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Annual Report 2019



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Annual Report 2019

2019 was the year that the Green Tank established its presence as an independent, non-profit think tank developing policy solutions for a sustainable future. In a year of dense political developments, not only did we monitor developments closely, but also we contributed in a catalytic way with interventions and substantiated analyses and recommendations to these developments.

Particular emphasis was given to the “climate and energy” thematic area, while, at the same time, the foundations were laid for greater engagement in the two other thematic areas of the Green Tank, namely, “biodiversity and natural resources” and “sustainable development”.

Through our actions we promoted one of our main goals which is to partake and strengthen the public discourse. Our extrovert approach and willingness to collaborate bore fruit in various collaborations and new alliances.

At the same time, during the year we continued focusing on the operational and administrative maturing of the Green Tank as an organization, as well as on fundraising so as to achieve our goals in each one of our three thematic priorities.

Climate and Energy

Energy and climate policy constitutes one of Green Tank's main areas of activity. From the first period of our operation, at the end of 2018, we have been active in this field with substantial policy and legal interventions.

In 2019, this work intensified even more, with a variety of actions that were largely implemented in collaboration with other environmental organizations and think tanks, as well as close communication with officials and political actors at both national and European levels.

Developments were particularly dense, especially in Greece and can be differentiated between two periods, with the national elections held in July serving as a key milestone. The first part of 2019, our work focused on the cancellation of efforts both to sell 36% of the PPC's lignite portfolio, an obligation arising from the memorandum between Greece and its lenders, and to secure, on behalf of the Greek government and PPC, additional subsidies and exemptions for lignite. At the same time, at every opportunity, we emphasized the need to review the objectives of the draft of the National Energy and Climate Plan, which provided for the continuation of dependence on lignite after 2030.

In addition, together with the organization of environmental lawyers, ClientEarth, we appealed first via an administrative appeal and then by submitting a writ of annulment to the Council of State against the operation of the Amynteo lignite plant, which continued to operate, despite the fact that the plant has run out of operating hours, based on an exception provided in existing legislation.

In view of the July 7 parliamentary elections, the Green Tank mobilized a partnership of 24 environmental NGOs and civil society organizations as well as Social and Solidarity Economy actors. During this initiative, questions were posed to political parties participating in the elections, asking them for specific commitments to tackle the climate crisis and strengthen the Social and Solidarity Economy. In this way, we highlighted the climate crisis in the public discourse leading to the elections.

Following the 2019 national elections, our work focused on informing the new leadership especially at the Ministry of Environment and Energy on the need to turn electricity generation away from lignite. In fact, we showed that persistence to this power production model is linked to the unprecedented dimensions of the PPC's economic situation, which had since become public. In this context, the publication of the Green Tank report "The economics of Greek lignite plants. End of an era." had a catalytic role.

The Green Tank's actions throughout 2019 contributed to Greece's historic decision to close all its lignite plants by 2028 at the latest, as announced by the Greek Prime Minister at the United Nations Climate Action Summit on September 23, 2019.

Following the announcement of this historic decision, the Green Tank redefined its approach. We focused on the need to solidify this political commitment. In this context, we participated in the committee appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Energy on the revision of the draft of the National Energy and Climate Plan. We insisted on the need to include a clear timetable for the withdrawal of lignite plants, a goal that was finally achieved in the final draft submitted to the European Commission.

With the big elephant in Greece's lignite phase-out process being the planned operation of Ptolemaida 5 as a lignite plant, we introduced to the public discourse the need to explore the conversion of Ptolemaida 5 into a unit of thermal energy storage. At the same time, in collaboration with the environmental lawyers' organization ClientEarth, we submitted an administrative appeal to the Ministry of Environment and Energy, since the project's environmental permit does not meet the requirements of legislation in force today.

Expanding our action in the Balkans, we are working closely with organizations seeking a coal phase out. In this context, we have been active in the field of cross-border pollution resulting

from the lignite and coal power plants in the wider Balkans. In particular, we are participating as plaintiffs in the appeal of the organization Za Zemiata against the lignite station Maritsa East 2 in Bulgaria.

In 2019, we intensified the promotion of Just Transition for the lignite regions, a field of work that is part of the sustainable development thematic area of the Green Tank (see relevant section).

Biodiversity and Natural resources

In 2019, Green Tank began gradually its activity in the field of biodiversity conservation. We collaborated with environmental organizations and institutions as well as the Ministry of Environment and Energy, on relevant projects that they are implementing, providing know-how and experience. Specifically, we contributed to actions, either as speakers or as workshop coordinators, organized in the context of the following projects:

- LIFE NATURA THEMIS (LIFE14/GIE/GR/000026) και
- LIFE GRECABAT (LIFE17 NAT/GR/000522).

We also participated in the regional meetings of the project INVALIDIS (INTERREG Europe).

At the same time, we explored the possibility of new collaborations that are expected to bear fruit next year. Indicative is the cooperation, which will be completed in early 2020, with the project FIDELIO (ERC 802605), implemented by the University of Cambridge and concerns the social impact of biodiversity conservation.

Special mention must be made of the project proposal which we submitted to the “Active citizens fund” programme. The Active citizens fund in Greece is supported through a € 12m grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway as part of the EEA Grants 2014 - 2021. The Fund Operator for the Active citizens fund in Greece is the Bodossaki Foundation in consortium with SolidarityNow. This proposal aims at an evaluation of the implementation of Greece’s national biodiversity strategy, laying the foundation for the Green Tank’s greater engagement in this thematic area next year. In fact, 2020 is expected to be the year in which both European and global commitments will be renewed to address the ecological crisis.

Sustainable Development

Transformation into a sustainable development model is the key challenge for the next decade. The Green Tank's actions under this thematic area were structured at two levels in 2019.

At the first level, we focused on the Just Transition of lignite regions to a sustainable production model. The monoculture of lignite spanning many decades has led local economies to multi-level dependence on mining, while at the same time leaving its mark on the environment and the health of the citizens of the lignite regions. Starting in Western Macedonia, but also in Megalopoli, we seek that no citizen will be left behind in the 42 lignite regions of Europe, especially as the EU is on an irreversible path to a zero-carbon economy.

In 2019, we collaborated with WWF Germany for the implementation of the «Just Transition in South Eastern Europe” project, we participated in the 2nd Forum of Just Transition Mayors in Weisswasser, Germany, while we have consistency presence at the regular meetings of Coal Regions in Transition Platform of the European Commission. Throughout our engagement on this topic we work together with many European organizations.

During 2019, we visited Western Macedonia several times, cultivating collaborations with local actors. Following the decision and the front-loaded planning of lignite phase out in Greece, our actions intensified even more. With interventions and relevant positions, we highlighted the need for national planning, with the participation of all stakeholders, as well as for adequate resources to strengthen the just transition of lignite regions.

At a second level, we concentrate on the transformation of Greece's development planning, as the use the funds of the new programming period 2021-2027 is being prepared. The coincidence of the start of the planning of the new NSRF with the beginning of the critical decade for tackling the climate and wider ecological crises is an important opportunity for the first, post-memorandum, development package to become the key mechanism for moving to a sustainable development model in line with the European Green Deal as well as the agenda of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2019, the Green Tank secured resources so as to be able to focus during the upcoming year on recommendations related to selected regions of the country with the co-financing of three foundations: the Cyclades Preservation Fund, the Ionian Environment Fund and the Captain Vassilis and Carmen Constantakopoulos Foundation.

Communications and Extroversion

2019 was the year of the dynamic introduction of Green Tank to the public discourse. In 2019 we established communication with most of Greece's democratic parties, while from July 2019 we participate in the meetings of the Minister of Environment and Energy with the environmental non-governmental organizations of the country organized every two months.

In April 2019, we concluded the design of the bilingual website of the Green Tank (<https://thegreentank.gr>), which went live and has since become the main information hub for all our activities. In addition, we have activated and gradually increase our presence in social medial. For now, we have presence on Twitter and LinkedIn.

During 2019, we also were actively present in mass media, with various opinion articles in printed and electronic press in Greece and abroad, as well as with interviews and discussion on radio and TV.

Also, in 2019, we completed several presentations and invited speeches to various audiences, events and conferences.

Collaborations – Alliances

Our extrovert approach and willingness to collaborate has borne fruit, as in 2019 we cultivated close working relations with environmental organizations and other actors in Greece and abroad, joined existing collaborations and networks of organizations but also created new alliances.

The following list includes our most important collaborations in 2019:

- CAN (Climate Action Network) Europe
- CDE – Centrum pro dropavu a energetiku
- CEE Bankwatch
- ClientEarth
- Development Yes – Open Mines No
- EEB
- Europe Beyond Coal
- E3G
- IDMA Instituto internacional de derecho y medio ambiente
- Magyar Termesztvedok Szovetsege (Hungarian Friends of the Earth)
- Greenpeace
- MEDASSET
- Polish Green Network
- Priatelia Zeme CEPA
- Sandbag
- University of Cambridge, Department of Land Economy
- WWF
- Za Zemiata
- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Institute of European Integration and Policy
- National Center for the Environment and Sustainable Development (NCESD)
- Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN)
- Hellenic Institute of Speleological Research (HISR)
- Y.M.C.A Glyfada Chapter

Alliances

- Balkan Coal Network
- EBC – Europe Beyond Coal

- Initiative of 24 organizations and actors for the climate crisis: Agroecology of Greece, ANTIGONE - Information and Documentation Center on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence, το Social Cooperative Enterprise Network of Central Macedonia, MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network, ECOCITY, Karditsa Energy Community, Ergani – Center for the support of employment and entrepreneurship of women, Callisto, Kinisi Politon Ilioupolis (Ilioupolis Citizen Group), Social Cooperative Enterprise Wind of Renewal, Social Cooperative Enterprise Electra Energy, Social Cooperative Enterprise Speira Gis, Social Cooperative Enterprise Dimiourgies (Creations), MEDASSET, Ecological Recycling Society, Ecological Movement of Thessaloniki, Ecological Movement of Kavala, Ecological Movement of Kozani, Ecological Movement of Patra, Organization Earth, Coordination of Actors of Social Solidarity Economy of Athens, SOS Epirus, No Oil and the Green Tank.

Organization and Administration

In the field of administrative organization, the emphasis continued on the establishment of our operational competence, our organizational structure and our way of working.

In particular with regard to our administrative organization:

- We organized the financial and administrative monitoring of our actions,
- We were trained on the protection of personal data and have done our utmost to ensure that both our website and our operations comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- We have been trained on occupational safety issues,
- At the end of 2019 we moved to a new office and formed a comfortable workplace,
- We announced and organized the process of selecting a new member for the Green Tank team, a new policy officer, who started her collaboration with the Green Tank in early 2020.

We also formulated an internal strategy that directs us in the selection of our actions, while at the same time giving us the flexibility required in a new organization at the beginning of its course.

The Green Tank Advisory Committee met for the first time in May 2019. The members of the Advisory Committee individually or collectively stand by us and provide specialized support whenever needed.

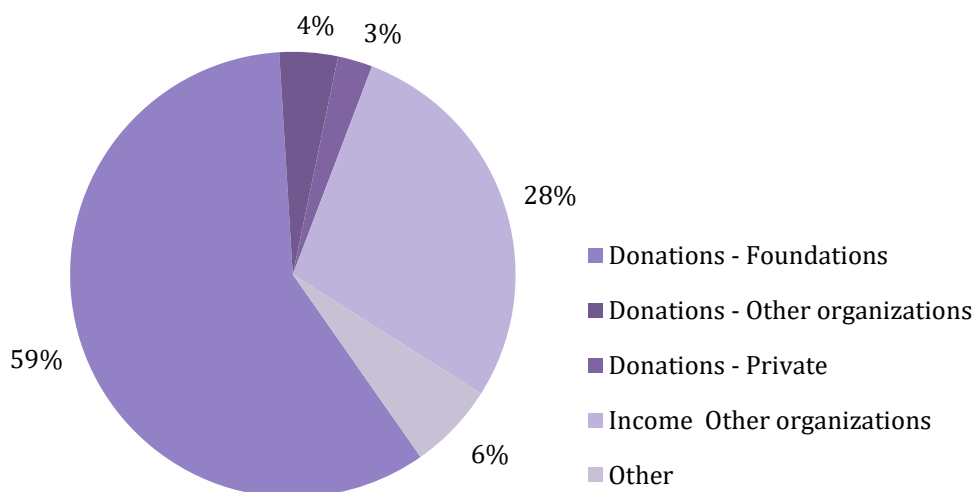
Financial information 2019

In 2019 we received positive responses to funding proposals and partnerships that we had submitted in 2018, while at the same time we continued the process of finding resources by submitting new proposals and exploring even more possibilities for new partnerships. Most of our proposals had a positive response. As a result, we secured a significant increase in Green Tank's resources from varied sources and we have laid a solid foundation for 2020 onwards.

In detail, our sources of income:

| | | |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| Donations - Foundations ▪ European Climate Foundation ▪ Cyclades Preservation Fund | €69.839,00 | 50,9% |
| Donations - Other organizations ▪ Climate Action Network | €5.038,34 | 3,7% |
| Donations - Private individuals | €3.000,00 | 2,2% |
| Income - Other organizations ▪ ClientEarth ▪ MEDASSET ▪ WWF Germany | €33.510,57 | 24,4% |
| Other (payment obligations, etc.) | €7.492,92 | 5,4% |
| Amounts available (1/1/2019) | €18.442,15 | 13,4% |
| TOTAL | €137.322,98 | |

The allocation of our resources, excluding the amounts available on 1/1/2019, is shown as follows:



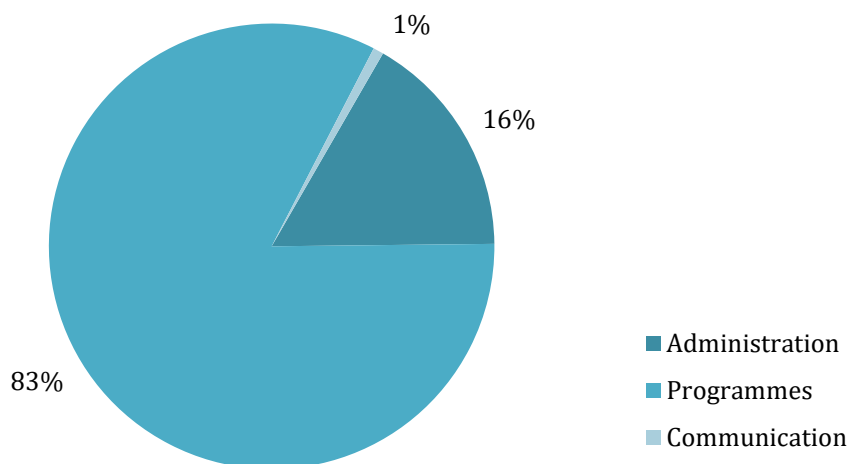
In terms of expenses, most expenses are on implementing Green Tank's projects and actions.

Our administrative costs correspond to the fact that we are still a new organization that lays the foundations for our proper and good operation.

Our expenses in more details:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Administration | €12.819,95 | 9,3% |
| Programmes | €64.330,22 | 46,7% |
| Communications | €588,80 | 0,4% |
| Amounts available (31/12/2019) | €59.931,96 | 43,5% |
| TOTAL | €137.670,93 | |

The allocation of our expenses, excluding amounts available on 31/12/2019, is shown as follows:



2020 begins with an adequate balance available resulting from the financial flow of some new projects approved at the end of 2019, but whose actions will be implemented within 2020.

Green Tank goals for 2020

Looking at the new year that is beginning, at the dawn of the most critical decade of transformation for a sustainable future, we set the following goals:

- To continue our dynamic role with policy interventions
- To develop actions in all three thematic areas
- To cultivate interesting collaborations and actions
- To systematize more our operations
- To ensure sufficient resources

Annex – Green Tank actions

Reports

1. «[The economics of Greek lignite plants. End of an era.](#)» September 3, 2019

Press Releases - Announcements

1. [Green Tank sends letter to Greek MPs regarding crucial vote on capacity mechanism](#), 7.6.2019
2. [Time to change course for Ptolemaida 5](#), 20.6.2019
3. [23 civil society actors and NGOs seek commitments from political parties on the climate crisis](#), 27.6.2019
4. [The end of an era for Greek lignite](#), 3.9.2019
5. [The end of lignite](#), 24.9.2019
6. [The three biggest challenges of Greece's new NECP](#), 16.12.2019

Participation in Public Consultations

1. [Consultation on Just Transition in Western Macedonia](#) 18.2.2019
2. [Comments on the Greek Capacity Mechanism](#) 10.5.2019
3. [The three biggest challenges of Greece's new NECP](#) 16.12.2019

Legal actions

1. [Request for closure of lignite power plant Amyndeo](#) 19.4.2019
2. [Legal challenge against lignite power plant Amyndeo](#) 22.7.2019
3. Appeal against Maritsa East 2 (see relevant article [energypost.eu](#)) 3.9.2019
4. Administrative appeal on Ptolemaida 5, 20.12.2019

Speeches / Presentations

1. [Environmental NGOs and Journalism](#) 26.02.2019
2. [Towards Sustainable Development](#) 18.3.2019
3. [Institutional provisions for biodiversity conservation](#) 10.4.2019
4. [The time has come: Lignite phase-out](#) 06.05.2019
5. [Nature conservation and climate change](#) 11.7.2019
6. [Lignite plants and water pollution in Greece – The case of Akrini](#) 10.9.2019
7. [Management bodies of protected areas: present and future](#) 10.10.2019
7. [The Green Tank in the BCET 2019 in Kozani](#) 19.9.2019
8. [The role of NGOs in environmental governance](#) 21.10.2019
9. [Protecting the Mediterranean](#) 25.11.2019
10. [About the climate crisis](#) 30.11.2019
11. [Environmental crime in protected areas](#) 11.11.2019
12. [Greek caves and bats](#) 13.11.2019

Opinion pieces

1. [Response of Nikos Mantzaris to the President of GENOP – PPC \(union\) George Adamidis](#), (in Greek) kozani.tv, 11.2.2019

2. [The next day after the failure of the lignite sale](#), energypress.gr, 13.2.2019
3. [Greece: lignite asset sale failure could shift focus to electricity market reform and renewables](#), energypost.eu, 19.2.2019
4. [Bill on the seaside: Building on moving sand](#) capital.gr 11.04.2019
5. [Comments on the Greek Capacity Mechanism](#) energypress.gr 10.5.2019
6. [Sustainable development central focus of the European elections](#) capital.gr 23.5.2019
7. [Greece needs to urgently change its National Energy and Climate Plan](#), energypress.gr, 23.5.2019
8. [The sale of Greece lignite assets has failed](#), Capital.gr, 31.5.2019
9. [The green wave in Europe and Greece](#) HuffPost Greece 5.6.2019
10. [“EU must block Greece’s desperate attempt to subsidise coal power”](#), euractiv.com, 25.6.2019 and Greek translation on [euractiv.gr](#), 28.6.2019
11. [Change of course for Ptolemaida 5](#), 5.7.2019, energypress.gr
12. [The lignite refugees](#) HuffPost Greece 6.7.2019
13. [The challenge of Just Transition in the post-lignite era](#), HuffPost Greece, 19.9.2019
14. [Interview for the transition to the post lignite era](#), 21.10.2019
15. [Ptolemaida 5: the elephant in the room of Greece’s lignite phase out](#), energypress, 16.12.2019
16. [Environment 2019: 8+1 trends](#) HuffPost Greece 31.12.2019

Comments

1. [Greece again postpones sale of lignite stake amid appeals to call off process](#) Carbon Pulse 25.1.2019.
2. [NGOs ask Commissioners to cancel the Greek lignite sale](#), To VIMA, 26.1.2019
3. [The high cost of the insistence on the Greek lignite sale](#), newmoney.gr, 28.1.2019
4. [Question to the European Commission on the Greek Capacity Mechanism](#), energypress.gr, 5.3.2019
5. [EU under pressure to pull the plug on Greek coal aid](#), Euractiv.com 14.3.2019
6. [Distortions from the lignite sale](#), Insidestory, 28.3.2019.
7. [«Green» restrictions on the sale of the PPC lignite plants](#), Βήμα 25.5.2019
8. [Amendment for the sustainability of the lignite plant Ptolemaida 5](#) To Vima 7.6.2019
9. [MoEE: Submitted amendment with many energy provisions](#) newmoney 7.6.2019
10. [Ptolemaida 5 will be economically non-viable despite subsidies](#) Proto Thema 9.6.2019
11. [The lignite of the country is on the opposite “trend” compared to the objectives for green energy and the climate](#) energypress, 13.06.2019
12. [Greece’s biggest energy investment is not economically viable](#) Proinos Logo Kozanis 14.6.2019
13. [Carbon pricing with the blessings of the Pope – At 583 million euros the Annual Cost of Greenhouse Gas Emissions on Health in Greece](#) energia 17.6.2019
14. [The hunt for the lignite exemptions](#) To Vima 23.6.2019
15. [Ptolemaida V: The PPC’s thorny wreath](#) insidestory.gr 30.8.2019
16. Extra cost of up to 25% for the committed PPC consumers Sunday edition of To Vima 1.9.2019
17. [A guide to a conscious \(and ecological\) way of living](#) LIFO 6.9.2019
18. [Do we properly site wind turbines in Greece?](#) Inside Story 26.9.2019
19. [Greece and Hungary pledge to phase out coal](#) pv-magazine 26.9.2019
20. [Waiting for Just Transition to the post-lignite era](#) Inside Story 29.11.2019.

Radio

1. RadioLogos Kozanis, 14.6.2019: https://thegreentank.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/lyssandros_rigas_14.06.2019.mp3
2. [What will the rise of the Greens in the EU elections lead to?](#) 7.6.2019
3. The Voice of Greece, 12.7.2019
4. EPT3 102 fm, 19.7.2019
5. EPT3 102 fm, 7.8.2019
6. [EPT](#), 27.9.2019
7. Bulgarian National Radio, 30.11.2019

TV

1. Kozani.tv, 31.1.2019 <https://bit.ly/39vO8yD>
2. EPT1. [Discussion about the EU elections and the climate crisis](#), 31.5.2019
3. Hellenic Parliament Channel, 17.6.2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VumYD_nZaRU
4. EPT1, 12.7.2019 <https://webtv.ert.gr/promo/12iol2019-apeytheias/>
5. EPT1 [Halkidiki 10 July 2019 – The climate crisis is here](#) 12.7.2019
6. SKAI, 3.9.2019 <http://www.skaitv.gr/episode/enimerosi/ta-nea-tou-ska-stis-2000/2019-09-03-19> -->00:54:40 - 00:56:20.
7. ONE channel, 6.9.2019 <https://www.onetv.gr/ekpompes/one-direct-06-09-19/>
8. Kozani.tv, 21.10.2019 <https://bit.ly/2F6GzQX>