What is a Green Library?

Environment means the surroundings or conditions in which human beings, organizations, animals, or plants live and operate. Environments can be natural, social, or cultural.

Sustainable development is development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Our Common Future, Brundtland Report, UN).

Present environments are endangered by climate change and other threats including social inequalities. All organizations should strive to protect the environment through sustainable development. This includes all kinds of libraries, which can play an active and significant role in sustainable development.

A *green and sustainable library* is a library which takes into account *environmental, economic* and *social sustainability*. Green and sustainable libraries may be of any size, but they should have a clear sustainability agenda which includes:

- **Green buildings and equipment**: The emissions, or carbon footprint, of the building and equipment are actively decreased.
- **Green office principles**: Operational routines and processes are environmentally sustainable.
- **Sustainable economy**: Consumption is restrained, circular and sharing economy practices are advanced and are made accessible to the community.
- **Sustainable library services:** Relevant and up-to-date information is easy to access for users, shared spaces, devices, and environmental education is offered, and operations are efficient. The library has a positive carbon handprint.
- **Social sustainability**: Good education, literacy, community engagement, cross cultural diversity, social inclusion, and overall participation are considered. The library works actively to reduce inequality.
- **Environmental management:** Environmental goals are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound), and the library works to decrease its own negative impact on environment. The library's environmental policy, its implementation and the results of environmental work are communicated to a broader audience.
- **Commitment to general environmental goals and programmes:** Commitment is guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and related environmental certificates and programmes.