



## Collection of the strategic and legal framework development pilots

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

**Deliverable 2.1**

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# 1. Introduction

Moving towards a circular plastic economy requires a systemic and strategic approach on a local level. Addressing waste in a general waste management plan or only raising awareness among end users is insufficient to change plastic waste trends. Municipalities need to agree on strategic directions that set targets and prioritise actions and financial plans for reducing single-use plastic (SUP) at the local level. However, in many cases, the local strategic documents are not specific enough regarding plastic waste, and the rules for preventing and reducing SUP are lacking.

Therefore, the BALTIPLAST project developed guidance for municipalities' strategic and legal framework (hereinafter referred to as 'strategic framework'), aiming to reduce single-use plastic and plastic packaging/package waste (deliverable 1.2): [Draft guidelines on plastic prevention and reduction for municipalities](#). The strategic framework aims to support the sustainable use of plastics in a municipality, from agreeing on a strategy/action plan to adopting necessary legal acts and compiling supportive guidelines for stakeholders (Figure 1).

Building on the developed guidance and other municipalities' experiences (e.g. Västerås Municipality), the BALTIPLAST partner municipalities piloted the strategic framework by preparing their own strategic documents. The pilot activities were documented according to the agreed template. This report summarises the document preparation processes (see Annex 1. Strategic framework pilot ).

Some of the piloted documents have been adopted by the decision-making entities, and some are planned to be adopted in 2025.

This report and lessons learned from the pilots provide the basis for fine-tuning the strategic framework for plastic waste reduction in GoA 2.5 and replicating the solution in WP 3.



*Figure 1. The concept for the strategic framework*

## 2. Developing a strategic framework for plastic waste prevention and reduction in municipalities

This chapter summarises the steps and lessons learned (success factors and challenges) from developing plastic-related strategic documents in the project partner municipalities. These key messages are listed according to the main steps of the strategic document development process.

The project partners have developed or are developing the following strategic documents (see the pilot descriptions in Annex 1. Strategic framework pilot documentation).

<b>Strategies and action plans</b>	Helsinki (FI): Litter Control Action Plan 2.0
	Tallinn (EE): Circular Economy Development Plan 2035
	Daugavpils (LV): Latgale Regional Waste Management Plan
<b>Guidance documents</b>	Helsinki (FI): Roadmap for Sustainable Plastic Usage in City Operations
	Valmiera (LV): Guidelines for Sustainable Use of Plastic in Valmiera Municipality
	Valmiera (LV): Guidelines for Organising Environmentally Friendly Events
	Kaunas (LT): Recommendations on the Use of Single-use Plastics in Kaunas City

In addition, Daugavpils compiled informal guidelines for municipality employees on avoiding SUP at municipality and public events.

### STEP 1. Get organised

Roughly, there are two approaches to the development of strategic and legal framework documents:

- Top-down, where the initiative is led by political forces or very high-level civil servants.
- Bottom-up, where the initiative is led by mid-level specialists. For example, the roadmap to sustainable use of plastic in the city of Helsinki operations is a bottom-up initiative stemming from the BaltiPlast project.

It is important to recognise the differences between the top-down and bottom-up approaches, as they often differ in the mandates and budgets of the working group. Whether the approach is top-down or bottom-up depends, among other things, on the culture and size of the organisation.

To move the idea of developing a document forward, ownership of the document needs to be defined/taken: appointing a person or small team responsible for deadlines and creating the document.

If the document is a bottom-up initiative, then it is crucial to have an idea of the plan before going to the higher-level decision-makers. Collect background information to explain to them the plastic waste current situation and issues:

- Engage stakeholders to identify their concerns and expectations and summarise this for the decision-makers.
- Learn from other countries through transnational collaboration. Showing what neighbours are doing can inspire and motivate local action.

Securing a political mandate or high-level support and permission to proceed is essential, regardless of whether the initiative is top-down or bottom-up. Within the organisation, it must be clearly defined who needs to grant approval and at what stage to move forward with creating the strategic document. For instance, the city council had to approve the concept of updating the Helsinki litter control action plan before the work could start (top-down case).

If a local-level strategic document on plastic waste prevention and reduction does not exist yet, start by involving politicians step by step and creating their awareness; only then can a bigger strategy be developed. However, it can be challenging for mid-level civil servants to advocate for single-use plastic prevention and reduction to the municipality's political leadership. It will help explain the need for plastic waste prevention and reduction to the decision-makers if:

- The municipality's development plan includes a goal to be green and move towards a circular economy.
- There is also external pressure for mandatory sustainability measures. For example, the European Green Capital year was a very good driver for accelerating sustainability topics in Tallinn.

Effective arguments may also include emphasising that creating a plan can unlock funding opportunities and that it will not lead to increased bureaucracy.

Knowing the right people, timing, and procedure helps influence politicians to recognise plastic pollution as a priority issue at the municipality's political level. For example, decisions on expenditures that burden the municipal budget (such as replacing single-use containers at municipal events) are not usually made before local elections.

Once the political commitment is secured, form a working group (or agree on contact persons) from local government departments (including decision-making level) and appoint a coordinator to lead the process of developing the strategic document. It is easier if the coordinator leading the change has already established contacts and, in the best-case scenario, is a long-time employee of the organisation. Driving change as a person coming from outside the organisation is more challenging.

The composition of the working group should be based on the members' competencies. The problem of plastics should be understood more broadly, tackling plastic as a material in a circular economy, not only plastic waste. For plastic waste-related strategic documents, the following working group members may be relevant:

- Procurement department/specialist(s),
- Thematic departments (e.g. economic, environmental, communication departments),
- Waste operator(s).

However, engaging the right people may be tricky, and other priorities or financial constraints may affect how keen the workgroup is on plastic waste issues. As with engaging politicians, the importance of raising awareness when convening the working group cannot be underestimated, highlighting the broader benefits of sustainable plastic use for the local economy, environment and human health.

If different departments are involved, agree on the ownership of the document (including for the future updating process).

## STEP 2. Assess the current situation

If you plan to prepare a strategy/action plan:

- 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/engagement of stakeholders (ongoing initiatives, expectations of businesses, organisations, and consumers).

In larger cities, several projects promoting plastic waste prevention and reduction might be going on, so benchmarking and understanding overlapping programs and strategies are crucial.

Municipalities also need to know the composition of plastic waste (the amount of deposit and non-deposit packaging and the types of material) in order to steer waste management development. If this data is not available, a waste sorting study may be necessary.

After collecting the relevant information, prioritise the problems and needs to identify the major ones. Possible criteria for prioritisation are:

- Legal requirement,
- Importance for stakeholders/social impact,
- Environmental impact,
- Economic impact.

If you plan to prepare guidelines for event organisers on the sustainable use of plastics, first map the process of organising events in the municipality. There are usually two types of events:

- Public events which are procured from event organisers,
- Smaller events which are organised by the municipality on its premises.

Find out whether plastic use is regulated for events and where the gaps are from the perspective of single-use plastics and plastic waste reduction. After that, you can choose what kind of events need instructions first.

If you have not decided before which level in the strategic framework your municipality will focus on (see Figure 1), define the scope of the document. Defining the right scope that fits into the municipal strategic framework and is needed to solve the identified problem is maybe the most important step for successful implementation.

If the strategic documents addressing single-use plastic issues do not exist yet, start developing the framework for plastic waste prevention and reduction step by step:

- Prepare the guidelines for city employees as an initial step, then for all target groups (including residents, businesses, and event organisers).

- Based on the discussions with target groups of the guidelines, the municipality learns what should be regulated more strongly.
- Preferably, the strategic framework should capture all three levels (strategy, regulations, guidelines). The guidelines alone may not be efficient if not made mandatory to follow.

Guidelines on the sustainable use of plastics for city officials can be incorporated into other green office rules, which address the consumption of energy, water and paper, commuting, etc.

Also, in the case of a regulation/guideline, consider whether it is possible to integrate it into existing documents when they are being amended instead of developing a totally new document. For instance, if the municipality has decided to ban the use of PVC plastic material in commercial posters, try to find an existing regulation that can be supplemented with the respective ban.

If you are preparing a strategy, take into account the local legal rules for developing strategic documents: whether it will be a separate plastic strategy = like Västerås' and Stockholm's path<sup>1</sup>, or whether you will integrate plastic aspects into the existing strategies/action plans, i.e. a larger framework. For example, the latter path may be preferred if the decision-makers and departments are hesitant to create and approve a new binding action plan, as they feel overloaded with action plans.

When defining the document scope, keep in mind that if it is too large, the document may become very complicated, and departments may lose focus and be unwilling to act. On the other hand, if the document scope is too narrow, departments may not commit as they see that either this document doesn't properly affect them, or it has no real impact.

It may work best if the scope and objectives are defined in a smaller sustainability expert group, and then more people are involved to provide input to the document based on the already thought-out suggestions (see [the next step](#)). This method has worked well for Helsinki's roadmap for sustainable plastic usage in city operations and Västerås' action plan for sustainable use of plastics.

### STEP 3. Formulate the strategic document

In the phase of formulating the strategic document, it is important to get more departments involved and to assign ownership of the measures, as after the document has been created, it is up to the departments to put it into action.

At the beginning of the document, show how it is related to a higher-level strategic document (e.g., the municipality's development strategy or waste management plan).

When formulating the measures:

- Consider the waste hierarchy,
- Build a link between the strategic and operational levels.

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<sup>1</sup> The City of Västerås' Action Plan for a Sustainable Use of Plastics 2022–2025:  
<https://www.vasteras.se/bygga-bo-och-miljo/livsmedel-och-halsa/hallbar-plastanvandning.html>  
 The City of Stockholm's Plastics Strategy:  
<https://miljobarometern.stockholm.se/content/docs/tema/plast/HP%20Plast%20eng.pdf>



Plastic waste reduction needs a systemic approach. Upstream measures reducing the volume of plastic waste must be prioritised. However, upstream measures that require rethinking packaging, products and practices are still rare in municipalities (vs. downstream measures). Although it is very important to set out targets and measures for raising public awareness of plastic waste and to ensure funding in a municipal strategy/action plan, at some point, soft measures, such as awareness raising, are no longer low-hanging fruit. Further plastic waste reduction requires upstream measures, e.g., via municipal procurement policy.

So a strategic document (e.g. guidelines) for sustainable use of plastics should include measures for:

- Prevention of plastic waste,
- Reuse options,
- Source separation and collection of plastic waste.

A link between the strategic and operational levels from a systemic point of view to implement the plastic waste policy and achieve strategic goals can be built as follows:

- Strategic measures – procurement criteria, terms of contracts with service providers, creating a supportive business environment;
- Soft measures – awareness raising, communication;
- Technical measures – investments in reuse systems and waste management.

For example, plastic waste prevention in schools depends considerably on what kind of products are procured for schools. If the procurement criteria are set by the municipality, then it is the municipality's strategic measure to review the respective procurement criteria.

In addition, the municipality can include criteria and targets for plastic waste reduction (e.g., to avoid SUP) in its contracts with cleaning service providers, organisers of public events and city camps, etc.

At the same time, sufficient market capacity and solutions must be available to replace single-use plastic items. A municipality can support the creation of innovation hubs and platforms for businesses that work on circular solutions and offer alternatives in takeaways or events, e.g., by providing premises, offering financial support, and introducing and recognising the businesses.

Depending on the chosen strategic framework level, formulating the document can also include allocating a budget, determining roles and responsibilities, agreeing on indicators of achievement, etc. Allocating the budget and other resources for the measures is much easier if there is political will and plastic pollution is recognised as a priority issue in the municipality (see [Step 1](#)).

## **STEP 4. Endorse and implement the strategic document**

Consider what the right format is for the document that will be approved by the municipal decision-making body. What is the approval procedure if the document is updated?

For example, guidelines may need updating quite often. If the municipality establishes mandatory guidelines for organising sustainable events in the city with the mayor's decree, then the decree should say for whom the guidelines are mandatory, but the guidelines themselves should not be included in the decree's text. In this way, the updated guidelines may not require the same approval procedure.



After endorsing the strategic document, communicate it among the stakeholders. For instance, if you have developed guidelines for the municipality employees, arrange meetings with the departments and introduce the guidelines.

## Summary of the main challenges and proposed solutions/lessons learned

The table below summarises the main challenges with their respective proposed solutions or lessons learned as detailed in the steps above and in the pilot activities ([Annex 1](#)).

*Table 1. The main challenges, proposed solutions/lessons learned in developing the strategic framework for plastic waste prevention and reduction*

Challenge	Proposed solutions / Lessons learned
Lack of political or high-level support for the developing strategic framework for plastic waste prevention and reduction.	<p>Involve decision-makers step by step by first creating their awareness of plastic waste issues.</p> <p>Show the link with the municipality's overall goal to be green and to go towards a circular economy.</p> <p>Advocate by linking the initiative to broader goals like economic, environmental and health benefits, as well as funding opportunities.</p> <p>Start with strategic documents of smaller scopes, like guidelines for municipality employees, and gradually expand the scope to all target groups and strategic framework levels.</p>
Overload with municipal action plans.	Integrate the planned actions and regulations into the existing strategic and legal framework for circular economy and procurement policy, green office rules, guidelines for sustainable events, etc.
Deciding on the right scope for the document: neither too large nor too narrow.	<p>Define the scope and objectives in a smaller sustainability expert group.</p> <p>Involve more people in the document formulation phase (with already thought-out suggestions).</p> <p>Ensure that the strategic framework provides objectives, targets, and measures for both soft and technical measures to prevent and reduce plastic waste.</p>
Adopting upstream measures to reduce plastic production and consumption.	<p>Set a target for SUP reduction on the municipal level.</p> <p>Phase out single-use plastics, first at internal events and municipality organisations, then at public events and public spaces.</p> <p>Share best practices from neighbouring countries and municipalities.</p> <p>Emphasise the visible reduction of waste in public spaces.</p>
Municipality-wide market solutions for reusable containers and packaging are not available.	Plan actions to support the development of circular solutions and business models: e.g. providing premises or financial support, introducing and awarding of innovative businesses.

# Annex 1. Strategic framework pilot documentation

## Helsinki (FI): Roadmap to Sustainable Plastic Usage in City Operations

### Description of the document and its development process

The Roadmap aims to fill the need for a comprehensive plastic strategy for city operations. It includes guidelines and recommended actions for sustainable plastic use, comprehensively through the lifetime of a plastic product from procurement and use to waste management.

The focus is on SUP and packaging materials. The roadmap will include a vision for a SUP-sustainable future, general principles for sustainable plastic usage and certain plastic-related actions that will be implemented in other programs/action plans. The aim is to incorporate binding actions into the action plan of the circular economy and Litter Control Action Plan 2.0.

The target groups of the document are all departments in the city operations.

The document is developed by the BALTIPLAST project manager and colleagues from the city working on the PlastLIFE project.

Relevant city departments (procurement and waste management) and, from there, the persons responsible for environmental issues were involved in the document development process.

The development of the document started in March 2024. The main steps of developing the document included:

- Benchmarking,
- Gathering a working group from different city departments,
- Planning large-scale goals and guidelines,
- Constructing recommended actions for city departments,
- Harmonizing and scaling up the work,
- Communicating and implementing the actions across the city's various sectors.

The strategic document will be implemented after it is finalised in 2025, and the recommended actions will later be integrated into relevant strategies and action plans.

### Roadmap to sustainable plastic use (PP02 Helsinki)



## Helsinki (FI): Litter Control Action Plan 2.0

### Description of the document and its development process

Littering is a problem that increases the flow of plastics into nature, and it needs to be addressed in an effective manner. The roadmap to sustainable plastic usage tackles the issue of "upstream usage", and the litter control action plan addresses the downstream actions.

Updating the first Litter Control Action Plan 2022–2025 started in the autumn of 2024. The new period will start in 2026.

The target groups of the document are municipal operations and departments, as well as all citizens within the city of Helsinki.

There are five focus areas in LCAP 2.0: Communication, Common areas, Construction, Cooperation and Events.

Unsustainable plastic usage and plastic litter will be a cross-cutting theme in these focus areas. The aim is to implement some of the best practices of the BALTIPLAST project in LCAP 2.0.

The LCAP will consist of 20–30 (tbc) binding actions and measures allocated to different departments within the city of Helsinki. The coordinators will monitor and oversee how the actions progress through 2026–2029. Once the departments are committed to binding actions and measures, they are expected to follow through with the execution as well.

The document is developed by LCAP coordinators within the Urban Environment division, together with stakeholders and the BALTIPLAST project manager. LCAP 1.0 already has a working group in place, which will continue in the update process.

Stakeholders involved in the development process are Keep the Archipelago Tidy, local waste and water management company HSY, the Finnish Environment Institute and different departments within the city of Helsinki.

The main steps of developing the document included:

- Deciding the themes,
- Conversations with key people from different departments,
- Deciding on the actions and budget in cooperation with stakeholders,
- Approval of the LCAP in the city council.

The city council's support has enabled enough financial and human resources for the development. Human resources for the creation of the document are not huge, but during the execution, coordinating and supervising the actions across different departments is resource-intensive. A person is working full-time only with the LCAP and its implementation.

The document development process and the actions are easy to replicate.

## Tallinn (EE): Circular Economy Development Plan 2035

Description of the document and its development process
<p>With the circular economy development plan, the city of Tallinn wants to prioritise, among other areas, circular products and services in the city. For that, Tallinn has analysed what measures the city can implement to prevent and reduce the use of single-use plastic products and packaging and what the goals and targets of circular products and services (including public events, tourism, circular businesses, and public procurement) for the city are.</p> <p>The target groups of the document are the Tallinn City organisation, businesses, residents and tourists.</p> <p>Objectives of the plan: Tallinn is a green and circular world city where people want to live, work, develop themselves and rest. Tallinn is an important promoter of a smart and circular consumption model and the creator of a system of circular products and services that support it. Tallinn's urban space and built environment are developed according to circular principles. Tallinn operates resource-efficiently by reducing primary material consumption and increasing waste recycling. Tallinn is a progressive promoter of reuse and repair and sharing culture, offering companies and residents comprehensive opportunities to contribute to the circular economy. Tallinn is a place where entrepreneurs can test and develop innovative circular solutions and business models, being an example for other municipalities in Estonia as well as internationally.</p> <p>Main measures related to plastic reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All city employees will be aware of their responsibilities and obligations to follow the principles of the circular economy in their daily work.</li> <li>➤ Tallinn's procurement system will support the procurement of products and services by applying sustainable, environmentally friendly and circular criteria. The suppliers will have comprehensive knowledge and skills regarding green and circular procurement, and market participants will be involved in the dialogue between suppliers and providers.</li> <li>➤ The city of Tallinn will promote organising sustainable public events. The city is developing circular criteria to reduce and replace single-use materials.</li> <li>➤ Cooperation with existing initiatives and environmental labels of the tourism sector (e.g. Green Key, green museum, sustainable destinations) will be carried out to integrate the principles of circularity in the activities and products of Tallinn's tourism companies.</li> <li>➤ Developing the reuse and repair system in cooperation with companies and organisations creates the basis for the spread and progress of this type of business. Through procurement, Tallinn is able to increase market demand for reused and repaired products and, therefore, promote circular and innovative entrepreneurship.</li> <li>➤ The city organisation, as well as residents and companies, contribute to waste prevention. The city organises campaigns, promotes recycling and creates consumer-friendly infrastructure for this purpose.</li> </ul> <p>The document was developed by the Tallinn Strategic Management Office together with the stakeholders: the city departments, institutions, and external experts.</p> <p>Main steps of developing the document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The development of the document started in February 2024.</li> <li>➤ In April and May 2024, 12 workshops for the city departments and institutions were organised to define the goals and the directions of action for the circular economy development plan. The workshops focused mainly on circular products and services, food and bio-economy and built environment.</li> <li>➤ As a result of these workshops, a draft version of the development plan was prepared and introduced to the city authorities and external stakeholders for comments and proposals.</li> <li>➤ The proposals were analysed in autumn 2024, and a new draft was prepared by December 2024.</li> <li>➤ In April 2025, the document was made publicly available, and it is planned to be adopted in the summer of 2025 by the city council.</li> </ul> <p>Link to the document:</p> <p><a href="https://www.tallinn.ee/et/keskkond/ringmajanduse-arengusuunad#Arengukava">https://www.tallinn.ee/et/keskkond/ringmajanduse-arengusuunad#Arengukava</a></p>



Public seminar for stakeholders (September 2024).

## Daugavpils (LV): Latgale Regional Waste Management Plan 2024–2030

### Description of the document and its development process

The document addresses waste management challenges in the Latgale region, of which Daugavpils municipality is a part. The document represents a proactive approach by the municipality to address waste management challenges, including challenges of plastic waste, promote sustainability, and enhance the environmental quality and wellbeing of the region.

Thematic scope of the document:

- Characterisation of waste (including plastic waste) management systems, responsibilities, and volumes.
- Strategic objectives for the waste (including plastic waste) management sector at the regional level, including qualitative indicators and transition to a circular economy.
- Forecasts for waste generation and quantitative indicators (including plastic waste) for achieving recycling and processing targets.
- Recommendations include developing waste (including plastic waste) collection systems, improving infrastructure, conducting public awareness campaigns (also educating about plastics and waste reduction – the BALTIPLAST project is mentioned as part of awareness-raising activities), and managing data.

Target groups of the document:

- Local authorities and municipalities
- Waste management companies and service providers
- Environmental and regulatory agencies
- Community organisations and NGOs
- Businesses and industries
- Residents and the general public
- Academic and research institutions

Objectives and targets of the document related to plastic prevention and reduction:

- Improvement of waste (including plastic waste) management infrastructure
- Enhancement of waste (including plastic waste) collection systems
- Promotion of circular economy principles, also talking about public awareness of plastic waste

Priority measures to be implemented:

- Development of waste (including plastic waste) separation services/infrastructure.
- Waste (including plastic waste) recycling and preparation for recycling measures.
- Development of infrastructure at the landfills, including the development of waste (including plastic waste) recycling infrastructure.
- Public information and education, raising environmental awareness.
- Collection of information and data, maintenance of databases.

Main steps of developing the document:

- The development of the document started at the end of 2023 when all involved municipalities in the region delegated the development of this waste management plan to the Latgale Planning Region by an official decision taken by the City Councils.
- For the plan development, the Latgale Planning Region sub-contracted the company SIA "Geo Consultants", which provides a broad range of services for implementing investment projects.
- A working group was formed with representatives from all the main stakeholders. The BALTIPLAST project manager participated in the meetings. Good examples, such as the action plan for the sustainable use of plastics in Västerås 2022–2025, were shared with the group and discussed.
- During the preparation of the Environmental Report, consultations were held with the State Environmental Bureau, the Latgale Regional Environmental Administration of the State Environmental Service, the Latgale Regional Administration of the Nature Conservation Agency and the Latgale Control Division of the Health Inspectorate.
- The public consultation period from 28 March to 29 April 2024 allowed the public to make proposals on the draft



Plan and the draft Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

- The executor revised the Environmental Report and Plan, taking into account the proposals and comments received during the public consultation.
- The State Environmental Monitoring Bureau provided an opinion on the draft Environmental Report.
- Upon receiving a positive opinion from the State Environmental Monitoring Bureau, the regional waste management plan was submitted for approval to the relevant municipalities in the waste management region.
- The Plan came into force after approval by all municipalities in the waste management region on 31 July 2024.

The document development went as planned, involving all the possible stakeholders. The State Environmental Bureau, local authorities and municipalities, waste management companies and service providers were the main stakeholders.

Positive lessons were the environmental report, the survey among waste operators and involved citizens, and hybrid public consultations (both meetings online and at the premises). In addition, sub-contracting the company that organises the process was a success that ensured the quality of the document.

One of the challenges was incorporating aspects in the Plan that are not mandatory by law. Every measure written into the Plan needs a financial basis and an understanding of how it will be financed. Considering that many municipalities were involved, with different budgets, there were many discussions about every activity – whether it was really necessary and what the benefits would be. The limited budgets of municipalities were the constraints that led to most of the activities included in the Plan being statutory and absolutely necessary.

The main regulatory requirements that were taken into account and that municipalities need to achieve:

- By 31 December 2023, ensure that bio-waste is either separated and recycled at the source or collected separately and not mixed with other types of waste (including not mixed with plastic).
- Increase the amount of municipal waste prepared for reuse and recycled to at least 55% by weight by 2025 (including plastic).
- By 2030, increase the amount of municipal waste prepared and recycled for re-use to at least 60% by weight (including plastic).
- By 2035, increase the amount of municipal waste prepared and recycled for re-use to at least 65% by weight (including plastic).
- Establish separate collection systems at least for paper, metal, plastic and glass and by 1 January 2023 for textiles.
- From 2020, at least 70% by weight of non-hazardous construction and building waste demolition waste is prepared for reuse, recycling and other material recovery, including backfilling.
- By 1 January 2025, establish a separate collection system for household hazardous waste.
- By 2035, the proportion of municipal waste (including plastic that cannot be recycled) disposed of in landfills has been reduced to 10% of the total municipal waste generated (by weight) or even lower.
- Ensure that at least 65% by weight of packaging waste (including plastic) is recycled by 31 December 2025 at the latest.

Link to the document: [https://www.geoconsultants.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Latgales\\_AAR\\_RAAP\\_2024\\_2030.pdf](https://www.geoconsultants.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Latgales_AAR_RAAP_2024_2030.pdf)





## Valmiera (LV): Guidelines for Sustainable Use of Plastic in Valmiera Municipality

### Description of the document and its development process

The Valmiera Municipality aims to improve the environmental management of municipal institutions, with a long-term goal of implementing a certified environmental management system. Plastic is an essential part of the resources used in municipal operations. Therefore, guidelines for the sustainable use of plastic are an investment in improving the municipality's environmental management. These guidelines aim to reduce the use of single-use plastics and promote thoughtful procurement and utilisation of resources necessary for municipal operations.

The objectives of the guidelines are to recommend actions and choices to the employees of the municipality's administrative institutions regarding plastic as a necessary resource for their work and its possible alternatives. The overall aim is to reduce the volume of waste generated by the municipality and its impact on the environment.

The document is based on the plastic usage audit conducted within the framework of the BALTIPLAST project in the main building of the municipality's administration and the conclusions derived from it. It also draws on a general waste audit of the municipality, assessing the overall composition and proportions of generated waste.

Based on this information, the document offers evaluated options for actions to reduce and eliminate the circulation of single-use plastics in the municipality's daily operations.

The document was developed by the project coordinator in the municipality in collaboration with the development working group, which includes the project communications specialist, representatives from the municipality's Natural Resources Administration, as well as from the project's associated organisation SIA ZAAO – the municipality's waste management company, one of whose areas of expertise is environmental education within the municipality as a whole.

Main steps of developing the document:

- The document development started in March 2024. First, baseline data was collected – a waste audit was conducted in municipal institutions. This was necessary for assessing the current situation, evaluating the potential for reducing plastic waste and exploring alternatives to plastic.
- The working group for the development of the guidelines analyzed the collected data, evaluating viable alternatives to plastic and opportunities for reducing plastic waste and recommending actions.
- The proposal for the guidelines with the recommended actions was discussed with the involved parties: the Document Management and Customer Service Centre, the Procurement Department, the Branding and Public Relations Department, as well as the municipality's administration management.

The document is intended to be approved by the municipality's administration management and introduced to the municipal employees. The document is also planned to be presented to the members of the municipal council.

A very important driving force for the development of the document and improvement of the municipality's environmental management is the overall support from the municipality's administration management.

The improvement of daily practices within the municipality's operations, as long as it does not require significant additional investments in time, finances, or human resources, is also supported by the involved parties. The challenge lies in changing daily habits, which are closely tied to environmental awareness and the ease and possibilities of changing these habits.

In 2025, the municipality plans to work on the document's piloting through employee training, raising general environmental awareness about the need for circular management practices, as well as explaining and discussing the sustainable use of plastic within the municipality and in everyday life.

In the long term, the document can serve as the municipality's first step towards implementing a certified environmental management system.

## Valmiera (LV): Guidelines for Organising Environmentally Friendly Events

### Description of the document and its development process

In September 2023, during the BALTIPLAST project, Valmiera Municipality and the project's associated partner, the waste management company SIA ZAAO, organised the DAIBE ZERO waste recycling hackathon. A key conclusion from the hackathon regarding an effective and climate-friendly approach to transitioning to a circular economy was prioritising plastic waste prevention. Therefore, as solutions require in-depth piloting, the project team decided to focus on finding system-level solutions to prevent plastic waste. Learning from project partners' experiences, the Valmiera Municipality team concluded that single-use plastic waste generated at public events represents a significant environmental impact on the municipality. Eliminating such waste could substantially reduce the environmental footprint of public celebrations.

While implementing the BALTIPLAST project, the municipal team gained an in-depth understanding of the impacts and lifecycle of single-use plastics. The team concluded that strategic guidelines for sustainable plastic use are needed in two key areas: 1) for municipal employees in their daily work within the municipality as an institution, and 2) for events organised by the municipality targeting an external audience. Public celebrations and events, particularly those providing catering services, were identified as significant contributors to the environmental impact of single-use plastics.

Considering that the responsible municipal institutions had already identified the volume of plastic waste generated by catering as a significant contributor to the environmental impact of celebrations, it was decided to pilot a cup deposit service as part of the "Green Events" initiative at the 2024 Valmiera City Festival within the BALTIPLAST project.

Based on the experience gained from piloting BALTIPLAST "Green Events," a dedicated section in the guidelines focuses on sustainable plastic management and proposes actions and solutions for reducing single-use plastic waste at events. The section also analyses the types of plastic waste typically generated at events. A special subsection is dedicated to catering services, offering solutions for different kinds of events to make the transition away from single-use plastic tableware feasible.

Other parts of the guidelines comprehensively address various environmental aspects of event organisation, such as materials and procurement, catering and water consumption, waste management, transportation, energy and resource efficiency, and communication.

The document is developed by the municipality's BALTIPLAST project coordinator, in close collaboration with the project communication specialist and the Municipal Cultural Board, as the main organisers of the Valmiera City Festival and other cultural public events. The working group also includes representatives from the Municipal Sports Board, Municipal Tourism Board, and Municipal Natural Resources Management Board.

Additionally, in order to reach solutions that are acceptable to all parties for preventing single-use plastic waste at public events, the municipality is organising discussions with catering service providers and potential service providers involved in the deposit system.

Main steps of developing the document:

- The development of the document started in February 2024, alongside the piloting of the cup deposit service during the Valmiera City Festival.
- Evaluation of the solution with the Valmiera Municipality's Culture Department and the company that provided the cup deposit system during the festival.
- Meeting with event organisers and planning the implementation of the cup deposit system for the 2025 municipal events during various local festivals.
- At the same time, gathering experiences from other municipalities and preparing guidelines and action proposals for discussions at the stakeholders' meeting.
- Meeting and discussions with a broader group of responsible municipal institution representatives (managers), evaluating the experience with the cup deposit system in 2024, as well as other plastic management-related issues in specific events related to each theme (sports and tourism).
- Presentation of the guidelines to the municipal administration leadership.

In 2025, the guidelines will be introduced during employee training sessions.

Work is underway to develop the best solutions for the cup deposit system service for events of various scales that provide catering services. There will be a smaller-scale meeting and a larger-scale workshop with catering service providers, involving potential companies for deposit and related services, as well as a broader group of municipal event organisers from the municipality's cultural institutions. The heads of various municipal departments have been introduced to the guidelines proposal, and meetings for evaluation and proposal discussions are planned.

The development of the guidelines and the implementation of solutions proceed successfully when all involved parties are equally interested, when there is a prior understanding of the environmental impact of events and the need to reduce it, and the implementation does not impose an excessive financial burden on the municipality.

To pilot the cup deposit system at the city festival, the colleagues involved needed to be highly motivated to test it and ready to make mistakes because solutions must be found through experimentation and risk-taking. This requires courage, the ability to persuade local government leadership, and a significant amount of time to delve into and implement the changes.

One of the challenges was the lack of potential service providers. The price survey results showed that only one service provider could offer this service for the specific need of the cup deposit system service and the required volumes. Therefore, when developing the guidelines, the feasibility of the service must be taken into account.

It was concluded that the experience gained during the 2024 Valmiera City festival is a very positive intermediate step. However, the system requires transformation and improvements, finding mutually acceptable solutions for all parties involved, such as preventing the municipality from paying for the deposit system service and balancing the financial burden between service providers, caterers, and event attendees.

The publicity that was created for the first large seminar involving stakeholders on the implementation of the container deposit system during the Valmiera City Festival is available here:

<https://www.valmierasnovads.lv/norisinasies-seminars-edinatajiem-par-trauku-depozitsistemas-ieviesanu-pilsetas-svetkos/>

<https://www.valmierasnovads.lv/parruna-ar-uznemejiem-glazu-depozita-sistemas-ieviesanu-valmieras-pilsetas-svetkos/>



Workshop with entrepreneurs on the introduction of a glass deposit system at the Valmiera City Festival (February 2024).

## Kaunas (LT): Recommendations on the Use of Single-use Plastics in Kaunas City

### Description of the document and its development process

One of the main challenges faced was the large amount of SUP waste at the Kaunas City Municipality and the municipality's schools. Understanding what kind and how much plastic is consumed daily is important. The inventory of SUP was organised in three municipal divisions (Investment and Project Division, Environment Protection Division, and Transport and Traffic Management Division) and in two municipal schools. The inventory took 2–3 months.

The development of the Recommendations on the Use of Single-use Plastics in Kaunas City was motivated by the need to change society's consumption habits and attitudes toward using single-use plastics. The recommendations were prepared based on the experience of finished municipal and school SUP inventories and the city's strategic documents.

The Kaunas City Municipality Administration's Environmental Protection Division started to develop the recommendations in August 2024. The working group comprised representatives of the Investment and Project Division, Transport and Traffic Management Division, and Environmental Protection Division.

The recommendations' main target groups are food establishments (restaurants, cafes, snack bars), private and public sector institutions, event organisers, and takeaway outlets (shops, petrol stations, supermarkets), but the recommendations are suitable for all (including employees, inhabitants, businesses, schools, etc.).

The recommendations are divided into 6 chapters:

- Chapter I – The necessity to change society's consumption habits and attitude toward SUP usage.
- Chapter II – Solutions that can change SUP usage culture, e.g., SUP directive; extended producer responsibility (EPR) principle; usage of reusable products; education and information campaigns; deposit system development.
- Chapter III – Different types of SUP products to which the recommendations apply (e.g. plastic bags, plastic water bottles, plastic cutlery, plastic straws, food boxes and packaging) and how SUP products can be replaced (e.g. use reusable bags and water bottles, permanent cutlery and food boxes, etc.).
- Chapter IV – Entities to which the recommendations are addressed: food establishments (restaurants, cafes, snack bars), private and public sector institutions, event organisers, and takeaway outlets (shops, petrol stations, supermarkets).
- Chapters V and VI – Concrete recommendations for private and public sector, event organisers, food establishments and takeaway outlets: to carry out waste audits; develop a plastics reduction policy; to promote reusable alternatives; to implement internal waste management strategies; to set up water refill stations; to promote education and information; to encourage event sponsors to highlight sustainability objectives; to monitor and report the impacts to society; to promote a reusable packaging policy; to apply deposit and SUP return systems.

The recommendations are approved by the order of the director of the Kaunas City Municipal Administration (2024-11-20 No. A-1375).

Close collaboration between divisions can be considered a success. However, due to the employees' busyness, the document took longer than planned to prepare. In 2025, a local dissemination campaign is planned to promote the recommendations.

