



**ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS**  
August 9th 2024 to December 31st 2025



# A message from our President

Dr Nicolas Mayot  
President



On 17th June 2024 the European Council formally adopted the Nature Restoration Regulation and on the **8th August 2024 the European Seagrass Restoration Alliance (ESRA) was founded** in Gujan-Mestras, France.

ESRAs objective is to provide a platform for the European seagrass restoration community to collaborate and engage in knowledge exchange.

Just nine months after ESRA was founded, from 8-10 April 2025, 211 delegates from 20 nations assembled in Arcachon for the 2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop. A gathering held under the strapline of **“From competition to coalition: Towards a European Seagrass Restoration Alliance”**

Full implementation of the law is crucial to restore the EU’s biodiversity strategy and stop further biodiversity loss, to reach climate neutrality by 2050, to adapt to climate change, and to enhance food security. It is also a key instrument to help the EU and its Member States meet international biodiversity commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

This first ‘Annual Report and Accounts’ covers ESRAs first seventeen months of operations: Our first few months from **8th August 2024 – December 31st 2024, (creation on 8th August, declaration on 9th August and** (publication in the Official Journal on the 27th August 2024) and then our first full year from **January 1st 2025 through to December 31st 2025.**

A lot has already been achieved, but these achievements needs to represent *only the beginning* of a more coordinated and collaborative approach to scaling seagrass restoration in Europe, only together can we the full promise of this ecosystem alliance be realised.

In the words of Helen Keller: **“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”**

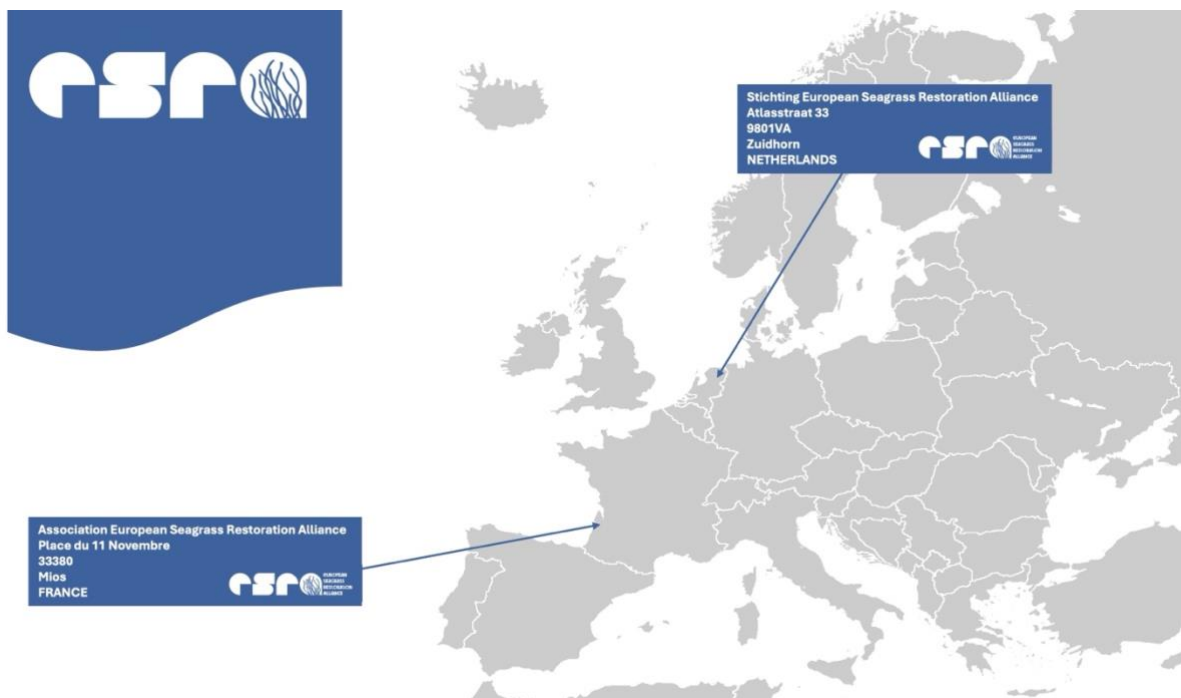
En avant!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Mayot', written in a cursive style.

Dr Nicolas Mayot

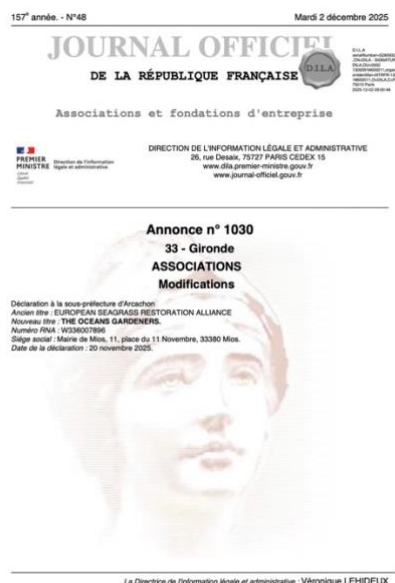
# ESRA(s) in Europe

ESRA in France was founded as an 'Association 1901' on the **8th August 2024** in Gujan-Mestras, France. Two months later, on the **8th October 2024**, a second ESRA was founded as a 'Stichting' in Groningen, Netherlands. Both of these legal structures, the ESRA in France, and ESRA in the Netherlands, are non-profit legal structures 'designed for social, cultural, or charitable activities' in their respective countries. Both ESRA were created **using the same founding documents** ("Statuts"). To date only ESRA in France has delivered any activities. ESRA in the Netherlands has remained dormant.



From January 1st 2026 the 'Association 1901 European Seagrass Restoration Alliance' in France will be changing its name to '**The Ocean Gardeners**' (**Date de la déclaration 20 Novembre 2025**). The statuts will remain unchanged and the focus of The Ocean Gardeners will be in developing activities relating to **public involvement and civic engagement** in seagrass restoration programmes.

The 'Stichting European Seagrass Restoration Alliance' in the Netherlands will become the future hub of ESRA activities, with the focus on providing a platform for the European seagrass restoration community to collaborate and engage in knowledge exchange. From **17th-20th February 2026** a meeting will take place at De Herdershut, the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen's field station in Schiermonnikoog, the Netherlands. Here we will co-create a governance structure for the Stichting 'European Seagrass Restoration Alliance' that it best serves the entire European seagrass community and formulate a series of specific recommendations to accelerate the restoration of seagrasses in Europe.



# MAIRIE



The European Seagrass Restoration Alliance (Association 1901) was founded on 8th August 2024 and is registered to Mairie de Mios 11 place du Onze Novembre 33380 Mios , France

# Financial Report

Dr Richard Lilley  
Treasurer



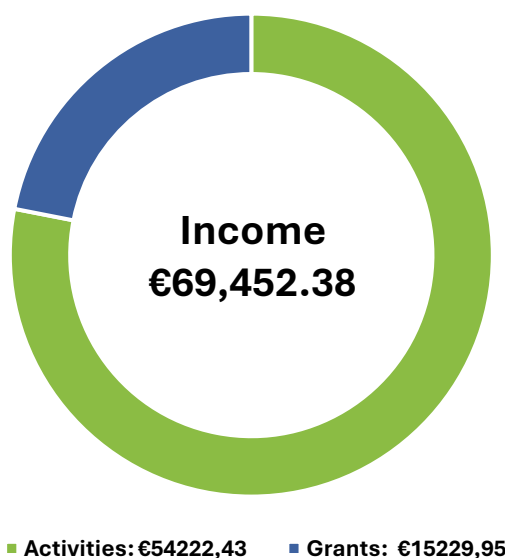
## Income

Since ESRA was founded on the 8th August 2024 total income has amounted to:

# €69,452.38

The total income presented in this report was accrued over 2 financial years; August 8th 2024 to 31st December 2024 and January 1st 2025 to 31st December 2025.

### August 8th 2024 - December 31st 2025



**2024:** Between 8th August 2024 and December 31st 2024 ESRA's income was **€22,988.66**. This income was generated from activities relating to the organisation of the 2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop (e.g. workshop registrations).

**2025:** Between January 1st 2025 and December 31st 2025 ESRA's income was **€46,463.72**. Of this **€31,233.77** was generated from activities relating to the organisation of the 2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop (e.g. workshop registrations) and a further **€15,229.95** was from grants.

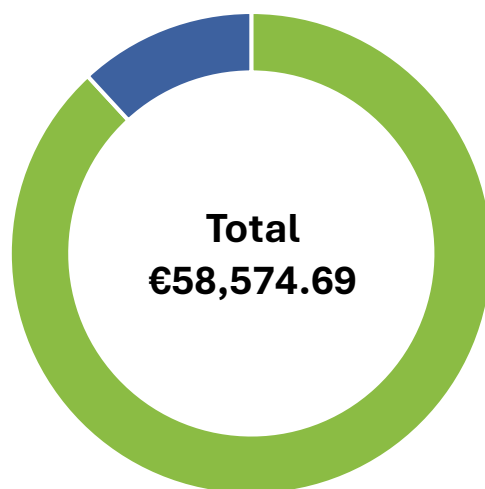
## Expenditure

Since ESRA was founded on the 8th August 2024 total expenditure has amounted to

# €58,574.69

The total expenditure presented in this report was dispersed over 2 financial years; August 8th 2024 to 31st December 2024 and January 1st 2025 to 31st December 2025.

### August 8th 2024 - December 31st 2025



■ Conferences and Workshops:    ■ Public involvement and civic engagement:

**2024:** Between 8th August 2024 and December 31st 2024 ESRA's expenditure was **€11,287.76**. This expenditure was related primarily to the organisation of the 2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop (e.g. deposits for the venue, boat etc) but also operational costs (including website, insurance and bank fees).

**2025:** Between January 1st 2025 and December 31st 2025 ESRA's expenditure was **€47,286.93**. Of this **€40,638.63** was related to activities relating to the organisation of the 2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop (e.g. workshop registrations) and operational costs (including website, insurance and bank fees) and a further **€6,648.30** was from implementing public involvement and civic engagement activities.

## Year End

Year End balance for 2024 = €11,700.90

Year End balance for 2025 = €10,877.69

# Moral Report

Sarah Lilley  
Secretary



## Collaboration and knowledge exchange

### 2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop (8-10 April, Arcachon, France)

This year, between 8-10 April 2025 the ESRA team delivered the **2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop (ESRW2)** in Arcachon, France, in collaboration with le Parc naturel marin du Bassin d'Arcachon. The principle aim of the European Seagrass Restoration Alliance is to work to provide a platform for the European seagrass restoration community to collaborate and engage in knowledge exchange. **211 delegates from 20 countries registered for ESRW2** (and 17 European nations plus Australia, South Africa and the USA were represented). **40 presentations were delivered** by participants to the whole community and **16 'mechanisms for change' workshops were facilitated** to address specific challenges during the event. Furthermore our hosts, le Parc naturel marin du Bassin d'Arcachon, were able to deliver a **group guided tour of the Bassin d'Arcachon** to share first hand their ongoing work to restore marine ecosystems in the bay.



We were inspired to host the 2nd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop after reading the report on the **1st European Seagrass Restoration Workshop in 2010** (which had 30 delegates) and seeing that no such targeted community gathering had been facilitated since. ESRW2 provided an opportunity to exchange information on both the methods and the results of various seagrass restoration projects in Europe. Attendees appreciated the workshop and expressed a need to organise more formal workshops on specific topics through ESRA. They also highlighted the need to better communicate seagrass to a wider audience and to raise awareness more effectively, particularly through participatory projects like those already carried out in le Parc naturel marin du Bassin d'Arcachon. Since ESRW2 a number of **ESRA 'Working Groups' have been created**, and interest has been shown by colleagues from number of countries across Europe in hosting a 3rd European Seagrass Restoration Workshop in the near future.

## 2nd Seascape Symposium (4-5 June, London, UK)

Dr Richard Lilley was invited to the Zoological Society of London to **Chair a session on ‘Advances in seascape restoration practice’**. We heard from Melissa de Kock (Deputy Director, UN Environment Programme WCMC) on the role of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and discussed how it is time to build on our understanding of the temperate seascape’s potential to deliver for nature and people at scale.



## 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (9-13 June, Nice, France)



At the Next Generation Ocean Basecamp at UNOC3, Dr Richard Lilley was invited to join Raquel Gapar (CEO and Co-founder of Ocean Alive) to discuss opportunities for **diversifying fishers income with restoration, tourism and scientific activities**.

Together they discussed how fishers are central to the perpetuity of marine ecosystem service provision and explored a case study from the Sado Estuary in Portugal, where the “Keepers of the Sea” are stewards of the estuaries seagrass meadows.

## Tools for Success in Marine Ecosystem Restoration (9-10 September, Dublin, Ireland)

In collaboration with the Mission Ocean and Waters project CLIMAREST, the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) Europe invited restoration practitioners, government representatives, students, and all interested in marine and coastal restoration to apply for a training event on 9–10 September 2025 at the Maldron Hotels & Partners Merrion Road, Dublin. Dr Richard Lilley was invited to deliver a session on **‘Monitoring and Evaluation of Marine Ecosystem Restoration projects’**.



## 6th Native Oyster Restoration Conference (24-27 November, Cartagena, Spain)



Dr Richard Lilley was an invited panelist at the NORA6 Conference in Cartagena focusing on the importance of collaboration in achieving restoration success. The **‘Scaling Impact: Collaborating for Restoration Success’** session explored the advantages of habitat alliances, the added value of sharing project-acquired knowledge through marine-focused clusters and the potential for the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) Europe to serve as an

umbrella framework within Europe, and how these efforts can contribute to the global restoration agenda.

# Public involvement and civic engagement

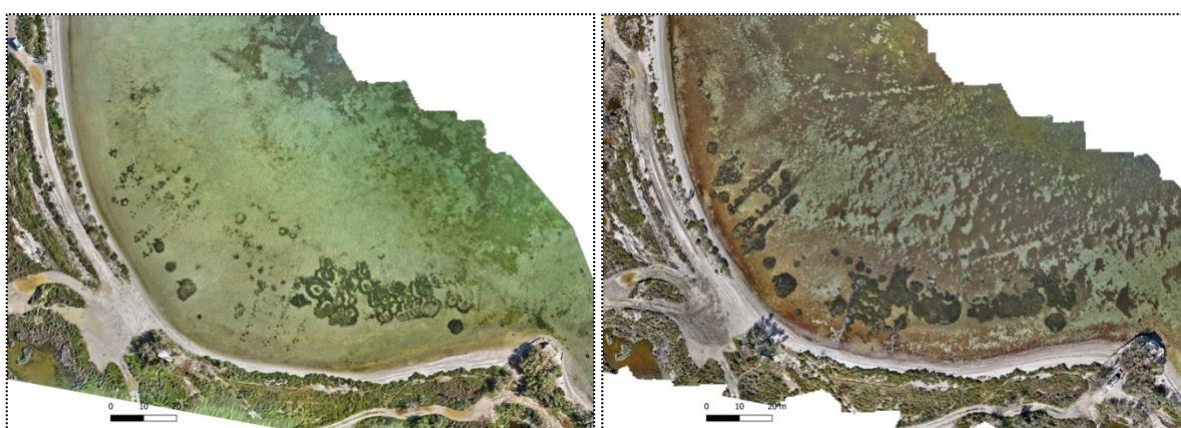
## Seagrass Restoration Week (12-16 May, Berre l'Étang, France)

From **12-16 May 2025** the ESRA team piloted a **public involvement and civic engagement** seagrass restoration volunteering opportunity in the Étang de Berre, France. The week was delivered in collaboration with the lagoons management organisation GIPREB-Syndicat mixte.

In total, over the course the Seagrass Restoration Week, **12 volunteers** (6 from the Netherlands, 3 from France, 3 from Spain) transplanted **three species of seagrass** (*Zostera marina*, *Zostera noltii* and *Cymodocea nodosa*). In total **752 seagrass sods** were transplanted at the site of 'Batidou'.



Following the Seagrass Restoration Week, the 2025 'end of season' monitoring was conducted between **18-26 October 2025** in collaboration with GIPREB-Syndicat mixte. Significant expansion of the transplanted cores was observed between May (*below left*) and October (*below right*). These results highlight the **positive contribution members of the public can make** in helping to scale up seagrass restoration programmes.



This public involvement and civic engagement project was piloted in order for ESRA to contribute towards building a **more inclusive and diverse environmental movement**.

Facilitating these kind of **public involvement and civic engagement** activities will be the principle focus of The Ocean Gardeners from 2026.

## Seagrass Restoration Night and Morning (11-12 November, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)



On the 11th November 2025, in collaboration with the team at Patagonia Amsterdam, a **Seagrass Restoration Night** was hosted in the Patagonia Amsterdam store.

ESRA and GIPREB shared the results of the Seagrass Restoration Week pilot with **60 members of the public**, and then together with Rijksuniversiteit Groningen and the Sea Ranger Service, we explored opportunities for facilitating public involvement and civic engagement activities both in the Netherlands, but also in the Étang de Berre and the Bassin d'Arcachon in France.

The following morning on 12th November 2025 we presented ESRA's work to around **200 Patagonia staff** at Patagonia EMEA in Amsterdam.

## Thank you

We wish to thank our many and diverse partners and collaborators who share our values and commitment to providing a platform for the European seagrass restoration community to collaborate and engage in knowledge exchange. We would also like to thank all of the individuals and organisations who have made our work this year possible:

### Government agencies and statutory bodies

L'Office français de la biodiversité (OFB)  
Le Parc naturel marin du Bassin d'Arcachon (PNMBA)  
Gipreb - syndicat mixte (GIPREB)

### Charities, trusts, foundations, and companies

Patagonia  
Native Oyster Restoration Alliance (NORA)

### Pro bono support and gear

Patagonia  
Olivier Bourgeois  
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

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