

IENE Strategy for Economy

September 2025

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The Subcommittee for Economy	3
3. Status of IENE budget in 2025	4
4. Financial targets of IENE	4
5. IENE Financial Rules	5
6. Facilitate the connection of the website with IENE bank account	5
7. IENE Fundraising Plan	6
7.1. Mapping the IENE funding resources	6
7.2. Fundraising campaign	7
7.2.1. Founding members	7
7.2.2. Fundamental Supporters	8
7.2.3. Members	8
7.2.4. Sponsors	9
Approach of communication:	9
8. Projects	9
8.1. A project from the IENE point of view	9
8.2. A project IENE process for projects development	11
9. General challenges and a scenario for financial multi-contribution	11
10. Conclusion summary for decisions	12

1. Introduction

In alignment with the Strategic Orientation and Action Plan of IENE, and with the aim of ensuring its financial sustainability, the current Strategy for Economy has been prepared by the Economy Subcommittee of the IENE Governance Board. This strategy is structured around four key objectives:

- A. To define the role and responsibilities of the Economy Subcommittee.
- B. To establish the financial targets of IENE.
- C. To formulate Financial Rules in accordance with the IENE Internal Rules of Procedure.
- D. To develop a comprehensive Fundraising Plan.

2. The Subcommittee for Economy

With the Decision taken on 3rd December 2024, the IENE Subcommittee for Economy has been set up which consists of the following members of IENE Governance Board (GB):

- Lazaros Georgiadis
- Iris Frederiks
- Vincent O'Malley

The Subcommittee is supported administratively by the Executive Secretariate and the accountant of IENE.

The initial aims of the Subcommittee are to:

- 1) Define the Financial Targets of IENE.
- 2) Create a framework of Financial Rules.
- 3) Develop a Fundraising Plan.

Once these initial aims have been approved by the Governance Board and the General Assembly, the Economy Subcommittee will focus on the following four ongoing responsibilities:

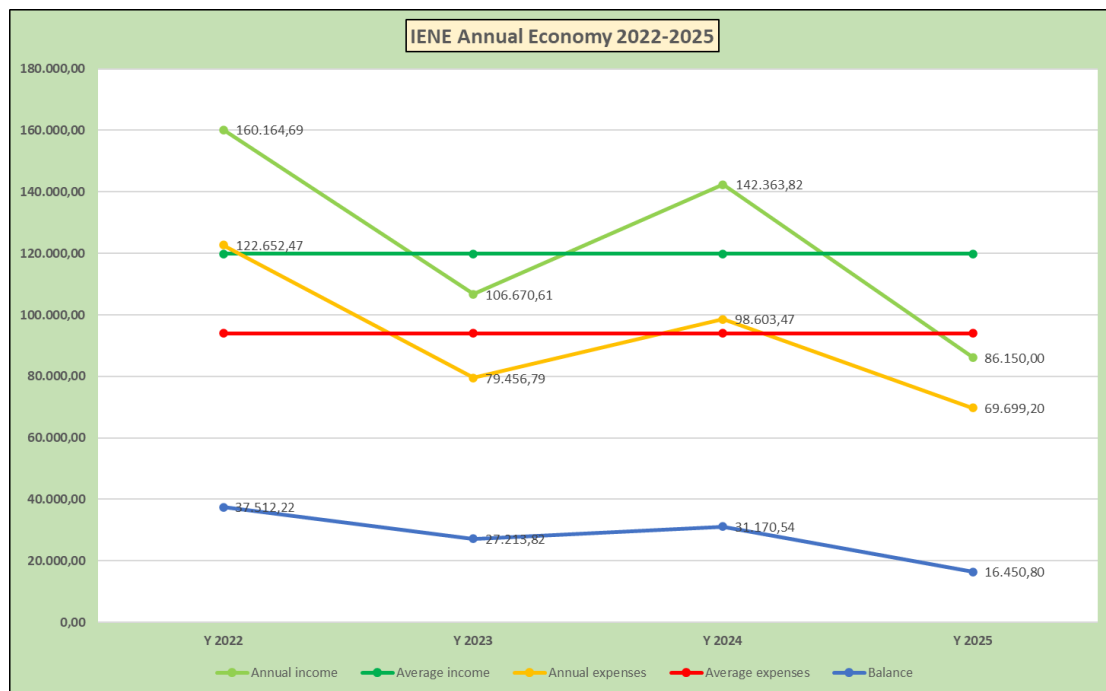
- 1) Monitor IENE's financial status and progress towards its targets.
- 2) Apply and uphold the Financial Rules.
- 3) Oversee the Fundraising Plan.
- 4) Support the Governance Board in making financial decisions.

3. Status of IENE budget in 2025

The following graph presents the financial status of IENE over the last three financial periods as well the anticipated budget for 2025.

The main income to date relates to the support of:

- 1) The Founding members:
 - Swedish Transport Administration: approximately €40,000 annually
 - The French Ministry for the Ecological Transition: approximately €20,000 for 2025 (€40,000 until 2024)
 - Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management: €5,000 annually
- 2) Membership: approximately €3,500-7,000 annually
- 3) Conferences fees: approximately €2,000-5,000 per conference
- 4) Other occasional sources



4. Financial targets of IENE

To clarify the IENE financial needs the Subcommittee will:

- 1) Estimate the annual budget which currently is approximately 100,000€.
- 2) Set a general surplus aim (e.g., 50,000€ in 5 years to cover a worst-case scenario of a potential six-month period without any income).
- 3) To increase income flow and source new financial resources through a Fundraising Plan.
- 4) Supervise:

- The Fundraising Plan and report results on income increases
 - Reducing costs and defining financial priorities.
- 5) Any future support needs to be adjusted for inflation.

5. IENE Financial Rules

A framework of financial regulations will be established, encompassing the following elements:

- 1) Procedures for financial decision-making and associated monitoring, including:
 - Proposed costs to be submitted to the Economy Subcommittee.
 - The Economy Subcommittee will review the proposals and make recommendations to the Governance Board for final approval.
 - Ongoing monitoring of cost developments by the Economy Subcommittee, with input from the appointed accountant.
- 2) Establishment of clear lines of communication between the Treasurer, the Economy Subcommittee, and the accountant (FEHRL), to uphold the financial independence of IENE and to monitor the progression of the budget.
- 3) Definition of financial priorities, including the annual costs of the Secretariat and the accountant, aligned with income flow, and the reduction of avoidable expenses such as printing and travel.
- 4) Development of practical “Rules for Expenditures”, including:
 - Criteria for eligible expenditure (e.g., publications, travel, awards, special products, gifts, etc.).
 - Implementation of a cost reimbursement procedure.
 - Guidelines for other relevant financial matters.

6. Facilitate the connection of the website with IENE bank account

Fundamental condition for receiving financial support is to develop a “donation page” on the IENE website for direct money transfer offered by individuals or entities who wish to support IENE. This will facilitate:

- A user friendly and convenient platform for donations based on charging of a credit/debit card.
- Provision of automated receipts and invoices by the platform when requested.

7. IENE Fundraising Plan

7.1. Mapping the IENE funding resources

In alignment with IENE's legacy as a networking organisation and its mission to promote ecologically sustainable, resilient, and safe transport infrastructure networks, a rationale exists for distinguishing between legal entities and individual persons in matters of funding.

Individual persons should be engaged as broadly as possible to inform and mobilise them in support of our shared objectives. The most effective means of achieving this is by removing financial barriers to individual membership. Furthermore, offering free or low-cost membership would foster equitable access to knowledge on a global scale and may encourage greater participation in paid events, such as IENE biennial conferences.

Conversely, legal entities should be invited to act as supporters. These organisations may benefit from affiliation with IENE through access to the latest body of knowledge, thereby reducing research costs, and through connection to a global network for sharing concerns and innovations. These advantages should be linked to sponsorship arrangements with the respective institutions. The IENE funding resources list as a basic framework of the IENE Fundraising Plan will be shaped as following:

- 1) The Founding Members which are the main contributors for IENE financial support until now according the IENE Statutes.
- 2) The "Fundamental Supporters" which are GB members' institutions and organizations providing working time and covering travel and other expenses assumed as already fundamental support to IENE (Proposed by the current Economy Strategy).
- 3) The status of Full Members is proposed to be changed in accordance with the following scheme which can be debated with the members in the first semester of 2026 in order to be decided in GA in Bristol 2026 IENE International Conference and starting its implementation in 2027:
 - Keeping the term of "Members" for individual persons which will provide an annual financial contribution as membership of 20€, or potentially more in volunteer base. The option of free membership was evaluated and excluded due to restrictions for participation to the General Assembly of the IENE members.
 - Establishing the "Organisation members" for organizations, institutions and companies which will provide an annual financial contribution of 100€ (Bronze), 200€ (Silver), 300€ (Gold) and 400€ or more (Platinum).
- 4) Sponsors – as organisations, institutions, and companies that provide "occasional" or "on concrete purpose" financial or in-kind support for

specific IENE activities (e.g., events, website development, publications)(Proposed by the current Economy Strategy).

- 5) Donors as a means for any individual or entity to contribute financially, in any amount of donation (Proposed by the current Economy Strategy).
- 6) Projects funded by European Union programmes, national or international funding mechanisms, or private sources based on a dedicated “Projects Roadmap” which will follow the Strategic Orientation, the Action Plan and the financial targets of IENE.

Also, the category of “Followers” is introduced for individuals and organisations wishing to receive updates from IENE without any financial obligation or participation into the internal processes of the Association as the General Assembly and voting to decision making. Followers will play a key deposit of individuals and organizations for exchange of communication and knowledge and at the same time will be a potential source for members and supporters.

The fundraising plan includes a special communication and administration approach for each resource as the following description in two parts:

- A. A fundraising campaign to the first 6 categories of resources:
 - In combination with the Communication Plan, updating the website and use special references in the IENE newsletter.
 - Dedicating half (at least) of the time and cost for communication to fundraising (e.g., keeping a minimum communication activity as the newsletter and maximizing communication with national bodies and institutions).
- B. A workplan or a Roadmap for project preparation and tangible proposal submissions based on the IENE Strategic Orientation and its Action Plan.

7.2. Fundraising campaign

7.2.1. Founding members

Proposed steps for further communication, acknowledging their existing contribution:

- Issue an official letter recognising and expressing appreciation for their contributions to date.
- Provide a summary outlining the history and key achievements of IENE to date.
- Present a proposal for continued support, inviting them to maintain or enhance their level of engagement.
- Organise a special event or issue a statement during celebrations years or to commemorate milestones.

7.2.2. Fundamental Supporters

Proposed steps for further communication, acknowledging their existing contribution:

- Send an official letter formally acknowledging their support thus far, particularly in enabling Governing Body members to advance the mission of IENE.
- Provide a concise summary of IENE's history and its key achievements to date.
- Present a proposal for the continuation and enhancement of their support, including a request for financial sponsorship.
- Organise a special event or issue a statement during celebrations years or to commemorate milestones.

7.2.3. Members

A. Status and challenges of the IENE membership:

- 1) Membership is currently linked to IENE conference fees, which complicates the overall process due to the following factors:
 - Membership payments are made to the conference organisers rather than directly to IENE.
 - Double taxation occurs, initially as income to the organisers, and then during the transfer of funds from the organisers to IENE.
 - A conflict arises between IENE membership fees and conference registration fees, as members receive discounted rates.
 - In an ideal scenario with 400 members generating €20,000 (covering 20% of a €100,000 budget), organisations hosting an IENE conference, the cornerstone of IENE, would face the challenge of offering discounts to all members, who typically represent most participants.

The annual membership fee of €50 is considered prohibitively expensive for individuals in Eastern Europe and non-European countries, particularly for young people and early-career professionals, who are a key target group for IENE.

IENE previously had over 400 members which currently consist of 125 members and more than 300 observers or “followers” as proposed from the Economy Strategy. From the perspectives of financial efficiency, operational practicality, and strategic value, it is increasingly difficult to justify the time and effort required to maintain a membership scheme that, even in the best-case scenario, contributes about 5% of the annual budget, especially when 75% of members are inactive or passive observers.

7.2.4. Sponsors

Approach of communication:

- 1) Develop a “Sponsorship Proposal” including:
 - A summary of IENE’s history and its key achievements to date.
 - A proposal requesting support, highlighting the value of their contribution, and outlining specific actions requiring sponsorship as:
 - a) Updating the website
 - b) Revising the Handbook and other key publications
 - c) Supporting IENE’s special events and strategic missions
 - A financial proposal detailing sponsorship requirements based on the costs associated with the intended IENE mission or activity.
- 2) Key communication messages for potential IENE sponsors:
 - Become a Sponsor of an IENE Mission: A meaningful, resilient, and biodiversity-friendly investment.
 - Sponsor a specific IENE initiative, such as website development or updates to the Handbook.
 - Sponsor an IENE Working Group aligned with your area of interest.
 - Sponsor an IENE event, including conferences, workshops, training seminars, webinars, etc.
 - Promote IENE within your professional and organisational networks.
- 3) Identify potential sponsors through existing projects and networking activities:
 - Current IENE members
 - Members of affiliated organisations such as PIARC, UIC, FEHRL, and CEDR
 - Participants in relevant projects (e.g., BISON, Carpathian GREEN, SYMBIOSIS)
 - Other relevant stakeholders

8. Projects

8.1. *A project from the IENE point of view*

When developing projects, the following challenges must be addressed from an IENE strategic point of view:

- 1) What are the goals of a project?

- a) Strategic: Following at least one of the four IENE pillars
- b) Objective: Including objectives and basic actions of the Action Plan, the Communication Plan, or responding to new challenges.
- c) Economic: Covering an important component of the existing annual budget

2) Practical challenges for funding IENE through projects:

- a) What kind of existing costs or services can be covered by a project?

To define the real economic benefits of a project the basic costs that can be covered by the project must be estimated as the following table indicates.

#	Baseline actions	Costs to be covered by future projects
1	GA, GB & SEC and their support by the secretariat	X
2	Conferences and their support by the secretariat	Partly
	Website and their support by the secretariat	Partly or all
3	Handbook and their support by the secretariat	Partly or all
4	Workshops & other "new" events	X
5	Communication with members	Covering the secretariat cost for promotion and dissemination of the project e.g., IENE newsletter
6	Communication and cooperation with stakeholders	Covering the secretariat cost for communication with projects' stakeholders
7	Other	?

- b) Can IENE coexists with FEHRL in a project?

The primary objective should be to ensure full coverage of existing management costs, including secretariat services, to the greatest extent

possible. Roles and budget of IENE and FEHRL must be clearly distinguished and especially the roles of each organization and the secretariat. Can the IENE Secretariat or the accountant—particularly if the same individual or entity serves both IENE and FEHRL—be jointly dedicated to both organisations within the context of a shared project?

- c) Any potential conflict of interest arising from such an arrangement should be explicitly addressed and resolved within the terms of the IENE–FEHRL contractual agreement. Can IENE lead a project, or an action of a project?
 - Leading a project or a specific project-related action does not fall within the scope of IENE's standard services or associated costs.
- d) Such an initiative would require additional time and resources from the Secretariat, or potentially necessitate the recruitment of additional personnel, without addressing the existing operational costs of IENE. In projects' preparation the IENE contribution and budget should be carefully determined.

8.2. A project IENE process for projects development

Bearing in mind the above challenges and according to the discussion which took place in 2024, projects can focus more on Achieving Goals, objectives and actions of the Action Plan and covering existing costs. An overall framework of challenges in connection with the IENE Action Plan with the candidate project must be defined and analysed in each project proposal where members of GB, SEC, Working Groups, or other members of IENE can play an actual role through their organizations/institutions.

For mapping of projects opportunities, a specific IENE project's roadmap can be developed and updated every year in cooperation between the GB, the SEC and the Working Groups.

9. General challenges and a scenario for financial multi-contribution

- The 2026 Communication Plan should be closely aligned, as a priority, with the Economic Strategy and the Fundraising Plan.
- Outlined below is an indicative and optimistic scenario for the development of the annual budget over the next four years (2025–2028), based on the assumption of successful project acquisition.

More realistic scenarios can be developed following the first year of the transition period, and after the initial implementation of both the Fundraising Plan and the first project in which IENE is actively engaged as a partner.

FUNDING RESOURCE	2025		2026		2027		2028	
	Euro	%	Euro	%	Euro	%	Euro	%
Founding Members	86,150	100.00	86,150	83.52	90,000	72.00	90,000	56.96
Full members	0,00	0.00	3,000	2.91	4,000	3.20	4,000	2.53
<i>Individual Members</i>		0.00	2,000	1.94	3,000	2.40	3,000	1.90
<i>Organisation Members</i>		0.00	1,000	0.97	1,000	0.80	1,000	0.63
Sponsors		0.00	3,000	2.91	4,000	3.20	6,000	3.80
Donations		0.00	1,000	0.97	2,000	1.60	3,000	1.90
Projects		0.00	5,000	4.85	20,000	16.00	50,000	31.65
Other		0.00	5,000	4.85	5,000	4.00	5,000	3.16
Total	86,150	100,0	103,150	100,0	125,000	100.0	158,000	100.00

10. Conclusion summary for decisions

Step 1: Adopt the initial objectives of the Subcommittee:

- Define IENE's financial targets, including setting a general surplus goal (e.g., €50,000 over five years) to safeguard against a worst-case scenario of six months without income.
- Develop a comprehensive Fundraising Plan.
- Establish a framework of Financial Rules.

Step 2: The Fundraising Plan should include the following funding sources:

- I) Founding Members, who have been the primary contributors to IENE's financial support to date.
- II) Fundamental Supporters, recognising and acknowledging the institutions and organisations of Governing Body members that contribute through staff time, travel, and other expenses—considered as essential in-kind support to IENE.
- III) The status of Full Members will be changed in accordance with the following scheme:
 - Keeping the term of “Members” for individual persons which will provide an annual financial contribution as membership of 20€, or potentially

more. The option of free membership was evaluated and excluded due to restrictions for participation to the General Assembly of the IENE members.

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- IV) Sponsors – as organisations, institutions, and companies that provide “occasional” or “on concrete purpose” financial or in-kind support for specific IENE activities.
- V) Donors as a means for any individual or entity to contribute financially, in any amount of donation (Proposed by the current Economy Strategy).
- VI) Projects, as a source of funding and engagement.

Step 3: Enable integration of the IENE website with its bank account by developing a “donation page” to:

- Offer a user-friendly and convenient platform for donations via credit/debit card.
- Provide automated receipts and invoices upon request.

Step 4: Prioritise project implementation as a strategic tool for achieving IENE's goals and activating member engagement, rather than as a primary source of financial support.

Step 5: Upon achieving the initial objectives and securing the adoption of the Financial Targets, Financial Rules, and Fundraising Plan by the Governing Board (and the General Assembly), the Subcommittee's long-term responsibilities will include:

- Monitoring the financial status and progress towards targets.
- Overseeing the implementation of financial rules.
- Supervising the execution of the Fundraising Plan.
- Preparing the Governance Board for financial decision-making and project engagement