be implemented?

Continuing with the necessary development of organic farming and the organic food industry means ensuring political continuity and reliability. The 2030 Organic Strategy, as an evolution of the Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming, provides a foundation for this over the coming years.

The Federal Programme for Organic Farming (BÖL) is one of the instruments for implementing the measures described in the 2030 Organic Strategy. It was launched in 2002 to improve the framework for organic farming and was also a key instrument in the Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming. To achieve the 30 percent goal, it will be necessary to equip the Federal Programme for Organic Farming with corresponding funds. The Protein Crop Strategy also contains support measures for the organic food and agricultural sector. Other BMEL support schemes will in future also take into account subjects relating to the organic food and agricultural sector. The BMEL's ministerial research will also carry out adequate research regarding the organic food and agricultural sector. Overall, 30 percent of the BMEL's research budget will be used for research in this area. The European Commission is taking similar action (COM, 2021). It intends to use at least 30 percent of total funds for research and innovation measures in the areas of agriculture, forestry and rural areas for topics about or relating to the organic sector.

## 2.5 What further steps are planned?

Only through close cooperation within the Federal Government, Federation and Laender, and between the stakeholders in science, society, industry, administration, advisory services and practice, will it be possible to significantly expand and develop the organic food and agricultural sector.

The various measures need to be implemented more quickly, as there are only seven years to go to achieve the organic farming goal by 2030. The measures must, however, be geared beyond 2030 towards the long term in order to achieve a sustainable development of the organic food and agricultural industry. The aim must therefore be to create the right legal, funding and structural conditions. Cooperative work at the following levels continually assesses and develops the 2030 Organic Strategy in the context of the work of all stakeholders.

- **Inter-ministerial cooperation:** Within the Federal Government, there is a close technical exchange to implement the 2030 Organic Strategy.
- **Cooperation between the Federation and the Laender:** There is a close exchange between the Federation and the Laender at technical level; this also exists or is being established to implement the 2030 Organic Strategy. The cooperation builds on existing exchange formats, such as the regular meetings of the Federation and Laender policy officers for the organic sector.
- **Expert advice:** To implement the 2030 Organic Strategy, the BMEL is advised by experts from industry, science and agricultural advisory services as well as by the Monitoring Committee on the 2030 Organic Strategy.
- **Cooperation at EU level:** The European Commission has launched a body of "organic ambassadors" to flank the work being carried out to implement the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production. This body is made up of delegates from the EU Member States. The BMEL has assumed this task on behalf of Germany.

The BMEL will report regularly on the implementation of the 2030 Organic Strategy. An interim review will be carried out in 2026 and the evaluation of the 2030 Organic Strategy drawn up in 2030.

## 5 Action areas and measures

Six action areas containing a total of 30 measures highlight ways to cooperate with the Laender, academia, industry, advisory services, practitioners and not least civil society to remove obstacles that currently prevent growth in organic production, and consequently prevent progress along an important transformation path for the entire food and agricultural industry. They provide new, important impetus for the sustainable development of the organic food and agricultural industry by examining the entire value chain, from input markets, production, processing and trade all the way to diet, supplemented by research, knowledge transfer, data availability, infrastructure and a coherent legal and funding framework.

### 5.1 Action Area 1: Input markets

#### Objective: Aligning the input markets to the growth goal for organic farming

The input markets for agriculture and the value chain have to date not be sufficiently aligned towards organic production.<sup>11</sup> There is also significant potential for strengthening the organic value chain in this area.

To achieve these aims, the “input markets” action area has three measures to provide support for the areas of plant breeding and animal breeding; input markets; and digital instruments.

#### 5.1.1 Measure 1: Supporting plant and animal breeding for organic farming

##### Description

We need to support plant and animal breeding in providing climate-adapted, site-adapted, robust and high-yielding varieties and lines. In collaboration with the stakeholders from research, industry, administration and advisory services, we will draw up specific proposals on the breeding activities and research, including the entire testing system, that are needed to develop reliable breeding structures in accordance with the standards of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (Norm 4.8), with due consideration given to market requirements and to the methodologies permissible as per Regulation (EU) 2018/848<sup>12</sup>. An exchange format will be established for this purpose and also in order to examine what support possibilities there are for the BMEL and, if applicable, the Laender. The aim is to apply and develop innovative and flexible possibilities which go beyond stand-alone breeding schemes. This particularly includes monitoring genetic diversity, investigating the influence of the production environment on individual plants and animals, also at epigenetic level, protecting the transparency of breeding methods in organic farming and, with regard to animal breeding, developing commercial crossbreeds from existing breeding lines that are suitable for organic farming. In the plant sector, the aim is to provide suitable varieties, adapted to future conditions and developed and tested under sufficiently organic conditions, for all crops. To this end variety testing (within the meaning of an Organic VCU test) also needs to be carried out under organic farming conditions.

Scientific findings will be continually taken into account and the measures will build on past, ongoing and future BMEL calls for research proposals.

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<sup>11</sup> German agriculture purchased inputs worth 49 billion euros in 2021. Feed accounted for the largest share (10.7 billion euros). Other important items included agricultural machinery (7.6 billion euros), fertiliser and plant protection agents (4.6 billion euros), agricultural services (3.2 billion euros), seed and planting material (2.4 billion euros) and veterinary medicine (1 billion euros). (DBV, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> IFOAM standards accessible at: <https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/2020-09/IFOAM%20Norms%20July%202014%20Edits%202019.pdf> [accessed on 15.12.2023].

## Objective

The objective of the measure is to support the breeding sector and all relevant stakeholders in developing genotypes adapted to organic farming, giving due consideration to the future climatic conditions, to test these genotypes under organic conditions and to make them available to practitioners. We will therefore in future focus more strongly on plant and animal breeding, as well as on the entire testing system for organic farming, including horticulture, wine-growing and other crops, for this is the basis of a high-performance and competitive organic agricultural sector and is closely linked to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in accordance with the aims of agrobiodiversity (cf. measure 9).

### 5.1.2 Measure 2: Continuing to develop the input markets for organic farming and the organic value chain

#### Description

In order to continue developing the input markets for organic farming and the organic value chain, we will collaborate with stakeholders from research, industry, advisory services and administration to identify existing deficits and inhibiting factors which prevent inputs being available in sufficient quantities as per the stipulations of Regulation (EU) 2018/848. We will establish a regular exchange format to discuss the following issues:

- What inputs require more research and development (e.g. methods to close regional nutrient cycles, methods to exploit previously neglected nutrient sources)?
- What inputs are not available in sufficient quantities?
- How can availability be improved?
- What specific measures can the Federal Government take to provide support in this regard?

New scientific knowledge is also continually taken into account and linked to the BMEL's past and ongoing calls for project proposals.

#### Objective

The objective of the measure is to support stakeholders on input markets so that they can provide sufficient, high-quality inputs for organic farming and organic food processing that meet the specifications of Regulation (EU) 2018/848. Sustainability aspects and already existing approaches for a circular economy will be taken into account.

### 5.1.3 Measure 3: Developing digital instruments for better data and input management

#### Description

Business management, controls and markets both require and generate ever more data. Innovative digitisation approaches can improve the collection, evaluation and targeted use of data in practice, for example for field records and herd management, and also for the assessment and optimisation of sustainability in production processes (for example regarding energy efficiency, water consumption, biodiversity, humus formation and the use of plant protection agents and fertilisers). The specific requirements, legislation and regulations for organic farming require adapted instruments for efficient data and information management and to support decision-making processes. This measures will also examine how existing systems can be integrated and expanded.

It is also important to ensure that existing and future systems are interoperable, specifically in respect of the data collected under the Integrated Administration and Control System (InVeKoS). The potential of drone-based and satellite-based technologies will be demonstrated and utilised. A prerequisite for this is, however, that farms control the automatic feeding-in of data into farm management information systems and other platforms, and the forwarding of data, and that these processes are data-protected.

**Objective**

The objective of the measure is to promote the development of specific digital instruments, databases and information systems to support stakeholders in the organic food and agricultural sector in documentation and decision-making processes. This applies, for example, to the areas of plant protection, nutrient management, feed planning, pasture management, animal management, markets and control systems (comprehensibility) and in respect of climate balances and sustainability assessments. The potential of drone-based and satellite-based technologies will be identified and taken into account. The specific requirements of organic farming will be investigated, especially in order to create synergies regarding the reduction of administrative costs.

**5.2 Action Area 2: Production****Objective: Exploit organic farming's performance potential**

The most important function of arable farming, horticulture, fruit cultivation, wine-growing, hop growing, aquaculture, beekeeping and animal husbandry is to create high quality foods while at the same time providing as extensive environmental services as possible. Organic farming works within a circular economy and attempts to sustainably achieve adequate yields based on the farm's capacity and the potential of the local natural conditions, while providing maximum environmental services.

The "production" action area has seven measures to provide the necessary support for arable farming, fruit growing, vegetable growing, wine growing, hop growing, grassland farming, animal husbandry and whole-farm system developments.

**5.2.1 Measure 4: Exploiting organic farming's yield potential****Description**

This measure will evaluate past research findings, in particular on site-adapted crop rotation systems, yield potential, nutrient management and soil fertility, and prepare these findings for targeted application in scientific and agricultural practice in order to exploit organic farming's yield potential and stabilise the yields under changing climatic conditions. This evaluation will be used to work with stakeholders from research, industry, advisory services and administration to determine further research requirements for continued system developments. Basic training, advanced training and knowledge transfer will also be further optimised with the assistance of technical consultations. Some of the necessary steps are closely linked to measures 1 - 3 and to action area 5 on "Research, knowledge transfer, data availability and infrastructure", which will necessitate an integrated approach.

**Objective**

The objective of the measure is to continue to develop organic production systems and management concepts, in order to increase the yields in organic plant production while retaining and / or increasing the services to the environment and the services of general interest. The aim is for these developments to be able to be integrated with and transferred to other forms of sustainable production.

**5.2.2 Measure 5: Strengthening legumes as a basis of organic cultivation systems****Description**

This measure gives due regard to the special role of legumes for both organic and conventional cultivation systems by supporting the transfer of knowledge on the relative importance of the different species and types of cultivation for the long-term sustainability and productivity of these systems. With regard to research, it will remove uncertainties and close significant gaps in knowledge, particularly regarding nitrogen balance, the self-

incompatibility of legumes, the interplay between the species and cultivation safety. Support through collaborative activities involving practice, industry, advisory services and research will continue to develop legume-based crop rotation systems and promote the use and processing of legumes. Close dovetailing with the Protein Crop Strategy is indispensable in this regard.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is, by expanding legume cultivation – the basis of all organic cultivation systems, with significant prospects for the conventional sector – to have a positive impact on environmental services such as soil conservation and species protection and, over and beyond the cultivation itself, to bolster the processing and use of the different species according to the respective purpose.

## **5.2.3 Measure 6: Raising awareness of potential of organic grassland farming**

### **Description**

To raise awareness of the economic and ecological potential of organic grassland farming in agricultural practice, and hence to facilitate use of this farming practice, the BMEL will hold consultations with the Laender on existing advisory and support schemes and on developing and focusing them on organic grassland farming (GAK support area 2B). This must be dovetailed with measure 7 on “Strengthening organic livestock husbandry and feeding” and with the commercially viable models for using male animals from milk and egg production that measure 7 addresses. A particular focus is therefore on pastoral farming, in particular of dairy cows in organic farming. Advisory services on pasture management, including sustainable approaches to controlling pasture parasites, will be strengthened for this purpose. Ideally, this will create synergies with nature conservation and promote biodiversity. Findings will be made accessible and disseminated in the agricultural sector as widely as possible.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to raise awareness about the advantages of organic pastoral farming and to create incentives for conventional grassland farms to convert to organic grassland farming. Organic farms will also be supported in managing grassland according to their performance potential. In addition to the production of high-quality pasture-fed meat – an ethically sound means of using male animals in organic milk production – other factors include an increase in biodiversity and carbon sequestration (storage of CO<sub>2</sub>).

## **5.2.4 Measure 7: Strengthening organic livestock husbandry and feed**

### **Description**

In order to strengthen organic livestock husbandry and feed, the BMEL will collaborate with stakeholders from research, industry, advisory services and administration in the ongoing development of feed concepts and advisory material for 100 percent organic feeding. Joint concepts will also be drawn up on commercially viable breeding and utilisation models for male animals in organic milk and egg production. Funding will be provided for regional and mobile slaughter structures permitted under Regulation (EU) 2018/848, for investments, in particular animal welfare-oriented housing, and for the additional ongoing expenses resulting from the need to comply with more stringent animal welfare requirements.

This measure will continually take new scientific evidence into account and build on the BMEL’s past and ongoing calls for project proposals. It is necessary to dovetail this measure with measure 1 on “supporting plant and animal breeding for organic farming” in order to provide suitable fodder crops for the need-based feed and animal lines. The findings and (improved) practices from this measure will, in order to increase animal welfare across the board, also be made available to conventional farms.

## Objective

The objective of the measure is to support farms in meeting the organic feed requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 and to slaughter the animals humanely and as far as possible without being transported over long distances. The measure will also increase the economic value of male animals in organic milk and egg production and provide financial support for the conversion of livestock husbandry.

### 5.2.5 Measure 8: Promoting the development, reinforcement and transparency of animal welfare in organic farming

#### Description

To further promote animal protection and animal welfare in organic farming, the BMEL will collaborate with stakeholders from research, advisory services, control systems, practitioners and administration to develop concepts for organic control bodies that record and evaluate corresponding measures. The measure will establish in practice an evidence-based animal-welfare testing regime based on action-orientated requirements (husbandry and management) and on additional result-orientated aspects (integration of animal-related indicators) (March et al. 2019). Test protocols, evaluation frameworks and training concepts for controllers will also be developed and implemented in practice. Existing digital instruments and advisory materials will also be considered and expanded. Due consideration will be given to ensuring that animal welfare test systems are practicable and able to be applied by all stakeholders at as little expense as possible.

The transfer of knowledge related to animal protection and animal welfare will also be intensified by providing practicable training and support opportunities for organic farms, for farms interested in converting to organic farming, and for advisory services. The BMEL will work with the Laender to draw up options for basic and advanced training and for individual and group counselling. Support will be provided to implement preventive management concepts based on data recorded during controls.

#### Objective

The objective of the measure is to develop efficient, evidence-based and practicable concepts for organic inspection bodies to monitor animal protection and animal welfare, and to intensify knowledge transfer to promote quality and transparency in organic livestock husbandry.

### 5.2.6 Measure 9: Continuing to develop region-specific and site-specific conversion concepts

#### Description

To increase the number of organic farms, the BMEL will firstly discuss with the Laender how to develop region-specific analyses of the potential for farms to convert to organic livestock husbandry and organic arable, fruit, vegetable, wine and hop growing based on site and production conditions and the establishment of relevant value chains, and how already existing analyses of potential can be further developed and linked to the Laenders' organic action plans. Secondly, current operating data on organic plant production and livestock husbandry will be collected and prepared to be used for counselling (on conversion), for example for inter-farm comparisons. Both the region-specific analyses of potential and the farm data and information will be made easily accessible to farmers interested in converting and to advisory services, with existing structures being used and expanded. There will be a particular focus on promoting the potential of organic farming in protected areas through advisory services and regional marketing models in order to expand synergies between nature conservation measures and organic farming in the regions. The measure will at the same time ensure that business secrets are protected and that competitive structures are maintained, both within the organic market and between organic and conventional products.



**Objective**

The objective of the measure is to show conventional farms the economic potential of converting to organic farming and in this way to make the decision to convert easier.

### 5.2.7 Measure 10: Promoting biological and genetic diversity in agricultural landscapes, crops and livestock

**Description**

In order to promote genetic diversity in agriculture, the measure will use status analyses to describe the genetic diversity (agrobiodiversity) that is used in arable farming, including the relevance and the extent of the cultivation of specialty crops and traditional crop varieties, and in livestock farming, including the husbandry of domestic livestock breeds. The measure will also systematically test existing genetic material, including local varieties and traditional cultivars, under organic conditions in order to identify potential for organic cultivation. To ultimately be able to also market these organic foods, the measure will seek to cooperate with stakeholders from research, industry, advisory services and administration to develop production systems and regional value chains. Financial support options, consistent with existing support instruments, will be developed in order to be able to implement the above measures. Advisory services aimed at nature protection, the support of biodiversity and the strengthening of pastoral farming will be expanded for farms so that the potential of organic farming can also be used to support biodiversity in the parts of the agricultural landscape that are not used for agriculture. Models will continue to be developed to conserve rare species in the fields (e.g. in weed management). Expanding agroforestry systems with a large variety of crops also contributes to agrobiodiversity, promotes climate change mitigation and helps agriculture adapt to altered climatic conditions.

**Objective**

The objective of the measure is to produce synergies between safeguarding agrobiodiversity, promoting biological diversity in the agricultural landscape and strengthening the food and agricultural industry.

## 5.3 Action Area 3: Processing and trade

**Objective: Strengthen organic food processing and trade**

The planned expansion of total land under organic farming will only be a success if the additional organic raw materials that are produced, and if possible processed regionally, can add value in Germany when sold via direct marketing, trade or away-from-home catering. Organic farming's diversity and products, and the quality of these products, require downstream structures that can deal with this large variety, both technically and conceptionally. Artisanal food producers are particularly suited, but medium-sized processors, in which production is not completely automated, also meet the above requirements.

The food industry has been undergoing a significant structural change for many years. The number of corresponding processing establishments (for instance in the grain, meat and dairy processing sectors) has decreased, in some cases drastically, in many regions over recent decades. At the same time, the positive development of some processing companies and their environments shows that the combination of organic production and artisanal and/or medium-sized structures can provide sustainable impetus for (re-)vitalisation, especially of rural areas.

The "processing and trade" action area contains four measures that aim to help sustainably strengthen the organic value chain, both in specific regions and across Germany as a whole, and thus enable forward-looking business partnerships to be established or expanded.

### 5.3.1 Measure 11: Promoting value chains through management and networking

#### Description

In order to further develop organic value chains through management and fair partnerships, the BMEL will work with a range of experts that are still to be nominated (e.g. competent coordinators at Laender level, and representatives from science, administration, industry and associations) to define the remit of the “value chain manager”.<sup>13</sup> Further training opportunities, supervision and coaching for this target group will be developed and conducted, and networking structures (communication and knowledge platforms) created. The aim will be to dovetail this measure with measure 24 on “structurally integrating and improving methodology of knowledge transfer and research communication”.

#### Objective

The objective of the measure is to pool findings about establishing and expanding processing and marketing chains of and for organically produced products and to empower those working in value chain management by conveying knowledge for successful work practices.

### 5.3.2 Measure 12: Continuing to develop fair partnerships

#### Description

Existing, exemplary cooperation agreements and contracts between value chain partners, both national and international, will be evaluated, pooled, anonymised and then published in order to learn from good examples in practice. This should also cover relevant experiences from German development cooperation in promoting agroecology and relevant agricultural value chains. It is planned to dovetail this measure with measure 11 on “promoting value chains through management and networking”.

#### Objective

The objective of the measure is to communicate important conditions for fair partnerships within value chains. It is intended to contribute towards initiating contracts and to promoting long-term and reliable contractual relations between the value chain partners.

### 5.3.3 Measure 13: Tailoring support schemes to small and medium-sized enterprises along the organic value chain

#### Description

The BMEL will firstly discuss with industry how the Federal Government’s support database can be adapted to improve its usability for small and medium-sized enterprises in order to better show the support options that exist for these enterprises all along the organic value chain. Secondly, a guide will be developed for companies along the organic value chain and for advisers to these companies; in addition to providing information on organic production, this guide will also provide targeted information on the steps to take for important support schemes along the organic value chain. To ensure that the support options reach the targeted practitioners, regular in-depth information on existing support options for small and medium-sized enterprises along the organic value chain will be provided to the economic support institutions in the Laender, regions and municipalities, as well as to advisers to industry, practitioners, the trade guilds and organic value chain management, thus supporting them

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<sup>13</sup> The term “value chain manager” also covers the currently common job profiles such as value chain developer, regional manager, regional advisor and cooperation management.

in their work. To this end, it will be evaluated whether contacts can be established and supported as a priority to train advisers and act as intermediaries and a first point of contact.

### Objective

The measure targets small and medium-sized enterprises that carry out processing and marketing operations along the organic value chain (or plan to do so) and aims to reduce obstacles regarding the use of support schemes by the Federation, the Laender and the EU, and consequently to facilitate the uptake of this support.

## 5.3.4 Measure 14: Supporting the creation and expansion of regional and organic processing and marketing capacities

### Description

In order to create and expand regional, organic processing and marketing capacities, support schemes will cover costs that small and medium-sized enterprises incur in connection with:

- initial advice on creating and successfully marketing an organic production line;
- advice on product development (organic manufacturers); and
- on the conversion of their enterprises to organic production.

A best practice network for organic enterprises will be developed, in which companies act as points of contact for technical advice and discussions. A virtual map of stakeholders will be drawn up and maintained with the support of industry. These enterprise-to-enterprise discussions will be used to facilitate the entry of food start-ups into the organic sector; the start-ups will also be assisted by networking, both with other start-ups and with experienced organic entrepreneurs.

### Objective

The objective of the measure is to support and promote small and medium-sized enterprises that are interested in processing and marketing regionally and organically along the value chain.

## 5.4 Action Area 4: Diet and society

### Objective: Boost the demand for organic food

The planetary boundaries have been transgressed for decades. The negative impact this has had on the environment and the climate is already evident, necessitating a transformation of the food system. The Eat Lancet Commission has shown how the future global population of 10 billion people in 2050 can be fed a healthy diet within the planet's ecological boundaries. The Planetary Health Diet is largely in accordance with the German Nutrition Society's recommendations (DGE, 2022) on a wholesome diet. The recommended quantities of food are also within the German Nutrition Society's guidance values. Along with other international evaluations, the results of the EAT Lancet Commission confirm that the implementation of dietary recommendations demonstrably promotes health and protects the environment. This necessary transformation to climate and environmentally friendly consumption patterns will only succeed if citizens are supported in this process (Willett et al., 2019; German Nutrition Society, 2022). It is important to provide citizens with information on what impact their grocery choices have on the environment and the climate. The Federal Government must carry out extensive awareness-building work to make this impact transparent and to provide support.

Another key lever is to significantly increase the share of organic goods in away-from-home catering, i.e. both in public catering businesses, such as day-care centres for children, schools, nursing homes, hospitals and authorities, and in the private hotel and restaurant industry, including catering. The percentage of organic food in away-from-home catering is low in Germany compared with Denmark or Austria and has untapped potential for the

sale and consumption of organic products. The trend to more sustainability in the hotel and restaurant industry offers a useful start. There are many examples of canteens across Germany that have shown that increasing the percentage of organic food can often be largely cost-neutral and consequently socially compatible.<sup>14</sup>

The “Diet and society” action area aims to provide support via five measures in the areas of consumer information and away-from-home catering, in order to open up access to a regional, seasonal, organic and sustainable diet.

#### **5.4.1 Measure 15: Continuing to expand communication on “organic”**

##### **Description**

Wide-ranging and targeted communication measures, for example a consumer information offensive or argumentation aids, will be developed and implemented to inform citizens and stakeholders along the entire value chain, from production and processing to trade and away-from-home catering, about the added social value of the organic food and agricultural sector, and to build trust in the statutory regulatory and labelling system for organic foods.

##### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to provide comprehensive information on the organic food and agricultural sector and to close gaps in knowledge in a fact-based and addressee-orientated manner. The measure will also raise awareness about organic farming, organic food processing and a diet featuring organic food as one of the possible answers to the current global challenges regarding climate change mitigation, livestock husbandry and the protection of soil, species and drinking water.

#### **5.4.2 Measure 16: Increasing the share of organic food in the canteens of the federal administrative authorities and in other public mass catering facilities**

##### **Description**

In order to increase the share of organic food in the canteens of the federal administrative authorities, the relevant canteen regulations now provide that the share of organic food on the canteen menus should be increased to at least 30 percent by 2030 at the latest. The BMEL will also conduct a consultation project to support those federal canteens in Berlin that aim to have 30% or more organic food on their menus.<sup>15</sup> The BMEL, the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation (BMUV) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI) / procurement office of the BMI (BeschA) intend to carry out a nationwide pilot project by 2025 at the latest to reach at least 50% organic food in interested authorities / canteens, in accordance with the policy plan on sustainability no. VI 2.) b. In order to support public catering institutions in increasing the amount of organic food in their canteens, the BMEL will continue the advisory services under the Federal Organic Farming Scheme, via measures such as “BioBitte - Mehr Bio in öffentlichen Küchen” (Organic Food Please - More Organic Food in Public Catering Facilities) and “Bio kann jeder - nachhaltig essen in Kita und Schule” (Organic food’s for everybody - eating sustainably in preschools and schools). The criteria for awarding the “Blauer Engel”, the German state

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<sup>14</sup> The following are just some of the many examples: The canteen of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Berlin managed to significantly increase the percentage of organic food to 43 percent by the end of 2022, with only around a 6 percent increase in costs. The Havelhöhe community hospital in Berlin achieved the goal of more than 40% organic food without increasing its budget. The refectory of the Finance Institute of the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia in Wuppertal has 65% organic products, with the food allowance remaining the same.

<sup>15</sup> Almost 20 percent of all the canteens of the federal administrative authorities subject to the action plan on sustainability are located in Berlin. Due to this, it is planned to have a separate consultation project for Berlin, in which advisory capacities can be pooled and the content specifically adapted to the conditions for canteens of the federal administrative authorities in Berlin. Canteens of the federal administrative authorities in other towns and cities can participate in the pilot project of the BMEL, BMUV and BMI / BeschA.

environment label, for “event catering and canteens” were also published in the summer of 2023. Discussions are being held with the Laender on whether the canteen regulation on the share of organic products can serve as a blueprint for the canteens of the Land administrative authorities. All support measures under measure 17 on “facilitating the use of organic foods for away-from-home catering companies” also apply to public catering institutions.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to increase the share of organic food in the canteens of the federal administrative authorities and to support other public away-from-home catering institutions in increasing this share while at the same time implementing the quality standards of the German Nutrition Society (DGE) for away-from-home catering. The BMEL will also encourage the Federation institutions to take ambitious action in increasing the share of organic food, so that a share of 30% is reached in 2027.

## **5.4.3 Measure 17: Facilitating the use of organic foods for away-from-home catering companies**

### **Description**

Institutions that want to introduce organic food in their kitchens, or increase the amount to at least 30 percent of the monetary cost of goods sold, can apply for financial support for counselling and staff training on the “Guidelines on Promoting the Counselling of Away-From-Home Catering Companies on the Increased Use of Organically Farmed Products (RIBE-AHV)”. The Organic Away-From-Home Catering Ordinance (Bio-AHV) creates national rules on organic labelling that are specifically tailored to the requirements of away-from-home catering and of the related controls and certification. The BioAHVV also provides a nationwide, standardised test procedure to inspect the organic share and the opportunity for away-from-home catering companies to be awarded a credible and standardised State Bio-AHV label in bronze, silver or gold.<sup>16</sup> The organic certification costs for away-from-home catering companies will also be funded for the first two years. Additionally, the “Ernährungswende in der Region” (Regional food system change) competition, which was launched by the BMEL in 2023, will also promote the use of organic food in away-from-home catering.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to facilitate the use of organic food for away-from-home catering companies. The financial support for counselling and certification, and the organic logo for restaurants, refectories and canteens, will increase the attractiveness of using organic food in away-from-home catering.

## **5.4.4 Measure 18: Strengthening advisory services for away-from-home catering companies interested in conversion**

### **Description**

In order to strengthen advisory services for away-from-home catering companies interested in converting to organic products, the measure will carry out a status quo analysis to identify how the current regional advisory services are structured nationwide, what regions advisory services for away-from-home catering companies need to be expanded in, what kind of additional counselling is required, and what areas have further needs that have not previously been met. Based on the analysis, a concept will be drawn up on how to meet the current and future needs in the advisory services, and how they can be raised to a unified, nationwide standard, taking into account regional differences in structure. Additionally, the measure will create a dialogue network for advisers to promote

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<sup>16</sup> Fact-finding events are currently being offered to advisers to ensure standardised and legally secure organic labelling. Further information is also accessible at: [www.bio-ahv.de](http://www.bio-ahv.de) [accessed on 15.12.2023].

advanced training and exchange of experiences within the advisory-service structure and to take on quality assurance tasks. The promotion of the organic agricultural and horticultural advisory-service structure can act as an example here.

This has been flanked by the publication of the BMEL's "Guidelines on Promoting the Counselling of Away-From-Home Catering Companies on the Increased Use of Organically Farmed Products (RIBE-AHV)".

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to create a nationwide advisory-service structure for away-from-home catering companies that are interested in converting to organic products and provide high-quality, comparable advice geared to the region and the target group.

## **5.4.5 Measure 19: Strengthening education on the production and processing of organic foods along the value chain**

The goal is to promote comprehensive nutritional education, including in general-education schools, in order to transform the agri-food system and foster a healthy and sustainable diet. This would allow people to learn about the concepts of the organic food and agricultural sector at a younger age. Discussions will therefore be held with the responsible stakeholders of the Laender on whether internships in enterprises along the organic value chain can be integrated into the curriculae of general-education schools. It will also be discussed how enterprises offering such internships can be supported by paedagogical training opportunities.

It will also be examined whether it is possible to develop and establish a competition focusing on the organic sector for vocational schools that train students for food and agricultural jobs, with awards being presented for the best activities (e.g. projects and exam assignments).

In order to also teach the required depth and range of skills for organic food processing in the vocational schools, a status quo analysis will be conducted and a working group involving all stakeholders in artisanal food training will develop and implement concepts and measures to ensure that particular aspects of organic food processing are integrated appropriately into the dual vocational training system. In addition to this, suitable support schemes will develop projects and initiatives to provide teaching staff from both general-education schools and the vocational schools with insights into the organic value chain.

These measures will be implemented in harmony with the National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to facilitate access to knowledge and skills relating to a healthy and sustainable diet and to the organic food and agricultural sector, and to develop ways in which young people and their teaching staff, in both general-education schools and vocational schools, can learn about organic production and processing. The resultant familiarity with the organic value chain is intended to increase the interest in a vocational future in the organic food and agricultural sector.



## 5.5 Action Area 5: Research, knowledge transfer, data availability and infrastructure

**Objective: Research, knowledge transfer, data availability and infrastructure for the organic food and agricultural sector will be expanded as part of the transformation of the agri-food system**

The transformation of the agri-food system must be supported and flanked by research in all areas. Overarching approaches that pool and focus research resources are needed to exploit the full potential of the organic food and agricultural industry, and to promote its expansion.

This requires both fundamental and practical research that follows disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, as well as the close involvement of practitioners and systemic research under real conditions along the entire value chain. Knowledge transfer to organic farms and farms interested in converting to organic farming is indispensable for networking and for solving production and processing problems. This research, this knowledge transfer, the data availability and the research infrastructure for the development and expansion of the organic food and agricultural industry can be decisive factors in the acceptance by all stakeholders and in their motivation to address and actively shape the realignment of the food and agricultural system.

The action area on “Research, knowledge transfer, data availability and infrastructure” aims to provide the necessary impetus with the following seven measures and in this way to contribute significantly to the further development of the organic food and agricultural industry.

### 5.5.1 Measure 20: Aligning research strategies and schemes to the organic food and agricultural sector

#### Description

In order to strengthen support for research on the organic food and agricultural industry and the respective food systems, the subject will be integrated into research strategies and schemes. This also includes focused and fundamental research schemes. This goes hand in hand with the provision of the necessary funds for the support of research, development and innovation in this sector.

In addition to this, the BMEL will collaborate with science, industry, advisory services and practice as part of an ongoing and systematic process to identify current research subjects and prioritise them according to current requirements. Research requirements and their prioritisation will be regularly reviewed and, if necessary, realigned in accordance with societal goals. This requires a close dovetailing with measure 21 on “strengthening and equipping the BMEL’s ministerial research to provide policy support on the organic food and agricultural sector”.

#### Objective

The objective of the measure is to organise research strategies, research schemes and research infrastructure in such a way that they promote an ecological and sustainable food and agricultural transformation.

### 5.5.2 Measure 21: Strengthening and equipping the BMEL’s ministerial research to provide policy support on the organic food and agricultural sector

#### Description

In accordance with the 30 percent goal, the BMEL’s ministerial research will be equipped to find solutions to topics and issues of importance for the organic food and agricultural sector. Coupled with this, the BMEL’s research institutions will be provided with research conditions and infrastructures that correspond to the legal framework for organic production and processing and adequately reflect organic farming practice. Structures will also be developed to facilitate continuous networking, both between the Federal Ministries’ research institutions

and also with other relevant research institutions. This measure must be closely dovetailed with measure 20 on “aligning research strategies and schemes to the organic food and agricultural sector”.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to align and structurally equip the BMEL’s research institutions to enable them to continue to develop the research projects relating to the organic food and agricultural sector within their own purview in order to provide substantive advice and support to policy makers and society in the necessary transformation of the entire agri-food system.

## **5.5.3 Measure 22: Structurally strengthening the regional research landscape, developing young research talent, expanding knowledge on the organic food and agricultural sector and strengthening innovation**

### **Description**

In order to strengthen research, development and innovation in the organic food and agricultural sector throughout Germany, discussions will be held with the Laender and with science on how research into issues relating to the organic food and agricultural sector at universities and Land research institutions can be comprehensively strengthened and made attractive for young research talent. Together with the Laender, science and practice, programmes will be drawn up to establish regional contact points that facilitate access to funds and links to practitioners. Joint work will also be carried out to develop new funding models for research and practical implementation for farmers, small and medium-sized enterprises, start-ups, project spin-offs, consortia from science and practice and a cross-Laender exchange format on subjects related to the organic food and agricultural sector.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measures is to collaborate with the Laender and science to enshrine research and innovation relating to the organic food and agricultural sector in the regional research landscape.

## **5.5.4 Measure 23: Triggering transformation via practical research on organic production and sustainable diet**

### **Description**

The BMEL will collaborate with the Laender, research, advisory services and practice to develop analysis-based research concepts and structures aimed at strengthening practical research to further develop organic production and the processing, distribution and consumption of organic food. These concepts and structures will include data generation, data retention, the long-term flanking of projects and a supra-regional network of researchers.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is to create structures for conducting research under real conditions, thereby facilitating wide-ranging studies, advisory services and practical application of knowledge on developing the organic food and agricultural industry and on analysing and developing the sustainability of agri-food systems.

## **5.5.5 Measure 24: Structurally integrating and improving methodology of knowledge transfer and research communication**

### **Description**

In order to strengthen the transfer of knowledge gained in research relating to the organic food and agricultural sector to all relevant sectors, the BMEL will, in collaboration with science, advisory services, educational establishments and practice, analyse the reasons for the known shortcomings in knowledge transfer from the organic

food and agricultural sector to the various target groups and draw up a package of measures to eliminate these shortcomings. Approaches to promote knowledge transfer from research into the organic food and agricultural sector will be developed and expanded. Together with the Laender, discussions will be held on how to make knowledge transfer from university research into the organic food and agricultural sector more successful and what research communication structures need to be developed. It will also be possible to build on the existing knowledge transfer structures in the Federal Organic Farming Scheme.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is, in compliance with the principles of scientific communication, to communicate research results relating to the organic food and agricultural sector in a manner appropriate to the respective target group and adapted to requirements for all actors in both the organic and the conventional food and agricultural industry.

## **5.5.6 Measure 25: Promoting teaching about the organic food and agricultural sector at universities**

### **Description**

The aim is, with the help of a status quo analysis, to determine how deeply and broadly the topics of the organic food and agricultural industry have been included in the degree courses of veterinary medicine, food science and dietary science. In order to facilitate access to the organic food and agricultural industry for students at German universities, discussions will be conducted with the Laender and universities / science on how the teaching content about these areas can be systematically introduced into the curriculae of the agricultural study courses.

### **Objective**

The objective of the measure is above all, with regard to the undergraduate university courses, to impart knowledge about the organic food and agricultural industry on an equal footing with knowledge about the conventional system.

## **5.5.7 Measure 26: Improving the availability of data on organic farming and the organic food sector**

### **Description**

In order to make comprehensive and differentiated data on the organic food and agricultural industry available, it will be necessary to collect data on organic production, processing and trade, including import and export, continually and as far as possible in accordance with the same protocols, and to then make these data available rapidly to all interested parties (research, industry, advisory services, administration and practitioners). The measure will at the same time ensure that business secrets are protected and that competitive structures are maintained, both within the organic market and between organic and conventional products. In collaboration with the sector, the need will be continually recorded and potential solutions discussed with the competent bodies. The general harvest and fruit-tree surveys will take greater account of organic farming in particular. Discussions will be held with the Laender and the organic control bodies on whether the organic control bodies operating in Germany could in future conduct a digital, standardised collection of the data and information as part of the organic certification of their clients, and then enter them in an anonymised form in a database. It will be discussed how, in respect of the processing enterprises, the data and information can be collected in a standardised manner while also being differentiated according to the respective sector. In order to continue to bolster the market relevance of organic food enterprises, the measure will also examine options for recording further business data such as the number of employees. Discussions will also be conducted with the Laender - including during the

implementation of the new Regulation (EU) 2022/2379<sup>17</sup> - how the production volume of organic livestock and the respective slaughter volume can be recorded and made available. It will also be examined whether and how the BMEL's voluntary test farm network can be adapted so that the participating organic farms adequately represent the organic farm sector in Germany. It will also be examined whether a test network of enterprises along the value chain could be established. Following the development of a standard sustainability structure at European level, it is necessary to examine the idea of having a central database to calculate the environmental footprints with suitable data from Germany, including organic data. The already existing databases and networks must be incorporated in order to meet these aims. In general, the measure will particularly examine how to build on the developments of the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) and specifically how to link up with the NFDI consortia FAIRagro and NFDI4BioDiversity. They must be better connected and utilised to a greater extent, and the instruments that become available as a result of the ongoing digitalisation in administration and practice must be used. It will be examined whether the Thünen Institute can play a coordinating role in this regard.

### Objective

The objective of the measure is to improve data availability and quality on organic production and the organic food sector.

## 5.6 Action Area 6: A coherent legal and support framework

### Objective: To consistently gear the legal and support framework towards strengthening the organic food and agricultural sector

Support, regulatory and fiscal measures support the fundamental change of the agri-food system in addition to research. These measures are an expression of political will and constitute the guidelines for a sustainable development of the organic food and agricultural sector, at both national and European level. The aim is to use the proven forms of cooperation between the Federation and the Laender and at European level in order to drive the transformation and at the same time to bear in mind the Global South, with its flows of goods, its challenges and its opportunities. The four measures developed in the action area on "a coherent legal and support framework" are intended to make a decisive contribution towards achieving this.

### 5.6.1 Measure 27: Gearing the Improvement of the Regional Economic Structure (GRW) and the Joint Task for the Improvement of Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection (GAK) more strongly towards the goals of sustainability, environmental protection and climate stewardship and the GAK also towards the organic food and agricultural sector

#### Description

In order to gear the Improvement of the Regional Economic Structure (GRW) and the Joint Task for the Improvement of Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection (GAK) more strongly towards the goals of sustainability, environmental protection and climate stewardship and the GAK also towards the organic food and agricultural sector, the Federal Government will cooperate with the Laender in regularly examining, as set out in the coalition agreement, whether the fundamentals of support in the GRW and GAK serve the above objectives and to what extent improvements can be made.

<sup>17</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/2379 of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 November 2022 on statistics on agricultural input and output, amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 617/2008 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1165/2008, (EC) No 543/2009 and (EC) No 1185/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directive 96/16/EC. Official journal of the European Union L 315/1 of 07/02/2022.

**Objective**

The objective of the measure is, in cooperation with the Laender, to gear the principles of support in the GRW and the GAK more strongly towards the objectives described in the coalition agreement.

**5.6.2 Measure 28: Gearing the CAP more strongly towards the goals of sustainability, environment protection, climate stewardship and organic farming****Description**

In accordance with the objectives of the coalition agreement, the BMEL will draft proposals on how the direct payments in the first pillar of the EU CAP and the payments in the second pillar can, after 2027, be geared more strongly towards the goals of sustainability, environmental protection, and climate stewardship as well as on safeguarding of farm income and the excellent quality of organic farming. It will be imperative to give consideration in this regard to the necessary transformation of conventional agriculture to an agriculture geared more strongly towards environmental services and services of general interest. Following the experiences regarding the last agricultural reforms, the necessity of making far-reaching simplifications to the CAP has proved to be a matter of ongoing urgency, as the practical implementation of the EU agricultural support has become even more complicated. The post-2027 CAP must therefore become less bureaucratic for enterprises and administration. In autumn 2023, a policy paper will be presented on how the direct payments can be replaced in an appropriate and income-generating manner by the remuneration of climate and environmental services. Support schemes to improve biodiversity services geared towards organic farming will be developed by 2026.<sup>18</sup>

**Objective**

The objective of the measure is, together with the Laender, to drive the transformation towards more sustainability, climate action and environmental protection while safeguarding farm income in agriculture through the future structure of the EU CAP.

**5.6.3 Measure 29: Continuing to develop Regulation (EU) 2018/848 and creating a coherent national regulatory framework for boosting the organic food and agricultural sector****Description**

With the aim of ensuring that Regulation (EU) 2018/848 remains practicable and growth-orientated, the BMEL will conduct joint discussions with the Laender and industry on the Regulation's further development. In addition to this, Germany continues to take an active role in the relevant debate at European level.

In addition to this, discussions will be conducted with the Laender and industry on whether and - if so - what procedural steps considered necessary to date are hindering a conversion to organic production and how these can be changed without endangering the quality of organic production and processing or disregarding the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/848.

**Objective**

The objective of the measure is to drive forward the further development of Regulation (EU) 2018/848, to jointly identify procedural obstacles and to draw up solutions.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf.: 2030 National Biodiversity Strategy – proposals for discussion put forward by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV): <https://dialog.bmu.de/bmu/de/process/58604> [accessed on 12.12.2023].

#### 5.6.4 Measure 30: Developing organic farming methods as a policy option for the Global South to achieve the human right to adequate food

##### Description

In order to better develop organic farming methods as a policy option for the Global South to achieve the human right to adequate food, site-appropriate production methods and organic farming practices will be supported in development cooperation. This can help achieve various Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, in particular 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 15.

##### Objective

The objective of the measure is to:

- create local, diverse, productive and resilient production for (smallholder) farming enterprises in regions that are particularly affected by food insecurity;
- support the expansion of local and regional value creation up to and including entry into the international organic market;
- drive forward the sustainable development of existing production systems, while including traditional and local knowledge, and support knowledge-sharing in this area;
- strengthen women, in particular young mothers, as family breadwinners; and
- highlight and offer organic farming as an option for climate action, environmental conservation and health protection, in the spirit of One Health, for regions that are particularly affected by food insecurity.



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