

BECOMING FREE OF SINGLE-USE PRODUCTS

A GUIDE FOR ABU DHABI GOVERNMENT



هيئة البيئة - أبوظبي
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The Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) was established in 1996 to preserve Abu Dhabi’s natural heritage, protect our future and raise awareness about environmental issues.

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1. Introduction

This Guide presents the entities required measures to comply with the Government of Abu Dhabi Government declaration to become free of single use plastic and non-plastic products in its premises and operations.

According to a report published by the United Nations Environment Programme in 2018, the world produces 400 million tonnes of plastic every year, of which 36 % (equivalent to 144 million tonnes) are for single use packaging. Only 9 % is recycled, 12 % is incinerated and 79 % finds its way to landfills or leaks into the environment.

In the United Arab Emirates, for example, 11 billion plastic bags are consumed every year (a report presented to the Global Government Summit in 2019). This is equivalent to 1,182 plastic bags per capita. This average is extremely high in comparison with the global average of 207 bags per capita per year.

Against this global challenge, more than 127 countries have undertaken policy and regulatory measures to restrict single use plastics. In addition,

250 global brands and corporations, including soft drinks brands, signed a pledge to cut single use plastic from their operations.

At the national level, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment signed a pledge with a coalition, comprising of government, NGOs, and global and local companies, to reduce single use packaging pollution and promote recycling which is a part of a closed loop economy and sustainable production and consumption goal.

In March 2020, as a demonstration of commitment to excellence, the Abu Dhabi Executive Committee adopted the Abu Dhabi Single Use Plastic Policy, issued by H. H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in Al Dhafra Region and the Chairman of the Board of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi. The policy aims to achieve the following:

100%

of Abu Dhabi Government entities are free of single use plastic and non-plastic products



50%

recovery of single use plastic bottles through an incentive-based return scheme

100%

of plastic grocery shopping bags will be multiple use bags



This Guide helps government entities achieve the Abu Dhabi Government declaration as free of these products.

2. Objective and Application



2.1 What is the objective of the Guide?

This Guide presents information to government entities and staff on the implementation of the commitment stated in the Abu Dhabi Single Use Plastic Policy on declaring Abu Dhabi Government free of single use plastic, and non-plastic, through reducing the use of these materials and shifting to multiple use products with the least impact on the environment.



2.2 Who should use the Guide?

This Guide shall be implemented by all Abu Dhabi government entities. Entities shall implement the procedures so that they become free from the targeted materials. The Guide can be used by government companies and the private sector.



2.3 How will the Guide be implemented?

The Guide shall be implemented by each entity depending on its structure and activities.



2.4 How will progress be measured?

The key performance indicator related to the commitment is the percentage of government entities free of the targeted materials out of the total number of entities.

Among the key indicators at the entity level is measuring the quantities of waste generated by type, and the waste reduction percentage covering the Guide targeted products.



2.5 How will it be monitored?

As this Guide is related to the implementation of a government wide commitment, EAD will report on quarterly basis to the Executive Office for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. For that, entities are expected to report quarterly as well on the implemented actions at the entity level and progress against targets. EAD will provide the needed templates for the quarterly reports as well as the needed support to entities on implementation.



2.6 What events and facilities are covered by this Guide?

The commitment actions shall be implemented in entity facilities and premises, including pantries, self-service hot beverage machines, and mobile food and beverage stations serving the day-to-day operations. In particular, the government commitment shall be applied on the following events:

1. Staff and team meetings
2. External stakeholder engagement meetings and workshops
3. Conferences or exhibitions of any size and duration (organised either within the entity owned or leased buildings or within privately owned, such as hotels or exhibition centers or others)
4. Events organised through a contract with the entity
5. Events organised through sponsorships, grants, or contributions from outside the government



2.7 What are the targeted products and materials?

The Guide covers banning single use products in all entity offices, premises, events, and activities (See Figure 1). These products exclusively include the following items:

- 1

Single use plastic and non-plastic bags, including paper bags.
- 2

Single use cups and lids made of plastic or paper.
- 3

Single use cutlery (forks, spoons, knives, and chopsticks) made of plastic, wood, or bamboo or any other single use material.
- 4

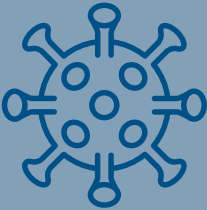
Single use plastic, cartoon, or aluminum plates.
- 5

Single use plastic or paper straws.
- 6

Single use plastic, wood, or bamboo stirrers.
- 7

Single use plastic, cartoon, or aluminum food containers.
- 8

Single use plastic, glass, or tetrapak bottles. Family size (or designed for multiple users) milk and juice bottles are excluded.



2.8 What is the impact of COVID-19 on restricting single use products targeted by this Guide?

The Guide covers banning single use products while some of the COVID-19 measures previously communicated with entities calls for the use of those products. After a thorough review of these measures in Abu Dhabi by the relevant authorities, the call for using single use plastic products in government premises as a safe alternative for COVID-19 was lifted as there is no scientific evidence that single use products protect from COVID-19.

EAD did not release this Guide until sufficient scientific data and research worldwide led to the conclusion that reusable containers posed no threat to the public during the pandemic and such measures were lifted by the relevant authorities in Abu Dhabi.



2.9 What are the alternatives to the targeted products?

The Guide proposes examples of alternatives to the targeted products (Refer to Section 2.7) provided. These alternatives are multiple use in nature. Figure 2 shows targeted products and possible alternatives.

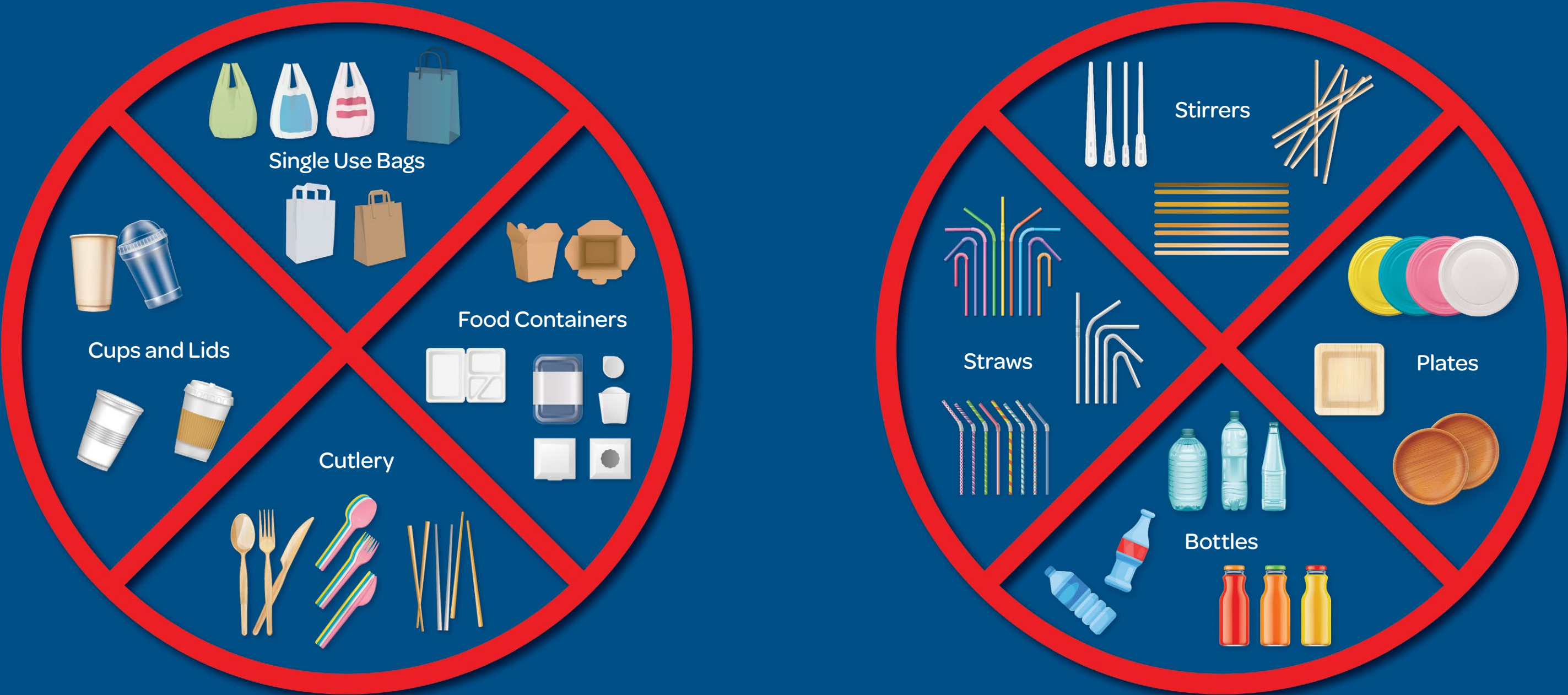


Figure 1: List of targeted single use products – to be banned from government premises.



3. Guidance for Organisers of Events

3.1 Event planning

The greatest opportunity to fully comply with the commitment in the events organised by the entity or reduce waste is at the planning stage. Specific important details could very much help successful planning:

1. What waste-management and related facilities are available at the venue?
2. What to provide during the event?
3. What are the requirements for service providers?

Answering these questions will have a large impact on how much waste the event produces.

3.1.1 Knowing the event venue and available services

Knowing what facilities (for example, waste-management services, kitchens, dishwashing equipment) are available at the venue makes it easier to plan for waste reduction. The event organiser should be aware of these details for proper event planning.

Important considerations for venues are as follows:

Figure 2: Examples of alternatives to targeted single use products

Can reusable food service items be washed, dried, sanitised or stored at the venue? If so, where are these facilities?

FOOD SERVICE FACILITIES

Are there any special instructions for access or operation?



What items can be recycled?

WASTE SERVICES

Are bins provided and labelled clearly?

3.1.2 Identifying what materials will be used in the event

By planning a meeting or an event with the objective of waste reduction or avoiding the use of banned products as per this Guide, the event planner can easily identify the following:

- Potential sources of plastic and other types of waste
- Alternatives that could be used

There are several sources of waste from single use items at events:

1. Food service



- Single use cutlery (forks, spoons, knives, and chopsticks) and plates
- Food containers and packaging
- Pre-packaged condiments
- Trays and protective covering

2. Drink service



- Straws
- Cups and lids and stirrers
- Coffee pods
- Pre-packaged drinks (bottles)

3. Signage and decorations



- Posters and signs
- Table decorations
- Foam (like Styrofoam) decorations
- Balloons and balloon sticks

4. Event supplies



- Handouts
- Business cards
- Nametags
- Pens

The event planner can follow these steps to plan for material use:

1. Make a list of all meeting materials, food and drink services, signage and decorations needed for the event
2. Delete from the list all banned items and explore alternatives (*Refer to Figure 2: Examples of alternatives*)
3. Would it be possible to avoid unnecessary use of non-banned single-use plastics and how could this be done?
4. Finalise list after doing this analysis

3.1.3 Working with service providers to reduce event waste

When issuing contracts to host or provide catering services to a certain event, it is important to ensure that the host or suppliers are aware of Abu Dhabi Government's commitment to ban the materials stated in this Guide and broadly reduce single use materials. *(Refer to Section 5: Guidance for procurement)*

3.2 During and after the event

3.2.1 Awareness

It is important that event organisers communicate Abu Dhabi Government's commitment to become free of single use plastic and non-plastic products. And highlight the entity's plans to broadly reduce waste generation. Consider reinforcing the waste reduction ambitions and encourage participants to support these environmental objectives.

3.2.2 Performance management and reporting

Performance can be monitored for an event by a designated team member to ensure the plan and the associated list of materials are implemented. This member shall keep a record of the reduced or avoided materials using the number of items per participant to get the total figure for all participants. It is important to communicate a report, even a quite simple one, on achievements with the rest of the team and management. It is also important to identify any callings in implementation and use the event evaluation forms to embed questions to participants about this issue.

4. Guidance for Internal Communication



Environmental awareness is important and crucial to change staff behavior and engaged and support the entity's directions. There are several instruments for entities to use to raise the level of staff awareness. These include communication and information dissemination, using internal communication channels (emails, social media networks, display screens in entities premises). Instruments also include the organisation of staff engagement workshops and meetings to discuss challenges and how to address them.

In addition, the staff shall be continuously encouraged to change their behavior using annual staff gatherings and periodic meetings. Entities could benefit from the 'Green Business Network', established by EAD to support raising environmental awareness across entities by providing awareness material, guidance, and engagement in workshops and organisation of various environmental initiatives that entities can adopt for internal implementation.

5. Guidance for Procurement

The entity procurement functions shall embed the requirements for banning the targeted products in purchase requests for catering of events, workshops, and conferences that are organised by the entity internally or in commercially owned tourism facilities. *(Refer to Section 2.6: What events and facilities are covered by this Guide?)*

If the used facilities are outside the entity's premises, it is important to notify the management of the host facility of the following:

1. Abu Dhabi Government commitment to ban items stated in this Guide
2. The host facility management shall ensure that none of the banned products shall be used
3. Request the host facility management to communicate with any third-party supplier or catering service provider about the content of the commitment

6. Guidance for Entity Facility Management

The entity facility management trains the hospitality service providers on enhancing cleaning and hygiene handling of washing dishes and multiple use cutlery. Training also covers the use of separate cleaning kits for these items as well as disinfecting them, including disinfection water glasses and cups, to encourage their use as an alternative from single use plastic and glass bottles. Training on such practices should be equivalent to such hygiene training provided for similar staff in five-star hotels.

All meeting rooms shall be provided with reusable clean and disinfected cups which can be used for drinking water.

The facility management shall develop procedures to periodically measure quantities and types of waste generated by the entity, no later than June 2021. This will enable the entity to measure reduction percentages at entity level when the commitment is applied.

7. Guidance for Strategy and Performance Management

The strategic planning management function works with relevant internal functions to develop a plan for the implementation of the commitment and embed it into the entity strategic and operational plan. As such, the plan will be subject to the entity performance management procedures and methods. This function shall be responsible for reporting performance against the commitment, as per the requirements set by EAD, so that reporting shall be submitted to the Executive Office as part of the reporting requirements for the implementation of the Abu Dhabi Single Use Plastic Policy.



8. Guidance for Staff for Day-to-Day Single Use Product Use

Staff shall be encouraged to shift towards sustainable alternatives to items they use on a daily basis, to demonstrate their environmental commitment. In case any of the employees may wish to buy any of the products listed in this Guide at his/her own expenses for his/her own personal use, this will be considered out of the scope of the Guide.

Employees shall be encouraged to take simple steps to achieve the desired change as follows:

- Encourage employees to bring their own reusable bottle for their personal use
- Avoid using single use bottles and replace them with reusable bottle
- Contribute to awareness dissemination and encourage close family and friend to change behavior and embrace sustainable practices
- Bring stainless steel cups for coffee and hot beverages
- A reusable bag can be used for bringing food from home
- Replace single use by multiple use bags



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