



Green Exchange Manual

Sustainability during your Erasmus+ stay as an Incoming student at Goethe University

Goethe University Frankfurt am Main - 2024

Faculty of Social Sciences

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Inspired by



Table of Contents

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of humankind and it affects every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, people, communities and countries today and even more tomorrow. To address climate change, countries worldwide adopted the Paris Agreement at the COP21 in Paris on 12 December 2015. In the agreement, all 174 signing countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and given the grave risks, to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius. Implementation of the Paris Agreement is essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN), and provides a roadmap for climate actions that will reduce emissions and build climate resilience.

- 01 Green Exchange & Green Erasmus**
- 02 Mobility in Europe and Germany**
- 03 Sustainability during your Exchange**
- 04 Sustainability at Goethe University**
- 05 Further Information**


Eco-logical

01 Green Exchange & Green Erasmus

Learn more about the background, objectives and importance of "Green Exchange" at Goethe University and the *Green Erasmus* initiative.

The "Green Exchange" project aims at making the Erasmus+ program at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Goethe University more sustainable and wants to generally raise awareness for sustainability in everyday life, travel and international contexts.

The project is financed by QSL*, a fund meant to support initiatives for innovative and interdisciplinary projects improving the quality of teaching and studying at Goethe University.

The main goal is to raise awareness among Erasmus+ incoming students for the topic of sustainable international mobility. A second focus is set on developing skills to live in a sustainable and resource-efficient way.

*QSL stands for "Qualität der Studienbedingungen und Lehre", meaning resources for the funding of projects that improve the experience and quality of studying at Goethe University.

Erasmus+ students who travel to and/or from the host country by bus, train, ferry or carpool are entitled to funding for additional travel days, if they can prove they travelled sustainably.

The purpose is to make travelling within the European mobility program as CO₂-neutral as possible and at the same time to raise awareness for low-emission transportation possibilities.

The next page compares the three main means of transportation and their environmental impact, measured in CO₂ emissions.

01 Green Exchange – What's that?

Example: Frankfurt – Berlin

Estimated with the CO₂-calculator from DB (for one person)



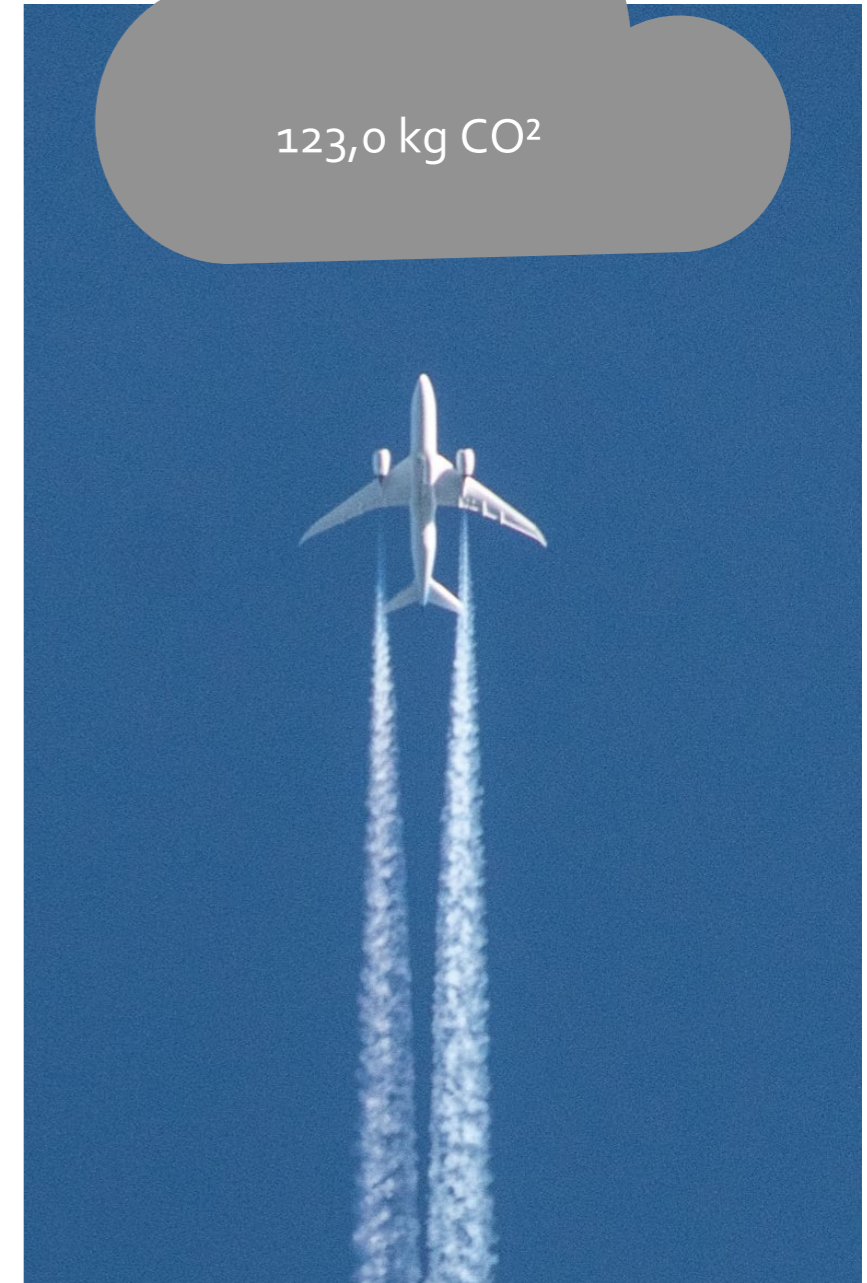
0,07 kg CO₂

Train 4h 1min



99,5 kg CO₂

Car 5h 23min



123,0 kg CO₂

Airplane 1h 10min + Waiting time

Objectives

In addition to reducing the ecological footprint, the *Green Erasmus* program extension is about building skills and knowledge about climate change, environmental protection and sustainability, the so-called "Green Skills". The aim is to educate as well as to raise understanding and awareness of these issues.

A consortium of several universities and student organisations founded and now coordinates the *Green Erasmus* project within which they formulated three main objectives:



To decrease the negative impact of the Erasmus+ Programme on environmental sustainability.



To raise awareness across the European higher education sector about the importance of sustainable internationalization.



To empower student organisations to be the agents of change, pushing for improvements on the topic of environmental sustainability.

For more information, visit the [Green Erasmus portal](#).

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 targets with several sub-goals, adopted by the UN to tackle global challenges such as inequality, poverty or climate change and can be understood as a call to action.

By reducing the ecological footprint and raising awareness and knowledge about sustainability, the "Green Exchange" project contributes to the SDGs.

The next pages introduce you to the three SDGs the "Green Exchange" project at Goethe University mainly contributes to.

For more information, visit the [UN SDGs portal](#).



01 Green Exchange - What's that?

SDG 11

- Shop, eat and drink locally. Supporting neighbourhood businesses keeps people employed and circulates money back into your community.
- Commute in a sustainable way – bike, walk or take public transport. Save the car trips for when you've got a big group.
- Take care of public spaces. Start yourself and inspire others to contribute to better public spaces – water the greenery, trim and plant trees, renovate sports areas and playgrounds, organise a cleanup.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



SDG 12

- Be conscious of packaging – the less the better!
- Do some research and buy from companies you know have sustainable practices and do not harm the environment.
- Choose reusable products. Use an eco-bag for shopping, a reusable water bottle or a cup to reduce your plastic waste.
- Buy second-hand whenever you can.
- Download and use food sharing applications. You can download apps to donate your leftover food and decrease the amount of food waste you produce.

12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



SDG 13

- Consume less meat and become vegetarian for one day a week. Meat production has a huge impact on the environment.
- Offset your carbon emissions. You can calculate your carbon footprint with the UN platform [Climate Neutral Now](#).
- Recycle paper, glass, plastic, metal and old electronics.
- Reduce your use of paper. Avoid printing and substitute it with electronic devices or carriers. Do not shop for pets! Visit your local animal shelter and adopt an animal there.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



02 Mobility in Germany and Europe

Frankfurt is located in the middle of Germany, and Germany in the middle of Europe - a perfect spot for further exploration. We want to encourage you, if possible, to do this in a sustainable and eco-friendly way. On the following pages you can find some ideas and orientation.

Travelling through Germany

During your stay in Germany you might want to see more of the country and travel a bit. The train system in Germany is perfect to visit other places - even if the commonplace about the punctuality of German trains oftentimes is more a myth than a reality. [Here](#) you can find more information on climate-friendly travel, put together by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

"Nahverkehr" also called ÖPNV, an abbreviation for "Öffentlicher Personennahverkehr" (public transport)	"Fernverkehr" (long distance travel)
Refers to the public transport with regional trains, mostly within one city or between cities	Refers to trains that travel fast from one city within Germany to another - more convenient for longer routes
Includes busses, the subway and regional trains ("Regionalbahnen", "S-Bahnen", "U-Bahnen", "Straßenbahnen")	Includes ICEs, ICs, ECs as well as long distance busses
With your student ticket you are often eligible to use this transport freely. In Frankfurt you automatically get a student ticket with your GoetheCard which allows you to use all "Nahverkehr" in Frankfurt and the state of Hesse.	You need to purchase a ticket to use these trains and busses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deutsche Bahn for train tickets • Flixbus for bus tickets as well as train tickets to some German cities • BlaBla Car/Bus for bus tickets or car pool

Travelling through Germany

Deutschlandticket

Since May 2023, there is the possibility to purchase the "Deutschlandticket", also called 49€-Ticket.

It allows you to use all public transport within Germany. This means that if you visit another city, e.g. Berlin, you can also use the subway there without buying a ticket again.

This ticket normally costs 49€ per month, however for students of the Goethe University it is automatically included in the student ticket – so you don't need to purchase it separately! [Here](#) you can find more information on the student ticket from AStA - the General Students' Committee (attention: this website is in German).



Places to visit in Hesse

Some Frankfurt day trip ideas that you can reach with public transport: Idstein, Darmstadt, Taunus, Rhön, Marburg, Odenwald or Kassel. Proof that you don't always need to travel far to explore beautiful places!



Sustainable Travel in Europe

Unfortunately, train travel within Europe can sometimes be more expensive and time-consuming than simply booking a flight, especially if it involves crossing more than one border. Here you can find tips and links for sustainable and resource-friendly mobility within Europe.

Interrail Ticket

- Starting at 212 € for people younger than 28 years (status: summer 2024) - attention: seat reservations necessary in Spain and France

Transeuropean Connections from the Deutsche Bahn

- Tip: book your travels 8 weeks in advance to get the best prices

Platforms for Research of connections across borders

- Omio
- Trainline
- App Railplanner

Train company of the respective country

- Advantage: early and reliable information about delays
- e.g. Austria: ÖBB, Italy: trenitalia, France: SNCF

Night Trains

- ÖBB Nightjet through Europe from Czech Republic to Italy
- European Sleeper from Brussels over Amsterdam and Berlin until Prague (from 2024 onwards)
- SJ EuroNight from Berlin/ Hamburg to Sweden

Concept: Slow and Mindful Travel

Slow Travel

Slow Travel means believing that the quality and learning potential of the experience is more important than the quantity of experiences you might have while travelling. The concept stands for an authentic participation and the feeling of really getting to know and engage with the place, people and culture. This concept benefits you as a traveller as well as the locals you interact with.

Mindful Travel

Mindful Travel specifically refers to thinking about what the intention of the stay is before leaving. Do you want to be able to read a book in the local language at the end? Or to travel in a way that conserves resources as much as possible? Would you like to network with like-minded people in another country? Ask yourself these questions before departing.



What does "slow and mindful" mean in practice?

1. Slow Down
2. Expand Your Comfort Zone
3. Simplify
4. Let Go of Plans
5. Spend Less
6. Get a Foothold
7. Integrate Yourself
8. Trust the Unknown
9. Show Gratitude
10. Appreciate the Ordinary

According to the [Zukunftsinstitut](#) (website only available in German).

We are aware that the conditions are not ideal - from planning chaos to financing and time investments. Nevertheless, we would like to encourage you to try this way of travelling, as long as you have the financial and timely resources.

An Erasmus+ can be a great opportunity to try this kind of travel and to take the time - for getting there and back as well as at your destination.



03 Sustainability during the Exchange

This chapter provides you with examples, ideas and concepts on how to include more sustainable habits during your exchange in Frankfurt as well as useful facts about (sustainable) daily life in Germany.

Getting around Frankfurt

During your time at Goethe University you have a ticket for the public transport which you can use for the whole of Germany ("Deutschlandsemesterticket").

Moreover, you can purchase or rent a bike during your stay. It can be practical for getting to the campus, biking along the river Main or doing a bicycle tour on the weekend.

Some ways to get a bike:

- Kleinanzeigen: a second-hand platform where private people sell their bikes (among other things)
- Swapfiets: a bicycle flatrate program where you rent a bike for a fixed amount of time, starting at around 20€ per month
Advantages: if your bike has an issue, Swapfiets fixes it for you, plus you don't have to resell your bike at the end of your stay
- Deutsche Bahn Bike: download the "Call a Bike" app to use one of the many DB bikes standing around Frankfurt for getting from A to B
Advantages: as a student you can rent up to 3 bikes for one hour for free if you enter a code at the registration





Consumption

Consumption is one of the more easy individually implementable modulations for more sustainability.

The concept of **circular economy** is at the center of this as the antithesis to the "throwaway economy". The aim is to produce and consume in the most resource-conserving and durable way possible and to create a cycle of products and materials. In general, of course, the principle of avoiding unnecessary consumption always applies.

Consumption

But if you still need something - for example, if the espresso maker does not fit into the suitcase for the semester abroad or the weather (due to climate change?) is completely different than planned - you can keep your eyes open for **second hand stores or platforms** (page 31) and pay attention to **labels and sustainability seals** (page 26).



There are also sustainable concepts and approaches in everyday shopping, such as **zero waste** or **recycling**. In Germany there is drinking water in lots of public spaces such as parks and you can easily fill up your water bottles at every tap – however, beware of warning signs that indicate when the water is not drinkable.

Also, the consumption of **seasonal and regional food** (page 28) is more sustainable and offers a very special cultural-gastronomic access to the host country on top. Do not forget to taste the locally produced "Äppler" (apple wine) while staying in Frankfurt!

Consumption: The Five Rs - Principles of Zero Waste

Zero Waste is a concept that targets at producing the least amount of waste with one's consumption. The most sustainable consumption is the one that does not happen - but that's not always possible.

You can make this your motto in order to avoid waste:

B₃ **U**₁ **Y**₄ **L**₁ **E**₁ **S**₁ **S**₁
C₃ **H**₄ **O**₁ **O**₁ **S**₁ **E**₁ **W**₄ **E**₁ **L**₁ **L**₁
M₃ **A**₁ **K**₅ **E**₁ **I**₁ **T**₁ **L**₁ **A**₁ **S**₁ **T**₁

Easy to implement practices

- Always having a reusable water bottle and/or coffee cup (Recup) with you
- Always carrying a tote bag (German: "Jutebeutel") with you
- Choosing the non-plastic wrapped vegetable or completely shopping at Zero Waste stores
- Try shampoo bars instead of bottled shampoo
- Use food-sharing apps
- Buy second-hand
- Resell or donate anything you don't need

Consumption: Waste Management

In Germany the waste is already separated within the household. Most of the times you distinguish between four types of waste, which are collected separately. This helps to recycle as much as possible.



General Waste ("Restmüll")

Hygienic articles
Backing paper
Tissues
Textiles
Broken glass or ceramics
Dust, ash
Medication
Receipts
Photos
Batteries, CDs/DVDs and LEDs belong into the special waste. You can bring them for example to your local drugstore.



Organic Waste ("Biomüll")

Vegetable and fruit waste
Egg shells
Flowers
Bread crumbs or leftovers
Coffee grounds
Garden waste
Organic cheese rind

When in doubt, put processed groceries in the general waste



Recycling: Paper

Magazines, newspapers
Books
Cartonage, egg cartons
Clean pizza cartons without plastic coating
Envelopes (remove the plastic window)

In general: if possible dispose all materials separately.



Recycling: Plastic

Plastic wrapping
Empty shampoo and cleaning bottles
Aluminium foil
Cans
Styrofoam
Plastic bags
Tetra packs from juice or milk
Empty yoghurt pots (without the paper coat)
Medical drug blisters

Consumption: Returnable Bottles



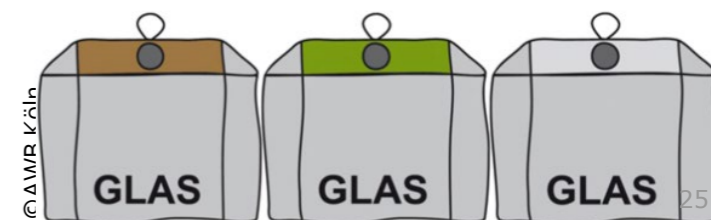
Every plastic or glass bottle and drinking can with this sign is a returnable bottle (German "Pfandflasche"). This means you pay between 0,08€ to 0,25€ "Pfand" on top when you purchase the drink. You get this money back when you return the bottle. You can do this in the supermarket where you bought it, as not all supermarkets take all bottles back (beware of supermarket-specific brands).

When sitting in a park or at the river Main with your friends, you might notice people going around, looking into trash bins to collect "Pfandflaschen" or asking you directly if they can have yours. They are oftentimes trying to earn some extra money by collecting returnable bottles and bringing them to the supermarkets. If you want to do something good, you can give your empty returnable bottle to them or place it next to a public trash bin, so they don't have to put their hands in there to look for it.

Glas bottles

Glas bottles or jars are also easy to recycle, thus they are collected separately. You can also collect them at home and bring them to the public glass containers to dispose them.

Here (as well as on Google Maps) you can search for the nearest glass container to your house (look up "Altglascontainer"). Please be aware to not dispose your glass bottles very late in the evening or early Sunday morning – this is very unpleasant for the people living around there and you might get admonished if you do so.



Consumption: Sustainability Labels in Fashion



World Fair Trade Organisation:
The aim of the WFTO is to work for greater justice in world trade.

GOTS: The world's leading textile processing standard for organic fibers, taking care of ecological and social criteria.



OEKO-TEX: Textiles are tested along the whole supply chain for health safety, production sites for socially and environmentally friendly production conditions.



Cradle-to-Cradle: Sustainability standard for manufacturing based on the cradle-to-cradle principle, according to William McDonough and Michael Braungart.



Fair Wear Foundation: The FWF stands for compliance with ILO labor standards, for safe and healthy working conditions and living wages for sewers.

Bluesign: A sustainability standard for the production of textiles, which especially takes into account aspects of chemical safety.



Consumption: Sustainability Labels Food & Tourism

Bioland

Bioland: Some of the criteria that must be met in order to obtain this label are a limitation on the amount of allowed fertilizer, free grazing for cattle, and a maximum of 4 hours and 200 km for livestock transportation.

Demeter: Demeter's standards not only go beyond the legal requirements of the EC Organic Regulation, but they are also considered the strictest among all associations. The ideal of this biodynamic farming method is the circular economy.



Naturland: This label has high ecological standards for food cultivation and processing and takes social aspects such as child labor and human rights into account.



EU-Bio-Logo: you can find this logo on products that have been organically produced and pre-packaged in the European Union.



 The logo for the "Tourismus Label Guide" features the words "TOURISMUS LABEL GUIDE" in a bold, green, sans-serif font, with a green arrow pointing to the right. The text is centered within a white circle, which is itself set against a teal square background.

TOURISMUS
LABEL
GUIDE

On the website fairunterwegs.org you can find a detailed overview of European tourism label jungle.

Sustainable initiatives in Frankfurt

GemüseheldInnen: By creating edible islands in urban green spaces, pleasing the eye with colorful fruit and vegetables and at the same time providing Frankfurt's residents with fresh food, the "vegetable heroes" are making a valuable contribution to climate protection. Their project is a big step towards food sovereignty, as growing one own's food implies becoming less dependent on imports and large companies.

The idea was implemented for the first time by a couple at Günthersburgpark in 2019. Today, the project manages 19 gardens with 250 active gardeners and cooperate with the Rappelt nursery on the 2-hectare Frankfurt city farm. For each garden, there is a team of 5-20 people who manage the garden together - there are even more people involved in the city farm.

Ada_kantine: The ada_kantine is a solidarity kitchen in Frankfurt Bockenheim. In the rooms of the former "Akademie der Arbeit" on the old university campus, the Kantine has been offering a delicious lunch every Friday-Monday since July 2020, focusing on vegan and vegetarian food out of political conviction.

The canteen is run by a very open association of around 200 volunteers, various associations and with the help of donations. It is run as a non-profit organisation by the Initiative Zukunft Bockenheim.

Cleanffm: Cleanffm focuses on infrastructure and better logistics: more waste bins, more staff and more frequent cleaning tours. The "clean" ambassadors are out and about in the city to talk openly and in a relaxed manner with everyone who is concerned about the issue. The project organises measures, campaigns, offers, events and collaborations around the topic of "clean cities". On top there is an active and motivated #cleanffm community!

Consumption: Sustainability in Frankfurt

Zero Waste Shops

Gramm.genau

Ulf-Unverpackt

Die Auffüllerei

Franco Unverpackt

Foodsharing places (one on Campus Westend)

Ecological Supermarkets

Fruit/ vegetable box from the producer: Die
Kooperative, Paradiesen, Querbeet, Hof Lebensberg,
Ackerlei, Dottenfelderhof in Bad Vilbel

Alnatura

Bioeck Bürgel

Naturkost Malm

Denn's Biomarkt

Reformhaus

Eating Out

Café Suppengrün

Ada-Kantine

Concept of Zero Waste Shops



Bring empty containers from your home to the shop e.g. plastic boxes, glass jars



Weight your empty container



Fill your container with what you like



Pay at the counter - prices are per kg



Consumption: Sustainability in Frankfurt

Second-Hand Shops & Flee Markets

Free flee market "Drehscheibe"

Weekly flee markets

Oxfam (also as a bookshop)

Epiphany

Ola Ware

Wiesen Vintage

Globetrotter Secondhand

ReSales

Teilerei

Neufundland

Remar Deutschland e. V.

Repair Café

AStA bike repair on campus ("Fahrradwerkstatt")

Nähcafé Seidenfaden

Repair Café Eschborn

Repair Café Nordend

Online Platforms

Vinted

Kleinanzeigen

Kayak

Momox (for books and fashion)

Fair Shops

Glore Store

Manufactum

Weltladen

Refurbished devices

Refurbed.de

Backmarket.de

Refurbishedstore.de

Living

A very common living situation in Germany are so called "Wohngemeinschaften", short WGs. Several people, mostly students, rent and share one flat from a private landlord where everyone has their own room but all share the kitchen and bathroom(s). This decision is not only cheaper, but also more sustainable.

WGs are a rather steady part of the student culture in Germany. There are all kinds of types - from purpose shared flat (so called "Zweck WGs", where people just live together to save money but do not interact too much) to functional WGs (where rooms are assigned according to their function and flatmates also share one bedroom). You are most likely to find something in between: people who want to live together and who will sometimes engage in activities such as cooking or going out, but have their own rooms and lives. And oftentimes flatmates grow into friends.




04 Sustainability at Goethe University

This chapter provides you with more concrete information on sustainability at our university.

Sustainability at Goethe University

In the QIS/LSF-system you can find a list of all academic courses and seminars with a reference to sustainability under "Sustainability Studies" (make sure to look for seminars of the right semester).

Since 2022 the Goethe University has a Sustainability Office/ Green Office, which is responsible for the university's sustainability strategy and for raising awareness on the topic.

In the Goethe App you can check the  environmental score of the daily dishes in the cafeterias. Up to three green stars provide information about emissions, water consumption, and animal welfare. The more stars, the more sustainable is the dish.

Furthermore, you are welcome to check out the book exchange on Campus Westend (and the "Bücherschränke" all over the city).

Engagement at Goethe University

Sustainability is the key topic of several student organisations at Goethe University. You are welcome to join these initiatives during your time in Frankfurt (e.g., "[Goethe teaches sustainability](#)").

Students from the "Umsonst-Flohmarkt Drehscheibe" organise a free flea-market every other month - you can bring and/or take used clothes, books, plates, etc. And you can also participate in the planning team.

Moreover, you can get active in the campus gardens at Campus Westend (behind the Seminar Pavillon) or at Campus Riedberg. The voluntary students from Goethe's Green Office are happy about more helping hands with planting and harvesting. There is also another zero waste project called "Die Teilerei", where you can get second hand objects for free.

05 Further Information

In the following chapter you can find further links to calculate your own ecological footprint or learn more about sustainable exchange semesters as well as interesting and inspiring documentaries or books.

Sustainability in Erasmus+

Portal Green Erasmus: [Green Erasmus](#)

[Erfahrungsberichte zum Auslandsstudium | studieren weltweit \(studieren-weltweit.de\)](#)

[DAADeuroletter_70](#)

Calculate your ecological footprint

DB Rechner

Quarks & Co.

WWF-Klimarechner

Documentaries

The Story of Stuff

The True Cost

Books

Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things (William McDonough & Michael Braungart)

Working to Restore: Harnessing the Power of Regenerative Business to Heal the World (Esha Chhabra)

Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered (Ernst F. Schumacher)

Sustainability in Frankfurt

[Stadtklima Frankfurt \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

[Fußabdruck oder Handabdruck? - Grüner Faden Frankfurt \(mgffm.de\)](https://mgffm.de)

[Karte von Morgen](#)

refill-deutschland.de

[Frankfurt Green City](#)

[Clean-Ups](#)

[Green City Event Calendar](#)

Helpful Apps

[Too Good to Go](#)

[Saisonkalender](#)

Contact Department of International Relations



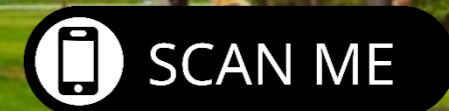
Department of International Relations

Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr. Anke Reinhold, Manager for International Relations

Do you have feedback, further comments or tips? You are welcome to contact us via e-mail via international@soz.uni-frankfurt.de.

Visit our website about "Green Exchange" here tinygu.de/greenexchangefb03 or via the QR code.





This manual provides students who are spending some time in Germany with information on how to be more sustainable during their Erasmus+ stay.

Incomings will find suggestions and tips for resource-friendly travel in Europe and Germany as well as for sustainable everyday life in Frankfurt. Moreover, students will find background information and further links. Although this handout is primarily about the individual contribution of each one of us, sustainability and climate protection are structural issues and the responsibility does not lie solely within individual citizens. We are, however, pleased about every person who decides to make a contribution.

