



Annual Report 2022

www.vgp-foundation.eu







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photo © Niklas Hamann, Unsplash

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About the VGP Foundation

The VGP Foundation was established as a private foundation in September 2019 by Jan Van Geet, founder and reference shareholder of VGP NV ("VGP"), a pan-European developer, manager and owner of high-quality logistics and semi-industrial real estate, on the belief that responsible entrepreneurship goes beyond the day-to-day activities.

The Foundation focuses on three main areas: supporting the education for children and young people in need, the preservation and creation of biospheres and nature conservation zones and the protection of European cultural assets and heritage sites.

VGP has committed to donating each year a part of its profits to the VGP Foundation to ensure that it has sufficient financial resources to carry out its charitable causes. The VGP Foundation received € 3 million start-up capital from VGP in the year 2020 and € 4 million in 2021. Beyond the capital already committed in previous years, for the year 2022 VGP made no additional provisions for funding for the Foundation as the Group extended EUR 3 million to the UNHCR directly in response to the emergency of the humanitarian crisis in the Ukraine and the neighbouring countries in Europe.

Additionally, VGP offers in-kind funding through the provision of expert volunteers, community volunteers, products and services. It also provides office space, IT and travel support, and hosts the Foundation's website.

Focus areas

The foundation supports projects in the three main focus areas explained below. However, many of the initiatives often combine more of the aspects in one to secure a long-term sustainability and efficiency of the projects.



Stage fright project in Belgium

Supporting social projects for children and young people in need

Persuaded that access to education and fundamental care are crucial ingredients for their positive development, the VGP Foundation supports social projects around children from disadvantaged environments.



Restoration of peatland 'Chorne Bagno'

Encouraging Nature Conservation

The VGP Foundation engages in projects encouraging nature conservation, such as saving and creating permanent biotopes, protecting animals and their natural habitats, or educational programmes raising public awareness about respective issues.



The Basses danses of Margaret of Austria, Ms. 9085, f.22v, La danse de cleves, Royal Library of Belgium (KBR)

Enhancing protection of European cultural heritage

The VGP Foundation would like to support projects and events which define our longstanding European cultural history through various cultural domains, such as architecture, music, fine art and other forms of cultural heritage.

Foundation governance

Registered as a private foundation in Belgium, the VGP Foundation operates in accordance with charity regulations. All partners of the VGP Foundation are required to define KPIs and report on the progress of joint projects at the end of each quarter. Additionally, the VGP Foundation will follow its own transparent, KPI-led reporting process to ensure the best allocation of funds and resources. The board of the VGP Foundation consists of six members today, including three directors who are independent from VGP. The Board has full responsibility for the strategy, policies, performance and operations (including the management of funds) of the VGP Foundation. It also makes the final decision on all projects run as part of the Foundation's programs.



Jan Van Geet
initiator and founder

Jan Van Geet is the founder and CEO of VGP. He has overall daily as well as strategic management responsibilities of the Group. He started in the Czech Republic in 1993 and was manager of Ontex in Turnov, a producer of hygienic disposables. Until 2005, he was also managing director of WDP Czech Republic. WDP is a Belgian real estate investment trust. In September 2019 he founded on behalf of VGP the VGP Foundation as an independent charity.



Olaf Tschimpke

Mr. Tschimpke is currently Chairman of the NABU International Nature Conservation Foundation. Founded in 2009 by the NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union), Germany's largest nature and biodiversity conservation association, it aims to protect natural heritage worldwide. The foundations' international project funding is focused on climate protection and the conservation of biological diversity. Until 2019, Tschimpke served as President of the NABU and was Deputy Chairman of the Council for Sustainable Development of the German Federal Government from 2012 to 2019. Since 2017 member of the German steering committee for science "Sustainability 2030"; advisory board of the German Industry Initiative for Energy Efficiency; Chairman of the curator-board of the Nature Conservation Foundation History; member of the curatorship of the Michael Otto Foundation and the Hanns R. Neumann Foundation. He is also a member of the ZDF Television Council.



Prof. Dr. Anne De Paepe

Prof. Dr. Anne De Paepe is currently Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Ghent University Association, Honorary Rector of Ghent University and Professor of Human & Medical Genetics of the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences at Ghent University. An expert in the field of Rare Hereditary Diseases and Medical Genetics, she developed the Ghent University Centre for Medical Genetics into an internationally renowned institution where more than 200 people are researching hereditary diseases today. In doing so, she not only pioneered scientific research but also translated her findings to her clinical work as an M.D. She is also a pioneer as the first female Rector at Ghent University, a leading Belgian research and teaching institution. Since 2019 she has been actively involved with TAJO as a Board member, supporting disadvantaged children in the greater Ghent-area in Belgium.



Tereza Van Malderen

Tereza Van Malderen graduated from the Academy of Art in Prague and spent afterwards more than 20 years engaging in the world of art on many different levels. She has been actively involved in several different charitable projects nationally as well as internationally, especially in the domain of cultural heritage.



Hugo Van Geet

Hugo Van Geet is the founder of VGD, chartered accountants and tax advisers, an office he founded and helped develop into a medium-sized European partnership of certified accountants and tax advisers. Mr Van Geet has a close relationship with leading Flemish entrepreneurial families of international business renown, and advises many of these families on business and family-related issues. As such, he also holds positions in several board of directors. Classical music is an important factor in his daily life, he organizes concerts at a high level, created his own opera and, at the request of the Flemish government, is also the chairman of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra. Although he has a financial and regulatory background, Hugo has a broad interest in nature conservation, European cultural heritage and sustainable agriculture.



Ann Demeulemeester

Ann Demeulemeester graduated as fashion designer at the royal Academy of Fine Arts, Belgium in 1981, she launched her own brand together with her creative partner Patrick Robyn in 1985. Present in Paris during fashion-week for 30 years, her shows and work gained international appreciation with a world-wide distribution. She received the first Culture Award from the Belgian Government and later the Henry Van De Velde life-time achievement gold award. The l'Université libre de Bruxelles awarded her with the title 'doctor honoris causa'. In recent years, she moved into new design territories such as tableware, lighting and furniture.





Projects completed in 2022

**Eight projects were successfully
completed during the year 2022**



01

NATURE CONSERVATION

Restoration of peatland ‘Chorne Bagno’

Ukraine

APPROVED **March 2021** COMPLETED **December 2022**

The project was a cooperation project between NABU and the Transcarpathian Regional Branch of the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds (USPB), which implemented it in close cooperation with the administration of the National Nature Park “Zacharovanyj Kraj” (“Enchanted Land!” – NPP), financially supported by VGP Foundation.

The main goal was to **restore the natural hydrological regime of the internationally important bog “Chorne Bagno”** and related wetland in the same catchment area in the NNP in the Transcarpathian region. “Zacharovanyj Kraj” is known primarily as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site cluster “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe”.

Achieved goals

- **Study** carried out on the drainage network, the existing sources of water supply and the built objects
- Correct **boundaries** of the bog were determined (22.17ha)
- Shallow **ditches filled** with local material to stop the draining
- **Educational trail** established for public with information pannels (5km)
- **3 short movies** created (QR code to the final video below)
- Created **infrastructure** for sustainable conservation
- **Eco-educational space** and educational material were created





all photos on this page © NABU / VGP / USPB



Sustainable production of Yak wool for snow leopard conservation

Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia

APPROVED **March 2021** COMPLETED **December 2022**

The protection of the snow leopard in Central Asia is a priority issue for NABU International. Together with VGP Foundation, leopard-proof corrals for livestock were built and compensation measures for locals established in Tajikistan, and a new rehabilitation centre was built in Terek, Kyrgyzstan. (For more information, see Annual Report 2021 or the VGP Foundation website.)

The main goal of this project was to ensure the ecological compatibility of yak husbandry and yak wool production as well as contributing to the conservation of ecosystem services in the target regions of the Pamir, Tien Shan and Altai Mountains. This included, above all, the conservation of the pastoral landscapes as a measure for adapting to climate change and the protection of the snow leopard and its prey.

Achieved goals

- Conducted **visits to local herders** raising awareness about the yak wool production, motivating them to participate in local wool initiatives (until then, yak was mostly used for meat and milk)
- Organised **workshops** for collection and processing the wool; and technical seminars for local herders
- **50 camera traps** will be still installed by the anti-poaching unit Gruppa Bars





all photos on this page © NABU





03

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Spanish Riding School in Vienna

Austria

APPROVED March 2020 COMPLETED September 2022

The Spanish Riding School in Vienna is the oldest riding school and the only institution in the world where classical horsemanship in the Renaissance tradition of the “High School” has been alive and well for more than 450 years and continues to be cultivated unchanged – which is why it is also listed as an **intangible UNESCO cultural heritage of humanity**. The Stallburg, which houses 72 of the famous white stallions, is Vienna's oldest and most important Renaissance building, built-in 1565, located in the centre of Austria's capital.

VGP Foundation's financial support lead to the direct benefit and welfare of the Lipizzaner horses. The majority of the funds urgently needed for construction projects and refurbishment were directed to the Lipizzaner Stud in Piber.

Achieved goals

- Façade renovation of the stable building
- New paddocks built
- Construction of a new horse walker
- Extension of the senior horse residence with new boxes



all photos on this page © Spanish Riding School in Vienna



Protection of migrating birds in Cyprus

Cyprus

APPROVED **May 2020** COMPLETED **January 2022**

The problem of illegal poaching of migrating birds remains a big issue in Cyprus, where every year more than 2 million birds are illegally killed. The importance of education and public awareness is thus crucial to protect millions of birds migrating via the Mediterranean.

Originally, the project consisted of the part:

- **Southern Cyprus** – “Opportunity for an Education and Awareness raising space for Cyprus's new wildlife rehabilitation centre”
- **Northern Cyprus** – “A Nature Protection Campaign – Three Villages Go Green”

However, due to difficulties with local authorities in Souther Cyprus, the project could not be executed and the construction of the rehabilitation centre was cancelled. The amount provided by VGP Foundation was refunded forthwith.

Achieved goals

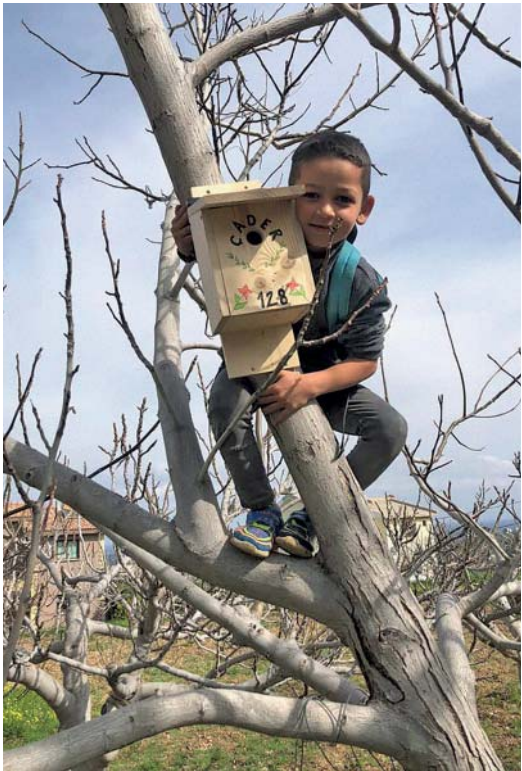
- distributed **180 bird box kits** directly in the homes in **4 villages**
- **instructional video** shot for the bird boxes
- new **website** created (caderkibris.org)
- organised field trips, excursions
- created multiple **educational materials**
- painting competitions at schools
- making clay pots for planting insect attracting plants
- cleaning areas from litter
- planting trees and shrubs
- placing bird boxes and insect houses

The project was frequently presented in the local media and will have a sequel in 2023 and it will be also supported by VGP Foundation.





all photos on this page © NABU/ÇADER



Protection of Insects:

Become an insect scout

Germany

APPROVED **May 2020** COMPLETED **June 2022**

Germany is home to about 33,000 insect species. In their overwhelming diversity they are not only an irreplaceable food source for birds and bats, but they play a major role as pollinators of wild and cultivated plants. However, scientific studies prove that the biomass of flying insects decreased within only 27 years by up to 75%. In order to draw attention to the dramatic situation and the importance of insects, NABU has called for an interactive campaign "The Insect Summer". In 2021, the Insect Summer had its fourth edition.

All interested parties (NABU activists and external insect fans) can apply as **Insect Scouts** to help NABU groups on a voluntary basis in spreading the awareness and enthusiasm for insects.

Achieved goals

2021

The starting goal was to find 30-32 Insect Scouts

- In total 206 people applied, from which **36 Insect Scouts were chosen and trained**
- **3 online workshops** (due to COVID regulations they had to be done online)
- Scouts received: scout package with branded backpack, the first badge, diverse materials on insects, a personalised certificate, a guide
- **materials** created: insect flyers (50.000), buttons, stickers, tote bags, stitched badges, short educational film, identification key for insects, website

2022

- 32 candidates chosen, 3 workshops...



Flyer by NABU



photo © Tom Rogers, Unsplash



photo © NABU



Flyer by NABU



06

NATURE CONSERVATION

Saving wetlands Sedmihorky Czechia

APPROVED **September 2022** COMPLETED **December 2022**

The Ivan Dejmal Foundation for Nature Conservation has been operating since 1993, and it is an important nationwide environmental foundation that also functions abroad. VGP Foundation has repeatedly supported several projects run by the Czech foundation, aiming to restore and protect local environment.

The aim of this project was to acquire, restore and protect a unique ecosystem in the Bohemian Paradise, which had been damaged in the past by insensitive drainage. The main focus was in protecting the natural water regime on the landscape and preserving the wetlands where many (rare) bird species nest over the year, such as the *common crane*.

Achieved goals

- 14 natural pools were built
- Up to 7 km of melioration pipes were removed
- 770 m of drainage channels blocked on an area of approximately 6 ha



See project video



photo © Nadace Ivana Dejmalá pro ochranu přírody, Vojtěch Štátný

Sedmihorky wetlands



photo © Nadace Ivana Dejmalá pro ochranu přírody, Jiří Štátný

Common cranes



photo © Jiří Štátný



photo © Jakub Tšek



photo © Jakub Tšek



photo © Vojtěch Štátný

Krats along the sustainable food chain

Belgium

APPROVED **March 2021** COMPLETED **November 2022**

With the project, vzw Habbekrats wanted to familiarize vulnerable youngsters from Wetteren with ecology and sustainability, by connecting them with organizations and companies that are strongly committed to this. Habbekrats is a youth welfare service that has been unconditionally committed for 30 years to young people from disadvantaged groups, aged between 8 and 18 years.

The aim of the project was to explore the area of the Scheldt Valley and visit organic farms by bike on Wednesday afternoons for 10 weeks, to learn how to cultivate a vegetable garden. The following Thursdays were the tasting days of what the youngsters prepared themselves with local goods.

Achieved goals

- purchased 8 bicycles and 4 locks
- organised 10 bike tours with children
- cooking workshop with youngsters via vzw foodsavers
- visits to local growers and volunteers



photos © vzw Habbekrats





08

SOCIAL PROJECT

Help build the nature garden at the Molsbroek Visitor's Centre

Belgium

APPROVED **March 2021** COMPLETED **June 2022**

The visitors' centre Molsbroek in Lokeren is the starting point for everyone who wants to explore the nature reserve Groot Molsbroek. Visitors can discover inside and outside all kinds of fascinating facts about the nature of the region. The whole site was in need of renovation.

The aim was to design the garden environment as a miniature nature reserve where one can truly experience nature from the front row and to inspire visitors to work in their own gardens. All this with natural materials, indigenous plants and exciting corners to discover and play.

Achieved goals

- redesigned the concept of the visitor's centre indoor and outdoor
- built a renewed nature garden with play elements and inspiring corners
- added name tags to plants in the garden
- opening ceremony to all visitors and stakeholders
- cleared the pond
- purchased benches, beehives, hedges, wood sculptures, educational info boards etc.

NATUURTUIN BEZOEKERSCENTRUM MOLSBROEK



HIER WERKT VZW DURME AAN EEN NIEUWE NATUURTUIN, TOEGANKELIJK VOOR IEDEREEN.

MEER INFO VIA WWW.VZWDURME.BE

STEUN VANDAAG NOG DIT PROJECT, EN BOUW SAMEN MET VZW DURME AAN DE NATUURTUIN. SCAN DE QR-CODE EN DOE NU EEN GIFT. BEDANKT!



Natuurbewoud langs Durme, Moervaart, Schelde



Dit plan kwam tot stand i.s.m. Regionaal Landschap Schelde-Durme. De plannen worden gerealiseerd met de steun van Streekfonds Oost-Vlaanderen.





A landscape photograph showing a field of dry, golden-brown grass with several haystacks scattered across it. In the background, a dense forest of tall, thin trees stretches across the horizon. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds, with a warm, orange glow from the setting or rising sun visible through the clouds near the horizon.

New projects

In course of 2022, we approved support to **6 new projects** and **renewed** donations to **4 projects** already supported in the previous years. Detailed project description to each individual project is available on our website.



01

SOCIAL PROJECT

Ukrainian centre in Brno

Czech Republic

Psychological counselling at the Ukrainian Centre for children and adults fleeing war

Target group of the counselling center are people who have had to flee war-affected areas of Ukraine and are now in the South Moravian Region. These people are facing many difficulties which can have negative impact on their psychological health. Psychologists help refugees (mostly children and women with children) cope with various problems such as anxiety, depression, trauma and other psychological problems.



Ukrainian centre in Brno



02

NATURE CONSERVATION

Saving wetlands Sedmihorky Czech Republic

**The third in a series of projects organised by the
Foundation of Ivan Dejmál for nature protection.**

Restoration of valuable wetlands damaged in history by
drainage, located in the Bohemian Paradise (Český ráj),
a protected landscape area about 90 km from Prague.



Sedmihorky wetlands



03

NATURE CONSERVATION

The Katra river valley Biodiversity & Tourism project

Lithuania

The Lithuanian biodiversity spot for many rare birds, plants, and animals.

The VGP Foundation will support the measures showing the importance of this area to the wider nature-friendly public by supporting the building of a nature-watching tower on the edge of Katra River valley and surrounding forests and the wooden nature trail through the flooded forest to the tower. This will be a unique experience to enter and cross the old forest, which is flooded several months a year. The old Black elder alluvial forest is a home of elk, deer, and rare bird species.





all photos on this and the previous page © Marius Karlons/NRF





photo © IERS

04

NATURE CONSERVATION

Protection of bats in Transcarpathia region
Ukraine

Protecting bats in church towers and public building attics as an affirmation of biodiversity values among religious and local communities

Previous projects in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine showed that due to the low eco-competence of communities, entire colonies can be often destroyed. With the support of the VGP Foundation, NABU will expand efforts to protect bats while using methods of educating religious audiences (having a significant impact in the regions) and other representatives of local communities.



photo © IERS



photo © Andrii Taras Bashta

Plecotus auritus



photo © IERS



photo © Amber Weir via Unsplash

05

SOCIAL PROJECT

Villages Go Green Cyprus

Follow-up project to expand public awareness of the importance of nature conservation in Cyprus.

In March 2022, ÇADER, a non-profit civil society organization in Northern Cyprus, successfully completed an Environmental Protection Project for Northern Cyprus, funded by the VGP Foundation and administrated by NABU International. From the gained experience emerged a new project Villages Go Green aiming to further encourage nature protection at a grassroots level and to expand the awareness-raising activities to more schools and other villages.



photos © ÇADER



Decoyman and decoydog at a trapping pipe of the duck decoy in Bornem ca. 1898

© Verstraeten A., Karelse D., Zwaanepool A., 2011. Eendekooien in Vlaanderen en Nederland en 7 andere Europese landen

06

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Historical duck decoy in Bornem

Belgium

Castle Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde

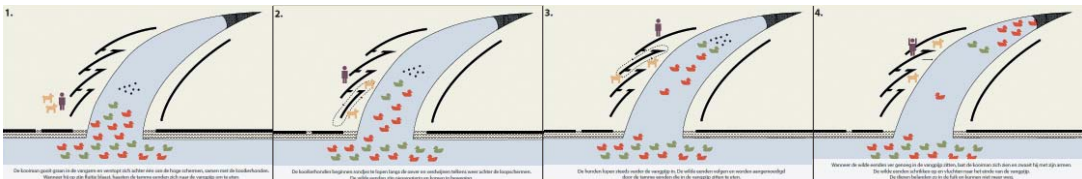
Alongside the banks of the Old Scheldt, the castle hides a special piece of landscape heritage, a historical duck decoy, whose origins date back to the 14th century and which is therefore considered the oldest in Europe. The project foresees its reconstruction and implement it into local touristic activities.



Figurative map (c. 1780) depicting 6 trapping pipes in Bornem's duck decoy.



Kempens Landschap



4 renewed projects and activities



SOCIAL PROJECT
TAJO
Belgium

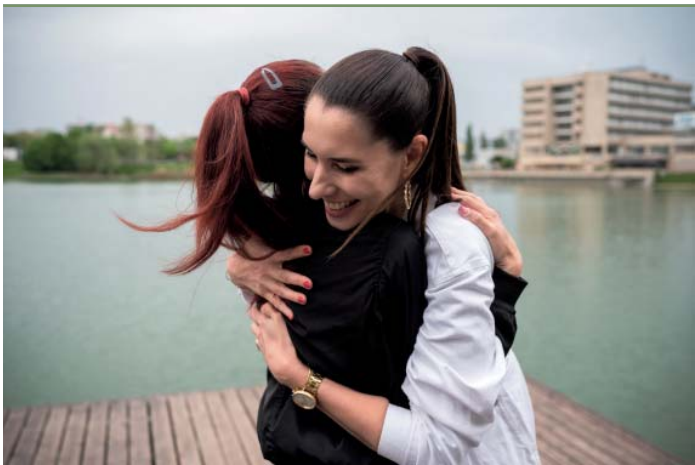
NATURE CONSERVATION

Increasing stability of forest covers in Liberec region

Czech Republic



photo © Jakub Trsek



SOCIAL PROJECT
Tvoj Buddy
Slovakia

photo © Tvoj Buddy

NATURE CONSERVATION

Project coordination by NABU

International







Highlights from projects in execution

Detailed articles and additional activity reports within the following
and other projects in execution available on our website
www.vgp-foundation.eu

VGP CZ

Tree-planting Day 2022

Czech Republic

Since 2020, the VGP Foundation has supported a Czech project run by Nadace Ivana Dejmal a pro ochranu přírody, focusing on Increasing the stability of forest covers in Liberec region. The project was designed to plant in the 2022 planting season **70.000 seedlings** of beech, oak, and fir trees in the region to improve the age and species composition of the currently monocultural areas. Thanks to the unforgettable experience from 2021, we assembled again a team of 20 volunteers from the Czech branch of VGP, determined to join their forces to help enrich the forests in Rychnov u Jablonce nad Nisou with young seedlings of beech and larch trees. Under the professional and experienced guidance of Jan Duda, a specialist in forest management, and Ondřej Petrovský, the director of the Czech foundation, the volunteers planted **320 seedlings** in just a few hours.



all photos on this page © Jakub Trsek



SOCIAL PROJECT

First VGP honey goes to charity

Spain

A year after the launch of the project, VGP Foundation collected its first honey produced in the VGP Park Llica d'Amunt, Spain. In June 2021, VGP Foundation in cooperation with Aristeu, installed 5 beehives on the rooftop of the park together with **250,000 bees** native to the location. One year later, when the bees had enough time to settle and work hard, we collected almost **40 kg of honey** which was put in jars destined for charity. These jars were finished thanks to Esclat, a special employment centre in Barcelona promoting social and labour inclusion for people with disabilities. During the workshop, **150 jars** were labelled and each of them was made unique by a personal signature of the person who labelled it. On October 27, 2022, the labelled honey was delivered and handed over to children in need in Fundació Alber (Barcelona), an organisation promoting equal opportunities and social integration for children and families with a disadvantaged background. More honey giving activities are planned for 2023.



all photos on this page © VGP Foundation



SOCIAL PROJECT

Volunteering in Social centre Capelderij

Belgium

Located in Buggenhout in Belgium, BC Capelderij is a social centre for adolescents between 10 and 21 years of age dealing with behavioural and emotional problems. VGP Foundation supports the centre's efforts by financing urgent interventions needed around a lake on its property, which offers excellent opportunities for the young people in the programme to get meaningful leisure time and at the same time develop connection and respect for the natural environment. On December 9, 2022, twenty-six motivated volunteers from the VGP BENELUX team visited the centre and lend a helping hand by painting the interior of one of the community houses used by the young people, by gardening around the main building (cutting, cleaning) and moving materials. We also had the privilege to meet with the devoted staff of Capelderij who shared with us their knowledge, experience and results of the admirable unceasing work.



all photos on this page © Jakub Trsek



Figures

Funding Areas since inception (as of Dec 2022)

PROGRAM FOCUS AREA (in €)	approved	€	
Cultural heritage	23	1,650,886	24%
Nature conservation	6	4,277,136	63%
Social projects	7	815,000	12%
Total projects approved	36	6,743,022	

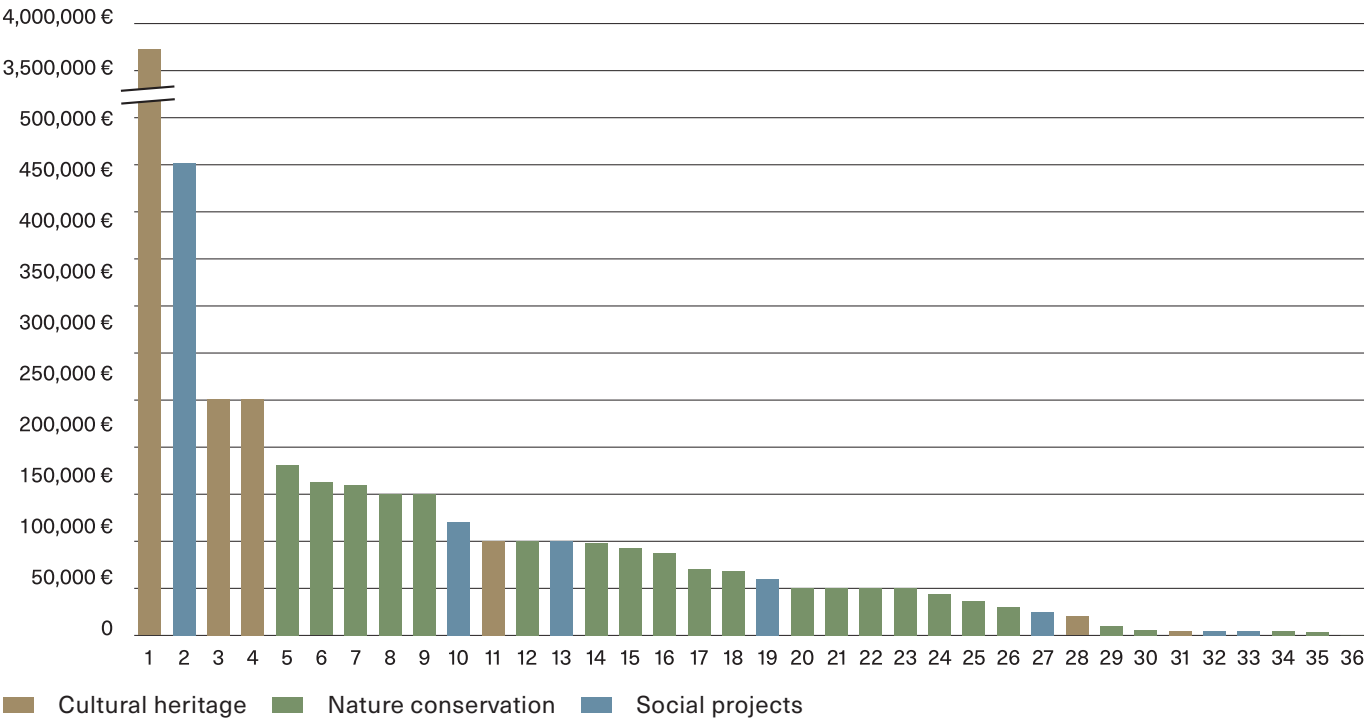
2022 Funding areas / incl. projects renewed (as of Dec 2022)

PROGRAM FOCUS AREA (in €)	approved	€	
Cultural heritage	6	171,200	58%
Nature conservation	1	51,196	17%
Social projects	3	75,000	25%
Total projects approved	10	297,396	

Spending by year and focus area (as of Dec 2022)

PROGRAM FOCUS AREA (in €)	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
Cultural heritage	350,000	3,875,940	51,196	4,277,136
Nature conservation	712,100	767,586	171,200	1,650,886
Social projects	100,000	640,000	75,000	815,000
Total projects approved	1,162,100	5,283,526	297,396	6,743,022

Approved projects: 36 projects approved (with funds allocated to 35 projects so far)



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