



Three-Year Strategic Plan 2017-2019

Approved by the Supervisory Board of Rewilding Europe

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 29 November 2016

1. Corporate positioning

1.1. The initiative

Rewilding Europe is the first and only European-wide initiative that uses a unique and historical opportunity in Europe to advocate a vision for a wilder Europe. This is done through creating large areas of wild nature and abundant wildlife across our continent that become inspirational showcases in this process, working in support of both Europe's nature and people.

Historic opportunity

Rewilding Europe was initiated and founded in 2011 by a number of individuals that want to take advantage of a historic opportunity that is unfolding in Europe, caused by:

- Large scale land abandonment in rural areas in Europe (both in agricultural and in forested areas), where associated socio-economic problems can be turned into new opportunities,
- A substantial comeback of a number of iconic and keystone wildlife species, offering great opportunities for Europeans to enjoy and benefit from this wildlife resurgence,
- An increasing demand – alongside increasing urbanisation – for urban people who want to go out and experience wild nature and see wildlife, combined with an increasing tolerance towards wild animals,
- A more favourable European policy towards wildlife, wilderness and rewilding, in particular related to the recently approved wilderness resolution and new biodiversity strategy for Europe, the existence of the Natura 2000 Network, the Emerald Network and the Habitat and Bird Directives,
- The opportunity rewilding provides as a cost-effective way to manage Natura 2000 areas – Europe's main network of protected areas.

Vision

Wild nature¹ is recognised as an important and inherent aspect of Europe's natural and cultural heritage and as an essential element of a modern, prosperous, and healthy European society in the 21st century.

Mission

Rewilding Europe wants to *make Europe a wilder place, with much more space for wildlife, wild nature and natural processes*, to bring back the variety of life for us all to enjoy and to explore new ways for people to earn a fair living from the wild.

How do we achieve this

Rewilding Europe brings *a new conservation vision for Europe*, with wild nature and natural processes as key elements, where rewilding is applicable to any type of landscape or level of protection. Treating nature as something that is fully capable of taking care of itself, if given the opportunity to do so. This concept could become the main management principle for many natural areas in the future.

Rewilding Europe focuses on *turning the problems caused by the on-going, large-scale land abandonment into opportunities* for humans and nature, providing a viable business case for wild

¹ In this document, 'wild nature' or 'wilderness' is defined as "large landscapes that are governed by essential natural processes, which create the necessary space for all of our original animals and plants, including man".

nature in Europe. Several areas have the potential to become world-class nature tourist destinations, alongside the many other ways of reaping economic benefits from the wild.

Rewilding Europe aims to rewild at least one million hectares of land by 2022², creating ten magnificent wildlife and wild areas of international quality, that will also work as example for a new, competitive, sustainable rural economy. They will serve as inspirational examples for what can also be achieved elsewhere.

In these areas, Rewilding Europe wants to *allow natural processes to play a vital role* in shaping our landscapes and ecosystems. Among such natural processes are flooding (including erosion and sedimentation), weather conditions (including storms, avalanches and wind-shaped sand dunes), natural calamities (such as natural fires and disease), natural grazing (the role of herbivores of all kinds in creating vegetation dynamics), predation (the impact of carnivores on their prey species and thereby the vegetation), the role of scavenging, amongst many others.

Rewilding Europe recognizes the *crucially important ecological role of the large carnivores*, as well as smaller predators, raptors and scavengers. The brown bear, the wolf, the lynx, the Iberian lynx, the wolverine and many other carnivores are necessary for the natural functioning of the ecosystems they live in.

Rewilding Europe recognizes *natural grazing as one of the key ecological factors* for naturally open and half-open landscapes, upon which a large part of Europe's biodiversity is dependent. We want to allow our native herbivores to return again in significant, more natural numbers to the lands where they once belonged, where they can play their ecological role.

Rewilding Europe *emphasizes the joy and the value of wildness*, and takes active part in a mass communication effort to stimulate a greater sense of pride in the wild and to spread a vision of a wilder continent. It aims to do this by working with a broad range of media and partnerships to promote our natural heritage and showcase the opportunities for rewilding to many millions of Europeans.

1.2. Positioning in Europe

Rewilding Europe fulfils a unique position in the conservation scene in Europe: there is no other initiative that:

- Has developed a similar vision for a wilder Europe³, addressing the apparent historic opportunities as mentioned above,
- Addresses and pioneers rewilding as an additional conservation tool at this scale, combining rewilding, enterprise development and communication in an integrated way,
- Works on a mass communication initiative to talk about the rewilding of Europe, reaching out to many millions of Europeans,
- Includes business and enterprise development as an integrated part of its strategy and principles,

² A number of rewilding areas have started in 2012, others started in 2014 or 2015 (new areas) or will start in 2017 or later, so the end date of a 10-year period differs from area to area, potentially up to 2027 or later.

³ At WILD10, a Vision for a Wilder Europe was launched, signed by now 11 European conservation organizations, including Rewilding Europe. Most of the key elements of Rewilding Europe's vision are included in this vision.

- Emphasizes the importance of wildlife comeback and the role of apex species to conserve and sustain Europe's rich biodiversity of open and semi-open habitats,
- Explores the economic potential of wildlife watching and related nature-based tourism as an economic alternative for marginal, subsidised agricultural schemes,
- Is creating a wide range of partnerships with organisations to realise the vision at local, national and European level,
- Works to create a European rewilding movement through its 10 rewilding landscapes and the envisaged 100 members of the European Rewilding Network,
- Has initiated or is working to address policy related issues to rewilding at national and European scales,
- Is working to scale up rewilding through setting up new, supporting or cooperating with existing or rewilding initiatives (e.g. Britain, Scotland, Ukraine, Spain, France and others).

At a European scale, most related organisations that address rewilding and wilderness work together under the Wild Europe Initiative, a platform where Rewilding Europe is also participating. Members of this initiative are Large Herbivore Initiative, WWF, IUCN, European Centre for Nature Conservation, Eurosite, European Wilderness Society, Europarc, The European Nature Trust and others.

Most of these organisations are focusing their work on protection of existing wilderness areas and restoration of (near-) wilderness areas in Europe, mainly at a policy and lobbying level.

On a wider scale, Rewilding Europe became a member of the European Habitat Forum (EHF) in April 2015. This forum is a coalition of 25 conservation NGO's in Europe that work together to address policy issues related to conservation. Also, Rewilding Europe became a member of IUCN in 2016.

Rewilding Europe openly invites for collaboration with initiatives where this supports the Rewilding Europe vision and strategy. Rewilding Europe aims for working with 'partners making a difference', being very conscious about its own position. Rewilding Europe does not have the ambition of becoming a 'umbrella' organization overarching, replacing or competing other initiatives.

1.3. Initiating organizations

The four organizations that initiated Rewilding Europe are:

- *World Wide Fund for Nature* (WWF) – Netherlands
- *ARK Nature* – Netherlands
- *Wild Wonders of Europe* - United Kingdom
- *Conservation Capital* – United Kingdom

WWF, the World Wide Fund for Nature, is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations. It was conceived on the 29th April 1961. WWF is a global organization acting locally through a network of over 90 offices in over 40 countries around the world. On-the-ground conservation projects managed by these offices are active in more than 100 countries. In Europe, WWF has a number of offices that are involved in implementation work both at the policy and the field level. WWF Netherlands has taken a lead role over the past 10 years in supporting conservation initiatives all over Europe.

ARK Nature is an innovative, Dutch nature organisation founded in 1989, working to realize robust, spontaneous nature in different parts of Europe. In ARK's view, societal changes invariably lead to new opportunities for nature and landscapes. ARK encourages people to seize these opportunities, in the conviction that more room for nature will improve the quality of life, for people and for nature.

Wild Wonders of Europe, founded in 2008 is a pan European conservation photography initiative working to inspire the widest possible audience with an appreciation and understanding of Europe's biodiversity and the need for its protection.

The emotional power of striking imagery accompanied with engaging text forms the basis for a communication platform that uses multiple forms of media to connect with the public on a deep, emotional level.

Conservation Capital is a unique conservation organization in that it focuses exclusively on linking private sector business and investment finance with global biodiversity conservation. The Conservation Capital team consists of business people, lawyers, accountants and conservation managers who together have pioneered a range of innovative conservation business development techniques and are presently leading the creation of some of the world's first conservation business investment funds.

Rewilding Europe will continue to work in partnership with the initiating organisations in the years to come, and has recently reviewed and reformed these partnerships for a period of three years. New three-year partnership agreements have been signed with Wild Wonders of Europe and Conservation Capital in February 2015 (covering 2015-2017), while a new three-year partnership agreement was signed with ARK Nature early 2016. A specific partnership agreement is being discussed with WWF Netherlands for 2017 and beyond.

1.4. A working definition for rewilding

Rewilding Europe believes there is a need for a working definition for 'rewilding' as this is becoming a conservation approach that is used more and more in Europe. We also recognize that there might be differences in how 'rewilding' is defined and practiced in different places across the world. We have therefore developed a working definition that we believe is particularly suited to Europe's history, culture, and condition of landscapes.

We will use this definition for the vision and work of Rewilding Europe and encourage other organisations and initiatives to adopt it as much as possible.

A number of important annotations further clarify the definition for the European situation.

Working definition:

'Rewilding ensures natural processes and wild species to play a much more prominent role in the land- and seascapes, meaning that after initial support, nature is allowed to take more care of itself. Rewilding helps landscapes become wilder, whilst also providing opportunities for modern society to reconnect with such wilder places for the benefit of all life.'

Annotations:

- Rewilding represents a new appreciation of wilder landscapes, in which people understand the interdependent relationship between the health of wild nature and the health of human society, and act to strengthen this indispensable relationship.
- Rewilding creates a new understanding that life supporting European biodiversity is fundamentally important, and is best derived from natural processes and the habitats that are the result of those processes.
- Rewilding can occur in all types of land (and sea-) scapes, on a small and a large scale. While a formal protected status is not required, some form of it is often desirable to assure continued, long-term benefits of rewilding.
- In Europe, even our wildest landscapes are missing certain key natural processes and/or species, making even these areas important and “qualified” for rewilding.
- Rewilding is future-oriented, and works towards the return of natural processes and wildlife within our modern social context, creating new opportunities to link human activities to such wilder, natural landscapes.
- Rewilding often requires some initial supportive measures, to kick-start natural processes again, or to help wildlife species come back in more natural numbers, but always with the goal of less intervention after that point.
- Rewilding is a relative and progressive process, and can be understood as occurring on a ‘Scale of Wildness’, where the process is directed towards moving up on this scale.
- Rewilding is not geared to reach any certain human-defined ‘optimal situation’ or end state, not to only create ‘wilderness’ – but it is instead meant to support more natural dynamics that will result in landscapes, habitats and species interacting with each other, as characteristic for these landscapes with abiotic, biotic and social features that together create the particular ‘Sense of the Place’.
- Reintroductions and population reinforcements of flora and fauna are meant to restore ecosystem functions and processes, but in historically indigenous range of species.
- To restore ecosystem functions and natural processes, working with ‘ecological replacements’ (of extinct species) is also an option (cf. IUCN), however the main focus is on the native species, including those that may be locally extinct.

2. Our strategy

2.1. Short background

Conservation in Europe has long since been rather different from the rest of the world. As much of the wilderness was lost a long time ago, nature conservation focused on cultivated land, ancient farming systems and semi-natural, managed habitats, often depending on public subsidies and private engagement. This compensatory habitat approach has its value and certainly rescued many species from extinction, but an important element in conservation and biodiversity protection was left out: the preservation of wild nature, wilderness and natural processes. Europe is highly diverse in its landscapes, habitats, cultures and development. While we are still rapidly losing species and natural ecosystems through urbanisation, infrastructure development, industrialisation of agriculture, forestry and fishery – new conservation opportunities are emerging. Additionally, there is a growing understanding of the imperative for wilderness and the potential of rewilding.

We have, as a society, begun to recognise the need for wild land, to provide ecosystem services like clean water and air, as base-line scientific reference areas, for recreation and economic development, and last but not least, to refresh our human spirit and wellbeing. People understand that wilderness protection and rewilding are at the core of sustainability, and vital in handing over a healthy environment to coming generations and not limiting their choices. The comeback of species like wolves, beavers, vultures and white storks gives hope.

Initial approaches in rewilding have shown that European ecosystems have a high potential for regeneration, while existing wilderness benefits from strict protection. Europe now has the chance to catch up with the global approach, where conservation is intrinsically linked to wilderness protection and wild nature.

By changing our perspective from traditional nature conservation towards a more development oriented approach, the reference point for European nature changes too. A reference point that is no longer based in the past but in the future, towards novel landscapes that are governed by essential natural processes, which create the necessary space for all of our original animals and plants, including humans. Species that survived in agricultural landscapes can also reclaim their place in a natural setting.

The starting point of Rewilding Europe is *in nature* and the general approach of Rewilding Europe builds on three guiding principles:

- Every area should host complete and naturally functioning ecosystems specific to the region, with the full spectrum of native wildlife typical for the region present ('Planet');
- The areas should be embedded within the social and cultural fabric of their respective region ('People');
- The new land use should be based on what nature can offer, be economically viable and competitive with other alternatives ('Prosperity').

2.2. Five specific, 10-year objectives

Europe has given itself five specific, 10-year objectives that are worked on both at the central level and at the rewilding area level. The work in the rewilding areas is designed in a way that all activities and results contribute to these five European-wide objectives. In this way they form the backbone of our initiative and guide all the planning, monitoring and reporting efforts in the initiative. Sub-objectives and main tools are mentioned that we have developed to help achieve these objectives.

Main objectives	Sub-objectives	Main tools
<p>1. Wilder Nature:</p> <p>Create enabling conditions and kick-start the more natural functioning of nature across Europe, in particular in larger, connected landscapes, based on the <i>Vision for a Wilder Europe</i> (2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote wild nature and natural processes as one of the main management principles for nature conservation in Europe, in particular in the larger conservation landscapes, Apply the principles of the Vision for a Wilder Europe in 10 places covering different geographical regions of Europe, including a spectrum of habitats, landscapes and species, Ensure effective protection of existing wilderness areas, wild nature and wildlife, such as old-growth forests, and create new protected areas where needed or appropriate; Promote natural grazing of free ranging bovines and horses as one of the key natural processes for shaping wild nature. Promote the development of new (local and national) policies, legislation and guidelines to create an enabling environment for a wilder nature; More cost-effective management improving conservation status of priority habitats and species (N2000). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-year shared visions or each rewilding area Landscape planning and zonation Pilot sites in priority rewilding zones where user- or property rights (grazing, hunting, management) re secured, Partnership agreements with main land owners and area managers Best practices that support rewilding in water management, forestry, hunting and other sectors
<p>2. Wildlife Comeback:</p> <p>Ensure the continued comeback of wildlife – including large herbivores, large carnivores and scavengers across Europe, to service both nature as well as people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a substantial wildlife comeback in the ten areas, especially of keystone and flagship species, with the aim of creating more complete, functional ecosystems, Actively support reintroductions or re-stockings (through in-situ breeding facilities and translocations) to bring back wildlife, following IUCN guidelines and practices. Support acceptance and tolerance of societies for wildlife comeback in the rewilding areas, Establish a cross-European coalition to support wildlife comeback and improved conservation status of species (strategic partnerships) To develop and apply pan-European tools for the successful wildlife comeback with these partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Wildlife Bank, Species reintroductions and population enforcements, Mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts, Local rangers, herd keepers or ambassadors of certain species, Applied research where needed.
<p>3. Nature-based</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through supporting rewilding enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewilding Europe

<p>Economies:</p> <p>Demonstrate that rewilding generates new business opportunities, jobs and income for society, thereby creating an alternative and competitive form of land (and sea) use for local people, landowners and communities</p>	<p>across different economic sectors in each of the ten areas, develop new economic prospects for local people, landowners and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a ‘market value’ for wildlife, for landowners, hunting associations and other land managers 	<p>Capital,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewilding Europe Travel Club, • European Safari Company, • Promotional support and sales of destinations
<p>4. Interest in the Wild:</p> <p>Create pride, public support, new engagements, and a more positive attitude amongst stakeholders for a wilder Europe with much more wild nature, wilderness and wildlife</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sense of “Pride of the Wild” among a very broad audience in Europe, who will also be able to enjoy the wild values • The concept of the “joy of the wild” will reach out to a very wide European audience, leveraging connection and support • Existing partnerships are strengthened and new ones established supporting the Rewilding Europe concept • The importance of rewilding nature for society and development has been recognised by funding/investment institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass-media campaigns, • Photo missions and image purchase, • High quality design products, • Media trips and press releases, • Websites and social media, • Exhibitions, • TV productions, feature film • Local seminars, • Brand Manual
<p>5. Magnification:</p> <p>Inspire scaling-up and replication of the rewilding approach across Europe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through using the ten rewilding areas as examples, inspire up to 100 other ‘rewilding’ initiatives across Europe affecting a total of 4 million ha (40,000 km²) • A Rewilding Scientific Network Group established, also linked to a site-specific monitoring scheme • Build a coalition to influence EU conservation policy towards rewilding (contribution to 15% CBD restoration target). • Through strategic partnerships, enhance our work but also promote ‘broadcasting’ by these partners • Major publications with scientists in peer-reviewed journals and magazines • Become a member of international fora, and use these to promote rewilding (e.g. IUCN) • Media and marketing work at high levels, including a TV series/Feature film production promoting rewilding in Europe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Rewilding Network, • European Habitat Forum, • EU Policy coalition, • Strategic partnerships, • IUCN Membership, • Rewilding Europe Circle, • Work with scientific sector, and create a professorship

Figure: Rewilding Europe's five 10-year objectives



2.3. Making it Real

There is an overall, strong emphasis on putting our vision into practice: ‘Making it Real’ has become our slogan, for nature and for people:

For nature

Relating to our vision on the role of natural processes, the crucial role of wildlife and the need to cooperate with landowners and land users, we are using a number of strategic initiatives and tools for rewilding:

- Securing land for rewilding, ranging from community conservancies, Natura 2000 management contracts, purchase of user rights (such as lease, hunting or grazing rights) through agreements with hunting associations and (public and private) landowners; in some cases even purchase of land;
- Setting up ‘best practice examples’ with different commercial sectors, such as hunting, water management, forestry and others. E.g. on hunting, engage with local hunting communities to improve wildlife populations, develop wildlife watching, create wildlife recovery zones, reduce or eliminate poaching and poisoning, and ensure sustainable hunting;
- Reduce and if possible eliminate poaching and poisoning of wildlife, and reduce human-wildlife conflicts to support a further wildlife comeback;
- Further grow the European Wildlife Bank, to provide rewilding areas with wildlife and grazing animals where reproduction of animals serves as an ‘engine’ for scaling up rewilding and where receiving partners become more responsible for good wildlife management;

- Further grow the European Rewilding Network to exchange knowledge and experiences between existing and upcoming rewilding initiatives across Europe, to create and enhance a rewilding movement in our continent,
- Developing wildlife recovery plans and strategic partnerships with leading institutions on bison, vultures, aurochs, wild horses and large carnivores in Europe to support the comeback and recovery of these species in European ecosystems.

For people

Relating to our vision on the benefit of rewilding for people, new nature-based economies and the involvement of citizens and entrepreneurs in the rewilding movement, we are developing a number of strategic initiatives and innovative tools on enterprise development and communications:

- Supporting the development of rewilding enterprises, that create incentives for local entrepreneurs and business people to generate income and create jobs based on rewilding;
- Provision of attractive loans for rewilding enterprises to support local entrepreneurship through Rewilding Europe Capital, our investment fund;
- Involving local people in the rewilding work, such as herd keepers, bear ambassadors, bison rangers, volunteers, researchers and monitors;
- Helping incubate Europe's first safari company, to support developing accommodations, generate traffic and develop rewilding areas as nature destinations;
- Involve young people in the rewilding movement from all over Europe, through student programmes and internships across our areas and at the central level;
- Helping entrepreneurs to develop wildlife watching facilities and businesses and start developing wildlife watching as an important economic activity;
- Reaching out to the European audience by various communications tools, and marketing the rewilding areas as attractive destinations to visit;
- Invite people to engage, support and/or participate where possible.

Centrally led initiatives

From the outset, Rewilding Europe started to develop a number of new and innovative tools at the general level in support of the rewilding areas. Some of these tools are still in their early stages; others have already commenced in 2011 or will be launched very soon. Below, these tools are shortly described under each of the three main components of our initiative.

From 2015 onwards, more detailed strategies have been developed for the three components, including target & indicators for each of these on a 3-year basis. These will be updated each year, on a 3-year rolling base as well, like the overall Rewilding Europe strategy document. In this way, these detailed strategies provide an important base for the overall strategy but also the yearly workplans.

2.4. Rewilding

The rewilding component is obviously the very basis for the initiative; it is at the heart of all our work and this is where it all begins. Everything else will be based on the objectives set in this field. The most important centrally led initiatives on rewilding are:

Securing management, user and/or property rights: Securing meaningful land positions in priority

rewilding areas as a base for tangible and meaningful rewilding activities on the ground (started 2012).

Rewilding and hunting: New approach to address possible conflicts and common interests of rewilding and hunting, in promoting wildlife comeback, no-take zones (or breeding zones), re-introductions and wildlife watching. We will look for synergies with hunting organizations, providing business cases and look for practical models in the rewilding areas.

Rewilding and water management: A more specific effort to restore wetlands and freshwater habitats in our rewilding areas, including the impact of keystone freshwater species (migratory fish species like salmon, sea trout, different species of sturgeon and beaver). It includes ensuring free-flowing rivers; restoration of spawning grounds, reflooding of former polders, allowing erosion and sedimentation, and others. Ultimately decommissioning of dams could even be part of this component.

Rewilding and forests: Approach to address possible conflicts and common interests of rewilding and forestry, in promoting zonation with no-take zones (including protection of old-growth forests in core zones and) and sustainable forestry. We will look for synergies with forestry institutions, providing business cases and look for more practical models in the rewilding areas.

Rewilding and fishing: Promotion of improved fish-habitats, better water quality, more natural fish populations (both species diversity as quantifies), restoring fish migration patterns, and sustainable business models for fishing that support recovery of fish populations (e.g. catch & release, MSC certification, reducing/eliminating by-catch of otters etc). In support of fish-eating birds including pelicans, eagles, herons, egrets and many more.

Wildlife Recovery Programme: A major element of the rewilding component that works, with experts from all over Europe, to increase wildlife numbers in all our project areas, through planning and preparing releases or reintroductions of targeted wildlife species, in particular European bison, red deer, wild horse, wild bovines, Tauros, beaver, Spanish ibex, chamois, vultures and others.

European Wildlife Bank: Live asset-lending model to reintroduce and expand naturally grazing wild herbivore populations across Europe, set up as a rewilding business support initiative together with partner organization ARK Nature, Taurus Foundation and possibly others. Focusing on large wild herbivores.

Bison Rewilding Plan 2014-2024: Strategic action plan (published 2014) to create or support by 2024 in three rewilding areas viable, wild living bison populations of at least 100 animals each, and 5 different breeding sites of a minimum of 15 animals each. Bison will be sourced from existing populations e.g. zoos, nature reserves, wildlife parks and private collections.

Breeding back the Aurochs: initiative to breed-back a very close version to the original wild bovine species that once roamed in Europe, by collecting genetic material through old cattle breeds in Europe, and breeding significant numbers of the near-Aurochs (called Tauros), starting to live in free and social herds in at least five rewilding areas by 2020. Done in partnership with Taurus Foundation.

European Rewilding Network (ERN): Network of larger and smaller areas in Europe where rewilding is a key target and takes place at scale, according to criteria set by Rewilding Europe,

and meant to help sharing expertise and lessons creating a rewilding movement across Europe.

Setting up a rewilding science group: Establish a group of interested scientists from universities across Europe who will work on an applied research programme addressing key questions related to rewilding. Coordinated through a specific professorship or a similar vehicle that will serve this purpose.

Links of rewilding with other sectors need further exploration, in particular with climate change and energy production.

2.5. Enterprise development

The creation of nature-based economies in and around the project areas is a key component of the Rewilding Europe initiative. This requires the development of businesses which have a positive relationship with wilderness and wildlife – and whose commercial success is carefully linked to natural values.

Rewilding Europe operates in a challenging context for rural societies in Europe. Land abandonment is resulting in an exodus of skills, experience and energy from such rural areas with a corresponding negative impact on local and regional economies. While an initiative primarily concerned with biodiversity conservation, Rewilding Europe must and does have social and economic goals at the heart of its strategy. We recognize that in order for rewilding objectives to be achieved we need to secure the positive engagement of local people in Europe's rural areas as well as government policy makers at local, national and international level.

Specific objectives for enterprise have been set, linked to the overall objective for this component: demonstrate that rewilding generates new business opportunities, jobs and income for society, thereby creating an alternative and competitive form of land (and sea) use for local people, landowners and communities.

A primary emphasis will be to focus on stimulating economic benefits, which can be directly attributed to, and feed upon, our rewilding activities. Accordingly, we will strive to stimulate the creation and development of commercial activity, which can provide direct or indirect incentives for a newly energized rewilding dynamic across and around our project areas in one or more of five different ways:

- By generating finance (from profit share, fees, royalties etc.) that can directly sustain the effective management of a conservation area or initiative – including payments for ecosystem services;
- By increasing and/or diversifying the economic value of wildlife and other biodiversity within a target conservation area in manners that increase local and wider incentives to conserve it – including the transfer of labor and capital from activities that threaten these values to conservation friendly alternatives;
- By modifying systems of production so that current reliance on products extracted from the natural resource can be met through environmentally sustainable or alternative means;
- By developing and distributing products or services that support actors involved on the front line implementation of conservation activity;
- Or simply by promoting the values of, access to, and enjoyment of wilderness;

- Stimulate local and national political support for rewilding and wilderness conservation through the generation of tax revenues and employment by relevant conservation-focused businesses.

In addition to supporting the creation and development of a wide range of local enterprises, the following key initiatives are part of the enterprise component at the central level:

Rewilding Europe Capital (REC): development of a financing facility (revolving fund with an initial € 500,000 investment capital) that will be funded by philanthropic and investment capital, run by a separate legal entity (REC B.V.) that will be owned by Rewilding Europe. Since the start in 2013 until 2015 REC provided relatively small loans to enterprises in rewilding areas in order to leverage carefully defined rewilding outputs. During the next phase, from 2017 to 2019, REC will further grow through cooperation with the European Investment Bank, aiming at creating a 6 million Euro loan facility under the Natural Capital Finance Facility (NCFF). Connected to this upscaling, REC will also extend its working sphere, not only including the Rewilding Europe areas, but also the ERN member areas and even outside.

European Safari Company: The European Safari Company (ESC) will leverage off a growing wildlife tourism opportunity by providing an optimised direct route to the market for Europe's leading and most interesting nature and wildlife tourism products (design started 2013). It offers top quality authentic nature and wildlife experiences, which aren't normally known or accessible to the general naturalist or traveller. Alongside the wildlife offerings, authentic cultural & culinary experiences will diversify the overall product and bear attraction to a far wider market, which includes families, travellers, naturalists and the average city dweller. This will grow the existing market from pure wildlife fanatics & photographers to the greater portion of travellers in Europe and create an incentive for more wild nature and wildlife in Europe, supporting Rewilding Europe's core objectives.

Rewilding Europe Travel Club: Club to connect the many keen nature travellers with the many great local and international enterprises who do their best to make the most charismatic wildlife and nature experiences in Europe accessible to a wider audience. The Travel Club is under revision and a new strategy is developed to make it more effective in 2016 and further, connected to the European Safari Company.

2.6. Marketing and communication

In 2014, we have revised our communication strategy (including communication, marketing and branding as main three elements) with the help of various external partners and advisors. A first step was a SWOT analysis of our communication work done so far (2011-2014), to learn from the first phase (strengths and weaknesses) but also to look at threats and opportunities. The new communication strategy has identified 5 major objectives:

1. Filling our vision with real stories and results

After having communicated our vision for a wilder Europe and 'rewilding' as a new, additional conservation tool, we now need to substantiate and 'fill' this promise with real stories and results from our rewilding areas and beyond.

2. Moving from outreach to engagement and support

Communication and engagement with key audiences and local stakeholders, which are critical to our success, is becoming increasingly important. We are therefore shifting the emphasis of our communication efforts from mainly outreach, more over also to engagement, in order to mobilise key target audiences and stakeholders to ultimately support our initiative at different levels.

3. Providing targeted communication support for rewilding and enterprise development

Communication is not a goal in itself - it is a tool for achieving Rewilding Europe's 5 main objectives. In reality, this means that key messages and the ways we communicate have to be steered by the needs from the rewilding/enterprise development and from the rewilding areas points of view. Our new communications strategy is therefore very much geared to support the rewilding and enterprise work.

4. Focus on key target audiences, using specific tools for each

We will focus more towards specific target audiences and key stakeholders, what we would like to achieve together with them and how we can be of value for them. We have tried to identify the most effective communication tools for these groups and messages, prioritising between 'must have' and 'nice to have', helping us reach the respective target group in a cost-effective way.

5. Empowering local teams and building capacity

We need to further increase and enhance local communication and marketing capacity in the rewilding areas. Not all teams have communication officers yet; we work even more strongly towards building sufficient capacity at the rewilding area team level – both for the rewilding areas themselves and for servicing the central team and its functions – with the ultimate goal to have effective communications in each of the rewilding areas, based on a clear strategy and guidelines from the central level.

3. Our operating model

3.1. Operating structure

The Rewilding Europe operating model is centred around the rewilding areas, to ensure they become the showcases of how we put our vision into practice. There are three main components in our operating model, illustrated in the diagram:

1. The rewilding area itself; carefully selected and based on a number of criteria that together determine critical success factors. Each rewilding area works in an integrated way on the three components a) rewilding, b) enterprise development and c) communication. At the centre of this are local rewilding partners, which are vitally important for all our work in the rewilding areas, either existing NGO's or legal entities specifically set up for our purpose.

2. A number of centrally led initiatives and activities, providing an enabling environment or very tangible support to each of the rewilding areas. These centrally led initiatives are linked to each of the three thematic components:

- *Rewilding*: Wildlife Recovery Programme (including the programmes of European bison, European wild horse and other wildlife), European Wildlife Bank;
- *Enterprise development*: Rewilding Europe Capital, European Safari Company and the Rewilding Europe Travel Club;
- *Communication*: outdoor and indoor exhibitions, photo missions, media outreach network and publications, website and social media, seminars and events, TV/feature film production.

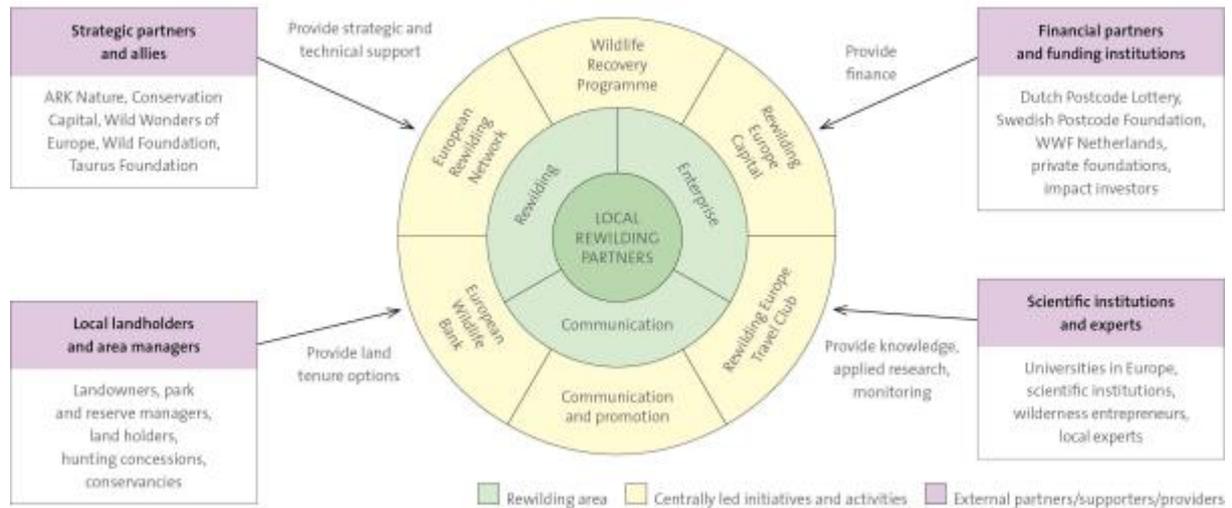
3. External partners and stakeholders, that provide support in various ways, and which are vital for Rewilding Europe's success and delivery:

- *Strategic partners and allies* including the initiating organizations, that provide strategic and technical support: ARK Nature, WWF Netherlands, Conservation Capital, Wild Wonders of Europe, WILD Foundation and others;
- *Financial partners and funding institutions* (some of them are also strategic partners) providing finance, such as the Dutch and the Swedish Postcode Lotteries, European Commission, European Investment Bank, Adessium Foundation, Fondation Segre and other funding agencies and (local) business partners;
- *Local landholders and area managers*. Local partners such as private landowners, park and reserve managers, hunting concession owners and other landholders that can provide land access, management or user rights (e.g. hunting, fishing, grazing);
- *Scientific institutions and experts* that provide scientific knowledge and background, and carry out applied research and monitoring: various universities across Europe, European Bison Conservation Center, Large Carnivore Initiative Europe and other experts that do feasibility studies and research work.

This operating model has proven to work although new experiences and lessons learnt during the coming years might provide a need for further improvements.

Figure: Operational model of Rewilding Europe.

OPERATING MODEL – REWILDING EUROPE



1. Overall, the initiative becomes more inspirational for many stakeholders and funding institutions when the programme is large and Europe-wide instead of small and local, and therefore more attractive to donors, tourists, investors, banks etc.,
2. Last but not least, the potential to communicate and reach out to large audiences is far more efficient and effective when working from a programme level instead of individual rewilding area levels.

The advantage of being ‘one team’ across Europe leads to different functions of the central and local teams, which are explained below.

Central team functions

From the central Rewilding Europe team, the following key functions will be relevant to the rewilding areas:

- Development of initiatives at central level in support of the rewilding areas in the fields of rewilding, enterprise development and communication,
- Fundraising at a European level, opening doors to new potential funding partners and development of proposals at scale – including support to local fundraising efforts,
- Providing finance – both grants to the local entities and loans to local partners and entrepreneurs (through REC), and through match funding for fundraising at local level,
- Provision of technical support, ideas and innovations that are unknown in rewilding areas, providing technical backstopping and provision of strategic guidance,
- Providing the ‘glue’, connecting the ‘dots’: linking the rewilding areas with each other and providing learning and exchange opportunities,
- Unlocking marketing and communication potential through reaching out to a mass audience and specific target groups in Europe, in support of both the central initiative and the rewilding areas,

- Building a strong brand and marketing function at a European level for the overall initiative, which will support the rewilding areas as nature tourism destinations.

Local Team functions

The following local team functions will be relevant to the central team functions:

- Rewilding areas act as showcases for the wider rewilding vision at the European level,
- Provision of local ownership and leadership within the local context and socio-economic realities, making the initiative relevant and real to local situations,
- Setting up and managing legal entities with dedicated teams (including local boards) that are capable of running the initiatives and delivering results,
- Responsible for all planning of relevant documents (e.g. 5-year Strategic Action Plans) and monitoring of results,
- Establishing and managing local partnerships with key stakeholders, to ensure local support, land tenure and property rights,
- Responsible for the delivery of results in the rewilding areas, in each of the field of rewilding, enterprise development and communication,
- Fundraising at local level, opening up local funding agencies and donors, as well as dedicated European funds,
- Provision of communication materials, stories and further content to be communicated at the European level,
- Building a local brand and credibility of Rewilding Europe as an initiative and the rewilding areas itself specifically,
- The ultimate goal is that, although rewilding areas will remain under the Rewilding Europe umbrella, the support role of the central team will gradually phase out and individual projects will stand on their own feet (see 3.3.5.).

3.2. Delivering our decentralized model

The way we relate to the rewilding areas is very much determined by the long-term aim of our initiative. Rewilding Europe works along a ‘decentralized model’, where we work to ultimately create self-supporting rewilding areas. For each of the rewilding areas this might be a bit different or take place in a specific time frame.

3.3. Strategic partnerships

General

Partnerships are instrumental for the success of Rewilding Europe. Without partnerships, we will not be able to succeed in our mission.

This section provides an overview of existing partnerships that Rewilding Europe has established so far, and which additional partnerships are currently being established both at the central level and the rewilding area level. The partnerships mentioned are the ones we have formalized through a partnership agreement.

Central level

We have identified five partner categories.

1. *Initiating partners*: the four partners that helped the birth of our initiative: WWF Netherlands, Wild Wonders of Europe, Conservation Capital, and ARK Nature. Except for WWF Netherlands we have specific partnership agreements that spell out our cooperation.
2. *Funding partners*: WWF Netherlands, Dutch Postcode Lottery, Swedish Postcode Lottery, Adessium Foundation, Fondation Segré, European Commission. The nature of the legal agreements is funding agreements.
3. *Rewilding partners*: we have signed partnership agreements with ARK Nature, WILD Foundation, Tauros Foundation and Large Carnivore Initiative Europe (LCIE), European Bison Conservation Centre (EBCC) and Avesta Wisent Park. All of these agreements have Joint Action Plans that spell out activities.
4. *Marketing/communication partners*: first partnership signed in 2015 with Artist for Nature Foundation, and a new partnership in 2016 with Off The Fence.
5. *Corporate partners/sponsors*. Partnerships established and/or signed with four different corporate sponsors so far.

Currently, Rewilding Europe has formal partnership established with 21 different entities. It is envisaged that we have to extend our strategic partnerships with a number of entities that are critical for our delivery.

In the table below, an overview of *existing* strategic partners is provided, including the main purpose and nature of each partnership.

Local level

Also at the rewilding area level there are numerous partnerships, some of which are formalised through an MoU, partnership agreement or Letter of Intend. Quite a number of key partnerships have not been formalised or are in a first stage of negotiations.

4. Our portfolio of rewilding areas

4.1. Rewilding areas at the frontline

Rewilding Europe puts its vision into practice through working in 10 areas in Europe, to become examples of rewilding. The rewilding areas are at the frontline of the initiative, because we believe that by showing our work in reality we can generate support for this new conservation vision for Europe.

Through our mass media work so far, and through that presenting our ambitions and goals, we have generated a lot of interest and support, but we also raised considerable expectations. For the period 2017-2019 our initiative will therefore fully focus on:

- Supporting the existing eight operational rewilding areas making considerable progress in terms of rewilding, enterprise development and communication,
- Start exploring to identify a 9th and 10th rewilding area to add to our portfolio.

Enhancing of our portfolio will be done in a careful way, taking into account important lessons and applying the critical success factors as outlined in this chapter.

In 2016, the Eastern Carpathians has been dropped from the portfolio, after a careful process of evaluation and decided by the Supervisory Board.

4.2. Selection of areas

Based on a screening of some 30 nominations from all over Europe submitted by a variety of organisations, five areas were selected in 2010 to serve as the first rewilding areas. The first rewilding areas started work at the end of 2011. We are currently working in eight areas (the starting year shown in brackets).

- Western Iberia, Portugal/Spain (2011);
- Velebit Mountains, Croatia (2011);
- Southern Carpathians, Romania (2012);
- Danube Delta, Romania/Ukraine (2012).
- Central Apennines, Italy (2013),
- Rhodope Mountains, Bulgaria/Greece (2014),
- Odra Delta, Germany/Poland (2015),
- Lapland, Sweden – with extension possibility into Norway (2015).

We aim to have a maximum of geographical spread and representation of different ecosystems, to ensure the Rewilding Europe portfolio will be as diverse as possible. The main reasons for this are:

- Rewilding Europe would like to prove that rewilding is possible in all regions in Europe, not only in southern and eastern Europe (more remote areas) but also in central, west and northwest Europe (more urbanized areas),

- We strongly believe rewilding is applicable throughout European ecosystems, and want to learn how different ecosystems respond to rewilding,
- We would like to work and learn about rewilding in different settings and local socio-economic contexts.

Map: Existing rewilding areas in the Rewilding Europe portfolio by the end of 2016.



For each of the rewilding areas, we have set specific rewilding targets for a 10-year period (10 years after the project started), to indicate what our ‘rewilding footprint’ would be in each of those areas.

4.3. European Rewilding Network (ERN)

Rewilding Europe is part of a broader European rewilding movement in which many great and inspiring initiatives have been developed over the last decades, and many new ones are being started all over our continent. In order to inspire others and to make a fair contribution to even more rewilded parts of Europe, Rewilding Europe has started a new initiative within its wider programme: the *European Rewilding Network (ERN)*.

Table: Overview of Rewilding Europe portfolio by the end of 2016, approximate size and countries involved (countries in brackets means we have not started/initiated working there).

Name of area	Status (2015)	Size (ha) ⁴	Landscape type	Countries
Western Iberia	Operational	100,000	Montado, dehesa, sierra, rivers and canyons	Portugal
Velebit Mountains	Operational	220,000	Temperate and Mediterranean forest, sub-alpine grasslands, coastal marine, cliffs and canyons	Croatia
Southern Carpathians	Operational	100,000	Temperate forest, sub-alpine grasslands, cliffs and steep river valleys	Romania
Danube Delta	Operational	180,000	River delta, reed beds, marshes, riverine forests, coastal grasslands, dune systems, coastal lagoons and forests	Romania,
Central Apennines	Operational	100,000	High alpine mountains, alpine grasslands and valleys, small rivers and temperate forests	Italy
Rhodope Mountains	Operational	250,000	Mediterranean temperate forests, river valleys, grasslands and steppe	Bulgaria, Greece
Oder Delta	Operational	250,000	Baltic coast with wetlands, tidal zones, reed marshes, sand dunes, alluvial and coastal forests, peat systems and wet grasslands	Germany, Poland
Lapland	Operational	3,500,000	Taiga forest, high tundra and alpine grasslands, free-flowing rivers, lakes and peat marshes	Sweden

Although every initiative is unique and has its own opportunities linked directly to the specific area and people involved, it is very worthwhile to exchange knowledge. The European Rewilding Network aims to establish a living network of many rewilding initiatives, to support rewilding in Europe as a conservation tool.

All initiatives joining the ERN are included in a database and can be easily located. The members are enabled to directly connect with similar initiatives in Europe, and are connected with Rewilding Europe itself. They become visible to the outside world as being part of a pan-European movement for active rewilding initiatives, and are encouraged to share their gained knowledge and experiences.

⁴ The estimated size of the area that can be rewilded which is targeted in each rewilding area; this excludes the wider magnification area.

Figure: map with members of the European Rewilding Network by November 2016 (red: ERN member, purple Rewilding Europe area). Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Germany and Poland have both RE areas and non-RE areas.



Rewilding Europe will facilitate this process through an online network. Also, members of the network receive additional information through specific training, learning seminars and exchange visits will be considered and organized.

The status of ERN by November 2016 is shown in the table and map presented here. For the period 2017-2019, we will work to increase the number of members of the ERN considerably, with a target of 20 additional rewilding examples each year. By the end of 2017, some 80 areas should be part of a well functioning ERN.

To be a member of ERN, members have to sign a so-called 'Declaration of Commitment', which clarifies what is expected from ERN members and what will be offered from Rewilding Europe to the members. We are in a process of having such declarations signed by the current members.

5. Our organisation

5.1. Legal basis

Rewilding Europe is registered on 28 June 2011 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, as a Dutch charity Foundation (Stichting) according to Dutch Law. Apart from the foundation, Rewilding Europe has also established a limited company (B.V.), which is wholly owned by the foundation.

As such, Rewilding Europe has a non-for-profit and a for-profit legal component. The purpose of this is on one hand to have a legal entity to be able to raise charitable funds (through the foundation), on the other hand to be able to be commercially active (through the limited company participating in businesses at central level or perform other commercial activities such as sales of goods and products). Income through the limited company is only to be used by the single and 100% shareholder (the foundation) to cover operational costs. The limited company is meant to be a funding mechanism for the foundation, to create a certain level of financial sustainability in the long term.

New legal entities are under construction for REC (a limited company REC – B.V. will be set up) and the Rewilding Europe Endowment Initiative (a charitable foundation).

5.2. Central team structure

5.2.1. General

The structure of Rewilding Europe is not that of a typical donor-recipient nature, whereby a central entity provides money to local projects. The nature of our initiative needs a different approach, creating different dynamics.

Instead, Rewilding Europe acts as one cohesive initiative at a European level with a European agenda, where work is done at two levels: 1) the European (or central) level and 2) the rewilding area level. This approach requires an organizational set up that allows us to work in function of our objectives both at the European level and the rewilding area level in a coordinated, mutually beneficial and cohesive way. Central level activities support the rewilding areas in many different ways (through central initiatives) while rewilding areas support the objectives at the central level.

The *Central Team* drives the initiative at a European level on a day-to-day basis. This central team exists of an international team of experts, working from different European countries (with its home office in Nijmegen, The Netherlands). A *Senior Management Team* (SMT) - including the of leaders of the three components and regional managers - heads the central team. The SMT holds two formal, statutory directors: the Managing Director and the Finance & Operations Director, who form the *Executive Board*.

The *Supervisory Board*, with board members from different European countries, oversees the overall initiative and holds the Executive Board (in practice through the SMT) accountable for the initiative.

A *Rewilding Europe Circle*, with respected and well-know individuals from within and outside Europe who connect their names to our initiative as our ambassadors, will add further credibility and image to our initiative.

5.2.2. Organisational structure and formation

Overall tasks

The Central Team deals with all activities at central level and in support of the rewilding areas. The Central Team drives the overall initiative and is the core group of individuals – each with different roles and responsibilities under a specific assignment and ToR - working from different countries. The Central Team is responsible for the four key sections within Rewilding Europe: 1) general management & development, 2) rewilding, 3) enterprise development and 4) marketing & communication.

The Central Team encompasses the following positions:

- **Formal Executive Directors:** in 2011 and 2012 these were four persons (the founders of Rewilding Europe) but it has been decided to reduce the number of Executive Directors from four to two. By the end of 2013, the Managing Director and the Finance & Operations Director are the two statutory directors.
- **Thematic Heads:** three positions responsible for running their respective key components of the initiative (rewilding, enterprise development and marketing & communication), and supervise the team members they have been allocated.
- **Regional Managers:** Two Regional Managers are the main liaison and coordination persons between the Central Team and the rewilding area teams, ensuring proper planning, reporting and monitoring of all rewilding areas.
- **Thematic managers:** these are the team members that work on rewilding, enterprise development and communications.

All Central Team members report to the Managing Director, either directly (Thematic Heads and Regional Managers) or indirectly (through their team leaders).

Types of assignments

The Central Team has three different types of assignments:

1. Employees, under an employer's contract of these individuals with the foundation (staff). Rewilding Europe has started a formal employers role by mid 2013 and has set all the standards and rules for that according to Dutch regulations;
2. Individuals (often technical advisors) who have a direct consultancy contract through their own local companies, as they cannot be contracted as employees due to labour and tax laws in their home countries
3. Individuals, contracted as technical advisors through the organizations with whom Rewilding Europe has a formal partnership agreement (Wild Wonders of Europe, Conservation Capital and ARK Nature);

Executive Board

The Executive Board is formally responsible for the management of the foundation, determines the policy, establishes the financial guidelines and bears the final responsibility for the daily operations. It also bears the final responsibility for the implementation of programmes and activities.

Senior Management Team (SMT)

The SMT is a sub-section of the Central Team and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation. The SMT includes the 2 Statutory Directors, the 3 Thematic Heads and the

Regional Manager(s). The SMT meets 3 or 4 times a year in a formal meeting, and holds two-weekly skype calls.

Volunteers and internships

Students, volunteers and other interested people, increasingly approach Rewilding Europe to become involved. We have not yet been able to address this huge potential properly, due to limited time availability and lack of coordination capacity. The only exception was the European Entrepreneurship Programme (closed in 2014), which involves dozens of students from now 6 different universities in Europe in our work. Also, we have been able to assign different other students to the rewilding areas, and 2 students at the central level (2015).

The coordination of students is done within Rewilding Europe by the regional managers (for the rewilding areas). A 'student bank' is managed by ARK Nature, and we have agreed that the student's coordination needs to be improved, in particular towards communication about their work and reporting.

In 2015 we also started with a volunteer programme, which turned out to be quite successful, both in the rewilding areas and at central level. Seven volunteers signed contracts on communication and enterprise development work mainly.

5.3. Supervisory Board

Main functions of the Supervisory Board

The primary role of the Supervisory Board is to supervise the Rewilding Europe Initiative. A Board Protocol (approved by the Supervisory Board in September 2013) describes the roles, responsibilities and procedures of the governance structure of Rewilding Europe.

In addition to their supervisory (statutory) responsibilities, the Supervisory Board members of Rewilding Europe have two main functions:

- To provide strategic oversight and direction to the initiative and to provide guidance and support to the Board of Directors.
- To bring in and open up a range of networks from various sectors that are particularly relevant to Rewilding Europe in a wider sense, and use those networks to support the overall goal and objectives of Rewilding Europe.

The statutory roles and responsibilities of the Supervisory Board are described in the statutes of the foundation and the limited company of Rewilding Europe.

5.4. Rewilding Europe Circle

Introduction

After many discussions and careful consideration, Rewilding Europe has now come to a conclusion of how to establish a support group around our initiative. We want to connect Rewilding Europe to a group of highly respected individuals from across Europe who can actively support us through their expertise, networks and enthusiasm. We have discussed many possible labels for this cross-cultural and pan-European group and finally arrived at a distinctive concept and name which we believe embodies community, longevity and activity; the "**Rewilding Europe Circle**". Straying from the traditional concept of patrons and also from the celebrity focused concept of ambassadors the "Rewilding Europe Circle" consists of a smaller group of individuals

who are willing to actively and regularly contribute to Rewilding Europe's development. The key is to assign members who are relevant to our cause.

5.5. Management excellence and learning

Rewilding Europe's ability to implement its model effectively is dependent on the quality of people implementing it and the management systems that guide our initiative. Key components of this strategy going forward involve a focus on the following:

- *Competent and passionate people*: key individuals at both the central and rewilding area levels are highly qualified, competent and passionate about Rewilding Europe and have the skills and experience to make this happen.
- *Proper systems and procedures*: a continued focus on improving systems and procedures of the organization, as articulated in a Rewilding Europe Operations Manual. This manual allows for a common set of standards without inhibiting individual management and entrepreneurial flair. There will also be financial procedures and accounting manuals.
- *Focus on results*: Rewilding Europe is about results in our 10 model rewilding areas – results in conservation, results in socio-economic development and results in communication and outreach. Measuring results and achievements keeps the initiative and its management focused. Goals and objectives are set in the project documents and business plans; results are measured against these goals. The results are reported to partners on a regular basis in a transparent manner, and summaries are compiled in the form of an annual report.
- *Self-analysis and improvement*: Rewilding Europe is a learning organization and does not penalize mistakes, but treats mistakes as an opportunity to learn from. Being transparent about problems and mistakes will generate respect and trust. Consideration needs to be given to ensure that self-analysis and improvement is entrenched into the organization, beginning with reviews at the central level and the rewilding area level. Formal, independent evaluations will be part of project cycle management.

5.6. Learning from other initiatives

Learning by doing and sharing

Rewilding Europe will be a learning initiative, because 'rewilding' is a new field of expertise and will be very much 'learning by doing'. We will also develop knowledge exchange mechanisms and activities - where needed and appropriate - with other organizations both in Europe and outside.

Within Europe

Within Europe, there are great learning opportunities, in particular:

- Between existing and new rewilding areas within our portfolio, on different aspects and at different levels;
- Within specific trainings and exchange visits to be held and organized by the central team between our rewilding areas;
- With other rewilding initiatives that are part of the European Rewilding Network (ERN).

We will plan for such exchanges, learning and training activities within our work plans and budgets during the coming years. Exchange visits will be tasked with objectives and follow-up, to ensure adoption of better/best practices and approaches.

Outside Europe

In particular we will look into learning from rewilding initiatives in other parts of the world:

Africa:

- African Parks Network - <http://www.african-parks.org>
- African Wildlife Foundation - <http://www.awf.org>
- African Wildlife Capital
- Community conservancies in both Namibia and Kenya/Tanzania - <http://www.nacso.org.na/index.php> and <http://www.lewa.org>

North America:

- From Yellowstone to Yukon - <http://y2y.net>
- American Prairie Reserve - <http://www.americanprairie.org>
- Wildlife watching industry

Australia:

- Bush Heritage Australia - <http://www.bushheritage.org.au> and New South Wales National parks Association

6. Measuring success

6.1. When are we successful

Rewilding Europe is successful when it has reached its 10-year objectives as described in section 3.2. Progress against these objectives will be tracked by using different systems for the overall programme level and for the rewilding areas.

For measuring success, we have developed three main monitoring and performance tools:

- 1) A monitoring matrix to track progress against the 10 main objectives of rewilding Europe. This monitoring matrix includes 34 indicators that are measured once a year to against baseline values in the starting year and target values set for a three- and ten-year period.
- 2) A portfolio assessment tool that allows for scoring the rewilding areas against 7 critical success factors based on 10 criteria for each of these success factors.
- 3) The Rewilding Scale that will be used to measure progress in the rewilding areas, according to the scale.

In the table below we have put the main characteristics of these three rewilding tools and how they are linked to each other.

Tool/ characteristic	Monitoring Framework (1)	Rewilding Area Assessments (2)	Rewilding Scale (3)
Target	RE initiative (but data kept separated for each rewilding area)	Rewilding areas	Rewilding areas (focus on priority areas and pilot sites within)
Objective	Measuring overall progress of the initiative	Comparison between areas and evolution of each area	Ecological conditions (rewilding at area level)
What is measured	Progress against 5 long term objectives for the overall initiative	Operational conditions and enabling environment for the 10 areas	Physical development of the rewilding situation in the 10 areas
Number of Indicators	34	70	33
Score	Results against targets (%), set for 3-year periods	0 - 350 (10 points/indicator)	more complex system (relative score and weighing factors)
Frequency	Annually	Annually	Bi-annually (tbd)
Reporting date	First SB meeting each year	First SB meeting each year	tbd

We believe these three tools are very much complementary, however there might be some potential overlap (which we should avoid), mainly between some of the indicators of the Rewilding Areas assessment and the Rewilding Scale, especially some of the indicators related to practical rewilding possibilities. We will revise these in such a way that these are more related to an enabling environment than to the actual status of the Rewilding Scale indicators.

6.2. Monitoring matrix

A total number of 34 indicators have been selected to measure the progress against the 10 objectives. Baseline values for each of these indicators have been set in 2012, and target values have been set for 2013 and 2020. For each indicator, the frequency of measuring has been set. All information has been stored in an excel file. Monitoring reports will be provided after each calendar year, based on technical progress reports from the rewilding areas, combined with the progress reports at the central level of Rewilding Europe.

7. Funding

7.1. Budget structure

The structure of the budget has been agreed with our auditing firm for our yearly financial statements, and is congruent with CBF certification rules. All budgets are based on detailed work plans for all the components of the initiative. Work plans show detailed deliveries, activities, time allocations and expenditure and ultimately generate the budget on an annual basis. These budgets are all allocated to achieving our five main objectives.

We distinguish unrestricted and restricted funding. On the expenses side, we work with three main categories:

Management and Administration

This includes costs for running the initiative at the central level, mostly covered by unrestricted funding. Maximum percentage of overall budget targeted at between 10-15%.

Centrally led Initiatives and Activities

This includes all costs for centrally led initiatives that directly support the rewilding area teams on rewilding, enterprise development and communication. Funding is partly restricted, partly unrestricted.

Rewilding Area Allocations

Budget that is raised at central level, allocated to the rewilding areas and spent locally through formal contracts based on 3-year plans and detailed, yearly work plans. Funding is partly restricted, partly unrestricted.

Fundraising so far

So far, Rewilding Europe has been quite successful in fundraising, due to our very pro-active fundraising and communications efforts.

Despite this success we have to continue a strong fundraising effort. Our fundraising strategy describes our priorities and a) builds on success factors so far, and b) brings in new elements and approaches that should grow our income and diversifies our income streams. A key element to our fundraising efforts will be if the rewilding projects can show tangible results and progress, that will motivate partners to continue supporting us, or start supporting us as a new financial partner.