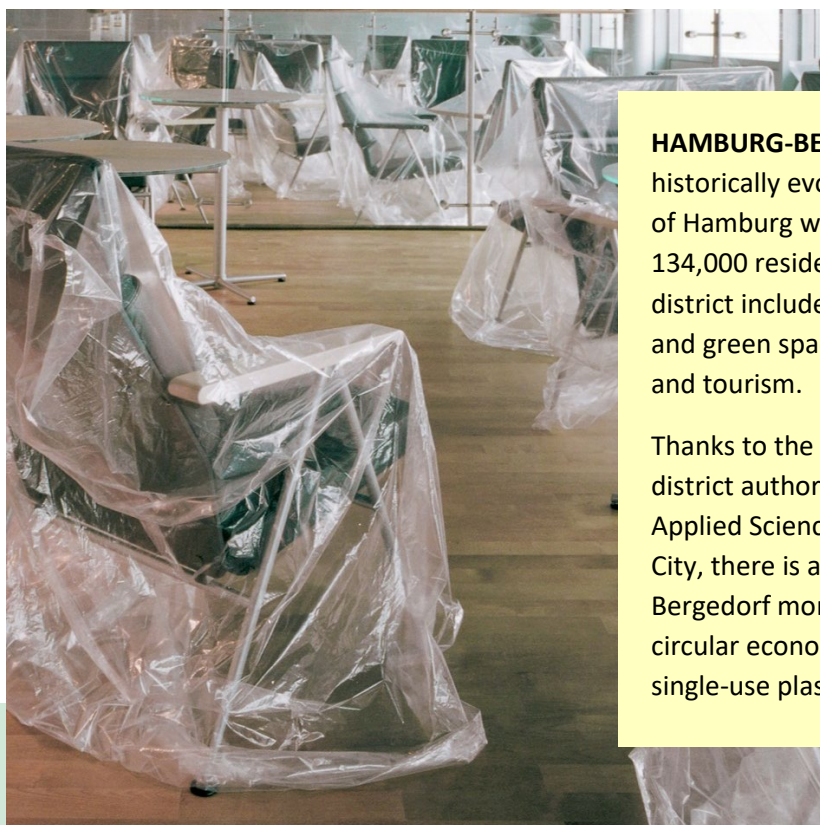


# BEST PRACTISES IN PLASTIC-FREE SOLUTIONS

The BALTIPLAST project co-financed by Interreg BSR helps to drive the transition to a green and resilient Baltic Sea region.

## Plastic reduction in the Bergedorf district office

HAMBURG-BERGEDORF, GERMANY



**HAMBURG-BERGEDORF** is a green and historically evolved district in the south-east of Hamburg with listed buildings and around 134,000 residents. Important issues for the district include nature conservation of parks and green spaces, sustainable urban design and tourism.

Thanks to the cooperation between the district authority, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and NGOs like Plastik-Free City, there is a solid foundation for developing Bergedorf more strongly in the direction of a circular economy community and avoiding single-use plastic in the long term.

The Bergedorf district office planned and implemented various measures to raise awareness among employees and the civilian population. The Climate Office ("Klimastabstelle") was responsible for coordinating the project for the district and networking.

In addition to the citizens, companies in the region were also targeted in this way. In order to set a good example and motivate local stakeholders to reduce single-use plastic, the district office is examining how they themselves can implement savings measures in their institutions with the help of the Plastic-Free City initiative's inventory tool.

# Challenges and actions

The greatest challenges were the **lack of human and financial resources** required to fulfil the project, which currently affects many municipal structures in Germany.

It was and is therefore important to **set realistic goals for the cooperation** of all those involved, to **appoint specific contact persons** for the project and to **take concrete initial steps for low-threshold measures**. At the same time, the aim is not to stop at low-threshold measures alone, but to draw up **long-term plans** for more far-reaching changes and determine concrete initial steps for their implementation.

## Brief description of activities

The following steps were attempted to meet the challenges:

- On-site meeting in Bergedorf with the parties involved in the process (Bergedorf District Office, Baltic Environmental Forum and Plastic-Free City) to develop a joint structure for co-operation
- Monthly jour fixe with the team of Plastic-Free City to exchange information on the progress of the implementation of measures in the district office
- Exchange with the Wandsbek district office, which had previously worked with the Plastic Free City team and the Plastic Inventory Tool for municipalities. Exchange on challenges and best practices that can be adopted by the climate office ("Klimastabstelle") in Bergedorf
- Examination of the extent to which plastic reduction measures also contribute to other sustainability goals of the district office for which funding already exists in order to share and bundle time and personnel resources across projects
- Identify low-threshold opportunities to involve the local economy and civilian population in the process from the function of the district office

## Target groups

Target groups
Bergedorf district office and the climate office ("Klimastabstelle") as an interdepartmental institution of the city of Hamburg
Internal building management of Bergedorf district office
Lead of the municipal business development organisation
Bergedorf business associations
Bergedorf citizens

## Timeline

From the initial contact in 2023, the collaboration between the Bergedorf district office and the project partners has been ongoing at least until 2025. However, the implementation experienced delays due to necessary clarifications regarding internal project responsibilities, limited resources, and changes in

personnel within the Bergedorf district administration. After clarifying responsibilities and common goals, intensive and targeted collaboration on the aforementioned topics began in 2024. Cooperation between the Bergedorf district office and the Plastic-Free City initiative is planned beyond the project period for events and employee workshops on the topic of plastic avoidance.

## Pilot implementation

**The Plastic Inventory Tool** was used by the Bergedorf district office to explore where plastic-saving measures could be implemented in its own institutions. The exchange with other municipal partners, such as the Wandsbek district office, helped identify suitable starting points for this process. The Bergedorf district office aims to further strengthen the effectiveness of the tripartite collaboration model between municipalities, businesses, and NGOs, and has recognized the Plastic Inventory Tool as a low-threshold and practical approach to initiate the scaling of sustainability measures.

## Results

- Strong support from Bergedorf district office and the climate office.
- Support of the district authority in approaching companies by inviting them to local networking events and establishing contact with the city council's local business development department.
- Raising awareness among citizens by inviting the Plastic-Free City Initiative to neighbourhood festivals and municipal events organised by the district of Bergedorf. Exchange with citizens and entrepreneurs in the region on circular economy topics.
- Advice on the implementation of reusable packaging as standard at municipal events, exchange on challenges that currently make implementation difficult and framework conditions that can be created at municipal level to support implementation.
- Employee survey of all workshop participants on the topics: Catering, general best practices and wishes for measures to save plastic in the office.
- Successful identification of two levers for starting a plastic inventory in the BA, which can represent both a low-threshold and effective lever for saving single-use plastic in the BA Bergedorf: 1. visualisation of already installed water dispensers and examination of the extent to which dispensers can be set up in other locations. 2. scaling up waste bag-free paper bins in employees' offices and examining the extent to which this best practice has already been implemented across the board and can be adopted in other areas of the city administration.

## Enablers



- + **Strong support from the stakeholders** and interest of target groups
- + **Personal meetings on site** at the Bergedorf district office, in addition to the regular digital meetings, to create space for personal exchange and to get a direct picture of the local conditions
- + **Good networking** of the Bergedorf climate office as a basis for planning cross-district measures in the area of recycling management

# Barriers



- **High demand for human resources** to manage the development process.
- **Staff changes within the district office** during the project period
- **Discrepancy between the desire for immediate implementation of measures and the need for long-term budget planning** in order to provide the necessary financial resources

## Key takeaways

In order to initiate transformation processes in city administrations, it is not only important to **provide knowledge and best practices** from your own organisation/NGO, but it is just as important to **educate yourself as an NGO on the processes and working methods of city administrations**. This is the only way to find realistic ways of jointly implementing measures. **The exchange of best practice among city administrations is an important and effective lever.**