

**VGP**  

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**FOUNDATION**



# Annual Report 2023 / 2024

[www.vgp-foundation.eu](http://www.vgp-foundation.eu)





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photo © Günter Nowald, NABU-KRANICHWELTEN

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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. Since inception the VGP Foundation received a total of € 12 million capital from VGP and VGP has provisioned € 1.75 million additional contribution for the year 2025.

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 has three main focus areas:



Popiska

## Supporting education for children and young people in need

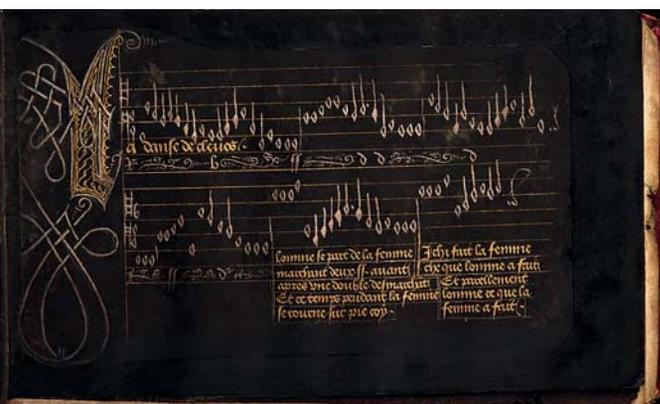
Persuaded that access to education and fundamental care are crucial ingredients for their positive development, the VGP Foundation supports social projects around children from disadvantaged environments.



Popiska

## The preservation and creation of biospheres and nature conservation zones

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)

## The protection of European cultural assets and 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 five members today. The VGP Foundation's charter foresees a board of six members, 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 former 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.

# Supported projects



A photograph of a field of tall green grasses with purple flowers, likely a coastal or wetland area. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

# Projects completed in 2023 and 2024

During 2023 and 2024, an additional 15 projects were successfully completed, bringing the total number of completed projects to 24 as of December 2024.

# 01

CULTURAL PROJECT

## Hof ter Laken

Belgium

Hof Ter Laken is a twelfth-century country real estate in neo-Flemish Renaissance style, situated in Booischot, Belgium.

This project, which was led by Kempens Lanschap, a foundation focused on restoring and maintaining historically significant landscape sites in Antwerp province, supported the reconstruction of a greenhouse and an aviary within the estate. The glass house now fully restored is again being used for growing fruit and vegetables.



photo © Stichting Kempens Landschap



photo © Stichting Kempens Landschap



photo © Stichting Kempens Landschap



photo © Stichting Kempens Landschap





# 02

## NATURE CONSERVATION

# New Networks for Eastern Imperial Eagle

### Eastern Europe

The NABU has achieved important research results and conservation success for the imperial eagle over the past 10 years. In Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, the respective national bird-life partners are active in the conservation of the imperial eagle. The exchange of experience between international experts can make an important contribution to the effective conservation of this iconic species.

This project enabled a transfer of knowledge and cooperation between international experts in different regions across Eastern Europe to improve the conservation of the species in its entire range.



# 03

CULTURAL PROJECT

## Social Centre Capelderij

Belgium

Capelderij is located in Flanders, Belgium. Within the centre passionate and enthusiastic staff members guide young people with behavioural and emotional problems. The adolescents, between 10 and 21 years of age, are often referred by the juvenile court. Capelderij also offers ambulatory guidance and the cooperation with the internal school offers additional guidance possibilities. In general, the center wants to stimulate young people in their personal development. Together with all those involved, the centre tackle the problems. They also work on restoring the family relationship.

The centre is situated in a charming green setting, including a castle and a double lake. The VGP Foundation project focused on the restoration of a lake on the estate which provide a setting for social and free time activities for its residents and staff.



photo © BC Capelderij





photo © NABU - Dr. Hans-Bert Schikora

# 04

NATURE CONSERVATION

## Monitoring of peatland water levels (Rotenburg, Stade)

Germany

The project, led by NABU supported the rehabilitation of peatlands in the districts of Rotenburg and Stade in Germany. The project primarily involved the construction and operation of peatland water levels. With the help of gauges is it has been made possible to identify ecological development trends or unfavourable, creeping processes at the hydrological level at an early stage in the renaturation projects carried out so far. In addition, the recording of hydrological state variables and processes is fundamental for a holistic understanding of (disturbed) peatland ecosystems. As a result of the project in total ca. 20 water gauges in the bog protection areas were installed and are managed now by NABU. The water levels are to be continuously recorded and documented.





# 05

SOCIAL PROJECT

## Ukrainian Centre, Brno

Czech Republic

The Ukrainian center offers services in the area of pregnancy, and social and psychological counseling in cooperation with the Union of Midwives, the Czech Doula Association, Brno Social Services, and Counseling Centers, International organisations of nurses, other health professionals, universities, and teaching hospitals.

The project started in March 2022. At first the project mainly ran crisis psychological assistance with the support of three Ukrainian psychologists on the team who are refugees themselves.

To be able to provide the children and adults with pedagogical assistance, the center established educational activities for the involved professionals (such as teachers) who integrate children from Ukraine into their classrooms. This helped them recognize trauma or post-traumatic stress disorders. Nearly 900 people were supported through the centre in the course of 2023 alone.





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

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

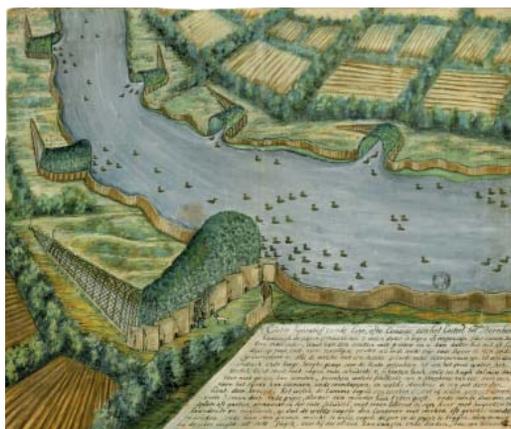
# 06

CULTURAL PROJECT

## Historical duck decoy in Bornem

Belgium

Along the Old Scheldt in Bornem in the province of Antwerp a special piece of landscape heritage, a historical duck decoy, whose origins date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and which is therefore considered the oldest in Europe has been restored in cooperation with and under the leadership of Kempens Landschap. The opening to the public took place in September 2023.

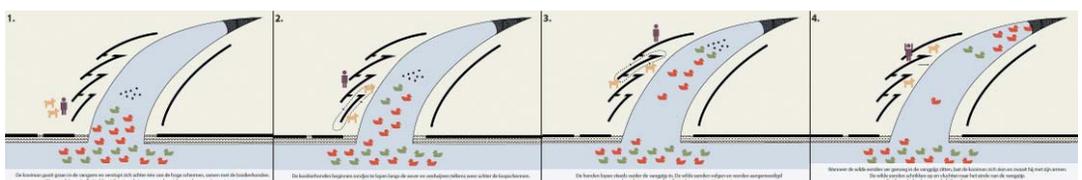


© Bibliothèque Nationale de France, dép. Arsenal MS-646-1 (641A) (Paris)

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



Kempens Landschap



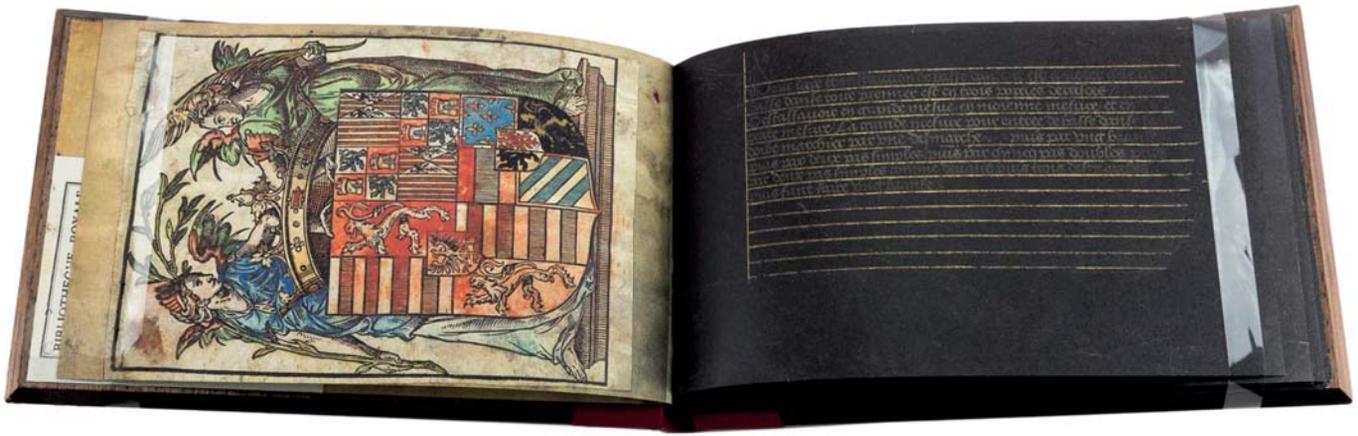
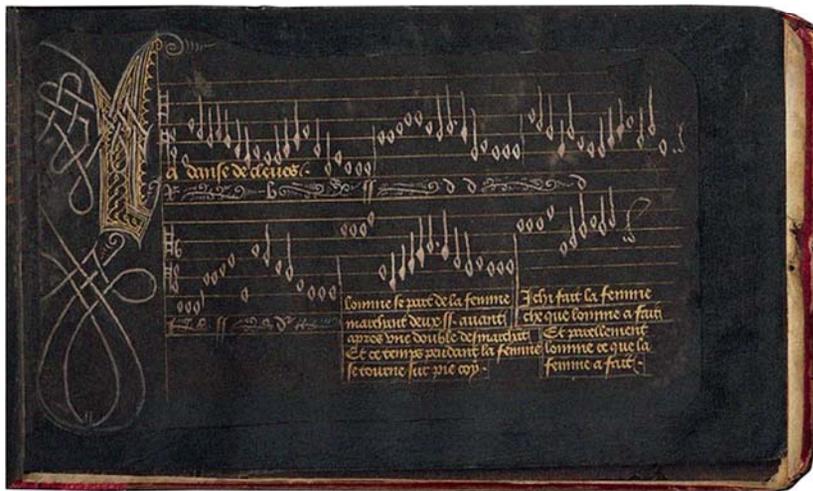


photo © www.facsimilefinder.com



# 07

CULTURAL PROJECT

## The 'Basses Danses' of Margaret of Austria

Belgium

The 'Basses danses' of Margaret of Austria is a unique manuscript probably compiled shortly before 1500 and kept in the vaults of the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR). It is an oblong book measuring 12.8 by 21 cm and it enclosed 25 black parchment sheets on which text and music have been written in expensive gold and silver ink. Because of its artistic value and exceptional content, the manuscript is considered one of the highlights of Burgundian-Habsburg culture. The Alamire Foundation initiated and completed a research and valorisation project, digitalising the work, creating accessible copies and making a study of the interpretation of the music and the dances. The completion was celebrated with a performance of the dances in AMUZ, Antwerp.

# CESAMM: Centre for Social Action and Music Making

## Belgium

The projects the Academic Chair Jonet and the research and training centre CESAMM focused on is an example of collaborative, plural, participatory codesign. Allowing to look at what we can learn from music-making practices. CESAMM offers both training for as well as research on socially oriented music practices involving different departments of the Ghent University and the Ghent University of Applied Sciences and Arts.



# 09

NATURE CONSERVATION

## The Katra river valley Biodiversity & Tourism project

Lithuania

The project supported measures showing the importance of this area to the wider nature-friendly public by supporting the building of a wooden watch tower linked to a wooden nature trail through the flooded forest. The site now offers 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, like tree-toed woodpecker, green woodpecker, black woodpecker, pygmy owl and tawny owl.





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





# 10

## NATURE CONSERVATION

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

### Ukraine

In cooperation with professional ecologists, NABU developed a geography of the project expansion and create methodological materials for effective environmental education of the population in dealing with bats. In the end, 40 colonies of different species of bats and related animals were protected with the help of 10 practical protection measures.





# 11

NATURE CONSERVATION

## Villages Go Green

Cyprus

The project offered a summer school concept where children from local villages spend the day with ÇADER, a non-profit civil society organization founded in 2005 in Northern Cyprus, while engaging in various activities such as decorating cloth shopping bags (to minimise the use of plastic ones, which represent a danger not only for local birds) or drying fruits (to offer an alternative to sweets).



CULTURAL PROJECT

## Adriaen Willaert's Dionysos Now

Belgium

Adriaen Willaert was born in 1490 in Roeselare / Rumbeke, Belgium and was maestro di cappella of the San Marco in Venice for 35 years. He was known as one of the best composers and pedagogue of this time. With the new ensemble Dionysos Now!, Tore Tom Denys succeeded take Adriaen Willaert's music out of Europe's libraries and let it sound again.





photo © Alain Honorez

# 13

CULTURAL PROJECT

## James 2024 – Junior Ballet

Belgium

JAMES was specially created for the talented young artists of Junior Ballet Antwerp, providing them with the opportunity to grow, excel and shine on stage. JAMES premiered in the Antwerp Opera on February 24, 2024 and afterwards toured in Belgium.



photo © JBA Filip Van Roe



# 14

NATURE CONSERVATION

## Reorganization of Retezat Biosphere Reserve

Romania

In order to regain biosphere reserve status for Retezat, the project reconfigured the Retezat area and provided the required documentation of the UNESCO MAB program.



15

NATURE CONSERVATION

# Restoration of visitor infrastructure on the nature trail Tři iseriny

Czech Republic

The contribution was used for restoration of the local nature trail providing material, including information signs and boards, and labour





# Highlights of selective projects currently in execution



SOCIAL PROJECT

# TAJO

## Talent workshops for disadvantaged youngsters

Belgium

TAJO is a non-profit initiative started in Ghent (Belgium) promoting a successful educational pathway for disadvantaged youngsters between the age of 10 and 14 years.

TAJO wants to make a significant contribution to the emancipation and integration of youngsters with a socially vulnerable background in Ghent. The initiative TAJO Ghent wants to offer an attractive, varied and accessible after-school educational programme to disadvantaged youngsters in order to increase their chance for a successful career education and diminish the risk for premature school drop-out.



# Black Rhino Reintroduction

## Tanzania

The population of black rhinoceros faced a dramatic decline of 98% in the second half of the 20th century. Classified as 'critically endangered', black rhinos are now being reintroduced into the wild in order to avoid their extinction.

The Grumeti Fund is a non-profit organisation based in Tanzania whose mission is to support the conservation of the iconic and biodiversity-rich Serengeti ecosystem. Their work in the western corridor of the Serengeti aspires to successfully protect the landscape and enhance the wellbeing of both people and wildlife within the Grumeti Concessions in collaboration with key government and community stakeholders. These endeavours entail supporting initiatives for the re-establishment of black rhino in Ikorongo Game Reserve and adjacent areas.



photo © Singita Grumeti Fund Ross Couper



photo © Grumeti Fund

# New International NABU Crane Centre

## Germany

NABU e.V. is aiming to establish a unique International Crane Centre in Germany to provide information on climate protection and biodiversity. The New International Crane Centre will be a travel destination for all crane lovers in Europe.

Since 2017, NABU is the only shareholder of **Crane Conservation Germany**. The main aim of Crane Conservation Germany is to provide secure breeding and undisturbed staging sites for cranes in Germany, contribute to international crane conservation, and offer environmental education.

'**The NABU Crane Centre**' was created in 1996 and is located in Groß Mohrdorf, about 14 km to the Northwest of the city Stralsund. Visitor management is also an important field of activity. Many excursions and other events are organized by the NABU Crane Centre. One of these events is the "Week of the crane", which takes place every year in September.

Therefore, the Kranichschutz Deutschland gGmbH in sponsorship of the NABU e.V. is aiming to establish a **new unique International Crane Centre in Germany to provide information on climate protection and biodiversity**. The New International Crane Centre will be a travel destination for all crane lovers in Europe. The centre's exhibition is supposed to take visitors to a new environment and inspire them.



photo © Gunter Nowald



# Aristeu Bee project

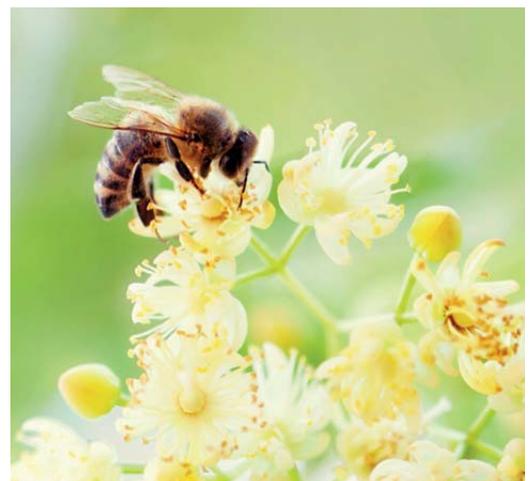
## Spain

Protection of bees by placing beehives around VGP parks and donating the produced honey to children's social canteens. A start-up project to be launched in the VGP park Lliça d'Amunt.

**Bees play an essential role in biodiversity and human life.** More than 80% of crops and plants depend on their pollination! However, **30% of bees die every year** due to multiple factors such as industrial agriculture, climate change and diseases and parasites.

To help prevent this dramatic situation, the VGP Foundation decided to collaborate with **Aristeu**, which was created with the purpose of returning organic pollination to nature and, with it, biodiversity and life. In the Greek mythology, Aristeu means "*the bees' protector*".

In cooperation with Aristeu, we have initiated the installation of beehives and greenery on the rooftop of the VGP Park in Lliça d'Amunt in Spain.



CULTURAL PROJECT

# Tibur Hof

## Belgium

Future headquarters for the VGP Foundation and VGP NV! Built in 1807 in Rumst to replace an older castle, this late-classicist castle and its spacious park with classified trees, will see a brighter future with a new purpose.

In 2021, VGP Foundation purchased a protected historical property Tibur Hof located in Rumst, Belgium. The intention is to restore the property while respecting its historical value and to give it a new function. Once restored, the property could fulfill all three purposes of the Foundation:

- protection of European cultural heritage by restoring the historical building to its original authenticity
- nature protection by restoring the adjacent park with classified trees
- social aspect by organising charitable, educational, and environmental events



# Increasing stability of forest covers in Liberec region

## Czechia

The project aims to plant mainly beech, oak and fir trees in the Liberec region (Czechia) forests to improve their age and species composition, enhance their biodiversity and resistance, and return to more environmentally friendly farming methods. The project foresees planting diverse tree seedlings in the Liberec region, mostly beeches, oaks and firs in order to improve the age and species composition of the local forests. It is also necessary to protect young seedlings against animals by building protective fences.

The Foundation of Ivan Dejmal cooperates with Mr. Jan Duda – a senior expert in the field of applicable farming methods to increase numbers of firs and deciduous trees. Several lands and tree species suitable for planting have been already selected. Seedlings will be ordered during the spring and supplied according to need. To protect firs and oaks against animals, fences will be constructed as well. Depending on climatic conditions, planting of seedlings is realized during autumn 2021. In the following years, continuous caring is also covered, for example trimming, repellent coating or fence reparations.



# Youth School in the Carpathians – Saving vulnerable species during wartime

## the Carpathians

Promoting biodiversity conservation and environmental education by broadening the scope of eco-educational campaigns to protect bats and reptiles. Building on the success of previous initiatives, this project is dedicated to promoting biodiversity conservation and environmental education with a specific focus on protecting bats and reptiles. By expanding eco-educational campaigns and fostering community engagement, the initiative aims to enhance scientific understanding and cultivate a culture of conservation through interdisciplinary approaches and innovative outreach strategies.

- Scientific Research & Monitoring
- Conservation & Rehabilitation
- Education & Awareness
- Interactive Learning & Resources





# Dec 2024 approved funding split by focus area

## Total budget and number of projects approved/executed since inception

PROGRAM FOCUS AREA	Number of projects	Budget spent/ approved	% of total budget
Cultural heritage	10	4,271,538	56%
Nature conservation	31	2,200,486	29%
Social projects	7	1,215,000	16%
<b>Total projects approved</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>7,687,024</b>	

## Projects by status

Projects completed	25
In execution	16
Approved, pending execution	7
<b>Total number of projects</b>	<b>48</b>

## Spending (€) by year and focus area

PROGRAM FOCUS AREA	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Cultural heritage	350,000	3,875,940	51,196	65,000	100,000	4,277,136
Nature conservation	712,100	767,586	171,200	100,000	449,600	2,200,486
Social projects	100,000	640,000	75,000	30,000	370,000	1,215,000
<b>Total projects approved</b>	<b>1,162,100</b>	<b>5,283,526</b>	<b>297,396</b>	<b>195,000</b>	<b>919,600</b>	<b>7,687,024</b>

As of December 2024, the VGP Foundation had € 4.3 million of cash and cash equivalents, outstanding commitments of € 0.5 million and contribution to be received of € 1.75 million.



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