



SUSCOM POLICY BRIEF 1

CIRCULARITY



What is it?

SUSCOM plans to release three consecutive policy briefs, focusing on three different aspects of sustainability. These will then make up the complete Sustainability Report of the AUC Student Association.

The first policy brief focuses on the issue of circularity, hence deals with patterns of consumption and waste management present in AUCSA activities, e.g committee events. The first part of this brief analyzes the data gathered via an online questionnaire, the second part consists of recommendations for sustainable improvements in the current consumption and waste disposal patterns.



Our three main goals for circularity

- 1** Reusing materials and decorations
- 2** Eco-packaging of snacks
- 3** Reusable plastic cups for all events

The rule of 5 Rs

The rule of 5 Rs, inspired by the zero-waste movement can be a useful guideline when making consumer and disposal choices.

Refuse
Reduce
Reuse
Repurpose
Recycle

Note that recycling is only the last stage of this chain - we want to focus on avoiding consumption altogether, not on improving waste management (which is of course still very important).

What has already been done by the AUCSA body?

- Biodegradable plastic cups at Winterformal
- Allowed max amount of printed posters reduced
- Initial research into reusable hard plastic cups

FINDINGS

14 committees and commissions took part in the survey on which we based our brief. Here are the main trends from the three categories we focused on.

Food packaging

Percentage of respondents:

0% throws away leftover food

43% uses non-recyclable materials, also in snack packaging

Advertisement

Percentage of respondents:

100% uses social media

93% uses posters

70% uses lunchbreak stands

Decorations and materials

70% uses decorations during their events

Percentage of those respondents:

50% reuses old decorations

40% buys them at physical/online stores within the Netherlands

10% buys them online from outside of the Netherlands

90% buys new decorations very infrequently or never

50% has reused other committee's decorations

The most widely used materials are paper and snack packaging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Food packaging

- Packaging matters - when possible, choose carton over plastic, and glass over juice boxes.
- Try to make snacks yourselves and avoid unnecessary packaging. For more information, follow our Instagram (@sustainabilitycommission), where we will be posting tips and recipes for more sustainable events.
- Paper or biodegradable plastic cups are all a step in the right direction, however they should not be our ultimate goal. They are still single-use products, and improper disposal makes them almost as harmful to the environment as regular plastic cups.
- SUSCOM, along with AUCSA Board, will try to introduce reusable plastic cups that can be used for all events.

Advertisement

- We don't want to discourage you to print posters, since the limits of printing are already very reasonable. Also, SUSCOM will attempt to convince AUC to use recycled paper for the printing of posters.
- You can also make more use of digital advertising. For example, by using the digital screens in the Academic Building to put your poster up (check the Committee Handbook for the guidelines).



RECOMMENDATIONS

Decorations and materials

- SUSCOM created a communication platform, in the form of a google sheets, to make the exchange of decorations between committees easier. If you want to find out which decorations are available to use, and update which ones you have available for others, open the following link:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=18TIUHNn9sbrxhnl1FClAOKPjkAn7u44ZoU9hvpNCFc4>
- Whenever buying new decorations, always refer to the rule of 5 Rs. Buy new ones only when absolutely necessary. Creative repurposing of old materials (papers, carton boards) often proves to be a fun and aesthetically pleasing option.
- Be mindful of the materials you use for events. If possible, always choose already recycled or recyclable products. Also, check out the Recycling Manual on the next two pages, to find out how to best dispose of your materials after use.

What's next?

Consecutive policy briefs will focus on issues such as travelling, or the carbon footprint of certain AUCSA activities. To make these briefs even more suited to your needs and expectations, all kinds of feedback will be greatly appreciated!



RECYCLING MANUAL

Here are some tips and information that will help you recycle!

Basic rules

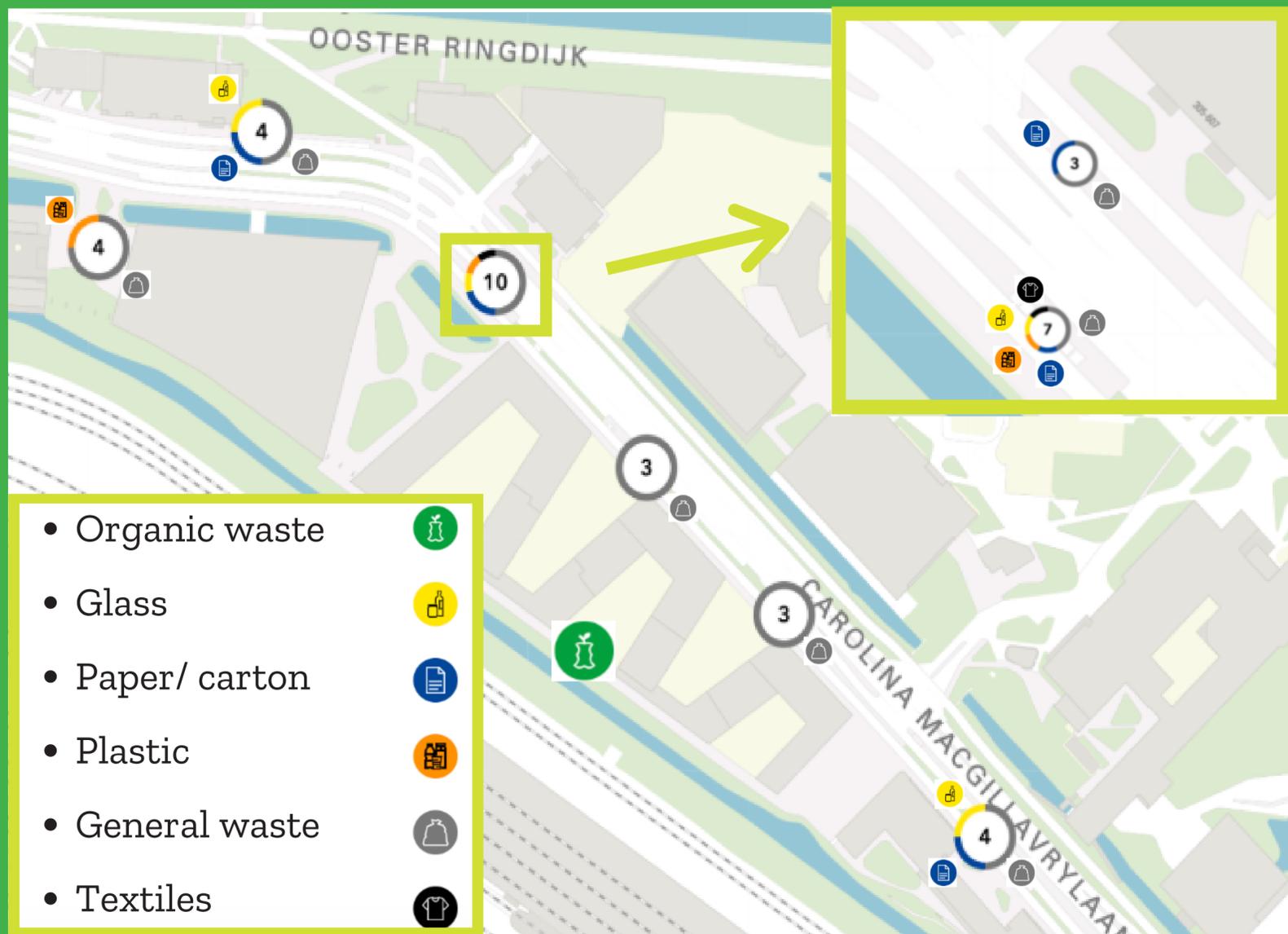
- Bottles and jars do not need to be cleaned and can be left with a lid on
- Paper and carton needs to be clean
- If you are unsure about where to put an item, choose the general waste bin (do not leave anything next to the bins)
- If the container is full, please use another one
- Dispose your organic waste at Pangea's compost bin (behind the courtyard of the middle dorm building), do not put: ('compostable') plastic bags, teabags, mango, avocado and citrus peels

Tricky items

- Tetra Packs (juice, milk cartons) should be put in a container with plastic
- Cans should be put in general waste bins
- Chip bags cannot be recycled (combination of hot plastic and aluminium), so they should be put in the general waste bins
- 'Compostable' plastic cups should be put in the general waste bins
- Citrus net packaging should be put in the general waste bins



Recycling points at Science Park



For further information, we encourage you to explore the following websites:

- <https://www.kidv.nl/> Netherlands institute for sustainable packaging
- <https://www.kidv.nl/6354/factsheet-drankenkartons-inzameling-en-recycling-def.pdf?ch=DEF> info about drinking cartons (dutch)
- <https://www.afvalscheidingswijzer.nl/> Dutch website for recycling
- <https://www.amsterdam.nl/en/waste-recycling/waste-guide-district/> select district 'Oost' to find out how to properly dispose of your waste in Oost

The framework of this brief was partially adopted from rootAbility.

Sources

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Contact SUSCOM

Do you have questions about the policy brief or sustainability in general? Always feel free to send us a message!

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