



3

Berlin – Mehrweg pilot



RSVP core local partner:

DUH (Environmental Action Germany - Project Lead).

Key Local Partners:

REWE, Sykell (Einfach Mehrweg), Recup, Tomra, Sielaff, Profimiet, Berlin Senate.

Funding Sources:

Plastic Solution Fund, Environmental Defense Fund and Berlin Senate.

Duration of Test Phase:

12 months (March 2025- February 2026).

Core Goals & Key Elements Tested:

Return of reusable to-go-cups from the two system providers RECUP and EINFACH MEHRWEG via RVMs in supermarkets; serialisation of existing reuse packaging (Recup); the goal is to explore improvements in convenience for the HORECA sector and consumers by simplifying the return of reusable packaging through reverse vending machines (RVMs), as well as to test opportunities for scaling reusable systems via shared infrastructure.

Geographical Scope:

Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district, Berlin with around 85 gastronomy partners of RECUP and eight REWE stores.

Regulatory Context:

German packaging law encourages reuse partly through an obligation for large gastronomy businesses to offer reusables; is going to be aligned with EU PPWR.

Reuse System type (Closed/Open):

2 separate closed loop systems sharing the reverse logistics (collection, washing, redistribution).

System Operator:

DUH coordinates the project activities, manages press and public relations and evaluates the results (with support from the Kühne Logistics University)..

System Participants & Roles:

Tomra and Sielaff collect through their RVM technologies; Sykell manages the data through its IT system Circular ERP and organises the logistics together with the retailer REWE; Profimiet is the washing provider, sorts and scans the packaging; city actors coordinate.

Type of Incentive to Return:

Deposit-based model (RECUP and EINFACH MEHRWEG).

Tracking System:

Recup and Einfach Mehrweg use several types of codes for the tracking (data matrix, barcode, QR-code).

Key Learnings:

- ⌚ The success of the project depends on the commitment of key stakeholders in the German reuse-to-go sector. For cities looking to implement similar pilots, it's crucial to identify and involve existing players, as their participation can significantly impact pilot development.
- ⌚ While the project is in its early stages, it has already highlighted the need for unified digital interfaces for automated returns. Supermarkets and vending machine manufacturers in Germany currently use barcodes and data-matrix codes, while reusable packaging system providers prefer QR codes. For new reuse systems, automated returns should be facilitated through serialised printing. We recommend that industry representatives agree on standardised codes.

