

## Backpacks to save our bees are no flight of fancy

**C**isco has established a partnership with a new technology hub in Manchester on a programme to attach sensor "backpacks" about the size of a grain of rice to honey bees to better understand the worldwide decline in their populations (Alexandra Frean writes).

Bees pollinate close to three quarters of plants and a third of the food that people consume. Researchers hope that the bee backpacks will help conservationists to protect them by tracking their migration, pollination and movement.

In conjunction with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the Global Initiative for Honey Bee Health, there are already 15,000 bees tagged



with a radio-frequency identification chip around the globe.

The initiative is part of the launch of Mi-IDEA, a post-accelerator centre in

Manchester's innovation district backed by Manchester Science Partnerships, a public-private partnership that aims to foster partnerships

between businesses, academia and the government in the north of England to help digital technology start-ups to grow.

Fight against...