

University of Twente

**Association
Sustainability
Guide**

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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, additions to this document or need any other sustainability-related help, 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 becomes a sustainable organisation. To achieve this, the [SEE programme](#) was established, a university-wide programme for managing the UT's sustainability, energy & environmental performance.

At the UT, integrating sustainability in an organisation is defined as a systematic reduction in the use of resources and energy and a decrease in damaging consequences of the activities of the organisation such as pollution to the air, water and soil. All the information regarding sustainability at the UT can be found at <https://www.utwente.nl/en/sustainability/>.

[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 at creating a bottom-up movement for sustainability within the UT community and acts as a channel for a network of (young) sustainability professionals and entrepreneurs, empowering them as navigators of organisational transformations to sustainability in business and wider society.

[SUSTAIN](#) is the student association for sustainability in Twente, raising awareness on global issues and local solutions by organising events, workshops, talks, initiatives, projects and more. SUSTAIN is a community of active students who want to have a positive impact in Twente, share thoughts and execute ideas, collaborate with cool organisations, and connect with each other.

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. You can inspire and lead the way! Furthermore, a sustainable approach focuses on making conscious choices, often leading to reduced consumption, which can be good for your budget as well.

How do I make my association more sustainable?

Now it's time to make your association more sustainable! In this guide, the functioning of an association is divided into 8 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 principles to becoming a more sustainable association are:

- 1. Reduce your consumption**
- 2. Reuse what you consume where possible**
- 3. Recycle what you cannot reuse**
- 4. Purchase from sustainable initiatives and brands**

The aim of this guide is not to proscribe the perfect rules of what is good and what is not. Hopefully this guide helps to give ideas and step by step make your associations and events better for the environment. Every step forward can be celebrated.



Policy

Sustainable development can be reached only as a result of collective action. It is vital to bring everyone in your association on the same page in terms of goals and expectations. This can be achieved by drawing your sustainability policy, which can be used as a tool to make and assess the decisions. As a long-living association, you can set the sustainability policy describing your major goals and priorities, based on for example the tips mentioned in this guide. If you are ruling a one-year committee, it is possible to draw and sign the sustainability commitment policy, where your goals and actions for one year are outlined. It is also extremely useful to assign at least one person, who can take care of sustainability-related issues on a constant basis. Such measures make sure you stick to your goals and show the outside what you are working on! You can even use the section of this document as subsections for your plan. Besides that, efficient internal communication helps a lot the association in reaching its goals.



Energy and Buildings

If your association has a board room, you probably use energy there. Reducing your energy consumption is an effective way to become more sustainable. If you would like to have any control over heating and electricity, contact the [team manager of your building](#):

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

- Improving insulation does not only retain warmth inside during the winter but also keeps cold during the heating summer days!
- Digitally, use the [Ecosia](#) search engine, to plant some trees while searching

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.

Waste

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

- **Reduce waste:** In each category, you can reduce the amount of waste you produce.
 - Plan the waste: use e.g. a sign-up form to get an exact number of sandwiches to order for a small event (also see chapter 'How do I make my events more sustainable?'). Communicate to the catering or another partner company that you require waste-free service.
 - Buy less packaged foods for the association fruit instead of wrapped candy or bake cake yourself instead of buying cookies in wrapping.
 - Use large containers and trays instead of individual packaging 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.
 - Instead of disposable, 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 with washable mugs
 - Use metal/bamboo straws
 - Use towels instead of paper napkins
- **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?
 - If you are interested in having a separation bin contact the [manager of your building](#).
 - For the clarification of the waste separation rules in the campus bins see the [link](#).



Travel & Mobility

- **Don't travel:** On a smaller scale, the covid-pandemic has shown that video-conferencing can be enough and traveling can sometimes be prevented. Of course, this is not relevant if you travel by bike or by walking!
- **Choose the sustainable option:** For long-distance trips, consider using the train within Europe instead of flying. Travel less far, travel by (e-)bike, foot or public transport. Use 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:** When flying is unavoidable and you've deemed this long-distance travel necessary, you can compensate for it. Most airlines have an option to compensate for the CO₂- emissions from your trip with an extra fee during purchasing of the ticket.



Biodiversity

- Adding plants to your board room is good for the air quality and well-being (stress reliever). Make sure these plants are produced sustainably since several popular species are tropical and imported from far away countries or produced in heat-intensive greenhouses.
- If your association has an outside area, you can make sure a diverse range of plants grows there, to help the insect population! This has to be discussed with the terrain manager.



Finance

Make your money speak!

- **Sustainable Bank:** Transfer to a more sustainable bank such as the ASN or Triodos. An overview is found [here](#) (Dutch).
- **Sustainable investment (if applicable):** If your association invests money, invest in sustainable stocks. Support charities that are committed to sustainability.
- **Sustainable Budget Plan:** Finally, your expenditure policy can have an impact on the choices of your members. A budget for sustainable choices can help members decide to purchase for example organic food or more sustainable merchandise.



Materials (Procurement & Processing)

As for an association, the most visible way of impacting the environment is 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.
 - First, decide what your policy is on clothing purchases. When do you deem it necessary?
 - 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, a good option to buy personalized sustainable clothing for your branding is [Groenendijk Bedrijfskleding](#).
- **Study books:** If you're a study association, you probably provide the study books for your members. Stimulating the use of electronic versions or borrowing and selling study books limits the amount of paper used for printing.

How do I make my events more sustainable?

Promotion

- **Wasteless promotion:** No more flyers, posters, stickers, seat covers or other materials. Only use digital promotion such as the [UT's LED screens](#), the [SU's event calendar](#), your website, social media or e-mail.
- **Waste-reduced promotion:** If you're not ready yet to transfer to wasteless promotion, there are many things you can do to reduce your promotion waste.
 - 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.
 - Use a timeless design: No dates and times on the flyer, refer to the website. This way, you can reuse any left-over flyers.
 - 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!
 - Place flyers and posters in the right locations: you need fewer flyers to reach many people.
 - Use a sustainable supplier: Suppliers like [groenprint.nl](#), [printenbind.nl](#) or [greengiving.nl](#) allow for more sustainable flyer printing.
- **Promote sustainability:** Share that your event is organized sustainably (see chapter 'How do I make my events more sustainable?') to inspire others and make them aware of your sustainability efforts.

Water

Don't hand out bottled water at events, let people bring their own bottle. Also, having tap water as an option with reusable or paper cups is also a sustainable option. If absolutely necessary, organise the central collection of water bottles at the event and make sure that they get recycled by handing them in at the dedicated points.

Waste

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

- **Reduce waste:** ensure you to a pre-estimation: use e.g. a sign-up form to get an exact number of sandwiches to order for a small event. In each category, you can reduce the amount of waste you produce. When you organise an event, minimise the materials you need. For example, can people bring their bottles and their own

cutlery? Instead of using plastic cups, ask the caterer if they can provide a washable glass alternative.

- **Separate waste:** Make sure all of your events have separate bins for PMD, paper and organic waste.
- **Educate:** make sure it is clear to your members how to separate their waste. For the clarification of the waste separation rules in the campus bins see the [link](#).

Communication

When collaborating with other organizations, involve them in sustainability. For example, if you have an external speaker from a company, ask to tell them something about the sustainability policy of their company. Bring sustainability to the agenda while communicating to the partners/ co- organizers. Communicate to the catering or another partner company that you require waste-free service. Since sustainability requires collective action, it is vital to inform the participant of the event about the importance to behave responsibly. For example, you can send a letter or announce how to separate waste at your event e.g. importance to collect cups at designated locations.

Materials (Procurement & Processing)

For events, impacting the environment can also be done by changing the materials purchased. Reducing the number of items you buy, directly reduces your impact. Here are some topics that you could tackle:

- **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 Doppertje! If you do want to hand out a goodie bag, hand out only useful, consumable, local items, and don't forget about the sustainability of 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!

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). This would reduce your negative impact enormously. However, many gradations towards a more sustainable diet 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 purchasing organic or [fair-trade](#) labeled options. Take the packaging of food into consideration. Choose packaging-free options such as fruit or serve products in a bulk rather than individually, e.g. put sandwiches on a tray instead of single packaging. 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. "Too good to go" is an app which makes sure there is no food waste from shops and catering. A food bank is also an option for giving it away to members.

Green certificate for events

Next to this guide, a [checklist](#) is available where you can assess the sustainability of your event. With this checklist, you can design your event in a much more sustainable way and get a 'green certificate' for your event!

How can I get further help?

For further help contact Green Hub by operational-greenhub@utwente.nl or come to our office in Bastille 304.

You can reach SUSTAIN via board@sustain.utwente.nl, through our website: www.sustain.utwente.nl, or through social media.

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