

# The New Strategy and Role of the Maastricht University Green Office

## General Purpose

With the new organizational sustainability structure - namely the Sustainability Task Force - being established at Maastricht University, we believe that the Green Office Maastricht (UMGO) must adopt some changes in order to effectively complement the activities of the Task Force. The following proposal introduces how this will take place and what this new approach will entail. Essentially, UMGO plans on shifting its focus completely towards students, the community, and student initiatives, as opposed to our prior bi-dimensional focus on staff and students. With this narrower focus, we hope to establish a sustainability hub that facilitates a bottom-up approach to sustainable innovation at UM. We seek to integrate student and staff efforts towards a Sustainable UM 2030, aligning communication and action.

The strategy is divided into four parts. Firstly, UMGO's role and responsibilities will be defined, including its unique value within the new structure. Second, UMGO's new structure is defined including the Green Office (GO) Coordinator with respect to the new organizational sustainability structure. Lastly, this proposal gives an overview of all UMGO activities and projects including a selection of projects which the UMGO wants to focus on in its future endeavors.

## UMGO's Role and Responsibilities

UMGO's role logically follows from its mission and vision, as defined in 2016:

### Our Mission

UMGO is a driving force for sustainability efforts at UM. We are a sustainability hub that connects students, staff, and the community. As such, we empower bottom-up initiatives and facilitate cooperation between departments to achieve UM's sustainability goals. Through our projects, we aim to raise awareness, inspire critical thinking and creativity in order to stimulate collaborative action in the face of sustainability challenges. We believe that shared responsibility, transparency and accountability are critical to the success of these endeavors.

### Our Vision for a Sustainable Maastricht University

UM is a driver of sustainable development. UM prioritizes sustainability in all decision making and empowers its community in becoming a transdisciplinary hub for social and environmental research and entrepreneurship.

### Scope and Main Stakeholders

The scope of our projects differs, depending on the project at hand. Our main focus rests on raising awareness and encouraging mobilization among students. Additionally, we also collaborate with researchers and professors at the university (see Project Overview for more information). In parallel, we work with the university staff, like Marketing & Communications,

Facility Services and the Executive Board. For events, we also collaborate with external organizations and associations to promote sustainability to a wider audience. Some of our projects are small-scale, like for Climate Change 101, but others are to be implemented on a larger scale, such as the Recycling Communication. UMGO's stakeholders include, among others:

- Students
- UM's Executive Board
- Sustainability Task Force
- UM Facility Services
- UM Support Staff
- UM researchers and professors
- External organizations (student associations, green initiatives, businesses, the Municipality)

## Green Office Principles

All 38 Green Offices around Europe and Africa are based on the following principles, which are adapted to the needs and structure of the respective higher education institution:

1. **Students and staff:** A dynamic team of student employees, volunteers and supportive university staff form the core of a Green Office. They are directly responsible for running the Green Office and its activities. The Green Office's new approach is to mobilize groups of students into a movement and have their voices heard with regards to sustainability at the university.
2. **Mandate:** The Green Office receives an official mandate to drive the sustainability transformation of the university and/or local community, by creating new impulses, connecting and empowering actors, improving communications or implementing sustainability strategies.
3. **Resources:** The university grants a budget to pay for salaries, training, project expenses and office space. These resources are crucial to guarantee the continuity and commitment of students and enable them to implement high-impact sustainability strategies.
4. **Integration:** The Green Office is integrated into the institution's organizational structure and is supervised by a steering group. The Green Office team also joins relevant sustainability committees.
5. **Collaboration:** All activities of the team are conducted in close collaboration and partnership with internal and external stakeholders. The Green Office also becomes part of the vibrant network of the Green Offices around Europe.
6. **Training:** The Green Office and its volunteers receive training from other Green Office Alumni that are engaged as rootAbility Fellows, to guarantee the quality and impact of their work.

## The Role of UM Green Office

In line with UMGO principles, we treat students as change makers, prioritize their opinions, and believe in their power to stimulate sustainability efforts. Hence, UMGO's role can be described with the terms 'sustainability living lab', 'sustainability hub', and 'constructive

critic', geared towards supporting UM's progress towards its 2030 goals for sustainable development.

As a **sustainability living lab** facilitating a bottom-up approach, UMGO provides the unique opportunity for students to engage with staff and the wider Maastricht community through the initiation of sustainability projects. By establishing a connection between the three groups, it becomes easier to create a movement to make the campus sustainable. This is achieved through offering a safe space for students to experiment and test different approaches for tackling sustainability issues at UM.

As a **sustainability hub**, UMGO actively establishes and maintains an interconnected network of students, staff, and various community initiatives, which are fundamental stakeholder groups as their collective involvement is necessary to reach the Sustainable UM 2030 Goals. UMGO increases visibility and awareness for various sustainability-related topics by providing and supporting informal education in the form of lectures, get-togethers, excursions, workshops, campaigns, petitions, and other activities of this kind.

As a **constructive critic**, UMGO takes a critical role towards sustainability progress and developments within UM. It is important to endorse a constructively critical and transparent organization of sustainability efforts at the university, and UMGO can help accountability by shining the light on these developments. Altogether, UMGO functions as a platform which connects students, staff, and the community, providing UM with input in the form of unique and innovative ideas, e.g. in the form of project proposals and events.

To endorse this refined role, it is important that the UMGO's communication with the Sustainability Task Force is clearly established. The UMGO will take a more bottom-up approach, in line with the practice of intrapreneurship, bringing students' innovative ideas, critical points of views, opinions and concerns to the attention of the Task Force, e.g. as was done with the recent survey distributed among students with regards to communication and effectiveness of the current recycling system.

Our role is not to work for the Sustainability Task Force but work together on projects that are aligned with the wider university's Sustainability Vision and assess those collaboratively.

## The New Structure

UMGO will adapt its current structure to the Sustainability Task Force, which will potentially be implemented from April 2018. The purpose is to establish a close collaboration between the Sustainability Task Force and UMGO. The proposal for the Sustainability Task Force includes three portfolios, Operations, Education and Research, which will be connected to the respective UMGO coordinators.

### UMGO's Positions and Job Descriptions

This section will propose new vacancy definitions that are in line with the new organizational structure. Thus, it first provides a general portfolio and job description including a list of tasks and the relevant contact details.

In order to meet the reduced budget, UMGO sees the need to lower the number of students employed from eight to six. This would mean a change in working hours from 14 to 10 hours per week per person. Additionally, job descriptions and responsibilities of portfolio coordinators have been adjusted to meet the new structure.

The roles are structured under five portfolios, namely Governance, Operations, Education, Research, and Community. These portfolios are the same that UMGO has been working with since its founding in 2010. Thus, only the responsibilities and tasks of the six coordinators will be redefined and embed cooperation with the Task Force and its underlying portfolios.

The six positions are:

- Administration & Assessment Coordinator
- Strategy & Reporting Coordinator
- Operation Coordinator
- Research Coordinator
- Education Coordinator
- Community Coordinator

Each of UMGO's Coordinators will be linked to a different level of UM's new organizational sustainability structure, as indicated by the dotted lines in the figure above. UMGO's Community Coordinator will establish a close relationship with the Communication Coordinator on the University side. The Communication Coordinator is not included in the figure above.

## Governance

The Governance portfolio oversees UMGO's internal operations and will be the direct link to the Sustainability Task Force. The portfolio consists of two coordinators who are responsible for the Administration, Assessment, Strategy, and Reporting, focusing on team management, finance, planning and reporting. The Coordinators will establish a close relationship and intensive communication with the GO Coordinator and the members of the Sustainability Task Force to ensure that UMGO and staff efforts work in concert to achieve the overall Roadmap and underlying sustainability goals of the Maastricht University.

### Administration & Assessment Coordinator

The Administration and Assessment Coordinator will support the GO Coordinator with all Governance related tasks. Above all, the position will also be directly connected to the Sustainability Task Force to ensure that UMGO's efforts are in line with the overall strategy and sustainable goals of the Maastricht University. Therefore, the Administration & Assessment Coordinator will mainly be responsible for various administrative tasks like scheduling meetings, organizing events and support writing the Annual Plan and the Annual Report.

- Support the GO Coordinator
- Plan, prepare and coordinate team meetings
- Organize team events
- Manage internal communication
- Maintain a central calendar
- Manage official Green Office email account

- Publish annual plan and annual report and make them visible among external and internal stakeholders

### Strategy & Reporting Coordinator

The Strategy & Reporting Coordinator will support the GO coordinator in substantive governance tasks, such as filling in the Mission and Vision of the GO, collaborating with the Admin & Assessment Coordinator in writing the Annual Plan and Annual Report.

- Identify & manage key stakeholders within the university
- Assist other coordinators in preparing Project Proposals
- Establish key objectives for the coming year to be accomplished by the GO
- Keeping sustainability at the core of the organization
- Improve the transparency of the university's sustainability performance through an assessment or report
- Co-create the strategic direction of the university, by involving students and staff in developing a sustainability vision

### Community

The community portfolio focuses on the visibility of UMGO. UMGO aims to act as an incubator for sustainability change and a platform for growing ideas while bringing already established organizations and projects together. Creating visibility means combining, collaborating and facilitating what there is while fueling and empowering new ideas. The main focus of the community portfolio rests on students and student organizations to facilitate a bottom-up approach of new ideas and proposals coming from the UM student community.

### Community Coordinator

The Community Coordinator will mainly be responsible for the PR of UMGO, focusing on students and communities. However, PR has to be joint team effort. Thus, the task of the community coordinator hence lies in coordinating joint efforts, developing communication strategies, organizing events, buying merchandise and coordinating related tasks. The Coordinator will be the contact person for volunteers, external organizations and UM staff. Therefore, it is important to establish a network between student organizations, staff members and students and knowing how different faculties and departments are related to each other. As the Community Coordinator is reaching out to students, he or she has a more internal UMGO role which is not directly connected to the Task Force. However, the UMGO Community Coordinator needs to work closely together with UM Communications Coordinator for internal and external communication regarding sustainability.

- Recruit, support and coordinate volunteers
- Organizing various kinds of events including networking events for student organizations and volunteers
- Reach out and maintain a network with student initiatives for potential collaboration and staff members
- Develop a communication strategy
- Design flyers, posters and banners and order them
- Work in close contact with staff from marketing and communication and guarantee a constant stream of communication in university's newsletter
- Manage a clear & centralized contact information system

- Build upon previous community coordinators' efforts

### **Volunteer Management (part of Community Portfolio)**

The Volunteer Management is part of the Community Portfolio and includes all volunteer related tasks. This includes communication with current and potential volunteers, hiring volunteers, organizing events and being the central contact person for volunteers. Above, Volunteer Management also includes managing vision projects.

- Hiring volunteers
- Organizing volunteer events
- Writing letters of recommendations
- Being the central contact persons for volunteers and students proposing vision projects
- Providing support for vision projects, students and volunteers
- Establishing a volunteer network

### **Operations**

The operation portfolio comprises all activities that are related to the operations of UM. Operations combine various areas, e.g. logistics and technology. However, the impact of operations on sustainability are widespread.

#### **Operations Coordinator**

As operations is the main responsibility of the Facility Services department at Maastricht University, the Operations Coordinator does not have a direct influence on the sustainability performance of UM. The Operations coordinator collects and streamlines student and staff ideas on sustainable operations and brings the to the attention of the Facility Services, developing innovative solutions together with FS, who will take a leading responsibility. Furthermore, UMGO communicates how students and staff can be sustainable at UM, not just through student-developed ideas, but also through shining a light on long-standing practices as well as ideas originating from FS. Thus, a close relationship with Facility Services is essential for the success of the operations-related projects. Within the new structure, they must also work in close collaboration with the operations portfolio of the Sustainability Task Force. This also includes administration of the blog and website, which are important channels for informing the UM community about sustainability.

- Co-organize warm sweater day with facility services to enhance the university's footprint
- Work closely together with Facility Services and the Operation Portfolio of the Sustainability Task Force (on projects such as e-waste or catering)
- Facilitate awareness for sustainability on campus among students and staff
- Analyze existing data about UM's ecological footprint in order to form recommendations and inform the UM community about resource consumption
- Develop and maintain the Green Office website and the blog

### **Education**

The main goal of the education portfolio is to make education for sustainability accessible to students and staff from all faculties, as well as raise awareness on sustainability issues. The education portfolio strives to work together with students and staff to incorporate topics relevant to education for sustainability within UM's educational curricula. By doing so, it

encourages students to gain a more holistic understanding of sustainability and equips them with the relevant knowledge and skills to make a change within their local environment.

### **Education coordinator**

The education coordinator is responsible for realizing the goals of the education portfolio. Thus, the main tasks include: designing and facilitating workshops; remaining critical of UM's sustainability curriculum; and co-organizing educational events, courses and work sessions with stakeholders within and outside of UM to raise awareness about sustainability issues. The coordinator also acts as a service provider and a lynch pin. As a service provider, the coordinator helps stakeholders within and outside of UM realize education-related projects. As a lynch pin, the coordinator connects UM's sustainability education efforts (both formal and informal) and builds opportunities for educational collaboration with the wider Maastricht community, working in concert with EDlab.

- Contact person for all stakeholders who want to learn more about initiatives, courses and projects about education about sustainable development
- Organize events and projects with partners from within and outside the university to advance extra-curricular learning opportunities about sustainability
- Provides input around matters of sustainability related education.

### **Research**

The Research portfolio focuses primarily on sustainability-related research at UM. While this does not mean conducting research, it is about establishing a network with sustainability researchers, external stakeholders, project management and event management. It aims to promote student and staff research on sustainability and make this research visible in order to foster behavioral and operational progress towards becoming a more sustainable University.

### **Research Coordinator**

The Research Coordinator is mainly responsible for promoting student and staff research on sustainability by helping to establish a network with sustainability researchers, external stakeholders, projects and event management. The main task will be to encourage knowledge exchange between different parties as students and UM staff. The Research Coordinator should also inspire students and staff.

- Provide input around matters of sustainability research to the website, social media, and other communications of the GO and the university
- Reach out to establish and maintain a network focusing on sustainability related research
- Organize projects and events to enhance knowledge sharing among sustainability researchers and showcase existing research going on at the university
- Publish the Maastricht Journal of Sustainability Science