

# Why Hotels do not Go Reusable: Managers' Mental Frames and the (Non-)Adoption of Sustainability Innovations

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## **Abstract**

Across European hospitality, sustainability innovation now targets cutting single-use materials, with reusable packaging systems promoted by regulators as a key lever. In Germany, reusable-offer obligation in food service defines these systems as tools to reduce waste and emissions, yet many hotel managers remain hesitant to adopt this process innovation. Focusing on Germany's hospitality sector, we use a managerial cognition perspective and a multi-study design based on 185 guest surveys, 39 manager surveys, a stakeholder workshop with 14 participants and 9 expert interviews. We reveal a gap between market and legal signals that frame reusable as favorable innovation and managers' mental frames, which lean on symbolic compliance while discouraging the respective innovation. We derive actionable levers for policy makers and hospitality bodies to accelerate reusable system uptake and close the gap between regulatory ambition and operational practice.

**Track:** Tourism Marketing