

# Innovative design and management to boost functional biodiversity of organic orchards

Increasing floral diversity by sowing flower strips to augment the diversity of beneficial insects and hence to reduce pest damage is one way to increase Functional Agro-Biodiversity (FAB). The **CORE Organic Plus project "EcoOrchard"**, started in 2015, will (i) develop FAB-practices appropriate for users' needs; (ii) identify innovative techniques and assess their effectiveness and implementation; (iii) carry out on-farm and multi-site field experiments and participatory stakeholder-workshops. The aims of this project are:

## EcoOrchard

**To track innovations, to collect existing knowledge, to identify promising techniques and tools to improve management and tools to improve management of FAB:** Comprehensive interviews were made with growers and advisers in ten European countries.

**To provide efficient user-friendly tools to assess biodiversity in orchards:** Monitoring protocols were developed in a participatory approach with growers in order to ensure their reproducibility and adoptability. Workshops on monitoring techniques will be held.

**To create a European-wide network of stakeholders for collecting, sharing and improving scientific and practical knowledge and experiences in FAB management:** A web-based stakeholder platform "EBIO-Network" will be launched.

**To assess how far functional agrobiodiversity can reduce pest damage and pesticide use:** In European countries the effects of flower strips on abundance of pests and antagonists, on crop loss as well as on practical feasibility are evaluated.