



GREEN OFFICE

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM



Table of Contents

1. Foreword	3
2. Definitions	4
3. General/ Organizational information	4
4.1 History and founding	4
4.2 Mission and vision	5
4.3 Portfolios and functions.....	6
4. Being a GO member/ Member information	7
4.1 Why are members important for our organization?.....	7
4.2 What can you expect from the GO.VU as a member?	7
4.3 What can the GO.VU expect from you as a member?	8
5. Get involved! - What are the possibilities?	9
5.1 Chairman of a Green Team	9
5.2 Green Team member	9
5.2.1. Team Campus	9
5.2.2. Team Community.....	10
5.2.4. Team Events.....	10
5.2.5. Team Media	11
5.2.6. Team Research.....	11
5.3 Project member	13
5.3.1 Foodhub	13
5.3.2. School Sustainability Enrichment Program (pilot).....	13
6. Contact information of coordinators + address GO.VU.....	13

1. Foreword

If you are reading this manual, it means you are interested in the best membership option present at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam! Congratulations, you are about to explore the challenging yet endless possibilities a GO.VU membership has to offer.

The Green Office VU started with just a couple of enthusiastic students who didn't have a place to let their green ideas grow. Now, the Green Office has turned into an organization with four portfolios, six teams, multiple employees and members and a Tree House Office. It has taken a lot of hard work, dedication and determination of all the involved parties to get the Green Office to where it is now. We would gladly welcome you into our battle for a greener VU.

The last decade the importance of sustainability has increased. It is no longer a boring subject, but a relevant and useful key item of our society. Companies are investing in sustainability. Not just because it's good for their reputation, but because they believe that it's relevant. In universities the shift towards sustainability is much slower, which makes your work even more important. As an educational institute we have a responsibility towards society.

Our power lies in both our capability to work outside of the internal system of the VU and our ability to quickly adapt to different situations. Not waiting for the stars to align, but taking action when needed. By doing so, we try to create awareness where needed.

There is a place for everyone at the Green Office. The GO is not solely a place where green ideas grow, but also a place where you grow as a person. Being a GO member you experience what it's like to work in a team responsible for a shared project. You will work alongside like-minded people, exploring your strengths and improving your weaknesses. You'll broaden your sustainable horizon, increase the size of your network and, cheesy yet so true, you'll meet friends that will last a lifetime.

At the Green Office VU, we acknowledge each other's strengths and use them for our common goal: empowering the VU community towards a more sustainable future.

"The activist is not the man who says the river is dirty. The activist is the man who cleans up the river." - Ross Perot

August 2016

Marthe van Rijn, Manager

Tabitha Saliba & Ilyes Machkor, Founders Green Office VU

2. Definitions

Coordinator: employee of the Green Office VU in charge of coordinating one or more portfolios.

Green Office VU: the Green Office VU Amsterdam, also “Green Office” or “GO.VU”.

Manager: employee of the Green Office VU in charge of managing the Green Office VU.

Portfolio: the Green Office VU has four portfolios, i.e. Education, Research, Campus and Community.

Project: planned set of interrelated tasks to be executed over a fixed period and within certain costs and other limitations.

Project member:

Team member: member of a Green team.

Member: student, staff, faculty or third party actively involved at the Green Office VU willingly and without pay, also “Green Officer”.

VU: VU Amsterdam.

Sustainable development: “is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”- Brundtland Report

3. General/ Organizational information

4.1 History and founding

The Green Office VU has been the sustainability platform at the VU University Amsterdam (VU) since October 2014. A university is place where students acquire new knowledge and experiences, but also where new habits are made. Therefore universities should act as drivers of sustainability and create a cultural change; a green movement. *‘Sustainable higher education implies that the critical activities of a higher education institution are ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable and that they will continue to be so for future generations’*, according to the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future.

In 2013 and 2014 the founders of the Green Office, Ilyes Machkor and Tabitha Saliba were part of a sustainability committee of the SRVU student union existing out of a couple of students and staff of the VU. The committee was a good initiative, but it didn't have the body, access and resources that a Green Office has. In 2014 Ilyes and Tabitha decided, together with the Facilities Campus Organization (FCO), to set up a Green Office. The executive board of the VU also expressed their wish for a Green Office. This made the Green Office VU both a bottom up and a top down initiative,



Opening Street Charger by SRVU Sustainability Committee

which made it easier to set up than at some universities where students need to struggle to set up a Green Office.

Nonetheless, founding an organization like this in a bureaucratic system has had its struggles at the VU as well. In October 2014 the Green Office celebrated their online launch, in April 2015 the GO got its own office space and on the National Sustainability Day, 9th of October 2015 the official opening of the Green Office took place. Bernadette Langius, former-executive board member of the VU, and alderman Abdeluheh Choho officially opened the Green Office and they also became the first two Green Ambassadors.



4.2 Mission and vision

The mission of the Green Office VU is to make a sustainable and significant impact by empowering the VU community. We are a young and dynamic organisation, catalysing sustainable transitions at the VU Amsterdam.

The Green Office VU aspires to become the central sustainability platform at the VU, where students, faculty and staff come together to implement joint initiatives, exchange ideas and create alliances. The Green Office's activities and projects take a broad approach to sustainability.

4.3 Portfolios and functions

The Green Office's activities and projects take a broad approach to sustainability. Our areas of focus include Education, Research, Campus and Community. A team of VU-students leads the Green Office VU. Each of the team members has its own portfolio, though some portfolios show some overlapping activities. Besides the four named portfolios there is also an internal portfolio meant for the manager, which is Office. This portfolio contains the management of the coordinator team and the Green Office in general.

Education

The Education portfolio concerns the education of the students, staff and faculties of the VU about sustainability. The Education coordinator is working on a sustainable Honors Course and a sustainable minor and is responsible for the inventory of all sustainable subjects at the VU. The Education coordinator is also responsible for Team Education

Research

The Research coordinator mainly focuses on the Living Lab; a project meant to connect (business) cases to students. The Research coordinator is also responsible for the Research inventory that lists all researchers focused on sustainability. They also support students writing their thesis on a sustainable subject and are working on publishing a journal with this research. The Research coordinator is responsible for Team Research.

Campus

The Campus portfolio focuses on the operations of the university. The Campus portfolio is divided into two sections: Internal Campus and External Campus. This division is not very strict – sometimes projects overlap. Internal Campus is mainly focused on the, as the name says, internal processes of the university such as waste management and energy conservation. The External Campus coordinator is focused more on the companies with establishments on campus, such as the supermarket. The Internal Campus coordinator is responsible for Team Campus and the External Campus coordinator is responsible for Team Quality.

Community

The Community portfolio connects all the stakeholders by an Online and Offline platform. Therefore this portfolio is also divided in an Online Community and an Offline Community. The Online Community coordinator manages the social media accounts, promotion and website of the Green Office. They are also responsible for Team Media. The Offline Community coordinator is responsible for volunteer and event management. Two Green Teams are connected to this portfolio, Team Community and Team Events.

4. Being a GO member/ Member information

4.1 Why are members important for our organization?

The Green Office VU has grown into an important entity at the VU in a short period of time. The coordinators employed at the GO.VU work hard to bring change to the university, but 7 students working part time is not enough to truly bring sustainability to our university. We need a group of students willing to dedicate their time, spread the message and help brainstorm and organize for sustainability. Every single person has different qualities that make them an added value to the GO.VU. Therefore we rely on our members to bring more skills and experience to our organization.

Members make it possible for us to get so much more done and reach so many more people on the subject of sustainability. They are what brings the GO.VU to a higher level and lets us accomplish so much more than we otherwise could!

4.2 What can you expect from the GO.VU as a member?

➤ **Office usage**

The Green Office exists out of two areas. The first is the general area which is accessible to everyone. Green Office members are welcome to use this area every day from 9:00-17:00 throughout the week with the exceptions of the room being booked for other purposes. Team meetings will also be held in this area. The other area is an office space reserved for coordinators to work in.

➤ **Member appreciation days**

Each semester we will organize a day/afternoon in which we thank our members for helping us reach our goals at the GO.VU. The day will include activities to get to know the other Green Office members better and most importantly, have fun with each other!

➤ **Certificate**

When your time at the Green Office has come to an end you will receive an official certificate signed by the manager of the Green Office VU and someone from the IVM (Instituut voor Milieuvraagstukken) as proof of your time as a member of the Green Office VU.

➤ **Networking and Resume building**

You will get to know many other students with an interest in sustainability that come from many different countries and different study areas. The work you do at the Green Office can also be mentioned as an extracurricular activity on your resume.

➤ **Open environment**

The GO.VU welcomes all students to our organization. You don't have to be an expert on sustainability to be welcome at the GO.VU, if you have an interest in learning we are more than happy to help you with that! All of our communication is in English so no matter where you are from you can participate in our activities and in team meetings. We find that many of our volunteers become friends with each other beyond the Green Office and we attempt to give everyone a place in which they feel comfortable at the university.

4.3 What can the GO.VU expect from you as a member?

➤ **Term of involvement**

Team members can join after each Meet the GO, which is once per semester. Since the teams only add new members twice a year we require team members to stay for the whole semester to make sure teams will be filled at all times.

As a project member we require you to finish your project. There is no set amount of time to this, it depends on when you reach the goals you aimed at achieving when starting the project.

Only when you stay for the amount of time specified here will you receive a certificate.

➤ **Attendance of weekly team meetings**

When active in a Green Office team meetings will be planned every one or two weeks. It is desirable that when possible you attend these meetings. This is very important for team cohesion and for achieving the goals of the Green Team you are involved in.

➤ **Proactive approach in completing tasks**

As we are working towards certain goals within the Green Office we expect our members to be motivated to reach these goals. This means that when you are assigned a team or a project we expect you to commit to the tasks you choose to take upon yourself and feel responsible for these tasks. Everything we do is a group effort and we expect all group members to pull their weight in what we are trying to accomplish!

➤ **Sustainable attitude and behavior when acting as GO.VU member**

What you do in your free time we cannot and do not wish to control as the GO.VU. But when you are in your role as a member of the Green Office we expect you to show sustainable attitude and behavior as this is the core value of our organization. As a starting member you will receive a crash course in sustainability to make sure you are up to speed on sustainable knowledge!

➤ **Contract**

Everything you do for the Green Office is voluntary but being a member comes with obligations. To make sure that our expectations are understood by all members we require you to sign a contract at the start of your time at the Green Office. This is to prevent miscommunications and make sure we are all on the same line.

5. Get involved! – What are the possibilities?

5.1 Chairman of a Green Team

Every coordinator (except the Manager) is responsible for orienting and directing a team. You as a chairman will have the opportunity to lead a team and report regularly to your coordinator. Among your responsibilities you are expected to:

- Have more communication with your coordinator than other team members;
- Make the agendas and lead the meetings with your team;
- Make sure deadlines for tasks are reached.
- Ensure that your team members are content by creating a pleasant atmosphere in the group

If you do not have any experience but you have the will, come to us the Green Office is a learning environment! If you feel up to the task of leading a team, then we're looking for you!

5.2 Green Team member

5.2.1. Team Campus

Team Campus is the volunteer team that assists the Campus coordinator of the Green Office VU in their work. The aim of the Campus team is to create a more sustainable campus by working on several projects that all strive to accomplish this. These projects include small projects, but also many are long-term projects. There are several ways to contribute to the Campus team:

- In the coming months Team Campus will start with the **collection of goods**, with the aim to improve recycling at the VU. We will create a hub in the Green Office where people can recycle several goods such as empty pens, bottle caps or batteries.
- **Move Out Clean Out:** Team Campus organized an initiative to collect things that leaving exchange students were leaving behind and sold them in a market to the upcoming new exchange students. This action not only contributed to avoid a lot of material waste but also financed the shipping of sweaters to refugees in the greek island of Lesbos. In close collaboration with the international office this action will triple size and be carried out again during the year !

5.2.2. Team Community

Team Community has been a team of the Green Office since November 2015. The team is focused on not only in giving back to the environment but also will be responsible to work for the community of the Green Office by addressing them through different events and projects. The projects listed below are what the team is working on now, but there is still room for community related projects within this team to be implemented!

Projects that the team will be working on:

- **#30DayGOGreenChallenge:** Team Community has created a 30 day online challenge to introduce our community to little gestures that can make their lifestyle more sustainable without compromising in comfort. Team Community members will be responsible for the maintenance, promotion and evaluation of the event once completed with the aim of improving it for next time.
- **Workshops:** Team Community will be bringing high level employees of different companies to the Green Office. The aim of the workshops is to shine some light on how sustainability issues are dealt with outside an academic context and in a real life scenario. We have already hosted Unilever's' sustainability director in January and are currently in contact with KLM, SHELL and Triodos sustainable bank.

5.2.3. Team Education

Would you like to be involved in planning engaging educational activities in a fun, relaxed setting? Then Team Education is for you! Team Education is responsible for the content and organization of monthly **Lunch Lectures** and biannual **Evening lectures**. These lectures serve to supplement the formal education that is on offer at the Vrije Universiteit, and Team Education gets to decide on each exciting topic! As a team member, you would play a hands-on role in deciding on themes, speakers, and the smooth running of each event from conception to completion. You will be the creative force behind the lectures, responsible for the practical set up of the lectures leading up to and during the events self.

5.2.4. Team Events

Team Events tries to organize one event a month in which sustainability is prominent, but in which having a good time is as well. Everything from movienights to pubquizzes are events this team has organized in the past but each and every time we try to find an original and fun way to get people involved with sustainability. The goal of the team is to give students a low key way of getting comfortable with sustainability whilst doing things they have fun doing. Team Events is supported by the Offline Community coordinator.

5.2.5. Team Media

Being a part of Team Media means that you will be working on the online marketing of the Green Office. This means that you will be responsible for the way the Green Office is seen by others. The main goal of Team Media is to expand the network of the GO and to increase sustainable awareness.

Team Media has the following functions:

- **Design member:** As the design member your main task is to design all promotional material needed for the GO events. You will learn to work with programs as InDesign and will be responsible for the main communication channel to students.
- **Website member:** As the website member your main task is to keep the GO website up-to-date. You will learn to work with the program Wordpress and will work closely with the Online Community Coordinator to increase the usability and the attractiveness of the website.
- **Blog member:** As the blog member your main task is to write blogs about different sustainable topics or to find people who want to write blogs about sustainable topics.
- **News member:** As a community member you will be responsible for the collection of sustainable topics and to keep updated on all sustainable channels. It is your main task to find which topics are suitable for the Green Office and which are not.
- **Vlog member:** Team media is currently looking for someone that has experienced producing video blogs for a new and exciting project !

5.2.6. Team Research

The Research Portfolio Coordinator seeks pro-active and inquisitive individuals to join Team Research. This Team will be well suited to those who aspire to develop a sophisticated understanding of the complex relationship between people and sustainability. Team Research will be instrumental in the creation of evidence based foundations, that will not only support GO Team projects but drive positive change within the VU.

Projects Team Research will be working on:

- **Digital Bible:** Collaborating with the Online Community Coordinator, Team Research will create a brand new system that will document interaction with the Green Office website and social media platforms.
 - Develop a suitable model to perform the function of logging online activity.
 - Produce a regular report on the performance of website and social media

posting, identifying patterns and trends.

- **Event Reportage:** In light of building a wealth of knowledge surrounding GO activities, Team Research members have the opportunity to produce an event reportage system.
 - Create a blueprint document for collection of event feedback and information.
 - Attend GO events including the European Green Office Summit 2016 and VU Open Day.
 - Produce a report on each event that will inform future GO teams how that event can be improved.
- **Eating Positive:** Team Research are working together on a survey to explore the eating preferences of the students and staff who eat at the cafeteria. More specific, we are exploring whether or not people would like to see more vegetarian options in the cafeteria. Hopefully, the results of the survey will contribute to creating a Green Canteen (with less meat and fish, and more vegetarian and vegan options). The tasks that need to be carried out are as following:
 - Fill in questionnaires with survey participants.
 - Analyze the results of the questionnaire (knowledge of statistics and SPSS is desirable).

Further Team Research projects for 2017 are currently under-development.

5.2.7 Team Communication

Team Communication is a new and exciting team that will aim to create more awareness about our projects and the Green Office in general. To make this happen, this team will actively think about the offline marketing of the Green Office and promote projects by creating campaigns (e.g. bring your own mug, food waste, PET-water free). In this way we want to increase our reach. The central challenge of this team will be to defeat the 'green bubble' that surround us. This is an amazing opportunity for marketing and business students to take part in real life campaigns projects that aim for behavioural change.

5.3 Project member

5.3.1 Foodhub

On the 6th of October 2016, the Green Office started, in collaboration with Ons Eten a Foodhub project. This means that once every two weeks the office is a distribution point for organically and locally produced fruits and vegetables. These food baskets will be accompanied by varying recipes that will support you in creating a meal that is healthy for yourself and the environment. In doing so we try to promote a vegetarian cooking style with sustainably produced products. We need members for the following tasks:

- Be present at the pick-up location (the office) every other week on Thursday from 15:00 till 17:30 when the distribution takes place.
- Translate the recipes from Dutch to English.
- In return for your help, a free basket of fruits and veggies is available!

5.3.2. School Sustainability Enrichment Program (pilot)

Are you interested in engaging the younger generation in issues surrounding climate change and sustainability? The Green Office is starting a pilot project in elementary schools to engage local youth in these very relevant topics. This project is – as yet – uncharted territory for the Green Office and the Education portfolio and as such, the individual who is interested in this project will play an essential role in its conception and development.

6. Contact information of coordinators + address GO.VU

Green Office General info@greenofficevu.nl	Education coordinator (for Team Education) Education.govu@gmail.com
Manager Manager.govu@gmail.com	Research coordinator (for Team Research) Research.govu@gmail.com
Green Office VU address: De Boelelaan 1105, room HG KC-18 1081HV Amsterdam	Internal Campus coordinator (for Team Campus) Campus.govu@gmail.com
Green Office VU telephone: +31 20 5984320	External Campus coordinator (for Team Campus) Extern-campus.govu@gmail.com
	Online Community coordinator (for Team Media) Onlinecommunity.govu@gmail.com
	Offline Community coordinator (for Team Community + Team Events and member questions in general) Community.govu@gmail.com