

Wetlands International - European Association

Annual Report and Accounts 2022



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Introduction

As part of Wetlands International, the only global not-for-profit network dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands, Wetlands International - European Association, further known as Wetlands International Europe, was established in 2013 as a membership-based Association aiming to improve policy development and implementation to enhance practices and investments in wetlands protection and conservation. By the end of 2022, the Association counted on **11 NGOs from seven European countries** (ES, IT, PL, DE, LT, FR, UK).



Wetlands International Europe is driven by the knowledge that safeguarding and restoring wetlands is urgent and vital for water security, biodiversity, climate regulation, sustainable development and human health. As a member-based organization, our working model is designed to connect knowledge at three levels: European, national and on-the-ground, creating a virtuous cycle of information flow between the Secretariat of the Association and member organizations. This cycle combines bottom-up and top-down approaches, and facilitates the collection of examples of best practices and lessons learned that are used to inform policy processes and decision-makers.

2022 has been marked by new strategic partnerships that have resulted, for example, in a new role of Wetlands International Europe as co-coordinator of the Secretariat of the [Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands](#) (MAW) or the launch of the Trans-European Swimways Network and its programme.

The organisation of the European Rivers Summit in Brussels, an event that served as a megaphone for freshwater-related policies, featuring more than 50 speakers from NGOs to the European Commission and European Parliament and businesses, and 180 participants from more than 30 European countries, made us realize the enormous capacity and possibilities that our team can offer.

2022 was also a key year for our External Action programme as we saw how it is increasingly gaining acceptance and recognition in Wetlands International's network. This has been reflected with the proposal from the network to include the External Action agenda of Wetlands International Europe in Wetlands International Global Fundraising Strategy.

Although we sadly saw our new member BirdLife Belarus leave after being shut down by the Belarusian government, we welcomed a new member from Lithuania: the Foundation for Peatland Restoration and Conservation.

Finally, the Secretariat's team grew in 2022 from 8 to 13 people, increasing the capacity in project management, finance, communications and policy advocacy. We would not like to end this section without being grateful and thanking for the support provided by four interns in organising the European Rivers Summit, general communications and external action activities.

Summary of activities and achievements in 2022

The work undertaken by Wetlands International Europe contributes and is complementary to the global [Strategic Intent of Wetlands International 2020-2030](#), which is built around three streams of work: Deltas and Coasts, Rivers and Lakes, and Peatlands. For the purpose of this report, we will refer to Freshwater when addressing Rivers and Lakes. Moreover, the European strategy adds two cross-cutting work areas to these streams, namely the European External Action and Biodiversity.

In 2022, we continued building our knowledge and experience, providing input into policy processes and raising awareness about the importance of wetlands for a variety of ecosystem services beneficial for nature and people.

Most importantly, we did not stand alone in pursuing our claims and goals, which is why we have persisted in nurturing the alliances, partnerships and coalitions we are part of such as Dam Removal Europe, CONCORD, Living Rivers Europe, European Habitats Forum (EHF) and the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands. Moreover, we have created new ones with organisations such as Rewilding Europe, European Justice Forum and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). Without these partnerships and alliances we would not have been able to be part in twelve project proposals, seven of them approved by the time this report has been published.

2022 has granted us with new working platforms and projects. Examples of the former are our new membership of the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Ecological Connectivity, the EU Biodiversity Platform, the Vision Leadership Team on Grey Green Infrastructure under Water Europe and the Steering Group of the Open Rivers Programme. Examples of projects are the three new Horizon projects we are now part of [ALFAwetlands](#), [WET HORIZONS](#) and [REWET](#).

The contribution of the European office to the Global governance of Wetlands International has gained relevance with our participation in the regular meetings of the Network Management Team and the Annual Meeting of Heads of Office of Wetlands International that this year took place in the headquarters of our member Tour du Valat in the Camargue in France and whose main focus was on Upscaling Wetlands International's strategic vision and Business Planning.

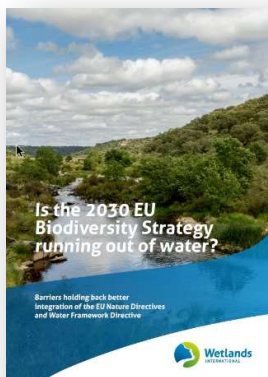
In the following section, we would like to present in detail a description of the main outcomes of the year for each work programme.

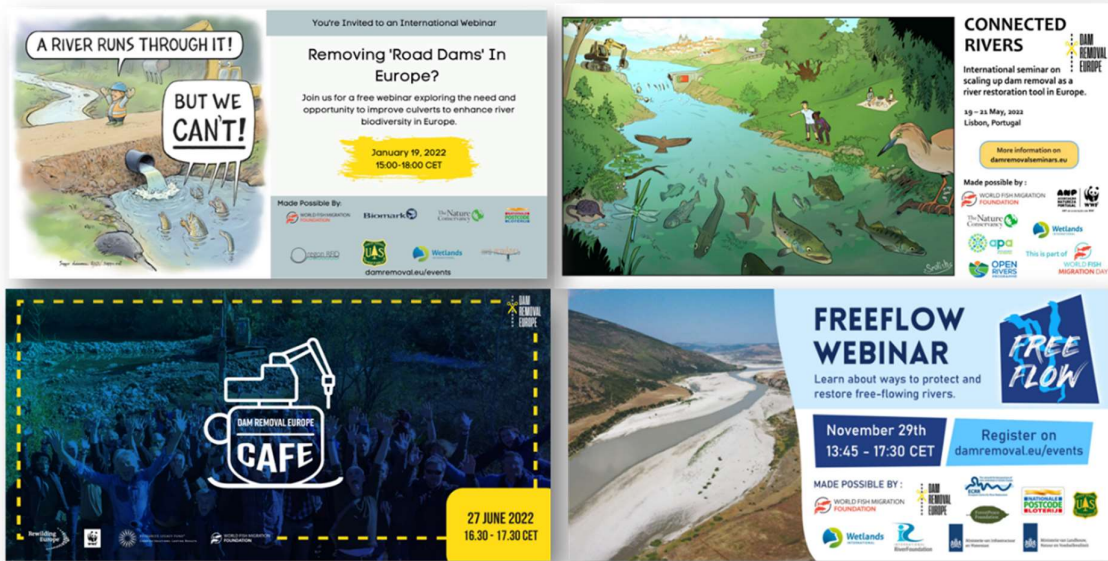
Freshwater

Our advocacy efforts towards the European institutions and Members States to strengthen the implementation of EU water-related Directives took different forms along the year. We co-wrote the report "[Is the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy running out of water?](#)" that examined the integration of nature conservation objectives into the most recent River Basin Management Plans for 2022-2027 as required by the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). We signed a [joint statement](#) with 20 NGOs,

including our member Fundación Global Nature, on the revision of lists of surface and groundwater pollutants and a joint letter with Living Rivers Europe to Water Directors on the impact of the proposed Nature Restoration Regulation on the implementation of the WFD.

With our partners from the MAVA Foundation project "Restoring Iberian Rivers", we developed a joint vision document for future collaboration in Iberian transboundary river cooperation after 2022 and a letter to the UNECE Water Convention's Implementing Committee. The latter stressed the discrepancies between the transboundary river management cooperation in Iberian countries under the Albufeira Convention and the obligations under the UNECE Water Convention.





We maintained our advocacy efforts for the protection and restoration of free-flowing rivers to achieve the goals of the Biodiversity Strategy. In this regard, we co-sponsored and co-organised an [International Dam Removal workshop in Lisbon](#), Portugal where we presented the European Green Deal policy opportunities for dam removal and [announced the winner](#) of the Dam Removal Award. We moderated the international webinar [Removing “Road Dams” in Europe](#) and the [Dam Removal Café](#) webinar featuring live connections from barrier removal sites and interviews. Similarly, we participated in the [Free Flow Webinar](#) as part of the International River Symposium to showcase the importance of free-flowing rivers among practitioners, civil society, and policy makers and focus on how dam removal can be understood and applied.

On advocacy towards the recognition of “sponges” as essential Natural Water Retention Measures to address floods and droughts, we remained working closely with WWF Netherlands and Bureau Strooming to turn our existing knowledge into action on the ground and position us for longer-term leadership.

What is more, we delivered a keynote address during the Society of Ecological Restoration Europe conference in Alicante, Spain and a presentation during the Europe-Wide Flagship Conference on Climate Change Adaptation “Designing climate resilient landscapes” hosted by the EU Presidency of Czechia. This last intervention led to the inclusion of natural sponges in the Prague Appeal. Alongside these opportunities, we presented the natural sponges to the International Meuse Commission and during a webinar organized by JRC on nature-based solutions for climate and water pollution mitigation in agricultural regions.



Free Flow seminar



To increase public support for healthy European rivers, an important milestone in 2022 was the organization of the [3rd European Rivers Summit](#) in Brussels, with more than 50 speakers and 180 participants from more than 30 European countries. It featured a River Film Festival which included the premiere of the [documentary #DamBusters](#).

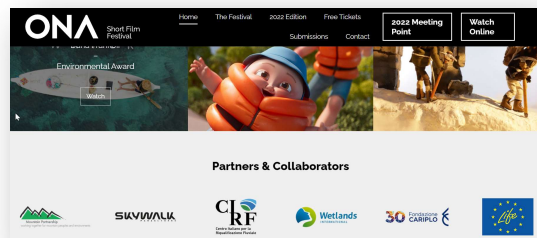
Work with members

In 2022, MAVA Foundation closed its doors. It was a year of reflection and opportunities that paved the way to strengthening our work in the Mediterranean region with our member Tour du Valat and IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN Med). We met with different MAVA beneficiaries during the year: during the Donors' Fair organized by MAVA in Tunis, in Malaga with IUCN Med and Tour du Valat to plan for the future of the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands, and at MAVA's final workshop in Tepelenë.



With our member the Italian Centre for River Restoration (CIRF), we kept participating in the meetings and consultations of the Strategic Coordination Group within the WFD Common Implementation Strategy (CIS). We joined the Floods and ECOSTAT working groups besides the WFD CIS meetings.

Moreover, we co-organised with CIRF a free-flowing rivers workshop at the IS Rivers Conference in Lyon, France and supported a freshwater award at the ONA Short Film Festival in Venice. With CIRF too, we developed and launched a [new website](#) on river connectivity to draw attention to the importance of free-flowing rivers.





In Spain, we supported our member the Iberian Centre for River Restoration (CIREF) with the organisation of an in-person geomorphology course to help inform the better implementation of the WFD and 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and the celebration of World Fish Migration Day.

With the Sustainable Eel Group, we actively engaged with the European Commission and stakeholders for better implementation of the European Eel Regulation and integration with EU Green Deal policies. In relation to this, we delivered a presentation assessing the need for better integration of different freshwater related policies during an [event](#) at the European Parliament “Eel Deal 2030” hosted by to the Members of the European Parliament Annie Schreijer-Pierik and attended by 50 people.



Peatlands

As in previous years, the analysis of legislative proposals, creating advocacy materials and engaging with EU stakeholders through events was a standing action to ensure that peatlands are rightly placed in key EU laws and initiatives. Among others, we worked on the Commission's proposal for a revised LULUCF regulation, sending feedback on the different amendments for the revision and voting recommendations to Members of the European Parliament. Besides this, we contributed to the [public consultation](#) for a Soil Health Law, calling for higher ambition to protect and restore peatlands and published a [reaction](#) to the proposal for a regulation to certify carbon removals.



We [welcomed](#) the recognition of paludiculture as a farming practice in the Commission's proposal for a Nature Restoration Regulation and contributed to the 2022 EU Green Week with a series of awareness-raising initiatives on our social media and the organisation of a [quiz](#) on paludiculture.

To provide an overview of some of the facts and figures related to peatlands in Europe, and how to make the draft Nature Restoration Regulation work better for these valuable ecosystems, we developed a [Peatlands factsheet](#) together with the EHF.

A new policy dossier for us in 2022 was the Commission's proposal for a Carbon Removal Certification Framework. We were actively involved in different meetings sharing Wetlands International's position paper on voluntary carbon markets and responded to the European Commission's call for evidence and public consultation on EU rules for certifying carbon removals in a [joint statement](#) with Rewilding Europe.

Furthermore, we were involved in establishing the European Peatlands Initiative (EPI), led by the Irish government. We contributed to different stakeholders engagement activities and to an exploratory study. These lead to the production of an EPI [report](#) that identifies the emerging needs for a government-supported network for peatlands across Europe through engagement with multiple Irish and international stakeholder groups.

In autumn, we gathered together partners from the Interreg project PEAT CARE and the Horizon project WaterLANDS in Wetlands International Europe’s premises in Brussels in a meeting called “For Peat’s Sake: Strengthening Peatlands Targets”. The meeting ended with a high level policy event at the European Parliament hosted by the Member of the European Parliament Jutta Paulus. We also took part in several discussions with Cesar Luena, rapporteur for the Nature Restoration Regulation, the Swedish Permanent Representative and people from the Commission’s DG ENVI and AGRI presenting our demands for peatlands restoration.



Work with members



With our member Michael Succow Foundation, we co-organised a five-day paludiculture [study trip](#) to peatland rich federal states in northern Germany, attended by 50 international stakeholders from 11 different EU countries to promote and build knowledge on paludiculture and its multiple benefits as well as understand the environmental damage of drainage-based peatland utilisation to nature and the climate. A second field visit was co-organised, attended by Members of the European Parliament and government officials.

Together with our member CMok, we organised an online workshop [Dos and Don’ts of voluntary carbon schemes](#) destined to inform about the latest EU and national developments on carbon farming’s main remuneration income: voluntary carbon schemes.

As members of the Policy Task Force for Mediterranean Wetlands within the MAVA Foundation project “Communicating and advocating to reduce water abstraction and detrimental coastal development in Mediterranean coastal wetlands”, together with MedWet, BirdLife Europe, Tour du Valat and WWF Spain, we produced a policy brief on “Mediterranean wetlands in the EU Nature Restoration Law” that was presented to the Commission during a [lunch seminar](#). We invited our member Fundación Global to join and deliver a presentation on “Mediterranean wetlands management and restoration as carbon sinks” as part of the LIFE Wetlands4Climate project they are leading.

Biodiversity

This year again, we coordinated the African-Eurasian Waterbird Census and made population size and trend information available for decision-makers and stakeholders via different publications like the [annual IWC count totals](#) online report, the [annual EU Multispecies Trends online report](#), the [East Atlantic Flyway Report 2020](#) with Sovon and the [annual IWC newsletter](#).



8th Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.

In addition, we organized the annual meeting of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership Strategic Working Group, the meeting of the [European national IWC coordinators](#) at the European Birds Census Council’s “Bird Numbers 2022” conference and an [online meeting of the African national IWC coordinators](#).

Our attendance to the European Birds Census Council board meetings and EU Expert Group meetings on reporting under the EU Nature Directives was likewise of relevance for our waterbirds conservation work.

Similarly, we engaged in international species recovery and management to support the Birds Directive through our participation in joint meetings of the AEWA International Species Working Groups (ISWG), the AEWA ISWG Task Force meetings and the [7th meeting of the European Goose Management Platform](#).

We promoted the conservation of migratory waterbirds beyond the EU to complement the achievements of the Birds Directive with our active contribution during the 8th AEWA MOP in Budapest through the drafting of different resolutions and meeting documents besides our presentation of the AEWA Conservation Status Report. What is more, we had a great opportunity to organise a webinar “Future



International Waterbird Census coordinators meeting

BirdScenarios: The impact of climate change on our bird conservation policies” and a networking event on the conservation of migratory freshwater fishes with the Commission’s Nature Unit.



With Commonland and Landscape Finance Lab, we organised a workshop in Brussels in April with nearly 30 different organisations including representatives of the Commission that led to the launch of a [set of Recommendations](#) at UNFCCC COP27 on how landscape-scale restoration can help to achieve the EU Green Deal’s objectives. A case study by Fundación Global Nature was included in this report.

Finally, of importance was the launch of the Trans European Swimways Network and programme. To achieve this, we organized and facilitated an online European



Launch of the Trans European Swimways Network

Swimways workshop to introduce the network, and collaboratively worked on the [first Trans-European Swimways Programme](#).

Work with members

Our work to reduce lead poisoning of wild birds in Europe was sustained with our member the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. We worked with Ruth Cromie, leading expert on the issue of lead poisoning to submit information to the European Chemicals Agency and coordinate a campaign on banning lead in gunshot and fishing tackle in the EU.

We supported the organisation by our member the Sustainable Eel Group of a [restocking field trip](#) to the Netherlands attended by 10 officials from Brussels.

With our members CIREF and Fundación Global Nature, we contributed to a letter signed by 30 European environmental NGOs to the European Parliament calling for action against the threats to wetlands in Doñana National Park in violation of the WFD, and warning about potential threats to other Spanish wetlands.

We sponsored the organisation of a [symposium on restoring coastal habitats in Europe](#) with our member the Zoological Society of London to promote the importance of ecological connectivity in the context of the EU Regulation on Nature Restoration and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

With our member Fundación Global Nature, we co-organised and facilitated an online Aquatic Warbler Conservation meeting that hosted 40 experts from 25

different organisations to develop a project plan to conserve and restore a site network for the aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) around Europe as a first step towards a trans-European conservation network.

A key mission during 2022 was influencing the EU’s proposal for a Nature Restoration Regulation. We started our work on this topic by pushing for the publication of the proposal, which had been delayed. Once published, we responded to the [Commission consultation](#) on the proposed Nature Restoration Regulation, recommending changes to strengthen wetland-related targets and drafted our internal

analysis and [position](#) on the draft law. We supported several joint positions with the policy task force of the MAVA [Mediterranean Coastal Wetlands](#) project, [Living Rivers Europe](#) and our member [Michael Succow Foundation](#).

Our advocacy activities were combined with active sharing of our views during events and meetings. Some examples are the different meetings we organised with representatives of the European Commission and parliament and the co-organisation of an event in the Parliament for a legally binding free flowing rivers target with the Member of the European Parliament Cesar Luena, the rapporteur for the Nature Restoration Regulation.

EU's impact on wetlands around the world

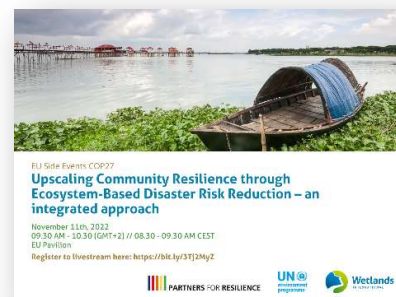
In our efforts to embed wetlands for sustainable development into the EU's global leadership, we advocated for the inclusion of wetlands in Multiannual Indicative Programmes and Annual Action Plans which successfully ended with the inclusion of wetlands in several of these documents.

Networking with EU delegations and Team Europe partners on wetlands' importance for the planetary goal of the EU Consensus on Development remained a constant besides our facilitation role to strengthen communication between Wetlands International network offices and EU external related institutions. Thanks to this work, we were invited to different events and meetings and to take part in two missions: on blue economy in Tanzania and on Copernicus in Argentina. Additionally, we produced a [briefing](#) on the EU's priorities for Africa that will be shared with EU delegations in 2023 and used by our regional colleagues as a guidance document for advocacy.



Our growing engagement with EPLO was highly relevant to promote the inclusion of wetlands as sources for stability, human peace and security in relevant EU policies and planning. We were panellists in the [event](#) "The EU, climate change and conflict: Conflict sensitivity as an entry point for integrated engagement" as part of the Stockholm Peace and Development Forum and facilitated the participation of Wetlands International's Director for Eastern Africa in the policy [meeting](#) of the Civil Society Dialogue Network on "Water, Peace and Conflict: Exchanging on opportunities and best practices". This work was complemented with our active participation in events like "Enhancing Water Security for Better Resilience to Climate Threats" organized in partnership with the French Presidency of the EU and "[Building resilience for people through sustainable food systems, tackling climate and environmental crises, and humanitarian action](#)" at the Europe-Africa Commission.

On wetland solutions for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, we organized sessions during the UNFCCC COP27 and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction focusing on the results of the EU-funded project "[Upscaling community resilience through Eco-DRR](#)" of which Wetlands International is a partner and on "[Embedding Risk in Investment Decisions](#)". Likewise, we stressed the role of healthy wetlands as natural buffers against disasters and as precious ecosystems to strengthen community to the EU Commissioners ahead of the EU- Africa Commission to Commission meeting in November.



Our advocacy efforts for a greener EU footprint on wetlands around the world revolved around the Commission’s proposal for a Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products and public consultation on Critical Raw Materials ([here](#) our reply). During the negotiations in the European Parliament and during the trialogue, we signed two NGO [statements](#) asking for the inclusion of wetlands in the Regulation. We also joined forces with the Environmental Justice Foundation and drafted amendments to be tabled for the plenary and coordinated closely with Wetlands International’s offices in Latin America.



We continued supporting Wetlands International’s programme "Save the High Andes Wetlands" led by Wetlands International’s office in Argentina to advocate for more sustainable lithium mining practices in the EU which included the organisation, during the European Development Days, of the event “[Lithium Triangle in Latin America and High Andean Wetlands](#)”¹

Functioning and governance

The Board

The general management of Wetlands International Europe has been entrusted to its Board members. Board members are unremunerated.

In 2022, the Board met several times to approve the 2022 Annual Report and Accounts, Forecast Budget 2023, succession of Board members and planning for the General Members Meeting. Other relevant topics discussed related to general management of the Secretariat and approval of new member applications.



General Members Meeting 2022

¹ Article written by Fred Pierce on this issue after the event <https://e360.yale.edu/features/lithium-mining-water-andes-argentina>

2022 composition of the Board²:

Member Organisation	Representative	Position on Board
Wetlands International	Jane Madgwick	Chair
Michael Succow Foundation	Jan Peters	Vice-Chair
Fundación Global Nature	Eduardo de Miguel	Secretary
Zoological Society of London	Alison Debney	Treasurer

The Chair of the Board, Jane Madgwick left per 1 May 2023. The election of a new Chair has not been formalized yet at the time of signing the Management report. Therefore, the Vice-chair, Jan Peters co-signed for this report.

Our members

Wetlands International Europe's governance is steered by its members who guide the Secretariat's work and strategic direction.

On a yearly basis, our members gather for the General Members Meeting to discuss and assess the Association's progress and identify new lines of action for the future. In 2022, the General Members Meeting for 2021 took place in January and the General Members Meeting for 2022 in November.

Besides this yearly event, the Wetlands International Europe Secretariat's team nourishes the relation with members on a bilateral basis or through the organisation of sessions with a group of members on specific issues. In 2022, thematic discussions focused on topical issues such as the Nature Restoration Regulation and restoration targets, the establishment of the Trans-European Swimways Network and Carbon Markets.

List of Wetlands International Europe's members:

Since	Country	Name	Abbreviation
2013	Spain	Centro Ibérico de Restauración Fluvial	CIREF
2013	Poland	Centrum Ochrony Mokradel	CMok
2013	UK	The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust	WWT
2013	UK	Zoological Society of London	ZSL
2013	UK	Sustainable Eel Group	SEG
2013	France	Fondation Tour du Valat	TdV
2015	Italy	Centro Italiano per la Riqualificazione Fluviale	CIRF
2013	Germany	EuroNatur	EuroNatur
2019	Germany	Michael Succow Foundation	MSF
2019	Spain	Fundación Global Nature	FGN
2022	Lithuania	Pelkių atkūrimo ir apsaugos fondas	

² Note: Board members are not remunerated for their work.

The Secretariat

All Wetlands International Europe's operations are possible thanks to the work carried out by the Secretariat made by a team of 13 people and different interns, associated experts and consultants.

New recruitments took place in 2022 to reinforce the different programmes (Communications Officer, Peatlands Policy Officer, Swimways Coordinator, Peatlands Project Manager, Financial Controller).

The European Programme Manager has been leading the executive management and operations of the European office in close cooperation with the wider network organisation and the European Association members thanks to a Power of Attorney signed by the Executive Board. She coordinates the development and implementation of the project portfolio of the European office to deliver significant results towards the Wetlands International 2020-2030 Strategic Intent.

With a growing portfolio and growing team, the Board identified the need for a strategic position in the Association's Secretariat and a new position for a Director was created and a vacancy published in 2022. A new Director should be in place in 2023.

Summary of finance and resourcing

Since 2016, Wetlands International Europe has been granted a LIFE NGO Operating Grant under the EU's LIFE Programme. This grant has co-financed the running costs of the Association. In 2022, following the application to conclude a Specific Grant Agreement (SGA), we signed a new agreement.

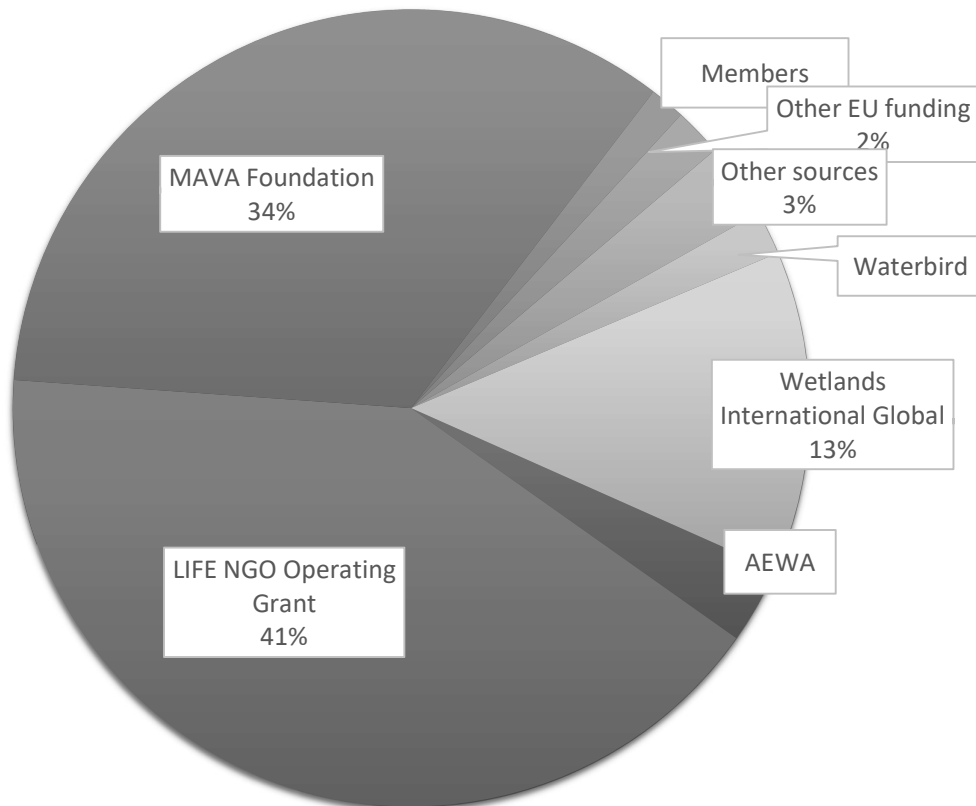
In 2022, all five MAVA Foundation projects concluded and three Horizon projects started: [ALFAwetlands](#), [WET HORIZONS](#) and [REWET](#).

In 2022, we submitted different project applications to public donors such as the European Commission and private donors on topics such as sponges, swimways and waterbirds.

As reflected in the graphic below, in 2022, the main sources of funding came from the LIFE NGO Operating Grant, MAVA Foundation and Wetlands International Foundation.

The total income in 2022 was € 1.326.656 of which €172.855 came from the Wetlands International Foundation. See pie chart below. The total expenses amounted to € 1.252.976. As a result, the year ended with a positive result of €73.680.

2022 Funding sources



Actuals and Budget 2022

In the table below the actuals 2022 are compared with the budget 2022:

	Actuals (€)	Budget (€)	Deviation (€)
Income			
Subsidies	574.113	599.456	-
Other income	<u>752.543</u>	<u>512.759</u>	<u>239.784</u>
	1.326.656	1.112.215	214.441
Expenses			
Staff costs	678.670	708.767	-30.097
Direct project costs	492.700	319.662	173.038
Housing costs	21.057	15.000	6.057
General costs	59.107	67.100	7.993
Depreciation	<u>1.442</u>	<u>1.686</u>	<u>-244</u>
	1.252.976	1.112.215	140.761
Result	<u><u>73.680</u></u>	<u><u>0</u></u>	<u><u>73.680</u></u>

Result

The result is €73.680 higher than foreseen.

Income

Income is 19% higher than budgeted. The main reason for this are the finalisation of the 5 MAVA projects in 2022. The contribution of the Life Operating grant for 2022 was only 1% lower than budgeted.

Expenses

The overall expenses increased with a total of € 140.761 against the budget. The main increase took place in the direct project cost. This has mainly to do with the finalisation of the MAVA projects as mentioned earlier. Also, in 2022 most of the Covid 19 restrictions were lifted which made it possible to travel and organise events.

Considerations looking ahead

The members of Wetlands International Europe are the pivotal element of the Association. 2022 was the year of realization that now is the time to bring more members to the network and become more influential without losing sight of our priority to work more effectively together. Additionally, small steps were taken towards strengthening engagement with the European members of Wetlands International Global, and 2023 should represent a tipping point for integration of these members into our strategy and annual plans.

The European Commission's Nature Restoration Regulation proposal and the negotiations in the European Parliament and European Council have served us as a good example of what joint collaboration should mean between the members of Wetlands International Europe and the Secretariat. During the General Members Meetings, a call for a protocol to ensure higher visibility of members and for advocacy and communication plans was made to the Secretariat as a way to increase the value of our political calls. Moreover, joint Resource Development has remained as an outstanding issue that we will address by developing a more systematic and transparent Resource Development process.

Nothing has changed in our position to keep working and strategizing in partnership and alliances as it keeps bringing us new opportunities to catalyse new initiatives and absorb additional funding. For this reason, we will continue nurturing our allies and will build new ones mainly on peatlands, swimways and "sponges" protection and conservation.

We saw MAVA Foundation closing its doors this year which opened new opportunities for exploration in the Mediterranean region. With our new role as co-coordinator of the Mediterranean Alliance for Wetlands, we will persevere in finding our niche in the Mediterranean region together with our member Tour du Valat and key stakeholders.

Wetlands International network has recognised the importance of Wetlands International Europe's programme on European External Action and we now look ahead with a stronger ambition to integrate this programme in the Global Strategy of Wetlands International. If we meet this goal, a strengthened relation between Wetlands International network offices and EU Institutions would lead to the inclusion of wetland protection and recovery into Europe's external agenda for development and adaptation to climate change.

The recruitment of the new Director to help balance and complement the internal organisation of the Association with its strategic direction was delayed to 2023. With this position, the awaited support to introduce new sourcing of unrestricted funding, which was always identified as a challenge, will finally start happening.

Finally, in terms of fundraising, drafting and consolidating our different programmes will stay as a priority and as the so much needed needle in the compass to prioritize fundraising on strategic priorities.

Of course, we will do all this in close collaboration with our members.

On behalf of Wetlands International – European Association:



Jan Peters
Vice-chair of the Board

Yurena Lorenzo de Quintana
European Programme Manager

Annual Accounts Wetlands International - European Association 2022

Balance sheet as per 31 December

(in Euros)

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
ASSETS		
Tangible fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets (1)	6.967	3.503
Current assets		
Debtors and other receivables (2)	241.490	147.969
Cash and Banks (3)	<u>37.232</u>	<u>139.504</u>
	278.722	287.473
Total assets	<u><u>285.689</u></u>	<u><u>290.976</u></u>
LIABILITIES		
Reserves and funds		
Continuity reserve (4)	81.950	8.270
Short term Liabilities		
Creditors (5)	10.885	16.964
Taxes and social security (6)	33.594	9.602
Other short terms liabilities (7)	<u>159.260</u>	<u>256.140</u>
	203.739	282.706
Total liabilities	<u><u>285.689</u></u>	<u><u>290.976</u></u>

Statement of Income and Expenditure Wetlands International - European Association 2022

(in Euro's)

	2022	Budget 2022	2021
Income			
Subsidies (8)	574.113	599.456	399.164
Other income (9)	752.543	512.759	385.591
	<u>1.326.656</u>	<u>1.112.215</u>	<u>784.755</u>
Expenses			
Staff costs (10)	678.670	708.767	406.942
Direct project costs (11)	492.700	319.662	302.541
Housing costs (12)	21.057	15.000	12.280
General costs (13)	59.107	67.100	60.990
Depreciation (14)	1.442	1.686	866
	<u>1.252.976</u>	<u>1.112.215</u>	<u>783.619</u>
Result	<u>73.680</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1.136</u>
Result appropriation			
Decrease / Increase continuity reserve	73.680	0	1.136
	<u>73.680</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1.136</u>

Cashflow Statement

(in Euros)

	2022	2021
Cash flow from operating activities		
Result	73.680	1.136
Depreciation	1.442	866
Cash flow	<u>75.122</u>	<u>2.002</u>
Changes in work capital		
- Change in receivables	-93.521	-32.274
- Change in short-term debts	<u>-78.967</u>	<u>64.549</u>
	-172.488	32.275
Changes in subsidy fixed assets	0	0
Cash flow from operating activities	<u>-97.366</u>	<u>34.277</u>
Cash flow from investing activities		
Investments in fixed assets	<u>-4.906</u>	<u>-3.579</u>
Cash flow from investing activities	-4.906	-3.579
Change in cash & banks	<u><u>-102.272</u></u>	<u><u>30.698</u></u>
Cash & banks		
- as per 1st January	139.504	108.806
- as per 31st December	<u>37.232</u>	<u>139.504</u>
Change in cash & banks	<u><u>-102.272</u></u>	<u><u>30.698</u></u>

General accounting principles

Wetlands International - European Association is established on 25 September 2013 and is registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce with no. 58891641.

Since 2018 Wetlands International - European Association has the ANBI status

The financial statements are prepared according to the following principles:

The annual accounts 2022 have been drawn up in accordance with Dutch Accounting Guidelines.

Valuation of assets and liabilities and determination of the result are calculated under historical cost convention. Unless presented otherwise at the relevant principle for the specific item, assets and liabilities are valued at nominal value.

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded using the rate at the time of the transaction. Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currency are converted at the exchange rate at the year-end.

Income and expenses are accounted for on accrual basis. Profit is only included when realized on the balance sheet date. Losses originating before the end of the financial year are taken into account if they have become known before preparation of the financial statements. Cash and bank balances are freely disposable, unless stated otherwise.

The financial year runs from January 1st to December 31st.

Currency

All amounts are expressed in Euro.

Principles of valuation of assets and liabilities

Tangible Fixed assets

Tangible Fixed assets are presented at cost less accumulated depreciation and, if applicable, less impairments in value. Depreciation is based on the estimated useful life of 3-5 years and calculated as a fixed percentage of cost, taking into account any residual value. Depreciation is applied from the date an asset comes into use.

Projects in progress

Projects in progress started before 31 December 2022 and continue into the next financial year.

Project grants are generally determined after the end of the project, upon submission of a report on the use of the funds made available. Insofar the received tranches from donor exceed the costs spent on the project, this surplus is recognised as a grant liability and presented under "Projects to be executed", as part of the short term debts. If the costs spent exceed the grants received, the difference is recognised as a claim on the donor and presented under "Project funds to be received", as part of the short term receivables. In valuing the costs spent on projects, account is taken of whether or not the costs are eligible and the maximum amount of the grant.

Taxes

The tax authorities decided that the organization is not subject to VAT tax and company tax.

Principles of determination of results

Income and expenses are accounted for in the profit and loss account at the time of supply of the relevant goods or services. Results are determined by the difference between income and expenses concerning the financial year.

Principles of determination of the Cash Flow

The cash flow is drawn up based on the indirect method.

Other off-balance sheet assets and liabilities

The European Commission granted us a LIFE NGO Operating Grant "Framework Partnership Agreement" for a three-year period 2022-2024, with only an indicative budget. For each year a separate agreement is signed.

Wetlands International European Association has a rental agreement for the office in Brussel till the end of September 2024.

Explanatory Notes to the Balance sheet

(in Euros)

(1) Tangible fixed assets	ICT Hardware	Furniture	Total
Balance 1st January			
Purchase value	9.155	0	9.155
Accumulated depreciation	5.652	0	5.652
Book value 1st January	<u>3.503</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3.503</u>
Investments	4.138	768	4.906
Desinvestments Purchase value	0	0	0
Desinvestmenst Accumulated depreciation	0	0	0
Depreciation	1.378	64	1.442
Balance 31st December			
Purchase value	13.293	768	14.061
Accumulated depreciation	7.030	64	7.094
Book value 31 December	<u>6.263</u>	<u>704</u>	<u>6.967</u>

Fixed assets financed by projects and in use by Wetlands International staff are activated.
The counter value of these assets is accounted for under 'subsidized fixed assets' which are decreased in line with the depreciation of the assets.

(2) Debtors and other receivables	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Debtors	23.641	200
Other donor funds	199.037	125.069
Current Account WI Foundation	0	3.553
Prepayments	15.915	19.078
Rent Deposit	1.398	0
Staff advances	1.500	69
	<u>241.490</u>	<u>147.969</u>

Contributions outstanding for more than 1 year are amortized
For contributions outstanding 2 years or more, the policy is maintained to institute a provision for 100% because in practise it is impossible for the Association to enforce such payments.

(3) Cash & banks	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
ABN AMRO Current account EUR	37.232	139.504
	<u>37.232</u>	<u>139.504</u>

All liquidities are available on demand

(4) Continuity reserve	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Balance 1 January	8.270	7.134
Result appropriation	73.680	1.136
Balance 31 December	<u>81.950</u>	<u>8.270</u>

The result in the Association's annual account is added to the continuity reserve, in accordance with the organisation's reserves policy.

(5) Creditors	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Creditors	10.885	16.964
	<u>10.885</u>	<u>16.964</u>

(6) Taxes and social security	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Tax & Social costs on salaries	33.285	9.531
Pension	309	71
	<u>33.594</u>	<u>9.602</u>

(7) Other short term liabilities	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Current Account WI Foundation	48.236	0
Projects to be executed	59.663	182.714
Creditors Subcontractors commitments	7.437	41.771
Holiday reserve	15.329	12.058
Reserve holiday hours outstanding	9.904	4.895
Auditors	15.097	12.300
Other	3.594	2.402
	<u>159.260</u>	<u>256.140</u>

Subcontractor commitments are contracted amounts due to subcontractors for the execution of projects.

Explanatory Notes to the Statement of Income and Expenditure

(in Euros)

(8) Subsidies	2022	Budget 2022	2021
European Commission Operating Grant	548.135	552.627	358.788
European Commission Horizon 2020	25.978	46.829	40.376
	<u>574.113</u>	<u>599.456</u>	<u>399.164</u>

The LIFE Operating Grant financial report for the year 2021 has been submitted and approved by the EC. For 2022, the financial report has been submitted (March 2023), but has not yet been approved.

(9) Other income	2022	Budget 2022	2021
Project income from donors/partners	511.494	269.874	142.780
Other sources of co-financing	209.820	213.482	163.864
Project income co-funding by members	17.463	22.550	36.493
Project income other revenues	12.166	0	14.753
Membership fees	1.600	1.700	1.700
Extraordinary profit and losses	0	5.153	26.001
	<u>752.543</u>	<u>512.759</u>	<u>385.591</u>

The contribution by Foundation Wetlands International in 2022 is € 0. The contribution in 2021 was € 26,000 and is classified under extraordinary profit and losses.

(10) Staff costs	2022	Budget 2022	2021
Wages & salaries	523.808	0	325.686
Social security costs	97.359	0	57.314
Pension costs	23.371	0	9.030
	<u>644.538</u>	<u>694.967</u>	<u>392.030</u>
Other personnel costs	34.133	13.800	14.912
Total staff costs	<u>678.670</u>	<u>708.767</u>	<u>406.942</u>

(11) Direct project costs	2022	Budget 2022	2021
Subcontracting	278.306	298.262	239.023
Travel costs general	90.654		19.428
General Publication costs	6.047		22.473
Meetings/workshops	2.512		0
Events	51.453		370
Conference fees	847	6.550	968
ICT costs	6.842	6.050	6.372
Project audit costs	8.800	8.800	8.800
Other project running costs	47.238		5.107
	<u>492.700</u>	<u>319.662</u>	<u>302.541</u>

(12) Housing costs	2022	Budget 2022	2021
Rent	21.057	15.000	12.280
	<u>21.057</u>	<u>15.000</u>	<u>12.280</u>

(13) General costs	2022	Budget 2022	2021
General Publication costs	29	0	1.973
Office costs	39.449	43.500	38.636
Travel costs	49	900	561
Auditors	6.000	6.000	3.189
Banking costs	573	750	379
Subscription service providers	7.902	9.450	10.905
Others	5.105	6.500	5.347
	<u>59.107</u>	<u>67.100</u>	<u>60.990</u>

(14) Depreciation costs	2022	Budget 2022	2021
ICT Hard- & Software	1.378	1.686	866
Furniture	64	0	0
	<u>1.442</u>	<u>1.686</u>	<u>866</u>

Budget 2023 Wetlands International - European Association

On **20 December 2022** the following budget for 2023 was approved by the General Members Meeting. For comparison reasons the actuals 2022 have been added.

(in Euro's)

	Budget 2023	Actuals 2022
Income		
Subsidies	812.264	574.113
Other income	598.348	752.543
	<u>1.410.612</u>	<u>1.326.656</u>
Expenses		
Staf costs	1.024.938	678.670
Direct project costs	242.104	492.700
Housing costs	29.283	21.057
General costs	111.749	59.107
Depreciation	2.538	1.442
	<u>1.410.612</u>	<u>1.252.976</u>
Result	<u>0</u>	<u>73.680</u>

Result appropriation	Budget 2023	Actuals 2022
Decrease / Increase continuity reserve	0	73.680
	<u>0</u>	<u>73.680</u>



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To: the management of Wetlands International European Association.

A. Report on the audit of the financial statements 2022 included in the annual report

Our opinion

We have audited the financial statements 2022 of Wetlands International European Association based in Ede.

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Wetlands International European Association as at 31 December 2022 and of its result for 2022 in accordance with Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code.

The financial statements comprise:

1. the balance sheet as at 31 December 2022;
2. the profit and loss account over 2022; and
3. the notes comprising a summary of the accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Basis for our opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Dutch law, including the Dutch Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report.

We are independent of Wetlands International European Association in accordance with the Verordening inzake de onafhankelijkheid van accountants bij assurance-opdrachten (ViO, Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, a regulation with respect to independence) and other relevant independence regulations in the Netherlands. Furthermore we have complied with the Verordening gedrags- en beroepsregels accountants (VGBA, Dutch Code of Ethics).

We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

B. Report on the other information included in the annual report

In addition to the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon, the annual report contains other information that consists of:

- the management board's report;
- other information as required by Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code.

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Based on the following procedures performed, we conclude that the other information:

- is consistent with the financial statements and does not contain material misstatements;
- contains the information as required by Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code.

We have read the other information. Based on our knowledge and understanding obtained through our audit of the financial statements or otherwise, we have considered whether the other information contains material misstatements.

By performing these procedures, we comply with the requirements of Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code and the Dutch Standard 720. The scope of the procedures performed is substantially less than the scope of those performed in our audit of the financial statements.

Management is responsible for the preparation of the management board's report in accordance with Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code and other information as required by Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code.

C. Description of responsibilities regarding the financial statements

Responsibilities of management for the financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code. Furthermore, management is responsible for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

As part of the preparation of the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern. Based on the financial reporting framework mentioned, management should prepare the financial statements using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Management should disclose events and circumstances that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern in the financial statements.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objective is to plan and perform the audit assignment in a manner that allows us to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence for our opinion.

Our audit has been performed with a high, but not absolute, level of assurance, which means we may not detect all material errors and fraud during our audit.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. The materiality affects the nature, timing and extent of our audit procedures and the evaluation of the effect of identified misstatements on our opinion.

We have exercised professional judgement and have maintained professional skepticism throughout the audit, in accordance with Dutch Standards on Auditing, ethical requirements and independence requirements. Our audit included e.g.:

- identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, designing and performing audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtaining an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the company's internal control;
- evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management;
- concluding on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting, and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause a company to cease to continue as a going concern;
- evaluating the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures; and
- evaluating whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant findings in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Utrecht , 22 June 2022

Bonants Accountancy & Advies

Signed on original
P.A.J.M. Bonants RA
Partner