

BEST PRACTICE ANDRÒMINES

Submitted by: Dom Spain

An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline with rocky cliffs and clear turquoise water. A large, semi-transparent blue circle is overlaid on the right side of the image. In the center, a white circle contains the text 'CIRCULAR ALBANIA TOURISM'.

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ALBANIA
TOURISM



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INTRODUCTION



SECTION 1: BASIC INFORMATION

- Title of the Best Practice: Andròmines - Take your plastic back!
- Website of the Practice: <https://espigoladors.cat/https://andromines.net/es/proyectos/precious-plastic/>
- Social Media links: <https://www.facebook.com/AndrominesInsercioMediambient/>
- Location: Stree Vallès, n° 57-59, El Prat de Llobregat (Barcelona, Spain).

SECTION 2: PRACTICE OVERVIEW

• Short Description of the Practice:

"Take Your Plastic Back" is a circular economy initiative by Andròmines in collaboration with AC Hotels in Barcelona. It focuses on transforming plastic waste collected from hotels into Panot de Andròmines souvenirs, which are iconic four-petal flower-shaped tiles made from recycled HDPE (high-density polyethylene) bottles and PP (Polypropylene) caps. These tiles are inspired by the historic pavement design of Barcelona. The project has dual objectives: to promote environmental sustainability by reducing plastic waste locally through low-emission recycling, resulting in a minimum 25% reduction in CO2 emissions, and to foster social and labour inclusion for vulnerable groups. By managing waste locally and creating symbolic products, the initiative encourages responsible consumption and demonstrates the positive impact of local action on both environmental and social challenges.

- Implementation Period: 1993 - ongoing
- Status:

☐ Planned ☐ Pilot phase ☐ Fully implemented ☒ Ongoing and evolving

• Thematic Areas Addressed:

☐ Farm to Fork / Sustainable Food Systems
☒ Waste Management
☐ Resource Efficiency
☐ Other: _____

• Describe how the practice aligns with the selected Thematic Areas:

The "Take Your Plastic Back" initiative is an example of sustainable waste management that combines environmental responsibility with social impact. By collecting plastic waste from hotels and transforming it into meaningful souvenirs, such as the iconic Panot of Barcelona, the project embraces the core principles of a circular economy. Instead of allowing this plastic to become waste destined for landfills, incineration, or even export to countries with poor waste management infrastructure, the programme processes it locally. Environmentally, this demonstrates a more efficient and responsible method of resource use. By transforming waste into culturally significant items, the project offers an authentic experience that appeals to modern travellers, proving that sustainability is not only good for the planet but also strengthens a destination's brand identity and marketing appeal.

• Explain how this activity fits within the tourism sector:

The "Take Your Plastic Back" initiative integrates into the tourism sector, offering a clear model for other companies to follow. It begins with hotels collecting plastic waste from guests and daily operations, diverting it from the conventional waste stream. This plastic is then locally transformed into culturally significant souvenirs, like the iconic Barcelona Panot tile. This practice provides a tangible example of a closed-loop system within the hospitality industry. Hotels do not just manage waste; they actively repurpose it, resulting in a new product with both cultural and environmental value. This not only reduces the carbon footprint but also engages tourists, allowing them to support a sustainable, local initiative directly. The model demonstrates that collaborating with circular initiatives can turn a waste problem into a unique, marketable asset, aligning with the principles of ethical and sustainable tourism.





- **What learning value for VET training, curriculum development or capacity-building of professionals does the practice offer?**

This initiative provides a powerful learning model for VET programmes and professionals, shifting the focus from simply reducing waste to actively repurposing it. It demonstrates how to turn a common operational challenge—plastic waste—into a tangible asset through collaboration.

For hospitality students and professionals, this practice teaches the value of implementing a circular economy within hotels and restaurants. Instead of just recycling, they learn how to partner with local initiatives like Andròmines to turn plastic bottles and caps from guest and kitchen waste into new, marketable products like the Panot souvenirs.

SECTION 3: CHALLENGES AND ALIGNMENT WITH CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES

- **What challenges or barriers were addressed?**

- ☒ Waste management and disposal
- ☐ Energy/resource use
- ☐ Infrastructure limitations
- ☐ Seasonality
- ☐ Skills and capacity gaps
- ☒ Low awareness of CE
- ☐ Behavioural resistance
- ☐ Financial or funding constraints
- ☐ Other : _____

- **How were these challenges overcome?**

The initiative addresses local plastic waste problems by creating a closed-loop recycling system. Plastic waste from hotels is collected, sorted, and processed locally, reducing the need to export waste abroad. This improves waste traceability, minimises environmental impact, and creates a sustainable waste management model directly linked to the tourism sector. Moreover, the production and sale of Panot souvenirs helped raise public and tourist awareness of Circular Economy concepts. Through communication efforts and hotel partnerships, the project highlighted how plastic waste can be transformed into meaningful, culturally relevant products, encouraging more sustainable consumer behaviours, and the initiative generates income to support ongoing operations. This self-financing model reduces dependency on external funding, ensuring long-term sustainability.

- **Which circular economy strategies does this practice address?**

- ☒ Waste reduction / reuse / recycling
- ☐ Renewable energy / energy efficiency
- ☐ Water conservation
- ☐ Circular product / service design
- ☐ Sustainable food systems / short food chains
- ☐ Eco-certifications or green standards
- ☐ Repair, refurbishment, or reuse of infrastructure / furnishings
- ☐ Digital tools for circularity or sustainability

- **Describe why this practice can be considered as a 'best practice' and how it contributes to one or more circular economy principles:**

The "Take Your Plastic Back" initiative is a best practice because it offers a measurable model for a circular tourism economy initiative. It goes beyond simple recycling by creating a complete closed-loop system within the hospitality sector. This practice directly contributes to several circular economy principles:

- **Keeping Resources in Use:** The initiative actively intercepts plastic waste from hotels and transforms it into new, valuable souvenirs.
- **Designing Out Waste:** By turning plastic waste into a desirable product, the project fundamentally changes how waste is perceived, demonstrating that it can be a valuable resource rather than a liability.





- **Describe why this practice can be considered innovative. What new, creative or underused approach brings added value to circular tourism development?**

This hyper-local circular model transforms a common problem, plastic waste, into an opportunity for education, engagement, and economic empowerment. A particularly creative aspect is the use of the Panot, an iconic symbol of Barcelona, as the product design. By embedding local heritage into circular product design, the project turns a recycled item into a desirable, story-rich souvenir. Moreover, the initiative introduces a self-financing model for circularity. Producing and selling souvenirs reduces dependence on external funding, ensuring long-term viability.

SECTION 4: COLLABORATION

- **Describe any collaboration that were involved in the development of this practice? this practice involve local authorities or other groups?**

The main collaboration is with AC Hotels that plays a central role in the success and implementation of the "Take Your Plastic Back" initiative. As a key hospitality partner, AC Hotels provides the primary source of raw materials, specifically, plastic waste generated by guests, such as HDPE bottles and PP caps. These materials are collected directly from the hotel's operations, integrating the initiative into the daily waste management practices of the hotel.

SECTION 5: RESULTS AND REPLICABILITY

- **What measurable results or outcomes were achieved?**

The "Take Your Plastic Back" initiative has yielded several measurable results that demonstrate a successful circular economy model. The project transformed 92 kg of plastic waste from hotels into new products, specifically 672 "Panot" souvenirs. This process directly prevented the plastic from being exported to countries in Africa and Asia, a common practice in Europe. By reprocessing the plastic locally, the initiative achieved a minimum of 25% reduction in CO2 emissions per kilogram of plastic compared to conventional methods. This translates to a maximum of only 0.56 kg of CO2 equivalent for every kilogram of plastic transformed. The initiative not only reduces environmental impact but also creates a new, locally produced product, highlighting the value of waste and reinforcing a positive sustainability message to tourists.

- **Why is this practice relevant to the Albanian tourism context?**

"Take Your Plastic Back" is highly relevant to Albania's tourism context, given the country's rapid growth. Many destinations, particularly in rural areas, often struggle with effective waste management. This initiative offers a tangible solution by demonstrating how hotels can manage their own plastic waste locally. By collecting and transforming plastic bottles and caps into unique, culturally significant souvenirs, the practice mitigates pollution that can harm natural environments vital for tourism. This local circular loop eliminates the need for costly and carbon-intensive waste transport.

- **What is the practice's potential for further expansion? How can it be applied or adapted to other Albanian tourism destinations or businesses?**

"Take Your Plastic Back" has significant potential for expansion in Albania's rapidly growing tourism sector. It can be easily adapted by hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses across the country. These businesses can implement simple collection schemes for specific plastic waste types like HDPE (from shampoo bottles) and PP (from bottle caps). This extends beyond guest waste to include compatible plastics from kitchens and laundries, establishing a comprehensive internal waste management system. The collected plastic can then be directed to local organisations for repurposing. Albania has specialised waste management and recycling companies that can collaborate with the tourism sector. For example, Polymeran General Recycle Albania and Green Recycling are two companies that recycle various plastic polymers, including PET, PP, and HDPE, using modern technology. Partnering with such organisations would allow tourism businesses to create a tangible circular loop, transforming their waste into new products.



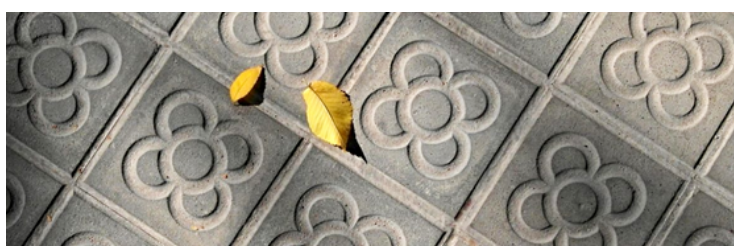


- **What advice would you give others looking to implement a similar initiative?**

For hotels, restaurants, and even VET schools, building strong partnerships with local circular economy organisations or recycling companies is key to effective waste processing. A great first step is to focus on specific, manageable waste streams like plastic bottles and caps to establish an efficient workflow. For tourism businesses, communicating this sustainability story to their guests and visitors is vital, as it not only enhances the customer experience but also boosts their brand's reputation for environmental responsibility.

SECTION 6: PICTURES

- **Pictures of the practice:**



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