



Brussels, 1.6.2018
COM(2018) 395 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

EU Pollinators Initiative

{SWD(2018) 302 final} - {SWD(2018) 303 final}

1. THE NEED FOR EU ACTION ON POLLINATORS

In recent years, public attention has been drawn to the plight of honeybee populations, which have seen losses in the EU and around the world. Behind this highly publicised phenomenon is a problem of a much larger scale, namely the dramatic decline in the occurrence and diversity of all kinds of European wild insect pollinators, including wild bees, hoverflies, butterflies and moths. Numerous pollinator species are extinct or threatened with extinction¹.

This is a serious cause for concern because pollinators are an integral part of healthy ecosystems. Without them, many plant species would decline and eventually disappear along with the organisms that depend on them, which would have serious ecological, social and economic implications. Pollinator-dependent crops rely on animal pollination to varying degrees. It is estimated that 5–8 %² of current global crop production is directly attributed to animal pollination. In the EU alone, around 84 %³ of crop species and 78 %³ of wild flower species depend, at least in part, on animal pollination. Up to almost EUR 15 billion⁴ of the EU's annual agricultural output is directly attributed to insect pollinators.

The first global report on pollinators issued by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services² names land-use change, intensive agricultural management and pesticide use, environmental pollution, invasive alien species, pathogens and climate change as the main threats to pollinators. It also identifies significant gaps in knowledge of how these drivers work and the need for cross-sectoral action to tackle them. The Convention on Biological Diversity⁵ endorsed the findings of the report and highlighted the importance of pollinators and the ecosystem services they deliver to achieving a number of the UN Sustainable Development Goals⁶.

The EU has put in place a range of measures beneficial to pollinators, notably under environment and health policies (in particular the Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU legislation on pesticides), as well as under the common agricultural policy, cohesion policy and research and innovation policy. There are also a number of national and regional pollinator strategies in place. However, to date there has been no single, coordinated EU action to address the decline of pollinators through an integrated approach involving different sectors and policies. The EU and its Member States need to address the problem together.

This Communication presents strategic objectives and a set of actions to be taken by the EU and its Member States to address the decline of pollinators in the EU and contribute to global conservation efforts. It sets the framework for an integrated approach to the problem and a more effective use of existing tools and policies.

¹ See the accompanying Staff Working Document for detailed evidence supporting this Communication.

² Potts, S.G., *et al.*, (2016), *The Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production*, Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. 552 pp.

³ Potts, S., *et al.*, (2015), *Status and Trends of European Pollinators. Key Findings of the STEP Project*, Pensoft Publishers, Sofia, 72 pp.

⁴ Gallai, N., *et al.*, (2009), *Economic Valuation of the Vulnerability of World Agriculture Confronted with Pollinator Decline*, *Ecological Economics* 68.3: 810-821.

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/>

⁶ Convention on Biological Diversity COP decision XIII/15, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-15-en.pdf>

This initiative illustrates the Commission's ambition to accelerate progress towards the EU 2020 goal of halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services⁷ reaffirmed by the Action Plan for nature, people and the economy⁸. It responds to the calls made by the European Parliament^{9,10} and the Council¹¹ for action to protect pollinators and their habitats in order to put an end to their decline. The public consultation¹² preparing this initiative has established that an EU initiative on pollinators is strongly supported across the stakeholder groups, and in particular by the general public.

2. THE COMPONENTS OF THE INITIATIVE

The objectives and actions set out in this initiative aim to improve scientific knowledge about insect pollinator decline, tackle its main known causes and strengthen collaboration between all the actors concerned. While the focus is on wild pollinators, the initiative addresses challenges common to all pollinators. Therefore, it will also benefit domesticated pollinators, in particular honeybees, and will complement existing EU support for apiculture¹³ and bee health¹⁴.

While the actions proposed are designed to be delivered in the short term, they will set key processes in motion and put mechanisms in place in order to come to grips with the challenge in a holistic way over the longer term. The successful implementation of these actions will require adequate financial and human resources. Policy makers and public authorities cannot tackle the challenge alone; EU citizens and the business sector will also need to be involved.

The initiative sets long-term objectives and short-term actions under three priorities:

PRIORITY I: Improving knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and consequences

PRIORITY II: Tackling the causes of pollinator decline

PRIORITY III: Raising awareness, engaging society-at-large and promoting collaboration

The table in annex provides details of the various actions and sub-actions under each priority.

⁷ EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/strategy/index_en.htm

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/action_plan/communication_en.pdf

⁹ European Parliament resolution of 2 February 2016 on the mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy (2015/2137(INI)).

¹⁰ European Parliament resolution of 15 November 2017 on an Action Plan for nature, people and the economy (2017/2819(RSP)).

¹¹ Council conclusions 13398/16 on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13398-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index_en.htm

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/honey/programmes_en

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live_animals/bees/health_en

2.1. PRIORITY I: Improving knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and consequences

The EU has already supported the generation of valuable knowledge (for example through the ALARM¹⁵ and STEP¹⁶ projects and the European Red List¹⁷). While these clearly demonstrate an alarming decline of pollinators and warrant immediate action, the knowledge gaps are still considerable. The full extent of the decline is not known and its repercussions on human society and the economy are not yet fully understood. Although the main threats to pollinators are established and allow immediate, knowledge-based action to be undertaken, knowledge about their individual impacts and interaction requires further research. Improving knowledge therefore represents a cornerstone of this initiative and will require joint efforts of the Commission, the Member States, the European Environment Agency, academia, stakeholders and citizens.

Pollinator species and populations in the EU need to be better monitored. The development of a coordinated monitoring process aiming to fill the knowledge gap on their status and trends will require a joint effort from the EU and its Member States. A technical expert group will be needed to devise a cost-effective and standardised monitoring methodology. Citizen science¹⁸, ICT tools and technology like DNA barcoding and machine learning have the potential to contribute to the process. Good quality on-site data from monitoring will make it possible to assess endangered pollinator species and develop robust pollinator indicators. These indicators would help to assess the impacts of various EU policies, primarily in the areas of the environment, agriculture and health, and to track EU progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2 ('Zero hunger') and 15 ('Life on land')¹⁹. Coupled with data on threats to pollinators and pollination, they would make it possible to carry out an integrated assessment of the decline of pollinators, its impacts on society and the economy through tools such as mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services²⁰ and natural capital accounts on pollinators and pollination²¹, and to develop adequate policy responses.

Research and innovation need to be strengthened on all fronts: the magnitude of the problem (status and trends of pollinators), tackling causes (threats to pollinators, their relative importance and interaction) and consequences (impacts on nature, human wellbeing and the economy). Fundamental research (systematics, taxonomy) as well as applied research should be supported to enhance the EU's monitoring and assessment capacity in relation to pollinators. Several ongoing research projects will already be delivering results on pollinators²², as well as on innovations in plant protection, integrated health approaches and alternatives to pesticides²³.

¹⁵ <http://www.alarmproject.net/>

¹⁶ <http://www.step-project.net/>

¹⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/>

¹⁸ Citizens can contribute to data collection and thereby play an active role in supporting science in this area, <https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/index.cfm?pg=citizen§ion=monitor>

¹⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/indicators>

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/index_en.htm

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/ecosystem-services-accounting-part-i-outdoor-recreation-and-crop-pollination>

²² <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/sfs-28-2017.html>

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/sfs-16-2017.html>

²³ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/sfs-04-2019-2020.html>

Open access to pollinator-relevant data and information is a pre-condition for making better use of existing resources to generate new knowledge and innovative solutions. Further efforts should be made to bring scattered data and information together and make it easily accessible.

2.2. PRIORITY II: Tackling the causes of pollinator decline

The variety of drivers of pollinator decline calls for mitigation actions across various sectors and policies.

The most threatened EU pollinator species and habitats, such as the ones protected under the Habitats Directive or included on the European Red List, should be subject to priority action and funding. The LIFE programme will in particular play an important role in this regard.

Loss of habitats

In order to improve the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives, the Commission is implementing the Action Plan for nature, people and the economy. While the Habitats Directive only lists a limited number of pollinator species, conservation measures for protected habitat types such as grasslands can significantly benefit pollinators. Therefore, improving the Directive's implementation is of major significance in addressing one of the key threats to pollinators — loss of habitats. Green infrastructure²⁴ can further improve the natural conditions needed to sustain thriving pollinator habitats by providing nature-based solutions²⁵ and strengthening the coherence and connectivity of the Natura 2000 network in broader rural and urban landscapes.

The EU's common agricultural policy and cohesion policy present key opportunities for the maintenance and creation of pollinator habitats in rural and urban areas in the period up to 2020. The structure of the common agricultural policy (including cross-compliance, direct payments, and rural development measures) provides a broad set of instruments needed to help tackle pressures on pollinators stemming from intensive agricultural management and land-use change, including farmland abandonment. These include in particular ecological focus areas under direct payment support to farmers, which provide buffer strips for pollinators and land lying fallow for nectar- and pollen-rich plants, as well as agri-environment-climate measures under rural development programmes. Other important incentives support farmers for sustainable farming systems in Natura 2000 areas, and investing in organic farming. Continued efforts are needed to recognise the significance of pollinators for agricultural productivity.

While the role of rural areas is paramount for healthy pollinator populations, the importance of urban and peri-urban areas in supporting pollinator habitats is increasingly recognised as well. Public and private spaces such as parks, gardens, green roofs and green walls act as refuge habitats for pollinators and 'stepping stones' which allow pollinators to move and disperse within urbanised areas. By connecting to natural and semi-natural areas in the countryside, they support a network of pollinator habitats in the wider landscape. A number of promising solutions, such as nature-based solutions, can improve the integration of pollinator habitats within major infrastructure networks such as roads and railway and power lines, often associated with habitat deterioration and typically spread across large expanses of diverse

²⁴See Green Infrastructure (GI) — Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital, COM(2013) 249 final.

²⁵ For example natural water retention measures, <http://nwrp.eu/>

European landscape. Regional and local authorities should be encouraged to invest in such solutions.

Pesticide use

The risks and impacts of pesticides on pollinators result from the toxicity of the active substance and the level of exposure. In the EU, active substances used in plant protection products²⁶ can only be approved following a risk assessment to make sure there are no undesired effects on honeybees²⁷. In 2013, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) developed a guidance document²⁸ to strengthen the current risk assessment by including, among other, chronic effects and wild bee species to the assessment requirements. However, this guidance has not yet been endorsed by Member States; further action will therefore be needed to ensure its implementation.

In 2013, the Commission restricted the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides²⁹ after it was shown that they pose high risks to bees. In February 2018, the EFSA's review of the evidence confirmed these risks³⁰. As stated in Regulation (EC) 1107/2009²⁷, it is important to introduce adequate measures to mitigate these risks. The Commission's proposal to further restrict the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides was endorsed by Member States on 27 April 2018³¹.

Furthermore, Directive 2009/128/EC³² provides for a range of actions that support the sustainable use of approved pesticides. Specific targets and measures can be set up in national action plans under the Directive to address the impacts of pesticides on pollinators.

Invasive alien species

Invasive alien species are another key threat to pollinators. Regulation (EU) 1143/2014³³ provides for a set of measures to be taken in this area across the EU. Continued efforts to implement these measures and list new species considered a threat will mitigate harmful effects, such as those associated with the predation by the yellow legged hornet (*Vespa velutina*), or the destruction of pollinator habitats by certain plant species such as the Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) which smothers native vegetation. Furthermore, the use of native pollinator species and native plant species for private and public use should be promoted to avoid the risks that alien species pose to native pollinator species.

Other threats

Pollinators are further impacted by climate change, environmental pollution and diseases. Climate change affects pollinators' distribution and range, their habitats and interaction, both

²⁶ The term 'pesticides' refers to plant protection products as defined in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009.

²⁷ Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market.

²⁸ EFSA Guidance Document on the risk assessment of plant protection products on bees (*Apis mellifera*, *Bombus* spp. and solitary bees), <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3295>

²⁹ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 of 24 May 2013 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011, as regards the conditions of approval of the active substances clothianidin, thiamethoxam and imidacloprid, and prohibiting the use and sale of seeds treated with plant protection products containing those active substances.

³⁰ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/180228>

³¹ https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/approval_active_substances/approval_renewal/neonicotinoids_en

³² Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides.

³³ Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

through gradual shifts and extreme weather events. While comprehensive studies on the effects of various pollutants (such as air pollution, heavy metals and light pollution) and disease are lacking, they are known to harm wild pollinators or negatively impact their habitats. This initiative does not directly address these threats. EU policies on climate action³⁴, air pollution³⁵ and actions for bee health¹⁴ will help to mitigate their impacts on pollinators. The initiative will, however, contribute to addressing these and other threats indirectly by supporting the maintenance, creation and connection of healthy habitats for pollinators and by tackling the spread of non-native species that carry harmful pathogens and diseases, thereby enhancing the overall climate resilience of European ecosystems.

2.3. PRIORITY III: Raising awareness, engaging society-at-large and promoting collaboration

Tackling pollinator decline requires a strategic approach at all levels of governance and the involvement of various actors. This initiative will raise awareness across society on the importance of pollinators and the urgent need to take action. By promoting and disseminating best practice and supporting further collaboration activities, it will aim to mobilise the scientific community, policy makers, businesses and citizens to act and to cooperate.

While a number of platforms supporting collaboration on pollinators already exist (such as research networks and policy exchange platforms), the capacity for collaboration need to be further strengthened. The Commission and Member States should raise awareness of and promote funding opportunities in this regard. Common tools and templates for developing pollinator plans and strategies, building on existing best practices, will foster further action at national, regional and local level. Increased EU expenditure on national apiculture programmes could also broaden public and professional understanding on the importance of wild pollinators for society and the economy.

The EU will step up its contribution to global action on pollinators by strengthening support for conservation actions under the International Pollinators Initiative³⁶, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and by fostering international collaboration through the Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators³⁷.

3. CONCLUSION

The EU Pollinators Initiative will contribute to the objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 and sectoral policies such as the common agricultural policy and cohesion policy. It will also provide valuable information on EU progress towards the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The initiative will work in synergy with the Action Plan for nature, people and the economy, in particular with the upcoming guidance on EU-level green infrastructure and on integration of ecosystem services into decision-making. It comes at the time when the inter-institutional negotiations on the post-2020 EU multiannual financial framework are about to start. Although it is envisaged that the actions proposed are completed by 2020, it will be important

³⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/index_en

³⁵ Directive (EU) 2016/2284 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants.

³⁶ Convention on Biological Diversity COP decision V/5, <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=7147>

³⁷ <https://promotepollinators.org>

to maintain momentum and make best use of future EU funding instruments in order to support impactful actions that address the decline of pollinators in the longer term.

The Commission invites the European Parliament and Council to endorse this initiative and to actively engage in its implementation, in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

By the end of 2020, the Commission will review progress on the implementation of the initiative and, if necessary, propose recommendations for further action. This process will feed into the final review of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 and its follow-up.

ANNEX — LIST OF ACTIONS

This annex provides an overview of the objectives and actions included under each priority of the EU Pollinators Initiative. The actions will be implemented until 2020. The objectives set a long-term perspective towards 2030.

PRIORITY I: Improving knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and its consequences		
<i>Objective</i>		
<i>Pollinators and their habitats are monitored and regularly assessed. There is an EU-wide monitoring scheme providing data for the assessment of their status and trends. This forms the basis for strong and timely pollinator indicators that help to assess the impacts of relevant EU policies and make it possible to develop a European atlas on pollinators and pollination. Resources are mobilised under the EU research and innovation programmes to fill in the gaps in knowledge about the decline of pollinators, its causes and consequences on society and the economy. Data and information on pollinators are openly accessible.</i>		
<i>ACTION 1 SUPPORT MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT</i>		
1A)	The Commission will devise and test an EU-wide pollinator monitoring scheme to ensure the provision of good quality data for assessing the status and trends of pollinator species in the EU and developing a pollinator indicator. A technical expert group will be set up to support this work.	First milestone in Q4 2018
1B)	The Commission will start work on a European Red List of hoverflies.	Q1 2019
1C)	The Commission will develop a list of habitats important for pollinators and assess their condition based on reporting provided by Member States under the Habitats Directive and other available data.	First milestone in Q1 2019
1D)	The Commission will launch a pilot project on monitoring the presence of pesticides in the environment through honeybee products (for example pollen) to assess the feasibility of using this innovative approach to inform about the exposure of pollinators to pesticides.	Q4 2018
1E)	The Commission will apply the ‘mapping and assessing ecosystems and their services’ framework to pollinators, including the development of natural capital accounts on pollinators and pollination, to assess in an integrated way the decline of pollinators, its impacts on society and the economy, and to derive adequate policy responses.	Q2 2019

<i>ACTION 2 — SUPPORT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION</i>		
2A)	The Commission will continue to promote and support research and innovation on pollinators and the causes and consequences of their decline under Horizon 2020 – the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014-2020.	Continuous
2B)	In the framework of exchanges via the EIP-AGRI network (European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability ³⁸), the Commission will raise awareness of stakeholders on the opportunities in recognising pollinator needs and the pollination service they provide.	Continuous
2C)	The Commission will consider how to further promote research and innovation to address the decline of pollinators in implementing the Horizon Europe programme – the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation post-2020.	Continuous
<i>ACTION 3 — FACILITATE KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND ACCESS TO DATA</i>		
3A)	The Commission will launch an online platform on pollinators to serve as a central data and information hub.	First milestone in Q1 2019
3B)	Member States should make relevant spatial data, such as land-use data, available in the public domain based on the requirements under the INSPIRE ³⁹ and Access to Environmental Information Directives ⁴⁰ to allow integrated spatial analysis.	First milestone in Q2 2019

³⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/european-innovation-partnership-agricultural>

³⁹ Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE).

⁴⁰ Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information.

PRIORITY II: Tackling the causes of pollinator decline**Objective**

Appropriate conservation measures for endangered pollinator species and their habitats are identified and implemented. Measures relevant for pollinators are fully integrated into the common agricultural policy and cohesion policy, and Member States make full use of the opportunities to maintain and restore pollinator habitats in rural and urban areas. Pollinator habitats are effectively connected in the wider landscape, allowing them to disperse across territories. Pollinators are protected from the impacts of pesticides and invasive alien species.

ACTION 4 — CONSERVE ENDANGERED POLLINATOR SPECIES AND HABITATS

4A)	The Commission will further develop action plans for the most threatened pollinator species and habitats listed in the Habitats Directive, and will support Member States and stakeholders in implementing them, including through the LIFE Programme.	First milestone in Q2 2019
4B)	The Commission will, in cooperation with Member States, identify conservation measures and management approaches to optimize benefits for endangered pollinators and their habitats, including in the frame of the Natura 2000 biogeographic process and through a dedicated workshop.	First milestone in Q2 2019
4C)	Member States should address priority measures for important pollinator habitats in the prioritised action frameworks for the management of Natura 2000 sites and green infrastructure as well as species protection.	Q3 2019

ACTION 5 — IMPROVE POLLINATOR HABITATS ON AND AROUND FARMLAND

5A)	The Commission will assess existing experience on the use of pollinator-relevant measures under the common agricultural policy 2014-2020. Based on this, it will develop guidance for managing authorities and farmers, providing technical advice on how to increase the effectiveness of measures, and actively promote it in the common agricultural policy post 2020.	First milestone in Q4 2018
5B)	Member States should encourage the uptake of pollinator-relevant measures in rural development programmes for 2014-2020, including through training and awareness-raising for farmers and other relevant stakeholders.	Continuous
5C)	The Commission will promote the integration of pollinator considerations in the implementation of the post-2020 common agricultural policy, and will include a pollinator indicator in the performance and monitoring framework once finalized and operational.	Continuous

<i>ACTION 6 — IMPROVE POLLINATOR HABITATS IN URBAN AREAS AND THE WIDER LANDSCAPE</i>		
6A)	The Commission will collect best practices and develop guidance for local authorities on how to create a favourable environment for pollinators, and will include pollinators in the criteria for the European Green Capital and Green Leaf awards.	Q2 2019
6B)	The Commission will increase the awareness of cohesion policy managing authorities and stakeholders on pollinator conservation and related funding opportunities in the 2014-2020 period and post-2020.	First milestone in Q4 2018
6C)	Through guidance on EU-level green infrastructure and on the integration of ecosystems and their services into decision making, the Commission will promote landscape-level actions that maintain and restore pollinator habitats, and their integration into spatial planning and other relevant decision-making processes.	First milestone in Q4 2018
<i>ACTION 7 — REDUCE THE IMPACTS OF PESTICIDE USE ON POLLINATORS</i>		
7A)	The Commission will encourage Member States to include specific targets and measures for pollinator conservation in their revised national action plans under Directive 2009/128/EC to reduce the risks and impacts of pesticide use on pollinators, and will assess the situation in a second report on the Directive's implementation.	First milestone in Q2 2019
7B)	The Commission will adopt an implementation plan for the EFSA Guidance Document on the risk assessment of plant protection products on bees (<i>Apis mellifera</i> , <i>Bombus</i> spp. and solitary bees) in order to enhance the risk assessment of pesticides on pollinators.	Q4 2018
7C)	The Commission will adopt legal measures for the prohibition of all outdoor uses of the three neonicotinoid pesticides already subject to specific restrictions since 2013 (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin).	Q2 2018
<i>ACTION 8 — REDUCE THE IMPACTS OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ON POLLINATORS</i>		
8A)	The Commission will provide technical guidance to Member States on how to prevent and manage invasive alien species harmful to pollinators within the scope of Regulation (EU) 1143/2014.	Q3 2019
8B)	The Commission will develop guidance to promote the use of native plant species and pollinators in the public and private sector.	Q3 2019

PRIORITY III: Raising awareness, engaging society-at-large and promoting collaboration

Objective

Awareness of the importance of pollinators and the urgent need for action to stop their decline is raised in society-at-large. Public policies have greater impact due to the effective mobilisation of businesses and citizens. Individual actions have more impact because there is better coordination of relevant actors at all levels. The EU takes a global lead to support and facilitate international action on pollinators.

ACTION 9 — ENCOURAGE THE BUSINESS SECTOR AND CITIZENS TO ACT

9A)	The Commission will provide guidance and incentivise businesses to contribute to the conservation of pollinators, in particular in the agri-food sector. It will also continue to promote good practices and innovative business models beneficial to pollinators through the EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform ⁴¹ and the European Business Award for the Environment, and will provide funding opportunities through the Natural Capital Financing Facility.	First milestone in Q2 2019
9B)	The Commission will explore the possibility of applying the EU ecolabel to products that support pollinator conservation, such as wildflower seed mixes, potted plants for pollinators and other relevant gardening products, in line with the conclusions and recommendations of the fitness check concluded in 2017 ⁴² .	Q3 2019
9C)	The Commission will develop and disseminate educational material on pollinators. It will also develop guidance on how citizens can get involved in conservation of pollinators and citizen science on pollinators. Such engagement activities for the preservation of pollinators may be conducted in the context of the European Solidarity Corps, which supports young people to volunteer in projects that benefit communities and the environment around Europe. In addition, national apiculture programmes could complement these efforts through training to broaden public and professional understanding on the importance of wild pollinators.	Continuous

⁴¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/index_en.htm

⁴² COM(2017) 355 final.

<i>ACTION 10 — PROMOTE POLLINATOR STRATEGIES AND COLLABORATION AT ALL LEVELS</i>		
10A)	The Commission will develop common templates and tools to facilitate the development of pollinator strategies at national, regional and local level, building on existing best practice.	Q3 2019
10B)	The Commission will identify opportunities for improving collaboration among all relevant actors through existing platforms and promote further collaboration through EU-level mechanisms, including under the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014-2020, the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) programmes, Community-Led Local Development, TAIEX-EIR ⁴³ and TAIEX-REGIO ⁴⁴ Peer2Peer instruments.	First milestone in Q1 2019
10C)	The Commission will promote the integration of pollinator conservation considerations and measures into EU supported policies, plans and programmes in developing and neighbouring countries, in line with the objectives of the International Pollinators Initiative ⁴⁵ .	Continuous
10D)	The EU will join the Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators and foster effective international action on pollinators.	Q4 2018

⁴³ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/p2p/index_en.htm

⁴⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/how/improving-investment/taix-regio-peer-2-peer/

⁴⁵ Led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.