

Reduction of single-use plastics in the hotel industry in Cyprus



© MalgorzataDewniak/Getty images

Quick facts



Type of procurement: **reduction of single-use plastics**



Year of inception: **2011**



Type of business:
Tour Operators and Hotels



Organisation name: **Travel Foundation**, in partnership with the Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (Non-Governmental Organisation) and Thomas Cook (supporting the data collection processes)



Number of staff: **26**



Country/region: **Resorts of Paphos, Protaras and Ayia Napa, Cyprus**

Background information

Cyprus produces around 570,000 tonnes of waste annually, 88% of which goes to landfill due to limited recycling facilities on the island. At an individual level, 468kg of solid waste is produced per person in residential areas and 679kg per person in tourist areas indicating that tourists produce more waste than the residents of Cyprus. Much of the waste from tourism is generated within the hotel sector where tourists spend the bulk of their holiday time.

The challenge

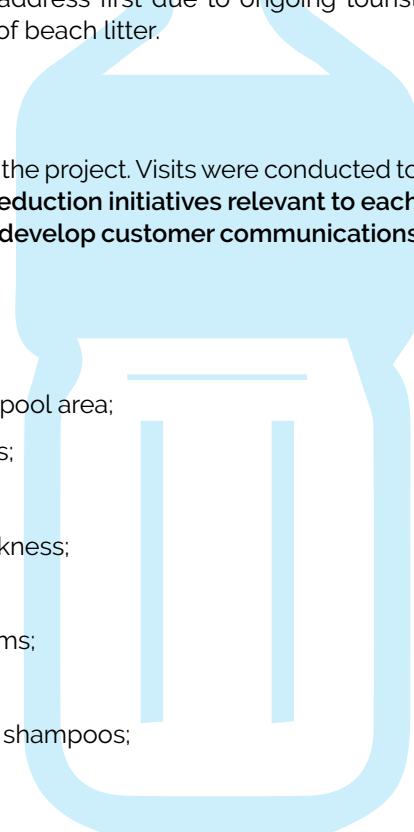
In May 2009, the Travel Foundation in collaboration with the Cypriot Hotel Industry held a two-day multi-stakeholder conference which gathered hotel associations, hotels representatives and other key actors within the sector. The objective of the conference was to find solutions to reducing solid waste in the hotel sector. Hoteliers highlighted plastic waste as a key area to address first due to ongoing tourist concerns around levels of beach litter.

The strategy

28 hotels from the resorts of Paphos, Protaras and Ayia Napa agreed to take part in the project. Visits were conducted to each of them to present the project scope, help with **the identification of plastic reduction initiatives relevant to each individual hotel, provide training to hotel staff to implement such initiatives, and develop customer communications and training plans for use and implementation by hotel staff.**

The plastic reduction initiatives included:






- ➡ Replacing one-use plastic cups with multi-use durable cups around the pool area;
- ➡ Replacing bottled water with drinking water dispensers and durable cups;
- ➡ Stopping the use of bin liners in bedrooms and using in bathrooms only;
- ➡ Training hotel employees to use plastic liners of the correct size and thickness;
- ➡ Changing plastic liners only when soiled;
- ➡ Considering alternative options to wrapping glasses in plastic in bathrooms;
- ➡ Discontinuing the wrapping of fruit baskets with plastic;
- ➡ Using refillable dispensers rather than individual packaging for soap and shampoos;
- ➡ Providing straws only when requested from hotel guests;
- ➡ Purchasing cleaning materials in bulk.



Impacts



Between June and October 2011, achievements in the 28 participating properties representing 3,640 beds included:

- ➔ **Reduction of the total number of plastic items hotels used by an average of 19%** which equates to a 31% reduction in mass (i.e. 27.5 tonnes). 
- ➔ Hotels used **793,916 less bottles of water** which equates to a 69% reduction in the number of items and a 67% reduction in terms of volume. 
- ➔ **A total reduction of 1,215,780 straws** – 37% less in terms of items and volume. 
- ➔ **A total reduction of 451,558 bin liners and bags** – 19% less in terms of items and 20% less in terms of volume. 
- ➔ Hotels achieved a **cost saving of €111,000** by reducing their plastic consumption. 
- ➔ High engagement of customers: a survey has demonstrated 98.4% of customers thought the project was a good idea and 93% would like to see it rolled out in other destinations.

The reduction in volume of plastic items used indicate that overall, less waste was sent to landfill, hence reducing the risks of leakage to the marine environment.



Lessons learned

- ✓ The project has been very successful in demonstrating that **significant reductions can be made in the disposal of plastic from hotels with very little financial outlay** (most of the actions were based on the elimination of plastic items and staff training) **while generating important financial savings for the businesses involved**. It has proven that significant results can be obtained working with hotel chains when senior managers are fully engaged and prepared to communicate the importance of the project from the top-down.
- ✓ One of the most common barriers to engaging hotels in waste reduction initiatives is proving that the actions taken will not have a negative impact on their guests' holiday experience. For example, it is assumed that all guests will want their own water bottle or will want to have a straw in their drink. This project demonstrates that, **provided good communication is in place, changes can be made without impacting negatively on the customer experience. In fact, such changes can influence customers' perceptions of a business in a positive way.**



Replacing single use plastic cups with multi-use cups at Ascot Coral Beach, Paphos, Cyprus

For further information

- 📍 Contact person: Julie Middleton,
Head of Sustainable Practice, The Travel Foundation
- ✉ julie.middleton@thetravelfoundation.org.uk

