

## ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work in order to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to make available any relevant information that they may have.

<b>TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE</b>	EU Pollinators Initiative
<b>LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT</b>	DG ENV, Unit D.2
<b>LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE</b>	Communication
<b>INDICATIVE PLANNING</b>	Q2 2018
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	<i>Webpage of the initiative:</i> <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index_en.htm</a>

This Roadmap is provided for information purposes only and its content might change. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the Roadmap, including its timing, are subject to change.

### A. Context, Problem definition and Subsidiarity Check

#### **Context**

Animal pollination is a vital process in nature and is essential for our food production. In Europe pollinators are primarily insects like bees, hoverflies, butterflies, moths and beetles. Some of these species are domesticated, like for example honey bees.

The EU has established 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, the Cohesion policy and the Research and Innovation policy. Some EU Member States and regions have developed pollinator strategies.

Despite these measures, in 2015 the [mid-term review of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020](#) showed that animal pollination services might be significantly decreasing in the EU. In response, the [European Parliament](#) called on the Commission to launch a European initiative on pollinators. The [Council](#) also stressed the need to protect pollinators and their habitats in order to mitigate and stop their decline. The need for a strategic intervention across different sectors was highlighted in the [first global assessment of pollinators](#) issued by the IPBES<sup>1</sup>. In December 2016 the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) endorsed its conclusions and highlighted the important contribution of pollinators to the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **Problem the initiative aims to tackle**

In the EU wild pollinators have seriously declined in occurrence and diversity. The declines are best documented for wild bees and butterflies: almost one in 10 bee and butterfly species is facing extinction according to the [European Red List](#). The status of half of the bee species is, however, unknown. For bumblebees, the best studied group of wild bees, nearly one in 4 species is facing extinction. Declines have been also documented for other pollinator groups at local and regional scale, like for example hoverflies, but available data is inadequate to inform on their status and trends at EU level.

The decline in pollinator abundance and diversity leads to the loss of animal pollination, a vital process for sustaining wild plants and crops. Around 78% of temperate wild flowers in Europe need animal pollination and 84% of crops benefit, at least in part, from animal pollination. Pollinators strongly affect both the quantity and the quality of crops: an estimated EUR 15 billion of annual EU agricultural output is directly attributed to pollinators. The diversity of crops which depend on pollinators is an important part of a healthy diet. Animal pollination also plays an essential role in the functioning of ecosystems and is, therefore, important for biodiversity conservation, especially where specific plant-pollinator cooperation has developed.

<sup>1</sup> The Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

The current scientific knowledge suggests that there is no one single driver of pollinator decline. According to the [IPBES](#) direct threats to pollinators include land-use change, intensive agricultural management and pesticide use, environmental pollution, invasive alien species, pathogens and climate change. Pathogens are considered a driver primarily in the context of domesticated pollinators. Their impacts on wild pollinators are largely unknown.

The EU actions beneficial to pollinators are insufficiently targeted and coordinated. The lack of a strategic approach reduces the effectiveness of individual measures and weakens synergies between them. Knowledge in particular suffers from such fragmentation. Without EU intervention, the impacts of existing EU efforts to tackle the decline of pollinators are likely to remain limited and their potential synergies to remain largely unexploited. As a consequence, the decline of pollinators and the pollination service they provide is expected to continue, affecting negatively EU's efforts in halting the loss of biodiversity and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **Basis for EU intervention (legal basis and subsidiarity check)**

The initiative concerns the environment, which is a shared competence between the Union and the Member States pursuant to TFEU Article 4(2)(e). Article 191 TFEU gives the EU the right to act in this area. Biodiversity has a cross-border character: species move freely across Member States. Thus, the decline of pollinators is a problem that warrants a coordinated EU action to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Moreover, this initiative aims to enhance the effectiveness of existing EU actions across different policy areas, namely environment, health, agriculture, regional and urban development and research and innovation. Thus, EU-level action is not only justified, but instrumental to tackling the problem successfully.

### **B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how**

The initiative aims to establish an integrated EU approach to tackle the decline of pollinators by raising its political profile and increasing the effectiveness of EU policies for pollinators. In order to achieve the aim, the initiative may focus on the following specific objectives:

- I. **Improve knowledge on pollinators, including by supporting:**
  - a. Research into the status and trends of pollinators;
  - b. Research into the threats to pollinators, including their relative importance and interlinkages;
  - c. Research into the ecological and economic importance of pollinators and future related risks;
  - d. Monitoring of pollinators and the pollination service they provide.
  
- II. **Tackle the causes of the decline of pollinators, including by:**
  - a. Supporting the maintenance and restoration of diverse pollinator habitats in rural and urban areas through improved use of existing EU tools and policies;
  - b. Promoting the reduction of risks and impacts of pesticide use on pollinators, including through integrated pest management, and exploring ways to further enhance the risk assessment of pesticides on bees;
  - c. Addressing the negative impacts of invasive alien species on pollinators;
  - d. Promoting private sector's activities on pollinators, including innovative business models.
  
- III. **Raise awareness and improve collaboration and knowledge sharing, including by:**
  - a. Facilitating engagement of rural and urban communities in the conservation of pollinators;
  - b. Facilitating sharing of knowledge and good practices among stakeholders;
  - c. Supporting collaboration among Member States on actions for pollinators;
  - d. Supporting the development of local, regional and national pollinator strategies.

Whilst the main focus of the initiative is on wild pollinators, actions under this initiative will also benefit domesticated pollinators, in particular honey bees. This initiative will work in synergy with existing [EU efforts for domesticated pollinators](#).

### **C. Better regulation**

#### **Consultation of citizens and stakeholders**

The consultation will collect views of all relevant stakeholders on an EU integrated approach to tackle the decline of pollinators. It will also aim to collect additional evidence and insights about the problem, its root causes and approaches to mitigate them. The main stakeholders are citizens, scientists, environmental non-governmental

organisations, farmers, farmers' associations and farm advisors, beekeepers, the agro- and food industry, landscape architects, educational institutions and public authorities.

Planned consultation activities include:

- consultation of Commission Expert Groups (e.g. Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature);
- workshops with experts and Member State authorities dealing in particular with:
  - pollinators and pollination service;
  - biodiversity and nature conservation;
  - land management in rural areas, especially agriculture;
  - urban development and planning.
- a 12-week open public consultation in all 24 official EU languages accessible online via the Commission's public consultations page (expected to be launched in the beginning of 2018).

Information about the consultation activities and their results will be communicated through the [consultation webpage](#). The consultation will also be promoted via stakeholder networks, social media and newsletters.

### **Evidence base and data collection**

The existing evidence provided through the [IPBES report on pollinators, pollination and food production](#), the [European Red List](#), EU research projects like [ALARM](#), [STEP](#), [PP-ICON](#), [Urbanbees](#), research networks like [Super-B COST Action](#), and pollinator initiatives at international (for example [FAO](#)), national and regional level form a solid base to inform the envisaged EU initiative on pollinators. This information will be complemented by the above-mentioned consultation activities. Relevant evidence gathered during the [Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives](#) will also be used.

An impact assessment will not be necessary for the development of the initiative given that its purpose is to increase the effectiveness of EU policies and facilitate a more integrated approach between them. If necessary, an impact assessment would be conducted before any new proposals with expected significant impact are being put forward.