

# CIC 34

## Community Interest Company Report

**For official use**  
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complete in  
typescript, or  
in bold black  
capitals.*

**Company Name in full** ESG Corporate Community Interest Company

**Company Number** 13566221

**Year Ending** 25/07/2024

*(The date format is required in full)*

**Please ensure the company name is consistent with the company name entered on the accounts.**

This template illustrates what the Regulator of Community Interest Companies considers to be best practice for completing a simplified community interest company report. All such reports must be delivered in accordance with section 34 of the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004 and contain the information required by Part 7 of the Community Interest Company Regulations 2005. For further guidance see chapter 8 of the Regulator's guidance notes and the alternate example provided for a more complex company with more detailed notes.

**(N.B. A Filing Fee of £15 is payable on this document. Please enclose a cheque or postal order payable to Companies House)**

## **PART 1 - GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPANY'S ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT**

*In the space provided below, please insert a general account of the company's activities in the financial year to which the report relates, including a description of how they have benefited the community.*

ESG Corporate Community Interest Company (Company Number: 13566221), trading as ESG Gaming, is incorporated as a not-for-profit with no share capital Community Interest Company (CIC). The Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies independently regulates our organisation. Additionally, we are registered with the Fundraising Regulator (ID number: FR.ID-271151)

At ESG Gaming, we strongly believe in thoroughly and transparently reporting our governance, activities, financial information and social impact, which exceeds the regulatory requirement. This report captures our work covering the period 01 August 2023 – 25 July 2024.

### **Governance**

ESG Gaming has a long-established and dedicated Governance section on our website, where the public can view all board meeting papers and minutes, our AGM papers and minutes, approved budgets and performance against our KPIs. There is also a library of our organisational policies and other relevant documents, such as our strategic risk assessment, Public Liability Insurance, Governance Handbook, IP and ICO information and our staff and director register of interests. The Governance section is navigated by one click from the menu bar at the top of the homepage.

We also transparently publish all our research, which is now organised into a dedicated Research Hub, which is again navigated in one click from the menu bar at the top of the homepage. Within the news section of the website, we publish all our external scrutiny of ESG Gaming (such as our Investors in People, Pride 365, Metaverse Standards Forum, or Armed Forces Covenant reports), social impact and thought leadership blogs. Finally, we publish this, our detailed CIC34 report annually, our year-end accounts and Directors report and a comprehensive ESG Gaming branded annual review.

In establishing ESG Gaming, we remain focused on social impact innovation, gaming, tech and gambling gateway products, grey and dark markets and streams of unique research and insight. We also strongly focus on income diversification to ensure the longstanding financial sustainability of our organisation. We see much duplication in the sectors in which we operate (i.e. gaming, gambling, tech, health), and we continue to spend considerable time understanding how we might contribute meaningfully and in a way that doesn't duplicate other services.

ESG Gaming continues to work in the gaming, gambling, tech, and health sectors, which is in keeping with our mission of being passionate advocates of emerging technology. ESG Gaming is committed to working alongside all stakeholders to ensure the experience is open, inclusive, and positive for all consumers and stakeholders.

Finally, ESG Gaming strongly believes in enabling other not-for-profit, grass-roots organisations and creatives to succeed, and we continue to donate up to 25% of our surplus annually to achieve this.

Fundraising is challenging for many community organisations, and our donations are possible due to the salary sacrifice of our founder, which saw £25,600 donated in the period of this report.

Year three has been challenging, but we have made humbling progress around the priority areas we identified in our strategic review.

### **Our approach to impactful products**

ESG Gaming continues to work in the gaming, gambling, tech, and health sectors, which is in keeping with our mission of being passionate advocates of emerging technology.

### **Virtual Reality & esports**

Working alongside our partners, we want to understand how virtual reality and esports might reduce loneliness and social isolation, reduce the risk factors for dementia, and provide an alternative, drug-free prescription for depression among those aged 50 years and over.

This year saw ESG Gaming launch an interactive virtual reality space (The DOME by ESG Gaming) where customers can experience an immersive and nostalgic virtual reality dome with three specific rooms (i) a Health & fitness room where we will host fitness classes and have interactive educational material on diet, physical and mental health, and fitness; (ii) a Mindfulness Space where meditation, mindfulness and relaxation classes take place and an opportunity to visit some fantastic countries virtually and finally (iii) our Auditorium where we host a variety of special interest events including stand-up comedy, motivational speakers and lifestyle classes. Plus, we have opportunities for consumers to participate in games to stimulate essential brain glands, including the:

- **Cerebrum:** *The cerebrum is the largest part of the brain. Divided into lobes, it coordinates thought, movement, memory, senses, speech, and temperature.*
- **Amygdala:** *Plays a key role in emotional responses, hormonal secretions, and memory formation.*
- **Hippocampus:** *Plays a vital role in memory formation and spatial navigation.*
- **Optic tectum:** *Also known as the superior colliculus, it directs eye movements.*
- **Mammillary Bodies:** *Plays a role in recollective memory.*
- **Function:** *Regulates emotions, memory, and arousal.*

We also developed an interactive esports workshop aimed explicitly at customers over 50 years old, where we not only use games to stimulate the essential brain glands but also the workshops enable understanding to be built between intergenerational populations. By bringing grandparents/parents together with their grandchildren/children or bringing together people from different social or ethnic backgrounds, understanding and trust can be fostered, improving community relations. Our esports workshops aim to deliver the following learning outcomes:

- **Understanding the Esports Industry and Career Relevance:** *Customers will comprehend the structure and significance of the esports and technology sectors and their potential impact on future career opportunities for their community, children/grandchildren or themselves.*

- **Exploring Esports History and Future Trends:** *Customers will examine the historical development of esports events and tournaments, as well as analyse future trends shaping the industry and action they can take locally to bring communities together through gaming.*
- **Developing Gaming Skills and Confidence:** *Customers will gain practical experience in gaming setup, game launching, and team play, leading to increased confidence in gaming environments and digital skills to aid future employment or entrepreneurship skills.*
- **Understanding the Importance of Gaming and Esports in Employment:** *Customers will recognise the transferable skills gained through gaming and esports and understand their relevance to future employment opportunities for themselves or their children or grandchildren or local community.*

### **Minimising tech harms**

As ESG Gaming, we are aware of the potential mental health and addiction challenges that emerging tech may pose to customers. We are also aware of the growing Black Market for deploying gaming and gambling content, which is often targeted at young or vulnerable people.

Therefore, we are scoping an additional stream of work by working collaboratively with gaming publishers, esports teams and gambling operators to foster a culture of consumer protection and develop educational tools specifically for gamers and parents. The educational tools are currently in development following the production of our Theory of Change, consumer research and academic research.

We are also getting a sense of the challenge surrounding Black Markets and, in particular, unregulated content appearing on the Dark Web. We are looking to undertake a substantive research project into the Dark Web next year and, from that, seek partners to examine how, as a society, we can respond to those challenges to safeguard customers.

### **Our approach to research**

ESG Gaming undertook and published six pieces of research during the period of this report.

- How technology might provide an alternative, drug-free prescription for depression for people aged 50 and above.
- How technology might reduce risk factors of dementia and similar neurological afflictions in people aged 50 and above.
- How technology can reduce loneliness in people aged 50 and above.
- A case for community action: esports, older players, mental health and social isolation.
- Influencer-led gambling in gaming on streaming channels of Twitch, YouTube and Kick.
- Initial literature review into unregulated and unlicensed gambling on the dark web.

These research projects were completed in collaboration with a mixture of academic institutions, individual researchers, consumer insight, parents, and those with Lived Experience of tech harms.

### **Building organisational excellence**

Building upon our organisational foundations has remained a priority. ESG Gaming will continue to model exemplary governance through our transparency and invite external scrutiny and feedback from various accreditation bodies, awarding organisations and stakeholders.

We renewed our commitment to the Living Wage Foundation and continued our support of Ecologi as a Climate-Positive Employer. We continued our membership Crypto UK, the Metaverse Standards Forum and Living Wage Foundation. We built further upon our foundations with Investors in People, Pride 365 and the Blockchain Council. Our founder has continued his studies towards an MBA and supported other start-up founders through their work with Virgin Start-Up.

Our headcount grew during the year, adding to the diversity of thought and experience of the ESG Gaming team. We continued to ensure we really thanked everybody personally for their invaluable contribution to our social purpose. ESG Gaming remains committed to a low but highly effective and impactful headcount as we model exemplar value for money.

### **Securing our financial future**

Securing our funding remains a challenge. Our income currently comes principally from grants or corporate donations, and we use that income to develop our products, deliver our products, and undertake research. All our products are offered free of charge to customers. Our donations also pay for the central costs across ESG Gaming, including volunteer expenses, travel, insurance, marketing, conferences, training etc.

Additionally, we are grateful for the various corporate pro bono pledges, which supported our legal costs and contributed to product development, capital costs, and evaluation.

The founder remains responsible for income generation, and we are seeking to strengthen this with additional resources in 2024/25.

### **Gracious, humble and kind leadership**

Everybody at ESG Gaming is hand-picked and humble, gracious, and kind in their approach. We have big ambitions, an unwavering passion and a solid commitment to our social purpose. However, we intend to execute this through an incredibly streamlined organisation, deploying a low headcount to epitomise and model value for money in our sector. Our directors have agreed that we will not take on any social or debt finance to establish or grow ESG Gaming. We are embracing the challenge of establishing our organisation from a standing start. We feel there is nothing more rewarding than creating something from nothing.

We have published our governance handbook, which sets out how the work of ESG Gaming will be led, how we manage the effectiveness of directors and employees and the benefits our employees will receive. We have committed to having an employee pay ratio not exceeding 4:1 (£125,000 highest possible salary to a median salary of £31,250); 35 paid holidays which rises to 40 days based on length of service; private healthcare; the latest equipment for home working; the opportunity to study for a fully-funded Degree or Masters qualification at no cost to the employee and the opportunity to travel and work overseas for up to four weeks a year.

### **What we have done in year three**

ESG Gaming was incorporated on 13 August 2021 as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. On 05 November 2021, the legal structure was changed to a regulated not-for-profit and with no share capital Community Interest Company (CIC). This change was made as we sought additional regulatory oversight to underline our commitment to deliver our activities in a way where no profit (surplus) is distributed to individuals (shareholders). Being a not-for-profit organisation gives us a unique legal structure, particularly in the gaming and tech sectors.

Here is a top-level summary of what we achieved in year three (period 01 August 2023 – 25 July 2024):

- Secured and banked £339,909 in donations (£310,980 in 2022/23 and £95,963 in 2021/22).
- Secured £37,650 in pro bono support (£42,900 in 2022/23 and £18,437 in 2021/22).
- Maintained financial resilience by ending the year with £288,793 cash at bank (£188,754 in 2022/23 and £52,240 in 2021/22).
- Donated £25,600 to grassroots organisations or creatives in the gaming space (£12,600 in 2022/23 and £5,450 in 2021/22).
- Published six research papers and created a Research Hub on our website (nil in previous years).
- Continued our partnership with Ecologi to off-set our carbon emissions and planted a further 500 trees (150 trees planted in 2022/23)
- Won two awards: Best Product at the world's biggest EdTech event, Bett 2024, and we were recognised as Regional Finalists in the UK Start Up Awards 2024 (nil in previous years).
- Scoped, developed, built and piloted a Virtual Reality platform and an immersive esports course, reaching over 2,500 customers (500 customers in previous years).
- Further strengthened and published our governance handbook and operational policies.
- Showcased ESG Gaming at eight Global events, including ESI NextGen at Oxford University; ESI London at Boxpark Wembley; ICE at Excel London; BETT at Excel London; Mobile World Congress at Fira de Barcelona Gran Via, IN4 Gametech Launch at London City Hall.
- Met with 132 stakeholders from different sectors (87 in previous years).
- Attended four House of Parliament or Lords events (nil in previous years).

Here is a top-level summary of what we are striving to achieve in year four (period 26 July 2024 – 25 July 2025):

- Secure and bank £350,000 in donations.
- Secure £25,000 in pro bono support
- Secure c£175,000 (or 50% of the budget for 2025/26) of pledged income for year five by 25 July 2025 to help build financial resilience.
- Maintain financial resilience by ending the year with c£250,000 cash at bank.
- Secure two multi-year funding commitments to help build financial resilience.
- Secure a Government Funding Contract to scale Virtual Reality & esports workshops.

- Donate up to 25% of our surplus to grassroots community organisations or creatives through founder salary sacrifice.
- Reach a minimum of 10,000 customers with our products.
- Publish four further research papers.
- Publish a substantive research paper on Black Markets and give clear recommendations as to how to minimise harm to customers.
- Research, plan, and understand the mechanics of commissioning an independent clinical trial and the costs involved.
- Co-create a Social Influencer Charter to increase the Influencer community's knowledge, skills and behaviour.
- Build upon our partnership with Ecologi, aiming to plant a further 100 trees
- Showcase ESG Gaming at up to eight Global events.
- Met with c150 stakeholders from different sectors.
- Organise a Parliamentary Event for Parliamentarians and members of the House of Lords.
- Consider changing the reporting year to 01 January – 31 December annually.

**Completed and accepted by the board at the AGM on 21 August 2024.**

*(If applicable, please just state "A social audit report covering these points is attached").*

*(Please continue on separate continuation sheet if necessary.)*

**PART 2 – CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS** – *Please indicate who the company's stakeholders are; how the stakeholders have been consulted and what action, if any, has the company taken in response to feedback from its consultations? If there has been no consultation, this should be made clear.*

**ESG Gaming has a wide range of stakeholders, from statutory and regulatory stakeholders to gaming, gambling, health and tech stakeholders, and Parliamentarians. Below is a list of some of our principle stakeholders with whom we have engaged within the year, the reason for the engagement, and the outcome.**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Reason for engagement</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Gambling Commission	Reporting RET donations for public publication.	Reported.
Information Commissions Office	Re-registration	Registered
Pride 365	Gain accreditation	Achieved
Social Enterprise UK	Membership	Members
Natwest Bank	On going banking support	Bank account established
Pleo	On going banking cards	Pleo account established
Markel Direct	Arrange insurance	Insurance in place
HMRC	Statutory requirement for HMRC, D11 & VAT returns	Registered and returns in place
Intellectual Property Office	Trade Mark registration	Trade Mark granted
Licensed Gambling Operators	Secure RET funding	Funding secured
Four Day Week Campaign	Join campaign	Member
Gaming companies	Secure partnerships	Engaged partners
Delivery Partners	Delivery of products	Engaged partners
University Partners	Support with research	Work published
Public	Insight into products	Insights gained
Crypto UK	Membership	Members
TrustLaw / Mishcon de Raye LLP	Legal support	Nominated lawyers
HTC VIVE	VR supplier	Product build
Living Wage Foundation	Membership	Member
Tech companies	Support with product build	Nominated suppliers
Events Companies	Support with a stand for ESG Gaming & speaking opportunities	Secured
Esports teams and associated organisations	Broaden knowledge of esports and gaming	Joint funding proposals and to gain knowledge and insight.
Fundraising Regulator	Secure membership	Membership gained
Technology Infrastructure organisations	Secure membership or insight	Membership and insights gained



*(If applicable, please just state "A social audit report covering these points is attached").*

**PART 3 – DIRECTORS' REMUNERATION** – *if you have provided full details in your accounts you need not reproduce it here. Please clearly identify the information within the accounts and confirm that, "There were no other transactions or arrangements in connection with the remuneration of directors, or compensation for director's loss of office, which require to be disclosed" (See example with full notes). If no remuneration was received you must state that "no remuneration was received" below.*

The highest-paid director (P L Willows) received a remuneration of £57,837 Gross for the period 01 August 2023 – 25 July 2024 and is employed full-time within ESG Gaming.

The board agreed that the maximum salary for this post is £125,000, which is fixed until 31 July 2025. This payment was for the full-time role of Exec Chair & Founder, which was undertaken by a director. This postholder drew down £89,993 in 2022/23 and £900 in 2021/22.

Other directors at ESG Gaming (C Jones and S Cooke) received honorariums totalling £4,500 in 2023/24. These postholders received £7,750 in 2022/23 and nil in 2021/22.

The board have agreed NEDs can draw down £250pcm, with additional payments made for duties over and above their fiduciary roles.

**PART 4 – TRANSFERS OF ASSETS OTHER THAN FOR FULL CONSIDERATION** – Please insert full details of any transfers of assets other than for full consideration e.g. Donations to outside bodies. If this does not apply you must state that "no transfer of assets other than for full consideration has been made" below.

**No transfer of assets other than for full consideration has been made**

*(Please continue on separate continuation sheet if necessary.)*

**PART 5 – SIGNATORY (Please note this must be a live signature)**

**(DD/MM/YY)**

The original report must be signed by a director or secretary of the company

Signed

Date

11/08/2024

**Please note that it is a legal requirement for the date format to be provided in full throughout the CIC34 report.**

**Applications will be rejected if this information is incorrect.**

*Office held (delete as appropriate) Director/Secretary*

You do not have to give any contact information in the box opposite but if you do, it will help the Registrar of Companies to contact you if there is a query on the form. The contact information that you give will be visible to searchers of the public record.

<b>ESG Corporate Community Interest Company</b>	
<b>124 City Road</b>	
<b>London</b>	
<b>EC1V 2NX</b>	<b>Tel 0203 488 5227</b>
<b>DX Number</b>	<b>DX Exchange</b>

**When you have completed and signed the form, please attach it to the accounts and send both forms by post to the Registrar of Companies at:**

*For companies registered in England and Wales:* Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff, CF14 3UZ  
DX 33050 Cardiff

*For companies registered in Scotland:* Companies House, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Edinburgh Quay 2, 139  
Fountainbridge, Edinburgh, EH3 9FF DX 235 Edinburgh or LP – 4 Edinburgh 2

*For companies registered in Northern Ireland:* Companies House, 2nd Floor, The Linenhall, 32-38  
Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BG

**(N.B. Please enclose a cheque for £15 payable to Companies House)**