

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.

Cup deposit system in events

VALMIERA, LATVIA

Photo: Uģis Brālēns



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.

29 %

reduction of waste
collected during
the Valmiera City
festival in 2024
(compared to 2023)

Each year Valmiera celebrates its "birthday" with a big city festival that usually takes place for 4 days. All activities, concerts and events organised within the festival are free entry hosting approx. 50 000 visitors. Organisers experience a large amount of waste, especially from single use plastic like cups, cutlery etc.

To decrease both the number of waste collected and the use of single use plastic, a cup deposit system was organised in the Valmiera City Festival 2024.

Challenges and actions

Each year Valmiera celebrates its “birthday” with a big city festival that usually takes place for 4 days (Thursday-Sunday). All activities, concerts and events organised within the festival are free entry, approx. **50 000 visitors** participate.

During the event there are many caterers (street food) around the city in different locations. Because of that, organisers (Valmiera Municipality Government Culture Department) experience a large amount of waste, especially **single use plastic like cups, cutlery** etc.

To decrease both the number of waste collected and the use of single use plastic, a deposit system for cups was organised in the Valmiera City Festival 2024.

Brief description of activities

The description of the actions to overcome the challenge, or the bullet points of the actions.

- Development department meeting with Culture department to inform about the need to organise events more environmentally friendly.
- Development department and Culture department organised a meeting with the potential catering companies of the Valmiera City Festival with an aim to discuss potential systems and to also justify why municipality is moving in green event direction.
- Find the deposit system service provider, meet with them.
- Deposit system provider communicates with caterers before the event, during the event.
- Municipality works on an extensive communications campaign.
- Communication with the visitors of the festival continue throughout the event.
- After the event – collecting data from waste management company about the collected waste, discussions with the organisers about the implementation of the system.
- Last communication to the visitors, informing about the waste reduced.

Target groups

Visitors of the City festival

Inhabitants of Valmiera city

Catering service providers

Culture Department of Valmiera Municipality Government

Timeline	Actions
End of 2023	Learning from other project partner municipalities about deposit systems in events.
February 2024	First meeting with catering service providers to introduce cup deposit systems, to discuss the best way how to implement the system so that it would be easy to use for both visitors and caterers.
April–July 2024	Meetings with deposit system service providers on return point locations, working hours etc. The service providers communicate with caterers to elaborate on the technical issues regarding the deposit system.
June–July 2024	An extensive communication campaign takes part in municipality's social media channels to ensure that as many people as possible know that the system will be implemented in the festival.
Weeks before the event, 15 to 25 July 2024	Deposit system service provider communicates with the caterers to talk about the system, as well as technicalities.
During the event, 26–28 July 2024	Deposit system service provider, event organisers and caterers are in close communication.
During the event, 26–28 July 2024	Communication activities from the municipality continue during the event.
After the event, beginning of August 2024	Last press release and information about the waste reduction during the festival to the visitors.

Pilot implementation

Firstly, within the BALTIPLAST project we learned from the existing experience of other partner municipalities (such as Tallinn) in implementing green measures, where the tableware deposit system was the key action with the biggest impact.

Secondly, to measure the change CO₂ emissions, a measurement tool developed within the project was used. It was important to know the number of cups used, the cleaning process of them.

Enablers



- + **Strong support** from the organisers of the city festival
- + **Strong support** from the municipality management
- + **Strong support** from the stakeholders and interest of target groups
- + **Effective communications campaign**
- + **Well organised service provider** that is focused on implementing the system

Barriers



- **High demand** for human resources to manage the process
- **Financial constraints** might pose a risk
- **Lack of knowledge** of the system for the visitors

Key takeaways

The cup deposit system is an effective way how to reduce single use plastics in events, but the implementation of the system takes a lot of both human and financial resources.

The communications campaign before the event was very important to ensure that as many visitors as possible have at least heard about the system, so that there is less explaining that has to be done by the caterers when communicating with their clients.

The communication and cooperation between event organisers, system providers and caterers is very crucial. It need to happen not only during the event, but also well before the event, as well as after.