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Business and nature working together: action by the tourism sector to protect wild pollinators

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Business and nature working together: action by the tourism sector to protect wild pollinators

Why is this guidance needed?

This guidance document for businesses is part of the broader implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative¹. The initiative was adopted by the European Commission (EC) on 1 June 2018, setting the framework for an integrated approach to address the decline of pollinators in Europe through 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.

One of the important actions of the initiative is to encourage and enable the business sector to take action for wild pollinators.

This document aims to provide such guidelines to the tourism sector. Its scope includes both local actions (i.e. site-specific) and measures across the value chain that can contribute towards the conservation and restoration of wild pollinator populations. The guidance document also informs businesses on the risks that stem from the decline of wild pollinators, and opportunities that arise from taking action to reverse this negative trend.

Pollinators – such as bees, hoverflies, moths, butterflies and beetles – are declining dramatically around the world, and Europe is no exception. With pollinator populations being essential in underpinning the stability of pollinator services over time, this decline of pollinators puts managed and natural ecosystems functioning at risk.

Why should your business care?

All tourism – even in city centres – relies on natural resources for supplies of food, clean water, and other 'ecosystem services' that ultimately depend on a functioning nature. For most other types of tourism, wild pollinators and wider biodiversity contribute significantly to the attractiveness and quality of destinations, and therefore to their competitiveness: for example, water quality and natural vegetation are both ecosystem services that contribute to destination attractiveness. Furthermore, biodiversity is a direct attraction at the heart of nature-based tourism products, such as tourism in protected areas like the Natura 2000 network.

Clearly, biodiversity is a vital asset to the tourism industry. Tourists often take advantage of natural landscapes, including national parks, coastal environments and mountainous regions – all of which harbour rich biodiversity. Wild pollinators indicate a clean and healthy environment, which is what every tourist expects. Many tourists will not return to polluted or spoiled destinations. As tourism consists of a crucial pillar for the local economy, and at the same time depends on nature, it is important to ensure development of tourism that safeguards biodiversity. Potential negative impacts of tourism activities on biodiversity should be effectively mitigated.

¹ COM(2018) 395 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1528213737113&uri=CELEX:52018DC0395>

What can your business do?

The sector is well placed to seize opportunities and act positively and effectively for wild pollinator populations. This guidance provides recommendations for action by this business sector to protect wild pollinators illustrated with examples of companies taking the lead in creating opportunities for both the sector and pollinators. The tourism sector should:

- ▶ implement land planning continuously, and from an early stage of destination development, and regulate the location, intensity and type of tourism development in accordance with ecological carrying capacities;
- ▶ assist destination managers with sustainable tourism development;
- ▶ implement supply chain management, especially green procurement;
- ▶ introduce environmental requirements into contracts or ask suppliers to sign legally binding codes of conduct that specify minimum environmental criteria and/or give permission to be environmentally audited;
- ▶ develop and promote tourism packages that exclude environmentally damaging options;
- ▶ inform and raise awareness of the role of pollinators to its stakeholders (i.e. sector professionals, elected representatives, tourists, local communities) and encourage them to partake in actions that promote biodiversity conservation;
- ▶ support innovation and environmental performance within the sector through the funding of sector-specific and applied research;
- ▶ monitor and evaluate the impacts of tourist activities as well as actions taken for the conservation of wild pollinators;
- ▶ lead reporting on actions for the planet by sharing its results on pollinator state improvement;
- ▶ partner up with NGOs, local nature authorities and/or academics when drafting, implementing and evaluating actions for pollinators, whether they focus on a company's site or the supply chain.





1. WHAT YOU AS A BUSINESS MANAGER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT POLLINATORS

Pollinator populations are essential to underpin the stability of pollination² services in the short- and long-term. Indeed, without pollinators, a large majority of flowering plants will not be able to reproduce and eventually will decline, causing serious cascading effects across ecosystems and business value chains. Many fruits, nuts and vegetables will be lost from our diets, but also other important raw materials and products, such as vegetable oils, cotton and flax, plant-based pharmaceutical and cosmetic products. In essence, pollinators play a crucial role in maintaining terrestrial ecosystems healthy and resilient, which in turn deliver essential services to our businesses and society at large.

Pollinators – such as bees, hoverflies, moths, butterflies and beetles (Figure 1) – are declining dramatically around the world, and Europe is no exception [2, 3]. Many species are threatened with extinction creating a pollination deficit [1]. This puts managed and natural ecosystems functioning at risk, with businesses facing possible serious shortages of raw materials, a decline in crop quality and challenges with the security of the supply chain.



Figure 1. a snapshot of the diversity of wild pollinators - see Annex 1 for photo credits

In addition to the impact on farmers' crops, the loss of wild pollinators will also lead to serious problems in terms of the benefits to society that our already fragile ecosystems are delivering. The reduced growth of specific pollinator-dependent vegetation on a mountain slope, for example, could lead to an increased erosion effect or flooding. To maintain our ecosystems and

landscapes healthy, wild pollinators are crucial allies. Indeed, we rely on wild pollinators for very important services in maintaining our ecosystems. There are no alternatives to species rich communities, and both businesses and society should therefore increase their efforts for the protection and restoring of wild pollinator populations.

² Pollination is the transfer of grains of pollen between flowers which enables the reproduction of flowering plants (both wild and domesticated). Without animal pollinators, many plants cannot set seed and reproduce. When humans benefit directly from this function, pollinators thereby deliver a free pollination service.

1.1 Wild pollinators and tourism

Tourism is one of the main economic drivers of Europe's rural economies and is a major industry in Europe. For the European economy alone, travel and tourism directly contributed an estimated 782 billion euros to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018 and 14.4 million jobs through direct employment in the sector [4]. The tourism sector is mainly dominated by a myriad of small and medium enterprises: with the share of medium and large companies (that have more than 50 employees) being below 10% of enterprises [5]. Furthermore, the traditional suppliers of this sector are very diverse and include travel agencies, tour operators, entertainment venues (such as amusement parks and golf courses), hospitality businesses (hotels, bed & breakfasts, guesthouses, resorts, and restaurants etc.), caterers and transportation companies (airlines and platforms, cruise ships, etc.). This makes the tourism industry a very complex and fragmented sector.

Because of the importance of environmental quality and biodiversity for tourism, the tourism industry has a long-term interest in environmental protection and conservation [1]. However, the high rates of growth of tourism over the past two decades have seen the expansion of tourism into new destinations and regions in ways that have taken inadequate account of biodiversity (including pollinator) conservation. The forecasted expansion of tourism for at least the upcoming decades indicates that more attention must be paid to the planning of tourism, using tools that can limit its impacts over the long term. The expansion of tourism is not only based on physical infrastructure; there is also an expansion in the range of experiences available to tourists. Increasingly, tourists are not just

interested in conventional 'Sun, Sea and Sand' holidays, but in an ever-widening range of tourism offerings, all of which impact the natural environment and local communities. Therefore, reducing the impact of tourism on biodiversity and pollinators is key to ensuring it remains a major source of economic activity. This has also been recognised at the EU policy level and underlined in the European Commission Communication 'Agenda for sustainable and competitive European tourism'[6].

While every industry can play a role in improving the health of wild pollinators, tourism businesses have a unique opportunity to attract more customers while benefiting the natural environment. Without pollinators, wildflowers would not ripen seeds, ecosystems will deteriorate, including a decrease of biodiversity and the services our ecosystems deliver... and biodiversity is vital to tourism. Indeed, tourism and pollination are closely linked both in terms of impacts and dependency. Many types of tourism rely directly on ecosystem services and biodiversity (ecotourism also known as nature-based tourism, agri-tourism, wellness tourism, adventure tourism, etc.). Tourism uses recreational services and supply services provided by ecosystems. Tourists are looking for cultural and environmentally friendly authentic tourism experiences, coming in contact with host and local communities of the destination, and learning about flora, fauna, ecosystems, and their conservation. On the other hand, too many tourists can also have a negative, degrading effect on wild pollinators and their habitats and on biodiversity and ecosystems more broadly.

Differences between honey bees and wild bees

In addressing this challenge, it is essential to understand the difference between wild bees and honey bees. Honey bees and wild bees are often both included when bee conservation and campaigns are conducted. Obviously, the two have much in common, however, there are key differences. Conversely, there are around 2,000 bee species in Europe, and the honey bee is just one of them. Although some feral honey bee colonies can be found, most honey bee colonies are bred by beekeepers (managed honey bees) for the production of honey and other products. Therefore, honey bee occurrence and density depend on the locations of bee hives, which is determined by beekeepers, with individuals feeding on the many different types of flowers available around the beehive. Wild bees, on the other hand, can be as generalists as honeybees, feeding on many different types of flowers, whilst others are specialists and exclusively feed from one or a small number flowering plant species. In addition, wild bees usually occur in lower densities, but because they are more diverse they have a much more diverse ecological role, feeding and making their nests in many different habitats. In fact, high honey bee density can negatively impact wild pollinators including pollinator-plant networks [9],

While some crops and wild flowers can be pollinated by honey bees and wild bees, several crops and flowers (such as legumes) can only be pollinated by specific wild bees. In general, wild bees are more effective and efficient pollinators than honey bees [10, 11]. Also, unlike honeybees, wild bees provide this service for free. Even though honey bees certainly have a role to play, maintaining a species-rich wild pollinator community is the key to securing a long-term sustainable pollination service.

Diversity in species ensures that plants will be pollinated even in cases where certain species fail to perform or when populations are too small to effectively pollinate. It enables resilience to the ever-changing environments and acts as a buffer for unforeseen or uncertain future major changes, especially in the context of climate change.



- Honeybees can be wild, but they are often farmed artificially for human purposes such as honey production - they are the only bees that produce honey.
- Honeybees live in large colonies with thousands of other bees in their family. Some wild bees such as bumblebees live in small colonies (of 50-200 bees) but most are solitary animals without a colony.
- There is only one species of honey bee in Europe but there are nearly 2000 species of wild bees.





All tourism – even in city centres – relies on natural resources for supplies of food, clean water and other ‘ecosystem services’ that ultimately depend on a functioning nature. For most other types of tourism, wild pollinators and wider biodiversity contribute significantly to the attractiveness and quality of destinations, and therefore to their competitiveness: for example, water quality and natural vegetation are both ecosystem services that contribute to destination attractiveness. And biodiversity is a direct attraction at the heart of nature-based tourism products, such as tourism in protected areas like the Natura 2000 network.

Reducing the environmental impact of tourism is key to ensuring it remains a major source of economic activity. Given the importance of human capital and the strong dependency of tourism on natural resources, further development of the industry in a sustainable way is key to remaining competitive and viable. Indeed, the business case for biodiversity and pollinators is easy to make for the tourism sector depending directly on biodiversity for its operation.

Compared to other sectors, the tourism sector is quite advanced regarding their approach to biodiversity. Several initiatives³ have already been launched to study and benefit from the close link between biodiversity and tourism such as concrete tools and recommendations, reports and maps. Those documents and best practices already target the different types of entities included within this sector: hospitality services (hotels, restaurants, etc.), transportation services, outdoor recreational activities, ecotourism, tour operators and travel agencies. Sustainable tourism initiatives involving private businesses, such as the Tour Operators’ Initiative (TOI) for Sustainable Tourism Development, already exist.

Nature-based tourism is one example where companies’ income depends to a major extent on biodiversity and

the health of the surrounding ecosystem. In such cases, business owners and managers need little persuasion to invest in biodiversity management. Essentially, the benefits of responsible tourism and its contribution to wild pollinator status improvement for companies include:

- diversifying and improving services and products;
- providing a sustainable angle for marketing and promotion;
- improving public opinion and overall perception of the company and sector;
- differentiating companies from competitors and acting as a role model of a responsible and innovative business, thereby enabling companies to reach new clients;
- attracting intertwining businesses and therefore creating dynamics of economic growth.

It will furthermore guarantee the sustainable management of tourism resources, thus ensuring long-term use of tourism sites and resources and will also promote responsible behaviour among tourists. Those involved in or benefiting from the tourism sector would profit both today and in the future. Finally, risks regarding companies’ image and reputation may arise in the context of new markets and the relationship with customers and shareholders who are more aware of pollinator and ecological issues. Building sustainable partnerships with stakeholders and identifying common goals can contribute positively to both a business’s goodwill and to wild pollinator populations. Mitigating those risks will reinforce brand reputation and company image. Moreover, companies acting as sustainability champions will directly benefit from such an image.

Clearly, biodiversity is a vital asset to the tourism industry. Tourists often take advantage of natural landscapes, including national parks, coastal environments and mountainous regions – all of which harbour rich biodiversity. Wild pollinators indicate a clean and healthy environment, which is what every tourist expects. Many tourists will not return to polluted or spoiled destinations. As tourism consists of a crucial pillar for the local economy, and at the same time depends on nature, it is important to ensure development of tourism that safeguards biodiversity. Potential negative impacts of tourism activities on biodiversity should be effectively mitigated.

In Chapter 2 further advisory is provided on what the sector can do in addressing wild pollinators to the multiple benefits for the business itself, the environment and the society.

³ Ecosystem services: the benefits to humans derived from nature, with pollination being the free service provided by wild pollinators.

1.2 Site and value chain impacts

Any business is a value chain as is shown in Figure 1 with environmental and social impacts occurring across the value chain.



Figure 1. Value chain link with key drivers of biodiversity loss

As sectors and individual companies are being pressed to account for all their impacts, they are turning to their value chain to disclose information in order to monitor and reduce impacts. This includes keeping track of where materials come from, under what conditions they are mined or manufactured, where and how things are made, how products are packaged, transported used and disposed of. This information is subject to scrutiny by related actors such as stakeholders, investors and regulators [8].

Understanding the full environmental footprint of products and services has become a critical challenge for the private sector and associated players such as manufacturers and retailers. Advances in accounting and reporting methodologies enable companies to identify suppliers that perform best on reducing resource dependence and environmental impact. This will allow companies to encourage suppliers to cost-

effectively manage risk and opportunity in their own value chains and product development [9].

All tourism organisations depend on external suppliers to provide materials and services. The environmental impacts arising from the production and delivery of these materials and services can be substantial compared with environmental impacts directly arising from activities occurring within, or directly managed by, tourism organisations. Meanwhile, the environmental impact of use and disposal can vary considerably across different products and services depending on their design. Thus, there is potential for all tourism organisations to significantly reduce the total – direct and indirect – environmental impact arising from their operations through the selection of buildings, equipment, consumables and services associated with better environmental performance.





2. WHY DO POLLINATORS MATTER TO YOUR BUSINESS?

Managing a business at any value chain level and the ecosystem services involved implies evaluating risks and opportunities against the various aspects of running said business: operational, regulatory and legislation, marketing and reputation, financial and societal. The sector is well placed to seize the opportunities and act positively and effectively for wild pollinator populations (see Table 1 for an overview).

Dr Beynon's Bug Farm pioneered The St Davids Pollinator Trail, which is an innovative community-wide venture connecting tourism sites across the St Davids peninsula in Wales.

Interested in what other front-runners are doing? See Chapter 4.

Brussels Airport Company has committed to safeguard biodiversity at the airport and, where possible, to enhance it. An inventory performed by the local NGO Natuurpunt showed several rare pollinator species that find suitable habitat at the airport's grasslands.

Interested in what benefits this has created for the company? See Chapter 4.

In 2008, jointly with Accor, IUCN has explored the contribution that hotels can make to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through their day-to-day operations. As part of the travel and tourism sector, hotels are uniquely positioned to spread the message and generate buzz about bees and pollinators.

Interested in what your business can do? See Chapter 3.



Table 1. **Why** pollinating insects matters to your business and **what** to do (risks & opportunities for the horticulture sector that are of key importance and sector-specific are highlighted in **bold**).

	Risks	Opportunities
<p>Operational Regular business activities, expenditures, and processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Degradation of habitats and loss of pollinators as tourism continues to expand and convert land to tourism uses (e.g. to provide more accommodation and tourism facilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improved environmental quality of touristic areas, leading to better touristic products. ▶ Integrating actions for wild pollinators in business plans could enhance the relationship with stakeholders and therefore provide easier access to land, both at the stages of exploring new areas for tourism development, as well as when expansion of existing areas is in focus. ▶ Provision of other ecosystem services and associated benefits (e.g. by linking water and carbon management with pollinator-friendly actions).
<p>Legal and regulatory Laws, public policies, and regulations that affect business performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New regulations or license fees to protect nature and pollinating insects. ▶ Increased compliance costs. ▶ Increased capital costs or reduced economic activities due to permit denials or delays. ▶ Increased fines, penalties, compensation, or legal costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reduce compliance costs and/or other costs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. being more proactive towards (new) environmental legislative frameworks and government policies; b. anticipating negative impacts; c. embedding pollinator risk identification within the supply chain management and certification schemes of companies (e.g. ISO14001, FSC⁴, PEFC⁵)
<p>Financing Costs of and access to capital including debt and equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased financing costs (higher interest rates or harsher conditions). ▶ Loss of financial institution's or investor's interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Gain or maintain investor interest and confidence, which can improve access to finance and/or reduce financing costs. ▶ New "green funds" may become available. ▶ New environmental markets might emerge (e.g. carbon offsets, habitat credits, payments for ecosystem services [10] etc.). ▶ Diversification of tourism products, complementing the efforts to fight seasonality of the tourism offer.
<p>Reputational and marketing Company trust and relationships with direct business stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Changing customer values or preferences may lead to reduced market share. ▶ Increased staff turnover which in turn leads to higher recruitment and retention costs. ▶ Reduced loyalty of key suppliers or business service providers. ▶ Public campaigns, e.g. by negative publicity on unsustainable tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Emerging environmental markets and products may offer new revenue streams (e.g. carbon offsets, habitat banking, payments for ecosystem services [10] etc.). ▶ Improve physical and mental wellbeing of employees. ▶ Improve ability to attract and retain employees. ▶ Differentiating the business to key customers who demand strong sustainability commitments in an increasingly competitive market.
<p>Societal Relationships with the wider society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local communities may hold tourism responsible for the decline in pollination, when the land is unsustainably managed and when tourism pressure is high, but not well-regulated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local communities may benefit from other improved ecosystem services that come along with the implementation of pollinator-friendly measures, e.g. through improved recreational access to green areas, cleaner air and improved regulation of water flows.

⁴ Forest Stewardship Council

⁵ Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification



3. WHAT CAN YOUR BUSINESS DO?

To avoid the risks and meet the opportunities that are described above (see Chapter 2), it is important for the tourism business sector to take measures to improve the state of pollinators. Measures to protect biodiversity and pollinators can be taken at all stages of the tourism chain and all stages of destination development. Public administrations and associated agencies can manage many aspects of tourism sustainability within destinations through the development of regulation, fiscal policies and by offering coordination and guidance. In this way they can prevent or reverse biodiversity loss.

Chapter 3.1 provides an overview of measures that are relevant for the tourist areas and activities that are accessible to tourists. Chapter 3.2 focuses on actions that can be taken in the context of the value chain. In addition to tourist sites, businesses in the tourism sector often also have properties that are not open to the public, such as the premises of a business' headquarters as well as the company's properties that have not yet been developed for business purposes. In Chapter 0 of this guidance there is advice on how to develop these spaces to the benefit of pollinators and biodiversity more broadly, including local-level actions that apply for all businesses.

3.1 Actions at tourist areas/activities

Tourism has a large potential to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development and environmental conservation. It can support the protection of natural resources, as residents realize the value of their assets and try to preserve it and provide another form of land use which supports landscapediversification. In addition, it can contribute to maintaining livelihoods and preserving cultural practices. In taking efforts to protect wild pollinators, opportunities arise for **education and awareness-raising to understand and respect cultural diversity along with biodiversity**. All these opportunities can be targeted by managing and enjoying tourism responsibly.



The single most effective measure to protect biodiversity and the habitats of species such as pollinators within a destination is land planning, and specifically the zoning of land to designate protected areas and **regulate the location, intensity and type of tourism development in accordance with ecological carrying capacities**. To be most effective, **land planning should be implemented continuously, and from an early stage of destination development**.

Land planning relates to both specific tourism developments (e.g. hotels) and infrastructure development that can increase the carrying capacity of an area or lead to damage directly through habitat fragmentation and indirectly by facilitating access to sensitive areas (e.g. roads). At the larger spatial scale, biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism development requires management at the destination level, where the central tool to allow for such sustainable development of tourism is the 'Destination Plan'. Developing such a plan involves coordination of all relevant government and private actors, to coordinate sustainable tourism development and minimise environmental burdens arising from tourism activities within the destination. On a smaller spatial scale, tourism evidently will benefit from developing fruitful partnerships with people living near to tourism developments and can lead reporting on actions for the planet by sharing its results on pollinator state improvement.

Further, various organisations and tools are available to assist destination managers with sustainable tourism development. **Local partners (such as NGOs, biodiversity experts and research institutions) could be crucial when planning local activities and designing conservation measures and strategies**, especially when no in-house knowledge is available.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) comprises UN agencies, leading travel companies, hotels, country tourism boards and tour operators and acts to promote increased knowledge, understanding, and the adoption of sustainable tourism practices. The GSTC compiles and provides tools and training to encourage sustainable tourism. Also, IUCN provides guidelines on sustainable tourism⁶.

Also, several labels certify the sustainable attitude of the tourism activity to consumers. Even if pollination or biodiversity more generally is not necessarily the focal point of criteria, the labels' requirements aim to reduce the impact of leisure organizations on the local environment. Local biodiversity, therefore, benefits from these eco-labels.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas of the EUROPARC federation is a good example of a practical tool for the development of sustainable tourism in European protected areas. This charter aims to increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas and improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, considering the needs of the environment, residents, local businesses and visitors.

It is fundamental that businesses in the tourism sector support systematic monitoring of wild pollinators in tourist sites in order to understand potential negative impacts of tourist activities on wild pollinators, as well as any measures taken to mitigate them. This will allow the companies to track the extent to which their goals were achieved, while gaining invaluable insight on how to improve future actions. Monitoring can be also a valuable management tool for project managers to track progress towards achieving outputs: planned activities and set milestones across a value chain. In order for business' efforts to be recognized, local partners (such as NGOs, research institutions) could be crucial to assist with the monitoring of the efforts on the ground.

⁶ Leung, Yu-Fai, Spenceley, Anna, Hvenegaard, Glen, and Buckley, Ralf (eds.) (2018). Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 27, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 120 pp.

3.2 Value chain actions

Environmental friendly value chain solutions can help companies to increase corporate image, employee satisfaction, customer loyalty/satisfaction and better relations with stakeholders, while positively impacting overall biodiversity and ecosystem services, directly and indirectly.

A small number of large tour operators dominate the industry in Europe, and margins are tight owing to high competition and a trend towards internet bookings. Thus, there are a variety of reasons for tour operators to implement sustainability measures; this including increased business, related to a responsible image. Tour operators can improve the environmental management and performance of their accommodation suppliers through a range of voluntary measures and mandatory requirements. Specifically, they can develop and **promote tourism packages that exclude environmentally damaging options, and include environmental front-runner transport, accommodation, and activity options**. Also, they can provide information to customers on the environmental impacts of tourism packages and recommend positive actions that can be taken by customers or guests during holidays to minimise their environmental impact.

All sizes and types of tourism organisation can implement supply chain management, especially green procurement. Large enterprises have greater potential to leverage influence over supply chains, but SMEs may exert considerable influence over local supply chains. For example, Hotel Gavarni is a small 25 room hotel in Paris that has implemented green procurement extensively, a.o. through renewable energy contracts and using ecological detergents only, and even influenced local suppliers to change their processes. Indeed, for the tourism sector (i.e. destination management, tour operators, accommodations, campsites and enterprises offering recreational activities) it may be possible to quickly improve supply chain sustainability by identifying and contracting more sustainable suppliers, especially where the environmental performance of suppliers is verified through relevant and rigorous third-party certification. In other cases, it may not be possible to contract other suppliers, especially on a large-scale, and the establishment of supplier standards and programmes to improve supplier environmental performance may be more appropriate. In such cases, a stepwise approach is recommended, with graded standards to incentivise continuous improvement. When moving to local suppliers, it may be necessary to contract a larger number of smaller suppliers. Local enquiries or internet searches are the best way to identify relevant local suppliers of more sustainable products. Also, large organizations may offer training on biodiversity protection to their suppliers. Further, disclosure on biodiversity issues like the pollinator loss is a critical step in advancing corporate accountability and will help businesses clarify and deepen their commitments to biodiversity and take the actions that are so urgently needed.

Large enterprises such as hotel or hostel chains can introduce environmental requirements into contracts or ask suppliers to sign legally binding codes of conduct that specify minimum environmental criteria and/or give permission to be environmentally audited. An example is the Accor procurement sustainable development charter (see good example of Accor in Chapter 4, in which the company asks suppliers to sign and commit to comply with the charter and to ensure that their (secondary) suppliers and subcontractors also comply with the charter. Signing the charter represents agreement to participate in Accor's sustainability assessment process and to implement action plans where required, including authorization for third parties to perform sustainability audits and implement action plans on behalf of Accor.

To contribute to improving the state of pollinators, cooperating with NGOs, nature conservation authorities and/or academics is highly recommended, both at national and international levels. With their help, the tourism business can incorporate ways to preserve biodiversity and reduce ecosystem threats across its operations.

Another possible measure that tourism businesses can take is to support innovation and environmental performance within the sector through the funding of sector-specific and applied research. The sector can (co-)develop research to decrease the direct and indirect environmental impacts of their activities and to improve the knowledge on what is needed locally to ensure a healthy pollinator population.

Furthermore, tourism businesses can **inform and raise awareness among its stakeholders** (i.e. sector professionals, elected representatives, tourists, local communities) **on biodiversity conservation**. These actions could help tourists and professionals to improve their behaviour with respect to biodiversity conservation.

3.3 Site/local level actions

While the previous chapter focused on sector-specific actions, this last chapter gives an overview of measures that can be applied to all business sectors, since they target individual business locations (for example, the premises of a business' headquarters or an industrial facility), as well as the company's properties that have not yet been developed for tourism purposes.

Action within companies' grounds

Businesses can draw up a long-term action plan, alongside a management plan, that identifies and protects the areas on the company's premises that are already providing food (for example, patches of wildflowers, weeds or flowering hedgerows) and shelter (like bare soil, long grass and dry-stone walls) for wild pollinators. In order to ensure pollinator-friendly management, the following actions are key:

- ▶ Reduce mowing frequency to create species-rich grasslands. Natural habitats can be further supplemented by artificial ones (for instance, bee hotels).
- ▶ When planting for pollinators, use native species (like seed mixes, clovers, bulbs, trees and shrubs). Ensure that wild pollinators have foraging resources during the whole vegetation season.
- ▶ Ensure connectivity with surrounding areas of green infrastructure and nature importance by creating grasslands and other types of vegetation that support rich biodiversity.
- ▶ Avoid and control the spread of invasive alien species⁷, both plants and animals.
- ▶ Consider the construction of green roofs and walls⁸, as they can provide considerable feeding ground for wild pollinators.
- ▶ Reduce light pollution, as artificial light can negatively affect insect populations.
- ▶ Adopt a pollinator-friendly management protocol and do not use pesticides (insecticides, fungicides and herbicides), as these can be harmful to wild pollinators.
- ▶ Ensure contractors that manage the company's land are aware of the company's intentions to enhance wild pollinators and how this should be realised.



⁷ IUCN. 2019. Managing invasive alien species to protect wild pollinators: Technical guidance prepared by IUCN for the European Commission.

⁸ See also IEEP 2020. 'Citizens for pollinator conservation: a practical guidance'. Guidance prepared by the Institute for European Environmental Policy for the European Commission & Wilk. B. Rebollo. V. Hanania. S. 2019. 'A guide for pollinator-friendly cities: How can spatial planners and land-use managers create favourable urban environments for pollinators? Guidance prepared by ICLEI Europe for the European Commission.

It is recommended that businesses partner with local NGOs/authorities or experts to include biodiversity and ecosystem services at the design stage of the company's site. They can also help with development of key performance indicators (KPIs) and, as it was already mentioned, with monitoring, reporting and evaluation of outcomes. The company could, for example, monitor the presence and diversity of local pollinator species at the company's site and the wider environment either through local partnerships or by engaging in local citizen science programmes⁹.

These actions within the companies' grounds can benefit wild pollinators and overall biodiversity most when they are applied early in the design stage of the company's site when the landscaping and infrastructure features are still open for creativity. **When securing habitats for wild pollinators, the main guiding principle is to let nature regenerate on its own.** This can be complemented by additional planting of native flowers seed mixes, if/when needed.

Generic actions which do not require any land holding

It is recommended for businesses to embed pollinator-friendly actions into the company's strategy and daily operations:

- ▶ Integrate pollinator-sensitive practices into the company's environmental management system and/or other certification schemes or standards.
- ▶ Introduce internal biodiversity policy commitments that include measures to improve pollination. For example, by implementing a biodiversity- or pollinator-friendly purchasing policy, the business can direct its suppliers to reduce the negative impacts on pollinators.
- ▶ Link the business' strategy to national and international biodiversity policy (including the EU Pollinators Initiative) and to the SDGs¹⁰ (namely SDG 15 "Life on Land", SDG 2 "Zero hunger" and SDG 12 "Responsible consumption and production").

In addition, the company can invest in projects to restore, create and connect pollinator habitats to reduce the environmental footprint of their buildings and operations and obtain general environmental benefits (reduced solid waste and wastewater, less pollution, energy efficiency etc.) and implement green procurement. Overall, these improvements will benefit nature and wild pollinators alike.

Also, the company can take efforts to **raise awareness** of:

- ▶ **the local community:** sponsor creation/restoration of pollinator habitats or arrange an expert to give a training/lecture on the conservation of wild pollinators;
- ▶ **the business' workplace:**
 1. organise pollinator awareness training sessions or workshops for employees (for example, on how to ensure their own gardens are pollinator-friendly, or how to observe and record wild pollinators in order to help monitoring efforts);
 2. include environmental considerations at each stage of the procurement process of goods, services and works (i.e. green procurement);
- ▶ **the business sector:** share your experiences regarding the implementation of pollinator-friendly measures with the EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform¹¹ at relevant conferences or seminars, and/or through social media using the #EUPollinators.

⁹ See also 'Citizens for pollinator conservation: a practical guidance'. guidance prepared by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (2020) for the European Commission.

¹⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/about/sdgs>

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/index_en.htm



4. WHAT ARE FRONT-RUNNERS ALREADY DOING?

This section presents a limited, non-exhaustive set of examples of businesses taking action for pollinators, to illustrate the diversity of potential actions that could be uptaken by the tourism sector. The list has been generated by consulting the members of the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform¹², and through literature review.

Dr Beynon's Bug Farm

Company: Dr Beynon's Bug Farm has an approach in which food, farming, research and conservation are equally important.

Action:

The farm has a programme of research that covers all aspects of the food chain: farming edible insects for food and feed; farming native insects for land management purposes; and using the services bugs provide to farm more efficiently. Also, the farm pioneered The St Davids Pollinator Trail, which is an innovative community-wide venture connecting tourism sites across the St Davids peninsula. The project aims to raise awareness about the importance of insect pollinators and to inspire people to preserve existing, or create new, pollinator habitat to combat pollinator decline. The Pollinator Trail has been part funded by the Tourism Product Innovation Fund and Biodiversity Solutions. "The Pollinator Trail is a real asset to St Davids", says Lord Elis-Thomas, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport. "Showcasing the diversity and quality of local businesses, Welsh artwork and the natural environment, The Pollinator Trail provides a vibrant and unique experience for visitors to rural West Wales".



City trail Dr Beynon's Bug Farm

Benefits for Dr Beynon's Bug Farm:

Many local residents, businesses, Open Gardens St Davids, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the St Davids City Council have supported the project by providing food and habitat for pollinators and reducing pesticide use. It is hoped for that this will result in many more communities and organisations in Wales undertaking action to support pollinators.

More info:

<https://www.thebugfarm.co.uk/pollinator-trail/>

Accor Group

Company: Accor is a French multinational corporation, the European leader in hotels (Accor Hospitality) and a global leader in corporate services (Accor Services). Accor operates in 100 countries, with more than 4,800 hotels and 280,000 employees worldwide. Its total capacity is approximately 704,000 rooms.

Action:

Through its Earth Guest policy founded on 8 priorities, Accor is committed to growing the well-being of the earth's population and preserving the planet's resources. Biodiversity is a priority with the implementation of procurement and green space management practices that respect biodiversity and the increase of employee and guest awareness through partnerships with associations. Accor includes measuring the impact on biodiversity in its environmental footprint. Also, they do not limit environmental impact analysis to the direct impact of a single hotel, but they also take into account indirect impacts such as the impact of raising the cows that wind up on restaurant menus and the impact of the shipping of goods that are necessary for a hotel to operate.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/index_en.htm

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, part of the Accor Group, facilitates the connection between its guests and the local environment through the Bee Sustainable program, placing beehives, pollinator-friendly gardens and miniature “bee hotels” on the rooftops of more than 20 of its properties around the world. While having started with a focus on honeybees, the programme soon expanded to also including actions for wild pollinator species. As such, the bee-focused initiative aids habitat protection and the pollination of gardens and flowers. For each customer ordering a beeswax gin “Bee’s Knees” cocktail; Fairmont donates a dollar to Pollinator Partnership, the world’s largest non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the protection and promotion of pollinators and their habitats..

Benefits for Accor Group:

In 2008, jointly with Accor, IUCN has explored the contribution that hotels can make to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through their day-to-day operations. As part of the travel and tourism sector, hotels are uniquely positioned to spread the message and generate buzz about bees and pollinators.

More info:

<https://group.accor.com/en/commitment/>

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_hotel_guide_final.pdf

<http://fairmontbeesustainable.com/>

<http://www.fairmontbeesustainable.com/pdf/Backgrounder%20-%20Fairmont%20Bee%20Sustainable.pdf>

Brussels Airport Company

Company: Brussels Airport Company is the private company that owns and runs Brussels Airport.

Action:

The airport site covers 1245 hectares, of which 515 hectares are undeveloped. In 2014 the airport started with beehives on its premises. Since then the airport’s honeybee approach has been intensified; this including an increasing attention and focus as well for wild pollinators and biodiversity as part of the airport’s sustainability approach. A large part of the airport’s surface consists of valuable grasslands which provide a haven to wild pollinator species. Inventory performed by the local NGO Natuurpunt showed several rare pollinator species that find suitable habitat at these grasslands. Brussels Airport Company has committed to safeguard biodiversity at the airport and, where possible, to enhance it. To this end, with the mowing of grasslands, balance is constantly searched for and improved for having maximal airplane flight safety and a suitable habitat for wild pollinators and other small critters. On the honeybee programme, the honey from the beehives is sold to airport staff, which raised €455 in 2018. Those proceeds were donated to a local nature organisation that supports wild bee populations

Benefits for the company:

Having started with beehives in 2014, these actions have paved the way for increasing actions on biodiversity and the developing of a company strategy and budget allocations to improving biodiversity and pollinator habitat. Top management, employees and other stakeholders are educated and motivated on actions that are taken with a rare species of butterfly figuring as the airport’s ambassador for its grasslands – the butterfly being depicted a tiny airplane compared to its larger companions that the airport is serving.

More info:

<https://environment.brusselsairport.be/en/biodiversity>

<http://www.flanderstoday.eu/photo-week-bees-brussels-airport>

<https://environment.brusselsairport.be/assets/PDF/environmental-report-2019.pdf>



5. FURTHER READING

EU Pollinators Initiative:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators>

EU Pollinator Information Hive:

- <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/EU+Pollinator+Information+Hive>
- https://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/news-and-events/news/news-84_en.htm

IPBES reports:

- <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services>
- <https://ipbes.net/assessment-reports/pollinators>

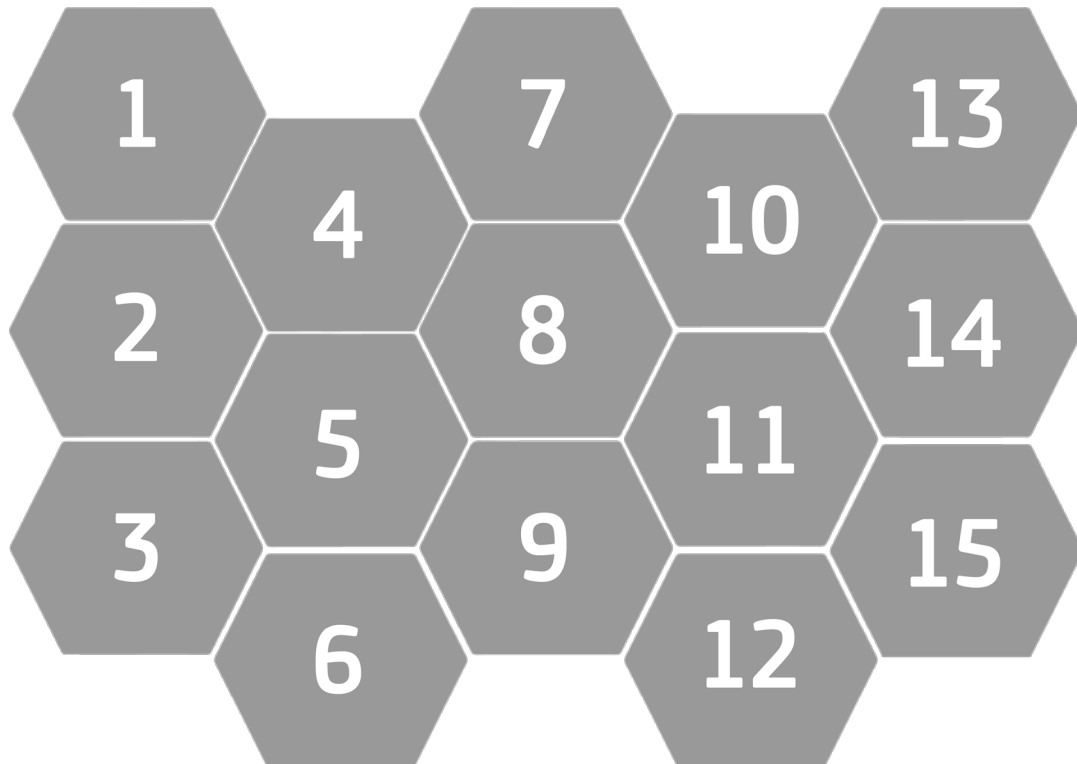
Tourism sector and environmental practice:

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- JRC Scientific and Policy Report on Best Environmental Management Practice in the Tourism Sector (2013). Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/pdf/other/TourismBEMP.pdf>
- CEWeb for Biodiversity: <http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/working-groups/sustainable-tourism/resources/>
- Leung, Yu-Fai, Spenceley, Anna, Hvenegaard, Glen, and Buckley, Ralf (eds.) (2018). Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 27, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 120 pp.Pollinators:
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Annex I



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