

Sustainability Protocol Atmos

Updated: May 2022

1. Introduction

In this document, you find the Sustainability Protocol. As a study association for energy, the environment, and sustainability we give the highest priority to working with an as low as possible carbon footprint. Therefore, all our activities and events are always organized with this protocol in mind. The use of this protocol extends from the board to committees and enthusiastic students interested in organizing activities. External parties have to adhere as much as possible to this protocol as well, when organizing an event with/for our members.

2. Board

The board members of Atmos have been elected by the members of the association. They are representative of the members and should therefore have a role model function. Below a list of guidelines is given that all board members should abide by to promote sustainability as much as possible within Atmos and the University of Groningen. These guidelines should be followed when a board member represents the association.

1. The Board of Atmos will serve as role models with regard to sustainability.
2. The board will pledge to have a PET-free office and promote this amongst members.
3. The end of life scenario, product assembly and origin are considered when buying goods like furniture or food when possible.
4. The board will enable members to use sustainable materials as much as possible.
 - a. E.g. introduce a sustainable tea-mug system or water bottles for reuse within the Energy Academy.

3. Board room and (future) members launch

In 2019 Atmos was granted a board office/association space within the Energy Academy. It was decided that this room would not only be used as an office/hangout for members, but also as an inspiration for others with regard to sustainability. The following rules were set for the office to ensure sustainable practice:

1. When purchasing new items for the office, the most sustainable option will be chosen. This can either be re-use of materials or materials from low-impact sources.
2. Use of single-use plastics (PET) are prohibited in the office.
3. Office materials will be recycled if possible, to keep waste at a minimum.
4. The office will purposely not have a bin to ensure that members of the association make use of the waste separation within the Energy Academy
5. The few existing electrical appliances, such as desktops and lighting, will be turned off during the absence of board members in the office.

6. A plan of where to recycle what will be used.
7. Electrical appliances will be disposed of accordingly.
8. The lighting in the office will only come from LED sources.
9. Lights and heating will be switched off when the room is closed.
10. A wide variety of plants will be selected that improve the quality of air within the office.
11. Plants in the office will be looked after weekly to ensure their longevity.

4. Activities

When organizing an activity Atmos ensures that sustainability plays a key role. This starts at the organizer/committee level and is checked by the board before an activity takes place. The policy outlined below is installed to have as minimal as possible impact on the environment and use minimal energy.

1. Sustainability will play a key role in all activities organized by Atmos.
2. Catering during activities shall be sustainably sourced.
 - a. Vegan options will have the highest priority.
 - b. Snacks given out during activities will consist primarily of fruits.
 - c. Locally sourced food is preferred.
3. Single-use plastics are forbidden for use during Atmos locally organized activities. They will be kept at a minimum during activities organized externally.
 - a. Plates and cutlery will be made from wood/cardboard or preferably home brought.
4. Waste produced during an activity will be cleaned up and separated accordingly.
5. Activities will be held locally if possible.
6. Transportation to an activity will be in a sustainable fashion. Short distances should be travelled to by bicycle. Large distances using public transportation.
 - a. CO₂ emitted during excursions outside of Groningen via public transport or buses will be compensated via the carbon credit market. These fees are included in the members' contribution to an activity.
7. Activities will be communicated and promoted via digital means as much as possible to reduce waste.
8. At the end of the year a collection of CO₂ emissions by the association will be made and is compensated where possible. Additionally, plans for future CO₂ reduction will be produced for the following board.

5. Career

Atmos organizes career-related events throughout the year. This can either be in-house or organized externally by e.g. a company. While we cannot control everything organized by external parties, the study association will try to keep the environmental impact as low as possible during such events. Below a set of rules is given that will be executed if possible.

1. Atmos will promote sustainability-related job opportunities, including TA positions, to its members as much as possible.
2. Atmos will only promote internships involving sustainability to its members
3. Atmos will organize career-related events that are linked to sustainability to prepare them for their future careers.
4. Atmos will organize at least one in-house day at a sustainability-related company.

6. Curricular- (EES) activities

As Atmos is within the core of energy and environmental research at the University of Groningen, the study association feels a need to promote sustainability-related courses as much as possible. Additionally, Atmos will support students taking such courses by offering educational support where needed. Below guidelines are given for Atmos to support sustainability in the curricular environment.

1. Atmos will support students in undertaking sustainability-related courses as much as possible.
2. Atmos will support students in choosing sustainability-related thesis topics as much as possible.

7. Extracurricular activities

As the only study association for energy and the environment within the University of Groningen, Atmos has the self-assigned responsibility and duty to educate others on becoming more sustainable. It is our wish to raise awareness for sustainability within other associations and organizations related to the university. Below a list of recommendations is given for the Atmos board to raise awareness.

1. Atmos will support extracurricular activities that are linked to sustainability.
 - a. Examples include:
 - i. Green Office sustainability week
 - ii. Green Office digital clean up
 - iii. Earth Hour
 - iv. Cleaning up waste
 - v. Promoting endeavours in the circular economy
 - vi. Fridays for Future
 - vii. Etc.
2. Atmos will raise awareness on the issues that we are facing with climate change and the energy transition.
3. Atmos will educate others on how to implement sustainable practices in an organization.
 - a. E.g. sustainability flowchart for staff
 - b. Student energy lectures on sustainable living
 - c. Sharing the infographic of this document