

Since 2018, the VESTING Board has been busy promoting sustainability within the association. This started with the initiation of monthly Green Initiatives and has been expanded to a Multi-Year Sustainability Plan by the VESTING Board 2019-2020. As a study association, VESTING believes it is important to contribute to a better climate and have an exemplary function in this regard for our members.

A multi-year plan has been made using input from the Sustainability Survey, the Green Office, VESTING's Green Officers, the Supervisory Board, and the VESTING Board. The following two goals have been adopted as guiding principles in this regard:

1. Making VESTING more sustainable;
2. Increasing the sustainable awareness of VESTING Members.

In addition to making VESTING more sustainable, the second goal is of great importance. By making members aware of the importance of sustainability, we hope to ensure that they will also give sustainability a place in their own lifestyle. To achieve awareness, exposure of the sustainable policy and Green Initiatives is very important. It is the responsibility of the Green Officer of the VESTING Board to realize the plans in this multi-year policy and to achieve the goals stated above.

The last multi-year plan has come to an end, but VESTING still strives to improve on sustainability every day. The new plan will consist of some new components and some old components where VESTING can still improve on. To make sure that the previous multi-year plan will not be forgotten, there will be a summary of the goals that VESTING still strives to achieve.

The Multi-Year Sustainability Plan consists of five parts, each with several goals. The five points VESTING wants to focus on in the coming years are:

- Ecological footprint of food;
- Ecological footprint of travel;
- Cooperation with sustainable parties;
- Mental well-being;
- Diversity & Inclusion.

These five components will all be explained in this multi-year sustainability plan. In the coming years, VESTING hopes to be able to develop in the field of sustainability in this way.

The long-term sustainability policy has been formulated ambitiously and its realization still needs to be investigated in some areas. We expect that the current society will also develop further, which will, in turn, provide additional opportunities for VESTING. That is why this multi-year plan will have to be revised every year, to be able to include current developments and thus keep the policy up-to-date.

How have we developed in the past five years?

As an association, VESTING achieved a lot over the past year in becoming more sustainable and encouraging our members to become more aware of sustainable behavior. In this section there will be an overview of what has been implemented within VESTING to make the association as sustainable as possible. In the past five years the main focus has been on the following points:

- Ecological footprint of food;
- Ecological footprint of travel;
- Ecological footprint of the VESTING Kamer and other association matters;
- Cooperation with sustainable parties;
- Paper consumption
- Mental well-being.

The goal is to maintain the changes that have been made to develop on sustainability. To make sure all goals that already are achieved are still implemented within VESTING we give a clear overview down below:

Ecological footprint of food

Since being aware of what an individual eats is one of the most important aspects in becoming more sustainable, VESTING has improved significantly. To encourage members to eat vegetarian, all food from our own catering is vegetarian at all VESTING Activities. This includes both multi-day and one-day activities. Next to that VESTING strives to reduce the amount of food waste to the minimum. Shopping lists for VESTING Activities have to be optimized. In this way, less food will be leftover, which is beneficial for the climate. Leftover food can be either auctioned where the proceeds are donated to research related to sustainability, or will be donated to the less fortunate and homeless shelters.

Ecological footprint of travel

Carbon neutral travelling is an important part of becoming more sustainable since there is a direct emission of CO₂ with transportation. The goal is to minimize carbon emission within VESTING Activities. To achieve this we nominally compensate all train, plane, and bus travel of members at VESTING Activities from and to Groningen. We also offer our members to compensate for their own CO₂ emissions in the enrollment procedure, on top of the total compensation that VESTING provides. In this way VESTING strives to become carbon neutral.

Ecological footprint of the VESTING Kamer and other association matters

VESTING has its own office at the Faculty of Economics & Business. This office is provided by the Faculty. VESTING strives to make its daily choices in the field of facilities and office environment more sustainable. In the past five years VESTING has made their office more sustainable by implementing a light sensor in the office, most energy efficient computer screens, being able to control our own heating and making the VESTING Kamer accessible to people with health conditions or impairments people. To reduce the waste of goodies we sent the remaining goodies back to the companies. This topic seems to have reached its full potential, hence we set this point as finished.

Cooperation with sustainable parties

One of VESTING's most important tasks is to bring students and companies together. By collaborating with companies, VESTING tries to create more sustainable awareness among our members. VESTING has a page on her website that represents sustainable parties to give them a platform. Also, at every VESTING Conference, there is at least one speaker from a sustainable party to talk about sustainable awareness.

Paper consumption

Making paper does not stop at felling trees, but the process from tree to paper costs a lot of raw materials and energy. Therefore, minimizing paper consumption is very important in the modern days. Within VESTING, we avoid using paper at our events and other association matters. When we have a case where we need to print paper, for example when ordering VESTING Notebooks for our members, we do this on recycled paper at Groenprint. Since we cannot improve further on this particular point, the VESTING Board decided to set this point as finished.

Mental well-being

VESTING is committed to good physical and mental well-being of its members. Research has shown that during the corona pandemic and a rapidly changing society, this overall health among students has declined. To increase the possibilities in mental health care for our members, we always have two confidential advisors available, one male and one female advisor. Our members can approach these advisors and share their life experiences and get help, which stay confidential at all times. Furthermore, VESTING always has a minimum of three Green Initiatives per year regarding mental health.

Ecological footprint of food

Fifteen to twenty percent of all greenhouse gases emitted can be directly traced back to agriculture. In addition, meat consumption is the main cause of the depletion of freshwater resources. Since food is distributed at many VESTING Activities, there is much to be gained in this area of sustainability. Considering the goals that already have been achieved, the following plans have been made for the upcoming years:

- 2024-2025 • Have at least three Green Initiatives regarding sustainable food production or consumption
- 2025-2026 • Implement vegetarian options only at every VESTING Activity
- 2026-2027 • Implement vegan options at every VESTING Activity
 • Reduce plastic waste with 50% in the fifty cent shop

Have at least three Green Initiatives regarding sustainable food production or consumption

Besides striving to achieve the smallest ecological food footprint within the study association, it is equally crucial to raise awareness among our members about their food consumption. Given that VESTING does not have direct control over individual choices, the most effective approach is to actively promote the cause. VESTING can play a pivotal role in encouraging members to enhance their awareness of food consumption. This involves promoting vegetarian options among members, fostering connections with local food cooperatives, and supporting initiatives dedicated to reducing food waste.

Implement vegetarian options only at every VESTING Activity

Since 2021, all VESTING Activities featuring our in-house catering have exclusively offered vegetarian food. However, during events with external catering, we haven't consistently provided vegetarian options. To encourage members to embrace a vegetarian diet, we now propose offering only vegetarian choices when utilizing external catering services.

Implement vegan options at every VESTING activity

VESTING already offers vegetarian food only when there is no external catering. Since veganism is environmentally the better option, VESTING wants to encourage vegan food at their activities. By introducing members to vegan food, an attempt is made to make vegan food more attractive and to encourage people to eat vegan food more often. Since the VESTING fifty cent shop has a lot of plastic waste, the reduction of waste will have a big impact on becoming more environmentally sustainable.

Ecological footprint of travel

About fifteen percent of all greenhouse gases are emitted by the transport sector. Daily transport choices influence the climate and also air quality. Since VESTING organises events where transport is facilitated or reimbursed for students and/or company representatives, it is in our power to become more sustainable in this area as well. To reduce the ecological footprint of travel, the following steps are taken.

- 2024-2025 • When organizing an activity or event involving travel, prioritize the use of trains over a touring car whenever feasible.
- 2025-2026 • Follow the updated RUG travel policy when traveling
- 2026-2027 • Always hire electric vans and cars when needed for an activity

When having an activity or event that includes traveling, always use the train over a touring car when optional.

VESTING has several activities that include travel by public transportation. When the journey is within the country, the options are by train or by touring car. Since the train is environmentally the better option, VESTING strives to take the train option over the touring car option.

Follow the updated RUG travel policy when traveling

Traveling by plane is the last option when striving to become carbon neutral. The European Programme is the only VESTING Event where the plane is an option, hence only use the plane when travel time is above nine hours to prevent using the plane when having greener options. VESTING always strives to avoid traveling by plane.

Always hire electric vans when needed for an activity

Especially at multi-day VESTING Events, there are often cars needed to transport tools for that event. Since VESTING wants to become CO2 neutral, the goal is to always hire an electric car when needed. With this change there will not be any carbon emission.

Mental well-being

VESTING is committed to maintaining good physical and mental well-being of its members. Research has shown that during the corona pandemic and a rapidly changing society, this overall health among students has declined. Therefore, the VESTING Board wants to increase its commitment to the mental well-being of its members by including mental well-being in the Multi-Sustainability Plan as well. The following goals have been set for this:

- 2024-2025
 - Always have one VESTING Board member as a confidential advisor
 - Introduce a ‘Mental Wellbeing’ Section on the VESTING Website
- 2025-2026
 - Give a presentation on study balance at the Introduction Weekend every year
- 2026-2027
 - Give a yearly workshop on mental well-being

Always have one VESTING Board member as a confidential advisor

Confidential advisors are very important to have in a study association, since it is important that members feel comfortable at every event. Board members are at every VESTING Event, for this reason it is convenient to have a board member as a confidential advisor. When a member is not comfortable at an event, they can directly talk about it to someone. Since members may have trouble with reaching out to the board, there will always be one non board confidential advisor. To enhance members with mental health issues to talk to someone, VESTING will introduce a ‘Mental Wellbeing’ section on the website.

Give a presentation on study balance at the Introduction Weekend every year

Due to the recurrent issues of alcohol and drug use among students, VESTING aims to proactively address these concerns to incoming first-year students. During the VESTING Introduction Weekend, freshmen will receive a comprehensive introduction to the challenges students may encounter, particularly those related to alcohol and drugs. Overworking is also common issue among students, often leading to burnout and diminished academic performance. It’s crucial to strike a balance between study and relaxation to maintain overall well-being and effectiveness in learning.

Give a yearly workshop on mental well-being

In 2023, VESTING organised a health game as a green initiative. This event was really helpful and educational. Given the persistent issue of mental health challenges faced by students, VESTING is proposing an annual workshop dedicated to mental well-being. The aim is to heighten awareness among our members and extend assistance to those grappling with such issues.

Cooperation with sustainable parties

One of VESTING’s most important tasks is to bring students and companies together. VESTING has a lot of events in which companies are brought to attention. In the upcoming years, an attempt will be made to pay more attention to both companies that operate in a sustainable manner and companies with a social or sustainable goal. The following goals have been set for this:

- 2024-2025
 - Find at least 1 new sustainable social partner
 - Actively promote the sustainable social partners
 - Switch to a sustainable insurer
- 2025-2026
 - Do a yearly committee auction for charity as an activity
 - Switch to a sustainable bank
- 2026-2027
 - Have a DAT project with a sustainable company

Find at least one new sustainable social partner

A sustainable social partner is a unique and valuable party who not only contributes to everybody’s well-being but also does so in a manner that aligns with the principles of sustainability and environmental responsibility. These parties embody the essence of conscious living and understand the interconnectedness of an individual’s actions with the health of our planet and society. To create awareness among members, VESTING wants to work together with a party that enlightens these subjects.

Do a yearly committee auction as an activity

This activity enhances committees to socialize with each other and compete to get the most money for charity. This activity includes all committees where they all have one item that they sell to members, the profit will be donated to charity by choice. This event is mainly to create more awareness for charities among members.

Have a DAT project with a sustainable company

Every year, the VESTING Data Analytics Team has several projects at various companies. These projects have a duration of a few weeks where they work on data for the company. To support sustainable companies, VESTING will have a DAT project at a sustainable company.



VESTING Multi-Year Sustainability Plan

Diversity & Inclusion

Inclusion within VESTING refers to the deliberate and proactive effort to create an environment where all members, regardless of their background, identity, or abilities, feel valued, welcomed, and empowered to participate fully in the association's activities and community. The following goals have been set for this:

- 2024-2025
 - Let the Chairs of the first-year committees and the introduction Weekend Committee do an Active Bystander Training
- 2025-2026
 - Create more awareness for the LGBTQ+ community
- 2026-2027
 - Invite an expert to speak about inclusion at Introduction Weekend

Let the Chairs of the first-year committees and the Introduction Weekend Committee do an Active Bystander Training

VESTING wants her members to feel comfortable and safe at every event. To accomplish this, active bystander training is very helpful for committee members. Especially first-year students can feel uncomfortable in a new environment and may avoid confrontation. To learn more about how to act when seeing an uncomfortable situation at an event, the ABT will give perfect guidance for these situations.

Create more awareness for the LGBTQ+ community

VESTING is a diverse community, comprising individuals from various backgrounds, orientations, and identities. Creating more awareness for the LGBTQ+ community sends a clear message that VESTING values and embraces diversity. It creates an inclusive environment where all members feel welcome and respected, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Invite an expert to speak about inclusion at Introduction Weekend

To create awareness about being yourself among the new members someone can give a presentation about inclusion. With this presentation VESTING wants to help members to make them feel comfortable with who they are. Since being a student can be very lonely and feel like you need to fit in, VESTING wants to create an atmosphere where everything can be talked about at VESTING.