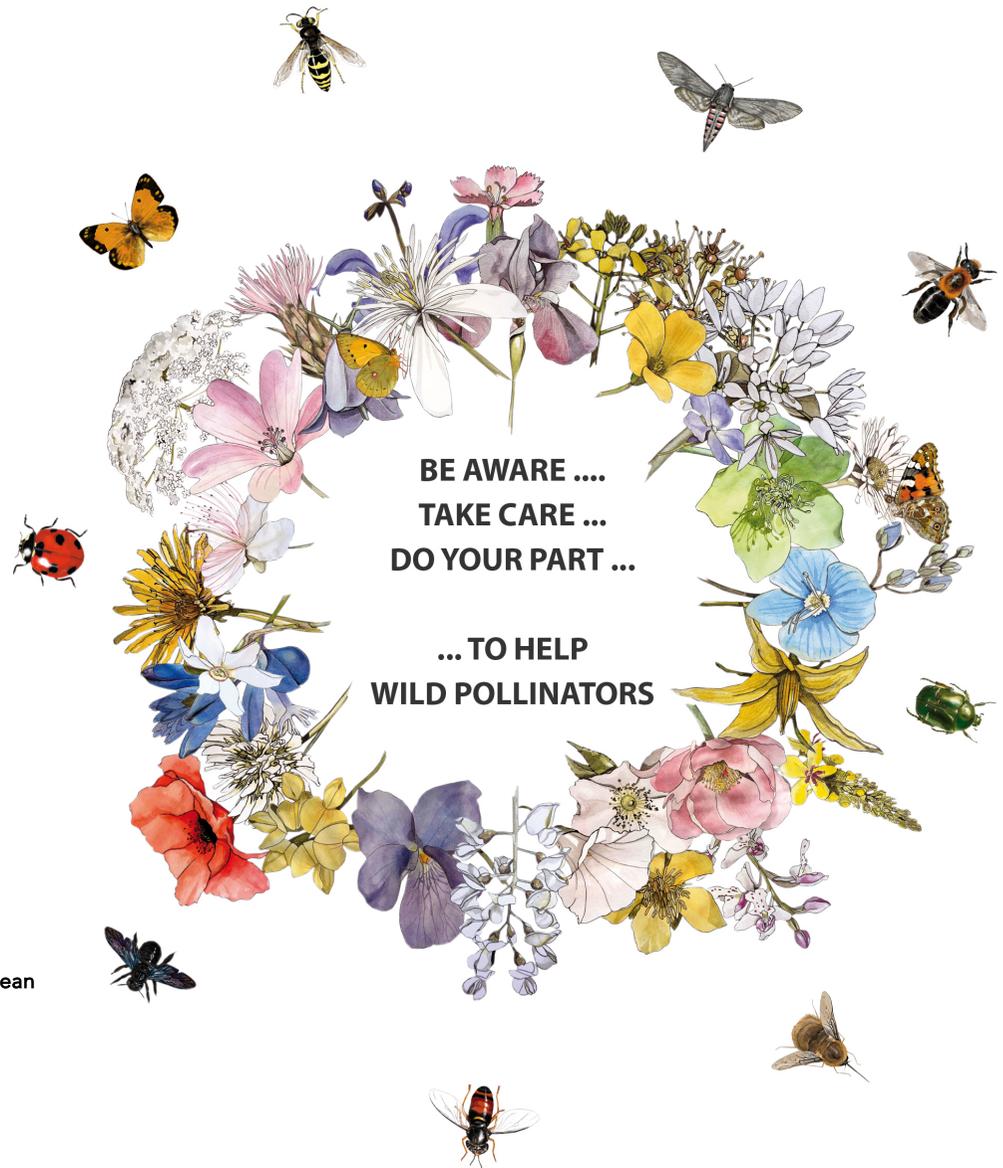




LIFE 4 POLLINATORS

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





**BE AWARE
TAKE CARE ...
DO YOUR PART ...**

**... TO HELP
WILD POLLINATORS**

Project title: **Involving people to protect wild bees and other pollinators in the Mediterranean**

Project acronym: **LIFE 4 POLLINATORS**

Project code: LIFE18/GIE/IT/000755

Duration: from 1.10.2019 to 30.09.2024

Total Budget: 2.460.717,98 €

EU contribution: 1,345,190,21 €

Location: Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Spain

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LIFE 4 Pollinators AFTER-LIFE PLAN



General information

The project LIFE 4 Pollinators was implemented between the end of 2019 and September 2024.

It aimed at **improving the conservation status of wild insect pollinators in the Mediterranean region** addressing a main driver of all causes of their decline: the level of awareness of key stakeholders and general public. Key stakeholders are the main actors that can make a difference to halt the pollinators decline, with their behavior.

Therefore, project was very ambitious aiming to improve awareness in the people reached and involved in the planned activities.

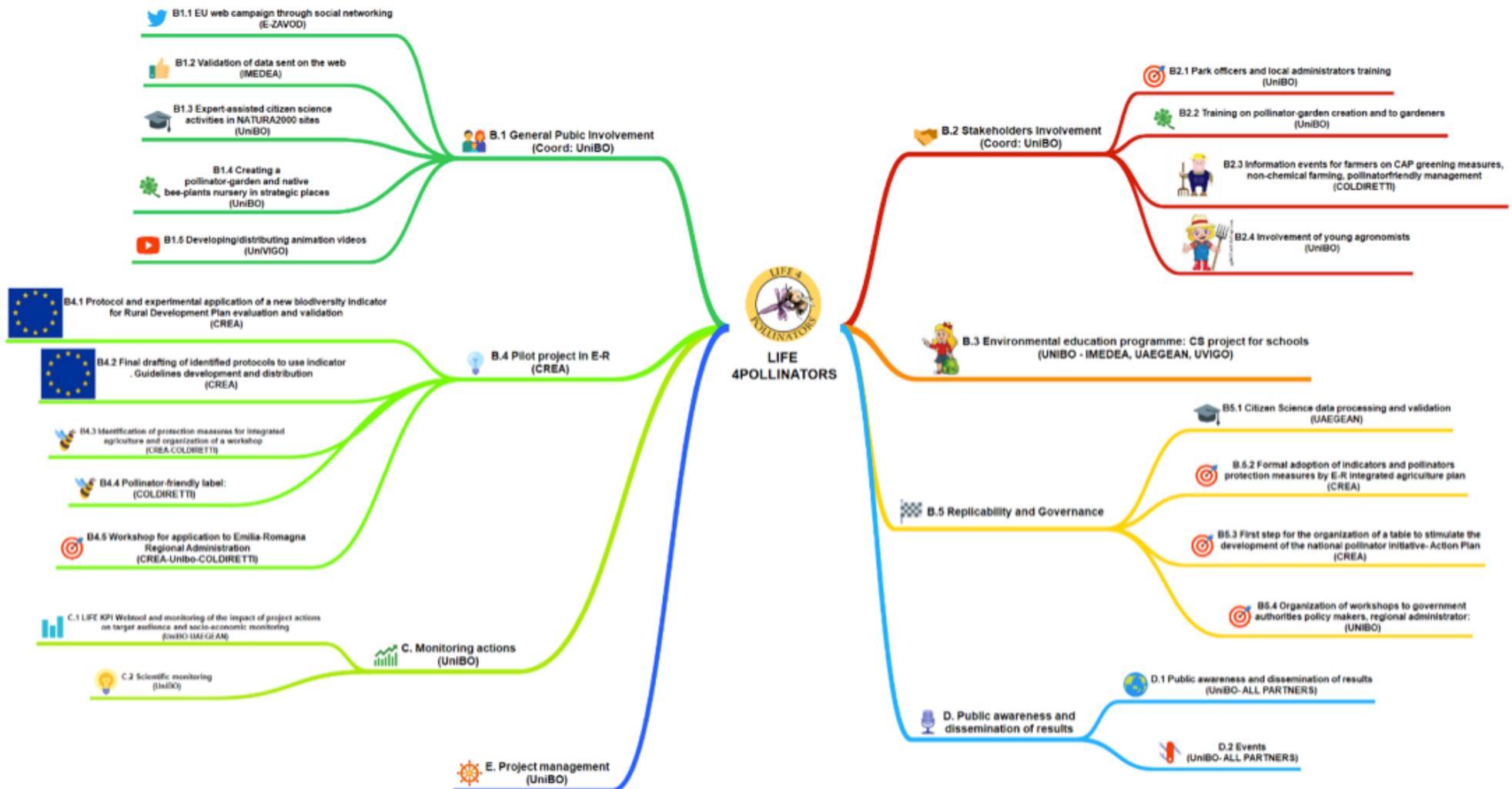
With this end, the project developed several tools and implemented a variety of actions, including training, talks, workshops, information and education activities, using a general Citizen Science approach. Citizen Science is a very good way to involve and target creatively citizens and professionals.

Objectives

The specific goals of this project were the following:

- Improve knowledge on biodiversity in target countries
- Improve general knowledge on native mediterranean wild pollinators and entomophilous plants, their interactions, IAS (Invasive Alien Species)
- Raise citizens and stakeholders' awareness in the decline of wild pollinators and the importance of pollination services
- Improve the use of greening infrastructures, promote free-pesticides agriculture and pollinator friendly practices in rural and urban environments
- Promote attitudes and behaviors in favor of wild pollinators
- Promote better environmental governance (update SDFs; Pollinator conservation strategies or action plans)

Achieving all the goals has been very challenging. A **strategic framework** was developed to target the different audiences and key stakeholders, finding the correct method to involve and target them. To have an idea of the complexity of this project the graphic scheme was developed (see below). Multiple layers of the society were involved to improve awareness and stimulate behavioral change in the addressed countries (Italy, Greece, Spain and Slovenia) towards the safeguarding of wild pollinators.



Both governance and information activities were planned to **influence civil society in an integrated way**. This is the reason why the proposed activities targeted general public, citizens, school students and teachers, environmental educators, farmers, farmer consultants and technicians of the agroindustry, young agronomists, gardeners, urban planners and managers, conservationists, protected areas technicians and managers, natural areas competent authorities, as well as municipalities, regional administrations, and national ministries.

The actions planned in the proposal and implemented during the five years have been:

Preparatory actions

A.1 Development of common protocols

A.2 Identification of project's areas among the selected ones

Core actions

B.1 General public involvement

B.1.1 EU web campaign

B.1.2 Validation data sent on the web

B.1.3 Expert assisted Citizen Science activities in N2000 sites

B.1.4 Creating a pollinator garden and native bee plants nursery in strategic places

B.1.5 Developing/distributing animation videos

B.2 Stakeholders involvement

B.2.1 Park officers and N2000 competent authorities training

B.2.2 Training on pollinator-garden creation and to botanical garden managers, urban park managers and private gardeners

B.2.3 Information events for farmers and beekeepers on CAP greening measures, non-chemical farming, pollinator friendly management

B.2.4 Involvement of young agronomists and floriculturists

B.3 Environmental school project (Students 4 Pollinators)

B.4 Pilot Project in Emilia Romagna

B.4.1 Protocol and experimental application of a new Biodiversity indicator for Rural Development Plan evaluation and validation

B.4.2 Final drafting of identified protocols to use indicator. Guidelines development and distribution

B.4.3 Identification of protection measures for integrated agriculture and organization of a workshop for agriculture consultant

B.4.4 Pollinator-Friendly label

B.4.5 Workshop for application to Emilia-Romagna Regional Administration

B.4.6 Mini-pilots for replication

B.5 Replicability and governance

B.5.1 Citizen Science data processing and validation

B.5.2 Formal adoption of indicators and pollinators protection measures by E-R integrated agriculture plan

B.5.3 First step for the organization of a table to stimulate the development of the National Pollinator initiative Action Plan

B.5.4 Organization of workshops to governments authorities

B.5.5 Replicability Plan

Monitoring actions

C.1 LIFE KPI Webtool contribution and update – Socio economic impact

C.2 Scientific monitoring

Communication and dissemination

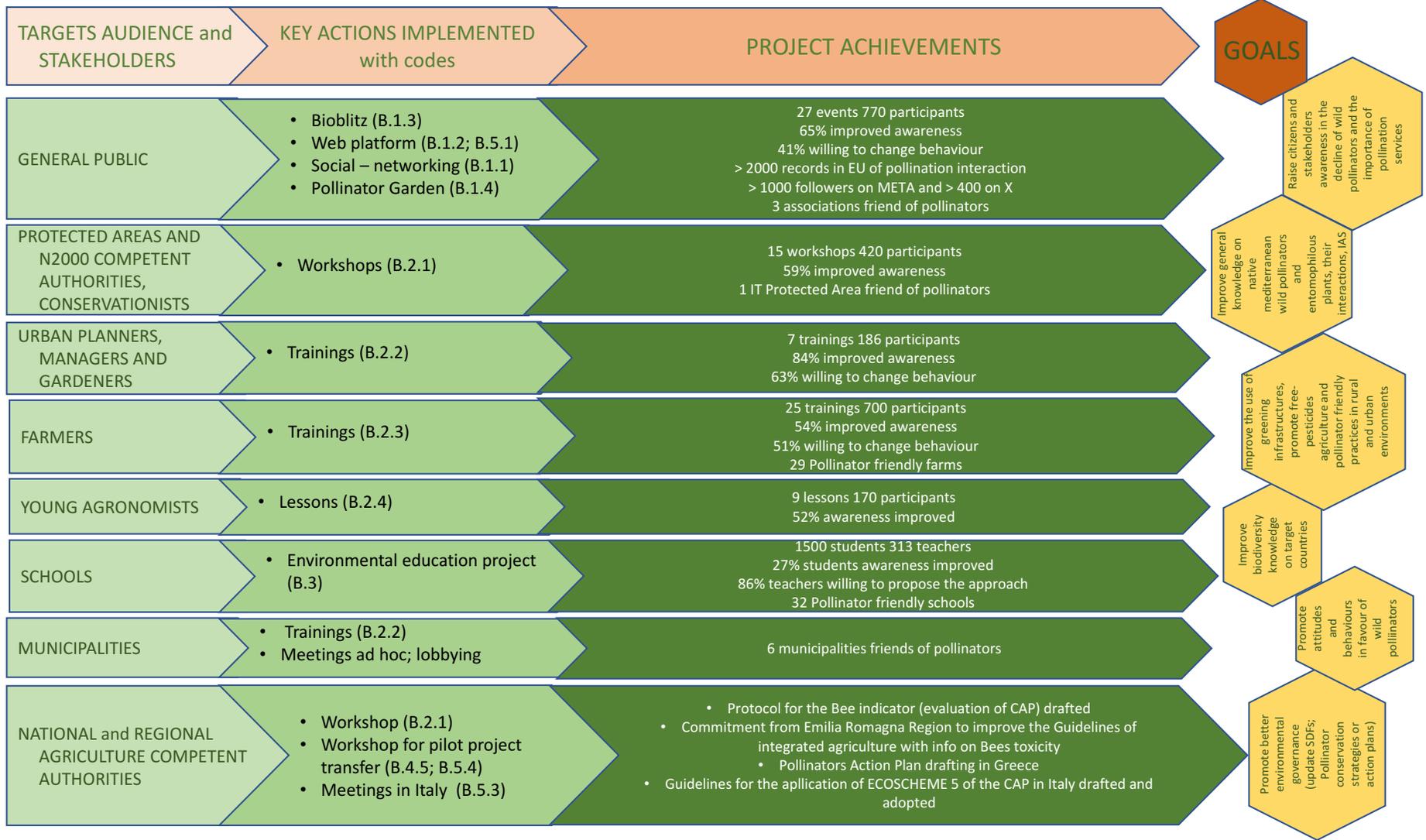
D.1 Public awareness and dissemination of results: website; leaflet; Pollinator kit; project video; Layman's report

D.2 Events: Mobile pollination exhibition; participation to conferences and other events; Final conference; networking

Management

E.1 Project management: coordination, technical and financial management; After LIFE Plan

The scheme below shows the logical link that was behind the construction and planning of the several actions conceived in LIFE 4 Pollinators. Key actions, different target audiences and main achievements are here summarized.



With the aim of identifying the next steps and plan what to do after the end of the project, the coordination team assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of LIFE 4 Pollinators. They are resumed in a SWOT analysis scheme, below.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Field Guides and Handbooks produced in different languages, easy to use and fit different targets, freely downloadable
- Web platform to collect data
- Network created
- Project materials and methods were successful with the public
- Pollinator Gardens in Bologna (IT), Balearic Islands (ES), Ptuj (SI)
- 313 teachers and 171 young agronomists trained
- Mobile pollination exhibition, 3D-models art exhibition
- Participation of 4,670 people to LIFE 4 Pollinators core actions
- Online tools available at LIFE 4 Pollinators website

WEAKNESSES

- Delays due to Covid-19
- Withdrawal of one partner (Coldiretti)
- Late meetings with the E-R Regional Administration due to catastrophic flooding
- Weak involvement of the Ministries
- Weak involvement of Italian Government in the protection of the environment
- Pesticide plan still not approved

OPPORTUNITIES

- Approval of the Nature Restoration Law
- Policies implementation (e.g. drafting of the Action Plan for Pollinators in Greece, pollinator conservation in CAP strategic plans, etc.)
- Rapid positive response from insect species that repopulate the area as soon as pesticides are banned
- Formal certification for the Pollinator friendly label (Code of Conduct)
- Farmers interested in being labelled
- Local associations and competent authorities interested in the project (Declaration of intents and Pollinator-friendly certification)
- Increasing public interest on pollinators
- Thousands of followers of project's social networks
- Schools/associations interested and replicating Students 4 Pollinators
- Professionals using materials to replicate project activities
- Art exhibitions: replication and new installations
- Apply to new calls for proposals on pollinator conservation

THREATS

- Intensive large farms reticent to change
- Glyphosate still legal
- Farmers associations linked with phytopharmaceutical producers
- Pollinator conservationists divided
- Slow bureaucracy

Starting from the identified strengths built in the five years of project implementation and bearing in mind all the weaknesses we tackled and overcome, we defined the activities to be carried out over the next three years. The planning and implementation of these activities cannot be done without considering the opportunities and the threats that a project as LIFE 4 Pollinators met.

The lack of awareness on the importance of pollinators is the primary origin of the human activities and behaviors threatening wild pollinators (urbanization; intensive agriculture, beekeeping and breeding; invasive alien species; unsustainable management of green spaces; etc.).

Nevertheless, we are aware that it will not be easy to find ways to finance activities to specifically increase awareness of citizen and stakeholders on nature conservation, also because of the funding reduction for LIFE-GIE projects.

Anyway, we accept the challenge of finding creative ways to implement activities aimed to counteract pollinator decline.

We will implement mainly outreach activities, aiming at educating, training, increasing awareness to stimulate a behavioral change towards pollinator conservation, using the materials and the tools already produced by the project. Some materials will be updated, improved and new ones (e.g. digital gamification tools to involve young generations) will be developed, as soon as possible. We will keep in contact with our supporters and followers through social networks, personal contacts and professional/scientific relations. We will continue to guarantee support to all the bodies that are willing to replicate or to adopt the Best practices developed by the project (Code of Conduct, Declaration of Intent), we will keep operative the emails: life4pollinators@unibo.it and amicidegliimpollinatori@gmail.com, and we will maintain the website and the web participative platform at least until 2034.

Project partners will continue to work to ensure that pollinator protection is on the political agendas in Italy, Spain, Greece and Slovenia. The network created thanks to the governance actions and meetings implemented throughout the project, as well as to the extant relationships between project partners with local, regional and/or national competent authorities (Municipalities, Regional authorities, Ministries of Agriculture and of Environment, etc.), will be the starting point to continue to stimulate a change of course and direction to halt pollinator decline.

Something already started:

- In Greece the National Action Plan for Pollinators will be drafted with UAEGEAN contribution;
- in Slovenia E-ZAVOD (a lead partner in several EIP-agri projects focusing on testing and transferring into practice different agricultural practices on grasslands and arable fields that protect biodiversity, including pollinator-friendly measures) is currently fostering the inclusion of the pilot measures in the CAP strategic plan;
- in Italy, thanks to CREA and UNIBO efforts, the Emilia-Romagna Region just included (February 2025) the indication on plant protection products' selectivity towards pollinators, in the 2025 Integrated Production Regulations;
- In Italy a national project, recently funded by the National Rural Network, will adopt the BEE indicator to evaluate the efficacy of agri-environmental-climate measures within the 2023-2027 CAP;
- additionally, a municipality district in Rome recently (February 2025) signed the Declaration of Intent to become pollinator-friendly.

The public involved in project core actions (4,670), as well as the associations and public bodies (more than 200 around 4 countries) reached, represent a guarantee for the long-term continuation of the project challenges to protect wild pollinators.

We detail the activities that we plan to continue in the following table.

There you will find, per each project objective: the various activities planned, the institution/subject in charge of the implementation, the location and timing of implementation, and a tentative estimation of costs and sources.

Some fundings are not yet guaranteed, but they could be or are part of project proposals that LIFE 4 Pollinators beneficiaries are going to submit or have already submitted in National/local or European calls for proposals, including the LIFE Programme.

It is worth mentioning that:

- UNIBO-BiGeA is already maintaining and updating the website and the participative web platform
- UNIBO-SMA is already managing the Pollinator Garden, the mobile pollination exhibition, and the Students 4 Pollinators project
- UNIBO-SMA and BiGeA together will keep following the municipalities interested in signing the Declaration of Intent
- CREA and UNIBO-Distal will keep working with the Emilia-Romagna Region to achieve the adoption of the Pilot Project results and to disseminate the methodologies developed. CREA will also continue promoting the Code of Conduct and supporting the farmers interested in its adoption
- Project staff will keep disseminating the project materials and promoting the Best Practices identified by LIFE 4 Pollinators

LIFE4POLLINATORS	AFTER LIFE COMMITMENTS					POSSIBLE SOURCE
	WHAT	WHO	WHERE	WHEN	TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET (€)	
Improve knowledge on biodiversity in target countries	Collect data from nature	Uaegean, UNIBO, CREA	Melissotheque of the Aegean. Natural areas in Italy	from march 2025	50000	Different projects
	Webplatform to collect data and validation	UNIBO	WEB	ongoing, at least for 10 years	(see cell below)	Different projects, volunteers
Improve general knowledge on native mediterranean wild pollinators and entomophilous plants, their interactions, IAS	Webplatform to collect data and validation;	UNIBO, UAEGEAN	WEB	ongoing, at least for 10 years	39000	Participation to EU-funds call for proposals (e.g. LIFE, HORIZON)
	Mobile Pollination exhibition	UNIBO SMA	Italy	from project's end onwards	no costs	own resources
Raise citizens and stakeholders awareness in the decline of wild pollinators and the importance of pollination services	Bioblitz in N2000 sites	UNIBO- SMA, DISTAL, BIGEA, UAEGEAN	Italy, Greece	from spring 2025	not calculable	TETRIS PROJECT, COLLABORATIONS with other projects/associations/authorities
	University's students seminars	Uaegean, UNIBO	Italy, Greece	from project's end onwards	5000	volunteering, Unibo researchers
	Gardeners training	UNIBO	Italy- Bologna	from spring 2025	7000	UNIBO- SMA personnel
	Pollinator garden maintainance	EZAVOD	Slovenia	from spring 2025	2200	Beekeepers Society Ptuj
	Pollinator garden maintainance (including beehotels)	UNIBO	Italy- Bologna	from project's end onwards	1940	UNIBO- SMA personnel and volunteers
	Workshop and seminars	CREA-AA, UNIBO	Italy	from project's end onwards	4820	CREA and UNIBO researchers
	Dissemination of the project results and translated materials in various events/conferences with related topics	UNIBO, EZAVOD, UAEGEAN, UVIGO, CREA	EU	from project's end onwards	14100	Partners own resources, diverse sources
	Plant & Pollinator exhibition – art installation	UAEGEAN	Greece	from project's end onwards	4250	NECCA, Green Fund
	Social networking	UNIBO	n.a.	from project's end onwards	3000	volunteering, Unibo researchers
	Art exhibition: "The pollinator crisis: a conservation challenge"	UVIGO	Spain	from project's end onwards	0	own resources
	Mobile Pollination exhibition	UNIBO	Italy	from project's end onwards	500	costs for shipment
Improve the use of greening infrastructures, promote free-pesticides agriculture and pollinator friendly practices in rural and urban environments	Maintenance of the bee hotels installed	Uaegean	Greece	from project's end onwards	500	volunteering
	Training to farmers and beekeepers	CREA-AA	Italy	from project's end onwards	not calculable	CREA researchers
	Promote Code of Conduct	CREA-AA, UNIBO	Italy	from project's end onwards	3900	CREA researchers
	Training on urban green management	UNIBO	Italy, EU	from project's end onwards	3000	UNIBO personnel
Promote attitudes and behaviours in favour of wild pollinators	Promote Declaration of Intent	UNIBO	Italy, EU	from project's end onwards	9000	UNIBO personnel
	Students 4 Pollinators' educational project	UNIBO; Uaegean	Italy, Greece	from project's end onwards	1500	UNIBO-SMA staff, volunteering, academic students
Promote better environmental governance (update SDFs; Pollinator conservation strategies or action plans)	Environmental education activities (Students 4 Pollinators, use of field guides, etc.)	EZAVOD	Slovenia	from project's end onwards	6780	Beekeepers Society Ptuj
	Declaration of Intents for municipalities promotion	CREA-AA, UNIBO	Italy	from project's end onwards		CREA researchers
	Declaration of pollinator friendly farms	CREA-AA, UNIBO	Italy	from project's end onwards	3200	CREA researchers
	Collaboration with Region ER for CAP	CREA-AA	Italy	ongoing	4800	CREA researchers
	Promote the application of the BEE indicator at national level	CREA-AA	Italy	from project's end onwards	4700	CREA researchers
	Drafting ACTION PLAN FOR POLLINATORS IN GREECE	UAegean	Greece	from project's end onwards	4800	Greek Ministry of the Environment and Energy
	Contribution to Drafting Assess to Plan for bees	Uaegean	EU	from November 2024	29000	IUCN SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group
Promote the adoption of National polinator plan	CREA-AA, UNIBO	Italy	ongoing	not calculable	CREA researchers	

I DO MY PART FRIENDS OF POLLINATORS

**IF YOU ARE
AN ASSOCIATION,
A COMPANY OR
AN ORGANIZATION**

that deals with
greenery, education
and green area
management, you can
become Pollinator
Friendly.



**IF YOU ARE
A FARMER,**

sign the Life 4
Pollinators code of
conduct and apply
it to obtain the
Pollinator Friendly
label.

**IF YOU ARE
A SCHOOL,**

you can implement
our Citizen Science
project. If you want
to do more and become
Pollinator Friendly,
contact us.



**IF YOU ARE
A MUNICIPALITY,**

sign the Life 4
Pollinators declaration
and apply it to
halt the decline of
pollinators. Cities can
be ecological corridors
and save pollinators.



Each of us can contribute to promoting and protecting pollinating insects. We can all make a commitment to fill our balconies with flowers. Municipalities, farmers and those who manage green areas can play a fundamental role in the conservation of bees, butterflies, hoverflies, wasps and beetles.



Become a "Friend of Pollinators"! The **Life 4 Pollinators** project has developed guidelines for **good practice** in managing green spaces and agro-ecosystems. Qualification as "Friend of Pollinators" aims to enhance and recognize the commitment of **municipalities, farms, schools** and **virtuous associations** in order to create a biodiversity protection network.

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME POLLINATOR FRIENDLY?





LIFE 4 POLLINATORS



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