

# 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.

## Guidelines for plastic waste prevention and reduction in events

VALMIERA, LATVIA



Photo: Roberts Āboltiņš

**VALMIERA** is a state city and administrative centre of Valmiera Municipality with 24 220 inhabitants. It is a growing, development-oriented city that is constantly developing and ensuring support to entrepreneurship and creating a dynamic business environment.

Valmiera is not only an active city with great sports infrastructure and culture activities, but also a green one, with half of its territory covered by green spaces.

In the event organization, the amount of waste generated during the event often has a significant environmental impact. At events involving catering, single-use plastic tableware frequently constitutes the majority of the waste produced. In search of solutions to reduce plastic waste at public events, the BALTIPLAST project team, together with the municipality's Department of Culture, recognized the development of the 'Guidelines for the Prevention and Reduction of Plastic Waste at Events' as a valuable initiative.

# Challenges and actions

In September 2023, during the BALTIPLAST project, Valmiera Municipality, together with the project's associated partner, the waste management company SIA ZAAO, organized 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 the **prioritization of preventing plastic waste generation**.

The municipal institutions responsible for organizing public events were interested in reducing the overall environmental impact of their events. Therefore, the BALTIPLAST project, with its in-depth evaluation of the plastic lifecycle and piloting of impact-reducing measures, fostered these institutions' motivation to work on general guidelines for organizing environmentally friendly events. Considering that the responsible institutions had already identified the **volume of plastic waste generated by catering services** as a significant contributor to the environmental impact of celebrations and events, it was decided to include a section on sustainable plastic use at celebrations as a distinct chapter in the Guidelines for Environmentally Friendly Event Organization in Valmiera Municipality.

- Pilot implementation of the cup deposit service during the Valmiera City Festival '2024
- Evaluation of the solution together with the responsible municipal authority – Valmiera Municipality's Culture Department and the company that provided the cup deposit system during the festival.
- Meeting with event organizers, planning the implementation of the cup deposit system for the 2025 municipal events during various local festivals
- 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.

## Target groups

Culture department

Tourism department

Sports department

## Timeline

February 2024 – May 2025

# Results

**Environmental sustainability guidelines for municipality-organized events have been developed in the form of a checklist, where the recommended measures are proposed based on the format and scale of the event.** Each checklist covers various sectors of environmental sustainability, one of which focuses on the reduction of plastic waste and the prevention of the use of single-use plastic products. The checklist serves as a support tool for event organizers, helping to promote the adoption of more environmentally friendly event organization practices.

## Piloting the solution

The solution was tested through meetings, inviting representatives from municipal institutions that are involved in event organization. The guidelines were jointly edited in a shared document. The aim of this work was to assess the various sustainable solution options and select those that could be fully implemented within Valmiera Municipality.

## Enablers



- + **Strong support from stakeholders**
- + **A positive practical experience** with the introduction of a cup deposit system at the 2024 Valmiera City Festival
- + **Guidance from the BALTIPLAST project** on plastic waste management and best practices

## Barriers



- **High demand for human resources** to manage the development and consultation process
- **Financial constraints** due to limited municipal budgets and resources for waste management projects

## Key takeaways

The development of the guidelines and the implementation of solutions proceed successfully when all **involved parties are equally interested** and when there is **prior understanding of the environmental impact of events and the need to reduce it**.

For the guidelines to fully serve as an effective tool for reducing plastic waste at events, **communication with stakeholders and education** are indispensable.