



Futouris

Tourism. Together. Sustainable

STARTERS MANUAL FOR A PLASTIC POLLUTION FREE HOLIDAY

Guidance for tourism businesses

SUSTOUR



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of the European Union

SUSTOUR

This Starters Guide was compiled in the project SUSTOUR - Promoting sustainability among the European tour operator sector, co-funded by the COSME programme of the European Union.

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Futouris e.V.

www.futouris.org

Preserving the heritage of holiday destinations and developing a sustainable future for the travel industry - that is what Futouris stands for! Our members are committed to the improvement of living conditions, the conservation of biological diversity and environment and to climate protection. Our aim is to help - in the long term, comprehensively and sustainably. All measures are planned and implemented in close collaboration with the local people.



Travel Without Plastic

www.travelwithoutplastic.com

Travel Without Plastic is an organisation established by tourism and sustainability professionals to provide practical advice and implement strategies to reduce unnecessary single-use plastic consumption, creating environmental benefits, reducing costs and engaging staff and customers from across the tourism sector. Travel Without Plastic created a range of online tools including the Let's Reduce Single-Use Toolkit which is available on their website.



Save The Med

www.savethemed.org/en

The organisation Save The Med, based on Mallorca, aims to reduce the amount of single-use plastic products used in the Balearic Islands. They launched their "Plastic Free Balearics" Programme in 2018 with the objective of tackling plastic pollution in the islands by working together with businesses, organisations, communities, schools, local authorities and individuals towards a 100% single-use plastic free Balearic Islands.

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Did you know that...?

... **8 million tons**
of plastic waste enters the oceans each year¹

... it takes up to **450** years
for a bottle to decompose²

... our oceans could contain
more plastic than fish by 2050³

... tourism increases the waste in the
Mediterranean Sea by **33%** during summer⁴

... single-use plastic items such as
straws and bottles
are amongst the most common litter
items found on beaches⁵

... the financial impact on Mediterranean tourism
industry due to plastic pollution is
approx. **268 million €** each year⁶

Why plastic waste is a problem

Worldwide up to 8 million tons of plastic waste enter the oceans each year. According to estimates, about 80 % of the garbage found in the sea is plastic waste. Plastics do not decompose in the same way as organic material or paper. The decomposition takes much longer and even then, they simply degrade into much smaller particles known as microplastics, which contain toxins. These are eaten by plankton and fish and ultimately end up in our food chain.

Plastic pollution can cause great harm to the marine environment and wildlife and it also causes economic risks, e.g. for tourism in coastal regions suffering from polluted beaches.



The role of plastic waste in tourism



Tourism is equally a contributor to and victim of the problem of plastic waste. As part of their holiday, guests are offered single-use plastic items such as drinking cups or straws, plastic bottles or bags, whether this is in their hotels or on excursions. A study by the environmental organization WWF shows that due to tourists, marine litter increases by up to 33 % on Mediterranean coasts during the summer.

As tourism depends on an intact nature and beautiful and clean beaches dumped plastic waste causes a huge economic risk, for example when tourist arrivals are decreasing due to polluted beaches.

Joint efforts to prevent plastic pollution

In response to the problems caused by plastic pollution, the European Commission defined a European strategy for the future use of plastics in January 2018. The plans are to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic products as well as the use of microbeads. A directive with corresponding provisions applicable throughout the EU entered into force in early summer 2019 and is currently implemented in the member states.

The members of the sustainability initiative Futouris e.V. fully support this approach. In their joint project "Plastic-free Holidays" they are working with tourism businesses to reduce the amount of unnecessary tourism-related single-use plastic waste.

Moreover, Futouris is participating in the project "SUSTOUR -Promoting sustainability among the European tour operator sector" (co-funded by the COSME programme of the European Union) working together with travel industry partners from various EU countries to foster the capacity and skills of tourism businesses in the field of sustainability, one focus topic being plastic waste reduction. Next to this Starters Manual, a digital toolkit was developed to provide step-by-step guidance and practical tools for plastic waste reduction in tourism businesses: <https://plastic-reduction.futouris.org/>



1.1 THE THREE-R-PRINCIPLE

A good principle to help you to manage your consumption of single-use plastic products is the three R-principle.

When planning to reduce or eliminate single-use plastic products from your hotel operations focus as much as possible on the removal of products before investigating replacement options:

Remove

unnecessary plastic products

Replace

single-use with services or more sustainable options

Recycle

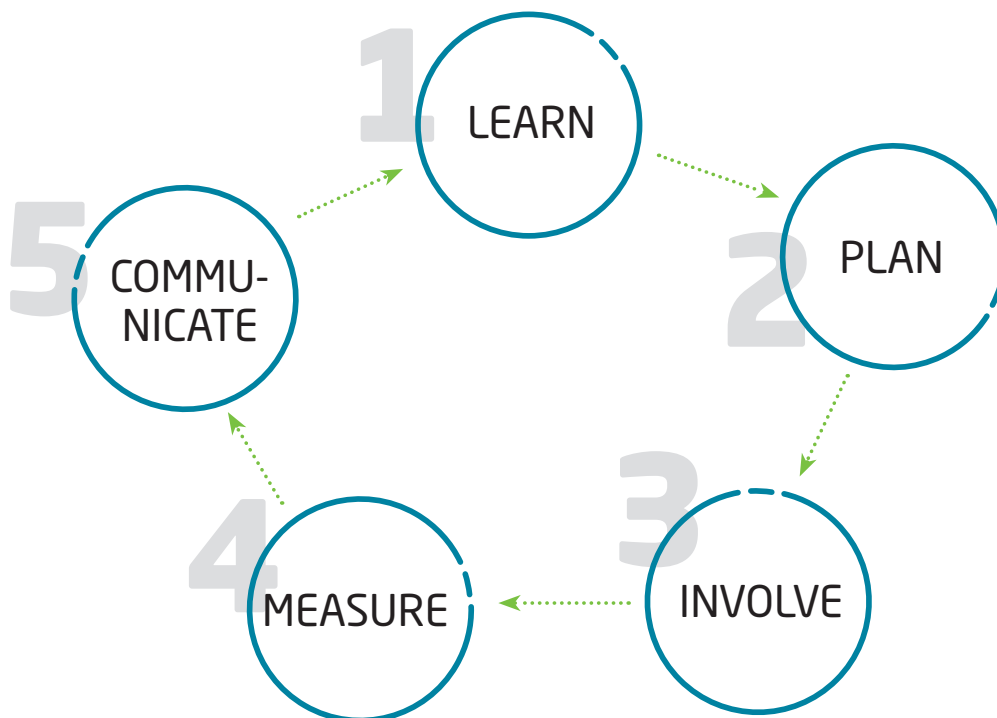
remaining plastic waste items

- 1. REMOVE** items that are unnecessary and can be eliminated entirely (e.g. straws or miniature guest room amenities)
- 2. REPLACE** single-use plastic items
 - with **processes** instead of products (e.g. amenities on request instead of amenities being provided in guest rooms),
 - with **reusable products** or **reusable packaging systems** (e.g. refillable water bottles in guest rooms which can be refilled from dispensers in the hallway),
 - with materials that can break down and decay safely in nature (e.g. products that are certified as home compostable).
- 3. RECYCLE** or responsibly dispose of all remaining plastic waste items that can't be eliminated or replaced with services/reusable alternatives.

1.2 FIVE-STEP PLAN TO MANAGE PLASTIC REDUCTION

Tackling your use of (single-use) plastic can be challenging. Our suggested 5-step-plan supports you in starting your plastic-reduction journey and enables you to manage your plastic reduction effectively.

1. Gather data on single-use plastic consumption by undertaking a self-assessment with our free template.
 - How much/which kinds of plastic do you use and in which operational departments?
 - What can you control immediately (products purchased for use within your company)?
 - Which types of single-use plastic waste are generated by contractors and suppliers?
2. Create a reduction strategy which should include clear ambitions and targets. What do you want to achieve and what is the timeframe? Consider the three-R-principles above.
3. Involve your staff and suppliers and communicate your strategy and targets to them, so they understand what you are trying to achieve and can support your strategy.
4. Monitor your progress regularly (achievements, single-use plastic consumption statistics, what is going well, what needs to be improved and why?).
5. Communicate changes and updates with guests, ask for their support.





1.3 ASSESSMENT: YOU CANNOT IMPROVE WHAT YOU DON'T MEASURE!

Measuring your plastic waste helps

- ✓ to get an overview about your business's plastic waste volume.
- ✓ to understand the root causes of the plastic waste.
- ✓ to develop and implement suitable reduction measures.
- ✓ to monitor and analyse your success.

HOW TO MEASURE AND ANALYSE YOUR SINGLE-USE PLASTIC WASTE

You can find out how much plastic waste is generated on your premises by:

- Gathering information from your waste contractor about how much plastic waste they are collecting from your hotel/ offices per year
- Weighing plastic waste in your containers and counting the numbers of containers filled for approx. one month to reach an estimate figure of your annual plastic waste

In order to identify the areas where (single-use) plastic products are used you can:

Walk around your offices / hotel or join one of your trips/ excursions and compile a checklist to identify

WHERE and **WHY** single-use plastic products are used.

- Look at all areas of your business, from operational departments, offices, to kitchen/canteen/restaurant/, laundry and garden/ recreational areas/ spas etc.
- Are there any current brand standards in place, which only allow to use single-use products?
- Look into your purchasing documents and stock rooms to calculate all plastic items purchased in the previous year, also integrating the stock lists.
- To obtain a comparable KPI, take the number of guests for this year as a factor, so that you can calculate the plastic items consumed per guest/ per guest night

You can use the Futouris Plastic Management Spreadsheet to measure your plastic waste.

- [Plastic Management Spreadsheet for Hotels](#)
- [Plastic Management Spreadsheet for Tour Operators](#)

2 Guidance: Sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic items

The following tables show a range of alternatives for the most common single-use plastic items consumed in hotels. The index used was developed by the Majorcan NGO Save The Med to quantify the impact of plastic products compared with common alternatives, to help you choose the most sustainable option.

The index takes into consideration the impact of the product's material, the size of packaging, its reusability and end-of-life facilities for alternative products available in the Balearic Islands.

The index works on a scale of 1-10. A solution rated 0 has the least negative impact, a solution rated 10 has a high negative impact.

GOOD TO KNOW

Making certain items such as straws, amenities and slippers on request only also helps to reduce the amount of plastic.



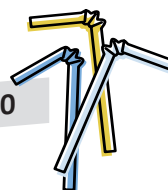
Plastic water bottle Impact 7,05

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Tap water	0
Dispensers (guests to refill their bottle)	2,14
Reusable bottles (carafes) with filtered water on site	2,20
Medium glass bottles (local & returnable to supplier)	2,20
Medium glass bottles (local and disposable)	4,40



Mini toiletries Impact 8,54

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Unwrapped soap bar	0
Refillable dispenser for shampoo, shower gel, lotion, soap etc., from large container, returnable to supplier	1,76
Refillable dispenser for shampoo, lotion etc. from large non-returnable container	3,53



Plastic straws Impact 10,0


POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
No straws at all	0
Reusable straws made from glass	2,93
Reusable straws made from stainless steel	3,01
Reusable straws made from bamboo	3,12
Single-use straw made from paper	5,67
Single-use straw made from straw	5,83
Edible single-use straw	5,85





Single-use gloves Impact 8,55
from Latex or Nitrile

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Frequent hand washing	0
Reusable (washable) gloves	4,27



Plastic bin bags Impact 5,07

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
No bin bags at all	0
Bio-based bin bags	5,26



Single-use slippers Impact 8,13
Plastic wrapping Impact 6,79

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Reusable slippers made from mixed fibres and available on request, unwrapped	4,06
Reusable slippers made from mixed fibres available on request, in cotton bag	Slipper 4,06, cotton bag 3,51
Single-use slippers from natural fibres (e.g. hemp) unwrapped	6,43
Single-use slippers from recycled plastic, unwrapped	7,38
Single-use slippers (mixed fibres) unwrapped	8,13
Single-use slippers (mixed fibres) wrapped with slim reusable band	Slippers 8,13, band 3,38

Plastic laundry bags (medium sized) Impact 5,07

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Reusable laundry bags (medium size) made of cotton or linen	2,63
Single-use laundry bags (medium size) made from paper	4,37



Single-use plastic amenities Impact 8,54
Plastic wrapping Impact 7,05

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
No amenities at all	0
Replace amenities with services (e.g. sewing repair, show-shining on request)	0
Amenities made from mixed plastics and wrapped in paper	Paper wrapping 5,83 + Amenity 8,54
Amenities made from and wrapped in bio-based plastic material	7,01



CLEANING MATERIALS

Cleaning products in plastic bottles Impact 5,29
Single-use wipes (mixed fibres) Impact 8,13

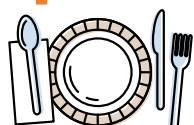
POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Cleaning products provided in large containers that are returned to supplier for refill	1,76
Cleaning products provided in large containers that are separated for recycling	3,38
Reusable wipes made from natural fibres	3,51
Cleaning products provided in plastic bag refills that are separated for recycling	3,53
Reusable wipes made from microfibres	4,06



Plastic cups Impact 10,0



POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Reusable cups made from glass	2,93
Reusable cups made from hard plastic	4,27
Single-use paper cups lined with bio-based plastic	6,49
Single-use paper cups lined with traditional plastic	6,79

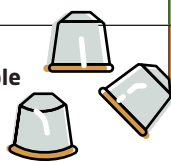


Plastic cutlery & crockery Impact 10,0

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Reusable cutlery and crockery made of stainless steel	3,04
Reusable cutlery and crockery made of hard plastic	3,53
Single-use cutlery and crockery made of wood or bamboo	6,23

Coffee capsules made from plastic & aluminum Impact 10,0

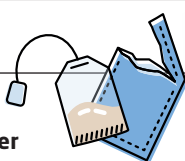
POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Coffee press / cafetiere and ground coffee in large multi-layer plastic bags	4,06
Reusable capsules and ground coffee in large multi-layer plastic bags	4,06
Single-use capsules that are certified as home compostable	6,72



Tea bag Impact 6,79

Plastic wrapping Impact 7,05

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Loose-leaf tea stations (tea in large plastic bags)	3,53
Tea bags wrapped in paper	Tea bag 6,79, Paper wrapping 5,83



Jams and sauces in single-use plastic sachets Impact 10,0

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Provided in large format bottles, dispensers or bowls	3,53
Pre-portioned in small ceramic dishes (from large containers)	3,53



Sugar, salt, pepper in single-use plastic sachets Impact 10,0

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
Provided in sugar, salt and pepper mills , from large format bags	3,53
Single-use paper sachets	5,83



Plastic take-away boxes Impact 10,0

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
BYO (Bring Your Own) policy	0
Reusable take-away boxes	2,64
Boxes from bagasse	4,37
Boxes from naturally compostable materials such as paper, bamboo or palm leaves	4,67



Plastic film wrap Impact 6,76

Tin foil Impact 6,03

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE	IMPACT
In hotel kitchen: reusable silicone covers or Tupperware	4,27
For guests: reusable boxes / trays with reusable covers	4,27
Snack bar: Greaseproof paper	6,79



WHY BIO-BASED BIN BAGS HAVE A HIGHER NEGATIVE IMPACT THAN TRADITIONAL PLASTIC ONES

Despite the upstream advantages (being made from renewable resources), bio-based liners are rated lower than traditional plastic liners due to a greater number of downstream challenges:

- They are difficult to differentiate from traditional plastic and are therefore **incorrectly used and/or disposed of by general public**.
- Bioplastic separation and recovery facilities are not developed.
- If composting facilities are available, bags are often separated as the machinery cannot identify

if they are made from bioplastic (can be processed as food waste) or traditional plastic (cannot be processed as food waste).

If industrial composting facilities exist, follow these guidelines to ensure that you do not compromise waste recovery systems:

Use bio-plastic liners to collect food waste and other bio-plastic products AND separate for specific composting collection. **Do NOT put bio-plastic liners into traditional plastic recycling bins.**

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRODUCTS LABELLED AS 'HOME COMPOSTABLE' AND 'INDUSTRIALLY COMPOSTABLE'

There are two types of compostable plastic **1) Home Compostable** and **2) Industrially Compostable**. Unfortunately, the manufacturers of many products don't make this clear and this means businesses may buy products made from materials that cannot be suitably disposed of.

Home, or backyard, compostable plastic is capable of breaking down at the soil temperature and conditions found in home / hotel compost piles. This may happen very quickly in warm climates but very slowly in cold climates. It also depends on humidity.

Industrially compostable plastic requires special conditions to biodegrade. These conditions can (i.e. temperatures over 50°C) can ONLY be achieved in specific facilities AND you would need to separate them on your business premises so that they are not confused with traditional plastic products

Standards for industrially compostable plastic do exist (EN 13432, ASTM D6400). Standards for home composting (OK Compost, TUV Vincotte and AS5810) are more complicated as the conditions will vary geographically, so what is theoretically possible may not actually be possible.

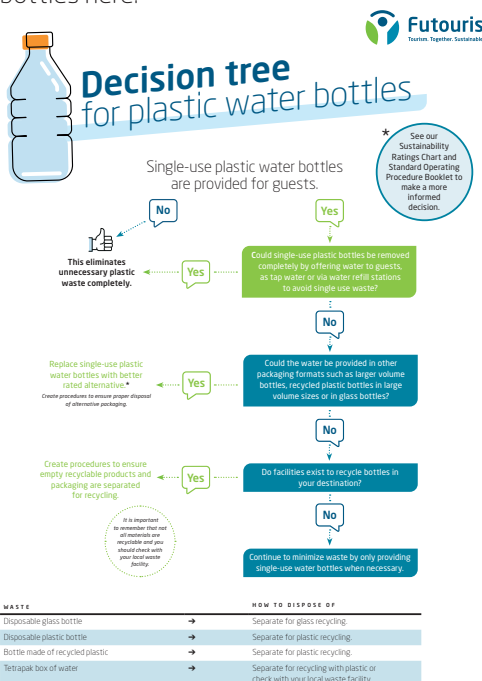
If you are unsure, ask suppliers of bio-based products if they meet recognised standards for home or industrial composting and make your decision according to the disposal facilities that are available to you. If disposal facilities are not available for these materials, it is suggested to avoid them at this time and find other suitable alternatives.

2.2 Tips and Tools

HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE ALTERNATIVES FOR SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS




We know that the choice of allegedly more sustainable alternatives for commonly used plastic products can be overwhelming. Moreover, you will probably be confronted with the question of how to maintain your operational procedures and guest satisfaction when using alternatives, especially re-usable options. Therefore, we have put together some practical tips on how to best choose and use plastic alternatives in your business:

1. Decision Trees We have developed so-called decision trees as a helpful instrument to demonstrate a simple but effective step by step process to decide which alternatives for single-use plastic items are best suited for your business. You can see the example of a decision tree to replace plastic water bottles here:



2. Buy in bulk:

Always choose bulk options if available. It is often more cost-effective and it reduces the volume of plastic waste produced as our example shows:

	 Miniature hotel bottle (0.04 l)	 Standard domestic bottle (0.35 l)	 Returnable container (5 litres) with refillable bottle
Amount of bottles needed	910	104	1 bulk and 1 bottle
Amount of plastic needed to produce bottle	6 g	36 g	Container: 172 g Bottle: 36 g
Total of plastic used for annual supply	5.5 kg	3.7 kg	0.2 kg

* for a yearly supply = 36.4 litres (real data from a partner hotel).

PLEASE NOTE

When thinking about the installation of an ultra-filtration remember that consistent systems do not reduce water and need well technical services teams to ensure that the water is captured for use in irrigation systems or swimming pools rather than going to waste.

If you do switch from bottled water to implementing your own filter or to providing tap water, it is a good idea to prepare some customer communication that gives people confidence that the water is safe to drink, tastes great, and has a plastic pollution free.



Find further **decision trees** in the [Digital Plastic Waste Reduction Toolkit](#).

3. "Process over Products" approach:

To really avoid waste and not simply change from one disposable material to another, try to change the process not the product wherever possible.

Read how this can be done in the **following example** for replacing plastic water bottles ("product") with water refills ("process")

PRACTICE EXAMPLE

WATER REFILLS

Bottled water is not only a business cost, but it generates a huge amount of single-use plastic waste. Switching from plastic water bottles to glass bottles is not the immediate solution as glass bottles still create waste if not properly recycled. Plus they are extremely resource intensive to produce and transport.

Change the process!

If tap water is safe to drink

→ Communicate it to guests and remove the bottled water completely. To encourage guests to drink the tap water provide refillable water bottles (free of charge or with a deposit to ensure their return).

If tap water is not safe or is unpleasant to drink
→ Consider installing water dispensers around the hotel (in public areas and in corridors) and provide drinking water carafes in the rooms that guests can refill. These carafes should be removed daily and washed through the dishwasher before being replaced. Use good communication to explain the water quality to guests.

Benefits

- Significantly reduced waste and costs.
- Removing plastic bottles from guest rooms means less touch points to transmit germs.
- Water dispensers provide great quality and great tasting water.
- It visually demonstrates your commitment to reducing single-use plastic waste.

Standard Operating Procedures

Switching from disposable to reusable products or from products to a process can come with a lot of uncertainties for business operations and customer satisfaction. Therefore, we have developed Standard Operating Procedures which show **step by step instructions to follow so that reusable and refillable alternatives can be implemented safely.** The procedures have been created together with the technical insight of health and safety experts at Intertek Cristal.

You can see the example of a Standard Operating Procedure to implement water refill procedures on tours. Find Standard Operating Procedures for various plastic alternatives in the digital [Digital Plastic Waste Reduction Toolkit](#).

Standard Operating Procedures for water provided on tours

Background



For further information please see our Sustainability Ratings Charts and Decision Trees for plastic water bottles.

Every day 1.3 billion plastic bottles are used, that's around 1 million bottles per minute! And only 1 out of 5 bottles is recycled, the other four bottles end up in landfills, are incinerated, or become litter, polluting environments and oceans and threatening wildlife. **Plastic can take hundreds of years to break down**, and in doing so it leaves very small plastic pieces behind that have already been found in marine species that are consumed by humans.

Bottled water is convenient, especially on tours: Individual travellers can bring as many water bottles with them as needed, tour operators can provide drinking water very easily for every guest without having to plan in advance or include frequent stops, and bottles can easily be disposed of when empty. Bottled water is often also perceived as more hygienic than refillable water bottles or water dispensers which is not necessarily true if basic hygiene standards are followed.

Tourism businesses can be part of the solution by providing refillable water for their guests whilst on tours.

Steps to consider when using reusable bottles

1. Ensure that **guests can refill their bottles during the tour**. It is recommended to provide refillable options free of charge. There are many ways to do this:
 - a. **Water refill stations:** Plan to pass a water fountain (either public fountains or fountains installed on the premises of a café, restaurant or hotel) every 1-2 hours.
 - b. **Large containers** (20 litres or more) from which guests can refill their bottles. Use an insulated cover to keep water cool.
 - c. **Portable filter bottles:** Water bottles with built-in filters to refill from freshwater sources. It is recommended for nature tours where water can mostly be obtained through public washing basin faucets or sweet water rivers.
2. Decide whether you would like to give each customer a bottle for them to take home or whether the bottles will be collected after the tour, cleaned and re-used for the next tour. Your decision might depend on existing facilities to clean the bottles hygienically, available storage space, customer perception (you can provide very positive communications that make it clear bottles are thoroughly cleaned) etc.
 - a. When providing bottles for guests to take home bear in mind to **use a high-quality material and nice-looking design** which will encourage guests to reuse the bottle many times.
 - b. When providing bottles only for the tour, **establish a procedure to ensure all bottles are collected and cleaned** properly before their next use.

SAVE PLASTIC - SAVE MONEY

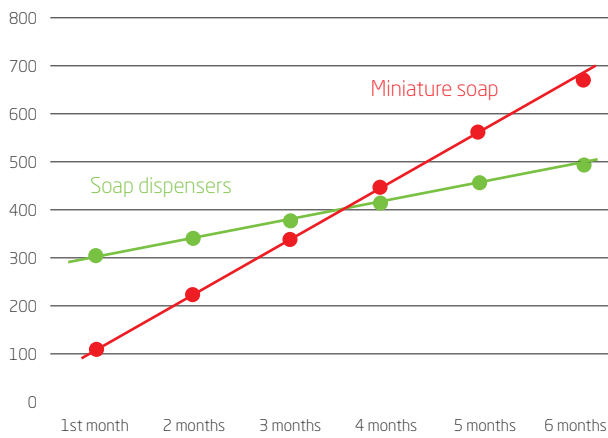
Even though single-use plastic is a cheap material, there are still opportunities for cost saving. For instance, by completely eliminating unnecessary products such as straws and stirrers you can make immediate savings. Even though the savings will be small, many small actions can add up over time.

Other alternatives can require larger initial investments which you will need to budget for, but many do

provide a good return in the medium to longer term.

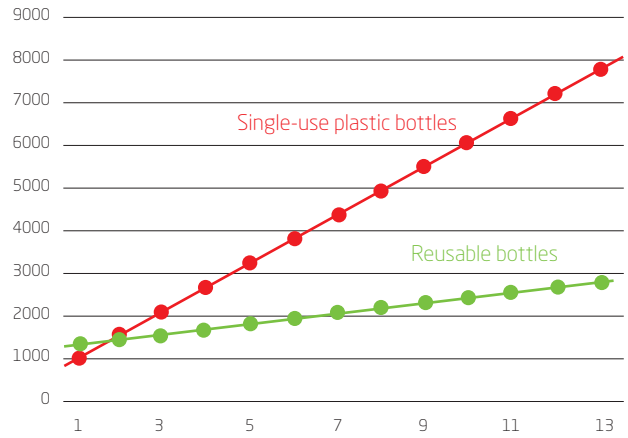
The following overviews by Searious Business show the potential savings from using sustainable alternatives. For example, hotels can save up to 4,475 € a year and 1,497 kg CO₂ by using refillable bottles with filtered water from the tap instead of single-use plastic bottles.

Soap dispensing system vs miniatures



€ 233 € / half year 66% 2.2 kg CO₂

Single-use water bottles vs reusable bottles (50 bottles per day)



€ 4,475 € / year 100% 1,497 kg CO₂

Single-use food containers vs reusable containers (50 packed meals per day)



€ 85 € / year 100% 547 kg CO₂

Single-use laundry bags vs reusable laundry bags



€ 300 € / half year 100% 9 kg CO₂

€ = Cost reduction = Waste material reduction = CO₂-reduction

*Source: Searious Business

3 Recycling and disposal

Globally, over 2 billion tons of municipal solid waste are generated every year, but only 13.5% of the world's waste is recycled, and one-third of waste is inappropriately managed.¹⁰

Waste that is inappropriately disposed of in natural environments causes severe ecological and social impacts. In order to protect the environment and to preserve natural resources, the correct recovery, recycling and disposal of waste is important.



The following tips can help you to improve the waste separation and collection in your business that recovery and recycling is facilitated:

- **Check with your local waste facility** or waste collection contractor to verify which materials are accepted for recovery and recycling. When you know this, ensure that people responsible for purchasing **prioritise products that can be processed locally** (e.g. avoid products made from bioplastic materials if there is no infrastructure in your destination to dispose of them).
- **Provide facilities for staff and guests to separate waste** according to the information you received from your local waste facility or contractors (e.g. sufficient waste bins throughout the premises that are **clearly labelled** and encourage staff and guests to separate waste accordingly.)
- **Regularly train your staff on waste separation** and encourage them to support your efforts and measures. New habits take time to embed, this will require regular follow ups to ensure waste is being properly separated.
- **Create communication signs for guests** and encourage them to support your strategy. Signage will need to be visual if you have guests from many different nationalities. Trying to educate guests about the correct disposal of every material is challenging. It is often easier to start with a focus on one or two products to make it easier for guests (e.g. plastic bottle collection points, newspaper collection points).
- When providing waste bins for separation, try to use colours or signage that is representative of the local waste collection system (e.g. yellow bins for plastic items, blue bins for paper, green for glass).
- **Don't be tempted to 'wish-cycle'.** This term represents our appetite to ensure that waste products are disposed of responsibly, but it often causes problems at the waste facility. For example, many types of plastic packaging are not recyclable, they must be disposed of with general waste. This can be difficult for staff and guests to understand, they 'want it' to be recycled and therefore discard non-recyclable plastic packaging into plastic recycling bins. This contaminates the waste stream and in the worst case can mean that all of the plastic waste (even the recyclable plastic) ends up in landfill or incineration. This might be too much information for your guests, but it is vital that your staff become aware of this and act accordingly.



RECYCLING STARTS AT PURCHASING

Whether or not you can easily recycle a certain product, is a very relevant information to already take into consideration when choosing alternatives to the current plastic items you are using. The following overview will help you to make a more informed decision which materials and products to choose. All materials in the green box have a high

recovery and recyclability rate and are widely accepted for recycling. These should be preferred. All materials in the red box cannot be easily recycled and recovered, most likely they end up in landfills. These products/materials should be avoided.

Easy to recycle High recyclability rate High recovery rate	For these materials check with the local waste authority or your contractors	Difficult to recycle Low recyclability rate Low recovery rate
PET PP (Polypropylene) HDPE (High-density Polyethylene) Glass Aluminium Cardboard Paper Steel Examples: PET/beverage bottles Steel containers Mono-paper products	LDPE (Low-density Polyethylene) Recycled plastic New material innovations	Compostable/biodegradable materials Composite materials Polystyrene Soiled materials Black plastic Silicone Ceramics Waxed paper Examples: Paper with inner plastic foil Soiled food boxes Small sachets (for coffee, ketchup etc.)

4 Tips for communication

Your single-use plastic reduction strategy is a challenging ambition, and it is a great idea to get some help! We recommend involving everyone who plays a part in ensuring its success such as staff, guests and suppliers. Make sure that they understand:

- **WHY** you want to reduce single use plastic
- **WHAT** measures you are taking and for what reasons and
- **HOW** they can support these measures so that your strategy will be a great success.



Communication to staff

Your employees represent your business as they are at the forefront of a great guest experience. It is important to involve them so that they can be real ambassadors for sustainability. Engage your staff right from the beginning so that they are included in the processes that lead to creating change

- Explain to staff about the **impact of plastic waste in your destination** – make it locally relevant as this is more likely to motivate them to be part of the change.
- **Involve staff in the creation of the strategy** – what do they think can be done to make changes.

Encourage open and honest feedback, even if it means they suggest making changes that challenge years of habit or brand standards.

- **Discuss ALL ideas** that are suggested, this gives people confidence to be involved – if staff think their idea will not be taken seriously, they might not speak up, and you might miss out on some great opportunities.
- Create a **single-use plastic reduction team** so that ideas become action.
- Don't give up at the first hurdle – changes take time to embed and not everyone is on board immediately. Persevere a while longer before dismissing ideas that don't seem to work just because one or two people were unhappy about it.
- Examples of ways to inform staff about the impacts of single-use plastic products:

-  Out of plastic video by Cleanwave: <https://youtu.be/gJ6ErqSoGk8>
-  Video by TED-ED / Emma Bryce about the life cycle of plastic bottles: https://youtu.be/_6xINyWPpB8

BEST PRACTICE

Staff Training for hotel employees

In the frame of the Futouris industry project "Plastic-free holidays, Balearic Islands" 134 members of staff from the two hotel groups "Universal Beach Hotels" and "R2 Hotels" have been trained on plastic waste reduction by our partner Cleanwave, based in Mallorca. The workshops are designed to encourage staff to be part of the hotel's plastic waste reduction strategy by inviting them to find

solutions for any challenges they might face so that they become real ambassadors for change. For example, during dynamic role-plays the participants were invited to give feedback, specifically on any potential operational challenges or how communications might need to be adapted so that guests are supportive of changes. On this basis, all participants worked together to find solutions to these issues.



Communication to guests

Guests expect hotels and businesses to lead by example when it comes to sustainability. 73% of global travellers intend to stay in an eco-friendly accommodation and this is an increasing trend.¹² Concerns around the impacts of single-use plastic pollution are wide reaching in the media and this raises interest and awareness with travellers. In turn, this creates expectations that businesses will take measures to avoid the use of unnecessary single-use plastic products. However, it is important that changes are not perceived to have a negative impact on the upon the guest experience, therefore communications are extremely important.

- **Inform your guests about your waste reduction strategy**, what are you doing and very importantly WHY you are doing it and what they can do to support it. Similar to engaging staff, it is the WHY that will ultimately motivate guests to be accepting of changes.
- Communication should be **transparent, positive, honest and easy to understand**.
- **Written communications should be placed at strategic and relevant points** in the hotel – for example, a straw on request sign should be placed at the bar and ideally be visual so that it is quickly understood, whereas a poster in the lift (where people spend more time) may include more detailed information on plastic reduction policies as people have time to read it.

- **Staff should be trained** so that they can inform guests as well (for example a 30 second welcome introduction explaining that bathroom amenities / tea & coffee facilities are now available on request).

Communication to suppliers

There are a number of ways that suppliers can help but firstly they need to know that you wish to make changes so inform your suppliers about your strategy and targets. Be clear that you would like their help in finding products that aren't made or packaged in single-use plastic.

- Discuss with your suppliers ways and options **to reduce or eliminate unnecessary plastic packaging**.
- Ask them **to avoid double packaging** (e.g. single product wrapped in plastic and a bunch of these wrapped in plastic bags).
- Consider **operating on a deposit system**/return system for packaging (e.g. reusable crates, bottles, cool boxes).
- Ask if they have bulk/refillable options available (e.g. liquid sanitising dispensers, dried foods, large water carafes of 18 litres).
- Ask them to help you identify new services (e.g. touch free water dispensers).

Give priority to suppliers who proactively help you to reach your waste reduction targets.

EXAMPLES

Communications to guests can be similar to the example below, which you can adapt and change to your own requirements.

REDUCE PLASTIC, REFILL YOUR BOTTLE
 REDUZIEREN SIE PLASTIK, FÜLLEN SIE IHRE FLASCHE AUF
 REDUCE PLÁSTICO, RELLENA TU BOTELLA

- 1 Purchase your reusable bottle from our reception.**
 Kaufen Sie Ihre wiederverwendbare Trinkflasche an unserer Rezeption.
 Compra tu botella reutilizable en nuestra recepción.
- 2 Refill as often as you like and free of charge from the refill stations around our hotel.**
 Füllen Sie Ihre Flasche kostenlos und so oft Sie möchten an den Wasserspendern in unserem Hotel auf.
 Recarga tantas veces como quieras y de forma gratuita en las estaciones de recarga de nuestro hotel.
- 3 Download the Cleanwave app to locate refill points around the island.**
 Laden Sie die Cleanwave-App runter, um Wasserspender auf der ganzen Insel zu finden.
 Descarga la App Cleanwave para localizar los puntos de relleno alrededor de la isla.
- 4 How do you like this service, tell us what you think?**
 Wie gefällt Ihnen dieser Service, sagen Sie uns Ihre Meinung?
 ¿Te gusta el servicio de agua? Cuéntanos qué te parece.

For more information visit www.cleanwavefoundation.org
 Für weitere Informationen besuchen Sie www.cleanwavefoundation.org
 Para más información www.cleanwavefoundation.org

KMZERO TUI MAGIC LIFE CLEANWAVE

Confidence around cleanliness and hygiene of refillable toiletries:

Dear Guests, we are taking all necessary precautions to keep our hotel clean and hygienic and we are proud to do this without having to resort to single-use plastic. For example, our refillable bathroom amenities are cleaned daily as part of the housekeeping service, they are tamper proof and when they are almost empty, they are removed to be cleaned thoroughly cleaned and sanitised inside and out.

Amenities on request

Our hotel was consuming XX amount of miniature plastic bottles and packages every year by leaving amenities in guest rooms and we wanted to make a change so that we are part of the solution and not part of the problem. Amenities are still available, should you need them please ask us at reception and we will provide them immediately.

5 Best practice examples

“Water from air”-instead of plastic water bottles in JW Marriott Phuket

Since 2018, hotel JW Marriott, Phuket offers its guests fresh mineral water in reusable glass bottles. The water is taken from the surrounding moist air and filtered into drinking water. More than 100,000 plastic bottles were replaced with this innovative “water from air”-technology in 2018 which is perceived positively by guests.¹¹

“Wave of Change” program, Iberostar Group:

With its ambitious initiative “Wave of Change” Iberostar Hotels achieved the goal of being the first Spanish hotel chain completely free of single-use plastic products in their hotel rooms in 2018. In total, over 607 tons of single-use plastic were avoided as a result of this program by the end of 2019.



Reduction measures included switching from plastic bottled water to glass bottles and dispenser/reuse systems, replacing mini shampoo/shower

gel bottles with dispensers as well as redesigning amenities using more sustainable materials and replacing individual plastic-packaged jam portions with dispensers at the breakfast buffet.



In addition, Iberostar invested in 3 industrial scale composting projects to work towards a circular economy, which now enables hotels to compost all organic waste.

As a next step, Iberostar Group plans to be completely waste-free by 2025.



Water refill stations on Balearic Islands by Cleanwave.org

Water refill stations on Balearic Islands by Cleanwave

In order to reduce the use of single-use plastic bottles the non-profit organization is building a network of refill stations on the Balearic Islands



where guests can refill their bottle with fresh drinking water for free. With this initiative more than 6.8 million plastic water bottles have been saved since July 2017. Hotels and other tourism businesses can be part of this initiative as well.

Plastic Alternatives Trial in two TUI Hotels

In the frame of its industry project "Plastic-free Holidays" Futouris has been trialling four alternatives to single-use plastic products in selected hotel guest rooms in two TUI-hotels for ten weeks:

- Plastic-free home compostable coffee capsules instead of regular aluminium / plastic pods
- Reusable, washable bin liners instead of plastic liners
- Refillable, liquid handwash dispenser and shampoo/shower gel dispensers made from local almonds replacing bar soaps and miniature bottles.
- Stabilised aqueous ozone replacing general cleaning and glass cleaning products



By switching to these trialled reusable / refillable products a hotel can significantly reduce respective annual costs by 64% as well as its packaging waste. Feedback from staff and guests were predominantly positive with most guests perceiving the trial products as better for the environment.

Plastic Reduction on cruise ships

TUI Cruises have been implementing a successful initiative called "Wasteless" to reduce plastic waste aboard their ships, i.e. the amount of waste on board of TUI ships has been reduced by 4,000 plastic bottles a day since 2012, by replacing plastic bottles with glass carafes and installing water dispensers.



AIDA Cruises has been engaging for many years in reducing plastic waste. By the end of 2021, AIDA has already reduced the number of single-use plastic items on board their ships by more than 70 percent compared to 2018 e.g. by not using bin liners in cabins and bathrooms, by serving cookies without plastic packaging for coffee, by not using disposable cutlery (i.e. ice cream spoons made of stainless steel) and by replacing single packaging (for example jam, butter, and Nutella) by dosing dispensers.



On tour without plastic bottles, Chamäleon Reisen

The tour operator saves 650,000 plastic bottles per year by providing their guests with a so-called "Nature Bottle" at the start of a trip since 2015. The bottles are being designed in the destinations and can be filled on the trips with clean and fresh water at any time without charge. About 22 tons of plastic waste are saved by this measure per year.



6 SINGLE-USE PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES AND HYGIENE

Single-use (plastic) products are commonly perceived as being safer and more hygienic because they are only used once and are then thrown away. During illness outbreaks, it can be tempting to switch back to single-use products for this reason, however they can give a false sense of security. Over 125 scientists released a statement in 2020 confirming that hygiene is not necessarily improved when using single-use products, furthermore single-use products produce a lot of waste and use a lot of natural resources. Whereas reusable products can be washed or sanitized to make safe to use again.

In this chapter we provide practical advice on how you can maintain hygiene standards whilst simultaneously avoiding unnecessary single-use plastic products. Our recommendations in this chapter **are not a substitute** for local health authority regulations which should always be followed.

Reducing touch points

One of the ways germs are spread is through contact with contaminated surfaces. All products (whether made from single-use plastic or other materials) are surfaces that can be contaminated and therefore transmit viruses.

By reducing the number of surfaces that people can come into contact with, you can reduce the possibility for the spread of infection.

For example: Providing miniature toiletries in a guest room will require the housekeeping staff to clean and sanitize every (small) bottle which is extremely time consuming. To save time staff will most likely replace old bottles with new ones even if they are not completely empty therefore creating waste and wasting money. Switching to good quality, tamper-proof refillable amenities that can be easily cleaned as part of the housekeeping regime not only saves time, it saves on costs and significantly reduces waste.

Communicating the cleaning process to guests

Guests expect their rooms and the facilities within them to be clean and hygienic. Cleanliness and hygiene

are guaranteed by processes. Covering the toilet seat and remote controls with a plastic wrap or putting a 'hygiene' sticker on the guest room door does not guarantee cleanliness, they are merely a communications tool. Instead of relying on these products, communicate your cleaning process to your guests at the reception or in the guest rooms via the in-room TV, on an app or if allowable in printed material.

Soap based detergents and water kill viruses

Hand washing and alcohol-based sanitizers are the most effective solution to avoid infections transmitted by hands or surfaces.

Make sure that there are enough hand washing or sanitising stations available in your hotel and that they are easily accessible.

Ask staff and guests to maintain good hand hygiene by using the provided sanitizing dispensers/hand washing stations and avoid providing miniature sanitisers or COVID kits.

Reusable masks

Where local regulations allow, provide staff with reusable masks which can be branded with your company logo. It is important to establish reusable mask hygiene procedures that all staff should be made aware of, including how masks should be laundered.

Single-use masks are often made with plastic fibres. They are lightweight, and even if they are disposed of correctly, they can easily become plastic pollution by blowing out of bins and into local environments.

Greenerguest.com offers a free e-learning course on how to reduce plastic and keep staff and guests safe.

If you must continue to use single-use masks, gloves or indeed any other single-use plastic products in order to comply with local regulations, separate products for recycling where infrastructure exists and as a minimum, take all possible steps to ensure that single-use plastic products don't become litter. Remember to always follow local regulations for the proper disposal of any potentially contaminated Personal Protective Equipment.

5 Sources and further reading

Sources

- 1) IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature): <https://bit.ly/2Z5RdBv>
- 2) WWF: The Lifecycle of Plastics <https://bit.ly/3cWSNOF>
- 3 & 4) WWF report (2019): Stop the flood of plastic – How Mediterranean countries can save their sea <https://bit.ly/3d3rv91>
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- 6) WWF report (2019): Stop the flood of plastic – How Mediterranean countries can save their sea <https://bit.ly/2NRzV8N>
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- 8) WWF report (2019): Stop the flood of plastic – How Mediterranean countries can save their sea <https://bit.ly/2Z2TKGf>
- 9) EU Single-Use Plastic Directive: <https://bit.ly/3a4RIIB>
- 10) The World Bank: Trends in solid waste management <https://bit.ly/2Z9Vu6V>
- 11) Reuters: <https://reut.rs/2NhXqaM>
- 12) Booking.com: Sustainable Travel Report 2019 <https://bit.ly/3rA4j6c>
- 13) Health Expert Statement addressing safety of reusables and COVID-19 (2020): <https://bit.ly/3q9xNI3>

Further reading

- Digital Plastic Waste Reduction Toolkit: <https://plastic-reduction.futouris.org/>
- Futouris single-use plastic products spreadsheet: <https://bit.ly/2Mqtj0T>
- Travel Without Plastic “Let’s Reduce Single-Use” toolkit: www.travelwithoutplastic.com
- Save The Med “Plastic-free Balearics”: www.savethemed.org/en/
- CleanWave.org: www.cleanwave.org
- Greener Guest e-learning: www.greenerguest.com
- Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP): <https://bit.ly/3jzGLf0>
- WWF report (2019): Stop the flood of plastics – Effective measures to avoid single-use plastics and packaging in hotels <https://bit.ly/3a8bv3L>
- Zero Plastic Waste toolkits by Searious Business: www.seariousbusiness.com/islands

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