



## CALL FOR ACTION

# More than just flower strips!

## Requirements for more and better insect and biodiversity promotion at landscape level

### The path to an insect-friendly landscape

More and better support for insects at landscape level means creating a dense network of areas with habitats and food sources for insects in both rural and urban areas. Effective and efficient protection of insects and biodiversity as a whole requires a high density of point, linear and extensive habitat and feeding opportunities and their interconnection across agricultural and urban landscapes. Insect diversity needs more space!

More than five years of intensive project work in a total of seven „insect-responsible sourcing regions“ within the LIFE project „Insect-Responsible Sourcing Regions“ have resulted in five key success factors for a lasting and noticeable improvement in insect diversity and biodiversity in our cultivated landscapes.



#### PIONEERS

**Innovative actors with intrinsic motivation.** More and better insect promotion at landscape level starts with land use stakeholders who have intrinsic motivation for the protection and promotion of insects and biodiversity as a whole. These stakeholders serve as key starting points and hubs for enhancing nature conservation in rural areas. Innovative pioneers are needed.

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#### DIVERSITY OF ACTIVITIES



**Activation and coordinated interaction of land use actors.** As many areas as possible in a landscape should provide food and habitat for insects. Therefore, as many land use stakeholders as possible must be motivated to cooperate and become active. Insect diversity needs a broad, active social basis!

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#### COMPETENCE



**Insect expertise is the key to high-quality implementation.** Measures to promote insects must be well selected, well planned and well implemented. This requires knowledge and expertise - both about insects and their needs as well as about suitable protection and support measures and their competent implementation. Because good intentions alone are not enough.

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#### COORDINATION

**Coordination of stakeholders, measures and communication.** A coordinating body is needed as a „caretaker“ to enable stakeholders to achieve the best possible results across multiple areas. Its main task is to organize the regular exchange of experience, the planning of measures, communication and skills development.



#### FINANCING

**More biodiversity requires significantly more money than before.** Effective stakeholder coordination requires stable and reliable funding. Land use stakeholders, especially farmers, need financially attractive incentives to implement measures to promote insects. Ideally, public funding should be complemented by financial contributions from the food industry.

In order for these success factors to be effective, **better framework conditions** must be created for more and better insect and biodiversity promotion at landscape level.



# Strengthening agricultural nature conservation through cooperative funding programmes

Cooperative, landscape-related funding programmes based on and further developing existing structures are a key component of sustainable agricultural nature conservation. They enable the targeted, flexible and participatory promotion of biodiversity and thus make a decisive contribution to the sustainable development of resilient and diverse landscapes in Europe.

## Effectiveness and efficiency through cooperation

Cooperative support programmes are an effective way of significantly increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural nature conservation. In order to achieve the greatest possible impact, such programmes should be offered throughout the EU and opened up to other land use stakeholders beyond agriculture. This promotes cross-actor cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and thus creates the basis for sustainable development in rural areas.

## Establish cooperation at landscape level

Innovative and voluntary cooperation models create the potential to coordinate nature conservation measures at a specific landscape level. By involving all relevant land use stakeholders, synergies can be utilised and the benefits for biodiversity can be significantly increased. The programmes should therefore be open to farmers, forestry, municipalities and other land users.

## Utilisation and further development of existing LEADER structures

The existing LEADER structures provide a tried and tested basis for the development of an independent biodiversity promotion programme. While the classic LEADER approach is aimed at general rural development, a specific biodiversity programme enables the targeted promotion of the conservation, restoration and creation of near-natural habitats in selected landscapes within a LEADER region. Such a programme offers the following advantages:

- **Customised support:** Regional characteristics and needs can be specifically addressed.
- **Strengthening ecological resilience:** Flexible, regional solutions increase the adaptability of landscapes to environmental changes.
- **Sustainable development:** The quality of life and economic strength in rural areas are secured and improved in the long term.



## **Reform of agricultural support programmes: Strengthening the attractiveness, flexibility and practicability of support programmes**

A fundamental reform of agricultural support programmes is necessary in order to increase participation in agri-environmental measures and promote the provision of ecosystem services. Higher premiums, opening up to private investment and a flexible, practical design will make the programmes fit for the future and make a decisive contribution to the sustainable development of agriculture.

### **Higher subsidies for ecosystem services**

The current funding rates and compensation premiums are insufficient to create a real incentive to participate in agri-environmental measures. More financially attractive premiums and appropriate compensation for ecosystem services are needed to significantly increase the willingness of farms to participate.

### **Enabling private investment in ecosystem services**

The legal framework must be adapted so that a combination of public subsidies (compensation component for basic quality) with private premiums (incentive component for top quality) is possible. Such a combination must not be regarded as unauthorised double funding. This can mobilise additional private investment in the protection and promotion of ecosystem services.

### **Flexible measure design and commitment periods**

In order to lower the entry barriers for agricultural businesses, support programmes should be made more flexible. This includes uncomplicated exit options for multi-year measures, a staggered increase in the level of support for long-term participation and easier adjustment in the event of land loss. These measures reduce the risk of sanctions and make the programmes more attractive and practicable.



## **Joint responsibility of the food industry and agriculture for biodiversity**

Together with the agricultural sector, the food industry bears a key responsibility for the protection and promotion of biodiversity. Targeted incentives, investments, support for monitoring and the creation of harmonised requirements in quality standards can make a sustainable contribution to biodiversity in Europe's cultivated landscapes.

### **Incentives for biodiversity-promoting production**

The food industry is called upon to create targeted financial incentives and fair remuneration models that reward farmers for their additional efforts to protect biodiversity. Ideally, this should be done in combination with public funding programmes in order to exploit synergies and increase the impact.

### **Investing in biodiversity**

Companies in the food industry should actively invest in biodiversity projects and thus in the resilience of supply chains. This can be done by supporting regional biodiversity action plans (e.g. Responsible Sourcing Regions) or by directly financing measures to restore and preserve near-natural habitats.

### **Support for biodiversity monitoring**

The food industry should support farmers in monitoring their biodiversity performance. This can be achieved through digital tools, training, the provision of monitoring systems and the joint development of indicators and reporting standards. In this way, successes can be measured and the effectiveness of the measures can be communicated transparently.

### **Industry initiatives for a level playing field**

In order to create practicable, efficient and transparent working conditions for agricultural businesses, the food industry must harmonise and standardise its biodiversity requirements across the sector. Common standards and initiatives ensure a level playing field and facilitate implementation in practice.



## **Advice and capacity building as the key to more biodiversity in agriculture**

The expansion of practical biodiversity advice and the integration of biodiversity into agricultural training are decisive levers for the success of agri-environmental measures. They ensure the quality and acceptance of the measures and make a sustainable contribution to the protection and promotion of biodiversity at landscape level.

### **Expansion of biodiversity counselling**

An advisory-based model provides farmers with targeted support in the development and implementation of suitable biodiversity measures. Specialised biodiversity advisors offer practice-oriented information on biodiversity and specific implementation aids. This improves the quality of the implementation of measures, increases acceptance and enables a greater diversity of measures within a landscape. It also promotes the development and maintenance of networked landscape structures.

### **Integration of biodiversity into agricultural training**

Biodiversity and environmental competence must be integrated as fixed components of specialised teaching and training in agriculture. A stronger anchoring of these topics in agricultural education lays the foundation for effective long-term biodiversity conservation and sustainable farming.



**We, the undersigned, call for the improvement of the aforementioned framework conditions for more and better insect and biodiversity promotion and express our interest and willingness to support and promote the development of insect-promoting regions.**

**For the LIFE 'Insect-promoting regions' project team:**

- Schwäbisch Hall Farmers' Producers' Association
- Lake Constance Foundation
- Global Nature Fund
- Nestlé Germany
- Flowering Landscape Network

**Other signatory institutions and companies (as of 20th July 2025):**

- Deutscher Naturschutzring (DNR)
- Naturland – Verband für ökologischen Landbau e.V.
- Kompetenzzentrum Ökolandbau Niedersachsen GmbH
- Schwartauer Werke GmbH & Co KG
- Neumarkter Lammsbräu, Gebr. Ehrnsperger KG
- EU Horizon2020 FRAMEwork Project
- Recodo information platform (of the FRAMEwork project)
- eurac research
- Umweltcampus Birkenfeld
- E-ZAVOD - Institute for Comprehensive Development Solutions
- IMEDEA (MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES, CSIC-UIB)
- Katholische Landvolkbewegung Deutschland (KLB)
- Katholische Landbewegung (KLB) in der Erzdiözese Freiburg
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