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URBAN STRATEGIES FOR
WASTE MANAGEMENT
IN TOURIST CITIES



Reuse initiative in camping sites





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What is the measure about?

Description and scope of the measure

Camping sites, as any other tourist facility, generate a vast amount of waste. One of the main concerns here lays on the fact that many of the items dumped in waste containers (e.g. tents, camping equipment, etc.) could be reused. Tents, for instance, are very re-usable items but utterly un-recyclable and so those abandoned or thrown away will most probably end up in a landfill site, something that besides damaging the environment is expensive for camping owners and events organisers. This is a serious problem in camping sites used during festivals and other open-air events where thousands of people gather every year, leaving hundreds of tents behind as well as plastic bottles, abandoned mattresses, etc. As an example, in the Isle of Wight (England) it is estimated that one in five tents was left behind at the 2011 event, which means around 12,000 tents were abandoned and turned into trash.¹ The fact is many people leave their tents behind simply because they cannot get their pop up tents back in the bag at the end of the festival.

As a response to such problem, the following measure consists in the implementation of a "give box"² to give away items in camping sites and to facilitate reuse initiatives among campers and tourists.

"Give boxes" are normally large open boxes or even shelves, placed in a public area of the camping site (e.g. courtyard, waiting room, laundry room, etc.) where people can drop off second-hand goods they do not want to bring with them after leaving. No surveillance should be needed and these boxes could be available for campers 24/7. Collaboration between different camping sites could be also arranged so that items could be borrowed at one place and be dropped off in the next one, like travelling items. Products given away could also be donated to charities or social NGOs and be further reused.

Examples of items people could drop off and take with them are books and magazines, tents, camping shelters and gazebos, mattresses, chairs, roll mats, airbeds, blankets, charcoal and gas bottles, cutlery and other camping equipment, etc.

NB: other initiatives which specifically target festivals and camping sites can be consulted in "Measure 13: Promotion of tap water" and "Measure 18: Eco-event guidelines".

¹ Festival season: how to encourage sustainable behaviour among campers (2014, The Guardian) (<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/estival-season-waste-emissions-transport-sustainable-behaviour>)

² Give box (European Week for Waste reduction, EWWR) (http://www.ewwr.eu/docs/ewwr/reuse_givebox.pdf)

Integration in a waste management plan

There are several Environmental Management Systems (EMS) against which camping sites can be certified, such as ECOCAMPING, ISO 14001 or EMAS. These programmes include sections for waste management strategies where reuse initiatives as the “give box” measure should be integrated and aligned with municipal, regional or national waste management-related regulations. Whenever not certified, camping sites can include this type of actions within the environmental policy and internal waste management plans.

How to implement this measure?

Economic aspects to consider and potential solutions for the financing of the measure

Costs

- Related to the acquisition of the “give boxes”, depending on the size and provider.

Saving costs

- The reuse of goods that camping visitors need no longer contributes to the reduction of waste generated and, therefore, decreases the costs associated to their treatment through incineration or landfilling. In average, the general costs of incineration and landfilling of residual waste in EU are³:
 - Incineration of residual waste: 64€/ton
 - Landfilling residual waste: 56€/ton

Financing options

- Municipalities could provide camping sites with “give boxes” reused from market places (e.g. fruit boxes, vegetable boxes, etc.), therefore only incurring in transportation costs from the market places to the camp sites.

Type of stakeholders to involve

For the effective introduction, implementation and continuous operation of the proposed measures a number of key stakeholders should be involved. These include:

- Camping site owners
- Festival organisers (*if applicable*)
- Camping site staff
- Campers
- Retailers (tents and camping equipment)
- Charities, second hand shops, reuse centres and social communities
- Waste management company/local authority in charge of municipal waste collection
- If possible, designers associations to create new products using materials such as tent canvas

Other possible stakeholders

- Waste management department of local authorities
- Camping site associations (e.g. European Federation of Camping site Organisations and Holiday Park Associations)⁴

³ Source : IPCC (https://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg3/en/ch10s10-4-7.html)

⁴ European Federation of Campingsite Organisations and Holiday Park Associations (EFCO&HPA) (<http://www.campingeurope.com/>)

Description of the operational steps to follow

At municipal level

- Mapping of camping sites and charities, NGOs, second-hand shops, designers, etc. within the municipal boundaries.
- Organization of informative meetings to encourage camping sites to undertake these initiatives and liaise with charities and similar organisations for a potential collaboration.
- Facilitation and support in the subscription of voluntary agreements and collaboration partnerships between participating entities (i.e. camping sites, charities, etc.).
- Realization of communication campaigns at local level to engage more participants and raise awareness (e.g. provision of a “give box” in a public area).
- Regulative support to encourage camping sites to implement reuse measures (e.g. about permitting procedures and compliance with waste management legislation).

At camping site level

Previous steps before implementing the “give box” should include:

- Finding location and getting authorisation to place the box (at the campsite reception, for instance).
- Finding or building the box, and preparing a suitable template for the records book.
- Installing the box at the chosen location with instructions or a small poster explaining its purpose and functioning.
- Communication campaign: posters to inform campers should be displayed, not only within the camping site but also advertised via social media and the press, on the camping website, in the tourist office, etc.
- Training to camping site staff.
- To prevent waste generation, specific communication campaigns should be carried out by showing campers, festival participants and every other citizen how much waste is generated every year on site.

During the implementation phase

- Checking out the “give box” after its presentation to make sure it is not mistaken for a waste bin.
- Measuring the participation.
- Donors should inform campsite staff before giving away an item so that they can keep track on every item donated (a record book could be used to register donated items). Campers interested in collecting an item from the box should inform camping staff beforehand. Likewise, campsite staff should periodically monitor and register which items are left in and taken from the box.
- Monitoring the quantity of products being donated and reused (by estimation or by weighing the box every week for instance). In fact the idea is not to control everybody leaving or taking something.

After the implementation of the measure

- Compiling the final number of collected products (this will give an overview of how much waste is avoided by implementing the measure).
- Dissemination of the information gathered with pictures and other relevant feedback to the organisers and stakeholders involved.
- Maintenance of the “give box”.

Gender aspects to consider

Attention needs to be paid to gender balance of those developing the idea and who will organise the ‘give shelf/box’.

In addition, awareness raising amongst campers may need to be gender sensitive.

Examples of good practices

- The LOVE-YOUR-TENT initiative is a waste campaign, mostly active in the UK and Germany, designed to bond people with their tents and encourage them to reuse them instead of throwing them away. The organisers of this measure show campers, festival organisers and citizens how much waste there is and what happens to it, besides describing the costs involved.⁵
- As part of plan to reduce waste produced by tourists, 5 municipalities in Vendée (West of France) have decided to implement measures aiming at reducing waste produced by tourism. After implementing a “give box” in a public area as a pilot test, the municipalities have promoted this measure to the camping sites located in their area. 25 camping sites were voluntary to install “give boxes” for promoting reuse initiatives among tourists. The “give boxes” have been made with recycled wood by a social inclusion association.⁶

⁵ LOVE YOUR TENT (<http://www.loveyourtent.com/>)

⁶ Give boxes in camping sites in Vendée - Zero Waste France (<https://www.zerowastefrance.org/fr/articles/383-des-boites-a-dons-dans-les-campings-du-littoral-vendeen>)

Guidance for setting up monitoring indicators

A monitoring can be set up to register, number of people donating and taking as well as quantity and types of collected items:

- Participation per day/week/month (number of people donating and taking items). People should be able to easily register themselves each time they put something within the give box **[Number]**
- Number and quantity (estimated from the record book) of donated and collected products per type of product per day/week/month/year **[Number]** and **[Kg]**

Time frame

It is recommended to start the monitoring at least one week before the starting phase to assess the effect of the measure on waste production.

Gender considerations:

- Who makes ultimate decisions in establishment? **[male-female]**
- Gender sensitivity of publicity/communication? **[yes-no]**
- Have those who undertake work been consulted in how to do **[yes-no]**

Lessons learnt from the implementation phase and fine tuning

Reuse initiative in camping sites has not been implemented in any URBAN-WASTE pilot city.