

University of Twente Association Sustainability Guide

Green
Hub
Twente



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Introduction

This is a guide to help associations become more sustainable. It contains an overview of sustainability at the UT and concrete steps you can take as an association to become more sustainable. If you have any questions or additions to this document, please reach out to operational-greenhub@utwente.nl

Sustainability at the UT

In [Shaping2030](#), the mission, vision and strategy of the UT for the coming years, the goal was established to ensure that by 2030 the University of Twente has become a sustainable organisation. To achieve this, the [SEE programme](#) was established, a university-wide programme for managing the UT's sustainability, energy & environmental performance. [Green Hub Twente](#) is the central point where all knowledge and initiatives related to sustainability within the university converge and reinforce each other. The student-driven Green Hub plays an active role in shaping, realizing, implementing and tracking UT's sustainability policies. It aims to create a bottom-up movement for sustainability within the UT community and will act as a channel for a network of (young) sustainability professionals and entrepreneurs, empowering them as navigators of organisational transformations to sustainability in business and in wider society. At the UT, integrating sustainability in an organisation is defined as systematically reducing the use of resources, energy and reducing the damaging consequences of the activities of the organisation such as pollution to the air, water and soil. All information regarding sustainability at the UT can be found at <https://www.utwente.nl/en/sustainability/>.

Why should you become more sustainable?

Becoming a sustainable association contributes to preserving the environment and, as a consequence, the quality of life for people all around the world. As an association, you have the opportunity to have a larger positive impact than a single person can have. You can inspire and lead the way! Furthermore, a sustainable approach focusses on making conscious choices, often leading to a reduced consumption, which can be good for your budget as well.

Sustainability Steps

Now it's time to make your association more sustainable! The workings of an association are divided in eleven themes, matching [the sustainability plan of the UT](#). Each theme includes concrete examples of what you can do to become a more sustainable organisation! Some tips will take more effort than others. It's up to you how far you take it! While this list is quite long, the principle is the same:

1. Reduce your consumptions,
2. Reuse what you consume where possible,
3. Recycle what you cannot reuse,
4. Compensate for the emissions you cause.

Communication

Policy

Let's start with the fact you'll be implementing sustainable policy. Sustainability deserves to be in your policy plan! Dedicate a section to this subject, with concrete implementation ideas. This makes sure you stick to your goals and shows the outside that you're working on it! You can even use the themes used in this document as subsections for your plan.

Promotion

As an association you have a lot of promotion to do. You want to promote events, committees and other happenings, and reach your target group the most effectively. Do it sustainably:

- **Waste-reduced promotion:** If you're not ready yet to transfer to wasteless promotion, there's many things you can do to reduce your promotion waste.
 - o *Use useful materials to hand out:* For example, spread your message on a roll of toilet paper! People will definitely remember your event this way.
 - o *Use a timeless design:* No dates and times on the flyer, refer to the website. This way, you can reuse any left-over flyers.
 - o *Use both sides of the flyer:* This way, you can have smaller flyers and use less paper. Even less paper: use a business card with a QR code!
 - o *Place flyers and posters in the right locations:* you need fewer flyers to reach many people.
 - o *Use a sustainable supplier:* Suppliers like groenprint.nl, printenbind.nl or greengiving.nl allow for more sustainable flyer printing.
- **Wasteless promotion:** No more flyers, posters, stickers, seat covers or other material. Only use digital promotion such as [the UT's LED screens](#), the [SU's event calendar](#), your website, social media or e-mail.
- **Promote sustainability:** Share that your event is organised sustainably (see theme 'Events'), to inspire others and make them aware of your sustainability efforts.

Energy

If your association has a board room, you probably use energy there. Reducing your energy consumption is an effective way to become more sustainable.

- **Save electricity:**
 - o Use energy-efficient products, like LEDs or water boilers, dishwasher.
 - o Turn off the lights and computers if nobody is there or use motion sensors.
 - o Unplug unused chargers
- **Save heat:**
 - o Turn down the heating, wear a sweater during winter!
 - o Insulation, radiator foil

Water

- Use a water saving tap
- Don't hand out bottled water at events, let people bring their own bottle.

Waste

For waste, there's three important aspects: preventing waste, producing less waste, and separate any produced waste optimally. Waste can be divided in many categories: plastics, glass, organic, paper, electronic devices, and even data storage (as it takes electronics to store this data).

- **Separate waste:** Does your board room have the possibility to separate waste? There's probably a trashcan to recycle your waste close to your board room. Are you using this instead of throwing it away unseparated in your board room? Do you separate the waste produced during events?
- **Reduce waste:** In each category, you can reduce the amount of waste you produce.

- Buy less packaged foods for the association. Sell fruit instead of wrapped candy, or bake cake yourself instead of buying cookies in wrapping.
- Buy large containers when possible.
- Go paperless: Is your administration fully digital? Are any booklets, for example during a symposium, available online? Also see the tips for promotion above.
- Use washable plates, bowls and cups for BBQs that can go into a dishwasher.
- Replace plastic cutlery with second-hand metal cutlery
- Replace paper cups by washable mugs
- Use metal/bamboo straws
- Use towels instead of paper napkins

Food & Drinks

Food is a large part of the impact we have on our planet. However, that also means there's a lot we can do to improve that!

- **Reduce the amount of animal products used:** The strictest policy would be to only have vegan food at your association ('s events). Of course, your contribution isn't that black and white, many gradations are possible. You can decide to go (partly) vegan or vegetarian. For example, at half of your events. You can also only nudge people by making vegetarian/vegan the default or the cheaper option.
- **Select your food:** Local and seasonal products require less transportation and refrigeration. Make a sustainable choice for your coffee and tea, such as loose tea instead of tea bags (avoid plastic tea bags, paper ones can be composted). Also think about organic or fair-trade options. Take the packaging of food into consideration. Choose packaging-free options such as fruit. Bring your own bags when picking up food. Serve drinks in glass instead of single-use plastics. Let people bring their own bottle or mug.
- **Consume your food:** Prepare or order the right amount to reduce leftovers. Decide what happens to leftovers, so they're not thrown away. Maybe the food bank is an option or giving it away to members.

Travel & Mobility

- **Don't travel:** The covid-pandemic has shown us the value of videoconferencing tools. Sometimes, this way of meeting is enough, and travel can be prevented.
- **Choose the sustainable option:** Travel less far, travel by (e-)bike, foot or public transport. Carpool if public transport is unavailable. Indoors, taking the stairs is not only healthier, but it also saves the elevator some energy! Even if you only walk down, you reduce your elevator trips by 50%. What is your policy for choosing a travel method?
- **Compensate:** For long-distance trips, consider the train within Europe. When flying is unavoidable and you've deemed this long-distance travel necessary, compensate the CO₂-emissions from your trip.

Biodiversity

- Adding plants to your board room is good for the air quality and wellbeing (stress reliever)
- If your association has an outside area, you can make sure a diverse range of plants grow there, to help the insect population! This has to be discussed with [the terrain manager](#).

Buildings

If your association has a board room, furnish it sustainably!

- **Use second-hand furniture:** If you get rid of it again, bring it to a secondhand shop or give it away so it is used for something else.
- **Insulate:** An easy step is to add radiator foil behind your radiators. If other insulation can be applied, talk to the service desk in your building about it.
- **If you really need single-use items:** Use paper ones.
- **Use more eco-friendly alternatives** such as refillable, eco-friendly soap or bar soap to reduce plastic waste. Use biodegradable sponges and eco-friendly paper (if you really need paper). Digitally, use the [ecosia](#) search engine, to plant some trees while searching!

Events

When you organise an event, minimise the materials you need. For example, can people bring their own bottle, their own cutlery? When collaborating with other organisations, involve them in sustainability. For example, if you have an external speaker from a company, ask them to tell something about the sustainability policy of their company. Of course, the tips presented in other sections can be used for your events. Next to this guide, a **checklist** is available where you can assess the sustainability of your event. With this checklist, you can earn a 'green certificate' for your event!

Finance

Make your money speak! Transfer to a more sustainable bank such as the ASN or Triodos. An overview is found [here](#) (Dutch). If your association invests money, invest in sustainable stocks. Support charities that are committed to sustainability. Finally, your expenditure policy can have impact on the choices of your members. For example, stop reimbursing plastic bags, or make vegan/vegetarian food options at events cheaper.

Materials (Procurement & Processing)

As an association, the most visible way of impacting the environment are the materials you buy. Reducing the number of items you buy, directly reduces your impact. Here are some topics that you could tackle:

- **Clothing:** As an association, you may buy clothing for the board, committees and certain events.
 - o First decide what your policy is on clothing purchases. When do you deem it necessary?
 - o If you've decided it's necessary, choose the right clothing. Second-hand clothing is the best option. It may be difficult to find matching clothes second-hand, but what about starting a new trend? Add your logo to show uniformity and have different clothes to show individuality! If second-hand is no option for you, buy [sustainable materials](#) from sustainable shops.
- **Goodie bags:** It may seem tempting to hand out goodie bags during e.g., the Kick-In. However, this often leads to unnecessary consumption. People don't need another Dopper! If you do want to hand out a goodie bag, hand out only useful, consumable, local items, and don't forget about the sustainability the bag itself! Even better, try out a new system, where people only take what they really want to have. Finally, making the items 'timeless' is a good way to make sure you're not left with leftover items, as you can reuse them later.
- **Thank-you gifts:** Thank-you gifts are similar to goodie bags. Try to give only useful, consumable, local items. Even better, make a donation in their name to a sustainable charity!
- **Study books:** If you're a study association, you probably provide the study books for your members. Stimulating the borrowing and selling study books of study books limits the amount of paper needed to print all those books.