

**Do you want to
take sustainability
to the next level?**

www.GreenOfficeMovement.org



With a **Green Office** you take sustainability to the next level!

A Green Office is a sustainability platform that empowers students and staff to embed sustainability in the curriculum, research, operations, community and governance.



CONTENTS

Green Office Model

Vision	2
Obstacles	3
Solution	4
Characteristics	5
Benefits	6
UNESCO Prize	7
Three types of Green Offices	8
Case studies	9
Teams	10
What others say	11

Activities

Success stories	13
Community engagement	14
Institutional change	15
Sustainability-focused stakeholders	16
Other stakeholders	17

The Movement

Join the Movement	19
Green Office Summit	20
Self-check	21
Steps	22
Your Green Office Design	23
Online course	24

ABOUT

This guide was developed by rootAbility gUG and the UNESCO Chair Higher Education for Sustainable Development at Leuphana University Lüneburg. The German Federal Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt) financed its development under grant number 33671/01.

This project emerged as collaboration through the UNESCO Key Partner-network to implement the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for the Sustainable Development.

Cite as: rootAbility & Leuphana University (2019) 'Green Office Model Guide', Derived from www.greenofficemovement.org

rootAbility


LEUPHANA
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG


Key Partner
UNESCO Global Action Programme on
Education for Sustainable Development

sponsored by

DBU 

Deutsche
Bundesstiftung Umwelt

www.dbu.de



This guide is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This means that you can freely adapt this content, if you use it for non-commercial purposes, reference this document and publish any new documents under the same license.

Please contact us for any questions at info@GreenOfficeMovement.org



Green Office Model



VISION

Our vision of a sustainable university!

Educators inspire students to study sustainability topics from a multi-disciplinary perspective and through real-life projects.

Researchers collaborate with NGOs, businesses and cities to find answers to sustainability challenges.

Staff embed sustainability in buildings, laboratories or procurement. They also work with educators so that students learn hands-on through sustainability projects at the university.

Students engage with sustainability in student groups, course projects, volunteering programmes and internships.

University management makes sustainability central to the university strategy and allocates funds for its implementation.

What is your vision of a sustainable university?



What **OBSTACLES** block you from achieving your vision?

Do only a few students and staff engage in sustainability?

Does university management see sustainability as a low-priority issue?

Are existing sustainability initiatives disconnected from each other?

Do sustainability efforts have low visibility and people don't know how to get involved?

Are sustainability efforts mainly volunteer-led and have low capacity?

SOLUTION

A Green Office is a sustainability platform that empowers students and staff to embed sustainability in the curriculum, research, operations, community and governance.

Student sustainability initiatives are often limited, as they lack funding and institutional access. Staff-led initiatives often struggle to engage students and mobilise many people to act on sustainability.

Unlike traditional sustainability initiatives, a Green Office empowers students to lead on sustainability, in close collaboration with staff, and receives funding, mandate and office space from university management.

	Green Office Model	Student-led initiative	Staff-led initiative
Student leadership	✓	✓	
Staff leadership	✓		✓
Institutional support	✓		✓

Table 1: Comparison between the Green Office Model and other sustainability initiatives

CHARACTERISTICS

All Green Offices share the following characteristics:



Students

Students join the Green Office as student employees, volunteers or by doing a course project.



University staff

At least one staff member acts as supervisor, coach and university contact person for the students.



Activities

Green Offices run activities to inform, connect, and support students and staff to act on sustainability.



Funding

University management or outside sponsors fund the activities, salaries and office space of the Green Office.



Mandate

University management legitimises the Green Office as an official project or department for two to three years.



Office space

Green Offices have a visible office space to run meetings, host events and be accessible during office hours.

BENEFITS

A Green Office allows you and your university to:

Empowerment: Inspire and enable more students and staff to create a bottom-up movement for sustainability

Legitimacy: Embed sustainability structurally in your organisation and make it a top priority

Collaboration: Strengthen synergies between initiatives to launch more joint projects

Visibility: Create a central sustainability contact point and make sustainability efforts more visible

Capacity: Mobilise funding and create positions for students and staff to work on sustainability projects



UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education
for Sustainable Development
Laureate 2015

**“The Green Office Model
is an **outstanding project**
to train young people as
transformation agents.”**

**Jury of the UNESCO-Japan Prize on
Education for Sustainable Development**

TYPES OF GREEN OFFICES

Three ways to organise a Green Office have emerged over time.



A student-led team with a staff contact

Students lead the Green Office and one staff member acts as their contact person.



A joint team of students and staff

Students and at least one staff member work together in the Green Office.



Separate student and staff teams

A student-led Green Office works alongside a staff-led sustainability team.

CASE STUDIES

Konstanz

Challenge

After the university let go of the sustainability coordinator, nobody was responsible for sustainability.

Solution

Students successfully lobbied for the Green Office as the official sustainability department of Konstanz University.

Team

- 6 student employees
- 1 staff member in Student Services acting as a contact person for the students

[Learn more](#)

Leuven

A staff-led sustainability team already existed, but student involvement was low.

Staff members created the Green Office to give students a voice in the university's sustainability efforts.

- 9 student employees
- 1 staff member to coordinate and coach the student team

[Learn more](#)

Utrecht

Students and staff faced challenges to get involved in sustainability and collaborate in joint projects.

The Green Office was launched to enable students and staff to exchange ideas and initiate projects.

- 8 student employees
- 4 staff member to coordinate and coach the student team

[Learn more](#)



Your team photo here!

WHAT OTHERS SAY

“Green Offices are an excellent way to integrate education for sustainable development into universities, affecting teaching and learning, the physical campus and student life.”



Miriam Tereick

UNESCO

Jamie Agombar

Head of Sustainability at National Union of Students UK

“Universities should do sustainability with students and through students. Green Offices empower students to lead on sustainability.”



Prof. Gerard Govers

Vice-rector Science, Engineering and Technology KU Leuven



“Green Offices provide a direct link between university management and the student community. This interaction and the joint projects that follow help to further sustainability.”

Jana Holz

Chairperson of netzwerk n



“The Green Office Model is a great way to promote sustainability and student participation at universities. Its whole-institution approach and creative projects enable real transformation!”



Activities



SUCCESS STORIES



Green Office Utrecht successfully lobbied for **daily vegan meal** options in the cafeteria, compared to no vegan options before.



Green Office Ghent co-created a **mobility policy**, including the rule that the emissions of all flights have to be offset.



Green Office Magdeburg co-created the first **sustainability report and long-term strategy** for the university.



Every year, Green Office Wageningen honours sustainability-minded academics at the university with a **Green Teachers Award**.



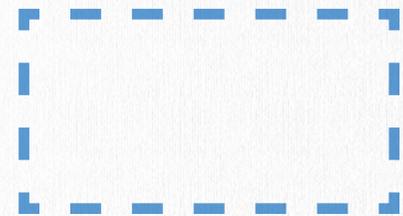
Greenwich Sustainability Hub conducted a **sustainability assessment** of 127 out of 135 study programmes.



Gothenburg Students for Sustainability organised a **sustainability day**, attended by 350 students and staff.



Maastricht University Green Office successfully lobbied to boost **e-waste recycling** by 186% within two years.



What do you want to achieve with your Green Office?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Some examples of how Green Offices engage students and staff on sustainability:

Awards for best sustainability idea

Bicycle repair workshop

Clothes swap event

Divestment day

Earth hour

Farmers' market

Green teachers award

Health Week

Insect hotels on campus

Joint board meetings of student groups

Lecture series on climate change

Meatless Monday

Networking event

Orientation week campaign

Plogging run to collect waste

Quiz night

Repair workshop

Second-hand book sale

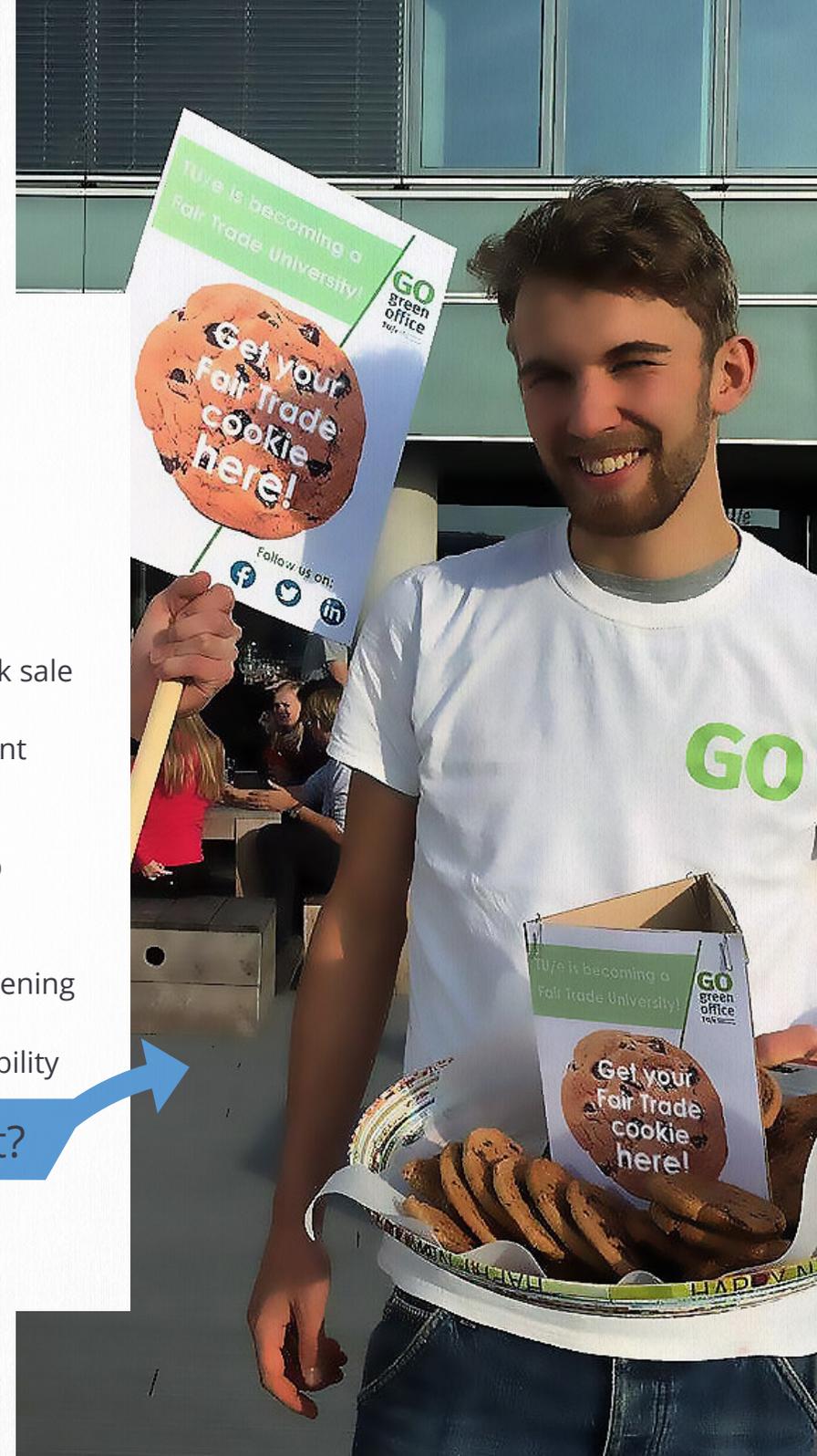
Training for student groups

Use your own cup campaign

Veggie cooking evening

Week of sustainability

Your project?



INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Some examples of how Green Offices embed sustainability within the university:

Advice on sustainable procurement

Biodiversity action plan

Carbon footprint of the university

Development of a sustainability strategy

Education for sustainability training

Fairtrade certification

Green roofs

Honours course

Inventory of sustainability courses

Journal of sustainability studies

Living lab

Mobility policy

New sustainability PhD

Organic meals in cafeteria

Proposal for new sustainability minor

Quality assessments of sustainability courses

Replacement of plastic cups

Student-led sustainability research

Tiny forest with 300 trees

Urban gardening on campus

Vegetarian catering

Water fountains

Your project?



SUSTAINABILITY-FOCUSED STAKEHOLDERS

Your Green Office doesn't replace but collaborates with people already working on sustainability at your university.



OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Your Green Office informs, connects and supports the whole university community to advance sustainability.



Academics

Develop new sustainability courses and study programmes together with you.



Course Projects

Answer sustainability-related questions for your Green Office or other actors.



University management

Co-creates sustainability strategies and policies with your Green Office.



Student volunteers

Work in your Green Office team on sustainability projects and events.



Facility Services

Collaborate on making buildings, catering and waste management more sustainable.



Student groups and representatives

Co-organise events or lobby for institutional changes with your Green Office.

GO
green
office
TU/e Technische Universiteit
Eindhoven
University of Technology

GreenOffice
powered by *avans*

GO
GREEN
OFFICE

Gothenburg
Students for Sustainability

Duurzaam
Scalda

GO with b
SGO Canterbury Christ
Church University

TU Delft
Green Office

UVA
GREEN
OFFICE

Erasmus
Sustainability
Hub

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT @

Green Office
Das Nachhaltigkeitsbüro am Umwelt-Campus

The Movement

RADBOUD
GREEN
OFFICE

Green Office
Wageningen

UniToGO
UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO
GREEN OFFICE

Green Office
Universität Hildesheim

green impact
imvaca.be

GREEN OFFICE
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

STUDENT
GREEN
OFFICE
ULB

Green Office
Van Hall Larenstein

NACHHALTIGKEITSBÜRO



GREENHU
OFFICE
POSITIVE ENERGY

HU

Leiden University
Green Office

STUDENTS'
GREEN UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
STUDENTS' GUILD

Green Office
Utrecht

Green Office
TUM Campus Straubing



ZUKUNFTSBÜRO

Drehscheibe für Nachhaltigkeit
zwischen Lehre, Forschung, Betrieb und Studierendenschaft
sowie externen Partnern

SUSTAINABILITY HUB

GREEN OFFICE
Universität Hildesheim



Green Office

JOIN THE MOVEMENT



The first Green Office started at Maastricht University in 2010. Today, it's an international movement.

450+ volunteers

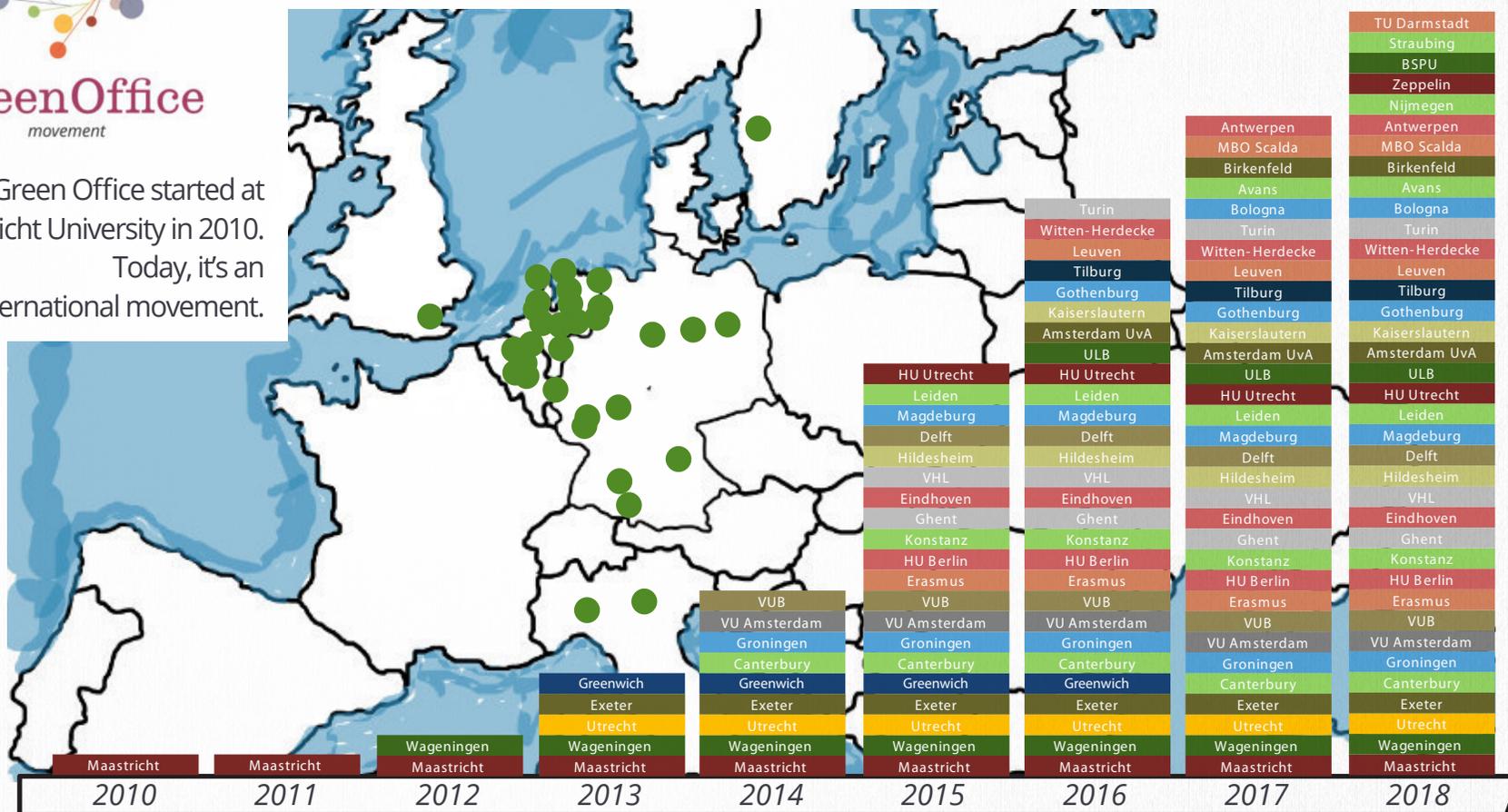
300+ projects

150+ jobs

37+ Green Offices

8+ countries

6+ partners



**The
ANNUAL
Green Office
Summit!**



Rotterdam 2015



Berlin 2014



Amsterdam 2016



Ghent 2018



Utrecht 2017

SELF-CHECK

Ready to establish your Green Office?

I want to...



Create a **contact point** for sustainability, equipped with funding, a mandate and office space.



Improve **collaboration** and visibility of existing sustainability initiatives.



Engage the student community and support sustainability student groups better.



Embed sustainability in education, research, operations and governance.



Strengthen an existing sustainability coordinator or team with **additional capacity**.



**Positive self-check?
Get started!**

STEPS

Take four steps to start your Green Office

- 
- 1**
Map
Get an overview of existing sustainability efforts and analyse their strengths and challenges.
 - 2**
Design
Determine the role, activities, team, partners and institutional support of your Green Office.
 - 3**
Pitch
Argue why your university management should fund your Green Office.
 - 4**
Funding
Mobilise supporters and influencers to convince decision-makers to fund the Green Office.

YOUR GREEN OFFICE DESIGN

Develop your Green Office, by answering these five questions

Role	How will your Green Office further sustainability?
Activities	What projects will you run to fulfil your role?
Team	What will your team look like?
Partners	With whom will you work on projects?
Support	What funding, mandate and office space do you need?



Benefits

- Get clarity of mind on what steps to take
- Design your Green Office with ease
- Learn from anywhere, anytime and at your own speed

Features

- 4 modules over 1 month with 30min weekly learning
- Toolkit to apply the lessons to your situation
- Certificate of completion for handing in the toolkit

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project team

Felix Spira, Anselm Grahl, Maik Adomßent

Design

R J Bavington

Special thanks for their advice and feedback

Anne Spira, Tim Strasser, Giorgia Silvestri
Arian Meyer, Tobias Stetter
Femke Lootens, Valentin Tappeser

Photo credits

rootAbility gUG and Green Offices: TU Delft, Groningen, Leiden University, OVGU Magdeburg, Maastricht University, UvA, VU, Utrecht, TU Kaiserslautern, Gent, KU Leuven, TU Eindhoven, Greenwich Sustainability Hub, Konstanz, Wageningen, ULB, UniTo, Erasmus Sustainability Hub, Gothenburg Students for Sustainability, Avans, Bologna, Scalda, BSPU, Umweltcampus Birkenfeld, Canterbury Christ Church University, Radboud, Universität Hildesheim, Green Team VUB, Van Hal Larenstein, Zukunftsbüro Zeppelin Universität, Hogeschool Utrecht, Students' Green Unit Exeter, TUM Campus Straubing, HU Berlin

www.GreenOfficeMovement.org

