



Action Plan for the prevention and reduction of plastic waste and marine litter in the municipalities of Niebüll, Wangerland and Helgoland (North Sea) and Rostock and Lübeck (Baltic Sea)

PP8 Umweltbundesamt, Germany

CAPonLITTER 
Interreg Europe





CAPonLITTER Action Plan PP 8 UBA Germany

Part I: General Information

Project: CAPONLITTER, CAPITALISING GOOD COASTAL PRACTICES AND IMPROVING POLICIES TO PREVENT MARINE LITTER, PGI06172

Partner organisation(s) concerned: Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA)

Country: Germany

NUTS2 Region: German coasts of the North Sea and Baltic Sea

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Part II Policy context

The action plan aims to influence the following areas:

The main objective is the prevention and reduction of plastic waste and marine litter through local/municipal measures and thus the implementation of measure UZ5-08 of the German programme of measures of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD, 2008/56/EC) which is transposed into national law by the Federal Water Act (WHG). For this purpose, political actors on the German North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts at the municipal and regional level are encouraged to implement concrete measures to prevent and reduce plastic waste and marine litter. The reduction of single-use plastics (SUP) is in the foreground.

Policy instrument:

Federal Water Act (WHG)

Further details on the policy context and how the Action Plan should contribute to improving the policy instrument:

The WHG is the main legal act regarding the German water right. § 45 of the WHG regulates the management of marine waters, including provisions for monitoring and a programme of measures. With the WHG, Germany has transposed the MSFD into national law. The implementation of MSFD/WHG measures allocated to Descriptor 10 on marine litter (D10) of Annex I of the directive are coordinated and operationalized by the German Round Table on Marine Litter (RTM). The RTM is under the auspices of the German Ministry for the Environment, the German Environment Agency (UBA) and the Ministry for the Environment of Lower-Saxony. One out of nine MSFD/WHG measures determined for D10 address the "Reduction of plastic pollution through local provisions" (UZ5-08) and is dealt with in the sub-working group "Local provisions" (UAG KV) within the framework of the working group "Land-based inputs" of the RTM. The work carried out in CAPonLITTER (CoL) is directly influencing the work on measure UZ5-08 making a very ambitious implementation possible.

Hence, the main objective of this Action Plan is the prevention and reduction of plastic waste and marine litter through local/communal provisions and initiatives and thus the implementation of measure UZ5-08. For this purpose, political actors on the German North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts at municipalities are encouraged to implement concrete measures.

We have considered in-depth a potential change in our policy instrument as suggested. However finally we decided that this would make no sense at this late point in time since from the beginning we followed a certain approach which we cannot adapt. When CoL started we, in the framework of our national RTM, already had a well-established network with municipalities who were already in the process of addressing waste reduction and marine litter. Hence different to other partners we did not start from scratch but put the focus of our work on involving as many municipalities as possible through the events and workshops conducted within CoL by sharing best practice and legal options. In this Action Plan we are supporting the implementation of measures under three greater fields of actions of the five municipalities who decided to sign instead of implementing a few specific measures together with one selected municipality. Although in phase 2 further legal actions are envisaged by the participating municipalities, this is within their remit, which we cannot claim as resulting from our work. Our role is to strongly support the participating municipalities by accompanying and reporting on the measures they are taking and intensifying as well as making them visible to the wider public in order to encourage other municipalities to follow those examples.



This Action Plan was presented and discussed with any interested municipality along the German coasts of the Baltic and North Sea and a high interest in cooperation and involvement was stated. For the actual implementation we aimed for two municipalities/cities for each sea (four in total) and are very glad that even five municipalities finally decided to sign. In addition we seek wider distribution of information to inspire as many stakeholders as possible. For this purpose we already developed two guidances, one on best practice examples and one legal options for municipalities to prevent and reduce plastic waste, which can be found on the website of the RTM (<https://www.muell-im-meer.de/ergebnisse/produkte>) and which are further disseminated by a special postcard we developed and printed in high numbers. The guidances are translated into English and can therefore be shared with all partners in CoL and will furthermore be used in the framework of the Regional Seas Conventions (RSCs) for the Northeast-Atlantic (OSPAR) and the Baltic Sea (HELCOM). Both RSCs have just updated their Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter, which do now include actions building on the work in CoL aiming at further and intensified cooperation with municipalities. Germany has signed up as Lead Country for their implementation.

The following Action Plan was compiled within the framework of CoL and its interregional exchange of the project. The ongoing work at the RTM and in the UAG KV was an additional basis for this Action Plan providing an already established network with stakeholders of coastal tourism and recreational activities, which could be largely expanded due to the work carried out in CoL.

The Action Plan has a focus on three greater fields of actions:

- Restriction on the application of single use products (SUP) in public spaces with a focus on major events
- Plastic reduction in public procurement
- Promotion and establishment of reuse systems

Altogether, this Action Plan has been discussed with stakeholders from 18 coastal municipalities. Five of them have committed to take part (two for the Baltic and three for the North Sea). All of them will work on the three greater fields of actions, but the exact nature of the measures taken and intensified will differ among the municipalities. Below we will first describe each of the three greater fields of actions and then we will specify how each field of action will be implemented by each of the five municipalities.



Part III – Details of the actions envisaged:

Action 1

Name of the Action: Restriction on the application of single use products (SUP) in public spaces with a focus on major events

1. **Relevance to the project:** This action is of great relevance to improve the policy instrument. The ban of SUP at events and other occasions is a great leverage for municipalities to reduce plastic consumption and thus important for an ambitious implementation of UZ5-08.

This action was inspired by the German project work in the CoL project, and especially influenced by the preparation of the 5th ILE hosted by UBA. The topic of this ILE was “How regulatory measures can be used to prevent specific items of marine litter”. The elaboration of the legal background was therefore a main focus of the German work in the CoL project, hence this topic also plays a central role in our Action Plan. The work was conducted in close cooperation with the UAG KV of RTM and a guideline on legal options for action for municipalities was prepared. It became clear that ban of SUP in public spaces is a major lever for municipalities to reduce plastic waste and marine litter.

In addition, this measure was inspired by several examples from the project partners. Namely, the examples from Portugal (“Music Festivals - How to make a difference and create solutions” presented also at ILE#6), France (“Drastic on Plastic supports French festivals in their commitment to reduce and eliminate single use plastic”, presented at the 2nd RSW in France as well as “Waste Reduction Strategies: developing source reduction and raising awareness in the territory of Marseille Provence, France”, presented at the ILE#5) and Bulgaria (“The Quarantine Festival, as a means of activating local communities in beach management and conservation strategies” presented at ILE#2), where the use of SUP at major events like festivals was reduced drastically.

2. **Nature of the Action:** *This action can be implemented by different means, for example with the following measures:*
 - Amendments to the bylaws/statutes
 - Adjustment of the general terms and conditions when renting to third parties

A central component in the sense of plastic reduction and resource conservation is a **restriction on SUP when using public facilities and properties**. The municipalities have the possibility to implement measures to avoid plastic waste when using municipal facilities and properties on their own responsibility. The obligation to use decomposable materials or reusable products can be prescribed. Municipalities can design concepts and framework conditions for events in public areas in such a way that measures to avoid plastic waste must be taken when serving food.

In addition to general regulations via statutes, private third parties can also be individually obliged to avoid waste via **contractual requirements, especially general terms and conditions**.



This could be agreed, for example, in commercial rental contracts with public facilities such as schools, municipal buildings or sports facilities.

The **CITY OF NIEBÜLL** already has a **statute that restricts the use of single-use items at public events**. The statute came into practice just before the onset of the pandemic and thus has therefore hardly been applied or put into practice yet (since no major events have taken place). Niebüll now aims to **make sure that the statute is implemented and applied correctly** and wants to **actively support the different stakeholders in the city** (e.g. public order office, event managers, caterers, and citizens).

The **MUNICIPALITY OF WANGERLAND's** subsidiary company "Wangerland Touristik" is already **only using reusable tableware and cutlery at its own events**. Also, external foodtrucks need to **follow a checklist for sustainable events**, which includes **not to use single-use tableware, cutlery or packaging**. Both measures shall be **intensified, communicated and followed** in more detail within phase 2 of CoL. In addition, it is **aimed for that the municipality itself will adopt a corresponding local provision**. However, this process might take longer than phase 2 of CoL. In their **contractual requirements** "Wangerland Touristik" requests a **commitment to refrain from using SUP in all leasehold properties**. In the second phase of CoL they **will implement stronger controls of compliance** with the clauses, and also work on a quality concept for gastronomy.

The **ISLAND OF HELGOLAND** so far has no statute that restricts the use of single use products at events. However, for more than six years a returnable system for cups and mugs is applied at events. Within the scope of phase 2 of CoL a **statute to account for all single use products at events shall be conceptualized and drafted** with the aim that the community council will agree and adopt it. However, the adoption cannot be guaranteed at this point, due to the democratic procedures.

The **CITY OF ROSTOCK** already has a **statute that restricts the use of single-use items**. However, in cases where there is no appropriate water supply **exemptions are accepted**. Within phase 2 of CoL the **implementation and application of the statute shall be intensified**. Additionally the **contractual requirements and general terms and conditions** at the city's touristic harbour are currently being adopted. Within CoL phase 2 this **shall now also include plastic reduction measures**.

The **CITY OF LÜBECK** already has a **statute in place that restricts the use of single-use items** at events on public spaces. The **implementation and communication on this shall be intensified**, to make sure that there will be **fewer exemptions and that the use of re-useable option will be the norm at public events**. Also, the **general terms and conditions** when **renting out to third parties** will be adapted accordingly.

3. Stakeholders involved:

North Sea: City of Niebüll, Municipality of Wangerland, Island of Helgoland

Baltic Sea: City of Rostock and City of Lübeck

4. Time frame: until June 2023. The next steps/milestones will be further verified together with the respective municipalities



5. **Preliminary costs:** to be determined by the respective municipality.
6. **Funding sources:** Are taken over by the respective municipality or in the case of festivals and private events may be private funds.

Action 2

Name of the Action: Plastic reduction in public procurement

1. **Relevance to the project: Public procurement is a key tool for coastal municipalities and their administrations to reduce their plastic consumption. The municipalities are leading by example and thus support an ambitious implementation of UZ5-08.**

This action and its possible sub-actions were inspired by different German stakeholders involved in the project as well as one French stakeholder. Plastic reduction in public procurement can be implemented through different measures. One of them is to conduct a plastic inventory in the municipal administration with a subsequent shift to plastic free products or other plastic reduction measures. This aspect of this action was inspired by the German stakeholder "Plastikfreie Stadt" (Plastic-Free City), who presented their plastic inventory at the 6th ILE. The use of tap water instead of bottled water was inspired by the French good practice "Implementation of eco responsible fountains", presented at the 2nd RSW in France as well as the German stakeholder "A tip:tap", who also was involved as a stakeholder in the 3rd RSW in Germany. A third option to reduce plastic in public procurement is to have clear specification which products may and may not be procured. This can be negative or positive lists. The negative list is one tool that was identified as a good practice in preparation of the 5th ILE in Germany and in the work of the UAG KV.

2. **Nature of the Action:** *This action can be implemented by different means, for example with the following measures:*
 - Conduction of a "plastic inventory" in the municipal administration and a subsequent shift to plastic-free products or other reduction measures
 - Use of tap water instead of bottled water
 - Clear guidelines on which products may and may not be procured (e.g. negative or positive lists)

Plastic reduction in public procurement can be implemented through different measures. As a first step it is helpful to determine the amount of SUP that occur in the administrations of the municipalities, in order to reduce the use of plastic in a second step and **switch to plastic-free products or other reduction measures**. To this end, the initiative "Plastic-Free City" designed a toolbox to facilitate a **plastic inventory** and track savings of plastic during a time frame of approximately three months.

Another possibility to avoid the use of plastic is by **using tap water instead of bottled water** for catering at events, meetings and in everyday office life. For this purpose, appropriate easy-to-clean bottles can be purchased, as well as water bubblers to - if desired - add carbon dioxide to the water.



To promote the use of tap water by employees, suitable drinking bottles can be made available to the staff. The installation of a water dispenser in publicly accessible rooms of the administration (reception, tourist information, etc.) is another way to sensitize citizens and tourists to fill up their reusable water bottles.

Municipalities can also set **clear guidelines which products may and which may not be procured with public funds**. These guidelines can take the form of positive or negative lists. An example of a negative list is the list in the City of Hamburg's Environmental Procurement Guidelines, which states that, appliances for preparing hot drinks with portion packaging ("coffee capsule machine"), disposable packaging, disposable crockery, disposable cutlery and detergents and cleaning products as well as cosmetics with microplastic content may not be procured. It is best if the respective administration recommends supporting sustainable and plastic-saving alternatives that are adapted to the respective situation.

The **CITY OF NIEBÜLL** is already **using tap water instead of bottled water** within the offices and meeting rooms in the town hall. This shall now be **expanded to other departments within the city's administration** in phase 2 of CoL. In addition, the possibility to carry out a **plastic inventory** within the city's administration **shall be explored**. It is aimed that a first inventory will also be carried out within phase II.

The **MUNICIPALITY OF WANGERLAND's** subsidiary company "Wangerland Touristik" is **installing water fountains** within its own premises, so that both employees as well as tourists can refill their reusable bottles with tap water and refrain from using single use plastic bottles. This **activity shall now be expanded to other areas** (e.g. also along the cycle path network) of the municipality and also be better **communicated and promoted** within phase 2 of the CoL project. Additionally, "Wangerland Touristik" is planning to **set up a list of products that shall not be purchased within the company** and is also aiming **to introduce plastic free merchandise products**.

The **ISLAND OF HELGOLAND** is already **re-arranging its merchandise portfolio** to more sustainable and plastic-free products, including **raising awareness among staff**. This shall now be expanded **by conducting a first plastic inventory in the administration of the municipality**. Additionally, a **concept for the extended use of tap water and clear specifications for products to procure** shall be developed within phase 2 of CoL. For both a decision by the council of the municipality is needed and due to the democratic process it cannot be guaranteed that this will go forward.

The **CITY OF ROSTOCK** is planning to put into place a wide variety of actions to ensure plastic reduction within the city's public procurement. Within the scope of a **structural development measure** they will carry out a **plastic inventory**. Within this scope also **the use of tap instead of bottled water will be implemented** and a **list** will be produced which **products can be procured** and which products shouldn't be procured. This will also include **communication with all relevant stakeholders**, including external service providers like cleaning services (e.g. no plastic bags in rubbish bins in offices). Another measure is the **awareness raising** among the approx. 3.000 employees of the city administration **to use reusable packaging options for their lunch breaks**.

The **CITY OF LÜBECK** has already implemented the **use of tap water in the city's administration**. At receptions refillable glass bottles are used only. Within phase 2 of CoL the city of Lübeck will be carrying out a **plastic inventory**, which will be embedded in the scope of the city's Climate Protection Master Plan.



3. **Stakeholders involved:**
North Sea: City of Niebüll, Municipality of Wangerland and Island of Helgoland
Baltic Sea: City of Rostock and City of Lübeck
4. **Time frame:** until June 2023. The next steps/milestones will be further verified together with the respective municipalities.
5. **Preliminary costs:** To be determined by the respective municipality.
6. **Funding sources:** Are taken over by the respective municipality.

Action 3

Name of the Action: Promotion and establishment of reuse systems

1. **Relevance to the project:** Reusable packaging is a key leverage point for coastal municipalities to reduce plastic consumption and thus ensure an ambitious implementation of UZ 5-08. Furthermore the German implementation of the EU-single-use-plastic directive (SUPD) will be actively supported by the promotion and establishment of reuse systems (namely through the German Packaging Act). The SUPD is based on marine litter findings and therefore a strong link to the MSFD and thus also to the WHG.

This action was inspired by the French good practice “Mutualized and reusable dishes: a platform for sharing reusable tableware” presented at the 3rd RSW in France, which also focusses on reuse systems. This measure was additionally inspired by two German stakeholders. The city of Tübingen presented their concept to combat SUP with a packaging tax and by supporting the introduction of reuse systems at the 3rd ILE. While the introduction of a packaging tax has been declared invalid by the Administrative Court of Baden-Württemberg in First Instance, the successful promotion and establishment of reuse systems in Tübingen are still a best practice that can be followed up by coastal communities. Another German project is called “Essen in Mehrweg” (Food in reusables) supporting the introduction of reuse systems for take-away food in Berlin and Bremen.

2. **Nature of the Action:** *This action can be implemented by different means, for example with the following measures:*

- Support the introduction of reusable systems
- Promote filling of customers' own containers through information campaigns

Various measures can be taken to promote reuse. Municipalities can actively **support the introduction of reusable systems** by carrying out information campaigns and proposing incentive systems. The city of Tübingen has very actively supported the introduction of reusable systems: the city subsidises businesses that want to introduce a reusable system with up to 500 euros for the purchase of tableware and up to 1000 euros for the purchase of a dishwasher. The city also subsidises the membership or user fees that businesses have to pay to participate in one of the existing pool systems for reusable dishes. Other possibilities are the commission a supplier of reusable packaging themselves, e.g. through a tender for the municipality or through an information campaign so that consumers and catering



businesses are made aware of the use of reusable options. This is especially important to **promote the filling of customers' own containers**. The interaction of as many different stakeholders as possible is important for the successful introduction and establishment of reusable systems.

NIEBÜLL is part in a project along the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein that is developing a concept for the **introduction of reuse systems in the catering and retail sectors**. In phase 2 of CoL Niebüll **will develop this further and work towards the introduction of reusable systems for take-away food**. In addition reuse is currently transferred to other areas in the city of Niebüll as well: a children day care centre is now using **reusable bags for wet and muddy children's clothes**. The bags are produced locally. This shall be **transferred to other day care centres within the city** and **promoted** within phase 2 of the CoL project. Also, the use of **reusable breakfast bags shall be promoted**.

The district of Friesland, where the **MUNICIPALITY OF WANGERLAND** is located, established funding guidelines for the introduction of reuse systems for take-away food. "Wangerland Touristik" **supports the information of the local stakeholder** about the funding guidelines, e.g. by holding an information event on reusable packaging options for food, where various system providers were present. These **activities will be extended** within phase 2 of CoL, namely, by **finding system solutions that fit the local food options** and also by **setting up drop-off points**. In order to support the **filling of containers brought by the consumers**, "Wangerland Touristik" **wants to develop "Unpackaged holiday" bundles to be distributed in holiday homes**. The further development of that concept will be done in phase 2 of CoL.

The **ISLAND OF HELGOLAND** has already been actively promoting reuse systems for beverages. Through the island-wide project *de green steer*, promoted by the Helgoland Tourism Service, **a reusable system for hot drinks was introduced**. As part of the green steer project, the islanders and guests were also encouraged to bring their own cups for hot drinks, and their behaviour changed accordingly. These **activities shall be extended within phase 2 of CoL and actively promoted further**.

The **CITY OF ROSTOCK** has started a funding programme for the **introduction of reuse systems for food for gastronomy businesses** in a 12-month test phase. The test phase is still running until the end of 2022. In order to **promote the filling of customers' own containers** the information provided at www.mehrwegfürdeinestadt.org **will be extended with guiding videos and additional information material** (reference to existing offers of the food association and initiatives such as "Einmal Ohne, Bitte.") At the city's beach in Warnemünde the use of reusable options is often difficult due to a lack of water supply. Therefore the city and the initiative "Plastic-Free City" are aiming to **develop a dish washing service, where the dishes used in the stalls at the beach are washed in a nearby hotel**. If the test phase in 2022 works out **this will also be continued in 2023** and thus in phase 2 of the CoL project. Complementary, **solutions** for places/cases where no water supply is given **shall be found and showcased**.

Another way how the city supports reuse options is a **pool of 1.000 reusable cups that can be rented by schools, clubs and NGOs**. This programme **will be expanded**, so that different sized cups will be available and thus the offer suitable for more occasions. Rostock also wants to achieve the active use of reusable products at football matches in the "Ostsee Stadium" and to this end cooperate with stadium owners, sponsors, reusable suppliers, environmental agency, and others. These activities will further be flanked by information work, for example at the event "Hanse Sail" with a stand with information and fairground games to raise visitors' awareness of reusable use and plastic reduction.



The **CITY OF LÜBECK** has already successfully established reuse systems for beverages and started a funding programme for gastronomy businesses that implement reusable packaging for food. In addition to the funding, the program's activities include information events, joint action days and promotional activities.

3. **Stakeholders involved:**

North Sea: City of Niebüll, Municipality of Wangerooge and Island of Helgoland

Baltic Sea: City of Rostock and City of Lübeck

4. **Time frame:** until June 2023. The next steps/milestones will be further verified together with the respective municipalities.

5. **Preliminary costs:** To be determined by the respective municipality.

6. **Funding sources:** Are taken over by the respective municipality.

Date: 06. Juli 2022

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