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Environmental Programme

Student Union of the University of Eastern Finland
2025–2028

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1. Introduction

The Environmental Programme of the Student Union of the University of Eastern Finland (ISYY) is a document that guides environmentally friendly practices in the Student Union. The Programme sets clear goals and concrete measures for the continuous development of the Student Union's eco-friendliness. The Programme was updated by an environmental working group established by the Student Union's Executive Board, taking into account the development ideas of the Student Union's members and personnel.

The goals set for the Student Union's operations are divided into sections: general operations, events and meetings, purchases, and facilities. The Programme also sets specific goals for the environmental advocacy done through stakeholder cooperation. The Programme is built on broad key objectives that serve as a basis for the rest of the Programme's goals.

The Student Union is committed to implementing and updating the Environmental Programme by a decision of the Representative Council. The Student Union's Executive Board and employees will implement the Programme in their areas of responsibility, and the Executive Board will also give the Representative Council an annual report on the implementation of the Programme.

2. Implementing, updating and reporting on the Programme

Ensuring the implementation of the Environmental Programme is the responsibility of the Student Union's Representative Council and Executive Board. The Executive Board sees to the practical implementation of the Programme in the Student Union, whereas the Representative Council monitors implementation. To support implementation and ensure eco-friendly purchases, the Programme comes with a list of eco-labels (appendix 1). The Executive Board will give the Representative Council an annual report on the implementation of the Programme. The report will state whether the goals were achieved or not. If the goals were not achieved, the report should state the reasons for that and propose measures to ensure that the goals can be reached in the future.

The Student Union is committed to amending the Environmental Programme every other council term to ensure that it is up to date and continuously developed. The Environmental Programme will be updated roughly every four years, which is also the timeframe for achieving the goals. Reports from previous years and any new goals and actions that have come up will be utilised in the update process, and development ideas are also collected from the Student Union and its members.

3. Key objectives

1. Responsible Student Union

ISYY is an environmentally responsible organisation that operates in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and follows this Environmental Programme in all its activities.

2. Raising environmental awareness by setting a good example

ISYY raises awareness of environmental issues through its communication and activities, encouraging its members and stakeholders to act in alignment with the same values. ISYY actively shares information about environmental actions and participates in and organises environmental awareness events.

3. Active environmental advocate

ISYY promotes environmental matters actively by doing advocacy work through stakeholder cooperation in student-related sectors. ISYY encourages students to take part in environmental advocacy and offers them opportunities for promoting eco-friendliness.

4. Operations

The Student Union emphasises eco-friendly and ethical practices in its activities. The goal is to promote sustainable development and raise awareness of environmental issues, both inside the Student Union and in the student community at large.

Goal	Action
Implementing and following the Environmental Programme	ISYY actively implements the Environmental Programme and reports on it to the Representative Council every year.
Stronger environmental advocacy	ISYY will participate in public discussion about the environment more actively through communication and stakeholder cooperation.
Promoting sustainable development	ISYY will organise annual events focusing on a different theme of sustainable development: ecological, financial, social or cultural sustainability.
Raising environmental awareness	We will raise environmental awareness by communicating environmental issues to members and by organising environmental events on environmental dates, for example.
Smaller carbon footprint and net zero target	We will create a plan to calculate and minimise our carbon footprint. We will calculate the carbon footprint either annually or every couple of years. We will set a net zero target for ISYY and make a plan to achieve it.
More eco-friendly archiving system	We will switch from physical archives to an electronic document and records management system.

Goal	Action
Reducing the environmental impact of travel	We evaluate the need for travel and the means of transport on a case-by-case basis, with special attention to environmental impact. Public transport should be used whenever possible. If there are no public transport connections or if the schedules are inconvenient, carpooling is also an option.
Encouraging eco-friendly commuting	ISYY offers its employees plenty of incentives for active and eco-friendly commuting by, for example, offering benefits to people who walk or cycle to work and by supporting public transport use.
Ensuring product recycling	Products that are no longer in use but are still usable are sold, given away or taken to be recycled.
Sustainable cooperation	Eco-consciousness is one of the key criteria in new cooperation agreements.
Sustainable investing	Environmental and ethical aspects are taken into consideration when making new investments.

5. Events and meetings

The Student Union prioritises serving eco-friendly and ethical food and drinks at its events and meetings. Special attention is also paid to recycling at events and meetings.

Goal	Action
Avoiding food waste	We check the number of participants and their dietary needs prior to in-person meetings and trainings and only get the amount of food we need.
Using reusable tableware more	We use reusable tableware whenever possible. We will look into the possibility of getting a reusable tableware set that associations, clubs and student associations could rent.
Serving eco-labelled, local and ethically produced food and beverages	We pay attention to how eco-friendly, ethical and local the products are by, for example, checking the labels. Any disposable tableware we buy should be eco-labelled.
Vegan catering	When buying food and drinks for events and meetings, we should primarily buy vegan food and food with as small a carbon footprint as possible.
Reducing packing waste	We pay attention to the amount and recyclability of the packing materials of food and beverages.
Proper recycling of catering waste	We instruct participants to put the waste in the right sorting containers and, where possible, provide proper recycling bins.
Using less paper	Events and meetings are primarily advertised online. Digital tickets, overall patches, etc. are used as tickets of admission instead of paper wristbands.

6. Purchases

When making purchases, we pay attention to how necessary, recyclable and eco-friendly the purchase is and choose eco-labelled, high-quality and more sustainable options.

Goal	Action
Sustainable products and services	We buy eco-labelled products and services where possible.
Sustainable real estate purchases	New real estate purchases are made with energy-efficiency in mind, and any repairs are done in a sustainable manner.
Eco-friendly appliances and devices	We choose energy-efficient and high-quality appliances when buying new appliances. Rechargeable devices should be preferred to avoid having to use non-rechargeable batteries.
Buying things second hand	We look into the possibility of buying things second hand when buying something.
Second-hand work phones	We buy work phones that are high-quality and preferably second-hand.
Multi-purpose overall patches	Where possible, we order overall patches that can be used for several events.

7. Facilities

Environmental aspects are taken into account in the Student Union's facilities and facility-related decision-making and measures.

Goal	Action
Improving the recycling bin situation	We will make sure that our facilities have enough functioning recycling bins by getting them ourselves or by contacting the people in charge of them. We need to demand more containers from the company managing the waste collection points to enable large-scale recycling.
Improving the recycling rate	We will give the people who use the facilities recycling instructions in both Finnish and English.
Sustainable cleaning services	Eco-friendliness is one of our criteria when outsourcing cleaning services.
Renewable and eco-friendly electricity	The electricity we buy should at least come from renewable sources. When shopping around for a new energy supplier, we will choose an EKOenergy-labelled option. As for those Student Union premises where we are not in charge of power purchase agreements, we will ask the people in charge of energy procurement to choose renewable energy and, where possible, EKOenergy-labelled energy.
Reducing energy consumption	We advise the people who use the facilities not to use the lights and appliances excessively.
Sustainable repairs and renovations	Attention is paid to improving the eco-friendliness of facilities when doing repairs and renovations.

8. Stakeholder cooperation and advocacy

In ISYY's Environmental Programme, the key stakeholders are student associations, campus associations, the University of Eastern Finland, campus restaurants and the campus cities.

ISYY is actively in contact with the stakeholders and brings up stakeholder-related goals during discussions.

8.1 Student associations and campus associations

Goal	Action
Encouraging eco-friendly activities	Being eco-conscious is one of the project grant criteria.
Raising environmental awareness among associations	The person in charge of our environmental sector will give a talk about eco-friendly association activities as part of association training.
Making events more eco-friendly	We will create environmental guidelines for associations to guide them towards more eco-friendly activities.
Environmental goals for associations	The person in charge of the environmental sector will offer advice and support for setting and achieving environmental goals with the help of documents such as the Environmental Programme and environmental guidelines.

8.2 University and campus restaurants

Goal	Action
Promoting eco-friendliness at the University	As part of our cooperation, we will ask the University to follow its action plan for sustainable development and responsibility.

Goal	Action
Eco-friendly events	We will make sure that environmental aspects are taken into consideration in things like purchases and recycling at events organised in cooperation between ISYY and the UEF.
Sustainability as part of studies	The University should incorporate sustainability courses into all degrees as planned.
Making vegan food more appealing	The vegetarian food served at the University and in campus restaurants must be quality vegan food. The availability of vegan food should be one of the key selection criteria when outsourcing the University's restaurant services.
Enabling eco-friendly transportation	The University should increase the number of bike racks that allow for frame locking to match the number of students and staff on campus.
Extensive recycling options	The University should increase the number of recycling bins as planned by, for example, getting bottle collection and cardboard recycling bins on campuses.
More concrete environmental action	The University should strive to make campus areas ecologically sustainable with measures such as landscaping, birdhouses and natural meadows.
Raising environmental awareness	The University should clearly communicate the environmental actions it has taken on its own communication channels and on campus and strive to raise awareness of environmental issues.

8.3 Campus cities

Goal	Action
Promoting eco-friendly practices in the cities	As part of our cooperation, we will ask city decision-makers to commit to their environmental programmes and plans.
Enabling eco-friendly transportation and making it more appealing	We will strive to promote the development of public transportation and cycling infrastructure. Public transportation must be accessible and affordable enough to be clearly more economical than driving a car.
Eco-friendly construction	Construction and renovations must be carried out in a sustainable manner. Housing and fixtures must be energy-efficient.
Enabling large-scale recycling	Residential planning should take into account sufficient recycling containers.
Accessible recycling instructions	Recycling instructions must be clear and accessible to international students as well.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Product labels

Eco-labels:

Official and third-party certified eco-labels include the Nordic Swan Ecolabel (image 1), the EU Ecolabel (image 2), the EU Energy Label (image 3) and the EU Organic Logo (image 4).



Image 1: Nordic Swan Ecolabel



Image 2: EU Ecolabel

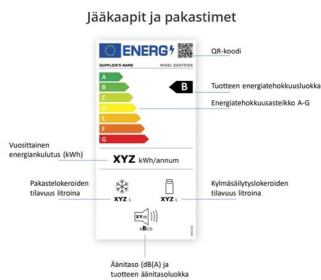


Image 3: EU Energy Label



4: EU organic logo

Other energy labels and eco-labels include the Energy Star label used in the EU and USA (image 5) and the international EKOenergia ecolabel (image 6).



Image 5: Energy Star label



Image 6: EKOenergia label

As for wood and paper products, there are two forest certification systems with their own eco-labels: the FSC label (image 7) and the PEFC label (image 8).



Image 7: FSC logo



Image 8: PEFC logo

Source: [The Consumers' Union of Finland's webpage on responsible consumption and energy and eco-labels \(in Finnish\)](#)

Food packaging labels:

In addition to eco-labels, there are other labels you can check to see how sustainable and eco-friendly a product is. These labels include the Hyvää Suomesta/Produce of Finland label (image 9), the Avainlippu logo (image 10) and the Fairtrade logo (image 11).



Image 9: Hyvää Suomesta/Produce of Finland logo Image 10: Avainlippu logo



Image 11: Fairtrade logo

Source: [The Consumers' Union of Finland's webpage on food packaging labels \(in Finnish\)](#)