



GOOD PRACTICES GUIDE

***BANNING
SINGLE-USE
PLASTIC BAGS***

THE FIGHT AGAINST MARINE LITTER, AT THE HEART OF SURFRIDER'S MISSIONS

Surfrider is a non-profit making organisation that aims to protect and enhance the ocean, aquatic environments, and the coast. Established in Europe more than 25 years ago, today it brings together a large community of more than 9,000 active volunteers and members in 14 European countries through some forty local chapters. Surfrider's actions are structured around six main themes: maritime transport and infrastructures, health and water quality, climate, the protection of waves, coastal development, and marine litter.

This latter theme is particularly developed with the Ocean Initiatives programme, which Surfrider has organised since 1999. These annual litter collection initiatives on beaches and near aquatic environments (rivers, lakes, etc.) aim to raise citizen awareness, acquire data on the presence and type of litter collected through participatory science tools, and provide support to campaigns of national and European influence to specifically reduce pollution at its source.

A great number of Ocean Initiatives participants and volunteers have revealed the importance of plastic bags amongst litter found around European aquatic environments and on coasts: plastic bags were the third most-collected piece of litter in 2015.

WHY DO WE WANT TO BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS?

In recent years, numerous countries and towns have decided to ban single-use plastic bags: from San Francisco in 2007 to Rwanda in 2008, on to France and even Belgium's Anderlecht municipality in 2016. An international coalition against plastic bags was even launched at the *Our Ocean* conference in Washington on 15th and 16th September, 2016. France, Morocco, and Monaco are the pioneers of this coalition and, following the example of Chile and Australia, many States are expected to join.

These bans are most often motivated by environmental reasons. The single-use plastic bag has imposed itself as the symbol of a completely disposable society that is squandering fossil resources: produced from oil in a second and used for an average of 20 minutes, 100 to 400 years are required for these bags to decompose in nature. Yet more than 190,000 plastic bags are used every minute in Europe, and in 2010, around 90% of these bags were used only once.

Not only are disposable plastic bags not long-lasting, but they also pose a serious pollution problem for the environment and for oceans in particular. In Europe in 2010, 50% of these bags were sent to landfills, and 8 billion of them ended up in nature. Since these bags

are light, they are carried by the wind and by rivers, and end up in the ocean, increasing the size of plastic «continents». Plastic bags contribute to plastic pollution that specifically affects marine ecosystems: 260 animal species ingest or are trapped in plastics. Scientific studies have also revealed that there could be six times more plastic than plankton in certain parts of the ocean. Once in the marine environment, plastic bags break apart into plastic particles that can release the chemical substances of which they are composed. These particles increase the transport of invasive species, and are susceptible to absorbing chemical contaminants present in the environment. By entering into the food chain, the ocean's plastic pollution also represents a potential threat to human health.

Apart from their adverse effects on the environment, single-use plastic bags represent a substantial cost to businesses, as well as the local authorities responsible for their waste management. Consequently, the banning of plastic bags is very often motivated by economic reasons. According to numbers from the European Commission, banning single-use plastic bags in Europe would avoid 6.4 billion additional plastic bags being thrown away between now and 2020, which represents savings of 64 million euros for the local European authorities that are responsible for their collection and treatment.

Banning single-use plastic bags also reflects local authorities' desire to improve their image. Indeed, these bags are a type of recurrent visual pollution that is responsible for clogging water drainage systems, amongst other things. No less than 70% of litter found around the cities of Marseille and Nice were plastic bags. Therefore, banning them would noticeably improve the cleanliness of cities and coasts.

« Not only are disposable plastic bags not long-lasting, but they also pose a serious pollution problem for the environment and for oceans in particular. In Europe in 2010, 50% of these bags were sent to landfills, and 8 billion of them ended up in nature. »

THE BAN THE BAG CAMPAIGN

Since 2011, Surfrider has been actively involved in the fight against single-use plastic bags, and has launched its *Ban the Bag* campaign. In order to reduce single-use plastic bag consumption and, specifically, their negative impacts on the environment, banning single-use plastic bags is Surfrider's demand because it is the most effective option. A consultation conducted by the European Commission in 2011 revealed that more than 70% of Europeans support this option.

In November 2013, this campaign allowed for a petition signed by 22,583 citizens to be submitted to the European Commissioner for Environment, demanding that single-use plastic bags be banned in Europe. Lobbying work was fruitful, since a European Directive to limit the consumption of single-use plastic bags was adopted in April 2015.

Beyond the influence actions it includes, the Surfrider campaign is built around the mobilisation of three key players in order to reduce plastic bag consumption: citizens, merchants, and local authorities. It invites citizens to demand that their municipalities or merchants get involved against single-use plastic bags.

Since the start of the campaign, numerous towns got involved and took measures to reduce and ban the use of plastic bags in their areas. This European network of towns has the purpose of creating a vast movement to ban single-use plastic bags, however it also allows for experiences and good practices to be exchanged between local authorities.

THE ADDRESSEES AND GOALS OF THIS GOOD PRACTICES GUIDE

First and foremost, this guide is directed towards local authorities wishing to act to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic bags in their areas. Being closest to citizens, local authorities are key players in this problem because they are able to act locally, assist citizens, raise awareness, and are able to promote a more global change.

By providing good practices and concrete examples of banning policies, this guide pursues the following objectives:

- To guide municipalities engaged in reducing the consumption of single-use plastic bags;
- To strengthen connections between local authorities, citizens, associations, and business that have implemented initiatives or wish to become involved;
- To highlight and share the courageous and interesting experiences undertaken;
- To invite and convince other local authorities to ban disposable plastic bags.

Apart from these main objectives, this guide can provide ideas and advice for all higher-level authorities, businesses, citizens, or groups that want to implement actions against single-use plastic bags.

GOOD PRACTICES THAT ARE ADAPTABLE TO THE FIELD

If banning plastic bags is a global movement, the possibilities for implementation are numerous. Local authorities can thus adapt their policies to the local social, economic, and environmental realities. Therefore, banning plastic bags differs according to the types of businesses and the foreseen scale (some merchants, or an entire town). Thus, this good practices guide does not aim to impose a single process, but instead has the goal of assisting local authorities by presenting various successful examples of banning single-use plastic bags, both in Europe and around the world.

METHODOLOGY

The good practices guide was created by Surfrider based on varied and complementary sources:

- **Interviews carried out** by Surfrider teams (with merchants, local authority personnel, other environmental NGOs, etc.)
- **The analysis of a questionnaire** distributed to municipalities involved in the Surfrider network
- **Scientific literature on policies** to reduce single-use plastic bags and existing reports from different environmental NGOs on this question
- **Feedback** on the experiences of its volunteer branches

TABLE OF CONTENTS

08

MAP OF GOOD PRACTICES

10

I. PREPARATORY PHASE: BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

- 12. a. Knowing the legal frameworks and competences regarding single-use plastic bags
- 20. b. Analyse your field

24

II. THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS: EXCHANGE VIEWS AND RAISE AWARENESS

- 26. a. Consultation and governance
- 36. b. Information and awareness-raising

50

III. BANNING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

- 52. a. Defining the ban's scope
- 60. b. Assisting and Monitoring application

66

CONCLUSION

- 68. A vital first step to reduce pollution of the Ocean
- 69. Checklist

70

BIBLIOGRAPHY



CASE STUDIES OF GOOD PRACTICES

Legend



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING



1. Modbury in the United Kingdom, the first plastic bag-free town in Europe

11. Reusable bags for bakeries in Portugal



2. Municipalities motivate a change throughout Belgium

12. Suggest simple, original alternatives: the Tiana local authority campaign in Spain



3. The Roubaix municipality, an example of assisting merchants with the national ban of single-use plastic bags in France

13. The world record for reusable canvas bag collection held by 4 Austrian local authorities



4. Comprehensive Study by the city of Montreal, Canada

14. A Tote Bag Exhibition, by Surfrider local chapter in Sofia, Bulgaria



5. The Greek island of Alonissos, a partnership between NGOs and a Municipality to finish using plastic bags

15. An old fabric reusable bag competition organised by the Estonian Ministry of the Environment



6. Plastic bag ban at Saint-Denis markets in France, an advanced consultation with merchants

16. Ecologists Without Borders raising awareness in Slovenia through art



7. When large chain stores go further and ban single-use plastic bags in Germany and the United Kingdom

17. An ambitious ban of plastic bags at municipal markets in the municipality of Anderlecht and the Abattoirs market in Belgium



8. Islands in the fight against single-use plastic bags, the example of Corsica, France

18. San Francisco, USA; a pioneer town with an ambitious ban on single-use plastic bags



9. Assisting the ban in Morocco: communication supported by civil society and the Government

19. Establishing a dialogue with Saint-Gilles market gardeners in Belgium



10. A key moment of mobilisation and awareness-raising: International Plastic Bag Free Day

20. NGO monitoring, the case of Legambiente in Italy





**PREPARATORY
PHASE:
*BACKGROUND
ANALYSIS***

A. KNOWING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND COMPETENCES REGARDING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

The European framework

The European Union directive 2015/720 amending directive 94/62/EC concerning the reduction of the consumption of light plastic bags was adopted on 29th April 2015. European Union Member States were required **to transpose the directive into their national law before 27th November 2016.**

The European directive on single-use plastic bags required Member States to take measures to reduce their level of consumption. To do this, they can either choose to, or cumulatively opt for:

- a) the adoption of measures guaranteeing that the annual level of consumption does not surpass **90 light plastic bags per person by 31st December 2019 and 40 light plastic bags per person by 31st December 2025**, or the setting of similar objectives by weight. Very light plastic bags can be excluded from the national consumption objectives.
- b) the adoption of instruments guaranteeing that on **31st December 2018, no light plastic bag is provided free of charge at the point of sale of merchandise or products**, unless equally effective instruments are implemented. Very light plastic bags can be excluded from the scope of these measures.

The banning of single-use plastic bags is also made possible by the directive. Furthermore, starting in May 2018, Member States must report their annual light plastic bags' consumption to the European Commission.

The directive defines the plastic bags concerned:

- Light plastic bags are bags of less than 50 microns. The directive aims to reduce this type of bag. They can be exempted "when they are recovered or disposed of, [in function of] their composting properties, durability or specific intended use."
- Very light plastic bags are bags of less than 15 microns "which are required for hygiene purposes or provided as primary packaging for loose food when this helps to prevent food wastage". They can be exempted from State measures.

Concerning biodegradable and compostable bags, the Commission must adopt an implementation measure to define the consumer information conditions before 27th May 2017.

[+ Please consult the Surfrider sheet on European legislation](#)

National frameworks

As of October 2016, few countries have transposed the European directive. Nevertheless, certain Member States had already implemented, or have implemented legislation on this subject in the form of a ban, economic instruments (tax), targeted objectives, voluntary agreements, or information and awareness-raising campaigns with a wide variety of methods.

[+ Please refer to the Surfrider sheet Overview of Legislation on Plastic Bags over Europe](#)

Knowing the authority and obligations of local authorities

Policy options of local authorities depend on the nation's legal framework, and particularly on the levels and forms of regional decentralisation. Therefore, local authorities must first understand all of their legal authorities for regulating the distribution of single-use plastic bags. Certain towns can ban the distribution of single-use plastic bags throughout their territory and in all types of stores (for example, in San Francisco), while others have the authority to ban these bags only in municipal markets (following the example of municipalities in the Brussels-Capital region).

In accordance with these constraints, local authorities have different leverage actions:

- **Local authorities can be pioneers of change** and implement a ban on single-use plastic bags in part of, or throughout their territory. These pilot experiences are essential to rolling out good practices to be replicated and shared with other local authorities



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CASE STUDY 1: **MODBURY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM,** **THE FIRST PLASTIC BAG-FREE TOWN IN EUROPE**

Type of measure: Plastic Bag Ban

Organisational backer(s): Citizens and Businesses

Country: United Kingdom

Strong points: Consultation among merchants and residents, Key role of awareness-raising, Sharing good practices with other towns

State of the initiative: Completed (2007)

Presentation of the initiative: The small town of Modbury in England has around 1,500 residents and is known as the first plastic bag-free town in Europe.

Rebecca Hoskins, a camerawoman from Modbury, filmed marine life in the Pacific and was shocked by the plastic pollution. Once she returned to Modbury in 2007, she decided to invite merchants from town to a showing of her film. Deeply moved by the images of pollution from plastic bags, the 43 merchants unilaterally announced that they would not sell, provide, or distribute any more plastic bags of any kind in Modbury for a six-month period starting in May 2007. After this trial period, Modbury became a plastic bag-free town permanently.

The initiative received no local authority funding or involvement of any kind, but succeeded thanks to the strong will of local merchants, including the town's supermarket. Through their own initiative, the merchants ordered 2,000 official reusable bags for the town. According to Hoskins' interview with the Guardian in 2007, «It seems to have really brought people together. The shops have sent all their unused plastic bags to Newcastle where they are being made into plastic chairs, and they have all set up plastic bag amnesty points where people can bring in the hundreds of bags that they keep under the kitchen sink.»

Modbury's initiative launched a movement: numerous towns in the United Kingdom wished to follow their example and put an end to plastic bags. In order to help these towns and communities, a website was created (which is no longer available) and a book was written. In 2015, following Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, England implemented a single-use plastic bag tax.

Find out more: Rebecca Hoskins, *Ban the Plastic Bag: A Community Action Plan for a Carrier Bag Free World*, 2008.

- **Local authorities can anticipate and assist national political changes.** This is notably the case in Europe, in the sense that European Union Member States must transpose the European directive on light plastic bags into their legislation before 27th November 2016. Numerous countries throughout the world have banned single-use plastic bags, and recently an international coalition against plastic bags has been launched. By applying a ban now, local authorities can prepare citizens and merchants for the change, and be perceived as a spearhead for the movement. In addition, municipalities, towns, and regions can promote greater change on a national level.





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CASE STUDY 2: MUNICIPALITIES MOTIVATE A CHANGE THROUGHOUT BELGIUM

Type of measure: Ban and reduction initiatives

Organisational backer(s): Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region

Country: Belgium

Strong points: Creation of a pilot authority centre

State of the initiative: In progress

Presentation of the initiative: Numerous municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region have implemented a single-use plastic bag ban or, at least, awareness-raising campaigns to reduce their consumption. Watermael-Boitsfort, Saint-Gilles, Anderlecht, Jette, and even Etterbeek have taken up initiatives to this end.

In this way, they have demonstrated their will for change towards improving the respect for the environment, and have contributed to a wider movement on a regional level. In June 2016, the Walloon Parliament voted to ban single-use plastic bags. The ban will come into effect on 1st December 2016 for checkout bags, and on 1st March 2017 for other bags, with some exceptions. The Brussels Government then announced a single-use plastic bag ban at the till in September 2017, along with a ban starting 1st September 2018, for «fruits and vegetables» bags. The Ministry of the Environment of the Flanders Region has also announced its desire to ban single-use plastic bags. Eventually, in addition to the three Belgian regions' initiatives, the Federal Minister of the Environment proposed implementing a tax, which falls under its authority.

Even though the details of the regulations and the coordination on a Belgian national level are not yet set, today Belgium is part of a global movement fighting against single-use plastic bags.

Find out more: *Mon marché propre* website www.properemarkt.be

- By being closer to citizens, local authorities are key players **in assisting with national policies to ban single-use plastic bags**. Therefore, local authorities play an essential role in communication and information (see Part 2), but also in monitoring application (see Part 3). **Local authorities can also go further** than national policies by promoting, for example, reusable alternatives to the detriment of compostable or biodegradable plastic bags when legislation in effect is not as ambitious.





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**CASE STUDY 3:****THE ROUBAIX MUNICIPALITY,
AN EXAMPLE OF ASSISTING MERCHANTS WITH
THE NATIONAL BAN OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS IN FRANCE****Type of measure:** Supporting a national ban**Organisational backer(s):** Town of Roubaix**Country:** France**Strong points:** Awareness-raising, Communication, Consultation**State of the initiative:** In progress (2015-...)

Presentation of the initiative: Within the framework of its *Territoire Zéro Déchet Zéro Gaspillage (Zero Waste Territory)* process, the town of Roubaix assists merchants in banning single-use plastic bags. In fact, the ban of single use checkout plastic bags came into effect in France starting on 1st July, 2016, while the ban of bags for “fruits and vegetables” will come into force in January 2017.

The “*Roubaix, Zero Waste town*” website provides a great deal of information to help merchants no longer provide single-use plastic bags. Since the end of 2015, the free distribution of reusable shopping bags with the Roubaix effigy on them has been a great success with merchants and customers: 2,000 bags were distributed in the town’s six markets.

After the ban came into effect, the town made an effort to inform and support merchants at the market and in permanent shops.

As far as the markets are concerned, a study on Roubaix’s food market merchants carried out at the beginning of 2016 revealed that they used around 160,000 single-use plastic bags every year. With the help of the market officer, the *Roubaix Côté Commerce* association has distributed mails, reading explanations of the details of the law and existing alternatives, as well as communication tools: rain-resistant informative signs to place on the merchant’s stands. This distribution occurred several times throughout the month of July, thereby

allowing the majority of merchants to be reached. The town continues with its support and hopes to carry on raising customer awareness, as well as conducting visits to inspect the ban's application.

Roubaix has also sent mails to the permanent merchants with a different message for food-based and non-food based merchants, as well as affixing posters that explain the ban and existing solutions to customers. If project managers have already met with market merchants, they want to get closer to trade unions to continue the dialogue with permanent merchants.

The town of Roubaix has also sought out appropriate alternatives in order to avoid plastic bags being replaced by other unsustainable alternatives (biodegradable or paper bags). Therefore, the project managers have distributed baskets to some merchants to weigh vegetables, and have implemented a deposit project with local producer withdrawal points.

Find out more: Roubaix, *Zero Waste Town* website www.roubaixzerodechet.fr



B. ANALYSE YOUR FIELD

In order to determine a policy or an implementation plan that is adapted to your territory, it is important to first analyse the field to which this policy would apply.

A further study of businesses and consumers using single-use plastic bags is necessary to define an appropriate consumption-reduction strategy. If single-use plastic bags are banned at municipal markets, it is important to analyse the markets, the number of merchants present, the type of products sold, the distribution methods, and the use of plastic bags in order to determine the needs and alternatives available for each use. If there is a more global ban, a study on the different types of businesses (supermarket chains or independent businesses, for example) as well as customer behaviour and habits also proves to be vital. The analysis could go further by identifying **a plastic bag reduction policy's upstream opposition and support**, as well as surveying residents' opinion. Namely, these studies will allow awareness-raising actions to be adapted and the definition of more appropriate single-use plastic bag alternatives that can be proposed. Lastly, it is essential to allow **stakeholders and citizens to be aware of the results of the diagnostic** carried out, and to invite them to comment or to modify it, in order to provide a truly participatory diagnostic known by all.

To conduct an evaluation of single-use plastic bag consumption upstream of the policy's implementation will be useful to define the baseline for measuring the improvement made and the measure's efficiency. This is especially justified since EU Member States must report their light plastic bags' consumption to the European Commission as from May 2018. **An analysis of environmental and financial costs** can also be carried out in order to evaluate the margin of progress, and to justify the banning measure. This analysis should include a scientific monitoring of the percentage of plastic bags in waste stream managed by the local authority, their percentage in the area's pollution, and the impacts of this pollution (clogging, visual pollution, etc.). In fact, these negative effects represent substantial costs to local authorities in terms of waste management and keeping towns clean. These studies can also be an opportunity to raise citizen awareness about the environment by organising trash collections on beaches, near rivers, or at markets. Thanks to participatory science, citizens can monitor the progression of cleanliness while providing the town with useful data. Nevertheless, monitoring plastic bag pollution improvements is very difficult, as this waste migrates. The financial impact analysis can also show that when shopkeepers stop handing out single-use plastic bags their costs decrease.

Getting inspired by good practices in place, on the basis of this guide but also through exchanges with other local authorities, can also help to define effective measures and to develop creativity.





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CASE STUDY 4: COMPREHENSIVE STUDY BY THE CITY OF MONTREAL, CANADA

Type of measure: Comprehensive study in preparation for the banning of single-use plastic bags

Organisational backer(s): City of Montreal

Country: Canada

Strong points: Impact study, Special commission, Ban of single use plastic bags

State of the initiative: In progress (2015-2018)

Presentation of the initiative: The city of Montreal has long since hoped to see a reduction in single-use plastic bag consumption. In 2008, the *Voluntary code on good practices for the use of shopping bags* adopted by Recyc-Québec, Éco Entreprises Québec, the Quebec Food Retailers Association, the Retail Council of Canada, and the Retail Council of Quebec, coupled with citizen awareness-raising, were able to reduce single-use plastic bag consumption in Quebec by 50%.

The city of Montreal wanted to go further and ban plastic bags. The city then put a commission in place to assess the ban's environmental, economic, and social impact. The Chamard consulting firm produced this study in 2015, which was based mainly on several American, Canadian, and Australian case studies. Specifically, the study revealed that banning single-use plastic bags, together with a tariff for other bags, not only allowed for the use of single-use plastic bags to be reduced, but also for the use of all other single-use bags, and that this option had a significant impact on the environment. The study showed that this option reduced costs for merchants (a tariff for paper and reusable bags covered the purchase price of the latter, and they no longer buy single-use plastic bags). The study also sought to compare the environmental effects of the various alternatives and to identify good practices in terms of communication and the application of various possible measures to reduce the consumption of disposable plastic bags.

Following this impact study, the Permanent Commission on Water, the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Large Parks recommended in a public session to ban single-use plastic bags within two years for time to adjust and to ban oxo-degradable and biodegradable bags. In 2016, the city of Montreal then announced a ban on plastic bags of less than 50 microns starting on 1st January 2018, with the exception of small plastic bags for fruit and vegetables and medication. The city also wishes to develop a local industry of reusable bags' production.

Find out more: City website on *The issues and impacts regarding a ban on single-use plastic shopping bags* www.ville.montreal.qc.ca





**THROUGHOUT THE
PROCESS:
EXCHANGE VIEWS
**AND RAISE
AWARENESS****

A. CONSULTATION AND GOVERNANCE

Dialogue and consultation with different stakeholders are determining factors in the success of banning disposable plastic bags. They are essential to heightening the acceptability of the banning measure. In fact, these two components will allow possible citizen, merchant, and perhaps industrial opposition to be prevented. This is why it is essential to conduct this consultation throughout the process: upstream from the decisions, and once the ban entered into effect.

Citizen opposition to a single-use plastic bag ban is in the minority, as more than 70% of European citizens are in favour. Case studies have also shown that in case some merchants are at first opposed to the ban, they are always appeased once it comes into effect. Nevertheless, even a minority opposition can reduce the efficiency of the measure and consequently affect the reduction of pollution caused by plastic bags.



MEDSOS - «Plastic bag free Alonissos» project



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CASE STUDY 5:

THE GREEK ISLAND OF ALONISSOS, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NGOS AND A MUNICIPALITY TO FINISH USING PLASTIC BAGS

Type of measure: Plastic bag ban

Organisational backer(s): NGO and Local Authority

Country: Greece

Strong points: Ambitious ban, Consultation and involvement of all players

State of the initiative: Completed

Presentation of the initiative: Alonissos is a Greek island with around 3,000 residents located in the Aegean Sea and belonging to the Northern Sporades Archipelago. The island has the defining feature of being located in Greece's first Natural Park, and Europe's largest marine protected area to date. Alonissos is known for the presence of one of the last colonies of monk seals, alongside turtles and other species of vulnerable birds. Therefore, the fight against plastic pollution is particularly essential for the island. This is especially the case because recycling is weak on Greek islands, where waste is largely dumped. Waste prevention is therefore all the more relevant.

In 2015, the organisations MedSOS and MOM implemented the *Plastic Bag-Free Alonissos* project, financed by the Thalassa foundation and supported by the Alonissos city mayor. The objective of the project was to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags on the island in order to contribute to the protection of their exceptional environment, and to promote the island as an alternative touristic destination. In light of positive feedback on the project from residents and businesses, the mayor decided to ban single-use plastic bags starting on 1st December, 2015.

The project is exemplary in terms of integration of citizens and shopkeepers into the process. In fact, in partnership with MOM, MedSOS conducted studies with three questionnaires adapted to tourists, residents, and merchants. Apart from the different communication tools mobilised, the project allowed for an exchange of ideas and a consultation with stakeholders, which made the awareness-raising effective. In fact, tourists

and residents received information and cotton bags, school children participated in workshops, and a meeting allowed for dialogue to be established between merchants and the local authority. Finally, through a participatory workshop, resident volunteers determined an action plan, giving birth to a Coordination Committee formalised by the mayor, which aimed to apply the ban gently by considering the suggestions of residents.

The raising of awareness on the negative effects plastic bags have on the environment has also been promoted by numerous marine environment protection organisations. The Pelagos Institute -a Cetacean Research Institute- specifically carried out work to trace the source of waste. The Archelon association, dedicated to the protection of turtles, which are particularly victims of plastic bags, raised awareness on this problem among of around 15,000 students. On the other hand, the MOm organisation organised waste collections in caves, where Monk seals live nowadays.

The success of the *Plastic Bag Free Alonissos* project attracted the attention of other islands in the archipelago. This enthusiasm allowed for the birth of the LifeDeBag project for 2016-2018, which is an awareness-raising campaign to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags in order to reduce marine pollution on the neighbouring island of Syros. The MedSOS and MOm organisations developed an advertising campaign with visuals and videos. More than 20 awareness-raising actions were carried out on the island over the course of a week: the organisation of a concert, a waste collection, the implementation of scientific observations thanks to drones, the distribution of 8,000 reusable bags, etc. The islands of Tinos, Sifnos, and Santorini have also joined the movement to reduce plastic bag consumption. The closing conference of the Alonissos project was also an opportunity to allow good practices to be spread to other stakeholders and to call upon the government regarding the importance of an ambitious transposition of the European directive on plastic bags into Greek law. On average, 200 to 500 single-use plastic bags are estimated to be used in the country every year.

Alonissos' experience demonstrates that a single-use plastic bag ban accompanied with a significant awareness-raising campaign within a local authority can have a significant impact and important repercussions beyond the territory concerned.

Find out more:

Plastic-Bag Free Alonissos website www.medsos.gr

LifeDebag project website www.lifedebag.eu



ΤΙΣ
ΠΛΑΣΤΙΚΕΣ
ΣΑΚΟΥΛΕΣ
ΠΟΥ ΧΡΗΣΙΜΟΠΟΙΕΙΣ
ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΑΛΗΓΟΥΝ
ΣΤΗ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ,
ΠΟΙΟΣ ΝΟΜΙΖΕΙΣ
ΟΤΙ ΘΑ ΤΙΣ
ΜΑΖΕΨΕΙ;

Bold Ogilvy Greece, MEDSOS' Cleanup the Med campaign

Firstly, the consultation is essential with the first parties concerned:

merchants. Numerous municipalities have insisted on the importance of establishing a direct, verbal dialogue with merchants during each stage of the process, and inviting them to take part in the decision making process. This communication can be established through meetings or a regular presence at points of sale. It is important to identify upstream alternatives to promote as well as existing companies that can provide these alternatives by consulting with merchants, who could then purchase these bags jointly. The schedule for implementing the ban can also be defined and negotiated with merchants.



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CASE STUDY 6:

PLASTIC BAG BAN

AT SAINT-DENIS MARKETS IN FRANCE,

AN ADVANCED CONSULTATION WITH MERCHANTS

Type of measure: Single-use plastic bag ban at municipal markets

Organisational backer(s): Municipality of Saint-Denis

Country: France

Strong points: Ambitious ban, Constant consultation, Varied awareness-raising.

State of the initiative: Completed (2009-2014)

Presentation of the initiative: Launched in 2009, the town of Saint-Denis' *Stop Plastic Bags* action has allowed for single-use plastic bags to be banned in municipal markets starting on 1st September 2014. Saint-Denis' process was part of the municipality's Agenda 21, but also in anticipation of the *Grenelle de l'Environnement* (environmental national measures) and the national ban on bags in France introduced by 2015's Energy Transition Law.

The ban was prepared and assisted thanks to background analysis, constant consultation with merchants, and a significant awareness-raising campaign. The municipality first completed a diagnostic on two of the town's markets (on the number of merchants and the types of products sold, for example) accompanied by a survey to find out the opinions of merchants and customers. Notably, the local authority distributed a questionnaire to merchants in 2010 on current practices and their ability to change. For example, this study revealed that merchants had different uses for plastic bags, and that merchants from the non-food related sector were less in favour of putting a reusable bag system in place. Starting in 2009, the reusable bag distribution actions were also a chance to distribute a quiz to customers. This first observation allowed for the conclusion that oral communication was the most effective.

Consultation with merchants from the two markets was also essential throughout the *Stop Plastic Bags* action. Fairground merchants, who are represented by the market merchant union, have been associated with the conception and implementation of the project since 2013. The union had also been asked about defining alternatives to plastic bags, both with respect to the types of bags distributed by the municipality, and the choice of the suppliers of reusable bags. Amongst the various industries considered during a consultation, the municipality and merchants chose their traditional suppliers. The local authority was assured that they would provide the needed alternatives (reusable bags, baskets, etc.). Throughout the project, the consultation was followed by means of a pilot committee that included Environment and Commerce services from the town, but also the *Plaine Commune* (waste prevention service), the trade union, and three committed merchants.

From November 2013 to February 2014, an observation and strengthening phase was put into place. The action began by committing a dozen or so merchants present in the Plaine market and six merchants from the town centre market (including around 230 merchants) to exclusively distribute free reusable bags provided by the town. In particular, the initiative was to observe the implementation of the ban on a given sample, but also to show feasibility by example, and to distribute reusable bags massively and free of charge over a short period. In August 2014, around 30,000 bags were distributed to customers. In the same way, numerous communication and awareness-raising actions were implemented: a quiz on reducing waste with shopping trolleys to win, an information stand, environmental mediation carried out by a specialised service provider, and solicitation of local newspapers.

The project's second phase (from March to August 2014) consisted of assisting merchants and customers even further with the change in habit. The town and the Plaine urban community called upon a service provider (Partnership For the City - PPV93) to carry out environmental mediation at the two markets over the course of five months in order to assist customers and merchants with the change. The mediation was organised around street activities and a stand. In order to raise the awareness of less receptive audiences, the town called upon a local theatre association for a more fun path towards awareness. The association created a mobile structure out of waste, and clown-actors called out to passers-by with songs, poetry slams, and sketches. Awareness-raising actions were also organised outside markets in order to raise awareness among the largest audience possible.

Starting on 1st September 2014, market regulations imposed the ban on single-use plastic bags, including oxo-degradable and biodegradable bags, and those used to weigh fruit and vegetables. The regulation granted a single exception, authorising single-use plastic bags for wet products (fish, olives, etc.). The details of the new regulations were communicated to merchants upstream and downstream of the ban.

The ban at Saint-Denis markets is exemplary in terms of consultation with merchants, awareness-raising, and assistance over time.

Local authorities must also invite merchants, and particularly large chain stores, to get involved in the banning project. Convincing arguments can be put forth: the fight against single-use plastic bags gives customers a very positive image, and no longer distributing bags free of charge specifically represents important savings for merchants.



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING



CASE STUDY 7: **WHEN LARGE CHAIN STORES GO FURTHER AND BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS IN GERMANY AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Type of measure: Voluntary agreement among large chain stores to ban single-use plastic bags

Organisational backer(s): Large chain stores

Country: United Kingdom and Germany

Strong points: Ambitious ban, Consultation

State of the initiative: In progress (2016 – 2018)

Presentation of the initiative: Two large German chain stores, Rewe and Lidl, decided to go further than national legislation by banning single-use plastic bags in their stores.

In fact, the German government chose to transpose the European directive through a voluntary agreement signed between the Ministry of the Environment and the President

of the Trade Association in April 2016. The agreement has the objective of charging for 80% of single-use checkout plastic bags by 2018. 260 businesses were voluntarily involved in April, and today 350 businesses have signed the agreement. This number would even be underestimated, because numerous merchants would charge for the bags without officially being part of the agreement due to the formalities to undertake.

The second largest supermarket chain in Germany, Rewe, completed a pilot project in 130 stores by ceasing to sell plastic bags for three months. Rewe indicated that the experience was well accepted by customers, and announced that checkout plastic bags would be banned in their stores in Germany starting in July 2017. The supermarket will offer cotton, paper, or hessian bags, as well as cardboard boxes. This initiative would allow 140 million bags to be saved each year.

In the United Kingdom, a tax on disposable plastic bags is now imposed throughout the country, the last of these being a 5 pence tax in England. Lidl announced a complete end to single-use plastic bags in its UK stores starting in July 2017. Instead, the chain will sell reusable plastic bags for 9 pence. The measure should allow 63 million fewer plastic bags to be used per year. The store also announced a ban on single-use plastic bags in its 3,200 stores in Germany starting in the spring of 2017. A saving of 100 million plastic bags is estimated. Lidl has also announced that it wishes to take similar measures in Austria and Switzerland.

The voluntary agreements and taxes on single-use plastic bags are a first step that may reduce single-use plastic bag consumption, although less so than a measure to ban them. From an environmental benefit perspective, voluntary agreements do not guarantee strict application (because there is no sanction) nor application on the long-term. In addition, merchants often favour regulation imposed by the authorities. According to them, this avoids them having to start the initiative and limits the unfair competition of some who do not «play the game».

The examples of Lidl and Rewe show perfectly well that large chain stores are ready for a ban, and can therefore be a powerful ally in this process.



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 8:****ISLANDS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS,
THE EXAMPLE OF CORSICA, FRANCE**

Type of measure: Voluntary agreement among large chain stores to ban single-use plastic bags

Organisational backer(s): NGO, Territorial authority, Large chain stores

Country: France

Strong points: Particular local reality, Consultation, Consensus

State of the initiative: Completed (2003)

Presentation of the initiative: Corsica has been a pioneer in France in the fight against single-use plastic bags with the *Stop Plastic Bags* campaign launched by the *Friends of the Wind* association during its Wind Festival in Calvi in 1999. The example of Corsica is unique because, on one hand, Corsica is a territorial authority with a unique status in France. Specifically, it has an Assembly and extensive authorities. On the other hand, Corsica is an island with reputed natural heritage.

Campaigns on the island insisted on the impact plastic bags have on the ocean and biodiversity. In effect, the *Friends of the Wind* association states that citizen awareness has been raised quickly thanks to residents' heightened environmental awareness. The association also launched a petition signed by 2,000 people, leading to consultations with different institutional and economic players.

In 2002 and 2003, two motions were voted on; the first by the Corsican Economic, Social, and Cultural Council, and the second by the Corsican Assembly, which ruled «solemnly against making non-biodegradable plastic bags available through channels of commerce». It is interesting to note that, in its motion, the Assembly specifies, «that the islands more naturally exposed to this type of problem demand specific solutions». After having carried out consultations with large chain stores since 2002, the Corsican Office of the Environment organised a consultation with the five major large chains on the island (Géant,

Casino, Système U, Champion, and Carrefour): customers could vote for their favourite of three alternatives to single-use plastic bags through an electronic box. The choice included a lifetime renewable shopping bag, a kraft paper bag, or a cornstarch-based bag. Customers were mostly in favour of reusable bags, which won 61% of the vote. Following these consultations, the large chains in Corsica abandoned single-use checkout plastic bags and replaced them with reusable bags sold for 1 euro.

Find out more:

Serge Orru, « *Halte aux sacs plastiques* », Annales des Mines, July 2005, p.67-75

Sylvie Touboul, « *La Corse Bannit Les Sacs Plastiques* », Novethic, 15/07/2003

Furthermore, it is essential for local authorities to **consult with consumers**, who we are asking to change their habits, and who play a crucial role in the ban's success. It is particularly interesting to define alternatives that are best adapted to customers by consulting with them, namely through questionnaires, group discussions, or even pilot projects in some stores.

In order to establish this consultation, it is possible to recruit an **external environmental mediator** who has the tools to establish a dialogue with the various stakeholders. The consultation and dialogue can take on different forms: participatory workshops, debate events, conferences, interviews, and enquiries on the ground, etc.

Ultimately, in order to ensure a peaceful transition towards the end of disposable plastic bags, it is necessary **to find significant support. Elected local representatives and technicians of the trade municipal service** are particularly important allies for rallying merchants. **Local associations** can also be significant allies. First and foremost, it is about seeing if there are campaigns in progress on the question of plastic bags, namely by contacting environmental protection associations. Secondly, the coalition could grow by inviting and raising the awareness of local associations, waste management unions, companies' Environmental and Social Responsibility departments, student associations, etc. If no movement in the fight against plastic bags exists, it is possible to raise the awareness of these players by screening a film or organising a conference. These allies will not only contribute to the emergence or upkeep of a public opinion that is favourable to the measure to reduce the use of plastic bags, but they will also be a significant way to relay communications.

B. INFORMATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Citizen awareness-raising and information follows several objectives: preparing citizens for the new legislation, promoting a change in behaviour, and ensuring the legislation's application. The legislative or regulatory text could even include the obligation to inform and raise awareness. In any case, it is essential for information and awareness-raising actions to be organised throughout the process, including before the regulation comes into effect.

In order to establish good citizen awareness-raising and information, **the message must concentrate on a clear argumentation**. According to a study on English citizens' behaviours after a tax on single-use plastic bags was put into place, citizens certainly changed their behaviour by using reusable bags for financial reasons, but also environmental and practical reasons. Therefore, the awareness-raising message can include the following arguments: the price of purchasing a reusable bag is higher but pays off over time since it can be used for years; the impact of plastic bags on marine ecosystems is disastrous, and there are possible repercussions on human health; alternatives to single-use plastic bags are more durable and practical; alternatives generally help local businesses since plastic bags most often comes from Asia, etc.

The environmental message can also target a clear and local objective, such as the protection of a river, for example. The arguments against single-use plastic bags are numerous, and it is important to diversify the message of information and awareness-raising according to the populations targeted. Nevertheless, **a unique slogan** should be determined so that it can be widely taken up.





ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING



CASE STUDY 9:

ASSISTING THE BAN IN MOROCCO: COMMUNICATION SUPPORTED BY CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE GOVERNMENT

Type of measure: Plastic bag ban

Organisational backer(s): The Moroccan State

Country: Morocco

Strong points: Ambitious ban, Effective communication campaign, Financial assistance for businesses

State of the initiative: Completed (2016)

Presentation of the initiative: In November 2015, Morocco adopted law 77-15 banning plastic bags. According to the Moroccan Ministry of Industry, the country consumes 26 million plastic bags each year, that is to say 800 bags per person per year. The law's text stipulates the ban on all production, import, export, commercialisation, and use of single-use plastic bags for packaging starting on 1st July 2016. The law allows bags for agricultural or industrial use that are used for the purpose of collecting waste (domestic or otherwise), freezer bags, and isothermal bags. By repealing a previous regulation, the law also bans biodegradable plastic bags. The text sets out heavy sanctions, since the contravener may first receive a formal notice, and then a fine: anyone stopped for selling or distributing plastic bags receives a fine of 10,000 to 500,000 dirhams (around 920 to 46,000 euros); anyone manufacturing bags can receive a fine going from 200,000 to 1 million dirhams (around 18,500 to 92,500 euros); anyone using plastic bags for uses other than those for which they are intended is subject to a fine ranging from 20,000 to 100,000 dirhams (around 1,850 to 9,250 euros).

This legislative arsenal was completed in April with a decree that specifically sets forth the naming of inspection agents appointed by each ministry to ensure that the law is respected. Starting on 1st July 2016, customers must bring their own bags or pay 1.20 dirhams for a bag.

The plastic bag ban has been accompanied with a vast communication and awareness-raising campaign, the *Zero Mika* action (or *Zero Plastic Bags*). This campaign aimed to raise Moroccan awareness as to the environmental and health risks caused by plastic bags. Namely, the campaign went through an extensive process of removing these bags from nature one week before the ban came into effect. This initiative benefited from support from the government and several cities. Some provincial committees have been created to ensure the operation's coordination and monitoring. Several Moroccan personalities have also posed with reusable bags in support of the initiative. The campaign has inspired Moroccan graphic artists who made creative awareness-raising posters. A website was created to report on the negative impacts plastic bags have on the environment, while presenting alternatives to plastic bags such as baskets, boxes for fish and meat, or reusable bags. Some other NGOs have been mobilised to raise awareness in Morocco. For example, Surfrider Maroc has distributed reusable bags in exchange for a plastic bag through its *Baraka Men Lmika* campaign. Dialogue between Surfrider and Moroccans revealed that if residents were informed about the ban, the NGOs should explain why such a ban was a step forward for the environment.

The government itself has also planned a strategy to implement the ban, specifically adopting a roadmap that touched on various topics from regulation, application and monitoring, promotion of alternatives, assisting formal and informal sectors, to promoting niches of redeployment for the plastic industry, collecting plastic bags, and finally the awareness-raising campaign. First, it sets up collection centres to reduce the number of plastic bags in circulation. Two weeks before the ban, spots were broadcast on television and radio, and flyers were distributed. The government also wanted to avoid opposition from the formal and informal sector, and the plastic industry by stipulating redeployment aid with a budget of 200 million dirhams (around 18,500,000 euros) and support for business investments from the sector (up to 50% and 30% respectively for the formal and informal sector). The government hopes to develop reusable options, bin bags, or bags for agricultural use in order to support the plastic industry and create employment.

Large means of actions were dedicated to monitoring the ban. For example, in the city of Rabat, officers have visited 3,000 locations between July and mid-August, leading to the confiscation of a large stock of bags and 200 non-compliance notices. Offenders that received these warnings will undergo a second monitoring visit. A dozen or so offenders have a file under investigation because of a second offence. This inspection would allow 90% of plastic bags to disappear from the city (according to a Wilaya spokesperson). However, Moroccan authorities also face large-scale plastic bags contraband (customs services have seized 7 tonnes of bags in 3 months), clandestine manufacturing (the price for a kilo of bags would move from 20 to 40 dirhams), and the difficulty of making traditional retailers adapt.

On a large chain store level, the main brands have launched communications campaigns and have been working together upstream to propose alternative solutions. For example, Carrefour offers reusable shopping bags for 7 dirhams, non-cloth bags for 1 dirham,

paper bags for fruit and vegetables, and aluminium packaging for fish. Small businesses interviewed by the press also appeared to adapt easily. For example, the brand BIM has made pamphlets available to customers that explain how freezer bags are offered during the Aïd.

The process to reduce plastic bag consumption is in progress in Morocco. The desire to eradicate plastic bags is nothing new: first there was a ban on black-coloured bags; a decree from 2011 also banned the manufacture of non-biodegradable plastic bags for the local market; and in 2013, several cities had participated in a programme launched by the Ministry of the Environment aiming to replace plastic bags with reusable bags.

Find out more:

Law 77-15 banning plastic bags <http://adala.justice.gov.ma/production/legislation/fr/Nouveautes/Interdiction%20de%20la%20fabrication,%20de%20l'importation,...de%20sacs%20en%20mat%C3%A8res%20plastiques.pdf>

Operation *Zéro Mika* website www.zeromika.ma

The Surfrider Maroc campaign www.surfridermaroc.com

The implementation of information and awareness-raising actions must follow three good practices: **multiplying tools, identifying key moments, adapting actions to the target populations.**

Information and awareness-raising tools are extremely varied. It is interesting **to multiply and diversify your choice of tools in order to reach an ever larger audience.**

For the purpose of example, awareness-raising can be carried out through stands, mobile awareness-raising, reusable bag creating workshops, artistic activities and games, theatre, mailings, banners, and videos, etc. Humour is a particularly good way of reaching audiences that are not very well informed on the subject. Broad communications for these actions also allows for the success of these awareness-raising campaigns by passing through a press release distributed to local newspapers, communication on social networks, etc.

Awareness-raising is even more effective if it takes place during **key moments to be identified:** sales, Christmas shopping, or the International Plastic Bag Free Day held every year in July, for example.



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 10 :****A KEY MOMENT OF MOBILISATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING:
INTERNATIONAL PLASTIC BAG FREE DAY****Type of measure:** Awareness-raising**Organisational backer(s):** NGO's**Country:** International**Strong points:** Key moment for Mobilisation and Awareness-Raising**State of the initiative:** Every year on 3rd July

Presentation of the initiative: International Plastic Bag Free Day was first introduced in Spain's Catalonia region by the NGO *Fundació Prevenció de Residus i Consum*. Very quickly, the event was made international with the collaboration of several NGOs such as Surfrider, Zero Waste, the European Environmental Bureau, etc. International Plastic Bag Free Day takes place every year on 3rd July, and is an occasion to rally the associations around events and actions around the world. These are listed through an interactive map on the International Plastic Bag Free Day website.

The NGOs also launch mobilisations through social networks and press releases on this occasion, in order to raise citizen awareness on this subject and to call upon their decision-makers to take measures against single-use plastic bags. This day is also a way to keep the question of single-use plastic bags on the political agenda.

Therefore, International Plastic Bag Free Day is a key moment to identify for awareness-raising actions or political announcements from local authorities.

Find out more:

International Plastic Bag Free Day website www.plasticbagfreeday.org



POLLUTING



CLEAN



CHEESY



TRENDY



FRAGILE



RESISTANT

In the end, **the message, organisation, and type of awareness-raising must be adapted to the target audience.** In fact, it is probable that independent merchants are less informed of the legislation in effect than, for example, large chain stores. Furthermore, one municipality underlined the interest in raising merchants' and customers' awareness at the same time in order to avoid a shift in the responsibility not to use plastic bags.

One major objective of awareness-raising is to allow citizens and merchants to change their habits and use reusable bags. To do this, awareness-raising actions must endeavour **to distribute and promote alternatives to plastic bags adapted to each type of business and buying habit.** Local authorities and associations have shown great inventiveness in this area: returnable containers, baskets for weighing vegetables, an artistic structure where residents can leave their unused reusable bags for customers that have forgotten theirs, etc.

However, for the time of distribution to also serve as an awareness-raising opportunity, it is important for bags to be distributed to merchants (who often have privileged dialogue with their customers), or the bag to be given after the citizen has taken an awareness-raising quiz.





ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING



CASE STUDY 11:

REUSABLE BAGS FOR BAKERIES IN PORTUGAL

Type of measure: Awareness-raising

Organisational backer(s): Espinho municipal library

Country: Portugal

Strong points: Reduction in use of disposable bags, Promotion of reusable alternatives

State of the initiative: Completed (2013)

Presentation of the initiative: *The Grandma's Bread Bag* project handled by the municipal library in Espinho - a municipality in Portugal's Porto metropolitan area - was the big winner in the Others category at European Waste Reduction Week in 2013. The project had the objective of raising public awareness and reducing the quantity of bags (plastic or paper) distributed by bakeries in order to reduce waste at the source. To do this, the project invited citizens to return to the habit of an old tradition: using cloth bags when buying their bread at the bakery. Four bakeries participated in the action and offered discounts to all customers using a cloth bag. The project was promoted by signs explaining the initiative and posters for European Waste Reduction Week.

The Grandma's Bread Bag initiative was simple and effective because it allowed for 594 single-use paper bags to be saved, and allowed for consumer and merchant awareness to be raised. The latter confirmed their will to continue with the action after European Waste Reduction Week.

Find out more:

European Waste Reduction Week website www.cwwr.eu



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 12:****SUGGEST SIMPLE, ORIGINAL ALTERNATIVES:
THE TIANA LOCAL AUTHORITY CAMPAIGN IN SPAIN****Type of measure:** Awareness-raising**Organisational backer(s):** Tiana Local Authority and the Catalan Waste Management Agency**Country:** Spain**Strong points:** Original alternatives**State of the initiative:** Completed (2011 - 2015)

Presentation of the initiative: The *A Tiana reduïm els residus* (*In Tiana, We're Reducing Waste*) project was selected among the Administration category finalists of the 2015 European Waste Reduction Week. The Catalan Waste Management Agency and the Tiana local authority have collaborated to lead numerous actions to reduce waste, from preventing food waste to reducing the use of single-use plastic bags. In 2009, the local authority had already launched a project to prevent this waste at its source with the *Network of Establishments that Respect the Environment*.

In 2011, the local authority launched the *On vas sense el cabàs?* ("Where are you going without your basket?") campaign, aiming to reduce single-use plastic bag consumption. The project's partner establishments received 10 baskets, which they lent to their customers in exchange for five euros, which was returned when the basket was returned to the store in good condition. The returnable basket system is a truly original alternative and, according to the Tiana local authority, it can be easily replicated in other towns.

In connection with this campaign, the local authority also organised an awareness-raising action during European Waste Reduction Week. This consisted of compensating customers that did not use plastic bags by offering them a reusable canvas bag and allowing them to participate in a draw. The draw's winners would then receive some of the many merchant-offered prizes.

The *On vas sense el cabàs?* campaign has a long-term goal: the idea is that establishments will continue to provide returnable baskets using the funds generated from baskets that are not returned.

Find out more:

Project's good practice sheet on the European Waste Reduction Week website
www.cwwr.eu/docs/case_studies/Case_study_file_finalists_Adm_PA_In_Tiana_We_Reduce.pdf

Information and awareness-raising require significant human resources. **Local authorities could call on NGOs** that are experts on the question, who generally have the appropriate education and communication tools, or create sponsorships with local artists, youth, or sports associations to contribute to the awareness-raising actions.





ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



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REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 13:****THE WORLD RECORD FOR REUSABLE CANVAS BAG COLLECTION
HELD BY 4 AUSTRIAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES****Type of measure:** Awareness-raising action**Organisational backer(s):** Local authorities**Country:** Austria**Strong points:** Original awareness raising**State of the initiative:** Completed (2011)

Presentation of the initiative: In 2011, four local authorities in the Styrie region of Austria (Judendorf, Eisbach, Gratkorn, and Gratwein) participated in the *Change Bag – Vom Kunststoff zum Echtstoff* («Change Bag - Plastic Against Canvas») project. Residents from the four municipalities were invited to collect used reusable bags to break the world record held by the Wieselburg local authority, which had collected 4,300 canvas bags in 2010. In addition to municipal residents, the project also involved nursery schools, retirement homes, and other regional institutions. In fact, new canvas bags were painted by the children. A closing ceremony was organised during the European Waste Reduction Week in November 2011, and the world record was set at 6,124 reusable canvas bags collected. The bags were then distributed to around 25 regional companies, and given to the public based on a voluntary donation. This project is an original example of raising awareness to reduce single-use plastic bags and promote sustainable alternatives.

Find out more: Project's good practice sheet on the European Waste Reduction Week website www.ewwr.eu/docs/case_studies/EWWR_2011-Case%20studies_NGO_Austria.pdf



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



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MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 14 :****A TOTE BAG EXHIBITION,
BY THE SURFRIDER LOCAL CHAPTER IN SOFIA, BULGARIA****Type of measure:** Awareness-raising**Organisational backer(s):** Sofia's local Surfrider chapter**Country:** Bulgaria**Strong points:** Raising awareness through art**State of the initiative:** Completed (2014 and 2015)

Presentation of the initiative: For several consecutive years, the Surfrider office in Sofia has organised a *Tote Bag* exhibition with the goal of raising citizen awareness on the plastic bag problem. Volunteers made a call to local designers to create cotton bags and decorate them with Surfrider messages, specifically denouncing the harm plastic bags cause to marine ecosystems. This was also the case in the German town of Aachen, where the Department of the Environment organised the "*Plastic Bags, No Thanks*" exhibition at the municipal library, or even in Brussels where the artist, Sandrine De Borman's exhibition entitled *Légendes du sac plastique* ("*Legends of the Plastic Bag*") was shown for several weeks. There, citizens could discover the negative effects of plastic bags along with available alternatives. In Germany, visitors were invited to bring five of their plastic bags, receiving a reusable hessian bag in exchange, while in Belgium they were introduced to bags created using the Japanese technique of furoshiki.





ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 15:****AN OLD FABRIC REUSABLE BAG COMPETITION
ORGANISED BY THE ESTONIAN
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT****Type of measure:** Awareness-raising**Organisational backer(s):** Ministry of the Environment**Country:** Estonia**Strong points:** Awareness-raising through art and reuse**State of the initiative:** Completed (2011)

Presentation of the initiative: In 2011, the Estonian Ministry of the Environment organised a competition for the funniest, most creative, most ingenious reusable bag homemade from recovered materials. The best bags were first selected at schools, then the best bags were presented in an exhibition travelling from town to town. Finally, three were selected as winners and received prizes. The action's mobile nature, and the originality of the bags created that participants used in the street, allowed for greater visibility. In addition, this awareness-raising action pushed citizens to find solutions with what they had at home instead of buying a reusable bag.

Find out more:

The case study is found on the European Waste Reduction Week website

www.ewwr.eu/docs/case_studies/EWWR_2011-Case%20studies_Administration_Estonia.pdf



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 16 :****ECOLOGISTS WITHOUT BORDERS RAISING AWARENESS
IN SLOVENIA THROUGH ART**

Type of measure: Awareness-raising

Organisational backer(s): Ecologists Without Borders

Country: Slovenia

Strong points: Raising awareness through art

State of the initiative: Completed (2011)

Presentation of the initiative: The *Bag On Bag* project was an NGO category finalist in the 2011 European Waste Reduction Week. This project was created in Slovenia by the *Ecologists Without Borders* association in collaboration with artists and the *Eco Vitae Ecological Society*, *Lukatarina Design Studio*, and *The Miha Artmak*.

The NGO collected used plastic bags brought into stores by customers while taking care not to send the wrong message: the purpose of the action was to raise residents' awareness about excessive plastic bag consumption. Numerous actions have been conducted with this type of waste to raise awareness among citizens by mixing waste and art. In particular, artists created a monster out of waste and plastic bags with tentacles, and decorated a large dead tree with plastic bags and flowers made of plastic bottles. The project owners also organised a photography competition with the theme *A Plastic Bag On A Branch*, which was a resounding success with more than 400 photos received. Workshops were also held, which offered to teach how to make duvets out of used plastic bags. The results of these artistic creations were presented during the European Waste Reduction Week in the Pogačarjev market. This event was the opportunity to award prizes to the winners of the photography contest, but also to attract the attention of passers-by with the artistic creations coupled with a music and dance performance entitled *Who's Bag*.

Find out more:

Ecologists Without Borders site <http://ebm.si/en/>

Action video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OGZm7qCHtk&NR=1>



BANNING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

A. DEFINING THE BAN'S SCOPE

Implementing a single-use plastic bag ban first requires defining the type of bag concerned, then the banning schedule, and finally the types of products and merchants affected by the ban.

First and foremost, it is important to recall that only reusable bags can reduce the environmental impact of these products. The regulation has the main objective of inciting the use of reusable bags, and avoiding that «classic» plastic bags be replaced by paper bags, or bags presented as oxo-degradable or biodegradable which are harmful to the environment or without true added value.

For this reason, **the best regulation is to ban single-use plastic bags (light and very light, namely those less than 50 microns according to the European directive), both at tills and for fruit and vegetables**. Banning oxo-degradable bags (stipulated in French legislation, for example) is equally essential for the preservation of marine environments because these bags do not decompose. Instead, they fragment into plastic micro-particles that are invisible to the naked eye, causing serious problems for aquatic ecosystems.

This ban must be accompanied by the prohibition of distributing bags free of charge, and thereby by an obligation to pay henceforth for disposable paper bags or reusable bags. In fact, several studies show that reusable bags accumulate in homes, and would be used as single-use bags. Therefore, their price should be relatively high in order to promote reuse. Also, to limit the use of disposable paper bags, it is possible to set a minimum recycled paper content. In any case, the regulation can give the possibility of distributing reusable bags free of charge for a limited period in order to encourage merchants to organise awareness-raising actions.

Furthermore, the regulation should define the schedule for the ban coming into effect. For example, numerous towns have chosen to progressively ban single-use plastic bags in their area. In fact, **banning free-service distribution of single-use plastic bags** first has shown its effectiveness in reducing consumption, as customers no longer use bags because they are not visible. The ban could also come into effect market by market, business type by business type (generally non-food based businesses at first, then food-based ones), or first affecting large chain stores followed by smaller merchants. Although progressive application has its advantages, it must always **avoid complicating the ban's conditions**, which must remain easy to remember for citizens, and avoid creating «jealousy» between merchants affected by the ban and the others.

In the end, **the regulation defines the type of products or businesses affected by the ban**. The type of business targeted depends on the town's authority. Cities could limit the ban to municipal markets, or extend the ban to other businesses. Knowing that customers use single-use plastic bags mostly in small businesses, a ban in this type of shops

has significant effects on the environment. Likewise, ideally the ban must concern the restaurant sector, which uses a great number of bags for food-delivery. Pharmacies are generally exempt in order to ensure respect for customer's private lives. Light plastic bags for wet products such as fish, deli meats, and olives are also generally exempted. In any case, it is possible to encourage merchants and consumers to use alternative systems such as returnable jars, Tupperware, or even their own bags to guarantee the protection of privacy for medicine and pharmaceutical products.

EXTRACT FROM THE LOCAL REGULATION REGARDING MOBILE ACTIVITIES AT PUBLIC MARKETS AND IN THE PUBLIC AREA OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANDERLECHT, BELGIUM

Article 14 – Cleanliness of markets and public spaces.

«For the application of article 6 of this ordinance, waste is treated preferentially in the following order: prevention, preparation for re-use, recycling, other repurposing, specifically repurposing for energy, elimination.

In order to encourage point 1 of article 6 of the ordinance, the distribution of single-use plastic bags to customers at the weekly markets within the municipality is prohibited.

All mobile merchants found to be distributing single-use plastic bags to their customers at the markets will receive a first warning through the concessionaire, reminding them of the obligation to respect this ban.

In the case of a repeat offence, the mobile merchant will receive a second warning through the concessionaire. Therein, the sanction applied shall be explained in the case of a second offence.

In the case of a second repeat offence, the mobile merchant shall no longer be permitted to come to the markets for 3 weeks.

We note that the distribution of see-through polyethylene bags without handles is only authorised for the following articles: meat, fish, lettuce, and spinach.»

Anderlecht municipality regulation

www.anderlecht.be/images/stories/R%C3%A8glements/Ambulantfr.pdf

**EXTRACT FROM THE ORDINANCE DATED 20/04/2007,
AMENDED BY THE ORDINANCE DATED 02/07/2012 FROM SAN
FRANCISCO, UNITED STATES**

«(Amended in 2012) SEC. 1702. DEFINITIONS.

[...] Until July 1, 2013, «Store» shall mean a retail establishment located within the geographical limits of the City and County of San Francisco

(2) Beginning July 1, 2013, «Store» shall also include any Food Establishment located within the geographical limits of the City and County of San Francisco

Plastic carryout bags prohibited.

A. No store shall provide to any customer a plastic carryout bag

B. This prohibition applies to bags provided for the purpose of carrying away goods from the point of sale and does not apply to produce bags or product bags

Use of reusable bags.

B. Each store is strongly encouraged to educate its staff to promote reusable bags and to post signs encouraging customers to use reusable bags

(Amended in 2012) SEC. 1703.5. CHECKOUT BAG CHARGE.

Beginning October July 1, 2012, no Store shall provide a Recyclable Paper Bag or Reusable Bag to a customer at the point of sale, unless the Store charges the customer a Checkout Bag Charge of at least ten cents per bag

(Amended in 2012) SEC. 1704. OUTREACH AND IMPLEMENTATION.

The Department's responsibilities for implementing this Chapter include conducting outreach to stores, providing multi-lingual information to educate store employees and customers, and making available lists of vendors who sell Recyclable Paper, Compostable Plastic, or Reusable Bags.

Enforcement and violation-penalty

D. If a store has subsequent violations of this Chapter that are similar in kind to the violation addressed in a written warning notice, the following penalties will be imposed and shall be payable by the operator of the store:

(1) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars for the first violation after the written warning notice is given; (2) A fine not exceeding two hundred dollars for the second violation after the written warning notice is given; or (3) A fine not exceeding five hundred dollars for the third and any subsequent violations after the written warning notice is given

San Francisco Ordinances

<http://plasticbaglaws.org/legislation/state-laws/california-2/>



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 17:****AN AMBITIOUS BAN OF PLASTIC BAGS AT MUNICIPAL MARKETS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANDERLECHT AND THE ABATTOIRS MARKET IN BELGIUM****Type of measure:** Banning of single-use plastic bags (including biodegradable bags)**Organisational backer(s):** The municipality of Anderlecht and the Abattoirs private market**Country:** Belgium**Strong points:** Ambitious ban, Monitored implementation**State of the initiative:** Completed (2016)

Presentation of the initiative: The municipality of Anderlecht banned single-use plastic bags at municipal markets after 1st July, 2016, while the Abattoirs private market located on the municipal territory favoured progressively banning plastic bags thanks to the support of the Municipality's elected representatives. In these two cases, it is prohibited to «distribute or sell single-use plastic bags to customers at markets. A single-use plastic bag is defined as a bag with a thickness of less than or equal to 50 microns, made of materials of fossil or renewable origins, and equipped with handles. The distribution of see-through polyethylene bags without handles is only authorised for greasy or wet items.» Biodegradable bags are therefore prohibited. Nevertheless, the municipality of Anderlecht has chosen to list products that are exempted: meat, fish, salad, lettuce, and spinach. The Abattoirs market has set a 40 euro fine following a first verbal warning and a second written warning sent to the contravener. Merchants that do not respect the municipality of Anderlecht's regulations receive two warnings, and can then be excluded from the market for a period of three weeks.

The ban at municipal markets was supported by the local authority's personnel who set up awareness-raising stands before and after the ban went into effect on 1st July. The teams informed customers by showing them different possible alternatives (totes, reusable bags, cardboard boxes, jars, etc.) and handing out reusable bags and vegetable sacks. Each merchant present also received 30 reusable bags and a sign to inform customers about the ban.

The Abattoirs market ban came into effect more progressively: plastic bags for plants and second-hand goods were banned on 1st January , 2016; on 1st February, 2016 for household appliances; on 1st March , 2016 for textiles; on 1st May , 2016 for dry foods (biscuits, nuts, deli meats, etc.); and on 1st September , 2016 for fruit and vegetables.

To implement this, teams in Abattoirs first conducted a study in 2014 with the participation of the municipality of Saint-Gilles to define the usage patterns and alternatives to be promoted. The teams from the market also contacted the Saint-Denis market in France (which had already banned single-use plastic bags) to exchange ideas regarding good practices on the subject. Firstly, free access to plastic bags was banned, which allowed for an impressive reduction in the use of single-use plastic bags. The market then quickly threw out the idea of volunteer action that would not be followed and was not favoured by merchants, who preferred that a ban be applied to everyone equally. The market regulation was then modified to ban plastic bags.

The most important field of work was communication with the merchants. Teams from the market invited merchants to numerous meetings, both before and after the ban. Local alternative options were also researched in order to accompany the ban. The teams very regularly organized awareness-raising stands and sold reusable shopping bags and vegetable sacks for one euro throughout the month of September and October. Through these actions, the market staff specifically searched for allies, such as the association of local residents.

In order to assist with and monitor the ban's application, staff will continue to sell reusable bags during the first months of the implementation. In addition, market staff will carry out regular inspections and continue to maintain a dialogue with merchants to avoid sanctions.

Find out more:

Abattoirs market website www.abattoir.be

Anderlecht municipality regulation on mobile activities www.anderlecht.be



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING

**CASE STUDY 18 :****SAN FRANCISCO, USA; A PIONEER TOWN WITH AN AMBITIOUS BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS****Type of measure:** Single-use plastic bag ban, Tax on paper and reusable bags**Organisational backer(s):** City of San Francisco**Country:** USA**Strong points:** Ambitious ban**State of the initiative:** Completed (2007 – 2012)

Presentation of the initiative: San Francisco is a pioneer city in the United States for waste reduction, as since 2002 the city has set a target of reaching a 75% waste recovery rate through recycling or composting by 2010 and, moving forward, sending zero waste to dumps or incinerators. The zero waste goal was later set for 2020. Within this framework, since 2007 San Francisco has banned plastic bags despite opposition from the plastics industry.

Influenced by the success of the tax in Ireland, the Commission on the Environment has proposed implementing a USD 0.17 tax on single-use plastic and paper bags starting in 2005. A plastic bag producer coalition immediately formed and launched the *Sack The Tax* campaign.

Faced with opposing public opinion, the Mayor proposed a voluntary agreement with large chain stores to foresee a reduction of plastic bags by 10 million per year. In 2005 and 2006, supermarket chains were obligated to provide their statistics concerning bag consumption in order to determine a baseline to assess the reduction. In 2006, the majority of businesses had still not provided their data.

In September 2006, the Governor of California signed the California State Assembly Bill (AB 2449) called *Plastic Bag and Litter Reduction* that encouraged the recycling of plastic bags. The law specifically set forth a voluntary bag recycling programme in stores, a plastic bag recycling education programme, and implemented reusable bags for purchase. In order to

adopt this law, an amendment was added and all taxes on plastic bags were made illegal.

On 23rd January, 2007, Congress Member Mirkarimi proposed *The Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance*. The ordinance set forth a total ban on single-use checkout plastic bags; only compostable bags, recyclable paper bags, and reusable bags were allowed. Sanctions were stipulated, ranging from 100 to 500 USD in case of repeated offence. At first, this ban was only imposed on stores with sales revenues of greater than 2 million USD, with pharmacy chains added a year later.

In February 2012, the ban was extended to all retailers starting in 2012, and restaurants starting in 2013. The new ordinance requires that there be a charge for recycled paper, compostable, or reusable bags (USD 0.10 in 2012, then USD 0.25 in 2014), in order to drive residents to actually reuse their bags.

San Francisco's disposable plastic bag ban was the start of many attempts to tax or ban single-use plastic bags in other American cities, such as the city of Fairfax: the city council adopted a ban on single-use plastic bags starting in August 2007 and, after legal objections from the plastics industry, citizens adopted the ban in November 2008.

Numerous towns have followed the movement since, including California's largest cities. Los Angeles County adopted an ordinance banning single-use plastic bags and taxing paper bags starting in 2010. A similar ban came into effect in San Jose in 2012. In August 2016, the city of San Diego adopted a ban on single-use plastic bags in local shops, small supermarkets, and pharmacies, as well as a USD 0.10 tax on paper and reusable bags.

In November 2016, the citizens of California will be called upon to vote for or against a ban on single-use plastic bags through a referendum. The law would already have been adopted two years ago, but the plastics industry succeeded in obtaining a sufficient number of signatures to subject the ban to a referendum.

Find out more:

Plastic Bag Law website plasticbaglaws.org

The San Francisco Department of the Environment sfenvironment.org

Californians Against Waste website www.cawrecycles.org/list-of-local-bag-bans

Jennie Reilly Romer, *The Evolution of San Francisco Plastic – Bag Ban*, Golden Gate University Environmental Law Journal, volume 1, August 2010

B. ASSISTING AND MONITORING APPLICATION

Once the ban comes into effect, the local authority must assist citizens and merchants and monitor the ban's effective application, which is a prerequisite for a reduction in the consumption of disposable plastic bags.

The first step in assisting with the ban is communication. It is important **to inform citizens of the legislation in effect**, the practical repercussions of the regulation, and alternatives available. Communications can be carried out in many ways: through visuals (posters, videos, banners, and leaflets) to be distributed or used at merchant stands and at businesses; sending mails; or even mobilising local journalists, etc. It would appear that proper communication on the measure allows for an increase in public acceptance. Carrying out a survey of the market's cleanliness or the residents' average consumption can also allow the measure's acceptance to be increased by stressing the measure's immediate and positive impacts.

Assisting and monitoring the application requires significant human resources. In fact, numerous individuals should be mobilised to continue to raise awareness, talk with reluctant individuals, and monitor application on the ground. Employing a task officer that knows the business sector could help to open a dialogue with a maximum number of merchants on the ground. Ideally, inspection visits should be carried out on the long-term in order to ensure the ban's continued implementation. Certain towns, such as Los Angeles, have put a number in place so that customers can complain about a merchant that distributes plastic bags. Here, they do not make visits unless a customer complains.

Finally, **sanctions should be stipulated in order to pressure merchants to change.** The existence of the sanction itself avoids unfair competition between merchants that do not play by the rules, and shows customers that the merchants are required to refuse to distribute single-use plastic bags. A warning is often the first sanction following a non-compliance with the legislation in order to appease merchant concerns. Then an increased fine for each repeated offence could be stipulated in order to avoid unfair competition. With regard to markets, the regulation can stipulate expulsion from the market in case of an exhibitor's recurrent non-compliance with the law.

 ANALYSIS

 COMMUNICATION

 CONSULTATION

 MONITORING

 REGULATION

 AWARENESS-RAISING


CASE STUDY 19: ESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE WITH SAINT-GILLES MARKET GARDENERS IN BELGIUM

Type of measure: Banning single-use plastic bags

Organisational backer(s): Saint Gilles local authority

Country: Belgium

Strong points: Ambitious ban, Consultation and Dialogue with merchants, Making innovative alternatives available to citizens

State of the initiative: In progress (2012 – 2017)

Presentation of the initiative: The Saint-Gilles local authority had already wanted to implement measures to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic bags for several years. Starting in 2012, the *Grocery Shopping, Never Without My Bag* project was launched. The municipality's department of sustainable development had first carried out a survey with customers to find out the best alternative. The local authority had then created a 100% sustainable bag from 100% recycled cotton manufactured by a social enterprise with motifs printed using a natural Belgian ink. 2,000 bags were distributed, and 35 merchants were committed to no longer distributing plastic bags and received a sticker in exchange.

On 10th March, 2016, the Municipal Council approved the ban on distributing plastic bags with «a thickness equal to or less than 50 microns, and composed of materials of fossil origin» at municipal markets, amending the regulation relating to street selling activities. The distribution of light plastic bags for greasy or wet articles remains authorised. The ban is coming into effect gradually: at the Place Van Meenen market since 1st May, 2016; at Parvis de Saint-Gilles market since 1st September, 2016; and at the Gare du Midi market starting on 1st January, 2017 (a market with around 300 vendors, welcoming an average of 10,000 visitors).

In order to assist with the ban, the local authority implemented a communication campaign through stands at the markets, press releases, posters, banners, and leaflets. Specifically, municipality personnel initiated close dialogue with market gardeners, the most vulnerable

to the difficulties caused by the ban. The local authority personnel therefore promoted verbal dialogue during times that were suitable for the specific schedules of mobile merchants. They organised a breakfast at the market early in the morning, taking advantage of the period of time merchants have between setting up their stands and customers arriving. The local authority also distributed plastic signs to the merchants indicating the ban along with the dates it would come into effect. These signs not only allowed customers to be warned, but also served to justify the merchant against possible complaints from customers.

The municipality distributed reusable bags to customers, as well as to merchants upon demand: the latter could then give them to customers who had forgotten their bags, and avoid losing a customer. The process allowed for a dialogue between merchants and their customers to be used to inform residents about the ban.

Furthermore, municipality personnel promoted alternatives and a change in behaviour through original, innovative initiatives. When the ban took effect at the Van Meenen market, a different artist would come each week to see reusable bags made from recycled material that they had created. Merchants have been regularly encouraged to make the cumbersome boxes and cardboard available to customers so that they could be reused.

Finally, the municipality created a transportable wooden structure representing a plastic bag with arms and legs called «Gilles». A newsletter was sent out to introduce Gilles to residents: *«Like all of his friends, Gilles is a plastic bag who is already unemployed after working only 20 minutes. Now he wanders the streets and gets carried away by the wind and rain, often ending his journey in the ocean. There, he will decompose into mini-particles and probably end up in the stomach of a fish or another marine mammal... If he is picked up by a sweeper before being taken so far away, he will end up with all the other non-recyclable waste: in the incinerator. Amongst all of the waste he will meet, sadly he will be amongst those with the shortest longevity... But Gilles has found a new job. If you cross one on the street, you can dispose of the numerous bags filling your drawer or closet, just waiting to be reused. That way, you will give them a second life; helping people that find themselves at the market without having thought to bring their reusable bags along, and gifting them a spare bag.»*

Gilles is moved about the market regularly, and has a sheet that explains what he is about; bringing joy to the market and raising awareness about the ban. It allows for bags to be reused, reducing their environmental impact, and assisting in changing behaviours in the early stage of the ban.

The single-use plastic bag ban at the first two Saint-Gilles markets was respected thanks to the regular presence of personnel. The sanctions stipulated (upon third warning, the municipality executive can ban the merchant from holding a place at the municipality markets for a period ranging from three weeks to three months, and upon a fourth warning, the licence could be terminated) have not been applied yet, leaving time for merchants to adapt.

Find out more:

Regulations regarding mobile activities at Saint-Gilles markets

www.stgilles.irisnet.be



The wandering bag, realised by Dévin Kupond Graphics, ordered by Saint Gilles Municipality



ANALYSIS



COMMUNICATION



CONSULTATION



MONITORING



REGULATION



AWARENESS-RAISING



CASE STUDY 20: **NGO MONITORING,** **THE CASE OF LEGAMBIENTE IN ITALY**

Type of measure: Monitoring the ban's application

Organisational backer(s): NGO

Country: Italy

Strong points: Monitoring through NGO surveys and citizen mobilisation

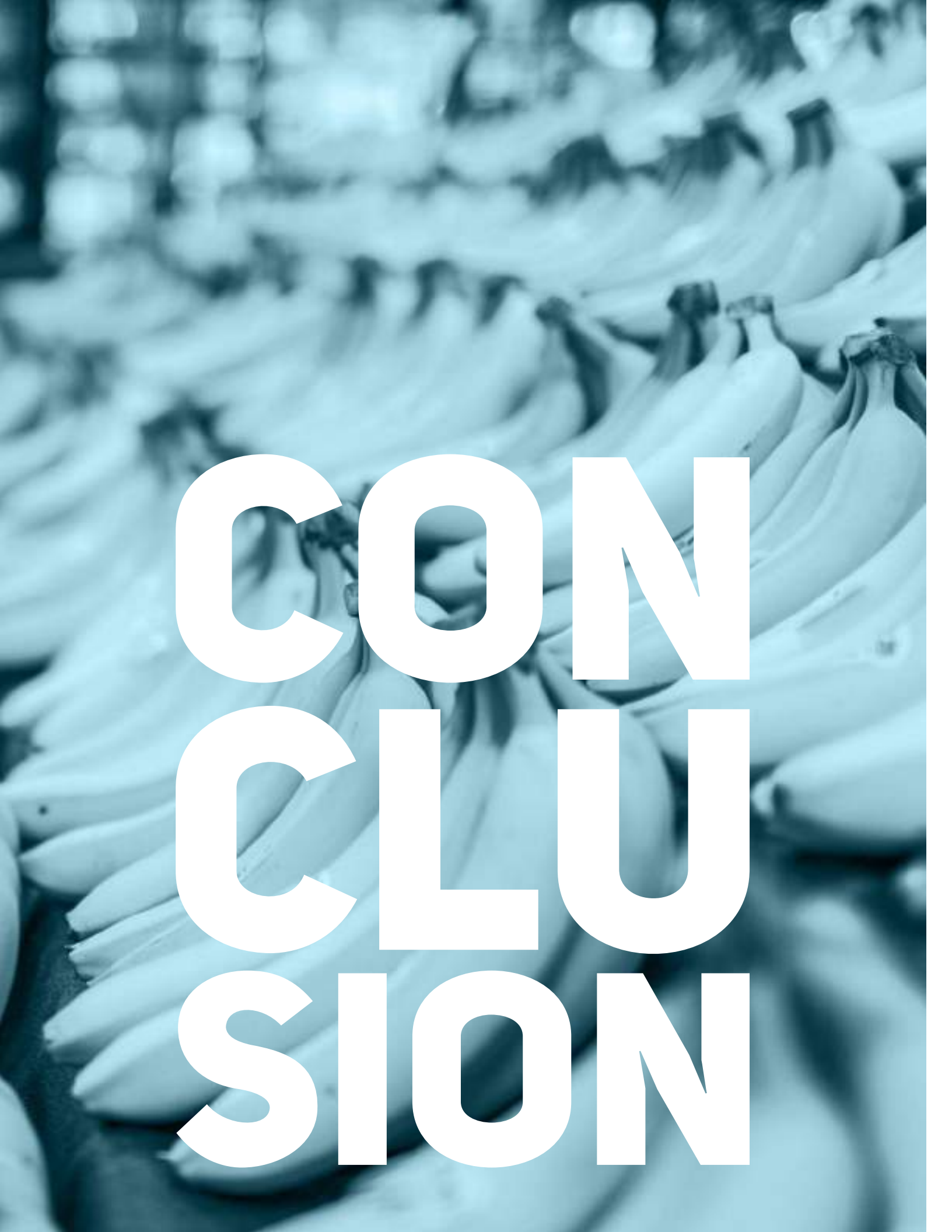
State of the initiative: In progress

Presentation of the initiative: Italy was the first European country to ban single-use plastic bags on 1st January 2011, with the exception of biodegradable bags defined by the regulation in effect. Since 2013, sanctions ranging from 2,500 to 25,000 euros have been stipulated for non-compliance with bags sold.

Following the ban, the Italian environmental association Legambiente led a monitoring campaign to report the presence of non-compliant bags in food-related businesses: in 2014, out of 37 collected in seven regions, around 20% were not in compliance with the law. The NGO denounced the role of the Mafia that controlled a large part of the biodegradable bag market, and forced merchants to buy non-compliant bags, which represented 160 million euros in lost profit for the legal sector, and a loss of 30 million euros in tax evasion. Through the #unsaccogiusto campaign, the NGO then called for citizen vigilance by giving them the keys to choose a proper bag and inviting them to point out non-compliant bags. Therefore, NGOs can play a key role in the monitoring of the law's application.

Find out more:

Un sacco giusto campaign by Legambiente www.legambiente.it/unsaccogiusto/



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A VITAL FIRST STEP TO REDUCE POLLUTION OF THE OCEAN

This repertoire of good practices based on pioneering experiences with banning single-use plastic bags has the aim of assisting local authorities in this process. The European and international examples cited in this guide have allowed us to identify that an analysis of the background, consultation with stakeholders, awareness-raising with customers and merchants, an ambitious banning of plastic bags, and rigorous monitoring of the ban's application are essential keys to truly reaching the goal of reducing single-use plastic bags. Several impact studies confirm the positive environmental effects and an improvement in the cleanliness of the area where such a ban is found.

Not only does the ban allow plastic pollution in towns, the countryside, and specifically in the ocean to be reduced, it is also a first step towards other virtuous behaviours. The ban allows for citizen awareness to be raised regarding the more general problem of plastic waste and, as a consequence, probably allows for increased acceptance of other policies to reduce such waste. A study carried out in England suggests that the awareness-raising brought about by measures on plastic bags increased social acceptance of other environmental policies such as putting a bottle return system in place.

In effect, a reduction in numerous single-use plastic items will be necessary to stop plastic pollution in oceans. Some local authorities are already showing the way, such as in Hamburg, where plastic bottles are banned in its administrations.

You can find all of Surfrider's tools on the Ban The Bag campaign website:

Ban The Bag : www.surfrider.eu/en/ban-the-bag/

Or you can contact us: plasticbagcampaign@surfrider.eu

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Analyse merchants and consumers, their needs, and their opinions
- ✓ Study single-use plastic bag consumption
- ✓ Study the environmental and financial impact of plastic bags
- ✓ Understand the limits of local authorities' competences
- ✓ Understand the legal framework and its potential advancement
- ✓ Consultation with merchants organised both upstream and downstream from the project
- ✓ Consultation with merchants to define alternatives
- ✓ Invite businesses to get involved in banning single-use plastic bags
- ✓ Implement environmental mediation
- ✓ Find support (elected representatives, trade technicians, neighbourhood associations, etc.)
- ✓ Prepare a clear and adapted communication message
- ✓ Diversify awareness-raising tools
- ✓ Identify key awareness-raising moments
- ✓ Distribute and promote alternatives to single-use plastic bags
- ✓ Enhancement of the most virtuous merchants and business people, along with already existing initiatives
- ✓ Equip participants with instruments and tools
- ✓ Exemplify municipal services
- ✓ Ban single-use plastic bags for fruit and vegetables, and at tills
- ✓ Ban the free distribution of bags, except during short awareness-raising periods
- ✓ Limit the businesses that are exempt from the ban
- ✓ Explain the ban to citizens through communication tools
- ✓ Make significant human resources available to assist with the ban and carry out long-term monitoring
- ✓ Plan out warnings and sanctions for if the ban is not respected

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