

## MEMO

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**From:** Sustainability Factory  
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**Subject:** Structure Sustainability Factory

# CONTENTS

1. Introduction - Sustainability within Tilburg University
2. The purpose of the Sustainability Factory
3. Team, target groups, working methods, and focus areas
4. Design of the program 2019–2021

## 1. Introduction - Sustainability within Tilburg University

Tilburg University has elaborated its ambitions in the field of sustainability described in Strategy 2018–2021 in the sustainability plan “Towards a Sustainable University” (2019–2021). This plan was adopted in July 2019 and describes Tilburg University's commitment to sustainability in four pillars: education, research, the campus, and asset management.

### Sustainability vision Tilburg University:

Tilburg University is committed to making a measurable contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals in research and in education, in the day-to-day management of the campus and in the management of our assets. To that end,

- in our **education**, we make students aware of sustainability issues and encourage them to think about their current and future roles in society;
- we aim to use **research** to gain a better understanding of international, regional, and local sustainability issues and develop knowledge to contribute to solutions. This knowledge is actively made available to fellow researchers, policymakers, civic organizations, and others;
- on our **campus**, we strive for sustainable business operations, sound asset management, reducing the footprint of students and employees in their work and study related activities, and improving the health and well-being of students and employees;
- we **communicate and report** transparently on the progress made in the area of sustainability.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter: SDGs) provide the framework for inspiration for the formulated ambitions and the activities to be undertaken.



One of the announced initiatives concerns the establishment of a Green Office. The Green Office is a mainly student-run organization that is officially implemented within the university's structures and actively brings together, within the university, the ideas and energy of students and staff to make sustainable changes. The first Green Office started 10 years ago in Maastricht. In 2018 and 2019, preparatory discussions were held and student initiatives were taken to launch a Green Office within the Tilburg University as well. Because the Green Office concept leaves room to give the initiative its own name that suits the university in question, Tilburg University students have chosen the name “Sustainability Factory.” This name better reflects the broad scope of our sustainability policy (it is about more than green) and emphasizes that it is a creative place where ideas and concepts are developed and implemented for a more sustainable world. The name also acknowledges the history of the city of Tilburg, in which textile factories played an important role.

First of all, this document describes the purpose of the Sustainability Factory in more detail (§2). The team, the working method, and the target group of the Sustainability Factory (§3) are then discussed. It concludes with an overview of the program as it will be implemented between 2019 and 2021 (§4).

## 2. The purpose of the Sustainability Factory

The aim of the Sustainability Factory is to

- **involve** students and staff in promoting sustainability;
- **support** Tilburg University with a critical, constructive attitude **in the implementation of the Tilburg University's sustainability plan** in order to contribute to the SDGs; and
- **communicate** on sustainability and Tilburg University's internal and external efforts in collaboration with M&C.

Central to this is the “brokerage function,” i.e., the Sustainability Factory helps students and staff with the conception and implementation of sustainability projects, for example, by bringing students into contact with Tilburg University researchers, by thinking about potentially interested external actors with whom collaboration can be sought, by advising students on sustainability actions on campus, by making suggestions for subsidy possibilities, etc.

Projects can contribute to the sustainability ambitions on our campus but can also relate to sustainability issues elsewhere in the Netherlands or abroad. Because assignments within the framework of Tilburg University's education can also be supported, the Sustainability Factory can play a role in making our education more sustainable as well.

In addition to the aforementioned brokerage function, the Sustainability Factory also fulfils a role in informing students, employees, and external actors about the Tilburg University Sustainability Policy and the implementation of this policy.

## 3. Team, target groups, working methods, and focus areas

### 3.1 Team

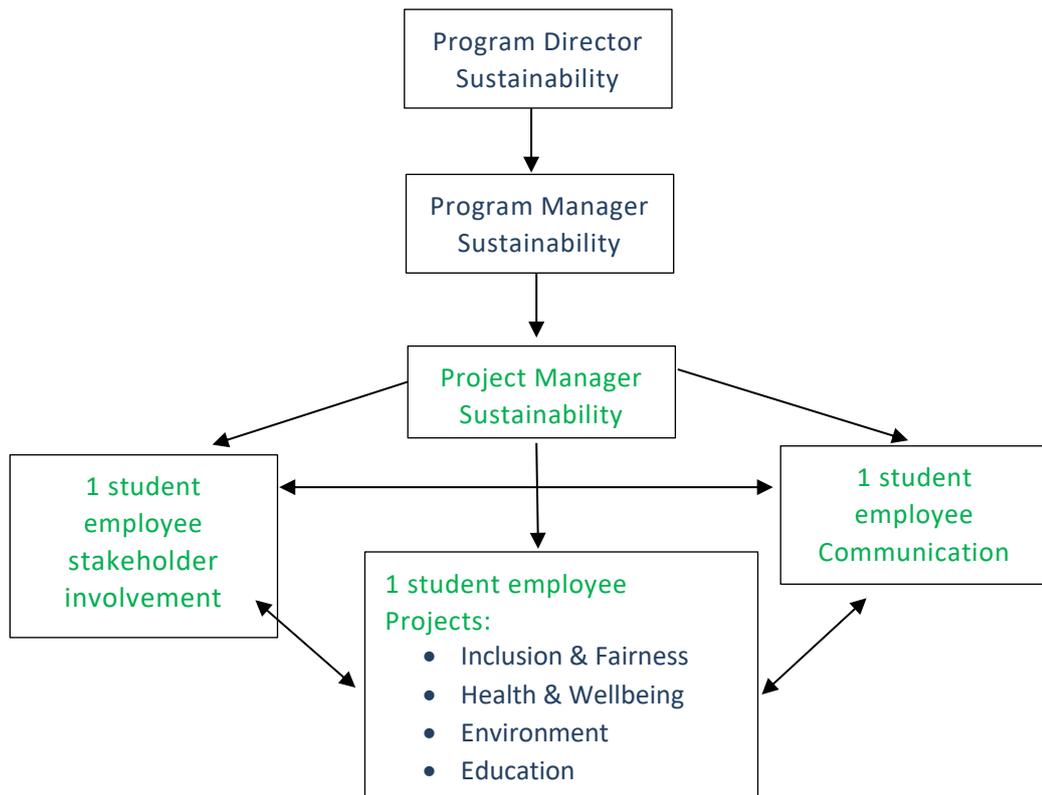
The Tilburg University Sustainability Team consists of a program director (0.2 FTE), a program manager (1.0 FTE), a Sustainability Factory project leader (0.5 FTE), and 3 to 5 student employees (0.2 FTE). The Sustainability Factory's project leader and student employees work for the Sustainability Factory (see also the organization chart on page 5). The commitment to the Sustainability Factory is well aligned with Tilburg University's broader Sustainability Policy. The student employees focus on the connection with the other students, and the project manager supervises the cooperation with the Tilburg University staff and works closely with the program manager and sustainability program director. The roles of the student employees are closely aligned with the three sub-targets of the Sustainability Factory.

One student employee mainly focuses on stakeholder involvement activities to involve people in sustainability and the activities of the Factory.

A second student employee focuses mainly on the content of projects and activities with special attention to their contributions to the implementation of the Tilburg University's sustainability plan.

A third student employee is charged with the communication objective formulated above. The three sub-objectives of the Factory are recognizable in the organization chart below under the terms stakeholder involvement, projects, and communication.

**Organization chart Sustainability Team & Sustainability Factory (in Green)**



### 3.2 Target groups with different characteristics and expectations

#### Target groups

The objective described above makes it clear that the Sustainability Factory has **various target groups**. Within Tilburg University, this mainly concerns **students and staff**, with a focus on all three sub-objectives: involvement in sustainability, support in projects, and communication.

Because projects can also contribute to the implementation of the Tilburg University sustainability plan, **the Executive Board and the Management Teams of the Schools and Divisions** also belong to the target groups of the Sustainability Factory. They can also make targeted requests to the Factory to support sustainability initiatives from organizational units.

As indicated in §2, projects can not only contribute to the sustainability ambitions on our campus but can also relate to sustainability issues elsewhere in the Netherlands or abroad. This means that collaboration can be sought with **external actors, such as governments, companies, and civil society organizations**, making these organizations also part of the target groups of the Sustainability Factory.

Communication from the Sustainability Factory involves all of the above target groups, but also **the wider public, either directly or through the media**.

*Different characteristics and expectations of students and employees*

It is important for the Sustainability Factory to recognize that the above-mentioned target groups have their own strong and weaker characteristics and may have different expectations of the Sustainability Factory.

Employees often come up with strategically relevant and feasible ideas as a result of their experience and observations during work. This is particularly the case when it comes to improvements in their own field of work. They regularly want to do more themselves, but there may be institutional resistance or they lack the time to take action themselves. Sometimes the ideas are not in their field of work, and, for that reason, they need the cooperation of others.

Students often come up with new, fresh, outside-the-box ideas, which are not always as easy to implement and especially not as fast as students would like. However, their energy, enthusiasm, and decisiveness to tackle issues can set things in motion if that energy is channeled properly. Students can often spend many hours on a project of their interest in a short period of time, especially when this can be integrated in a study assignment. Then, due to their limited time at university, they are highly motivated to see results within a short period of time.

If a change of work pattern is requested, employees may encounter resistance for some time, and, even for projects for which there is full cooperation, it may take some time before there is a structural change. Once the structures are adjusted, there is a long-lasting result, but students may not be at university anymore to really experience the results.

Especially in projects that involve collaboration between staff and students, it is important to exploit the strengths of both groups and to align their expectations at an early stage in the development of the project. This leads to the challenge of developing ideas into sensible projects that produce results in the short term, which are, in turn, in line with the longer-term ideas of staff members and the university.

<i>Students</i>	<i>Staff</i>
<i>a) Lots of enthusiasm and energy and sometimes a lot of time available within a short period of time</i>	<i>a) Lots of enthusiasm and energy but often very limited time available</i>
<i>b) Fresh, outside-the-box, often innovative but not always in keeping with existing visions or structures.</i>	<i>b) Often fits in well with strategic vision, the existing structures and the operation of the university, but therefore not always 'outside-the-box'.</i>
<i>c) Focus on quick results, but not always strategically relevant and/or well considered from a feasibility point of view</i>	<i>c) Often concrete and feasible, accustomed to processes and often relevant for the longer term (strategic)</i>

d) <i>With almost 16,000, the largest group at the university and therefore potentially a great deal of influence</i>	d) <i>Due to its structural position at the university, there is a high chance of long-term results</i>
e) <i>Usually no budget available</i>	e) <i>Sometimes budget available</i>

### 3.3 Procedure

#### *Alignment within the team and prioritization of support requests*

The entire Sustainability Team works in line with the Tilburg University strategic sustainability plan and does so in close mutual consultation. The program director and program manager are mainly concerned with the strategic lines and work together with the Tilburg University organizational units to ensure the implementation of the plan. The Factory works bottom-up on the basis of initiatives of the Factory's student employees, Tilburg University students, Tilburg University employees, and possibly external actors.

The initiatives and requests for support from students and staff are discussed within the broad Sustainability Team on the basis of concrete proposals from the Factory in order to ensure as much alignment with the larger strategic picture (the sustainability plan) as possible. Because of the broad scope of the sustainability plan, it is likely that initiatives can play a role in the implementation of the plan, but, if this is not the case, it does not matter. The 17 UN goals require a lot of action and the sustainability plan is not intended to limit the enthusiasm of students or employees. The degree of alignment with the plan does play a role in the prioritization of support requests. A simple assessment framework is developed by the Factory for this prioritization (e.g., alignment with the objectives of the Factory, alignment with the substantive objectives of the sustainability plan, who will be involved, feasibility and chances of success, communication power, costs, and risks).

### 3.4 Content focus areas

Sustainability is not meant to be a separate activity within the university but to be integrally interwoven with all other activities. The Team wants to highlight and support initiatives of others in this area. It is in line with the Factory's three sub-objectives to maintain a broad scope of projects. This means that no restrictions are imposed in advance on the type of activities or the substantive sustainability themes. Just as the sustainability plan itself, in principle, covers all SDGs, the Factory also works on sustainability in a broad sense.

This does not alter the fact that the Factory has identified a number of themes for its own initiatives and for the purpose of powerful communication. These are:

- Inclusion & Fairness;
- Health & Well-being,
- Environment, and
- Education.

The fourth theme intersects with the other themes but has been mentioned separately because the connection with students and education is relatively important for the Sustainability Factory (e.g., compared to research).

### ***3.5 Stakeholder involvement substantive projects, and communication***

#### *Active involvement of stakeholders*

Involving enthusiastic students and staff is essential for the Factory. The more communication and project material there is, the better the outreach:

- The story, the objectives, and the working method of the Factory must be available.
- Best practices from inside and outside the university must be available for demonstration.
- Realistic, inspiring, and concrete project questions must be available.

The educational field is an important stakeholder to make contacts with to create as many possibilities as possible to link internships and practical assignments to sustainability projects.

For the academic year 2019/2020, the choice has been made to strengthen the Stakeholder involvement by organizing 3 theme weeks:

January 27–31: Theme week Inclusion & Fairness.

March 9–15: Theme week Health & Well-being (national week without meat)

April 20–24: Theme week Environment

The theme of education is cross-cutting and gets attention by strongly linking the theme weeks to education.

The theme weeks serve both to highlight the Factory and to strengthen cohesion by making all stakeholders in the relevant themes more aware of each other's work. It is expressly the intention that the Factory organizes as few of its own events as possible (also during the theme weeks) but more than anything else shows the work of others. This ensures that there is sufficient capacity for Factory employees to also work on other Factory activities, including projects and communication activities (see below).

At the beginning of 2020, the theme Inclusion will be launched, with the message that the Factory wants to involve everyone at the university as a thread running through the communication. This is followed by the theme Environment and Health & Well-being. At the end of this academic year, an evaluation will be conducted as to whether the theme weeks have played a positive role in outreach and whether this approach for outreach will be continued.

#### *Projects: substantive contribution to sustainability*

Projects that make a clear contribution to the university motivate all those involved, create enthusiasm, and help the involvement of new stakeholders. For a long-term positive effect of the project, it is strongly preferred to somehow anchor the outcome of a project in the structures of the university. Partly for this reason, projects are preferably developed and implemented in close cooperation with the university's staff. In particular, Facility Services, Marketing & Communication, and employees active in education are important implementation partners. Anchoring, however, can also take shape through the efforts of others, including, for example, study and student associations.

Sustainability projects can take many different forms. It could include, for example,

- devising initiatives to strengthen the commitment to sustainability on campus;
- carrying out research into sustainability, for example, at the request of an external party and/or carrying out an assignment in the context of education;
- organizing a (series of) master classes on sustainability;
- linking several ongoing initiatives to strengthen the results and increase communication opportunities;

- etc.

The phase that a project is in can also be different. For example, this could be about activities for awareness enhancement as a basis for further action, thinking along with the questioner about the possible design of a project, analyzing a sustainability problem to see exactly where bottlenecks lie and how they could be tackled, how an ongoing initiative could be given an extra boost through the support from students and/or other staff, or how a successful project could be rolled out further.

*Communication & Awareness: also involve the (initially) passive people.*

The Factory would also like to get in contact with those who (initially) have little time or interest in sustainability in order to gradually build awareness. The Communication role includes the following activities:

- collecting inspiring best practices from both inside and outside the university and showcase them;
- creating inspiring content for the website and social media channels;
- following, announcing, and creatively capturing events.

In its visual expressions, the Factory naturally wants to be a prominent part of the university. At the same time, the Factory wants to appeal to the target group for its stakeholder involvement to clearly show that fresh, new ideas are welcome. To this end, in consultation with M&C, a logo was developed for the Sustainability Factory which, on the one hand, ties in with Tilburg University's corporate identity and, on the other hand, emanates its own identity.

## 4. Design of the program 2019–2021

The Sustainability Factory will have to acquire its position within the university in the initial phase (2019–2020). This is done in phases in which Outreach, Projects, and Communication are constantly being expanded. Generally speaking, the line is that the target groups (students, employees, and external actors) first need to hear about the existence of the Factory and that the focus should be on the subjects for which there is a lot of enthusiasm. The results can be used to raise awareness to involve others in sustainability within the Tilburg University.

### 4.1 Phases

The following phases have more or less been identified:

Phase 1a  Preparation for the start of the Sustainability Factory  February - November 2019	Outreach	Targeted at students	At this stage, there is no systematic outreach, nor is there implementation of larger projects or very targeted communication because the base still has to be developed. The larger plan is written; the identity of the Sustainability Factory is developed and laid down in a logo; the organizational structure is clearly defined; the template of the multi-year plans is defined in sub-sections; stakeholders are consulted at all levels. (See phase 1b).
		Targeted at staff	
	Projects	Students	
		Staff	
	Communi-cations	All; via website & social media	

<p>Phase 1b</p> <p>The first stakeholders hear about the existence of the Factory</p> <p>(overlapping with phase 1a)</p> <p>May 2019 - November 2019</p>	Outreach	students	The first exploratory contacts with student associations (35 united under Tigeak) and student associations (St Olof/Vidar/Plato/I*ESN) are made.
		Staff	To write the plans, the first stakeholders are approached, especially (but certainly not exclusively) M&C and FS.
	Projects	Students	First small test projects with existing volunteers function as 'quick wins' to generate enthusiasm as the main goal.
		Staff	First small test projects are done with willing staff members to generate enthusiasm as the main goal.
	Communi-cations	All; via website & social media	Develop and test the communication policy; remove and further develop initial problems.

<p>Phase 2</p> <p>Students and staff are invited to participate (low threshold).</p> <p>Estimation: November 2019 - September 2020</p>	Outreach	Students	During the first theme weeks students are invited in a 'fun' way to take a look at the Sustainability Factory.
		Staff	Through newsletters; word of mouth by the Team; and targeted approach of staff to invite them to participate in the theme weeks. Invitation to sign a symbolic pledge regarding one of the SDGs.
	Projects	Students	First projects are celebrated and participants are put in the spotlight.
		Staff	
	Communi-cations		Engaging, inviting, inspiring, motivating, Can-do

<p>Phase 3</p> <p>The Factory has a stable position within Tilburg University and is widely known.</p> <p>October 2020 - September 2021</p>	Outreach	Students	Moving from low-threshold to an active search for more and deeper connections and collaboration.
		Staff	
	Projects	Students	Encourage as many possibilities as possible within the education sector to link internships and practical assignments to sustainability projects. Some more challenging projects are set in motion.
		Staff	
	Communi-cations		Playfully challenging (challenging to think in depth and change)

<p>Phase 4</p> <p>The Factory has proven its worth</p>	Outreach	Students	The Factory is already sufficiently known that outreach is often the initial part of the projects: substantive discussions with stakeholders.
		Staff	
	Projects	Students	More challenging projects that require more from both volunteers and staff.
		Staff	

<p>with a first track record;</p> <p>(overlapping with phase 3) January 2021 - December 2021.</p>	<p>Communi- cations</p>		<p>Constructively challenging (Launching more vigorous discussions)</p>
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In the first months of 2020, the Sustainability Factory Team will elaborate on the above program and the working method. The Sustainability Factory’s performance is continuously monitored, and adjustments are made where necessary. Based on the objective of the Factory described in §2, an evaluation will be carried out at the end of the academic year 2020–2021.