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green office

Green Office Sustainability Subsidies

Informational document on the Green Office Sustainability Subsidies for student organizations of the University of Groningen

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General information

The Sustainability Subsidies are offered by the Green Office with the goal to facilitate a transition to a more sustainable student association or organization. Sustainability Subsidies are awarded to associations that have a concrete idea to make their organization more sustainable and can use financial aid to do so.

Criteria for a Sustainability Subsidy application to be valid

1. The organization or association must be recognized by [CUOS](#).
2. A **maximum of two** different items/events can be requested for.
3. No more than €1000 can be applied for per organization.
4. Indicate intent to participate before the set deadline, through [this forms](#).

Guidelines for Sustainability Subsidy application

1. Your subsidy application should help induce a positive change.
2. The foreseen change should have a **high impact**.
3. You should **prove** to us why the change you are making would be sustainable.
4. You should provide a clear **calculation** of the money needed.

Structural guidelines

1. Write your application concise and do not use too many words. Assist your elaboration with visual proof or a quotation.
2. Mail your application before assigned deadline in pdf to greenoffice@rug.nl
3. Let the title of the email contain: *association name* - sustainability subsidy

Tips

When creating your subsidy application, carefully consider the guidelines mentioned above.

Last year many applications were denied because they were seen as actually sustainable or not sustainable enough. For example, if you order a sustainable gadget for all active members, there is no guarantee that they will all actually use it, and thus it is quite likely that you are ordering stuff that will end up in the bin. In this case, you should explain clearly why you can be certain that these gadgets will actually be used. To give an idea, you could give people the option to choose beforehand between different gifts and order the amount of gifts based on how many people indicated they would like to receive it. Besides making sure your change is sustainable, it should also have a sizable impact. For example, activities that only target a small number of members, or plants for the boardroom are seen as quite low-impact and thus not likely to be approved for subsidy. In case a decision needs to be made between different applications, those that contribute to a durable change rather than one-time things will be prioritized.

If you are organizing a new activity focused on sustainability for the first time and you do not have a budget set aside for this, we can help cover (part of) the costs. However,

if this activity has taken place before, we expect you to include it into your yearly budget and we will not continue to cover the costs for it after one year. If you want to make an already existing aspect of your organization more sustainable, which will increase the costs, you could apply for the excess costs which were not in the budget previously. For example, in the case of a trip abroad, traveling by train rather than plane might lead to higher costs. If you usually travel by plane but want to make the change to public transport, you could apply for a subsidy to cover the additional costs.

Also be sure to prove to us that what you are applying for is not just green washing. Companies are becoming more and more aware that sustainability is 'in' and are often claiming their products to be sustainable, while this is not actually the case.

Ideas

To give an impression of what ideas could be approved, this page gives some examples from previous years. The focus is on making the organization more sustainable and motivating your members to lead a more sustainable life-style.

It is appreciated when a distinction is made between the 'regular' and 'sustainable' option. What difference would the change make and how much extra money would this require? In your budget indicate the costs you plan on making yourselves and ask the Green Office to cover the rest. Applying for the full €1000 is a lot, focusing on a smaller amount would be advised.

Good ideas

Things that show the association is working on sustainability and wants to promote this as well. For example:

- Workshops/events focused on sustainability for a large part of the member body
- Making large events such as the introduction camp or a symposium more sustainable
- Decrease the environmental impact of the operations of your organization

Making the association spaces more sustainable, as these changes are lasting and the effects can be measured. For example:

- Standby Killers for computers, printers etc.
- LED lights
- Replacing old devices for energy efficient ones (e.g. fridge)
- Replacing disposable items with reusable ones (e.g. dishes and glasses)

Things that promote the 'People' part of the 'People Planet Performance' principle. For example:

- Projects that connect members to social organisations such as Humanitas or the food bank.
- Workshops on mental health for your members
- Promote physical or social well being of your members

Bad ideas

Things that reduce the environmental impact slightly, but could be done much more sustainably will most likely not be awarded a subsidy. For example:

- CO2 compensation for flights (preferably: choose other modes of transport)
- Sustainable printing (preferably: make use of digital options)
- Just giving away a 'sustainable' item - more sustainable to not give it

Activities that are made more sustainable but do not cost more money do not require a subsidy. For example:

- Not providing goodies at an event

The sustainable aspect of what you are applying for needs to be clear, not a side-concept. For example:

- 'A visit to a company that partly uses green energy and recycles': if the visit is not focused on the sustainability aspect of the company, it is not clear how this would contribute to a more sustainable association.

Applying for gadgets or items

As mentioned above, there is a large chance that an application for sustainable items will be rejected. Therefore there are not many examples from previous years. If you want to make your goodie bags, thank you gifts or other items more sustainable and apply for a subsidy for this, the following guidelines could help you.

They are not items. For example:

- Vouchers for an experience (e.g. a class, activity or sustainable restaurant)
- "Altruistic" gifts such as a piece of rainforest adopted in someone's name
- A digital realization of a goodie bag, as such the bag inessential

They are items, but they adhere to two conditions:

1. They are not given to people without knowing if they actually need it. Consider for example making an inventory of who would make use of this gift before giving it to everybody.
2. They are made of sustainable materials. Do your research to make sure you can explain to us why these materials are more sustainable than their regular counterparts. In that research not just look for words as 'green' but look into source and material actually.