



Reuse Workshop for Stadiums: How to Upgrade Your Venue to Zero-Waste

MEETING SUMMARY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Advancing reuse systems as a legacy opportunity for FIFA World Cup 2026 in Canada.

On March 28, 2025, Oceana Canada and the City of Toronto FIFA Secretariat co-hosted a half-day workshop in Toronto to explore opportunities for advancing reuse systems in stadiums and large event venues ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 (FWC26). The workshop brought together 62 participants — including representatives from government, venue operations, food and beverage providers, reuse companies, and civil society — to examine the feasibility, challenges, and opportunities associated with transitioning away from single-use systems for food and beverage service to reusable systems.

The workshop featured presentations from public policy experts, government representatives, venue operators, reuse companies, and environmental organizations (*see Appendix B*). The presentations covered existing and emerging single-use regulations, the experiences of transitioning large venues operations to reuse systems, the logistics of delivering reuse systems in large venues, the financials of reuse vs. single-use, the environmental benefits of reuse, and the economic opportunities for communities associated with scaling up reuse operations.

Participants engaged in discussions that covered reusable foodware (cups, plates, cutlery) systems currently available on the market, financial models, customer experience, infrastructure requirements, the role of business leadership in reuse, the public policies that foster reuse, the realities of venue operations, and the impacts of supply chain disruptions and tariffs. Reuse systems were consistently cited as a promising solution to reduce waste, strengthen supply chain resilience, and support local economic development.

While perspectives varied, there was broad agreement that reuse systems offer a viable pathway toward achieving sustainability in large venues and support FWC26 host city legacy goals. Participants noted the potential to eliminate millions of single-use items, create green jobs, and demonstrate environmental leadership. Participants emphasized that reuse system implementation at large venues would benefit from clear public policy direction, collaborative procurement strategies, accessible infrastructure, and proactive communication with both venue staff and fans.

Based on these discussions, Oceana Canada developed the following recommendations to help advance reuse systems in advance of FWC26:

1. Venue operators should issue a request for proposal (RFP) for reuse systems.
2. FWC26 host cities should develop bylaws that require reusable foodware for dine-in food and beverage service at venues such as restaurants, stadiums and festivals.
3. Venue operators should immediately enhance free and easy access to water fountains and other existing refill and reuse infrastructure, supported by customer communication.
4. Reusable foodware systems should begin to be phased-in well in advance of FWC26 at event associated venues and festivals.

This summary reflects insights shared by participants. It does not represent the official positions of any single organization or the City of Toronto.

1. ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

1.1. Overview

On March 28, 2025, Oceana Canada and the City of Toronto FIFA Secretariat co-hosted a half-day workshop to explore the feasibility of implementing reuse systems at stadiums and large event venues in Toronto and Vancouver to reduce unnecessary single-use waste. The goal of the workshop was to learn about the reuse operations available in FIFA World Cup 2026 (FWC26) host cities and how host city venues could become zero-waste.

Local stakeholders had already expressed concern about the volume of single-use waste expected at FWC26 related events. The workshop brought together subject matter experts and decision-makers across environmental policy, sustainability, venue operations, food and beverage systems, reuse operations, and event management to explore how reuse systems could support both sustainability and FWC26 legacy goals.

Participants discussed the potential for reuse to help host cities transition toward zero-waste, while creating benefits for local communities, economies, and the environment.

1.2. Format

The workshop was hosted in a hybrid format, with participants joining in-person at Toronto City Hall and virtually via teleconference. Participants were curated by Oceana Canada and the City of Toronto FIFA Secretariat and included representatives directly involved in, or impacted by, FWC26.

The agenda featured three thematic blocks of presentations by subject matter experts, reuse companies, venue operators, and civil society organizations (*see Appendix A*). Each presentation block was followed by open Q&A sessions, encouraging dialogue and feedback based on the information shared. The day concluded with a summary of what we heard from presenters and participants.

To promote open dialogue while protecting confidential business information, the meeting followed Chatham House Rule. This allowed insights to be shared without attribution.

1.3. Participants

In total, 62 participants (43 in-person, 19 virtual) attended the workshop. They represented organizations from Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec, and the United States of America (USA). Sectors represented included government, reuse operations, food and beverage companies, venue operations, event management, and environmental organizations.

Affiliation	Representation
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Government	Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MOECP); Ontario Ministry of Sport; British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sports (TACS); British Columbia Ministry of Environment; City of Toronto; City of Vancouver
Reuse operations	Muuse; Arrise; Suppli; ShareWares; r.World; Upstream Solutions; Friendlier; O'Land Stations
Venue operations	Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE); Live Nation; BC Place; Pavilion Company; Exhibition Place; The Canadian National Exhibition; Green Sports Alliance (GSA)
Food and beverage	Coca-Cola Canada; The Canadian Beverage Association; The Beer Store
Other	Oceana Canada; FIFA World Cup 2026 (Canada); Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA); Environmental Defence; Canada Games Council

2. KEY TAKEAWAYS

2.1. Policy

Globally, regulations are increasingly supporting reuse systems and restricting single-use items. Workshop discussions highlighted:

- An internationally legally-binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment¹ (often referred to as the “global plastics treaty”) is currently being developed at the United Nations with participation from over 170 member states. This draft instrument includes sections that would prohibit the manufacturing and distribution of many single-use items, establish standard product design guidelines on beverage containers, and include reuse requirements for packaging and foodware.² Major industry players, including Coca-Cola,³ have expressed support for such measures.⁴
- The European Union’s regulation on packaging and packaging waste aims to reduce and prevent single-use packaging waste by requiring reuse and refill systems for common products.⁵ France has already mandated reusable foodware for dine-in settings such as restaurants.⁶
- Chile has enacted legislation restricting single-use items and promoting reusable foodware at restaurants, food courts and venues, as well as in the beverage bottling industry.⁷
- In Canada, there has been a myriad of regulations and by-laws at the national and sub-national level that prohibit the distribution of single-use items or require the use of reuseable foodware, including:
 - The federal single-use plastic prohibition⁸ and pollution prevention plan for major grocers.⁹

- Provincial bans on single-use packaging and items.^{10, 11}
- Banff's single-use item reduction strategy.¹²
- Edmonton's single-use item by-law.¹³
- Montreal's single-use plastic by-law.¹⁴
- Victoria's single-use item reduction by-law.¹⁵
- Toronto's phase 3 single-use and take-away items reduction strategy.¹⁶

Participants agreed that regulations and by-laws can create a level playing field, drive demand for reuse, and enable developing shared infrastructure like reusable products inventories and washing hubs.

Discussions highlighted that regulations or by-laws are most effective when they require reuse in a closed setting, such as event large venues and restaurants, rather than targeting a specific material used to make a single-use product. Material-focused regulations may lead to replacing one single-use item for another. These substitutions, also known as regrettable substitutions, may still go to a landfill or enter the environment. The substitution does not necessarily support zero-waste or sustainability goals. Special attention to these technical loopholes should be considered when drafting regulations or by-laws to avoid regrettable substitution or other policy circumvention.

Ahead of potential regulatory changes, many businesses are already piloting or fully integrating reuse systems across Canada and the USA. Participants discussed how these early adopters can help shape future policy by sharing operational insights and best practices.

Participants also noted that when stadiums or event venues proactively adopt reuse as part of their zero-waste strategies — such as Live Nation in Atlanta,¹⁷ The Beer Store in Ontario,¹⁸ Starbucks in North America,¹⁹ Coca-Cola in El Paso, Texas,²⁰ The Moda Center in Portland, Oregon,²¹ and various sporting venues across Canada and the USA²² — they position themselves as “future-proof,” reducing their exposure to future regulations and aligning with evolving public and environmental expectations.

2.2. Reuse operations in Canada

Participants acknowledged that while reuse has declined in many sectors, such as food packaging and non-alcoholic beverages, it remains common in cafes (e.g., reusable mugs and plates), restaurants (e.g., plates, glasses, and cutlery), bulk food stores, and alcohol sales. Everyday items like ceramic plates, cloth napkins, and metal cutlery in restaurants, or glasses and snack bowls in bars, were also noted as practical examples of reuse systems still in use.

At the same time, participants raised concerns about whether Canadian reuse companies currently have the operational capacity and commercial experience to meet the needs of large venues like stadiums and arenas.

Several reuse companies based in Toronto and Vancouver shared their experiences delivering reusable foodware systems at scale for major delivery platforms, restaurant chains, stadiums, festivals, and city-wide borrowing programs. Notably, these reuse companies have provided services for UberEats, SkipThe Dishes, Tim Hortons, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, BC Place, Brand Live, Evergreen Brickworks, Osheaga, Vancouver Folk Festival, Vogue Theatre, and The Town of Banff.

The Canadian reuse companies that presented at the workshop offer a wide range of foodware products suitable for large venues, including hot and cold beverage containers, plates, trays, take-out containers, and cutlery. These items come in various materials (such as metals, plastics, and glass), sizes, and designs. In addition to foodware, mobile water refill stations are also available in Canada to support reuse at pop-up events or venues.

Presenters made it clear that it is feasible for Canadian reuse companies to serve the high-volume capacity of stadiums and large venues. However, it was raised by reuse companies that it is not financially feasible for them to expand their operations to service stadiums without an advanced order or agreement in place from venue operators. Simply put, once orders for reuse are placed, Canadian companies can and will fulfill them, but they need the support and investment up front. Venue operators also need to take into consideration the lead time for reuse companies to expand, deploy and trial reuse operations with venue staff and customers.

Infrastructure was highlighted as another critical factor. Centrally located wash hubs — facilities where reusable items are collected, cleaned, and redistributed — are essential for streamlined, cost-effective operations and enhance the growth and scaling up of reuse operations. The location and size of wash hubs directly influence a reuse provider's capacity to service larger clients. Both Toronto and Vancouver have wash hubs in operation, and Canada's broader network of wash hubs continues to grow.

Participants noted that the “entertainment districts” in Toronto and Vancouver, with their concentration of large venues and recurring events, are ideal locations for expanding wash hub infrastructure. Wash hubs also generate local employment, creating green jobs that could otherwise go to multinational companies supplying disposable products.

Finally, participants discussed how multiple venues and stakeholders could share a single inventory of reusable products, since large events are typically held at different times. This kind of collaboration could lower overhead costs for both reuse companies and venue operators, increase efficiency, and help scale reuse across cities.

2.3. Venue operations requirements

Stadiums and large venues have specific operational needs when it comes to foodware. Venue operators and event managers at the workshop identified the following key requirements:

- Stackable design for efficient storage and service.
- Temperature retention for both hot and cold drinks.
- Safety features to prevent items from being used as projectiles.

- Visually appealing presentation.
- High standards of sanitation and hygiene.
- Minimal disruption to customer flow at counters and fountains.
- Maintenance or enhancement of the overall customer experience.

Participants from across sectors agreed that these requirements are essential for successful implementation of reuse systems in large venue settings. Reuse companies confirmed that these criteria can be met, either within a single company's operations or through partnerships across the reuse sector.

Canadian reuse companies offer:

- A variety of product materials, including plastics, metals, and glass.
- Transparent supply chains and sanitization processes.
- Digital tracking technology for inventory and life cycle management.
- Multiple product types (cups, plates, trays, etc.) and sizes to fit different venue needs.
- Products designed for thermal performance.
- Demonstrated data on positive customer experiences.

Stadiums and large venues may vary in their operational needs, requiring a mix of reusable products and systems tailored to different zones. For example, VIP lounges are typically seated and more controlled environments, allowing for more durable and upscale products (e.g., glass and metal). In contrast, general admission areas would prioritize lightweight, stackable items that support quick service and ease of use (e.g., plastic).

Participants emphasized that successful reuse operations often include a phased rollout to allow venue staff to adjust to new products and collection procedures. This is not always the case, as some venues have deployed full reuse operations without pilots and been successful. Clear communication with customers is also essential to improve return rates and ensure a smooth user experience. When questions were raised about customer hesitation due to hygiene, both reuse companies and venue operators already using reuse systems reported no pushback. In fact, customer feedback was largely positive, with guests appreciating the environmental benefits and overall experience.

To minimize logistical challenges, major venues — including stadiums, arenas, festivals, and amphitheatres— can help reuse companies plan and deliver by sharing reliable operational metrics, such as forecasted event dates and expected attendance.

Participants also discussed the role of deposit-return systems. While deposits can incentivize item returns, they may complicate the customer experience by requiring additional steps for refunds, either through at counter transactions or digital apps, and could increase the likelihood of guests taking items home as souvenirs. Reuse companies noted that although deposits can help offset inventory loss, they may negatively impact customer flow and satisfaction if not carefully designed.

2.4. Financial feasibility

Stadium and venue operators raised concerns about the cost of transitioning from single-use to reusable foodware systems, noting that single-use items are currently viewed as the most cost-effective method for food and beverage service. While reuse systems do require upfront investment, particularly for the initial inventory of reusable products, participants emphasized the importance of considering the full cost picture of single use versus reuse.

Key factors influencing financial feasibility of reuse include:

- **Leveraging and enhancing existing infrastructure:** Stadiums and large venues already have some reuse-friendly infrastructure, such as draft lines, pop fountains, and water fountains. Venue operators should build on this by clearly communicating – online, on tickets, and on site – the benefits of reuse and that guests are encouraged to bring reusables. More defined signage highlighting the location of reuse infrastructure such as water fountains would encourage usage. When infrastructure upgrades are made, such as adding “return” bins for reusables, all bin types should be co-located and visually distinct through color coding and unique lids. Participants shared that orange is commonly associated with reuse for bin labelling. Lids of bins can be redesigned to be hyper-specific to the product that would be deposited. For example, bins only looking to capture cups can have a small round, well-marked opening and those looking to only capture pizza trays can have a thin, well-marked opening. Ultimately, reuse systems must be intuitive and convenient for guests, and the venue should make it as easy as possible for customers to sort products.
- **Reusables as retained assets:** Reusable items should be treated as valuable inventory that remains on-site. High return rates reduce the need for ongoing repurchasing, unlike single-use items, which must be replenished for every event.
- **Supply chain stability:** Reuse systems are more resilient to price volatility, global supply disruptions, and tariffs. With fewer material inputs after the initial purchase, they offer greater cost predictability and transparency, especially when sourced from local suppliers.
- **Shared inventory:** In cities like Toronto and Vancouver, venues can share reusable stock across events, maximizing use while minimizing costs. This collaborative model improves efficiency and helps scale reuse more quickly.
- **Lower waste management costs:** Single-use items generate ongoing disposal costs and may trigger extended producer responsibility (EPR) fees. Reuse systems reduce waste and often include services like cleaning, storage and logistics provided by the reuse companies.
- **Revenue and sponsorship opportunities:** Branding and sponsorships on reusable items—such as cups, return bins, and signage—can offset system costs. Major events like FWC26 provide added visibility to attract partners. Reuse costs can also be integrated into product pricing to reduce capital burden and accelerate return on investment (ROI).
- **Risk mitigation:** Investing in reuse now helps future-proof venues against evolving regulations and shifting consumer expectations. Phased trials allow operators to test and refine systems before wider rollouts, reducing the risk of rushed transitions or reputational missteps.

ROI timelines vary based on system scale, multi-venue shared inventory, materials used, and the availability of sponsorships. In some cases, reuse providers have reported breaking even as early as within a year. Workshop participants noted that venue operators issuing a request for proposal (RFP) for reuse products and systems is the most effective way to determine the actual costs of transitioning to reuse. Standardized RFPs are available through reuse support organizations.²³

2.5. Materials and environmental impact

Venue operators had many questions over which product material is best for sustainability and environmental impact. Currently, many stadiums and large venues in Toronto and Vancouver use a mixture of single-use foodware products made from paper, metals, and plastics.

Participants expressed a range of views on the environmental performance of different materials. They emphasized the importance of assessing full lifecycle impacts of each material, as well as the capacity of local recycling and waste management infrastructure.

For example:

- Plastic was noted for being lightweight and having a relatively low carbon footprint as a product. However, this does not account for emissions from fossil fuel extraction, long-distance shipping, low recycling rates, and the environmental risks of plastic pollution when leaked into the environment.
- Aluminum was seen as a high-quality, recyclable material, but concerns were raised about the environmental toll of mining operations and energy-intensive, global supply chains required for its production and recycling. Participants also noted that single-use aluminum cups used in Toronto are often lined with a thin layer of weak plastic, which renders them non-reusable and unsuitable for commercial dishwashing.

A study presented at the workshop estimated that a shift to reuse at Canadian FWC26 host venues could prevent up to 2.3 million single-use items from entering the waste stream during the tournament.

In the end, there was strong consensus that reusable systems, regardless of material, offer significantly lower environmental impacts than single-use alternatives due to their lack of new material production. Reuse was widely seen as a meaningful and tangible sustainability legacy for FWC26 host cities.

3. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Reuse companies and venue operators reported that reuse systems contribute to a more positive and engaging customer experience. Feedback from fans and guests suggests that using reusable products — rather than contributing to single-use waste — enhances their overall impression of the venue and aligns with their environmental and social values.

In premium areas such as VIP lounges or private bars, durable and higher-end reusable items like glass or steel help elevate the experience, creating a sense of distinction and quality. In general admission areas, reuse companies and venue operators shared that customers noted knowing their foodware wasn't going to landfill or the environment made them feel good about their choices. These positive associations extend to the venue, its operations, and the food and beverage providers. Participants also noted that partnerships with local reuse companies amplify a "support local" message that resonated strongly with guests. Reuse helps create a guilt-free fan experience, minimizing waste and offering fans a chance to be part of a larger movement toward sustainability.

Workshop participants also highlighted that FWC26 host cities have seen unprecedented levels of engagement in public consultations related to reuse. Stakeholder sessions and community surveys generated record-high response rates and revealed widespread public concern about single-use waste and strong support for zero-waste initiatives in establishments such as stadiums and restaurants.

Reuse systems also support local economic development and inclusive employment. The reuse economy generates jobs in delivery, collection, sorting, and washing — roles that can be filled by individuals from underserved or at-risk communities like seniors, people with disabilities or neurodivergences, justice-impacted individuals, and others seeking accessible employment pathways. In this way, reuse systems don't just reduce waste, they foster a sense of connection and community across the entire supply chain.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Following a half-day of presentations and collaborative discussion, Oceana Canada developed a set of proposed next steps in 2025 to support implementing reuse systems in stadiums and large venues ahead of FWC26. The following actions are intended to help advance reuse systems at scale, aligned with the tournament's timelines and legacy goals:

1. Issue RFPs for reuse systems

- a. Stadiums and venue operators, particularly those in Toronto and Vancouver's entertainment districts, should issue RFPs for large-scale reuse systems well in advance of FWC26 to allow time for operational scale-up.
- b. FWC26 host cities should include reuse requirements in their RFPs for fan festivals and vendor operations.
- c. Provincial and municipal governments and food and beverage providers should be informed of upcoming reuse RFPs and explore cost recovery or sponsorship opportunities.
- d. Venues should prioritize replacing single-use foodware with reusable alternatives wherever possible.

2. Publish by-laws requiring reuse at venues and restaurants

- a. FWC26 host cities should proceed with by-laws requiring restaurants, ticketed events, festivals, and large venues to provide reusable products for on-site dining and beverage service.
 - b. By-laws should include phased-in implementation timelines to allow for product testing and operational adaptation where necessary.
 - c. Implementation timelines for by-laws should align with FWC26 preparation milestones.
 - d. In jurisdictions where direct reuse mandates are not legally viable, host cities should consider prohibiting the sale of certain single-use items and strongly encourage reusable alternatives.
- 3. Enhance access to refill and reuse infrastructure**
- a. Venue operators should improve communication to customers through ticketing platforms, websites, and in-venue signage, highlighting infrastructure like water fountains and encouraging patrons to bring reusable bottles.
 - b. Deploy mobile water refill stations connected to existing plumbing for high-volume events, reducing reliance on single-use bottled beverages.
- 4. Advance reuse pilots at stadiums and venues**
- a. Venue operators should begin piloting reuse systems to give staff and customers time to become familiar with new products, return stations, and collection procedures.

About Oceana Canada

Oceana Canada was established as an independent charity in 2015 and is part of the largest international advocacy group dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana Canada has successfully campaigned to end the shark fin trade, make rebuilding depleted fish populations the law, improve the way fisheries are managed and protect marine habitat. We work with civil society, academics, fishers, Indigenous Peoples and Environment and Climate Change Canada to return Canada's formerly vibrant oceans to health and abundance. By restoring Canada's oceans, we can strengthen our communities, reap greater economic and nutritional benefits and protect our future.

APPENDIX A – AGENDA

 **Location:** Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor - Committee Room #2, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto

 **Date:** Friday March 28, 2025

Microsoft Teams videoconference link available in Outlook

TIME (ET)	TOPIC	PRESENTER
10:40 AM - 11:00 AM	<i>Coffee and networking</i>	
11:00 AM - 11:20 PM	Welcome	Toronto FIFA Secretariat
	Introduction to reuse	Oceana Canada
11:20 AM - 12:15 PM	Toronto's single-use bylaw	Solid Waste Management, City of Toronto
	Operations: What reuse at sports venues looks like – obstacles and success	Scott Jenkins, Founder of Green Sports Alliance & former VP of Facility Development for the KC Current, GM of Mercedes-Benz Stadium, VP Ballpark Operation for the Seattle Mariners
	Case study: Reuse at FIFA World Cup 2026 in Canada	Emily Alfred, Toronto Environmental Alliance
12:15 PM - 12:30 PM	Q&A open discussion	
12:30 PM - 1:00 PM	<i>Food and drinks</i>	
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM	Canadian reuse products, systems, and models	Scott Morrison, President, Arrise & Development Partner at Muuse
		Megan Takeda-Tully, Founder & CEO, Suppli
		Cody Irwin, Founder & CEO, ShareWares
1:45 PM - 2:05 PM	Q&A open discussion	
2:05 PM - 2:15 PM	<i>Food and drinks</i>	
2:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Reuse at stadiums and opportunities for FIFA World Cup 26 host cities	Michael Martin, CEO, r.World & Co-Founder, Music Sustainably Alliance
	A 10,000-Foot View of Reuse, and the Untapped Economic Potential of Reuse Systems in Cities and Provinces	Crystal Dreisbach, CEO, Upstream

	Q&A open discussion	
CLOSE	What we heard, what's next	Josh Laughren, Executive Director, Oceana Canada

APPENDIX B – PRESENTATIONS

Presenters were asked for permission to share presentation with attendees. Some presentations have been altered to protect proprietary information and/or to add context to slides.

Presentations can be found here: <https://oceana.ca/en/reuse-workshop-for-stadiums-how-to-upgrade-your-venue-to-zero-waste/>

REFERENCES

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- ³<https://www.businessforplasticstreaty.org/endorsers>
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- ¹⁴<https://montreal.ca/en/articles/single-use-plastic-what-you-need-to-know-about-legislation-20549>
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- ¹⁷<https://specialevents.livenation.com/blog/atlanta-first-us-city-to-implement-reusable-cup-system-at-live-nation-venues>
- ¹⁸<https://upstreamolutions.org/podcast/the-beer-store-vision>

¹⁹ <https://www.chowhound.com/1772287/starbucks-free-refill-dine-in-policy/>

²⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR_E5dKcVFw

²¹ <https://www.greensportsalliance.org/media/bold-reuse-portland-trail-blazers-and-levy-launch-rip-city-reuse-the-first-largescale-reusable-cup-program-within-u-s-professional-sports>

²² <https://www.greensportsalliance.org/playbooks/reuse>

²³ <https://upstreamolutions.org/roadmap-to-reuse/#resources>