



# Annual Report 2021

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





photo © VGP Foundation

Aristeu Bee project on the rooftop of the VGP Park Lliçà d'Amunt in Spain

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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. For the year 2022 VGP has provisioned € 5 million additional contribution.

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.

photo © NABU



photo © NABU Kavkaz



# 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.

## 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.

## 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.



## 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.



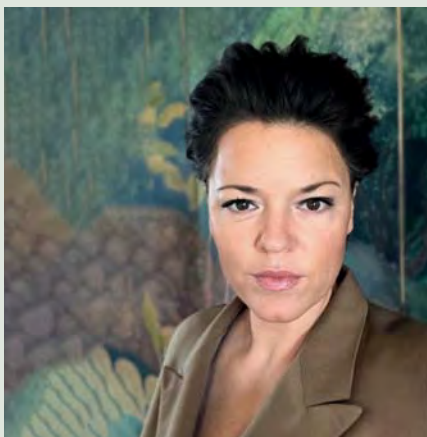
**Olaf Tschimpke**

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.







# Completed projects



# Projects completed in 2021

In the course of 2021, the first six projects were successfully completed.



photo © IERS

## 1 NATURE & EDUCATION PROTECTION OF THE CARPATHIANS

### Romania, Ukraine

#### Steps achieved

##### ROMANIA

- 2 educational lessons organised during the school program (designed maps of Romania, puzzles of Romania's forest, games, discussions...).
- thematic trail created in the UNESCO pristine forest near to Brasov with 2 information panels and 6 stops and an audio guide
- promotional materials created (1,200 posters, 1,200 brochures about local animals)
- school activities – 16 classroom groups, 32 lessons, 8 excursions, 2 festival educational stands; 1,100 children involved

##### UKRAINE

30 main activities on different environmental topics involving 1,012 people (e.g. Workshop on making natural eco-soap, Informational day on owl protection, Training on waste sorting, Event to preserve the unique oak habitat, Field expedition to study winter species of bats...).





## 2

### NATURE

## RESTORATION OF THE VOLUNTEER HOUSE IN THE EBRO DELTA

### Spain

With the financial support from NABU and VGP Foundation it was possible to solve most of the problems, aggravated by the Gloria storm effects, that were affecting the life of volunteers in the Riet Vell Nature Reserve.

#### **Volunteer House Rehabilitation**

- damaged parts of the old building removed
- new green roof planted, walls reinforced
- interior of the volunteer house renovated (kitchen and bathrooms), new sewage system

#### **Rehabilitation of the workplace**

- bedroom area restored, walls and floor isolated with natural elements
- part of the house transformed into a workplace for volunteers, small laboratory established
- adapted bathroom and bedroom for people with reduced mobility
- webcam restored for streaming a Barn Owl nest

#### **Construction of a barrier-free observatory**

- observatory for observing and photography
- surrounding vegetation renaturated, trees replanted



photo © SEO/BirdLife

*Barrier-free observatory*





# SNOW LEOPARD

3

NATURE

## Construction of a new rehabilitation centre in Terek

Kyrgyzstan

- construction of a hay barn and animal feeding area
- installation of the new roof
- manufacturing and installation of an oven
- installation of an outdoor enclosure and metal footbridge
- building an outside study area
- new sewage and plumbing system
- payments for rights to use 10 ha of pasture

*New rehabilitation centre in Terek*



photo © NABU Kyrgyzstan

4

NATURE & EDUCATION

## Prevention measures against human × wildlife conflicts

Tajikistan

- reconstruction of livestock corrals – 4 big, 80 small
- meetings with local communities around the importance of SL and its protection
- studying compensation measures for the loss of livestock
- purchase of a car
- purchase of a safe transport cage for snow leopards



photo © ANCOT



# 5

NATURE

## RESTORATION OF JIZERSKÉ SMRČINY

Czech republic

- Measures for increasing water retention and forest cover diversity in local peatlands
- 14,100 tree seedlings planted
  - 60 water retention barriers built
  - protective fences for the seedlings, repellents

photo © Jakub Trsek



Water retention system

# 6

NATURE

## INCREASING STABILITY OF FOREST COVERS IN LIBEREC REGION, 2021

Czech republic

photo © Jakub Trsek



### Measures for increasing the forest covers

- 70,000 seedlings purchased and planted (diverse age and type – beech, oak, fir)
- protective fences for the seedlings to prevent wild animals from eating the seedlings

### VGP tree planting day

- 18 VGP Czechia employees volunteered in November to plant 250 fir seedlings and expressed an interest in making this again in the future
- lecture about the forest covers, their health, threats, diversity, restoring

Tree-planting day in Czechia









New projects



# New projects in execution

Before the end of 2021, we had in total 23 projects in execution. Some of those mentioned in the Annual Report 2020 are also still running. Below, you will find a list of 14 projects currently in execution, approved after the publishing of the Annual Report 2020.



photo © www.facsimilefinder.com

## CULTURE

### The ‘Basses Danses’ of Margaret of Austria

#### Austria

The ‘Basses danses’ of Margaret of Austria is a unique manuscript kept in the vaults of the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR). The book, being compiled shortly before 1500, consist of 25 black parchment sheets on which text and music are written in expensive gold and silver ink. The project aims to do a research and valorisation to make the dance book accessible to a broader audience through a documentary, expert lectures and concerts.



photo © www.facsimilefinder.com

## EDUCATION & CULTURE & NATURE

### The green educational bastion

#### Belgium

The project initiator Oscar Romero College wants to integrate Bastion IX, a piece of heritage located on their school grounds into their activities by furnishing it as discovery and learning space. The idea is to open up the Bastion and make the green environment on top accessible through an outdoor staircase. In addition, this green space would be open for tourism within the framework of the tourist tours "Dendermonde City of Establishment". "In this way we hope to connect people and the environment: with our school and with the visitors to our beautiful city."





## EDUCATION & NATURE

# Krats along the sustainable food chain

### Belgium

With the project “Krats along the short chain” vzw Habbekrats wants to familiarize vulnerable youngsters from Wetteren with ecology and sustainability, by connecting them with organizations and companies that are strongly committed to this. After all, the Scheldt Valley has a great many farms that practise organic and dynamic agriculture and livestock breeding. The youngsters will explore the area and visit the organic farms by bike for 10 weeks on Wednesday afternoons. Moreover, on the following Thursday they will taste the dishes prepared together with the local goodies. In order not to lose the knowledge and the techniques, the youngsters will also learn how to cultivate a vegetable garden themselves.



photo © vzw Habbekrats



photo © Id-Art vzw

## EDUCATION

# Plankenkoorts/ Stage fright

### Belgium

The project aims to pay special attention to young people who have difficulty connecting to the regular leisure activities and who, due to certain circumstances, are rebelling against school structures. The emphasis is placed on lowering the threshold to art, culture & society, especially tailored to disadvantaged young people. Through intensive guidance by professional artists/teachers in various disciplines, the first concern is to identify and deepen interests, discover and stimulate their own talents. Pushing back frontiers is a growth process in awareness and belief in themselves, which makes them stronger in life. After the conclusion of the project they will be further guided and supported by a godfather or godmother.





Molsbroek Visitors' Centre

NATURE & EDUCATION

# Help build the nature garden at the Molsbroek Visitors' Centre

Belgium

The visitors' centre Molsbroek in Lokeren is the starting point for everyone who wants to explore the nature reserve Groot Molsbroek. Before, during or after your walk you can discover inside and outside all kinds of fascinating facts about the nature of our region, and relax with a drink and a view of the marsh. However, the entire site is in need of renovation. The insect garden, the terrace and the play forest surrounding the visitor centre are a sub-project in the complete make-over that is planned for the coming years. The aim is to design this garden environment as a miniature nature reserve where you can really experience nature from the front row, and to inspire visitors to get to work in their own gardens.



photo © Discovering Belgium, [www.discoveringbelgium.com](http://www.discoveringbelgium.com)



SOCIAL PROJECT

Tvoj Buddy

Slovakia

This social project is located in 10 cities of western and eastern Slovakia. In Slovakia only, almost 5000 children, who cannot grow up in a family environment, depend on the centres for children and families. When leaving the institutional care, these children often face difficulties pushing them to the edge of society. Therefore, the professional staff from Tvoj Buddy finds for these children a caring person (a trained volunteer) from outside the institutional care centres who accompany them on their way. Today, over 100 children report a positive change in their lives: they have a friend they can fully trust and who supports them with their personal growth, finding a job, and stable home.

photo © Tvoj Buddy



photo © USPB, by Mikhail Migovich

photo © NABU



NATURE

Restoration of Transcarpathian Peatlands ‘Chorne Bagno’

Ukraine

Peatland restoration is one of the most pressing activities on the global agenda. The Ukraine is ranked among the top emitters of greenhouse gases from drained peatlands to the atmosphere. The main goal of this new project in Ukraine is to restore the natural hydrological regime of the internationally important bog "Chorne Bagno", as well as related wetlands in the same catchment area on the territory of National Park "Zacharovanyj Kraj" (the Enchanted Valley) in the Transcarpathian region.



## NATURE

## Snow leopard conservation through environmentally sustainable production of yak wool

Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

A feasibility study and implementation plan for the establishment of regional value chains and nature conservation compensation services. With the support of the VGP Foundation, NABU foresees to ensure the ecological compatibility of yak husbandry and yak wool production, as well as contributing to the conservation of ecosystem services in Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This includes, above all, the conservation of pastoral landscapes as a measure for adapting to climate change and the protection of the snow leopard and its prey.



## EDUCATION

## Social centre BC Capelderij

Belgium

Capelderij vzw is located exactly in the centre of Flanders. 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. The castle domain offers excellent opportunities for young people to get meaningful leisure time and at the same time develop connection and respect for this natural environment. Hereto, several urgent and somewhat less urgent interventions are necessary. One of the most urgent interventions is the restoration of the double lake, situated between the castle and the living areas. These lakes are not only valuable and important from an aesthetic and natural point of view, but they are also a unique place for young people to relax. During the summer, they also serve as a leisure environment for fishing and boating.





## CULTURE

# Project Tibur Hof

### Belgium

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 fulfil 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 and educational events for children and public

To secure the sustainability of this project and long-term financial independence from the Foundation, the reconstructed building will be leased to VGP NV as its main office. This will also allow the Foundation to generate a regular and stable income from the lease of the premises while having a new headquarters for itself to operate from.







photo © Grumeti Fund

## NATURE

# Black Rhino Reintroduction

## Tanzania

Although we generally do not fund projects outside of Europe (except for the protection of the snow leopard), our Board of Directors decided to make an exception to support the Grumeti Fund in Tanzania in their efforts to save, reintroduce and protect the critically endangered species of Black Rhinos with only around 5,500 animals left in the world. The complex programme includes the acquisition, capture, pre-and-post capture holding, holding and release, veterinary expenses, transportation, ground logistics and anti-poaching activities once reintroduced to the wild.

## NATURE & EDUCATION

# The new international NABU Crane Centre “The Crane’s World”

## Germany

The charismatic cranes are pleasant ambassadors for nature conservation and a significant tourist attraction. Since September 1996, the NABU-Crane Centre is located at Groß Mohrdorf. The permanent exhibition can be visited year-round and provides all relevant information about the Eurasian crane and its relatives. The exhibition contains information boards, audio-visual media, and anatomical preparations, which give interesting insights into the life of these impressive large birds. However, with up to 500 visitors per day in autumn, the current Centre is way too small for visitors and staff. The new NABU Center “The Crane’s World” (building, exhibition, exterior area) will make the visitors more excited about cranes and their conservation. Additionally to “The Crane’s World,” the exhibition will address issues of bio-diversity and climate change.





NATURE

# Monitoring of peatland water levels

Germany

Since 2017, ÖNSOR has been an independently acting institution of NABU Niedersachsen e.V. with the mission to professionally manage and develop protected areas including, among others, several area-sized bog remnants in the districts of Rotenburg (Wümme) and Stade with a total area of about 3,000 ha. These bogs have mostly been left in a more or less disturbed state by drainage and subsequent peat cutting. Throughout the year, constantly high water levels in the remaining peat bodies are the control variable for successful peatland restoration. Reliable and continuous information on the water balance of peatland remnants is, therefore, the indispensable data basis for all renaturation projects and their subsequent success monitoring.



photo © Maksim Shutor, Unsplash

NATURE

# Reorganization of Retezat Biosphere Reserve

Romania

Biosphere reserves are ‘learning places for sustainable development’. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems. Retezat National Park was declared a Biosphere Reserve since 1979 by fulfilling UNESCO MAB old criteria. Since then, the specific criteria for obtaining/maintaining the status of biosphere reserve have been changed. The objective of the project is to elaborate UNESCO MAB documentation for Retezat Biosphere Reserve, reorganize and adjust the Retezat BR according to the new requirements to keep ‘biosphere reserve’ status.



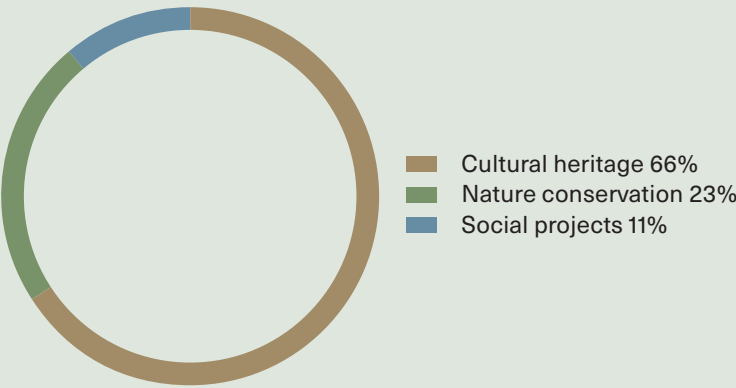
photo © Lucian Dachman, Unsplash



# 2021 approved funding split by focus areas

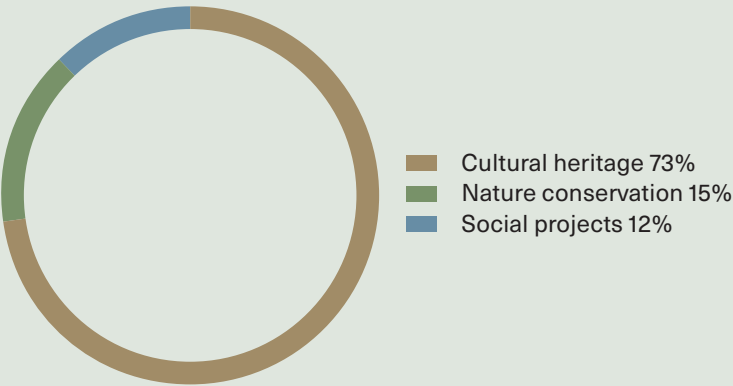
## Funding areas since inception

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020  
AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021 COMBINED



## 2021 Funding areas

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

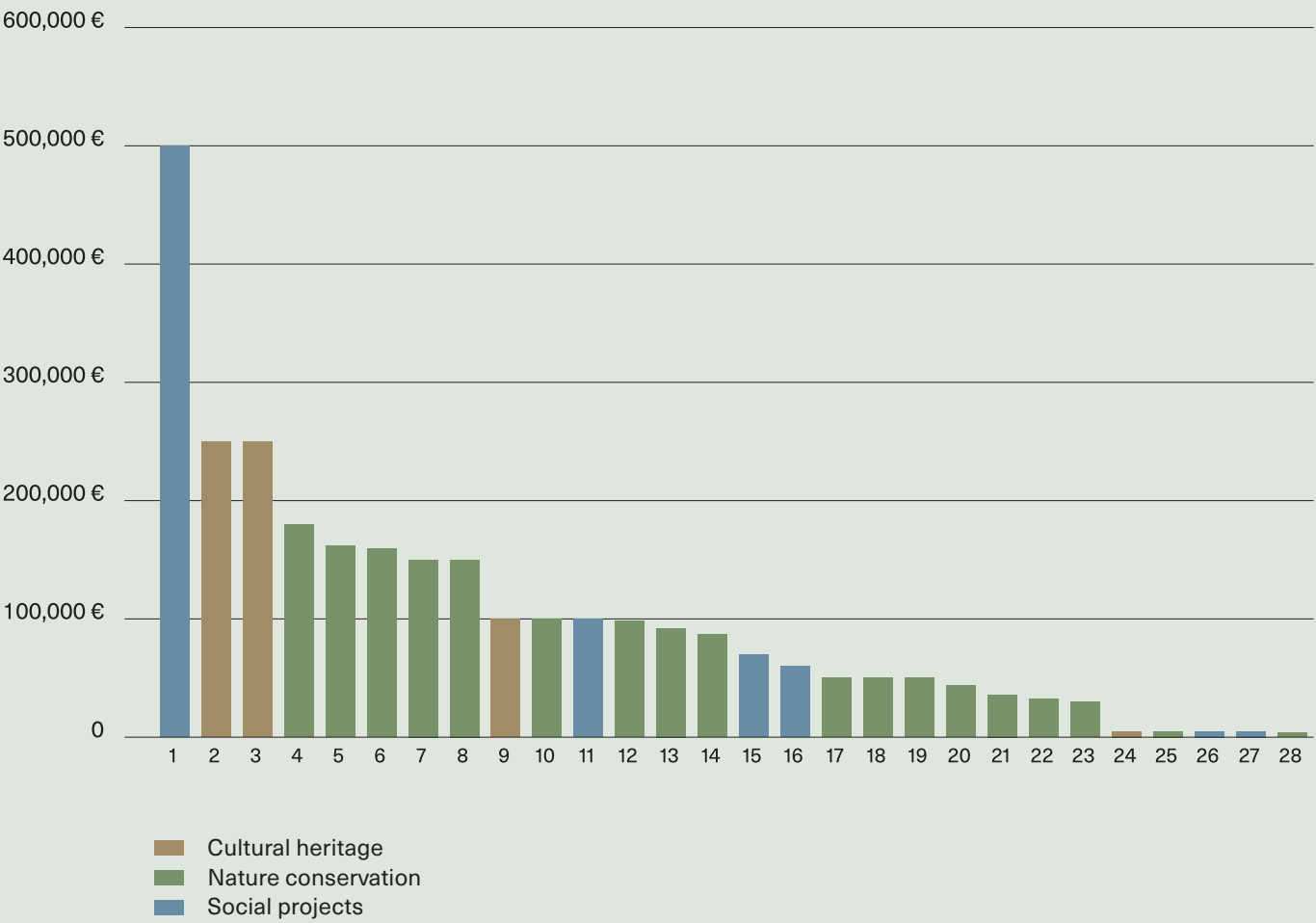


PROGRAM FOCUS AREA (in €)	2020	2021	TOTAL
Cultural heritage	350,000	3,875,940	4,225,940
Nature conservation	712,100	767,586	1,479,686
Social projects	100,000	640,000	740,000
Total projects approved	1,162,100	5,283,526	6,445,626



# Approved projects

Approved projects: 29 projects approved with funds allocated to 26 projects so far



Note 1: 28 projects shown on chart. List excludes Tibur Hof project (to secure the sustainability of this project and long-term financial independency on the Foundation, the reconstructed building will be leased to VGP NV as its main offices. This will also allow the Foundation to generate a regular and stable income from the lease of the premises).



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