



POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY DECLARATION FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES



LIFE 4 POLLINATORS

INVOLVING PEOPLE TO PROTECT WILD BEES AND OTHER POLLINATORS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



This declaration has been drafted during the implementation of the **LIFE18 GIE/IT/000755** co-financed by the LIFE Program of the European Union.





This template, based on the guidance produced by Buglife UK: “Helping pollinators locally – Developing a local pollinator action plan or strategy”¹, aims to help local authorities (e.g. city councils, municipalities, district councils, departments or communes) create local pollinator strategies.

INTRODUCTION

International commitments by governments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 15, “Life on Land”, affirm the importance of preventing species extinctions, mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services in policy making and funding delivery of better conservation.

The EU, which is a Signatory of the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), developed in the frame of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, The EU Pollinators Initiative², agreed by all EU Members States; it sets three priorities: (1) Improving knowledge on the decline of pollinators, its causes and consequences; (2) Tackling the causes of such decline; (3) Raising awareness, engaging society and promoting collaboration for more and diverse pollinators, and pollinator-friendly landscapes.

In addition, the EU Strategy on Green Infrastructure³ - a key step to achieving the EU Biodiversity Strategy - aims to make the protection, restoration, creation and enhancement of green infrastructure an integral element of spatial planning and development and has promoted the development of green infrastructure strategies in many cities.

The conservation of native pollinators at the local scale is key to deliver effective targeted measures. In this context, local authorities play an essential pivotal role in halting the decline of wild pollinators since they have a unique position to contribute to their conservation through the implementation of SMART targets⁴ and the monitoring impacts. By defining, implementing and monitoring the impacts of SMART targets, local authorities can ensure that effective actions that aim to contributing to halt pollinators decline are targeted and revised accordingly.

A local pollinator strategy offers an excellent opportunity to assess management practices of green spaces, often identifying new more attractive and potentially cost saving options that can also bring people closer to nature. Moreover, local communities, who appreciate the benefits that nature brings, often regard creating pollinator-friendly green spaces positively.



Local authorities can help conserve wild pollinators through the implementation of effective measures in various ways. For instance, they can contribute to conserving pollinators through local planning the creation of Green Infrastructure.

Local authorities can also help conserve pollinators by giving advice to land managers and implementing good management practices in open green areas. In addition, local authorities can implement programmes that engage schools, businesses, local communities, private individuals, and society at large in the conservation of wild pollinators. In addition, developing and implementing Local Pollinator Strategies shows commitment from the local authority to contribute to overall national objectives.

¹ [https://www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Helping%20Pollinators%20Locally%20in%20Scotland%20\(final\)_0_0.pdf](https://www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Helping%20Pollinators%20Locally%20in%20Scotland%20(final)_0_0.pdf)

² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index_en.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/strategy/index_en.htm

⁴ SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound



[Name of the local authority]
POLLINATOR STRATEGY 20xx – 20xx

A Commitment from the [Name of the local authority]

[Name of the local authority] is committed to helping to conserve pollinators by ensuring that the needs of pollinators are considered in the delivery of its duties and work.

[Name of the local authority] will seek to protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators. We will ensure local people are provided with opportunities to make [Name of the local authority] more pollinator friendly

Our vision: (eg Our local environment will be rich in flower-rich habitats, helping support sustainable pollinator populations and making places more attractive for people to live and work in)

Aims:

The [Name of the local authority] will work to:

- Ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy, and guidance
- Protect, increase, and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat in [Name of the local authority] to prevent extinctions and improve the status of any locally threatened species
- Increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across residents, businesses and other landowners
- Increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of all land under the ownership of, or managed by [Name of the local authority]
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area

BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

The Importance of Pollinators

Our native pollinators include bumblebees and other bees (around 2000 species in the mediterranean region), butterflies and moths, hoverflies and other flies, beetles, and wasps. In



all there are thousands of insect species in the Mediterranean that carry out pollination of our native wild plants and our food crops. Insect pollination is extremely important to the economy. Without pollinators we would struggle to grow many vegetables and fruits including crops eg apples, pears, strawberries, tomatoes, zucchini, watermelon, etc...

Pollinators under threat

Our pollinators are in trouble:

- Across Europe 38% of bee and hoverfly species are in decline
- 71% of our butterflies are in decline
- Two-thirds of our moths are in long term decline.

The most significant factors leading to these declines in pollinator numbers include:

Habitat loss – The most significant cause of decline is the loss and degradation of habitats which provide food, shelter, and nesting sites for pollinators. The loss of wildflower-rich grasslands is one of the most important issues.

Pesticides – There is growing evidence that the use of pesticides is having harmful effects on pollinators including honeybees, wild bees, and butterflies. Wider effects throughout ecosystems are also of concern and pesticides have been linked to other declines such as farmland birds and soil organisms. Neonicotinoid insecticides have been found to be particularly harmful to bees and many other animals. These are systemic pesticides which can be applied as a seed dressing (the preferred delivery mechanism) or spray and have a high toxicity to insects. Their use has now been banned across the EU on all outdoor crops. However, other pesticides can also have negative effects on bees and other insects.

Climate Change – long term changes can deprive pollinators of food supplies at times when they need them, increase their exposure to parasites and diseases, or change habitats so that they are no longer suitable.



What pollinators need

Pollinators need many of the things we need – food, shelter, and nesting areas.

Food: Pollinators need food (nectar and pollen) throughout the year. Many plants and trees can provide these food resources, including many so called ‘weeds’ such as dandelions and thistles. In addition to flowers, many pollinators need other food resources to support their different life stages – for example butterfly and moth caterpillars need particular plants to feed on.

Shelter and nesting: Dense vegetation such as dry grassland, scrub, mature trees, and piles of wood and stone can provide essential habitat for hibernating pollinators. Many species overwinter as adults including queen bumblebees, and some butterflies and hoverflies, others as eggs, larvae, or pupae. Old burrows and dense vegetation are used by bumblebees, with sunny slopes and dry ground used by ground-nesting bees such as mining bees.

Pollinators in [Name of the local authority]

Key principles of the Strategy

This strategy has been developed to raise awareness of the plight of pollinators and to ensure the local authority and its residents, businesses and landowners are provided with information to help us all protect and increase our pollinator populations. This strategy is designed to ensure the needs of pollinators are enshrined across the breadth of local authority work and to increase awareness of pollinators across our local community.

Working with partners and partners initiatives

Where possible, the local authority will join forces and participate in other local, regional, or national pollinator programmes or projects. More joined up collaborative action for pollinators will help ensure a future for these very important species. Key national initiatives include “Piano d’Azione Nazionale (PAN) per l’uso sostenibile dei prodotti fitosanitari” and “Direttiva Biodiversità 2021”.



Aim 1: To improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area

Improving our knowledge and understanding of pollinators at the local level can greatly facilitate the implementation of effective pollinator-friendly actions. A more robust knowledge base can yield better strategies that result in more effective and longer lasting positive impacts on pollinators.

Local authorities can establish effective monitoring of work by carrying out brief annual reviews of the main achievements, disseminating the results, encourage staff and contractors to provide feedback on actions and monitor the impacts of improvements, as well as increase information on the status of pollinators by encouraging local people to monitor pollinators.

	Objective	Specific Actions
1.1	Establish effective monitoring of work being carried out in our area	Carry out a brief review of achievements and publicise success to local communities
		Encourage staff and contractors to feedback on actions they take for pollinators and provide an award for best pollinators friendly practice
		Monitor the impacts of improvements on local bee populations and species diversity
1.2	Increase information on the status of pollinators	Encourage local people to participate to citizen science activities
		Create a pollinators' monitoring program and search for funding



Aim 2: To ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance

The planning system can play a vital role in the conservation of our wildlife habitats and species, including the protection and enhancement of pollinator populations and habitats. Local planning and development control has an essential function in protecting existing, and creating new pollinator habitats.

Local authorities can ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy, and guidance by increasing their protection, increasing the profile of pollinator-friendly habitats, as well as recognizing and capitalizing on the opportunities these habitats offer.

	Objective	Specific Actions
2.1	Increase the protection afforded to pollinator habitats and the species they support by ensuring appropriate recognition in local plans and policies	Carry out a review of existing surveys and biodiversity mapping to identify key pollinator habitats present in the area
		Take forward a review of local plans, and where required revise current policies to take account of the needs of pollinators
2.2	Increase the profile of habitats of value to pollinators in biodiversity assets, green infrastructure, and other maps	Survey habitats, including brownfield, parks, verges etc. to assess their importance for pollinators
		Review and revise biodiversity asset maps to recognise importance of pollinator habitats
2.3	Recognise and capitalise on opportunities to create pollinator friendly habitats as part of new development	Raise awareness of and promote the creation of pollinator friendly features with urban planners



Aim 3: To protect, increase and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat in [Name of the local authority], and prevent any extinction, as well as improve the status of any locally threatened species

The amount of habitat available to pollinators is of paramount importance for their conservation. By increasing and enhancing pollinator-friendly habitat local species can thrive, their conservation status can be improved and extinctions that would otherwise have occurred can be prevented.

Local authorities can increase the value of local wildlife areas and nature reserves for pollinators to ensure their needs are taken into account, increase the value of green spaces and reduce the impact of pesticides on pollinators and other wildlife.

	Objective	Specific Actions
3.1	Increase the value of local wildlife areas and local nature reserves for pollinators	Ensure the needs of pollinators are taken into account in the management of all local sites that support pollinators which are owned or managed by the local authority
		Provide information on the needs of pollinators and pollinator friendly gardening to other owners /managers of the above-mentioned sites
3.2	Increase the value of parks and other greenspace for pollinators	Identify areas of public green space where reducing the frequency of mowing to one cut per year (to allow wildflowers to bloom, provides undisturbed areas for nesting and also saves public funds and reduces greenhouse gas loadings)
		Work with local communities to develop a balanced approach to green space management to support a range of uses and wildlife benefits



	Objective	Specific Actions
3.3	Reduce the impact of pesticides on pollinators and other wildlife	Review use of pesticides by the local authority and aim to reduce this significantly
		Cease use of insecticides including in seed dressings, plants, and turf
		Promote the use of organic products and food in local schools
		Promote organic agriculture
3.4	Increase foraging and nesting habitats for pollinators in private gardens	Disseminate pollinators friendly guidelines and handbook to improve the creation of ecological corridors for pollinators in urban areas
		Promote planting of entomophilous flowers, avoiding invasive plants

Aim 4: To increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of all land under the ownership of, or managed by the local authority

Land managed by the local authority offers a great opportunity to implement pollinator-friendly measures at the local level. Management actions in green areas and buildings can be directly implemented and monitored by local authorities using practices that favour pollinator conservation.

Local authorities can make the land and buildings they owned more pollinator-friendly by introducing supporting features such as “bee hotels” and green roofs, as well as by introducing adequate flowerbeds. Local authorities can also reduce the use of pesticides in the land they manage, and increase the area of pollinator habitats on local greenspace managed by local groups.



	Objective	Specific Actions
4.1	Provide and increase foraging habitats for pollinators	Identify, map and protect, already present existing sources of food for pollinators, managing and restoring semi-natural habitats and their native plants
		Mix flowers type in order to ensure different flowering periods throughout the year
		Create areas with entomophilous plants avoiding species with poor pollen and nectar production, also along roadside and pavement verges, flowerbeds, roundabouts, etc...
		Avoid invasive species and double flowered varieties
		Increase the number of native flowers and trees characterized by high pollen and nectar production and of local provenance
4.2	Provide appropriate nesting habitat and increase ecological corridors creation	Identify, map and protect existing nesting habitats for pollinators, also managing and restoring bare soil, dry-stone walls, earth banks, etc...
		Leave small areas to grow wild, where possible
		Never use pesticides on areas destined to nesting, replace chemical fertilizers with organic products
		Establish and maintain a network of "bee hotels" or other nesting features accompanied by flowering beds across the parks and public open spaces
		Ensure green roofs and /or pollinator nesting features are installed on new local authority buildings and publicise this work as good practice
4.3	Increase the area of pollinator habitats on local green-space managed by local groups	Work with and support relevant organizations such as associations or NGOs to manage and create pollinator habitats



	Objective	Specific Actions
4.4	Reduce use of pesticides across the local authority estate	Prohibit the use of pesticides which have been linked to the decline of pollinators (e.g. Neonicotinoids...) on local authority land where the power to do this, exists.
		Provide all tenants with advice on pollinator-friendly farming including information on the harmful effects of pesticides.

Aim 5: To increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses and other landowners

For pollinator conservation to be successful residents, business and other landowners need to know the importance of pollinators. Awareness raising activities can greatly help boost the support provided by local communities as more people get involved in activities that focus on the conservation of pollinators.

Local authorities can increase awareness of pollinators by providing information on pollinator friendly gardening activities, creating flower beds and meadows in green spaces, promote pollinators to local business forums and individual businesses, and support educational activities in schools.

	Objective	Specific Actions
5.1	Increase awareness of pollinators in the local community and within local businesses	Promote and distribute pollinator friendly guidelines on private gardening
		Create pollinator friendly flower beds and meadows in green spaces and put up signage explaining the importance of pollinators and showing what is being done to conserve them
		Track and communicate progresses



	Objective	Specific Actions
5.2	Increase the number of young people who understand the value of their local pollinators	Encourage local schools to develop wildflower areas in school grounds
		Develop citizen science projects for schools
		Facilitate training programmes on pollinators and how to take action to protect them





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