



Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Change(K)now!

HOW can policy and strategy enable reuse?

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Background

- The EU produces around 55 million tonnes of plastic annually, with **packaging accounting around 40%** of total plastic demand (*Plastics Europe, 2023*)
- Only about 40% of plastic packaging waste in the EU is recycled (*Eurostat, 2024*)
- Takeaway consumption continues to **depend heavily on single-use packaging** (*European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2025*)
- Reuse systems still cover **less than 2% of the market** (*The European Reuse Barometer, 2025*)

This shows the gap between policy ambition and implementation



Photo by Bernard Bodo / iStock / Getty Images Plus

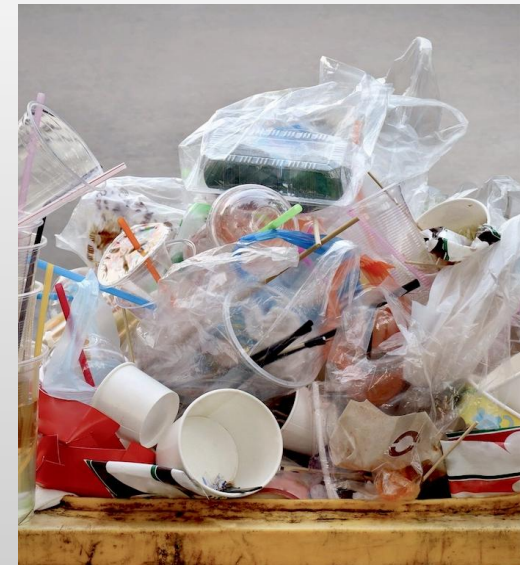


Early measures – laying the foundation (2019)

- Early initiative championed by forward thinking politicians
- **Ban on single use plastic cups, plates and cutlery at all public events (October 2019)**
- Only compostable tableware (EN 13432) was allowed

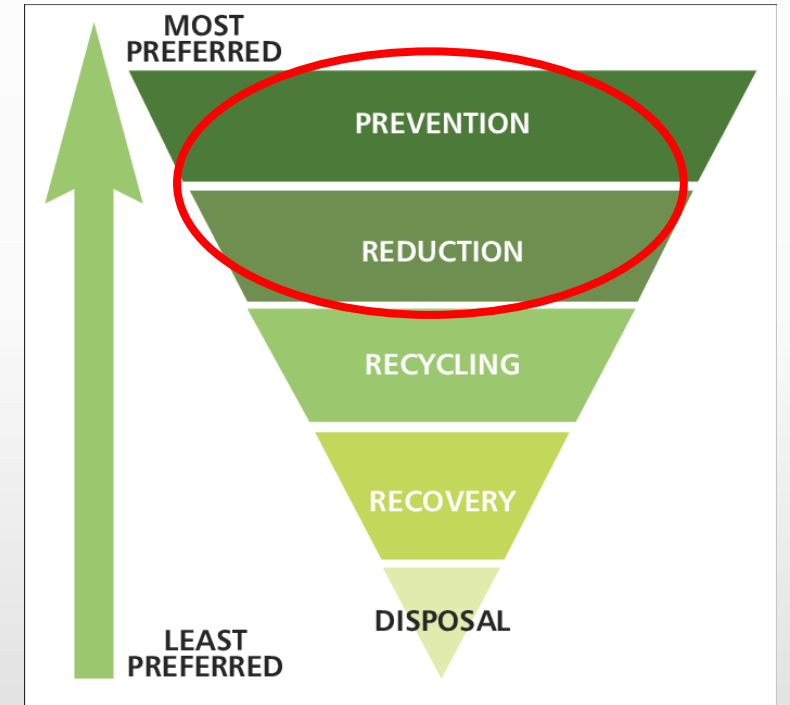


Replacing the material of a disposable product does not solve the waste problem!

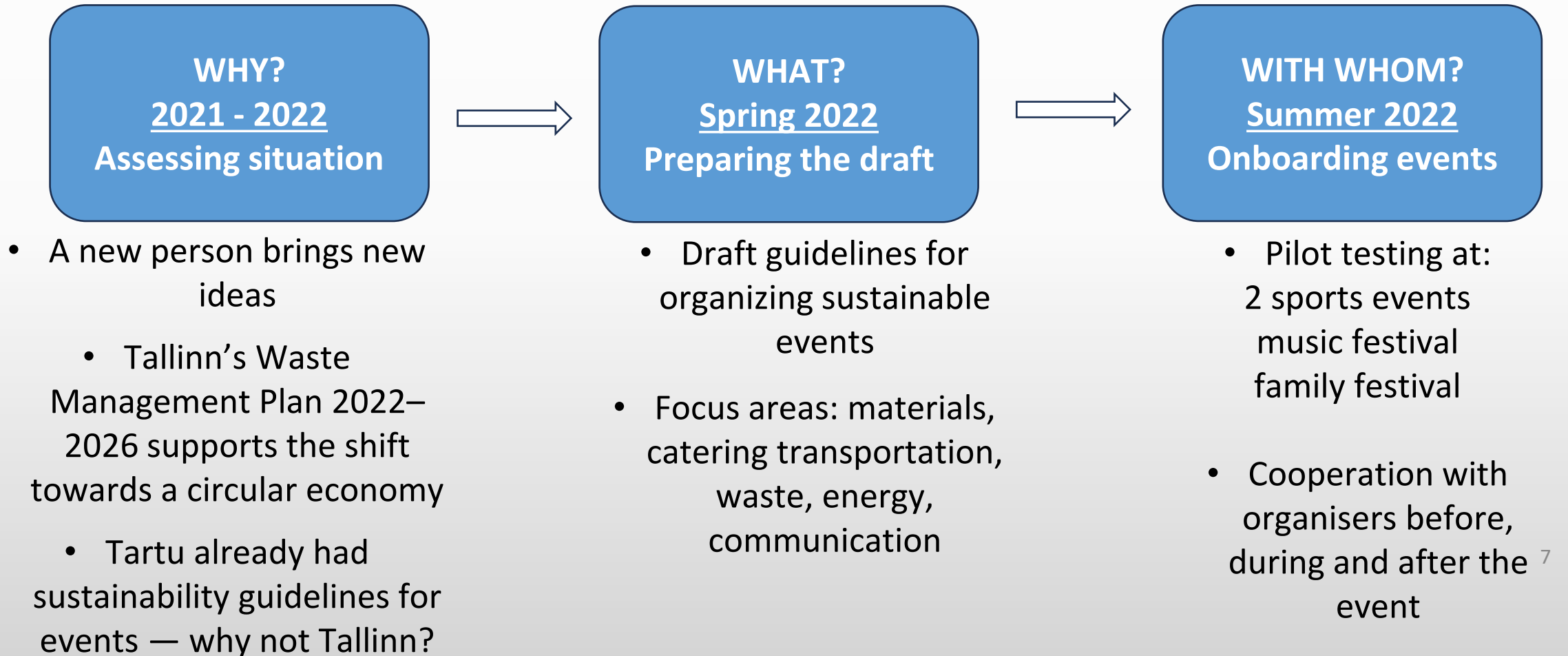


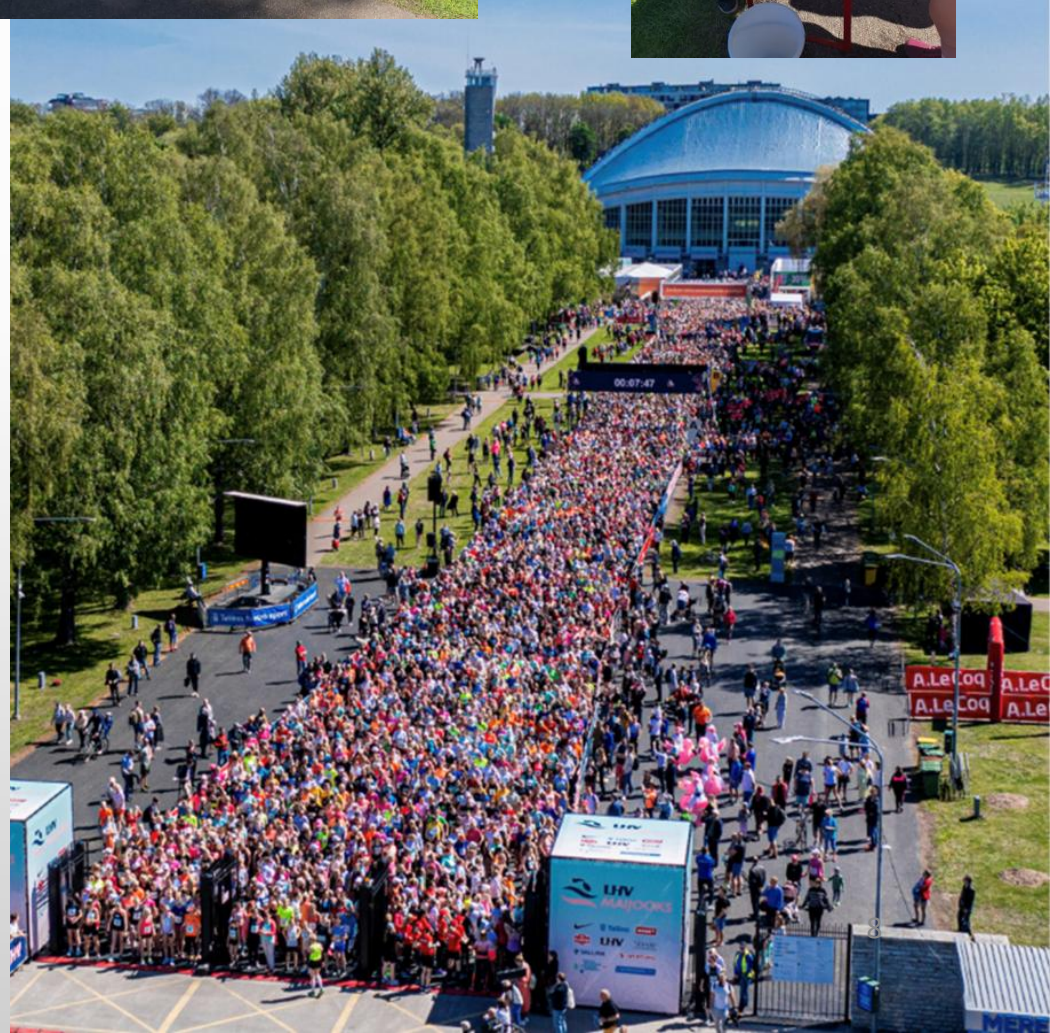
Strategic framework and policy integration (2021-2022)

- Recognising the limitations of first measures, the strategic framework was developed to support the reuse initiatives (*City Waste Plan 2022-2026*)
- Sustainable Event Guidelines - focus on real-world testing and local adaptation, not copy-paste solutions



Field testing and pilot implementation (summer 2022)





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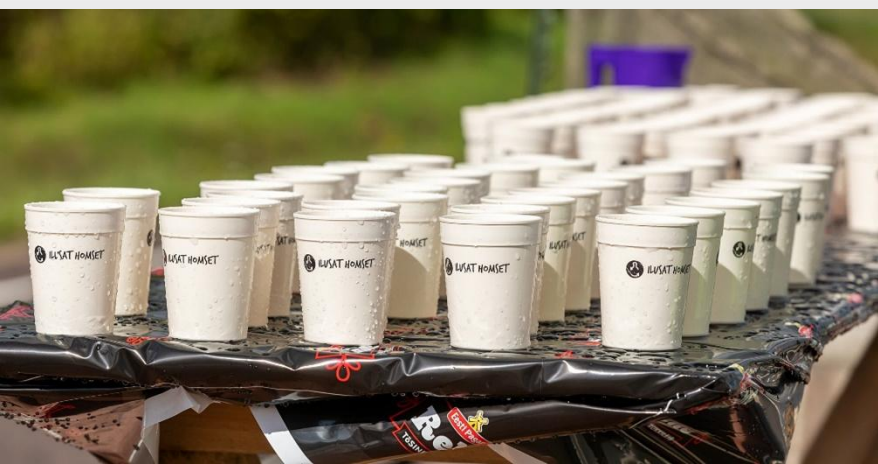
2022 – 2023
Formulating the
guidelines and reuse
regulation

- Meeting stakeholders



Spring 2023
Guidelines ready –
mayor's order



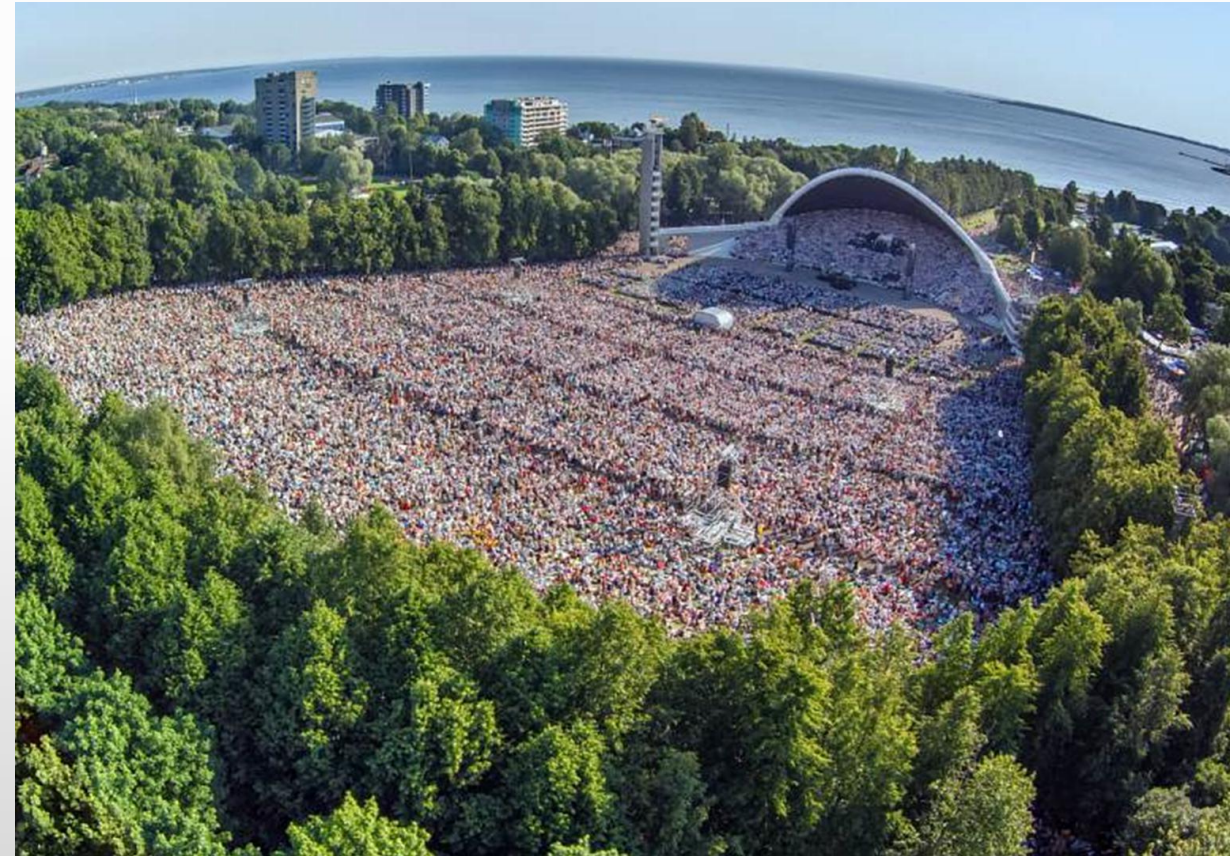


Political momentum and regulation (2023)

- April 2023 - Mayor's decree introduced sustainable event guidelines for all **city-organised events**
- June 2023 - two **city-wide regulations** were adopted
 - Tallinn Waste Management Regulations
 - Rules for Organizing and Holding Public Events
- June 2023 - food and drinks must be served in **reusable containers with reusable cutlery**
- **Public event** = an entertainment event, competition, performance, trade event or other similar gathering of people that takes place in a public place and is open to the public with or without a ticket

Youth Song and Dance Festival (2023)

- **A landmark case for large-scale reuse**
- Around 100,000 participants and spectators served using only reusable tableware
- Later recognised with the **ITB Earth Award 2025** at the **Green Destinations Top 100 Story Awards**.



National policy uptake and systemic impact

- June 2023 – reusable tableware in Tallinn
- January 2024 – reusable tableware in Estonia



- 2022 – guidelines for events in Tartu
- 2023 – guidelines for events in Tallinn
- 2025 – guidelines for events in Estonia



A strong start, but not enough

- Reusable tableware regulations have helped to grow the reuse market
- Tallinn has shown that reuse systems can work in practice
- **Events alone are not enough to sustain reuse businesses**
- Without supportive regulation, companies cannot stay profitable, scale up, or invest with confidence
- **It is important to create the conditions for the reuse sector to grow**



Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)

2025/40



- **Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)**(EU) 2025/40 is **directly applicable in all Member States, becomes binding 12 August 2026**
- Replaces Directive 94/62/EC
- Aims to reduce packaging waste, increase recyclability, and harmonise EU rules



Less wasteful

Plastic packaging must be made in part from recycled content, with increasing targets for 2030 and 2040.



More recyclable

All Packaging must be recyclable by 2030:
This means packaging must be designed so that all parts can be used for something else afterwards, instead of valuable material being dumped or burned.



Clearly labelled

No more confusing labels or complicated colours, making it easier to sort trash for recycling.

People will be able to see **what it's made of**, **where to bin it**, how to **return it for reuse**.



Common-sense packaging

No more **layers of useless packaging or pellets** in your deliveries. Small, light packaging without empty space.



Encourages re-use, refill & collection

Deposit and return systems will be boosted.

Some single-use plastics will be banned.

Companies must **make reuse or refill options available** whenever possible, with no extra charge.



Fairer and safer

Brands using non-recyclable or environmentally harmful materials will have to **pay to clean them up.**

Harmful and cancer-causing “forever” chemicals (PFAS) will be restricted in packaging that comes in contact with food.

Takeaway and reusable containers

- From 12. Feb 2027, customers must be allowed to bring their own container for takeaway food and drinks
- From 12. Feb 2028, businesses **must offer reusable packaging** for takeaway items
- Reusable option available at no additional cost compared to single-use packaging
- Refill systems must be supported with clear information on use, hygiene and safety
- This makes reuse a normal part of everyday takeaway services



PPWR alone is not enough

- PPWR generally applies to takeaway packaging across the sector
 - *Lighter rules may apply to micro-enterprises*
- **Member States still need to adopt stronger national rules**
- PPWR alone will not bring reuse into the mainstream
- **Wider uptake depends on national implementation and additional support measures**



Cities can act as incubators
of circular innovation



Political leadership,
the right people and timing matter



Gradual implementation
helps build evidence and support



Collaboration and pilot events
are key to scaling reuse



PPWR is a step forward,
but stronger national rules
are still needed

**Tallinn shows that change can start locally,
but lasting impact requires national action**





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Thank you!
Aitäh!

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