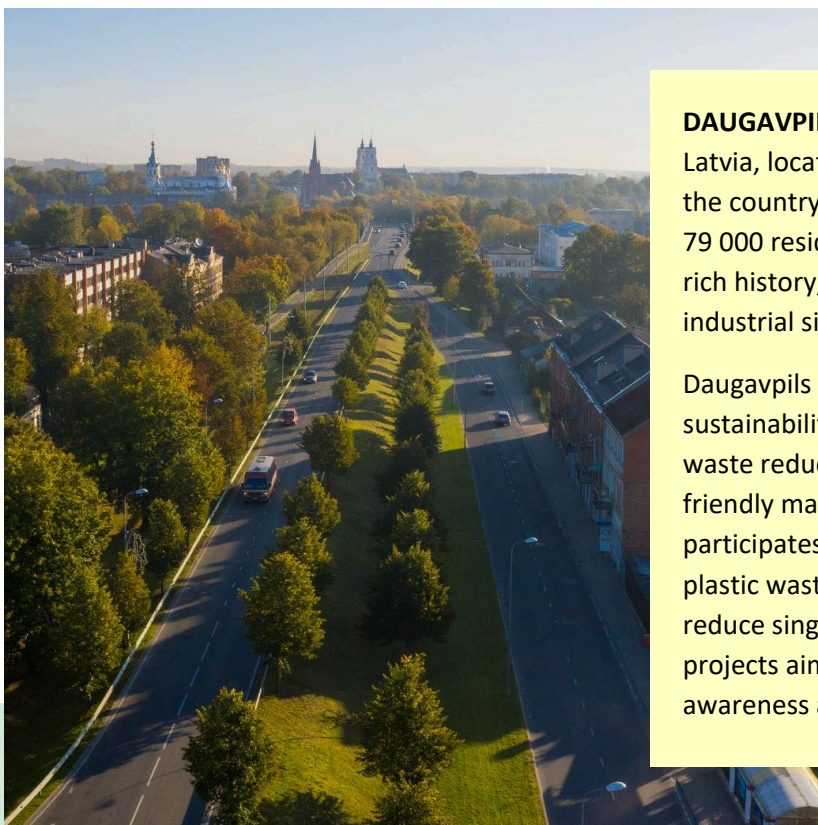


BEST PRACTISES IN PLASTIC-FREE SOLUTIONS

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

Empowering team members to be champions in office plastic reduction DAUGAVPILS, LATVIA



DAUGAVPILS is the second-largest city in Latvia, located in the southeastern part of the country. With a population of around 79 000 residents, the city is known for its rich history, cultural diversity, and industrial significance.

Daugavpils has been taking steps toward sustainability by promoting recycling, waste reduction, and the use of eco-friendly materials. The city actively participates in initiatives to eliminate plastic waste, encouraging citizens to reduce single-use plastics and supporting projects aimed at increasing environmental awareness and green practices.

47 %

CO2 reduction

This pilot in Daugavpils municipality addressed the challenge of reducing plastic waste within the Department of Urban Planning and Construction. Employees used an inventory tool to track, separate, and reduce plastic waste, while a seminar helped raise awareness and develop a reduction plan.

Challenges and actions

The pilot project in Daugavpils, Latvia, aimed at addressing plastic waste reduction in the **municipal Department of Urban Planning and Construction**. The challenge was to inventory and reduce plastic waste generated within the department, particularly from **food packaging, stationery, and single-use plastics**. By conducting a plastic waste inventory and implementing reduction measures, such as **promoting alternative packaging options**, the department successfully reduced plastic waste by more than half. This pilot serves as a model for other municipalities and government offices in Latvia and the broader Baltic Sea Region, demonstrating the **feasibility of small-scale plastic waste reduction initiatives**.

Brief description of activities

To overcome the challenge of plastic waste reduction, the pilot involved several key activities. First, an **inventory of plastic waste** was conducted by employees over two collection periods, where plastics were separated, weighed, and entered into an inventory tool. A seminar was organized to educate employees about plastic waste and reduction strategies.

During the summer, **staff developed a reduction plan** by considering alternatives to plastic packaging and promoting conscious purchasing decisions. The inventory was revisited in September to **measure the effectiveness of the reduction efforts**, which led to a significant decrease in plastic waste.

These activities were supported by enthusiastic department members who played a crucial role in implementing the pilot.

Target groups

Municipal employees (Department of Urban Planning and Construction)

Local government institutions

Other public sector organizations (government departments and offices)

Waste management professionals (local waste operators)

Environmental enthusiasts (individuals passionate about sustainability and climate action)

General public

Timeline

The pilot in Daugavpils municipality took approximately **5 months** to implement, **from 15 April to 29 September 2024**. This included two main collection periods, a seminar, and the development of a plastic waste reduction plan.

Results

- **Initial plastic waste collection:** 2 kg collected over three weeks by 21 employees.
- **Reduced plastic waste:** After implementing reduction measures, the amount decreased to 864 g during the second collection period.
- **Main waste type:** Food packaging remained the largest contributor to plastic waste.
- **Increased awareness:** Employees gained a clear understanding of the types of plastics discarded and their environmental impact.
- **Conscious purchasing:** Staff made more informed decisions when buying food, considering packaging alternatives.
- **Active participation:** Employees were engaged in developing and executing a plastic waste reduction plan.
- **Successful waste reduction:** The pilot demonstrated a notable decrease in plastic waste, reflecting a positive shift in waste management practices.

Piloting the solution

During the pilot implementation, Daugavpils utilized the solution developed in the BALTIPLAST project to effectively plan and execute plastic waste reduction within the Department of Urban Planning and Construction. The department employed the **inventory tool** to track, separate, and weigh the plastic waste collected during two collection periods (April and September 2024). This tool provided valuable data on the types and quantities of plastic waste generated, which helped shape the reduction strategy.

Based on the inventory data, the department developed a **reduction plan** that focused on minimizing plastic usage in daily operations. This included **educating employees on how to choose alternatives to plastic packaging** when purchasing food and other supplies. To further raise awareness, a **seminar** was organized, where employees learned about the environmental impact of plastic waste and available recycling options, with input from local waste operators.

As a result of the pilot, the department made conscious efforts to reduce plastic waste, continuing to implement sustainable purchasing decisions and encouraging staff to adopt similar practices. This approach highlighted the effective use of the BALTIPLAST solution in both monitoring and promoting plastic waste reduction.

Enablers



- + Strong support from stakeholders and interest of target groups
- + Enthusiastic participation of department employees, particularly key individuals who took responsibility for the pilot's success
- + Availability of the BALTIPLAST project expert to guide the inventory process and ensure quality data
- + Educational seminar that increased awareness and engagement on plastic waste reduction
- + Collaboration with local waste operators, enhancing practical knowledge on recycling and disposal

Barriers



- High demand for human resources to manage the development process
- Financial constraints, especially related to the more expensive alternatives to plastic packaging
- Time constraints, as the pilot required staff to dedicate time for data entry and participation in activities alongside their regular duties
- Limited immediate feedback from the inventory tool, which some participants felt could be more informative

Key takeaways

The success of the pilot was driven by a few passionate employees, highlighting the importance of **having champions within the team**. The **seminar** raised awareness about plastic waste and provided practical reduction strategies, showing the value of education in waste management. The **inventory tool** helped identify types and quantities of plastic waste, guiding the reduction plan. Despite limited resources, the **department reduced plastic waste by over half**, proving small changes can make a big impact.

The pilot also demonstrated the need for continuous efforts and balancing time and financial constraints for long-term success.