

## Financial Report for European Sustainable Use Group during 2024-2026

Last year, in Tallinn, we noted that ESUG finances of ESUG are simple in years without projects.. When ESUG was 'between projects' it was costing about €3,500 to run. Of this, the software fee for the Naturalliance network that we run for IUCN is about 75%, and the remainder is for accounting, banking and any fees to the authorities in Belgium to maintain our constitution. With payment also for IUCN membership, we should probably allow €5000. Other expenses are met by officers from their personal budgets and we seek opportunities on a one-off basis via IUCN-SUME and others to bring country coordinators and network contributors from countries with relatively low GDP (e.g. Ukraine) to joint meetings. We are extremely grateful to our Patrons (listed on <https://esug.sycl.net> at lower right or scroll down on a mobile), who kept us afloat in a difficult period of pandemic and other illness.

However, just after our 2023 General Meeting in Brussels, when we had only €387 left in the ESUG bank account, we heard that the Pro-Coast project was to be funded. With ESUG as Coordinator, in December we received a payment from European Commission of nearly €2.5 million for the first 75% of the project. We promptly distributed a majority of that to Pro-Coast Partners but, after paying salaries and expenses for the first two months of work, had €855,000 in the account at the end of 2023.

In comparison with that excitement, 2024 was fairly mundane. After reports from Partners had been received to our satisfaction at the end of the first year of Pro-Coast, much of the remaining advance from European Commission was distributed to them. We had also paid a year of salaries (€28,625) and of fees to contracted staff (€85,887), together with €8,112 T&S. Thus, [for the end of 2024 the accounts](#) show €211,440 in the bank.

The situation in 2025 was similar. After the mid-term reporting, we received a further 10% of the budget from European Commission (€328,536) at the very end of the year, to be distributed to partners in 2026. We paid another year of salaries (€35,371, i.e. an increase of €6,746) and of fees to contracted staff (€73,675, i.e. a decrease from 2024 of €12,212), with €6,463 of T&S. Thus, [for the end of 2025 the accounts](#) show €421,120 in the bank. We've now distributed most of that to partners and the ESUG team, leaving €30,532 in our account before the final 15% is received from European Commission when reporting is complete.

The European Commission pays ESUG Indirect Costs, effectively an overhead, at 25% of the spending on salaries and other costs. Committee has agreed for us to the overhead funding to pay the work needed to get the CUSP scaled out to handle projects online, with the help of our brilliant Country Coordination Team leaders and helpers, provided we leave enough to run ESUG at its 'non-project' level for three further years. Thus, we can meet until 2030 the responsibility to European Commission to run the Community Sustainability Platform until 2033. Committee is setting up a Business Plan Task Force to develop this opportunity.

We are most grateful to the Patrons who kept ESUG afloat during a difficult period before the current project income. We do need to ask them to continue contributing so that we can continue to meet our responsibilities to European Commission and to IUCN to run major networks for Conservation through Sustainable Use. Indeed, one patron has already agreed to help cover costs of continuing to publish Pro-Coast findings after the project.

*Robert Kenward (Treasurer)*