THE FUTURE TAKES FLIGHT

APPROVED BY CONAPI BEES

SPECIFICATION
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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biodiversity

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1. INTRODUCTION

CONAPI has always looked at the ecological and consequently social dimension as an indispensable part of the values that an Organisation must pursue.

With this in mind, CONAPI believes that every organisation, regardless of its type of activity and geographical location, must make the protection of natural resources and biodiversity, as well as the education of future generations, essential components of its activities.

2. CONTEXT

Organisations today are acting in an increasingly demanding context in terms of transparent behaviour, as being 'socially responsible' means creating value not only for the company itself but above all for local communities and future generations. Respect for the environment and biodiversity thus becomes an objective that increasingly finds its way into the policies of every organisation.

3. PURPOSE

With this in mind, CONAPI has created the specification 'Approved by CONAPI Bees', with the aim of providing a tool for companies to formalise ethical behaviour towards the ecosystem, with a view to safeguarding the environment, pollinating insects and consequently biodiversity, while also committing to continuous and constant improvements over time that are quantifiable and monitorable.

This specification, verifiable by an authorised certifying body - CCPB, is intended to ensure that, through its own small contribution, each Organisation can aid the environment, the health of ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity, at the level of management of the environments under their ownership, of the awareness of the human resources that make up the Organisation's workforce and of the local communities with regard to this issue.

Obtaining compliance with the 'Approved by CONAPI Bees' specification, which is held by CONAPI and that it is responsible for, also allows the organisation to communicate its commitment to the community through the use of the dedicated Trademark, which can be displayed on its website or other communication channels as well as on the labels of its products, both food and non-food. The rules of use can be found in the document 'Regulations Approved by CONAPI Bees'.

The trademark '**Approved by CONAPI Bees**' certifies that the Organisation has undertaken a path of awareness towards the environment, biodiversity and the community through the management of its business.

4. SCOPE

This specification applies to all Organisations wishing to follow a direction, in compliance with the requirements defined in this document.

Therefore, subject to approval of the conditions set out in the Code of CONDUCT, drawn up by CONAPI, all Organisations can access the auditing service, according to the terms and requirements set out in the "Approved by CONAPI Bees" Regulation.

5. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The verification of compliance with this Specification is fully assigned to CCPB Srl as the inspection body, which will conduct this activity in the field by carrying out audits at the sites concerned.

The audit will be conducted by collecting evidence of the status of developing and implementing the requirements of this Specification.

In the event of non-compliance with the basic requirements of the Specification, CONAPI may revoke the use of the Trademark upon notice from CCPB.

Achieving and maintaining conformity implies that the organisation undertakes a path of continuous improvement; therefore, CONAPI is expected to support Organisations in the pursuit of the annual and three-yearly objectives chosen by the Organisations themselves.

Upon request, CONAPI may carry out a preliminary documentary analysis of the organisation's business with respect to the protocol; in particular, a checklist must be filled in by the Organisation, setting out the basic requirements of the Specification, which will then be examined by CONAPI. If the Organisation does not meet the minimum requirements, CONAPI will provide the necessary support to the Organisation in order to achieve compliance and to be able to start the auditing process by CCPB.

The results of CCPB's audit of the Organisations will be examined by an external Technical Committee, which will indicate particularly virtuous companies that CONAPI will give visibility to.

6. REFERENCE STANDARDS

The reference documents and standards for this Specification are the following :

- EC Reg. No. 848/18 as amended;
- IFOAM Basic Standard;
- PAN: national action plan for the sustainable use of plant protection products (Decree of 22-01-2014 in application of Directive 2009/128/EC);
- LAW No. 313 of 24 December 2004, Specification on beekeeping;
- DECREE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC of 12 March 2003, No 120 Regulation amending and supplementing Presidential Decree of 8 September 1997, no. 357, implementing Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and semi-natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. (OJ No. 124 of 30-05-2003);
- ISO 17020 Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspections.

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7. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SPECIFICATION AND AREAS OF QUALIFICATION

The qualification areas, as well as pillars of 'Approved By CONAPI Bees' are:

1. Protection of green areas;
2. Safeguarding bees and other pollinating insects;
3. Raising the awareness of the Organisation's staff and local communities regarding the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity;
4. Continuous Improvement and Action Plan in Protection of Ecosystem and Biodiversity.

7.1 PROTECTION OF GREEN AREAS

For members with their own green areas, this specification requires sustainable management of these areas to protect biodiversity in order to safeguard pollinating insects and flora.

In fact, from a biological point of view, a typical garden, laid out and managed according to purely aesthetic standards, can be totally inhospitable to beneficial insects and minor fauna. For example, favouring exotic plants for aesthetic reasons, with showy but nectar-poor flowers, or frequent mowing of lawn areas and the use of insecticides and herbicides represent hostile practices for beneficial insects such as bees, ladybirds and butterflies.

This specification therefore suggests a series of measures to turn green spaces into real ecological oases.

It is important to emphasise that the protection of green areas in favour of beneficial insects does not mean foregoing on aesthetics, tidiness or proper maintenance, but only making such areas more welcoming to beneficial insects.

The focal points, as well as areas of qualification, are:

- Treatments and interventions that protect the ecosystem and pollinating insects;
- Creation of flower borders and spaces for small fauna and selection of appropriate nectariferous plant species;

- Awareness-raising of the Organisation's human resources and/or local communities.

If there are no green areas of your own, you can 'take care' of a piece of public green area such as a roundabout, a public park or a school garden. Alternatively, the organisation can engage in disseminating the importance of biodiversity to local communities.

Below are details of the optional or mandatory requirements for each of the qualification areas of green area protection and management, developed in cooperation with the Centro Agricoltura Ambiente 'Giorgio Nicoli'.

1) TREATMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS THAT PROTECT THE ECOSYSTEM AND POLLINATING INSECTS

Pollinating insects are particularly sensitive to treatments with insecticides, herbicides and, in some cases, even fungicides.

Therefore, 'natural biological control' techniques should be favoured and adopted, in particular the protection and increase in the area of useful arthropods (predators and parasitoids) through the creation of areas suitable for their shelter and multiplication and the use of biotechnical means (pheromones, traps, etc.) to reduce the incidence of damage and monitor the presence of pests.

In this scenario, it is useful to create conditions of balance between the factors influencing soil-plant-atmosphere interrelationships, such as actions and processes that promote the biosynthesis of secondary metabolites that induce resistance in plants of interest through the application of formulates, resistance inducers, permitted under organic regulations.

However, even some insecticides of natural origin, authorised in organic farming, have a toxic effect on beneficial insects and also on bees, which is why any type of treatment must be carried out according to the following rules:

- Prohibition of treating plants during flowering or in the presence of honeydew;
- Prohibition of treatments carried out in the presence of wind, with consequent drift effects on the surrounding area;
- Treatments must be carried out with appropriate equipment for targeted interventions that avoid dispersing the substances in the surrounding environment.

In any case, for the defence against harmful organisms, priority should be given to preventive measures aimed at minimising stress conditions for plants. It is also desirable, in order to favour the process of defending plants from various kinds of damage, to choose robust types suitable for the area where they will be planted and to keep pruning to a minimum.

The control of unwanted weeds must be carried out by mechanical and physical means or by the use of mulching material, with a clear preference for natural and biodegradable materials or even materials of a mineral nature such as, for example, non-calcareous gravels and expanded clays. The use of synthetic materials such as plastic films is prohibited.

The Organisation may request that, during the inspection by CCPB, samples of soil and plant material be taken to verify the absence of environmental pollutants. In the event of a positive result, if requested by the Organisation, CONAPI will provide a service to support the interpretation of the data.

2) PROTECTION OR CREATION OF FLOWER AREAS AND SPACES FOR SMALL FAUNA;

Choosing native or naturalised plant species, which are more likely to favour bee and beneficial insect populations, also helps keeping flowering gardens and terraces with 'less effort'. Flower borders, created with hardy plants with limited water requirements and low maintenance requirements, not only provide a pleasant ornamental effect, but also encourage the presence of small areas that are extremely useful for beneficial insects and various species of minor fauna. In addition, this technique can allow the recovery and enhancement of the ecological and ornamental function even in areas inserted in highly anthropised contexts such as, for example, road roundabouts or traffic islands. Creating differentiated environments, tolerating the presence of wild animal and plant species, and adopting low-impact management methods to contain diseases and pests, favours an increase in biodiversity.

7.1.1 MINIMUM LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TOWARDS THE PROTECTION OF GREEN AREAS

The minimum requirements for the 'Protection of green areas' qualification area:

1) In the presence of green areas under one's purview:
- It is a requirement to adopt treatment and intervention practices that protect the ecosystem and pollinating insects as set out in this Specification;
- In addition, it is required to carry out at least one concrete action towards the protection of green areas, as stated in Section 7.1.
  Apart from the above examples, any action that is aimed at protecting green areas is important and permitted.

2) In the absence of green areas under one's purview:
- There is always the possibility of taking care of public green areas;
- Disseminating the importance of biodiversity protection through different means.

  At least one concrete action as set out in this Specification is required and all actions contributing to the protection of green areas are allowed.

In order to demonstrate compliance for this area, the Organisation must keep and make available documentary evidence of the actions implemented to CCPB, during audits.

7.2 SAFEGUARDING BEES AND OTHER POLLINATING AGENTS

Pollination is a key ecosystem service for maintaining biodiversity. Nearly 75% of food crops (mainly fruit and vegetables), but especially 90% of all flowering plant species, depend on entomophilous pollination.

However, in recent times, the decline of wild and domestic pollinators, caused by habitat loss, climate change and the spread of diseases, puts biodiversity and agricultural productivity at risk.

Encouraging the presence of bees in the green areas within the business is therefore an important service for the preservation of biodiversity and a cornerstone of this specification.

- Installation of beehives.
  CONAPI offers, at the Organisation's request, the possibility of installing 4 or more beehives within its own green areas.
  Prior to installation, the technician and the beekeeper chosen by CONAPI who will install the hives, carry out an inspection to check that there are the fundamental characteristics for the well-being of bees:
  A. Adequate space to allow the location of the hives;
  B. Ensuring the safety of operators;
  C. Verification of compliance with requirements on the protection of green areas with an absolute ban on the use of pesticides with insecticidal action.

The apiary will be entirely taken care of by the beekeeper chosen by CONAPI, who will agree with the Organisation on how to enter the property areas.

CONAPI also offers a service for monitoring the health of the ecosystems of the areas owned by the Organisation and adjacent areas, through the analysis of the matrices of the installed beehives:

- Bees are the custodians of ecosystem health. In fact, foraging bees, which are responsible for finding everything that the family needs in order to develop, visit an average of 225,000 flowers, scouring an area of about 10 km². Their journeys are aimed at finding and transporting nectar, pollen, water and resins, thus coming into contact with the whole environment surrounding the hive. This is why bees are excellent bio-indicators and can be used as a means of ecosystem monitoring aimed at detecting environmental pollutants such as, for example, heavy metals, pesticides, insecticides.

  For this reason, among the services offered, CONAPI proposes the service of searching for environmental pollutants within the hive matrices.

  Once the results of the analysis have been obtained, and in the event of a positive result, if requested by the Organisation, CONAPI will provide a service to support the interpretation of the data.

If there are no green areas of the size required for bees, or the location of the Organisation does not allow the placement of beehives, or one chooses not to install hives, alternatives can be found to protect pollinator populations, such as:

- Enriching flowerbeds with native, medicinal or other nectariferous plants;
- Applying to CONAPI for the installation of Bee-hotels.

In addition, it would be useful to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, by:

- Training through a basic beekeeping course;
- Organising company outings to local beekeepers (CONAPI members) or to the CONAPI Beekeeping Park and Museum;
- Distributing Bee-Hotels and/or medicinal and nectariferous plants to employees.

Other actions proposed by the organisations themselves may also be evaluated.

7.2.1 MINIMUM LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO BEE CONSERVATION AND OTHER POLLINATORS

Minimum requirement for the qualification area ''Safeguarding bees and other pollinators'':

> At the very least, the Organisation should take concrete action concerning the direct protection of pollinators or to make employees aware of the importance of pollinators.

In order to demonstrate compliance for this area, the Organisation must keep and make available documentary evidence of the actions implemented to CCPB, during audits.

7.3 RAISING THE AWARENESS OF THE ORGANISATION'S STAFF AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES REGARDING THE PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY

It has now become essential to convey to new generations the awareness that the planet's resources are limited and how important ecosystem respect is.

Of great importance is also the dissemination of the value of biodiversity, and the communication of methods to preserve it, including the transmission of good practices for its defence.

With this in mind, it is important that each Organisation, starting with its own employees, disseminates the importance of protecting the environment and biodiversity, also involving citizens and in particular the younger generations.

The themes to be developed are:

- Abandoning the culture of discard and waste in favour of a culture of reuse and recycling;
- Value of biodiversity, land protection and conservation;
- Relationship between climate crisis and biodiversity loss;
- Eco-sustainable consumption that meets the needs of the community without altering the balance of nature.

These issues can be pursued by the Organisations in a variety of ways:

- Providing information on environmental issues and the value of biodiversity, land protection and conservation;
- Acting on environmental education issues by activating and/or supporting educational projects aimed at the school community, but not only;
- Organising internal events such as, for example, team building, outings to bioparks or experiences in national protected areas, short events organised for the children of employees focusing on biodiversity;
- Promoting the installation of Bee-Hotels;
- Asking a CONAPI beekeeper about the importance of pollinators for biodiversity;

- Raising awareness of the impact of pesticides on ecosystems and biodiversity and educating on integrated pest management.

7.3.1 MINIMUM LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO AWARENESS RAISING OF HUMAN RESOURCES STAFF AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The minimum requirements for the qualification area of Human Resource Awareness and Involvement:

At the very least, the organisation should take concrete action to raise awareness among its staff and/or local communities.

Apart from the above examples, any action that constitutes a concrete educational pathway, which contributes to promoting or developing the ecosystem and biodiversity culture of employees and co-workers and consequently of future generations, is important and permissible.

In order to demonstrate compliance for this area, the Organisation must keep and make available documentary evidence of the action(s) implemented to CCPB, during audits.

7.4 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND ACTION PLAN IN PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEM AND BIODIVERSITY

The continuous improvement process, as described in ISO 9001, is a method to achieve and increase the quality of processes and products.

This logic also applies in the context of this specification, where a continuous improvement plan in small steps is a tool for Organisations to optimise their efforts and implemented strategies.

CONAPI will accompany organisations in the implementation of the continuous improvement philosophy, through action planning, subject to checks at set intervals, and analysis of monitoring data.

In particular, CONAPI's assistance will be based on the PDCA cycle (PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT) and will therefore be implemented in the following manner:

- **Analysis of the organisation's context:** The geographical location, the commitment already made to ecosystems and biodiversity through pollinating insects, as well as the possible future actions that the organisation may agree according to its possibilities will be evaluated);
- **Planning:** following the context analysis, strategies will be planned for the pursuit of short and medium-term objectives;
- **Implementation:** i.e. the implementation of the strategies by the Organisation;
- **Verification:** with the support of CONAPI, the results of the applied strategies will be monitored on a regular basis, noting strengths and/or weaknesses;
- **Action:** based on the results of monitoring, CONAPI will assist the Organisation in identifying possible changes to the strategies implemented.

In order to provide detailed information on the Strategy and Objectives, the Organisation, supported by CONAPI, will draw up the Action Plan in Protection of Ecosystem and Biodiversity.

The strategies, and consequently the defined objectives and their state of progress, will be reviewed annually by CCPB, which will assess both their consistency with this Specification and the monitoring system and the state of implementation, according to the established timetables.

Subject to verification of compliance with this Specification by CCPB, the Organisation, may request CONAPI to share the contents of the Action Plan in Protection of Ecosystem and Biodiversity on the dedicated website, communicating the various steps of the path taken:

- Ethical behaviour towards the ecosystem;
- Activities to safeguard pollinating insects;
- Consequent protection of biodiversity.

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