



# EUROPEAN BEE AWARD 2026

## Guidelines for the jury

Organised by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and John Deere

### About the award

Established in 2014, the European Bee Award is a longstanding European prize that celebrates practical, innovative work to protect bees and other pollinators and to help preserve biodiversity across Europe's farmed landscapes. It is now organised by the *European Landowners' Organization (ELO)* and *John Deere*, and is open to farmers, landowners, research institutes, academia, community groups and private or public organisations.

Each edition offers **a single monetary prize of €4,000, awarded to one outstanding project**, together with diplomas of recognition for the other category winners. All winning projects are promoted through ELO and John Deere communication channels and celebrated at an Award Ceremony in Brussels. The winners are decided by an independent jury, chaired by Prof. Michael Garratt, which brings together international experts on pollinators and agriculture alongside representatives of the European Institutions and civil society.

### Who can participate

The Award is open to farmers, landowners, research institutes, academia, community groups and private or public organisations, whether applying individually or in partnership. Applicants from previous years who were not selected are warmly encouraged to apply again.

### The categories

For the 2026 edition, applications are invited across **four** categories:

1. **Land management practices.** Farming and land-management practices that create the right living conditions for bees and other pollinators, encouraging their presence in cropped areas while enriching biodiversity across the wider farmed environment.
2. **Innovative technological and digital solutions.** New technologies, and new applications of existing technologies, that reduce the impact of farming operations on pollinators (for example during the application of crop protection products or during harvesting) including advances in farm machinery and equipment. The category

extends to digital tools and artificial intelligence that help protect, monitor or better understand pollinator populations.

3. **Community action.** Community-led initiatives (by cooperatives, schools, citizen groups, associations or local organisations) that mobilise and educate people to protect pollinators and raise awareness of their importance to agriculture and biodiversity.
4. **Biological solutions.** This category recognises biocontrol products developed with a clear link to pollinator protection, together with the projects that apply them in the field. Eligible work ranges from biological control agents and products that replace or reduce inputs harmful to pollinators, to the initiatives that put them to use. The category is open to all applicants and is not restricted to members of IBMA.

### Prize structure

The structure for the 2026 edition is as follows:

- The jury awards *one winner in each of the four categories*.
- During the jury meeting, members then select one of those four category winners to receive the monetary prize of €4,000.
- The three remaining category winners each receive a diploma of recognition.
- All four category winners are promoted through ELO and John Deere channels and invited to take part in the Award Ceremony in Brussels.

*\*However, if no application is deemed sufficiently relevant in a given category, the organisers reserve the right not to award a winner in that category.*

### What the jury welcomes

The following are illustrative of the kinds of project the jury is pleased to see across the four categories:

- Novel and innovative ideas to protect bees and other pollinators.
- Projects that are scalable and can be adopted widely by farmers across Europe.
- Technological and biological solutions that can demonstrate efficacy with credible evidence.
- Practices that also benefit non-pollinator biodiversity in the farmed environment.
- Crop- and land-management practices that benefit both managed honeybees and wild bees and other pollinators.
- New ways to manage non-cropped areas that increase the availability of flowers and other resources for pollinators.
- Innovation in integrated pest management, including biocontrol, that reduces negative effects on pollinators.
- Farm-equipment and digital technologies that reduce the impact of farming operations on pollinators.
- Community and citizen-led efforts that broaden participation in pollinator protection.

### Guiding principles

The jury assesses every application on its merits. The principles below guide first the choice of the four category winners, and then the selection of the single project that receives the monetary prize.

### **Selecting the category winners**

1. Impact and effectiveness. How much measurable difference the project makes for pollinators, supported by credible evidence of how well it works in practice.
2. Novelty. How original or innovative the idea is, and the fresh thinking it brings to the category.
3. Scalability and adoption. How readily the project can be taken up and repeated by others across Europe, with extra weight given to approaches that also benefit wider biodiversity.

### **Selecting the monetary prize winner**

1. Catalytic impact. From the four category winners, the jury awards the monetary prize to the project for which the award — both the €4,000 and the visibility it brings — would make the greatest difference, giving particular weight to independent, smaller-scale and community-led work that this support would most help to realise, sustain or grow. The prize may be awarded to a winner from any of the four categories.
2. Breadth of benefit. Where two winners are closely matched, the jury favours the project whose benefits reach furthest beyond the applicant's own operation — work that others can readily learn from and repeat.

## **The jury**

The independent jury is chaired by Dr Michael Garratt and brings together international experts on pollinators and agriculture together with representatives of the European Institutions and non-governmental organisations. Members assess each application against the criteria above, agree the four category winners, and then select the recipient of the monetary prize during the jury meeting. The jury's decisions are final.

## **How to apply**

Candidates apply by completing the official application form, available at the link provided when the call opens. Applications open in mid-June 2026, in line with previous editions. Winners are notified by mail and are expected to attend the Award Ceremony in Brussels. Applicants from previous years who were not selected are warmly encouraged to apply again.