AQUASANDS

THE WOLF SERIES · Nº 03

The US LLC Playbook

For non-residents: Delaware, Wyoming, New Mexico or Florida, the federal filings nobody mentions, and the USD 25,000 mistake.

BY JASON PIVRON, DIRECTOR · AQUASANDS

EDITION NOVEMBER 2026

Stop being a pigeon.
Join the wolves.

BEFORE YOU READ

A great tool. Not a magic one.

A US LLC opens doors: US clients, payment platforms, fintech banking, a credible address. It does not make your income disappear. This playbook shows what it really does, what it costs to keep, and where non-residents get burned.

WHAT YOU GET

- Delaware, Wyoming, New Mexico, Florida in one table.
- The federal side for a non-resident owner, in plain words.
- The annual calendar, including the USD 25,000 form.
- Banking as a non-resident, as it really works.
- The seven traps, and a scorecard for your case.

WHAT IT IS NOT

- Not a do-it-yourself kit. Whether your income touches the US, and how your home country treats the LLC, is decided one to one.
- Not tax or legal advice. It is general information, stated as at November 2026.
- Not a promise of 0%. Your income stays taxable where you live.

Inside

1 · What a US LLC is, and is not p. 3
2 · Choosing the state p. 4
3 · The federal side for non-residents p. 5
4 · Banking as a non-resident p. 6
5 · The annual calendar p. 7
6 · Your home country and the LLC p. 8
7 · The seven traps p. 9
8 · Your scorecard p. 10
What this playbook leaves out on purpose p. 11

WHAT IT IS

01

A transparent box with a US address.

A single-member LLC owned by a non-resident is, for US federal tax, usually a disregarded entity: the LLC itself does not pay federal income tax; its income is looked at as the owner's.

WHY FOUNDERS CHOOSE IT

- Sell to US clients with a US entity.
- Access payment platforms and fintech accounts.
- Low formation cost, fast registration, light upkeep.
- Some states keep the members off the public record.

WHAT IT DOES NOT DO

- It does not move your residence.
- It does not remove tax where you live.
- It does not exempt you from federal filings.
- It does not open a US bank by itself.

€999
Florida LLC formation with AquaSands, government fees included

€1,290
Wyoming or New Mexico LLC formation

€1,390
Delaware LLC formation

DECIDED ON THE CALL

Whether a US LLC is the right tool for your activity, or whether a UAE, UK or Hong Kong company fits your clients better. **Book the 45-minute call →**

CHOOSING THE STATE

02

Four states, four personalities.

The state you choose sets your annual upkeep, your privacy and how banks and clients read you.

STATE	FORMATION	REGISTRATION	ANNUAL UPKEEP	BANKING IN PRACTICE
Delaware	from €1,390	2 days	Annual LLC tax due by 1 June.	Fintechs (Mercury, Relay, Wise). Deposit banks require physical presence.
Wyoming	from €1,290	5–10 days	Annual report with a licence tax.	Fintechs only, in practice, for a non-resident.
New Mexico	from €1,290	5–10 days	No annual report, no member disclosure.	Fintechs only, in practice, for a non-resident.
Florida	from €999	5–7 days	Annual report. State tax applies once there is effective presence in Florida.	Fintechs, plus local banks if you travel for the opening.

THE WOLF READING

Delaware for investors and credibility. **Wyoming** and **New Mexico** for lean upkeep and privacy. **Florida** if you will actually travel there and want a local bank, knowing that real presence brings state tax with it.

DECIDED ON THE CALL

Your state. It depends on who your clients are, whether you will raise money, and whether you will ever set foot in the US. Pick your state →

THE FEDERAL SIDE

03

0% federal is a result, not a regime.

For a non-resident owner with no US trade or business and no US-source income, federal income tax usually comes out at 0%. That is a conclusion reached case by case, never a status you are granted.

What can change the answer

- [ ] **People or offices in the US** working for the LLC: employees, dependent agents, a real US office.
- [ ] **Services performed in the US**: income from work done on US soil is US-source.
- [ ] **US-source passive income**: certain US dividends, interest, rents or royalties.
- [ ] **US real estate** held or sold through the LLC.

THE FORM THAT COSTS USD 25,000

Every LLC owned by a non-resident files **Form 5472** with a **pro forma Form 1120** every year, even with zero tax and zero revenue. A missing Form 5472 carries a **USD 25,000 penalty**. This is the mistake that turns a cheap LLC into an expensive one.

EIN

the federal tax number every LLC needs, obtained after formation

€1,890 / year

from, for AquaSands US accounting and federal filings

DECIDED ON THE CALL

Whether anything in your activity touches the US, and how to keep it clean. Check your US exposure →

BANKING

04

Fintech first. Bank branch only if you fly.

For a non-resident founder, a US LLC usually banks with a fintech. Traditional deposit banks generally want to see you in person.

WHAT FINTECHS LOOK AT

- Formation documents and EIN letter.
- Your identity and address abroad.
- A clear description of the business and its clients.
- A website and some proof of activity.
- Your country of residence and the countries you deal with.

WHAT GETS ACCOUNTS CLOSED

- Activity that does not match what you declared.
- Flows to or from countries the fintech will not serve.
- Sudden volumes with no explanation.
- Using the business account for personal spending.

THE RULE

Banks and fintechs do not refuse LLCs. They refuse **stories that do not add up**. Prepare the description of your business before the application, not after the first refusal.

DECIDED ON THE CALL

Which institution to apply to first for your profile and country of residence, and the file we prepare for it. We prepare the file; nobody serious guarantees an approval, and neither do we. **Prepare your bank file →**

THE ANNUAL CALENDAR

05

Cheap to keep, if you keep it.

A US LLC is cheap to maintain when the calendar is respected, and expensive when it is not.

WHEN	WHAT	WHO IT CONCERNS
Every year	Form 5472 with a pro forma Form 1120 to the IRS, for the previous year.	Every LLC owned by a non-resident.
By 1 June	Annual LLC tax to the State of Delaware.	Delaware LLCs.
Each year	Annual report with licence tax.	Wyoming LLCs.
Each year	Annual report.	Florida LLCs.
Every year	Registered agent renewal in the state.	All states.
Every year	Your own tax return where you live, including the LLC's income.	You.

THE BOOKKEEPING MINIMUM

- One business account, used only for the business.
- Every transfer between you and the LLC recorded: capital in, distributions out, expenses paid.
- Invoices and contracts kept for each client.

DECIDED ON THE CALL

Your exact deadlines, and who files what. We take the federal filings off your hands every year from €1,890.
Secure your calendar →

YOUR HOME COUNTRY

06

The US may not tax it. Your government might.

Income that escapes US federal tax is still income. It remains taxable in the country where you are resident.

Three questions your government can ask

01 **How do we classify the LLC?** Some countries look through it like the US does. Others treat it as an opaque company. The answer changes how and when you are taxed.

02 **Where is it managed?** If you run it from home, your country may consider it resident there.

03 **Do you control a low-taxed company?** Controlled foreign company rules can tax its profits in your hands.

THE COMBINATION THAT WORKS

A US LLC is at its best when paired with a **residence that suits it**: a country that taxes lightly or territorially, where you genuinely live. The LLC handles the US clients; your residence handles your personal tax.

READ NEXT

Our playbook *Live Here, Bill There* covers residence routes in the UAE, Georgia, Paraguay and Switzerland, and how to leave your home system cleanly.

DECIDED ON THE CALL

How your country of residence treats a US LLC, and which residence pairs with it for your case.
Check your pairing →

THE SEVEN TRAPS

07

Where pigeons lose their money.

01 **Skipping Form 5472.** Zero revenue does not mean zero filing. USD 25,000 per missing form.

02 **Believing "US LLC = 0% tax".** 0% federal is a result for some non-residents. Your home tax is a separate question.

03 **Working from the US without thinking.** Services performed on US soil can create US-source income and change everything.

04 **Choosing Florida for the price, then moving there.** Real presence brings state tax with it.

05 **Mixing personal and business money.** The fastest way to lose a fintech account and muddle your tax return.

06 **Letting the registered agent lapse.** The state can dissolve the LLC administratively.

07 **Forgetting your own country.** Its classification of the LLC can turn a clean US setup into a taxable mess at home.

THE PATTERN

The formation costs a few hundred euros of effort. The traps live in the years after. A US LLC is a subscription to a calendar: respect it and it is cheap.

YOUR SCORECARD

08

Ready for a US LLC, or about to pay twice?

Tick honestly. This is for you, not for us.

I know who my clients are and why a US entity helps me sell to them.	Yes ☐	No ☐
Neither I nor anyone working for the LLC will operate from the US.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I know which state fits my clients, investors and travel plans.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I know that Form 5472 and a pro forma 1120 are due every year.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I know how my country of residence classifies a US LLC.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I know which fintech I will apply to, and what it expects.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I will keep business and personal money strictly separate.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I have a yearly budget for the state, the agent and the filings.	Yes ☐	No ☐

8 YES

You are ready. A call gets you a firm quote and the formation started.

5 TO 7 YES

Close. The gaps are usually your home country and the bank: 45 minutes closes them.

4 OR FEWER

Do not form anything yet. Book the call first; it may save you the whole budget.

BRING THESE TO YOUR CALL

Write down every "No" above. They are the agenda of your 45 minutes, and the answers you leave with.

WHAT THIS PLAYBOOK LEAVES OUT ON PURPOSE

The LLC is easy. The fit is the work.

You now know how a US LLC works and where it bites. What a document cannot do is apply it to your clients, your residence and your bank. These are the decisions we make with you:

- Whether a US LLC is the right tool, or another jurisdiction fits better.
- Your state, and your yearly upkeep in that state.
- Whether anything you do touches the US, and how to keep it clean.
- Your first fintech, and the file that gets the account opened.
- How your own country treats the LLC, and the residence that pairs with it.

BOOK YOUR 45-MINUTE CALL

aquasands.net/request

At the end, we tell you what we would do in your place, including building nothing at all. The answer is often no, and we would rather say so before billing anything.

CALL · WHATSAPP · TELEGRAM
+41 77 981 72 76

EMAIL
contact@aquasands.net

HOURS
Mon–Sat, 9am–1am CET
French and English

AquaSands Trading AG, Zug, Switzerland. This playbook is general information stated as at November 2026. It is neither tax advice, nor legal advice, nor an investment solicitation. Federal and state rules, filing requirements, penalties, fees and banking policies change and depend on your circumstances; each must be validated case by case by a licensed adviser. We apply client identification and anti-money-laundering procedures to every file and reserve the right to decline an engagement. Prices include government fees and exclude travel, sworn translation and apostille costs.