



Draft guidelines on plastic prevention and reduction strategies for municipalities

BALTIPLAST: Baltic Approaches to Handling Plastic Pollution under a Circular Economy Context

Deliverable 1.2

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1.1 Introduction

There is a large difference among the Baltic Sea Region municipalities in how they tackle single-use plastics and plastic packaging at the strategic level – it ranges from following very generic goals of the national waste management plan up to developing a concrete strategy for plastic reduction for example, in the city of Västerås.

Moving towards a circular plastic economy requires a systemic and strategic approach on a local/municipal level. Therefore, harmonised guidance is needed to develop a suitable strategic framework for circular plastic systems. The strategic framework for plastic prevention and reduction aims to guide municipalities in developing their local strategic documents that contribute to the reduction of single-use plastic and plastic packaging/packaging waste (e.g. waste or plastic waste plans, reduction and reuse targets, circular economy strategy, reducing plastic by public procurement criteria, marine litter action plan, rules and guidelines for promoting reuse containers and reducing one-way packaging, etc.).

The purpose of the BaltiPlast draft guidelines on plastic prevention and reduction strategies for municipalities is to outline the process of developing a strategic framework by:

- explaining the concept of the strategic framework for the sustainable use of plastics (chapter [1.2](#))
- providing guidance for formulating, developing and implementing the strategic framework in municipalities (chapter [1.3](#))
- bringing examples of existing local-level strategic documents (chapter [1.4](#)).

The draft guidelines also include supportive material in Annex 1 and 2 for the BaltiPlast project partners to carry out the pilots and evaluate the results. This material will be integrated into the main text of the final guidelines.

1.2 Strategic framework for the sustainable use of plastics

The strategic framework can be expressed as a three-level pyramid model of types of strategic documents for moving towards sustainable use of plastics in local government (Figure 1).

First level: Strategies and action plans

At the top of the pyramid are long-term goals and targets for the sustainable use of plastics, which the municipality first agrees on based on the identified problems. Understanding the problem of plastics requires broader thinking on the municipal decision-making level, which tackles plastic as a material in a circular economy, not only plastic waste. Thus, the problems around soft and technical measures must also be understood at the strategic level as part of the solution.



Figure 1. The concept for the strategic framework

The action plan describes measures (e.g. regulatory, soft and technical measures) to reach the goals. The more explicit a strategic document is in addressing the defined problems, the easier it is to find appropriate measures, monitor their implementation, and finally succeed in the sustainable use of plastics. The more generic a document is, the less commitment it calls for.

Examples (see chapter [1.4.1](#)):

- Plastic waste-related strategies and action plans (e.g. action plan for sustainable use of plastics).
- Specific chapters in local-level sustainability strategies and action plans (e.g. waste management plan, litter reduction and control action plan).

Second level: Legal framework (rules and regulations)

Strategy leads to the development of rules and regulations designed to achieve policy goals and support the prevention and reduction of plastic waste in municipalities. Based on the action plan, the municipality adopts necessary legal acts. Local-level legal norms and rules describe how different entities have to prevent and reduce single-use plastics and plastic waste.

The aim is to provide the legal framework for moving towards the targets and objectives defined in strategies and action plans.

Examples (see chapter [1.4.2](#)):

- Local waste management rules,
- Banning the use of certain plastic products,
- Rules for specific activities (e.g. rules for organising environmentally friendly public events),
- Packaging waste collection requirements.

Third level: Guidance documents

At the bottom of the pyramid are various operational guidelines facilitating the enforcement of regulations, promoting the effective implementation of the strategy, and specifying the priority areas. Guidance documents for external and internal stakeholders provide instructions, minimum requirements and recommendations for plastic waste prevention and reduction.

Examples (see chapter [1.4.3](#)):

- Guidelines for green public procurement,
- Guidelines for toxic-free preschools,
- Recommendations for event organisers, etc.

1.3 Guidance for developing a strategic framework for plastic waste prevention and reduction in municipalities

This chapter provides step-by-step recommendations for municipalities to develop and implement the strategic framework document for plastic waste prevention and reduction (see Figure 2).

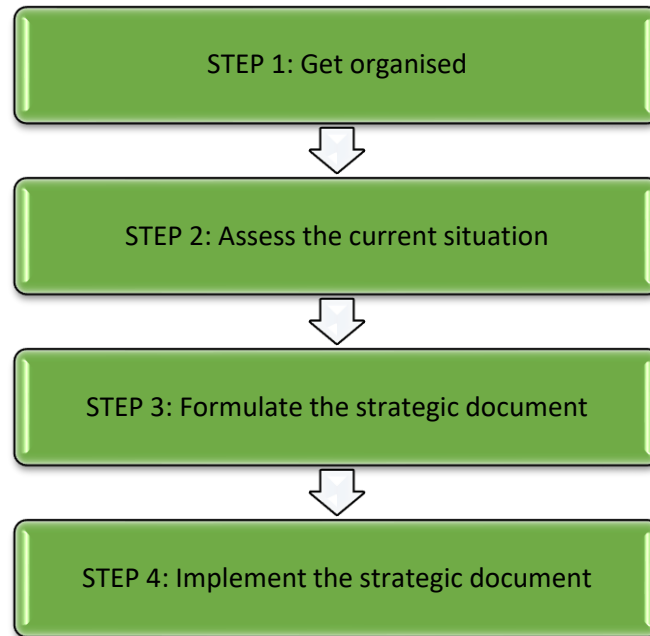


Figure 2. Steps for developing and implementing the strategic framework document

STEP 1. Get organised

- Ensure political commitment and leadership. Municipal leadership plays a key role in municipal planning.
- Appoint a coordinator and form a working group of representatives of local government (incl. decision-making level). The coordinator leads the strategic document development process.
- Consider external assistance. External experts might provide advice and expertise lacking in the municipality, build capacity and moderate workshops.
- Perform stakeholder analysis and engage stakeholders. Stakeholders should have opportunities to give input into the process and respond to proposed actions.

STEP 2. Assess the current situation

- Review the existing strategic documents, rules, legal acts and official guidance documents to identify to what extent the plastic use and waste issues are addressed and regulated (including relevant objectives and targets) and where the gaps are from the perspective of single-use plastics and plastic waste reduction.
- Collect information (problems, bottlenecks, needs, etc.) about the quantity and use of plastic items (e.g. plastic packaging, one-way vs reuse), plastic waste management (collection, sorting, recycling) and awareness raising/engagement of stakeholders (ongoing initiatives, expectations of businesses, organisations and consumers).

- Prioritise the problems and needs (possible criteria: legal requirement, importance for stakeholders/social impact, environmental impact, economic impact).

STEP 3. Formulate the strategic document:

- Based on the information collected in step 2, decide which level in the strategic framework your municipality will focus on (see Figure 1) and define the scope of the document. For making the decision, you can consider the following aspects:
 - Take into account the local legal rules for developing strategic documents: whether it will be a separate plastic strategy = Västerås' and Stockholm's path, or whether you will integrate plastic aspects into the existing strategies/action plans, i.e. a larger framework (see the examples in chapter 1.4.1).
 - In developing the legal documents, focus on the issues with higher priority: when and what to regulate and why regulation can be beneficial under current conditions (see step 2 above).
 - In developing guidance documents, also focus on the priority areas (see step 2 above).
- Develop a plan for compiling the chosen strategic document (including implementation timeframe, resources, actors, stakeholders, etc.).
- Draw up the strategic document. Depending on the chosen strategic framework level, this activity can include creating a vision, setting objectives and priorities, defining actions and indicators of achievement, developing rules and regulations, compiling guidelines, creating a budget, allocating roles and responsibilities, etc.
- Endorse the strategic document. After the final agreement of the strategic document with the stakeholders, the municipal decision-making body can officially approve it.

STEP 4. Implement the strategic document:

- Communicate the approved document among the stakeholders and the wider public and publish it on the municipality's website.
- Monitor regularly the progress and assess the impacts of the actions.
- Review and adapt the document based on the monitoring results, e.g. annually, to ensure the long-term success of the strategic framework for plastic waste reduction.

1.4 Illustrative examples

This chapter gives examples of the approaches by the Baltic Sea Region municipalities to tackle plastic use and waste issues. The chapter is structured according to the strategic framework pyramid:

- Strategies and action plans
- Rules and regulations
- Guidance documents

More examples have been collected in the BaltiPlast project deliverable 1.1: Best Practices in Innovation and Management of Plastic Materials Across the Baltic Sea Region.¹

¹ <https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Best-Practices-in-Innovation-and-Management-of-Plastic-Materials-Across-the-Baltic-Sea-Region.pdf>

1.4.1 Strategies and action plans

City of Västerås' Action Plan for a Sustainable Use of Plastics 2022–2025

In February 2023, the city of Västerås in Sweden adopted the Action Plan for Sustainable Use of Plastics 2022–2025.² The purpose of the action plan is to create clear guidance and common priorities for sustainable plastic use in Västerås municipality. The overall objectives are:

- No plastic with harmful substances or unnecessary plastic is present in the city's activities
- To create conditions for sustainable plastic use in the municipality

The action plan is primarily aimed internally at changing and developing the city's working methods. Secondly, the activities are aimed at residents of Västerås to increase knowledge and change consumption and behaviour.

The action plan has objectives, indicators and activities in three focus areas:

1. Conscious purchasing and smarter use
2. Increased recycling and sorting
3. Increasing knowledge of sustainable plastic use

This action plan also provides guidance for those who purchase or use plastic to do so in a way that contributes to sustainable plastic use. Guides:

1. Sustainable procurement and purchasing of plastics
2. Plastics in preschools and schools (chapter Q)
3. Plastics in offices and other workplaces
4. Plastics in healthcare
5. Plastics at events and conferences
6. The use of plastics in catering
7. Reducing the use of artificial grass and rubber asphalt

The action plan will be followed up annually through status reporting of activities and monitoring targets and indicators.



Action plan for a sustainable use of plastics in Västerås 2022-2025

Adopted by the Municipal Council 2023-02-02

KS 2021/00021
2022-07-23

² <https://www.vasteras.se/bygga-bo-och-miljo/livsmedel-och-halsa/plastbanta.html>

City of Stockholm's Plastics Strategy

Within the City of Stockholm, environmental work, including the work with plastics, is organised as part of the city's environmental programme. The work is also concretised in the following strategies and action plans³:

- The City of Stockholm's plastics strategy
- Action plan for the sustainable use of plastics 2021–2026
- Action plan for the reduced spreading of microplastics 2020–2024

The strategy involves environmentally conscious decision-making on plastic in relation to the following aspects:

- Purchase
- Use
- Waste

The city of Stockholm's action plan for the sustainable use of plastics outlines 14 measures based on the plastics strategy, divided into four chapters: procurement and contract management, usage, waste, and communication. The plan also defines responsible bodies and implementation time plans.

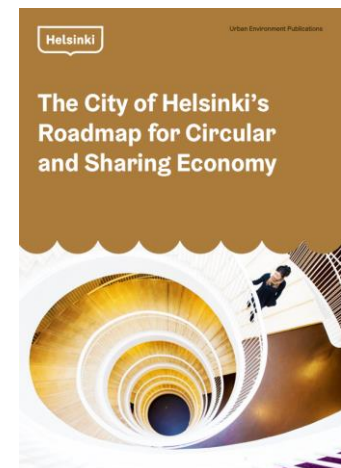
The action plan for the reduced spreading of microplastics includes 50 measures in 13 different areas and focuses on both the sources of microplastics and the dissemination pathways.



City of Helsinki's Roadmap for Circular and Sharing Economy and Litter Control Action Plan

Helsinki decided that reducing the consumption of plastic is an essential part of the circular economy, which is why it was included in the roadmap for the circular and sharing economy.

The Roadmap for Circular and Sharing Economy was adopted in 2020.⁴ The reduction of plastic consumption and the increased utilisation of recycled plastics are included in the focus areas of construction and procurements.



³ <https://miljobarometern.stockholm.se/content/docs/tema/plast/HP%20Plast%20eng.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.hel.fi/static/kanslia/Julkaisut/the-city-of-helsinkis-roadmap-for-circular-and-sharing-economy.pdf>

The topic of plastic is also dealt with in the City of Helsinki's Litter Control Action Plan 2022–2025, as about 90% of the rubbish collected from the beaches has been plastic.⁵ The aim of the Litter Control Action Plan is to gather the best ideas for practical measures to reduce litter, tackle the growing problem of litter and the damage it causes to the environment and health, raise awareness and knowledge of the problem of litter, and guide efforts towards reducing litter.

The measures are divided into three themes:

- communication,
- public spaces,
- construction.

The plan also describes the implementation of the measures, responsible parties and timetable. The litter control steering group will meet twice a year to monitor progress in implementing the action plan.

1.4.2 Rules and regulations

City of Tallinn's regulatory framework on single-use plastic products

In 2019, Tallinn implemented a ban on the use of single-use plastic dishes, cups, and cutlery in its public events, allowing only compostable dishes.

In spring 2023, the Tallinn City Council introduced new regulations concerning public events and using single-use dishes. These regulations were adopted in two parts: the waste management regulations and the regulations for organising public events in Tallinn.

Commencing from June 1, 2023, all public events in Tallinn, accommodating up to 30,000 visitors per day until December 31, 2023, and subsequently all public events, irrespective of visitor numbers, are mandated to exclusively serve food and drinks in reusable containers and use reusable cutlery. Disposable straws and cocktail garnishes not made of plastic (including bio-based plastic), oxidatively degradable or biodegradable plastic are permissible. This regulation aligns with the City of Tallinn's Waste Management Plan's objectives, emphasising the reduction of waste generation, the promotion of reuse, and the encouragement of separate waste collection.



10.03.2023

TALLINN PROHIBITS THE USE OF DISPOSABLE CUTLERY FROM PUBLIC EVENTS

Tallinn City Council adopted new waste management regulations at its Thursday session, one of the aims of which is to switch to reusable cutlery at public events in Tallinn.

As the European Green Capital, the city also wants to implement changes to make Tallinn and its activities more environmentally sustainable. From 1 June 2023, most public events in Tallinn will be allowed to serve food and drinks only in reusable containers and to use only reusable cutlery. From 1 January 2024, the requirement will apply to all public events, regardless of size. Disposable drinking spouts, mixing sticks and cocktail garnishes that are not made of plastic (including bio-based plastic), oxidatively degradable plastic or biodegradable plastic will be allowed.



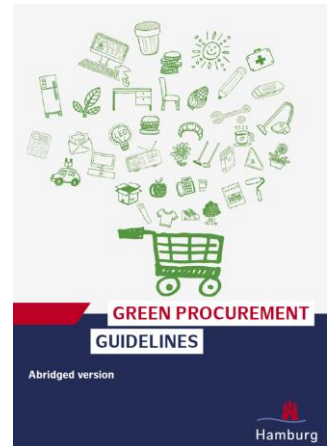
⁵ <https://www.hel.fi/static/liitteet/kaupunkiymparisto/julkaisut/julkaisut/HELSINKI-Litter-Control-Action-Plan-2022-2025.pdf>

1.4.3 Guidance documents

City of Hamburg's Green Procurement Guidelines

In 2016, Hamburg adopted guidelines for green public procurement.⁶ With the formal adoption of the guide by the Senate on 19.01.2016, it became binding for all procurements. The guidelines, renewed in 2019, help contracting and procurement departments take into account environmental aspects in tendering and contracting procedures. The guidelines define environmental criteria for 19 product groups and include a negative list of products that are not allowed to be bought with public money.

The guidelines do not explicitly mention plastic but formulate criteria regarding packaging for a few products. In addition to the product-specific procurement criteria, further recommendations are given in individual cases, including on the avoidance of waste (circular economy). The general environmental standards incorporate more aspects of the circular economy (packaging, reparability, and recyclable design). The standards for packaging contain, e.g., the following recommendations: "The packaging is recyclable" and "A reusable system is used for the packaging".



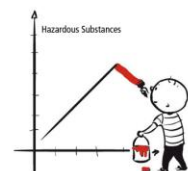
City of Västerås' Guidelines for Toxin-free Preschools

The guidelines⁷ aim to help preschools in Västerås avoid harmful chemicals and achieve the Swedish environmental objective of a non-toxic environment. As a first step, the City of Västerås adopted a Chemicals Action Plan, which stresses, among other things, the need to reduce children's exposure to chemicals. These guidelines build on that work.

The guidelines are intended to support decision-making, for instance, when changes are to be carried out or purchases are to be made. Tips are given on what the city can do to reduce plastic in the indoor and outdoor environments of preschools and schools.

The chapter on indoor environment consists of three sections: 1) eating, 2) playing, 3) sleeping and being.

The chapter on outdoor environment consists of four sections: 1) yard and playground equipment, 2) loose playing materials, 3) vegetation, artificial turf and fall protection, and 4) care and maintenance.



1.5 Concluding remarks

The BaltiPlast partners will develop the strategic framework document for tackling the single-use plastics problem at the municipality level as a project pilot. The piloting allows for testing the recommendations

⁶ <https://www.hamburg.de/pressearchiv-fhh/5172960/2016-01-19-bue-green-procurement-guidelines/>

⁷ <https://thinkbefore.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Toxin-free-preschool.pdf> (English),
https://www.vasteras.se/download/18.145a37061636287fe8f28/1629202384548/Vägledning_för_giftfri_förskola.pdf
(Swedish)

to municipalities, in line with the logic of strategic framework where the strategic level is an integral part of the solution.

In the BaltiPlast project pilot, the municipalities will mainly carry out steps 1–3 (see Chapter 1.3). Step 4 will likely be implemented later, as the document's adoption usually takes longer than the project timeframe. In addition to the drafted/adopted legal/strategic document, each partner municipality will describe the developing process of the documents (Annex 1. Strategic framework pilot documentation template).

The pilot descriptions will provide the basis for assessing the pilots in GoA 2.5 (Annex 2). Based on the pilots' results and evaluation, the draft guidelines will be finalised in the form of O2.5, the BALTIPLAST package of solutions for reducing single-use plastics and plastic packaging. In addition, the final guidelines will be supplemented with the piloted case descriptions, which illustrate the real-life development processes of strategic documents.

Annex 1. Strategic framework pilot documentation template

1. Country, municipality:
2. Type of the strategic solution (type of the strategic document: e.g. strategy/action plan/roadmap; rules and regulations; guidelines etc – the types will be defined during the solution development):
3. Title of the strategic document:
4. Description of the document and its development process:
4.1 Thematic scope of the document:
4.2 Target groups of the document:
4.3 Objectives and targets (if relevant):
4.4 Main measures (short summary of the document content):
4.5 When the development of the document started:
4.6 By whom was the document developed:
4.7 Which stakeholders were involved in the development process:
4.8 Main steps of developing the document:
4.9 If the document has been adopted, then when and by whom:
5. Key messages and lessons learned in the document development process:
5.1 Results achieved so far (status of the document):
5.2 Successes and positive lessons (what work(s)ed well):
5.3 Problems and challenges (what didn't work so well):
6. Assessment of the strategic document development process
6.1 Were there any policy or legal constraints that limited the options for the document content:
7. Feasibility, social acceptability and replicability of the strategic document
7.1 Were there any financial or human resource constraints that limited the document development process:
7.2 Do the key stakeholders support the strategic document:
7.3 Can the strategic document development be expanded within other municipalities of the pilot country and/or replicated in other BSR countries?
8. Link(s) and reference(s) to the document:

Annex 2. Assessment of the policy/legal solution development process

The BaltiPlast project partners will carry out a semi-qualitative assessment of solutions to fine-tune the draft solutions with key findings and learnings. The assessment criteria are:

- Achievement of objectives set by the pilot
- Feasibility (legally, technically, financially)
- Social acceptability (by stakeholders)
- Replicability (in other BSR municipalities)

When assessing the above-listed criteria, think of the following questions:

- Has there been a comprehensive consultation on the plastic waste issues in the proposed solution?
- Have the objectives been set which identify what the solution needs to achieve?
- Is it clear who is responsible for what?
- Is it clear what resources are needed to implement the solution?
- Is there a plan to monitor how the solution will be implemented in practice?

The criteria will be assessed **on a scale from 0–2** where **2** means the solution is feasible/acceptable/replicable, **1** means partly feasible/acceptable/replicable and **0** means the solution is not feasible/acceptable/replicable.

All the pilot activities, their findings, and their learnings will result in the key output of the project, the "BaltiPlast package of solutions for reducing single-use plastics and plastic packaging" (O2.5).