A guide for pollinator-friendly cities:

How can spatial planners and land-use managers create favourable urban environments for pollinators?

Thriving wild pollinator populations are a prerequisite for healthy, resilient green spaces and urban ecosystems. However, wild pollinator populations have declined at alarming rates in Europe intensifying the need for coordinated multi-level action amongst all stakeholders and at all levels of governance.

This includes **local policy-, decision-makers and practitioners** (such as spatial and land use planners and managers) who can **halt wild pollinator decline in cities and towns** by using their substantial legislative, administrative, regulatory and funding powers to bring about change on the ground.

Recommendations for policy makers

Policy and decision makers play a critical and leading role in driving action for pollinator protection and the mainstreaming of pollinator objectives into policies and practice. The following steps can be taken to anchor pollinator concerns in the city administration and its departments:

- **Make a formal commitment to protect and restore pollinator habitats** to create a supportive policy framework at local level. This can help translate international declarations and European policies into local ambitions and programs thereby empowering implementation;

Did you know...?

EU Members States are signatories to the *Convention on Biological Diversity* and its Protocols, as well as to its *Aichi biodiversity targets* and thus should comply with the targets.

Relevant EU strategies and Directives:

- → *EU Pollinators Initiative which sets strategic objectives and actions to be taken by the EU and its Member States to address pollinator decline in the EU and contribute to global conservation efforts;*
- → *EU Biodiversity Strategy* (including biodiversity and ecosystem services recovery);
- → the *Birds* and *Habitats Directives* aim to create an EU-wide Natura 2000 Network of protected areas to ensure long-term survival of threatened species and habitats;
- → *The EU Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticides (2009/128/EC)* has binding rules to minimise or prohibit the use of pesticides in certain public areas such as parks.

- **Develop a pollinator-friendly city vision and policy programme** ideally captured in a dedicated Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan and including all relevant stakeholders in its design and formulation. This helps raise awareness, mobilize support, draw on local knowledge and allay potential concerns;
- **Set concrete actions to integrate pollinator concerns into urban plans and sectoral policies** by reviewing policies and instruments for spatial planning, infrastructure and housing, nature conservation and land-use management. This can help steer supportive procedures across sectors and broaden engagement for pollinators;
- **Foster collaboration with and secure the commitment of other sectors** such as large-scale landowners, developers, brownfield managers, facility and utility managers, transport business managers, farmers, schools, local NGOs and community groups. Pollinator conservation is a joint effort, it is therefore important to find partners and build good networks to avoid working in silos.

Recommendations for practitioners in public authorities

Practitioners working at the implementation level are strategically positioned to lead on and bring about the conservation of pollinators. Especially spatial planners and green space managers have ample opportunities to push for pollinator action given their wide range of responsibilities, services and land holdings. An important first step here is to map existing and potential pollinators' habitats and networks in urban spaces.

- **Preserve existing pollinator habitats** by identifying high-value pollinator landscapes requiring protection such as in public or private gardens, church yards, around lakes, wetlands or buildings, on roads, railway and waterway verges and defining measures for their protection. One such simple and preferred measure is letting nature take its course and letting self-seeding plants grow;

What makes a high quality pollinator habitat?

Pollinators thrive in heterogeneous landscapes with a variety of habitats assembled (Open Mosaic Habitats) suitable for a broad range of pollinator species. Pollinators need foraging sites (for food) and nesting habitats (used as shelter during hibernation time or while settling colonies). Most urban spaces provide one or the other, sometimes even both at the same time, which would be ideal.

- **Restore, create and connect pollinator habitats** The mapping can also help identify high-potential areas that can qualify for restoration, connection or the creation of new pollinator habitats. For example, green corridors can be reconnected or new habitats created on brownfields and unused urban green spaces or green roofs. Following are some practical recommendations:
  - *improve ground conditions and the quality of substrate for nesting grounds* to allow plant communities to thrive;
  - *create nesting and hibernating habitats for wild bees* by leaving as many areas as wild as possible, or leaving some areas bare for ground nesting for example;
  - *use low-risk pesticides*, biological control measures, and non-chemical pest control techniques;
  - *combat invasive alien plants*, and;
  - *grow pollinator-friendly native plant mixes and adjust mowing practices* taking into account that pollinators require a continuous supply of nectar-rich flowers or trees, and herb-rich areas to feed (ideally all-year round).
- **Raise awareness of the role of pollinators for citizens and the urban environment through community engagement and environmental education** which are critical for the success and sustainability of any measures undertaken. Focus education efforts on the young to build a generation with strong pollinator awareness, knowledge and a sense of ownership.

More detailed guidance is provided in **"A guide for pollinator-friendly cities: How can spatial planners and land-use managers create favourable urban environments for pollinators?"**