



SURFRIDER
FOUNDATION CANADA®

BYE BYE MINI BOTTLES

Business Resource



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I. MISSION AND VALUES

Surfrider Foundation Canada (SFC) is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the ocean, beaches, and waves, for all people, through a powerful activist network.

SFC's irreplaceable national network of chapter volunteers serves as the first response to local threats in coastal communities across Canada. They are the boots on the ground who collaborate on both the local and national level with regional staff and issue experts to carry out our mission through campaign, program and educational initiatives in their local communities. Our network grows stronger with every new chapter and club, and you can let us know if you're keen to start a chapter in your community or club at your school! SFC is a progressive voice in plastic reduction, clean water, beach access, ocean protection and coastal preservation.

SFC cultivates a supportive network where our volunteers can emerge as environmental leaders in their communities. Our theory of change is based on the idea that if we grow environmental capacity on the ground in communities by training and investing in a collective of individuals, we will create the political will necessary to increase support for pollution prevention, coastal protection, and environmental awareness provincially, nationally, and internationally.

We're proud to work collaboratively with the commercial sector to address plastic pollution, including through our Ocean Friendly Business (OFB) Program. Our Bye Bye Mini Bottles (BBMB) Campaign is made possible by operating OFB in British Columbia for over a decade. This document is a resource for businesses as we work to win the BBMB campaign in British Columbia!



Website: surfrider.ca

Instagram: [@surfrider_canada](https://www.instagram.com/surfrider_canada)

Facebook: facebook.com/SurfriderCanada

II. INTRODUCTION

This business resource contains information on the negative impacts of single-use plastic amenities, how the commercial sector is embracing systems for refill and reuse around the world, the economic case for shifting to reusable systems for amenities, and the step-by-step process for making the switch from single-use amenities to a reusable amenity system!

For the health of the environment, our communities, the climate and our health, we have a responsibility to end plastic pollution, which includes embracing regenerative materials and reusable systems.

Travellers are also expecting environmentally responsible practices more than ever: 73% of global travellers intend to stay in eco-friendly accommodations and this is an increasing trend.¹ These practices include eliminating single-use plastics.

By following the guidance in this document, businesses can make the switch from single-use plastic amenities to systems of refillable and reusable systems! As this document will outline, there are environmental, economic, climate and social benefits to making this switch. With this win-win scenario, the time is now to demonstrate leadership for the ocean, beaches and waves. Let's do this!



¹ https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/from-crm/Futouris%2520Plastic%2520Guide_compressed.pdf

III. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SINGLE- USE PLASTIC AMENITIES

Among the litany of single-use plastics amongst accommodation providers, one of the most common types (hotels, motels, resorts, rentals) are amenities. Single-use amenities include small packages of shampoo, conditioner, body wash, body lotion and hand/body soap, which are often packaged in mini bottles.

Every day, millions of amenity packages are used in accommodation providers around the world.

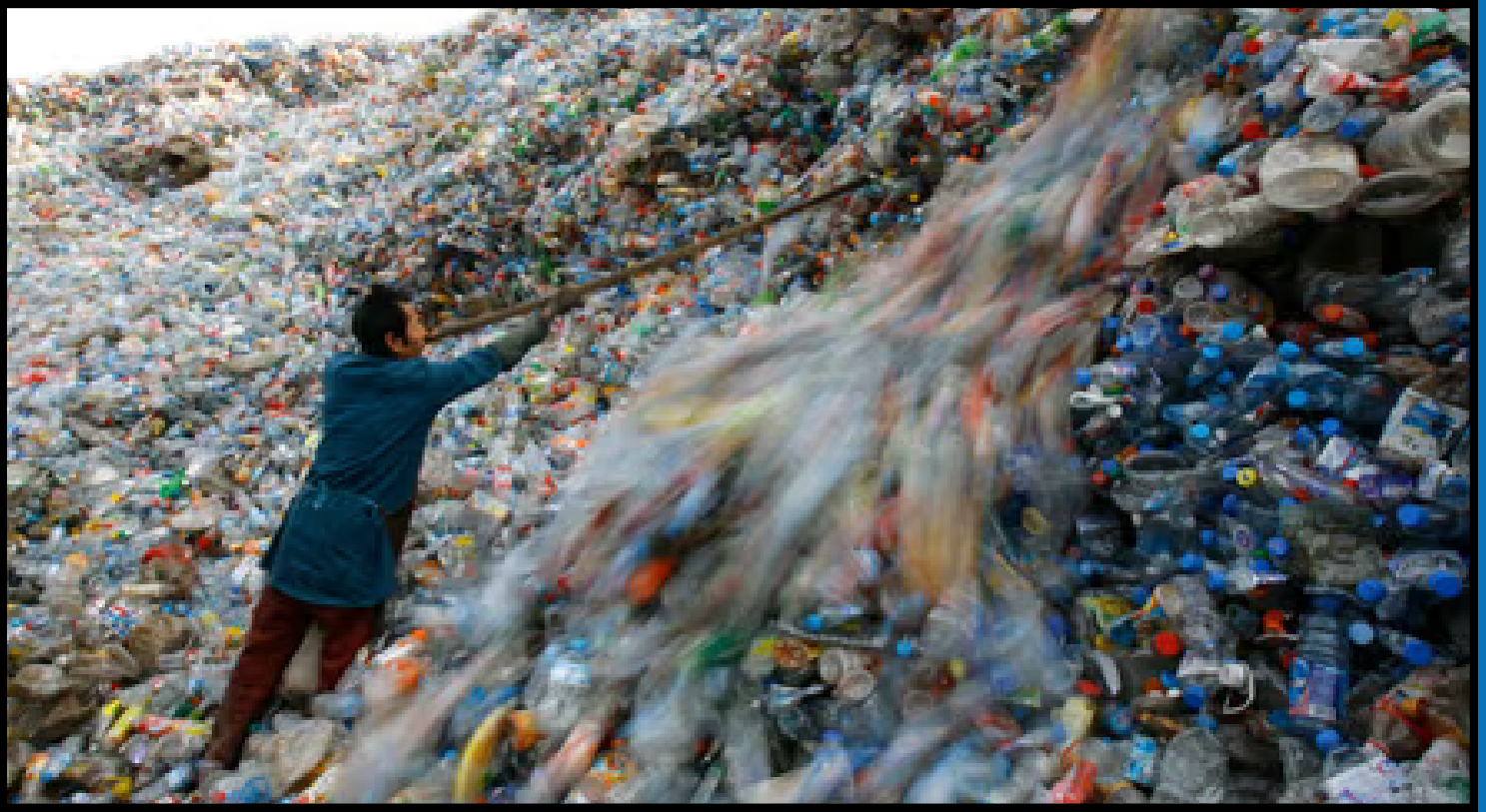
On average, each bottle of liquid becomes waste when only 15 percent is used.

These partially used amenities are then scooped up by the cleaning staff, thrown into the trash and sent off to landfill sites.

Even when businesses attempt to recycle amenities, because of their small size they can fall through the filters at recycling facilities and therefore are landfilled or leaked into the environment. Furthermore, small bottles are also hard to recycle because they're difficult to clean, and these containers need to be empty of their contents, otherwise they can contaminate recycling processing equipment.

If the plastic is landfilled, it will not biodegrade and contributes to shortening the lifespan of landfills. The value of this material is also lost forever. Or, the plastic may be leaked from the waste management system and end up polluting terrestrial or aquatic environments, including breaking down into microplastics.





Single-use accommodation amenities also contribute to resource depletion. The single-use bottles and packaging are made from finite fossil fuel resources and depend on energy-intensive manufacturing processes.

Plastics also wreak havoc on the stability of our climate. Plastic production generated 2.24 gigatonnes of planet-heating pollution in 2019, or as much as 600 coal-fired power plants. That year, the plastics industry accounted for 5% of all global carbon emissions, 12% of the world's oil demand and 8.5% of gas demand.² Without drastic action, including shifting to systems for refill and reuse, by 2050, global emissions from plastic production could triple to account for one-fifth of Earth's remaining carbon budget.

Plastics, including the specific polymers that mini shampoo bottles and conditioner bottles are made from, pose a risk to our health. Plastic shampoo and conditioner bottles are made from plastic resin code #2 HDPE (high-density polyethylene). It is considered "safe," but has been shown to leach estrogenic chemicals dangerous to fetuses and youth.³

² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/18/plastic-production-emission-climate-crisis>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3222987/>

IV. THE SOLUTION: REFILL AND REUSE

Accommodation providers around the world are adopting the reusable systems for amenities. Many accommodation providers in British Columbia, including businesses that participate in SFC's Ocean Friendly Business Program, have switched from single-use amenities to reusable systems, like refillable dispensers.

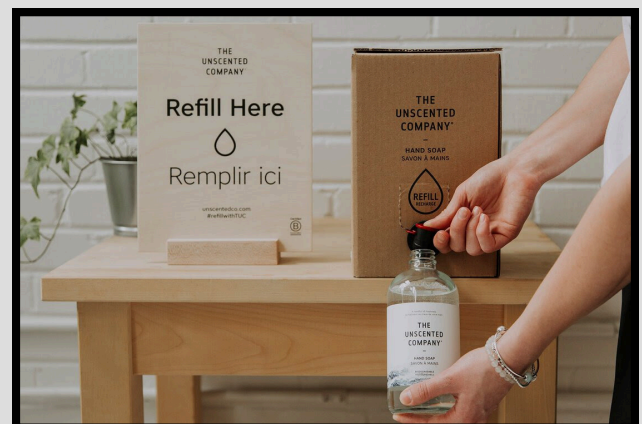
Refilling mounted dispensers or reusable bottles eliminates the need for single-use plastic bottles and wrapping. According to hospitality industry studies, switching to refillable dispensers is more economical than single-use amenities, which is described on page 12.

There are countless examples of waste reduced from accommodation providers who have eliminated single-use plastic amenities. This includes Marriott International, this company has 6,500 hotels, including 16 across Canada. They eliminated 1 billion plastic items per year by banning plastic straws and introducing a reusable amenities dispenser system.⁴

Other jurisdictions around the world have also joined this movement, including in the Caribbean and Central America,⁵ Spain,⁶ and the United States - as Washington, California and New York have all banned single-use plastic hotel amenities.



***Please note, we will ask the Government of British Columbia to allow for an exemption for accessibility rooms to provide mobile amenities, which may require single-use systems*.**



⁴ BCHA Sustainability Playbook

⁵ https://app-si.sica.int/MantenimientoFicha/Download?item=pres_133050_1_10102023.pdf

⁶ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/from-crm/A%2520GUIDE%2520TO%2520HONEST%2520ALTERNATIVES%2520TO%2520SINGLEUSE%2520PLASTICS%2520FOR%2520THE%2520HOSPITALITY%2520INDUSTRY.pdf>

V. MAKING THE SWITCH: STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

In regards to businesses making the transition from single-use to refillable, we have chronicled a streamlined process for maximum efficiency.

1) First, businesses need to invest in dispensers or reusable bottles. Ideally, businesses will look for dispensers and/or bottles that are durable as well as easy to fill and sanitize.

Due to the higher demand for amenity dispensers and reusable bottles, there are many options for businesses to choose from in order to match a preferred aesthetic. We recommend options that are opaque/not visible, which will save the housekeeping team time so that they can just refill the bottles when they feel lighter/not have to fill them up 100% after each room turnover.

See more detailed recommendations for purchasing reusable amenity systems below:

Reusable amenity dispenser and bottle recommendations:

- **Capacity and Size:**
 - Consider the number of guests and the frequency of refills needed.
 - Choose a dispenser size that accommodates the average usage without needing constant refilling.
 - Ensure the dimensions fit the available space in bathrooms or shower areas.
- **Durability and Material:**
 - Look for dispensers made from durable materials such as high-quality plastic, stainless steel, or eco-friendly options like bamboo or recycled materials.
 - Consider the wear and tear they will endure in a hospitality environment.
- **Mounting Options:**
 - Consider wall-mounted, countertop, or freestanding options based on space availability and bathroom layout.
 - Wall-mounted dispensers save space and provide a clean look.
- **Ease of Cleaning and Maintenance:**
 - Look for dispensers with smooth surfaces and minimal crevices to simplify cleaning.
 - Ensure they are easy to disassemble for thorough cleaning and sanitization.
 - Consider if they are dishwasher-safe or require specific cleaning solutions.
- **Compatibility with Products:**
 - Ensure the dispensers are compatible with the types of soaps, shampoos, and conditioners you plan to use.
 - Some products may have specific viscosity requirements for dispensing.
- **Aesthetic Appeal:**
 - Choose dispensers that complement the decor and ambiance of the accommodation.
 - Consider customizable options to match branding or style preferences.
- **Security Features:**
 - If security is a concern, select dispensers with locking mechanisms to prevent tampering or theft.
 - Locks also help ensure the safety of the products, especially in shared or public spaces.

- **Environmental Impact:**
 - Opt for dispensers made from sustainable materials or those that can be recycled at the end of their lifespan.
 - Consider the overall reduction in single-use plastic waste achieved by using refillable systems.
- **Cost and Budget:**
 - Evaluate the initial investment cost of the dispensers.
 - Factor in the long-term savings from bulk purchasing of refillable products compared to single-use amenities.
- **User-Friendly Design:**
 - Consider the accessibility of the dispensers for guests of all ages and abilities.
 - Choose intuitive designs that are easy to use without confusion.
- **Brand Reputation and Reviews:**
 - Research brands and read reviews from other accommodation providers.
 - Look for reliable manufacturers with a track record of quality and customer satisfaction.
- **Warranty and Support:**
 - Check for warranties, guarantees, or customer support provided by the manufacturer.
 - Ensure easy access to replacement parts or assistance in case of issues.

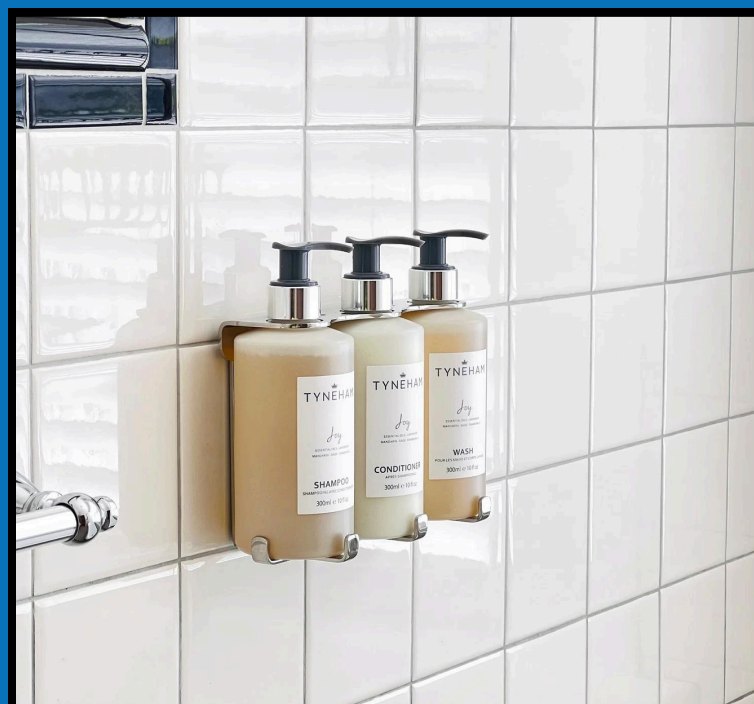
2) Businesses also need to source the product to fill the dispensers with. The best option is to choose environmentally friendly biodegradable products in bulk containers from suppliers (see options below in section VII). The least wasteful solution also encompasses the supplier taking back the bulk containers to refill and then recirculating them to businesses.

3) Once the dispensers have been installed in all of the rooms by the maintenance team, the management team can train all of the housekeeping staff on the proper maintenance of the dispensers or bottles, including sanitization.

To protect the integrity of the amenities, accommodation providers should also ensure that dispenser systems are locked.

4) A common challenge with implementation includes dealing with the stock of single-use amenities. Most businesses will have a stock of products, and can use this stock up before switching to refillable dispensers. Accommodation providers can also donate their leftover stock to non-profits like a food bank, which can offer them a tax credit for the value of their donation.

By following this process, accommodation providers can eliminate single-use amenities and contribute to the realization of a circular economy within the hospitality industry. This encompasses lowering plastic waste and switching to models for refill and reuse.



VI: STAFF TRAINING

To ensure the success of making the switch to reusable amenity systems, it's crucial to engage all stakeholders, including staff, guests, and suppliers. Here's a structured approach to communicate and involve all stakeholders effectively:

The key points below can be used for structuring communication and involvement with staff. By doing so, businesses can cultivate a shared commitment to reducing single-use items, including amenities.



1. Lead an educational staff training session:

- Highlight the local environmental impact of plastic waste, making it relevant to the community. Emphasize how actions taken by the commercial sector actions can contribute to systemic change.
- Communicate the reasons behind the initiative to eliminate single-use plastic amenities.
- Outline the specific measures being implemented and the rationale behind each measure.
- Clearly explain how staff can contribute to the success of the changes.

2. Engage Staff:

- Involve staff from the outset to foster a sense of ownership and commitment to the cause.
- Recognize that employees are integral to the guest experience and are essential ambassadors for sustainability.
- Create a sustainability team so that the staff can monitor the changes made and identify new opportunities for environmental change.

3. Encourage Input:

- Solicit input from staff regarding the switch to reusable amenities and the product being used.
- Create an environment where ideas are welcomed and valued, fostering a sense of empowerment and collaboration.

VII. GUEST EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Front-of-house staff, including receptionists, can communicate the business changes and the benefits of these changes to guests. Staff can be trained to give a 30 second welcome introduction explaining the reusable amenities, and any other sustainable practices. It's vital that sustainability practices are communicated to express how the guest experience is elevated by these changes.



Businesses can also inform existing and prospective guests of changes made by adding sustainability commitments to the website and all communication channels. Businesses can also choose to implement policies around refill and reuse of all in-room amenities, including housekeeping staff not refilling dispensers or towels unless specifically requested by guests. When sustainable practices are communicated effectively, businesses gain a competitive edge, bring in new guests, educate guests and establish meaningful relationships with guests.

Communications to guests can be similar to the example's on the right, which businesses can adapt.

Confidence Around Cleanliness and Hygiene of Refillable Toiletries:

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

Amenities on Request

Our hotel was consuming **XXX** amount(s) of miniature amenity bottles each year. We wanted to change our operations so that we are a part of the solution and not a part of the plastic pollution problem.

Single-use amenities are still available for folks in need, please ask us at reception and we will provide them immediately.

Dear Valued Guests,

Your safety and comfort are our top priorities. We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene throughout our hotel, while also minimizing our environmental impact. Instead of using single-use plastics, we have opted for eco-friendly, refillable bathroom amenities. These are carefully sanitized inside and out as part of our daily housekeeping routine. Additionally, they are tamper-proof and replaced when near empty to ensure they remain fresh, clean, and safe for your use.

VIII: THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR REUSABLE AMENITIES

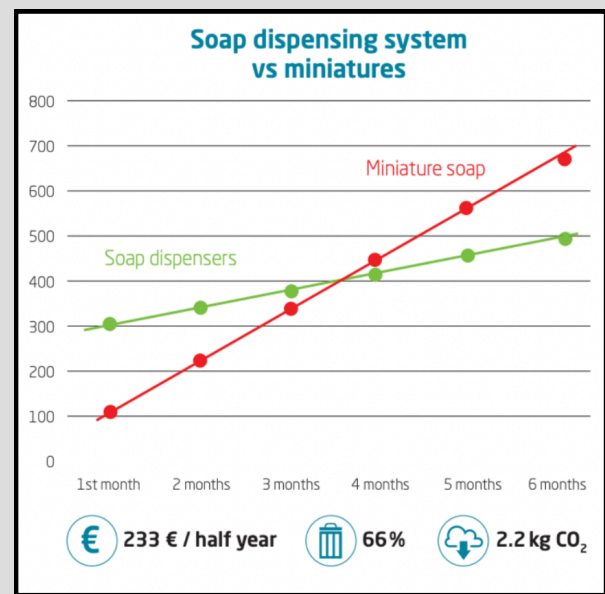
According to the Sanitary Maintenance Magazine, accommodation providers save money in labour costs when they eliminate single-use amenities as housekeepers require less time to service rooms. This is because reusable bottles and dispensers can be refilled once a week or once every couple of weeks, and are thus not labour intensive. Additionally, according to the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), U.S. hotels threw away nearly a million individual amenity bottles in 2009.

AHLA stated that an easy way for lodging companies to save money would be to install dispenser systems, as bulk liquid soaps are less expensive, which lessens the costs associated with waste management, and saves labour costs.⁷

In a case study performed by AHLA using the example of a 300-room hotel, installing two dispenser systems in each room (one in the shower, the other near the sink), savings were estimated at \$10,512 a year. This factored in a dispenser cost of \$32 for each unit, installation costs estimated at \$8 per room and a 60 percent occupancy of the hotel. The total investment was estimated at \$12,000, meaning payback would occur a little after a year. A hotel can save between 30-70% when they switch from individually packaged amenities to dispensers.⁸

A separate study conducted by Kure suggests similar cost savings, which states that “when switching from single-use bottles to dispensers, hotels save an average of 40% per oz. because of the cost savings associated with buying in bulk and another 50% in product savings because it does not get left unused and wasted in partially used bottles”.⁹

According to the BC Hotel Association Sustainability Playbook, “Generally, steering clear of disposable products (think paper coffee cups, plastic water bottles, etc.), will save you money over the long term. There may be an upfront investment to begin, but there is most often a return on investment over a period of time, from the reduced ongoing expense of purchasing disposable products as well as the reduced ongoing costs of hauling away your garbage and recycling”.¹⁰



⁷ <https://www.cleanlink.com/sm/article/Customer-Benefits-To-Wall-mounted-Shampoo-Dispensers-Soap-Dispensers--19590>

⁸ <https://www.cleanlink.com/sm/article/Customer-Benefits-To-Wall-mounted-Shampoo-Dispensers-Soap-Dispensers--19590>

⁹ <https://kureproducts.com/cost-savings>

¹⁰ [BCHA Sustainability Playbook, page 28](#)

IX: BEST PRACTICES FOR PRODUCTS

The best practice for procuring amenity products is to work with a local refillery. For instance, businesses on Vancouver Island can work with The Den Refillery. They can even provide their service to remote locations with an annual or bi-annual purchase, which also reduces CO2 emissions.

Of course, refilleries might only be available to accommodation providers in cities and towns. For more remote locations, we recommend the following ocean friendly, biodegradable, non-toxic options:

- Oneka
- Dr. Bronner's Pure-Castile Liquid Soap
- Plaine Products
- Ethique Eco-Friendly Shampoo Bars
- Attitude Natural Shampoo
- Green Cricket
- Sea Flora
- Be Clean
- Mint Cleaning



Where to find these products:

- Local Health Food Stores: Many local health food stores carry a range of eco-friendly and natural personal care products.
- Online Retailers: Websites like Well.ca, The Detox Market, and EcoRoots.ca offer a wide selection of sustainable personal care products, often with refill options.
- Direct from Brands: Some brands, such as Plaine Products and Ethique, offer online purchasing and refill programs directly from their websites.

These options provide environmentally conscious choices for refillable amenity dispensers, promoting sustainability and reducing plastic waste in Canada.

Always check with the brand or retailer for the most up-to-date product availability and refill options.

X: FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

[Reusables Are Doable](#)

[Reuse vs Single-use: Economics](#)

[ADDRESSING PLASTIC POLLUTION IN TOURISM THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT](#)

[How to Reduce Single Use Plastic: Guidance for Tourism Businesses](#)

[MANUAL FOR IMPLEMENTING THE LESS PLASTIC GUIDE: Tools for preventing plastic consumption in the tourism sector](#)

[ADDRESSING POLLUTION FROM SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS: A LIFE CYCLE APPROACH KEY MESSAGES FOR TOURISM BUSINESSES](#)

[Toolkit for plastic waste-free hospitality](#)

[Tools and resources for implementing the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative](#)

