

SAMEN MAKEN WE  
MORGEN MOOIER

**OVAM**

# Infosheets: Reusable Cups



We will provide you with a brief introduction to the use of reusable cups, developed to facilitate sustainable decision making for event organisers.

If you wish to receive additional information please visit the [groenevent.be](https://www.groenevent.be) site for more tools and manuals. Check also the [cup guide](#) from Powerful Thinking!

These info sheets are created by Ecofest and commissioned by **OVAM** (Openbare Vlaamse Afvalstoffen Maatschappij). Special thanks to Alex Camacho for the translation.

**We wish you every success in organising your (almost) zero waste event!**

*Ecofest is a non-profit organisation that focuses on change in the event industry.*

*We combine knowledge about circularity and sustainability with hands-on waste management at events. Ecofest supports organisations with implementing green initiatives. At events we assess current habitual activities, look for improvements and present a solutions strategy. We connect organisations with potential suppliers. You can follow us on [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#) and find us on [www.ecofest.be](https://www.ecofest.be).*

*OVAM is the Public Waste Agency of Flanders (Openbare Afvalstoffenmaatschappij voor het Vlaams Gewest) and is responsible for waste management and soil remediation in Flanders.*

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## How do I obtain the reusable cups?

### Loan or rent them at



Check first if you can serve  
your drinks in **glass**.



The purchase of cups is only relevant when they are used multiple times per year!




# How do I organise the cup circuit?

Reusable cups behind the bar have an impact on space and staff.


## Is there **enough space** for clean and dirty cups?

1 euro pallet (80x120 cm) of disposable cups:	1 euro pallet of reusable cups stacked in bins	1 euro pallet of reusable cups; special cups stacked separately in baskets
		
40.000 - 60.000 cups	8.000 - 10.000 cups	+/- 1.500 cups

## Is a **washing infrastructure** available on site?

Yes	Hygienic rinsing is an option. 
No	Analyse the budget and logistics to install professional dishwasher(s). In most cases it is cheaper to rent the required number of cups instead of rinsing (and circulating) cups during the event.

## Do you have access to **extra staff**?

Yes	Rinsing is an option. Make sure to add 1 extra person per 500 visitors for managing the cup cleaning and logistics. 
No	Organise cleaning of the cups via an external partner. In this situation add 1 extra person per 3000 visitors for cup logistics.

For more information on cleaning, check [this](#) website (question 16).

# How many cups do I need?

## STEP 1: WHAT DRINKS DO I SERVE?



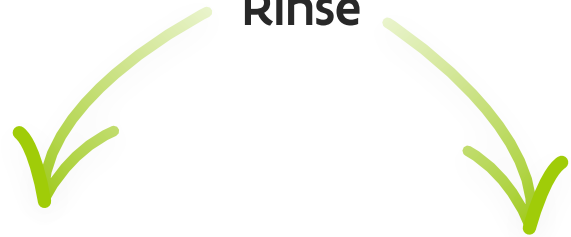
Try to limit the number of different types of cup. Ideally 1 or 2 types of cups are provided: 1 type of cup for beers, soft drinks or cocktails and 1 type of cup for wines/sparkling wines. Can all drinks be poured from large (glass) bottles or taps into cups? Or are some types of drink served in disposable packaging (cans/PET bottles)?



Ordering too many cups may lead to higher costs including transportation or the use of surplus storage space.

## STEP 2: CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF CUPS NEEDED.

### Rinse



I don't clean the cups on site

[the required number of cups = the number of expected visitors X the number of drinks per visitor]

Order the number of cups according to the volume of ordered drinks. Use a margin of 12% as a buffer.

I clean during my event.

[1.5 to 2.5 cups per person needed]

This depends on the speed of drinking during the event.

# How do I work with my cups?

## STEP 1: DO I ASK FOR A DEPOSIT?

The overall environmental benefit of reusable cups is closely linked with the loss rate. In order to be more environmentally friendly than disposable cups, the loss rate should be less than 10%. Therefore, more than 9 out of every 10 cups must return to the bar.

Yes: "long live the deposit"

The amount of deposit: 1 drink coupon or, in case of cash: 1 or 2 euros or pounds.

No: "they will bring back their cup!"

When operating a system without a deposit fee, an eco-team should be appointed to pick up and collect the cups. If desired, you can offer a reward system. Collection points (e.g. baskets or bins) encouraging visitors to return their cup(s) should be established at the exit and other designated locations throughout your event. These should clearly be marked and supervised by a security guard.

It is important to understand that every missing cup results in higher costs. Operating without a deposit fee requires a team to collect the cups on-site. At the bar, visitors can hand in empty cup(s) when ordering a new drink. At the box office or checkout, each visitor can exchange their cup(s) for either drink coupons or cash. This box office should remain open longer at the end of the event in order to exchange any final cups for the deposit.

How does my bar staff calculate the charges including cup deposits? The following instructions may be useful (for a system with drink coupons as a deposit):

1. Take the order and determine the total number of drink coupons needed for the drinks.
2. Add the deposit for each drink.
3. Subtract the deposit from the number of cups returned.

This is the number of drink coupons due.

### HANDY RULE OF THUMB

The number of drink coupons needed = number of drinks ordered X 2 – the number of repurchased cups.

## STEP 2: HOW DO I MANAGE MY STOCK OF CUPS?

Each bar or vending point should be provided with a number of crates/boxes containing clean, empty cups. Collection tubes should also be provided behind the bar to facilitate the return of dirty cups. Full tubes will be taken away collected by bartenders to the intermediate collection point or the on-site rinsing facility.

Logistics can be more complex with multiple types of cup in rotation as they must be sorted separately behind the bars. Different types of cups can also be more difficult to stack together, often leading to individual damage. When cleaning cups on-site, provide large boxes, wheelie bins or collection tubes for transport from the bar to the dishwasher.

# How do I communicate about my cup system?

## KEEP IT SIMPLE!

This page shows some good examples of how to visually communicate your cup system to event visitors. Ensure sufficient time is set aside to inform members of all teams about how the cup system works. Create a clear deposit system, rules and guidelines for all staff, including the return/collection of 'found' cups.

Make the reusable cup system part of your communication plan. Use the following outlets: social media, website, notice boards at the bar(s) and at the checkout.

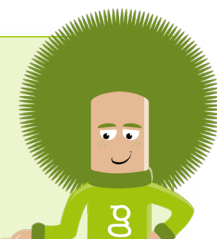


Voodoo Village



### Tip

Download the media kit of the campaign ["never give up on your cup"](#).





## How do I handle the cups after the event?



**Check** the event area for lost cups, check the bins, etc.



In case of **intermediate rinsing**: take care of a hygienic washing and drying process. Apply the 'pyramid system' by stacking cleaned but still-wet cups upside down. They will be dry within a day. For more information on cleaning, check [this](#) website (question 16).



**Stack** the cups in the provided bins or boxes.



**Count** the stock of used and unused cups. **Calculate** the loss rate (amount of non-returned cups). Group the cups on pallets for easy pick-up.



# How to set up a workable and profitable cup system?

## WITH A DEPOSIT SYSTEM

Make sure your bar staff do not offer free drinks (to friends). Provide a 'bar supervisor' who tackles any free distribution behaviour decisively.

Ensure the safe storage of the cup stock. Consult with security guards to monitor storage before, during and after the event.

Make sure the return of the deposit is carried out by the same staff occupying the box offices. Not all cups have to be repaid with coins (e.g. 5 returned cups = 10 euro banknote in return).

Set a limit on the number of returned cups to discourage overzealous cup collectors.

## WITHOUT A DEPOSIT SYSTEM

Provide enough collection points or high (bar) tables to prevent cups falling on the ground.

Strongly advise security that no cups can leave the hall or the event site.

