



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

PLASTIC-FREE DRINKING WATER

Award Scheme

Themes

Sustainable Development Goals

Others

Waste Management

Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

Cities can help end the trend of buying water in plastic by ensuring citizens have access to free, drinkable water. **TARGET USERS:** Individuals, Businesses, Industry, Government **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:** Recent polls suggest that 65% of people would not buy plastic water bottles if tap water refills were freely available.

Background and Objective

Every year around the world we create more than 300 million tonnes of plastic, half of which are items used only one time and only a fraction are actually recycled. One of the worst offenders are plastic bottles, with a million of them sold every minute around the world, a figure that's expected to grow by 20% by 2021.

Actions and Implementation

Cities that provide free drinking water to citizens and tourists notice a significant reduction in plastic waste. This not only reduces pollution, but also saves cities money on waste collection and processing. Accessible Tap Water Installing a network of drinking water fountains in cities encourages individuals to use reusable water bottles and eliminates the needless purchase of single-use plastic water bottles. Replacing plastic water bottles with free tap water stations reduces city waste streams and related waste collection and management costs. Water Analysis and Purification When citizens can have tap water from their home tested for free, they can gain the confidence needed that tap water is safe to drink and there is no need to buy water in plastic bottles. In places where it is not possible to provide drinkable tap water, citizens can be encouraged through rebates and public awareness campaigns to install tap filters that control and remove contaminants. Alternatively, the use of drinking water delivery services can be encouraged. Delivery companies operate worldwide to provide businesses and households with drinking water and reusable containers and taps.

Outcomes and Impacts

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES Eau de Paris In France, 8,7 billion liters of water are bottled and consumed and only half of those bottles are recycled. Considering plastic bottles are one of the primary sources of ocean pollution, the 'Paris de l'eau zero déchet plastique' (zero plastic waste water action) launched a new initiative to tackle single-use plastic pollution and make Paris the first city with plastic waste-free water. See <http://www.eaudeparis.fr/> for more information. Drinking Fountain Fund for London The average Londoner goes through 175 bottles of water each year – that's over a billion on a city level. Many of these bottles end up in the River Thames, from where they can flow out to the ocean, causing harm to marine creatures and poisoning the food chain. #OneLess, the Mayor of London and MIW Water Cooler Experts teamed up to install 28 drinking fountains across London, making it easier for Londoners to stop using plastic water bottles and protect the ocean from plastic pollution. Now 9 million Londoners and 30 million annual visitors from around the globe have access to free drinking water while they are out and about. See <https://www.onelessbottle.org/fountainfund/> for more information. Dutch Schools and Parks In The Netherlands, €2m was allocated in 2019 to fund 1,000 new drinking water fountains on school playgrounds. Schools can register for the subsidy, which covers 75% of the cost. In addition, the Amsterdam City Council is doubling the number of water fountains in parks and public places to 500 as part of the city's campaign to promote plastic-free drinking water. Refill Refill is a behaviour change campaign designed to make it easier for people to live with less plastic by connecting them to places where they can eat, drink and shop without "pointless packaging". Anyone can download the free Refill app to tap into a global network of places to "reduce, reuse and refill". With more than 30,000 places offering free drinking water globally, over 300,000 app downloads and 100 million pieces of plastic avoided to date, Refill has proven that it is possible to create a wave of change and stop plastic pollution at source. See <https://www.refill.org.uk/about/> for more information. Freewa Freewa is a Croatia-based mobile app for mapping free drinking water locations worldwide. The Freewa World Water Movement promotes free drinking water and the usage of reusable bottles. See <https://freewa.org/> for more information. Tap Tap is a mobile app that maps water refill stations, both public water fountains and participating businesses that permit free tap water refills. Tap's Refill Station network is partly made up of partnerships with coffee shops and fast-casual restaurants, while also locating the best public places to refill your water bottle around the world. Tap currently has over 35,000 Refill Stations in 30 countries and 7,300 cities including Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Austin, San Diego, Boston, Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, Ottawa, Montreal,



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London, Sydney and more. By becoming a Refill Station, businesses proudly welcome new customers into their establishment to refill their water bottles, increasing foot traffic and potential new customer sales. Visit <https://findtap.com/> for more information.