VGP

FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2020

www.vgp-foundation.eu

photo © ANCOT

VGP Foundation

The VGP Foundation was founded in 2019 and is a registered Belgian private foundation (“private stichting”) under number 0735.540.607.

The VGP Foundation received €3 million start-up capital from VGP in the year 2020 and in addition, VGP has provisioned €4 million for the year 2021. Longer term, VGP has committed to contribute circa 1-2% of its annual profit into the VGP Foundation. 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.

Three focus areas

The foundation will focus on three main areas:

1/ Supporting education
for children and young people in need

As VGP has an impact on local communities, the VGP Foundation wants to support social projects focused on education and child care

2/ Preservation and creation
of biospheres and nature conservation zones

As VGP turns green fields into economic fields, the VGP Foundation wants to engage in projects encouraging nature conservation, such as creating permanent biotopes

3/ Protection of European cultural assets and heritage

VGP operates on a pan-European basis and we believe in the dream of uniting all people of Europe. We want to support European cultural heritage through conservation and protection of heritage buildings

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 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.

Approved projects **2020**

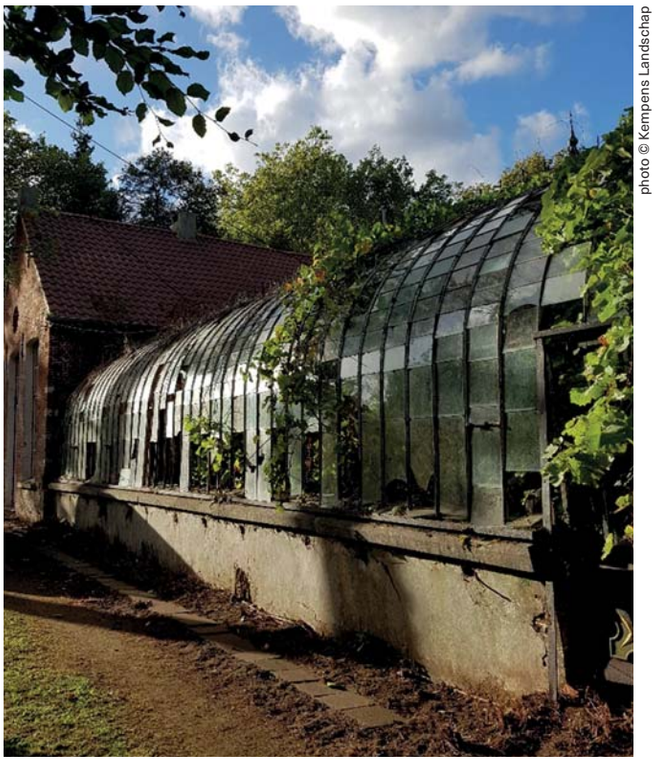


photo © Kempens Landschap

CULTURE

Hof Ter Laken

Belgium

Hof Ter Laken is a twelfth century country estate in neo-Flemish Renaissance style, situated in Booischot, Belgium. This restoration project is led by Kempens Landschap, a Foundation focused on restoring and maintaining historically significant landscape in Antwerp province. The VGP Foundation will conditionally contribute towards the reconstruction of the greenhouse and aviary at the estate. The aim is to give the entire site a new function with high social added value whilst respecting the heritage.

CULTURE

Spanish Riding School Vienna

Austria

VGP Foundation is supporting the renovation works on the cultural heritage site of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. While ticket sales cover basic operational costs (maintained by state subsidies during Corona pandemic), the SRS lacks the financial means to maintain and repair the older support buildings.

CULTURE

Restoration of a castle

Czech Republic

Whilst there are many famous and well looked after castles open for visitors in the Czech Republic, there are also many which have long been abandoned or not been properly maintained. Various estates are currently being analysed against our investment criteria. We try to look at the estate and its landscape from an integral point of view, thereby seeking a balance between an ability to preserve precious cultural heritage with its natural surroundings versus sustainable economical usage through a potential future (social) function.

SOCIETY

Talent workshops for disadvantaged youngsters

Belgium

VGP Foundation is providing financial support to TAJO, which is the abbreviation for talent studio for young people. It is a non-profit initiative started in Ghent/Belgium with a clear purpose: Promoting a successful educational pathway for youngsters between the age of 10 and 14, with special attention for those kids who need it the most.

photo © TAJO

photo © NABU

NATURE

Protection of Insects: Insect scout campaign

Germany

The biomass of flying insects decreased within 27 years by up to 75 percent. At the same time the insects in their diversity are not only an irreplaceable food source for other animals, almost all plants are pollinated by insects. In order to draw attention to the dramatic situation, NABU has called for an interactive campaign – "The Insect Summer". Insect scouts are to enthuse the world for insects and support with the identification of insects. VGP Foundation is supporting the project, which aims to build up a network of experts and from 2021 to 2022 in total 32 people, spread over all states, are to be trained.

NATURE

Project coordination by NABU International

Germany

Coordination of activities, including project contracts with local partners, monitoring, accounting and regular reporting on all active nature conservation projects led by NABU International in which VGP Foundation participates

photo © IERS (Ukraine)

NATURE

Protection of the Carpathians

Romania, Ukraine

Uncontrolled cutting down of trees, poaching, lack of waste management system, exhausting business projects, and climate change lead to Carpathian forests being in the zone of ecological risk. The local population of depressed remote rural areas are traditionally accustomed to forest exploitation. NABU International in cooperation with NGO's, national parks and the Church community both in the Ukraine and Romania want to provide local people with alternative practical examples of life activities and sustainable development in the Carpathians' unique ecosystems. The main goal of the project which VGP Foundation supports is to develop and then implement an educational program for children and youth in rural areas of the Carpathians. The aim is to reach circa 45,000 children and adults during the project implementation.

NATURE

Protection of the Ebro Delta

Spain

The Ebro Delta is one of the most important bird areas in Catalonia, Spain. Here 300 species of birds, ducks, herons, waders, gulls, coots and flamingos breed, rest or winter. The Ebro Delta is the second largest wetland in Spain. One third of the delta is a nature reserve. The reserve is partly managed by NABU's Spanish partner Sociedad Espanola de Ornitologia (SEO). The bird paradise was severely devastated by storm Gloria in 2019. The storm also heavily damaged and rendered uninhabitable the 80-year-old house in which the SEO volunteer caretakers of the sanctuary live. VGP Foundation is helping in repairing the house.

NATURE

Peatland Restoration

Baltics

While only 3% of the global land area is peatland, they store twice as many green-house gases as all the forests on earth. The protection and restoration of peatlands is therefore an efficient means for ecosystem-based climate protection and restoration. At the same time, as wetlands they are of central importance for the protection of species. VGP Foundation, together with and supported by NABU International, is planning to purchase high-value bog areas in the Baltics that are acutely threatened by drainage in order to restore the water balance and protect the natural habitat.

photo © ANCOT

NATURE

Protection of the Snow Leopard in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan

For the protection of snow leopards, which are among the most endangered big cats on earth, NABU, in close cooperation with NABU Kyrgyzstan, will build in 2021 a new rehabilitation centre in Terek (the Kemin district of the Chui region). The old, outdated, and risky cages will be replaced. Moreover, an environmental education centre will be set up. During the first month of the project, the new territory has been cleaned; the road to the future centre was repaired. In the next month, the roof and the house will be renovated.

NATURE

Protection of the Snow Leopard in Tajikistan

Tajikistan

Due to the growing population of mountain communities in the highlands, conflicts with snow leopards are becoming more and more frequent. In some cases, they have already led to the killing of the strictly protected species by shepherds protecting their farm animals. The construction of snow leopard-safe stables and implementing a compensation/insurance system is the most effective method to solve the conflict – also the project's main goal which is led by NABU, in cooperation with ANCOT. In the first month after the project launching, 7 villages of Bartang valley have been visited.

photo © NABU

NATURE

Protection of migrating birds

Cyprus

Every year more than 2 million birds are being killed in Cyprus alone through illegal poaching. The importance of education and public awareness is crucial to protect the millions of birds migrating via the Mediterranean. The aim of the project, which VGP Foundation is supporting and is led by NABU International, is to encourage nature protection at a grassroots level to make three Cypriot villages more avi-fauna friendly and become a model for other villages to follow. In addition, the project foresees the addition of a Education & Awareness space to the wildlife rehabilitation centre.

NATURE

Restoration of Jizerské smrčiny

Czech Republic

The Jizerské smrčiny is a location of special natural habitat in the central part of the plateau of the Jizera Mountains. There are a number of specially protected and endangered species of plants and animals in the area. Due to a long period of cultivation of monocultural forests and often inappropriate farming methods rapid water run-offs are increasingly endangering the area. The project, supported by VGP Foundation and led by the Ivan Dejmal Foundation for nature conservation, aims to cut unoriginal trees, plant new trees and build water retaining dams and baffles.

NATURE

Increasing stability of forest covers in Liberec region

Czech Republic

The forest areas of six towns in the Liberec region has for long witnessed a general decrease in biodiversity, caused by unsuitable composition of the forest and an overpopulation of cloven-hoofed animals. The aim of this project is to restore the biodiversity by planting diverse trees and placing fencing. The project is led by Ivan Dejmal Foundation and is supported by VGP Foundation.

ATURE

New networks for the Eastern Imperial Eagle

Europe

The breeding grounds of the endangered Eastern Imperial Eagle extend from south eastern Central Europe to Lake Baikal in Siberia. The European population is estimated at 1,100 to 1,600 breeding pairs. Populations in Eastern Europe are now highly fragmented. The aim of the project supported by VGP Foundation and led by NABU International, is to improve the conservation measures for the Eastern Imperial Eagle by transferring knowledge between existing conservation projects and closing knowledge gaps. The focus lies on the investigation of relevant factors for a recolonization of former habitats and the investigation of potential threat factors in the wintering areas.

NATURE

ARISTEU Bee Project

Europe

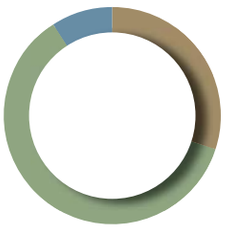
The bee population in Europe is dramatically decreasing – threat for plants and crops, resulting in low levels of honey production in Europe because of industry, climate change and diseases. The aim of the project is to create growing social and business awareness for the bees by placing bee hives in selected VGP parks. The hives will support local bee colonies and thereby support pollination in the local neighbourhood. The project supported by VGP Foundation is led by ARISTEU in cooperation with Esclatec, a foundation focused on catering to the needs of people with disabilities.

photo © Spanish Riding School, Vienna

2020 approved funding
split by focus areas

2020 Funding areas

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

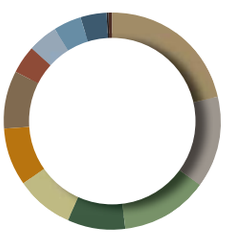


Cultural heritage 30%
Nature conservation 61%
Social 9%

PROGRAM FOCUS AREA	€
Cultural heritage	350,000
Nature conservation	712,100
Social projects	100,000
Total projects approved	1,162,100

Approved projects: 16 projects approved with funds allocated to 13 projects so far

SPLIT OF ALLOCATED FUNDS PER PROJECT
(split based on Euro amount approved)



21.5%
13.7%
12.9%
8.6%
8.6%
8.6%
8.6%
4.3%
4.3%
4.3%
3.9%
0.3%
0.3%

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