

6 GREEN OFFICE PRINCIPLES

“Educational institutions and governments should provide the institutional support, resources and legitimacy for youth-led change processes towards sustainability.” – UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Youth Statement, Japan 2014

The **Green Office Movement** is a rapidly growing community of students and staff from universities around Europe that advance sustainability in their organisations and communities through student-led and staff-supported Green Offices. In this report you learn about the 6 Green Office Principles, as well as options on how you can adapt these principles to the context of your university.

rootAbility is a non-profit organisation supporting students and staff during the design, lobbying and establishment of these Green Offices. We offer free material, online support and on-demand workshops. Please **get in contact with us** if you want to establish a Green Office at your university: info@rootAbility.com All information in this document is made available under a **Creative Commons Licence**. This means that you can directly quote the material and adapt it, as long as you do not use it for commercial purpose – such as consulting – and reference rootAbility as the author. Learn more [here](#).

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BACKGROUND

Our current way of life is deeply unsustainable: Humanity consumes the resources of 1.8 planets. If present trends continue, we will need three planets by 2050. Creating a socially desirable and economically viable human civilization flourishing within planetary boundaries is the primary challenge of our time, **the call of action for our generation**. The necessary changes will not come easy or through technical fixes alone. On the contrary they require **deep transformations** in the way we think, live, travel, eat, vote and work.

We believe that it is the **responsibility of universities** as public institutions to be the engines of local, national and global sustainability transitions: Universities should educate students as sustainability change agents, create new knowledge to inform these transitions, and reduce the ecological and social footprints of running the organisation itself. Creating more sustainable universities requires dedicated change agents.

Students are oftentimes overlooked and side-lined within a university's sustainability efforts. We believe this is a **missed opportunity**, given the energy and spirit of students, the learning opportunities that sustainability engagement presents and the sheer size of the student body as largest stakeholder group on campus. Yet for a large number of students to unleash their full potential as sustainability change agents, the **institutional support, resources and legitimacy** of universities and governments are required.

As a **student-led and staff-supported sustainability hub**, the Green Office Model presents an internationally recognized and open-source model to structurally empower students. The first student-led and staff-supported Green Office was founded at **Maastricht University** in September 2010. The Green Office acts as a platform for students and staff running sustainability initiatives, improves the communication around these initiatives, coordinates the development and implementation of the university's sustainability strategy, and provides new impulses to create a buzz around sustainability.

What started as an experiment developed into an **internationally recognized and awarded open-source model** for sustainability governance at universities:

- In 2012, Maastricht University won the **Sustainabul Award** as the Dutch university with the most transparent sustainability efforts, thanks to the relentless efforts of students and staff in the Green Office.



- Two Green Offices – Maastricht and Exeter – won the **Student Sustainability Award** of the International Sustainable Campus Network und oikos international two consecutive times, in 2012 and 2014.
- In 2013, the Green Office Model was recognized and recommended as a good practice by Uwe Schneidewind und Mandy Singer-Brodowski in their book **“Transformative Science”**, and a report by the expert commission **“Science for Sustainability”** of the government of Baden-Württemberg, Germany.
- The Green Office Model was presented as a good practice on the **UNESCO Education for Sustainable World Conference** in Japan in 2014, and inspired the central recommendation of the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Youth Statement that universities and governments should provide structural support for student-led change processes.

rootAbility was established by co-founders of Maastricht University Green Office as a non-profit organisation in 2012, to create a growing community of Green Office Alumni that support the replication of the Green Office Model. We developed the **6 Green Office Principles**, which form the basis of the model, and support students and staff in the adaptation of these principles to the context of their university. The Green Office Principles are **freely available** to everyone under a Creative Commons Licence. As a **process facilitator**, we deliver presentations, workshops and webinars, and provide guidance, inspiration, information and feedback for students and staff that want to write concept papers and funding application for their Green Offices.

Beginning of 2015, the Green Office Model has inspired student-led and staff-supported sustainability hubs **at 10 universities in the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom**. Over 58 students and staff work for these Green Offices, which have a combined annual budget of **800 000 Euro**. We support initiatives at universities across Sweden, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain in developing concept papers and funding applications for their Green Offices. In this sense, the Green Office Model gave rise to the growing and internationally active Green Office Movement. Goal of this movement is to engage over **10 000 students and staff in 100 Green Offices by 2025**, in order to help transition universities, higher education sectors and societies towards sustainability. Will you be part of this?

6 GREEN OFFICE PRINCIPLES

The essence of the Green Office Model can be distilled into 6 principles that then need to be adapted to the requirements of your university:



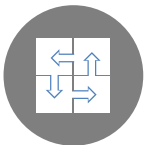
Students and staff: A dynamic team of student employees, volunteers and university staff form the core of a Green Office. They are directly responsible for running the Green Office and its activities.

Mandate: The Green Office receives an official mandate to drive the sustainability transition of the university and/or local community, by creating new impulses, connecting and empowering actors, improving communications or implementing sustainability strategies.



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 student, and enable them to implement high-impact projects.

Integration: The Green Office is integrated into the institution's organisational structure, and is supervised by a steering group. The Green Office team also joins relevant sustainability committees.



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 Green Offices around Europe.

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.



ADAPTING THE GREEN OFFICE PRINCIPLES

By February 2015, the Green Office Model has been adapted to 10 universities in the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom. Based on an analysis of these experiments with the model, we developed an overview on the best options to adapt the model to a university. These options illustrate an **adaptation range** allowing you to tailor your Green Office to your university's context, while still guaranteeing its impact.

Within this adaptation range, we encourage students and staff to further **innovate and experiment** with these 6 Green Office Principles, to improve and adapt the model to your context. However, in case that your adaptation of the Green Office Model significantly falls outside of the 6 principles, we cannot guarantee the quality and impact of your Green Office. For instance, a sustainability unit with two part-time student employees and five volunteers is not a Green Office according to our principles. Operating within this adaptation range is crucial to **guarantee the quality and impact** of Green Offices, and prevent mistakes that have been made at some universities.

1ST PRINCIPLE: STUDENTS AND STAFF

Students

Students form the heart of the Green Office. 5-8 student employees are hired who are reimbursed for 8-14hrs per week. Experience has shown that a size of 5-8 students is optimal for a Green Office. A team that is smaller than 5 students significantly reduces its ability for self-governance and to cover all the relevant dimensions of sustainability in higher education in its work, i.e. education, research, operations, community and governance. Experience also shows that a team that is larger than 8 students reaches the limits of self-governance that are possible for a Green Office, and requires more hierarchical forms of management.

The size of the team **depends upon the size of the university**: For instance, a team of 5 students will be a drop in the ocean at a university with 40 000 students, whereas it can be more suited to a university with 4 000 students. In general, we recommend students and staff to create a Green Office with 8 student employees, to create the necessary buzz and energy to kick-start and accelerate a dynamic change process.

To create the necessary commitment, student employees have a contract for a **minimum of one year** with possibility of extension. Students apply for the positions and are selected based on their merit and potential. The team should be from diverse study backgrounds, highly motivated and with leadership experience. To guarantee continuity of the team, the hiring process should take place twice per year, so that only half of the students are exchanged during each hiring round. After their one year contract is over, student employees can discuss an extension of their contract with the team.

The student employees also recruit and involve other students as **volunteers** in their projects. The number of students that are involved in a Green Office as volunteers depends on the ability of the student employees to manage volunteers and the work requirements of projects. Experience has shown that 3-5 student volunteers per student employee work very well. In addition to being engaged as volunteers in the Green Office, the Green Office can also **assist other students in running their own sustainability projects**. Involving student volunteers and supporting other students with their sustainability projects is an important empowerment function of the Green Office.

Staff

The integration of at least one enthusiastic and competent professional staff into the Green Office team is **essential** for the Green Office to create an impact. The staff should like to work with students and understand him/herself in a **facilitating and collaborating**, rather than supervising function. The staff has the final responsibility over the budget and approves expenditures, implements projects together with the students, and provides vital institutional and sustainability-related knowledge and project management experience.

Depending on the university, there are multiple options to integrate staff into the Green Office:

- **In case that one or two sustainability staff members already exist**, then they should become part of the Green Office. The staff can join as Green Office Coordinator, taking up a new challenge of closely working together with the student team.
- **In case that no sustainability staff members exists**, then there are the following options:
 - A. A staff with affinity to sustainability issues and working with students is assigned as the project coordinator for the Green Office for the duration of the funding period. In this case, no new staff needs to be hired, but an existing staff member – whose current university position is not directly focused on sustainability – starts working on a half or full-time basis for the Green Office.
 - B. A recent graduate or more experienced staff member can be newly hired to coordinate the Green Office.
- **For the advanced:** In addition to administrative staff, researchers and lecturers can also be integrated into the Green Office. Academics are especially important to work on projects in education and research together with the students. This can be achieved, for instance by allocating a researcher or lecturer to work two days per week with the Green Office. Also a PhD researcher can be integrated into the team, as has been done in Maastricht. The PhD could conduct action-research on the sustainability transition of the institution by implementing projects and then researching the impact of these projects. In addition to a permanent role in the Green Office, research and educational staff can also be involved with the Green Office on a project-by-project basis, for instance for developing a new sustainability course.

Experience shows that the integration of competent, motivated and inspiring staff, in addition to having driven, entrepreneurial and enthusiastic students, **determines the success or failure of a Green Office**. Yet be aware that integrating existing or hiring new staff will be one of the largest budget points in the Green Office. It is also very important that you ask yourself who within your university could work with the Green Office and that you involve these people early on in the design process. **Please contact us** to discuss this issue in-depth through a telephone or Skype call.

Green Offices have also adapted different practices on how to internally organise the team:

- **Portfolios:** One or two student employees work together with student volunteers in portfolios such as education, research, community, governance and operations. These portfolios correspond to the dimensions of sustainability in higher education. In addition, one or two students should act as student coordinators of the team, and student should be responsible for communication and outreach. The staff member becomes the Green Office Coordinator, or also joins one of the portfolios depending on his/her expertise.
- **Domains:** The team can also be organised into activity domains, such as campaigns, events, projects, policy, communications, support or coordination. This way of internal organisation structures the Green Office with regards to the types of activities that it engages in to create an impact (campaigns, events, projects, policy), the self-organisation of the Green Office itself (coordination), and its outreach to the university community (communication). Support can be a role that assists students and staff in implementing their projects. The staff member can join the Green Office in a coordinating role, and be involved in some of the impact-focused activities.
- **Open structure:** The team can also take a relatively open structure, by organising the team into one coordinator and several project managers. This open structure allows for the largest flexibility of the Green Office to engage in all kinds of activities. This might be important during the start-up phase when the direction and identity of the Green Office is still uncertain and in development. On the other hand, an open structure might raise internal challenges to coordinate the team as roles and responsibilities are overlapping.
- **Themes:** The team can also be organised along thematic lines. Student employees can then become responsible for thematic issues like energy, food, waste or transportation. These students can then organise events, campaigns, projects and lobby for policy changes across education, research, operations, community and governance. This internal organisation has not been done so far in any Green Office, but might be worth experimenting with it.

Until this point, experience still needs to show what the best way is to internally organise the team. What is definitely important is that at least two students are responsible for the supporting roles of coordination and communication. The coordination role is important to lead the recruitment of new students, organise retreats and the weekly meetings, write annual reports and plans, and develop budget projects. The communication role is important to guarantee a continuous stream of social media news, make the Green Office and its activities known via lecture announcements, or design and run the website. Experience has shown that communication is neglected in case that no student is directly responsible for it. In smaller Green Offices, the roles of coordination and communication can also be fulfilled by one student.

2ND PRINCIPLE: MANDATE

The mandate of the GO describes its official role within the university. A mandate is crucial, as it **legitimizes and focuses activities** of the Green Office. A Green Office gets a mandate by the university body - in most cases the Executive Board - that officially establishes the Green Office. The mandate of the Green Office depends on existing sustainability policies, strategies and governance structure within the university. In general, the mandates of Green Offices comprise some or all of the following elements:

- **Coordinating the sustainability strategy:** A sustainability strategy outlines the long and short-term aspirations of your university with regards to sustainability. It provides legitimacy, resources and direction for initiatives. Normally, a multitude of departments and actors work towards implementing this strategy. In case that the institution does not have a sustainability strategy yet, the Green Office should become responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of this strategy. In case that the university already has an extensive sustainability strategy and several staff and committees are working on sustainability issues, then the Green Office could be assigned to manage specific objectives of an existing sustainability strategy. For instance, the Green Office can become responsible for organising activities around student outreach, empowerment, communication or local community engagement.
- **Connecting people and initiatives:** In case that your university already has a lot of sustainability initiatives run by students and staff, but an overview of these initiatives, as well as a central contact point that they can turn to for support and inspiration are lacking, then this role should be an integral part of your Green Office's mandate. The Green Office becomes the hub where all initiatives and actors turn to.
- **Enhancing communication:** Many universities are large organisations, with very specialized communities that oftentimes do not know of each other's existence. For instance, many sustainability academics have never talked to the sustainability managers of their university, and many students do not even know that this position exists. If communication is a problem, then this should be an important objective of the Green Office's mandate.
- **Empowering students and staff:** In case that students, staff and external actors face hurdles to realise their sustainability ambitions, then their empowerment should be one aspect of your mandate. This empowerment can take several forms: Providing feedback and encouragement on project ideas of students and staff, connecting them with relevant actors, allowing them to run events in your office, financing small-scale student projects and assisting with their promotion.

- **Creating new impulses:** A key element of a Green Office's mandate is the creation of new impulses. This can be achieved in numerous ways, through additional projects, programmes, meetings and conversations that the Green Office realises. These new impulses infuse the institution with a new energy and spirit which helps to create the necessary buzz and dynamic around sustainability.

Developing the mandate for a Green Office requires a **careful understanding and analysis of existing sustainability policies and strategies**. Conversations with sustainability staff and student initiatives can provide you with an overview of existing activities, ambitions and aspirations. You also need to ask yourself: **what do we want the Green Office to achieve?** This simple question should trigger a further reflection on issues around what sustainability means for you, and how you envision a sustainable university to look like. These reflections, plus the analysis of existing efforts provide the breeding ground to frame a powerful mandate for your Green Office. As always, we are happy to provide feedback on your ideas and further elaborate on the options that you have.

3RD PRINCIPLE: RESOURCES

It goes without saying that resources are **crucial** for the Green Office to create an impact. The size and type of resources you need depend on your ambitions for the Green Office and the cost structure of your university. Your university's cost structure determines what the Green Office would need to pay for and how much this costs. For instance, at some universities you will *not* need to pay for office space. Also the salary costs that you need to calculate into your budget differs between universities. For Green Offices in the Netherlands, experience shows that an annual budget of minimum 75 000 € per year is necessary to set-up and run a Green Office that has some impact. Writing a good budget projection for the first two years is critical to get the Green Office approved and to guarantee its impact. While writing the budget, you might want to think of the following investments that your Green Office will need to make:

- **Salaries:** Paying the salaries of student employees and staff is the largest post within the budget. The amount of money you need depends on the hourly wage for students and staff, as well as overhead costs. Overhead costs include social insurance, taxes and administrative costs that come on top of the gross wage that employees receive. You will need to calculate also these overhead costs into your budget. You can find out about salary costs by talking to someone from the human resources department, job service office, or a financial controller. In case that a sustainability staff already exists that is then integrated into the Green Office, it helps to check to what extent the salary of this staff needs to be included in the Green Office's budget, or can be seen as an in-kind contribution from the department that s/he currently works in.
- **Office space and equipment:** At some institutions, office space can be provided for free, whereas at others you will need to rent office space from your university. You can find out about available office space and its costs by finding the responsible person within the real estate department of facility services. The cost for office space also varies depending on how large the space is, and where it is located. We would highly recommend you to find office space that is central, so that other students and staff can find you easily. Also for other sustainability student organisations and Green Office volunteers to work in the Green Office, larger office space with one big or many smaller rooms would be ideal. In case that you need to pay for office space, you also might find department managers that provide you with office space for free.
- **Events and campaigns:** This expenditure depends on the type of activities that you want to run. For events – such as a lecture series, workshops, open day, networking evening – you might need money for rooms, catering, speakers, and promotion. For campaigns, you might need to invest into online software to run a social media campaign or develop an app or hire a professional designer and photographer.

- **Projects and programmes:** Projects and programmes can incur expenditures with regards to materials (e.g. LED lighting pilot), and printing (e.g. annual sustainability reports). Especially projects that want to change something within the building infrastructure of the university will require larger investments. In case that the Green Office wants to implement bigger projects, the team can also write business cases and proposals to acquire extra funding from other departments.
- **Weekend working retreats:** Leaving the city to move to a farm or the coast for a weekend with your whole team, and the new recruits can be a great bonding experience. This is important to smooth the transition between student generations, create a team spirit and effectively plan your next steps. We would recommend you to plan the transportation, catering and accommodation expenditures for at least one retreat per year into your budget. Retreats are especially important after recruitment periods, when members of the old team are moving out and new ones are coming in.
- **Conferences and excursions:** Participating in sustainability in higher education conferences can allow you to present your work, and connect to sustainability initiatives from other universities. Also excursions to visit Green Offices and sustainability teams at other universities can inspire and provide additional learning experiences. You should allocate money for this in your budget, to pay for accommodation, transportation and registration costs.
- **Training and coaching:** Investing into training and coaching of the student employees, volunteers as well as the staff member(s) is important as becoming a sustainability change agent is a very knowledge and skill-intensive endeavour. We recommend experienced Green Offices to organise at least one training per semester, together with us. See more about the training at the end of this document on Principle 6.

In addition to calculating the annual budget of your Green Office, **finding the resources** to kick-start it is the next challenge. This can be quite an interesting journey with many twists and surprises. The most obvious option is to officially submit a funding proposal to the relevant university body, in most cases the Executive Board.

Nonetheless, we have seen **numerous creative ways** how students and staff mobilize resources: For instance, students have been talking to dozens of people within their university until they met the director of a sustainability research institute. This director then became their **supporter** and offered them office space and printing services in his department for free. By meeting and talking to people, students have also learned about an internal **innovation fund**, which on the first look had nothing to do with sustainability. These students then submitted a proposal to this fund and gained two year funding for a Green Office as an innovative pilot project.

Staff has kick-started a Green Office by paying for some student positions out of **existing sustainability budgets**. This provided the start-up funding until first successes had been generated and an official funding proposal developed. Staff members have also submitted proposals for Green Offices as part of multi-year funding proposals to finance strategic activities around **Sustainability Strategies**.

Three options exist to get structural funding for a Green Office:

- **Option 1 - Internal financing from central level:** The Executive Board, Senate, University Council or any other relevant central decision-making body establishes the Green Office as a permanent unit or as a pilot project, with a first funding period of 2-3 years. The funding can come from central funds related to innovation, student affairs, sustainability, and organisational development.
- **Option 2 - Internal financing from departments:** In addition to being financed through central funds, departments have their own funds that can be used to kick-start a Green Office. This is why Facility Services, faculties or research institutes can also contribute or fully fund a Green Office. The most relevant department for you to talk to is the one responsible for sustainability management at your university. At Dutch universities these are people within Facility Services in most cases.
- **Option 3 - External project funding:** You can also write an application for external funding to finance the Green Office. External funding can come from ministries, corporations or foundations at local, national or European levels. Until this point, only two Green Offices received external funding through the Students' Green Fund in the UK. This fund was especially developed to finance student-led sustainability projects at universities and communities. Please note that external funding might require more time to find funds, understand funding procedures, finding the organisational unit in the university that can develop the application with you and then submit it with you. It is also important that after the project period ends, the Green Office would need to be financed from your university, to avoid an abrupt ending of the project.
- **Option 4 - Patchwork funding:** In addition to this structural support, you can also realise your Green Office through **patchwork funding**. In this case, the funding to pay for the positions of the student employees can be drawn from several sources within and outside the institution. For instance, one student can be hired under the umbrella of a research institute, one student by Facility Services, another paid for by the Students' Union and another by the communications department. In this mix, the central level can provide the funding for office space and project expenditures. This allows more organisational units within the institution to share the investments into the Green Office. At the same time this requires more time and energy for coordination and collaboration to get these partners together.

With regards to funding from central and de-central levels, please note that universities have **special procedures to earmark money for the coming year**. At Dutch universities, budget calculations and allocations for the next year are done between September to December the year beforehand. This is why it is important for you to find a financial controller or other university employee to talk to and learn more about the internal budget procedures of the university. Also with regards to mobilizing external funding, there will be **deadlines** that you need to consider, as well as **bureaucratic procedures** – such as regular reporting and proper financial controlling –that you will need to adhere to.

To guarantee the legacy of the Green Office, it is important that the funding comes from within the university. Funding from central level also illustrates the commitment from higher management to the Green Office. This is the main reason, why **we see funding Option 1 as the most preferable option**. In case that your university is very under-resourced, then external and patch-work funding might be your two options to get a foot in the door. Funding from de-central level can be important to kick-start the Green Office **quickly**, rather than going through the bureaucratic and political complications of central-level funding. Regardless of the funding option that you chose, the ability to sustain and empower the Green Office over the years is to **demonstrate successes and impacts**. In the meantime, please **contact us** to discuss your budget calculations for the Green Office and to design a strategy to acquire funding.

Mobilizing resources for your Green Office is the most challenging and fun part of the journey. It will require **creativity, perseverance and well-crafted arguments** from your side. It is important that you recognize that **a lack of money is never the problem**, though most people will tell you that there is no money available. However, a lack of money is not an objective fact. **There is always money for something somewhere**. The question is rather one of **finding the right funds** that can be used to fuel the Green Office, and **shifting priorities of decision makers** so that they act upon their responsibility to advance sustainability and student empowerment.

During this process you will see **doors being shut**, as you get stuck in conversations why universities should do something about sustainability and what sustainability is in the first place. Be patient and persistent, continuously emphasise the responsibilities of universities as public institutions to contribute to sustainability and that students need to be empowered to lead and help drive these changes. At times you might need to mobilize the **lobby power of students**, collect signatures, work through student representation and organise demonstrations, if necessary.

You will also see new doors being opened, oftentimes unexpectedly, as you meet allies and supporters, and stumble upon new opportunities. It is going to be a simultaneously **challenging and fun process**. The most important thing is to learn from your mistakes, improve your approach, and

to keep trying and keep going. Remember that many students and staff have walked the same path before you, and that we and people from other Green Offices are more than happy to help you during this process.

4TH PRINCIPLE: INTEGRATION

The way the Green Office is integrated into your university **heavily depends on the existing sustainability governance structures**. The more people, teams and committees exist that are working on sustainability issues, the more important it is to fit role of the Green Office into these existing structures. With regards to integration, you need to ask yourself what the best department is that the Green Office should become part of, or if it becomes a department in itself. We have observed the following options in practice:

- **Ground zero:** No sustainability team or coordinator exists and nobody else is or feels responsible for sustainability. Only an informal group of students and staff engage in sustainability issues at the university, mainly as volunteers in their free-time. In this case you have the largest freedom and potential for change. Since the Green Office provides benefits to the whole institution and works across all departments, faculties and institutes, we suggest positioning the Green Office centrally within the university. Options are to position the Green Office directly under the Executive Board, or the General Administration.
- **One or two sustainability coordinator(s) exist(s):** Your university already has one or two sustainability coordinator(s). As mentioned beforehand, it would be important to make the sustainability coordinator(s) part of the Green Office. At most Dutch and British universities, sustainability coordinators are linked to Facility Services. One easy option would thus be to integrate the Green Office into Facility Services. The integration of the Green Office into Facility Services has certain pros and cons that need to be decided on a case by case basis. Since the Green Office engages with and connects people and projects across education, research, operations, the university, as well as the local community, it is quite important to make people feel that the Green Office belongs to the whole university, and does not represent the interests and is a project of a specific department, such as Facility Services or a research institute.
- **The university has a sustainability committee:** It is important that the Green Office is linked to a **Steering Group** on a strategic level. In case that the institution already has a Sustainability Committee, this committee can also take over the role of Steering Group for the Green Office. In case that no committee exists that could take over the role of the Steering Group, a Steering Group should be created as soon as the Green Office is launched. Depending on your university, this group could include a representative of the Executive Board, student representatives, departmental managers, professors and external actors. All members should be selected based on their skills, knowledge and connections that they could offer to advance the Green Office's cause. The group meets the Green Office twice per year. During this two hour meeting, the group reviews progress, provides feedback on the strategic direction, and helps to overcome obstacles.

- **Your university has more complex governance structures:** In case that your university is already doing a lot on sustainability, then you will encounter more complex governance structures: A whole sustainability team, multiple staff in different departments and institutes working on sustainability, and different committees dealing with waste, energy or sustainable procurement, as well as one central sustainability strategy or multiple policy documents on biodiversity, energy or sustainable real estate. In this case it is best to meet a staff member, who has a good overview of this complex structure, and then to discuss which sustainability issues are already addressed very well and where there are shortcomings. The Green Office can then be positioned in a way that it builds upon existing efforts and addresses weaknesses. Within a complex governance structure, you also might *not* need to have a separate Green Office. For instance, a self-governing student team of five to eight students can be integrated into an existing sustainability team.

Each of these different options presents specific challenges to integrate the Green Office into your university. We suggest that you just **contact us** to discuss those.

5TH PRINCIPLE: COLLABORATION

Since many universities are quite large, diverse and static organisations advancing changes towards sustainability requires a **high amount of collaboration between internal and external stakeholders**. We have seen projects fail at Green Offices, because end users and key staff have not been involved in the design and implementation of activities.

It is thus important during the design phase that you **consult relevant stakeholders** and provide an **overview** of existing stakeholders that the Green Office could work together with in your concept paper. You can collect this overview by searching on the university's website, and talking to experienced students and staff. It is also important to **set up meetings** with the most influential stakeholders, to discuss the Green Office idea, gain their support and brainstorm on potential projects. To provide a better illustration on what the Green Office is actually going to work on in the concept paper, you can then include the list of stakeholders together with an overview of different projects that the Green Office could do together with them.

The **degree and reasons of collaboration** between the Green Office and its stakeholders will vary depending on the type of projects: For instance, an infrastructure project to improve building insulation requires **professional staff** to contribute their knowledge, and skills, and to supervise the implementation of the building retrofit. Students can assist this process through research and data analysis. On the contrary, organising a student sustainability conference might fall under full project ownership of the Green Office. As preparation for this conference, the team will work closely together with other **student organisations**. Also **NGOs, companies and the local municipality** can play important roles as collaborators. Your Green Office can also build ties and relationships with **other Green Offices** that are part of the Green Office Movement.

You already see that a **great diversity of stakeholders** from the university, local community, as well as other countries can be involved in the activities of your Green Office. It is important that you emphasise the collaborative nature of the Green Office's activities in the concept paper, give specific examples of joint projects and most importantly involve key stakeholders in the design of your Green Office Model. We are looking forward to discuss your stakeholder engagement strategy for the development of the concept paper.

6TH PRINCIPLE: TRAINING

Most students, when starting their work in the Green Office, have little prior working experience, especially with regards to change management within a public organisation. The student employees and volunteers will have different levels of experience with regards to running projects, holding meetings, or convincing other people to join their cause. It is thus very important that the students are inspired, motivated and well-trained for their work, so that they can use the opportunities that a Green Office offers them to advance a dynamic change process.

For Green Offices in the start-up phase, experience suggests that a **minimum of three workshops per year** are necessary to build and strengthen their capacity. For more experienced Green Office, **at least one whole-day training workshop** per semester should be organised. Given our experience with the Green Office Model, we would highly recommend you to run these workshops with rootAbility Fellows.

rootAbility Fellows are experienced and trained graduates from Green Offices or other student-led initiatives that participate in a one year programme – the rootAbility Fellowship Programme – to be trained as trainers and run workshops for other Green Offices, and further the cause of the Green Office Movement. This is thus a great opportunity for graduates from Green Offices to stay involved, and to pass on their knowledge to other generations of students in Green Offices. Workshops for Green Offices are run by two rootAbility Fellows.

During the workshops, the trainers will create a safe space for your team spaces to learn, experiment, and reflect is important to become more inspired, refreshed, smarter and emotionally resilient. Specific **workshop topics** can include sustainability in higher education, project management, stakeholder engagement, as well as outreach and communication. As already discussed in the section on resources, a budget post for training budget should be allocated to enable this knowledge exchange and motivational boost through the workshops. Just get in contact with us to request a current overview of our **workshop portfolio**. In addition to running these workshops, we will stay in regular contact with your Green Office, and will share other open-source materials, such as examples of vacancy descriptions, with you.