

Barcelona – Retornable Takeaway



PROJECT
SNAPSHOT

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RSVP core local partner:

Rezero Foundation (Project Lead).

Key Local Partners:

Barcelona city, Vasovengo, Bumerang, Pacto Zero, Restaurant Guild, 22@network Barcelona, Eix Comercial Poblenou, Westfield, Clear Channel.

Funding Sources:

Plastic Solutions Fund; co-funding from Barcelona town hall and waste company.

Duration of Test Phase:

(April 2024–July 2025).

Core Goals & Key Elements Tested:

Increase HORECA sector and consumer awareness about reusable cup and bowl systems and their benefits; create a network of allies to promote their adoption as well as test incentives and reward systems.

Geographical Scope:

Barcelona city, focus on Poblenou district.

Regulatory Context:

No binding local regulation at the time; supporting voluntary uptake. By Spanish legislation, establishments must charge a fee for single use plastic take away containers but it is not implemented.

Reuse System type (Closed/Open):

3 closed loop systems, no shared infrastructure.

System Operator:

Vasovengo, Bumerang and Pacto Zero.

System Participants & Roles:

Rezero leads, recruits and implements loyalty system; providers manage logistics and digital platforms.

Type of Incentive to Return:

Deposit-based model (Vasovengo) and library system (Bumerang, Pacto Zero). A loyalty point system redeemable for gifts was also developed as an additional incentive.

Tracking System:

QR codes via Bumerang; Barcodes for Pacto Zero, Vasovengo operates without individual packaging traceability.

Key Learnings:

- Without binding regulation, scaling reuse systems is extremely difficult—even with strong public outreach.
- Success also depends on collective commitment from authorities, HORECA actors, service providers, and consumers.
- Reuse systems can act as a gateway to other sustainable behaviours, such as refill and bring-your-own.
- Simplicity in the return process is critical—especially the need for unified digital interfaces in multi-provider settings.

