

## **Calling all Irish Businesses to Help Save the Bees!**

**~ The National Biodiversity Centre and Bord Bia recommend 18 pollinator friendly actions ~**

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Irish businesses are being called on to take action in helping to save the bees. The National Biodiversity Data Centre and Bord Bia have launched a Framework for Businesses as part of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which identifies actions that companies can take to help protect pollinators and the livelihoods of farmers who rely on their invaluable pollination service.

Companies are being urged to sign up and implement the plan's business guidelines. The guidelines, launched today, suggest 18 practical actions that any business can take in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Some of the actions include:

- protecting areas that are providing food and shelter for pollinators
- mowing lawns using a pollinator friendly regimen
- install a bee or insect hotel
- raising awareness in your community or supply chain
- planting pollinator friendly bulbs, trees, shrubs and flower beds and reducing the use of pesticides

## **The Importance of Bees and Pollinators**

Pollinators, especially bees, make up an important part of Ireland's biodiversity. Irish pollinators are in decline, with one third of Ireland's 98 bee species threatened by extinction in Ireland. The annual value of pollinators for human food crops is at least €53 million. Speaking at the launch, Dr. Jane Stout, deputy chair of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan Steering Group, said, *"Without pollinators it would be impossible for farmers or gardeners to affordably produce many of the fruits and vegetables we need for a healthy diet. Pollinators are also necessary for a healthy environment and landscape. Without them, the 78% of wild plants in Ireland that require insect pollination would disappear. The overall strategy, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, makes Ireland one of the first countries in Europe with an approach to address this problem."*

Commenting on the Irish agri-food industry's efforts, Jim O'Toole, Bord Bia's director of sustainable development said, *"Bord Bia has worked closely with the National Biodiversity Data Centre to support the implementation of the Pollinator Plan through Origin Green, it's national sustainability programme for the agri-food industry. Support of the Pollinator Plan offers businesses multiple benefits, such as demonstration of their sustainability credentials and a way of differentiating a business to key customers who require strong sustainability commitments in an increasingly competitive market. Together with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, we are asking businesses, regardless of their sector or size or land holdings, to play an active role in helping pollinators."*

## **Business Benefits**

Along with the business benefits that come from supporting the Pollinator Plan, registered companies will receive a certificate of participation, as well as support in developing plans to take pollinator friendly actions within the business. Once businesses have taken pollinator friendly actions, they may also receive recognition for their work by logging their efforts on the publicly available mapping system, 'Actions for Pollinators'. Furthermore, commitment to the plan encourages and increases employee engagement through relevant training and events and improves employee health and wellbeing, as well as supporting community engagement and strengthening relationships with local groups.

## **The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015 – 2020**

Last year, the National Biodiversity Data Centre and Bord Bia, along with 68 governmental and non-governmental organisations, came together to form a shared plan of action, to help pollinators and improve biodiversity across Ireland. The national plan provides a framework to support Corporate Social Responsibility objectives, as well as coordination and support through Bord Bia's Origin Green programme.

For more information or to sign up, visit [www.biodiversityireland.ie/pollinator-plan](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/pollinator-plan)

**ENDS**

### **NOTES TO EDITOR:**

#### **About the National Biodiversity Data Centre**

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is a national organisation that collects and manages data to document Ireland's wildlife resource, and to track how it is changing.

Funding for implementation of the All – Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015 -2020 has been provided by the Heritage Council & Bord Bia. Funding for design of this guide has been provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

#### **About Bord Bia**

Bord Bia is the government agency charged with the promotion, trade development and marketing of the Irish food, drink and horticulture industry. Its mission is to deliver effective and innovative market development, promotion and information services to assist companies grow and win new business. Bord Bia also coordinates national initiatives such as the Quality Assurance Schemes operating at farm and factory level and Origin Green, a sustainability programme for Ireland's food and drink industry.