



# Versluijs - Projects

## Green Youth Initiatives

*“Never refuse an idea, it needs time to develop, like a flower needs time before it can flourish.”*

### Description of the project including the project's goal

Versluijs – Projects, Green Youth Initiatives has as goal to generate the possibility for youth to work on their ideas and start their own projects, projects which are aimed to connect environmental linked organisations.

The projects will be directed to three pillars:

**Youth:** (re)connecting youth and get more youths engaged through projects which connect to environmental linked organisations. In this way youth will get a stronger influence to decision making.

**Biodiversity:** Youth can act against the loss of our biodiversity, create awareness and change, get involved in projects directed to biodiversity related issues; it can also come with possible solutions.

**Sustainability:** We want to preserve the environment for the future, so all our projects must be sustainable, which means no impact on the environment; we also want to create awareness for environmental issues.

It is important that projects should cooperate with other organisations to build a strong network. This network shares information and experience, in this way we can, in cooperation with youth, build better regulations to preserve biodiversity and we can foster sustainable development.

### Project's objectives, activities and achievements

Each of the three pillars has its own objective :

**Youth:**

Through different kinds of projects creating cooperation with other (youth) organisations, this will provide a strong network (national and international), and has the possibility to influence decision making.

**Biodiversity:**

Through projects it will try to solve and/or create awareness among biodiversity related issues

**Sustainability:**

Promoting sustainable development within the organisation and all its projects, minimizing the ecological impact of some organisations.

The following activities are on-going:

- Engaging youth to develop their own initiatives and ideas, directed to nature, environment and biodiversity (local, national and international).
- Coaching and guidance of youth with their projects
- Expanding the network of projects and organisations through the projects

The following projects are done, on-going or starting soon:

- Dutch Nature Forum Project, which had the purpose to create a huge platform for all nature linked organisations in the Netherlands (temporarily finished)
- Dutch Go4BioDiv Initiative, The International Youth Forum Go4BioDiv gives young adults between 18 and 29 the possibility to engage in the Conferences of the Parties of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD-COP). Young messengers from five continents sent wake-up-calls to the world community for conserving biological and the often associated cultural diversity. In the Dutch initiative we work with students who will create more awareness for this organisation and will share and collect information related to biodiversity issues in the Netherlands, especially the Wadden Sea area (on-going)
- Project in cooperation with a Dutch young beekeeper to develop educational tools to provide information and create awareness for bees (and their related problems), which will be done together with other youths (expected to start soon)

The projects are very new, it's all an on-going process, but there are already a lot of youths who are very interested in the Versluijs projects. Youths became inspired by the projects we are doing at the moment.

## **How young people were involved**

Versluijs – Projects are developed by Erik Versluijs; the first idea related to this concept started 4 years ago, when he was 16 years old (now 20 years old). After a process and a few start-up projects in these 4 years it's now an organisation, which tries to connect, engage and stimulate young people with their ideas.

Every project what we have is inspired and developed by young people. We are working closely together with an educational institution, and we have close contact with youths of vocational education (which we prefer as target).

These projects are made by and for young people by using their own ideas and initiatives, and they work with passion and motivation. And doing so, they inspire other youths. So this process will engage more and more young participants. Starting a project should be approachable for all youths. From the age of 16 one can start a project and our target is between the age of 16 and 26.

Also we have close connection to other youth organisations (national and international), and even connections with a lot of nature linked organisations which provide us information and cooperation amongst projects.

## **Project funding**

The projects from Versluijs – Projects need to search for their own funding. For example: The Dutch participating at the Go4BioDiv International Youth Forum was funded last year (2012) by an educational institute (Netwerkschool MBO Helicon Velp), other small organisations and a few individuals. For the whole project we needed around 2000 euro, and this project was led by one person. Our projects should be low-cost. The organisation also needs funding, but we deliver services to generate an input income. The following services we offer to students and organisations: coaching and advising for project development and workshops, and lectures about project development.

### **Project's connections to national or international environment processes**

There are indirect connections with international environment processes. The Go4BioDiv International Youth Forum tries to have direct and indirect influences to decision making about biodiversity related issues. Versluijs – Projects started the Dutch Go4BioDiv Initiative in The Netherlands. In this way we also have a connection with environmental processes. And because of our national and international network we are able to connect with other organisations and projects that have a direct connection with environment processes. It is difficult to indicate connections with environmental processes, but in the end there are certainly some connections. If these are not visible right now, in the future they will be, because all of our projects should have a strong link with environmental issues.

### **Project's connections to national or international health processes**

There are indirect connections with international health processes. The new bee project wants to create educational tools about the importance of bees and its relation with health processes. The importance of bees is underestimated, we need the bees to pollinate the crops for our food production, so in the end it's for food safety that bees are protected against the enormous decline. Youths are able to create new educational tools for this problem.

### **Follow up, outcomes and future plans**

Versluijs – Projects has just started, our first projects have just begun and we hope to engage a lot of youths with new ideas for starting new projects. More youths are already interested in our organisations and also different kinds of other (youth) organisations are interested. Together with youth, governments, private organisations, NGO's, etc., we can make sustainable progress. Bad ideas don't exist, only badly executed ideas. Fostering youth for engaging their ideas, we will see where we end if all these great ideas come together.