

HERE WE SUPPORT NATURE!

#ECOstars – Making waste “cool and trendy”

Campaign among F&B SMEs, hotels, fitness centers, schools, universities and outdoor events for separate collection



Too busy to recycle?

- Food & beverage small business enterprises (F&B SMEs) have always been quite busy. Securing fresh produce, kind staff, and attractive menu is an everyday struggle. Not to mention the long-term challenges to stand out in the jungle of competition, find your way through the labyrinth of regulations and keep up with the steep consumers expectations. That is actually true for any SME, not only restaurants, bars, cafés and fitness centers. It is not surprising that separate collection and recycling of waste in general is not been on the top of their priorities. In tourism-centered country of Bulgaria it is a fact that the majority of managers and owners of food and beverage establishments say they never heard that they are legally obligated to collect waste separately. If they do not, they could be seriously fined.
- Misinformation aside, there were also other reasons why they were not so eager to “recycle”. F.e. lack of space, lack of time, short of staff, employee motivation and worries about “waste image”.
- Put in their words, they are “too busy to recycle”
- **But in 2023, the leading Bulgarian packaging recovery organization Ecopack decided to change detachment to “attachment” and make SMEs proud “separate collectors & recyclers”**



Why?

The reality: F&B SMEs, hotels, fitness centers, schools, universities and outdoor events generate hundreds of tones of packaging waste, which can be much more cost effectively collected than household waste

- In 2022 the EU Single Use Plastic Directive set new targets for collection specifically for waste PET bottles for beverages up to 3 l. The obliged industry and respectively the leading producer responsibility organisations (PRO) in the country - Ecopack were faced with a threefold increase in collection rates. Starting from 30% in 2022 to 77% in 2025 and 90% in 2030.
- While the industry began looking at the establishment of a Deposit Return System with automatic vending machines at retail stores as the long-term solution to eventually reach 90% target by 2030, Ecopack, which was responsible for over 70% of PET bottles put on the market, had to meanwhile find a way to reach the targets until then.
- The solution of Ecopack was to **focus on the places, where PET bottle waste was most concentrated** and seek a balance of quality and quantity.
- For the last 19 years since separate collection started in Bulgaria, **small businesses, offices and retailers have been obliged by law to collect separately their waste and provide it to a licensed operator for recycling.** However, since state control and sanctions were somewhat loose, it remained just “a good intention” for most establishments .



The point of generation

- **Focus:** Ecopack decided to focus on where PET could most effectively collected at the point of generation and bring a ready-made and well packaged solution:
- The three biggest cities in Bulgaria – **over half of the country's population** – **Sofia, Plovdiv and Burgas**
- From 500 to 2000 bottles per day can be collected at a location depending on it profile.



Restaurants, bars, cafes,
serving drinks in PET bottles



Fitness/sport centers,
events



Schools and universities

Campaign:

RECYCLE AT YOUR ESTABLISHMENT!

JOIN the first ECOstars in Bulgaria!

The goal: to engage the management and staff of food, beverage and sport SMEs and schools and universities to collect separately for recycling.

The strategy:

- **First:** Accessible, free and easy service
- **Second:** Make separate collection “trendy&cool”

The challenge was to overcome the **widespread skepticism in the business owners and management** by a carefully crafted communication campaign, emphasizing on the social and environmental benefits of recycling, as well as the public image and recognition that comes with it.



РЕЦИКЛИРАЙ
В ТВОЕТО
ЗАВЕДЕНИЕ!



Бъди сред първите „ЕКОзвезди“ в България!

Free, easy and available

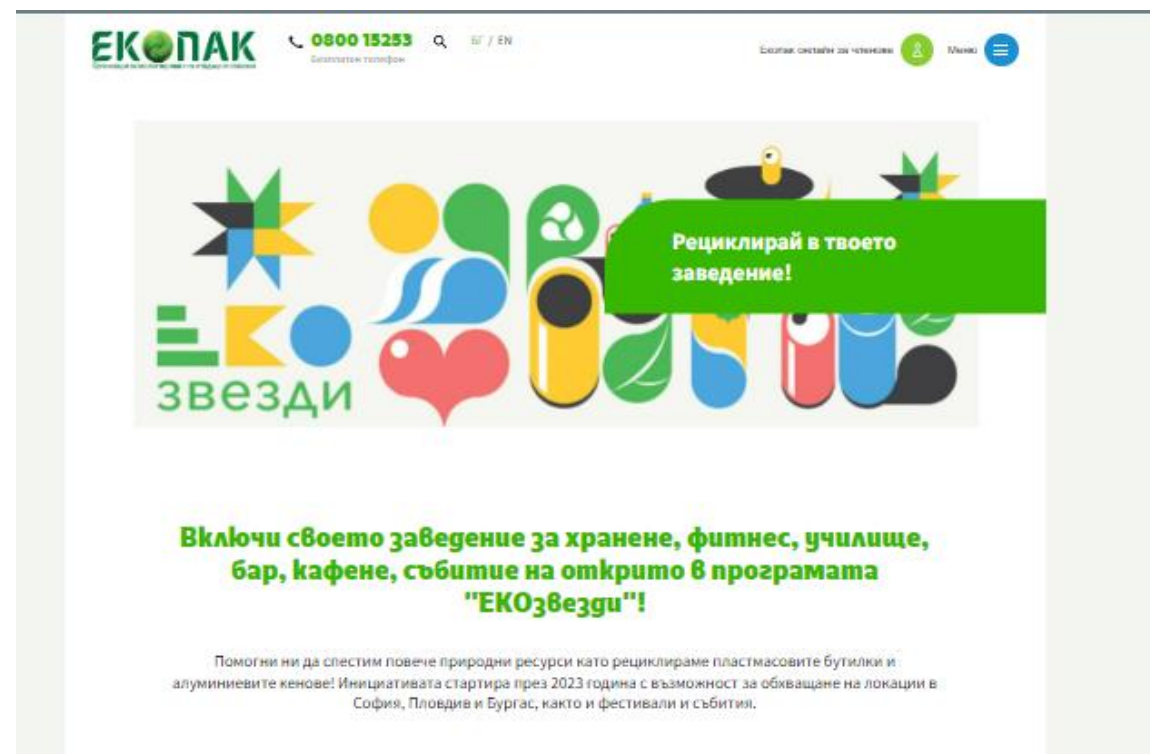
- 6 new trucks to only collect PET bottles from SME in Sofia, Plovdiv and Burgas (concentrating half of the country's population)
- **Free service on schedule and free bins** for collection to participation locations
- Recycling ECOstar trucks & bins looking **fun, trendy and cool**





Trendy #ECOstars
signage to make
waste collection
“cool”

- Trendy look and design – food and beverage establishments, schools, universities and fitness centers are triggered by being up-to-date with the last “call of fashion” in cooking, drinks, atmosphere ... and separate collection.
 - A special “ECOstars” sticker marked all participating locations, making “separate collection” an asset of trendy attitude to nature
 - The sign reads: **HERE WE SUPPORT NATURE!**



Easy online application form

- Any establishment can fill up a short and simple online application form to apply to join - <https://www.ecopack.bg/bg/eko-zvezdi>

Eco-rating platform



- All locations that join the campaign are listed in a specially created ecorating platform - <https://www.ecopack.bg/bg/zelena-aleja-na-slavata>
- Open for client and society endorsement – clients, employees and citizens are stimulated to express their 5-star support for the establishments efforts to collect separately and recycle (only once per location, but as many locations)



5/5звезди от клиенти ⓘ

125 гласували

Стария чинар София

бул. Княз Ал. Дондуков №71

ОЦЕНИ



THE FIRST ECORATING PLATFORM

An increasing list of all ECOstars – over 300 participants

ЕКОПАК 0800 152533

РЕЦИКЛИРАЙ СЕГА ЗА ПО-ДОБРО УТРЕ!

Гласувай и подкрепи заведенията, които помагат на природата!

Правила на томбола за 100 еконагради "Зелена алея на славата"

Официална страница Зелена алея на славата dot

Спечели в томбола за 100 еконагради!

Подкрепи, колкото забравения искаш

Колкото повече забравения подкрепиш, толкова по-голям шанс имаш да спечелиш от нашата томбола за 100 еконагради!

Можеш да влезеш за 1 забравение само безплатно

30 различни от рециклирани пластмасови бутилки (PET)

30 комплекта чанти за разделно събиране

40 чаша

Кафетерия Везато

Ресторант Палас

Фитхολик център

Ресторант Даяна Бургас

Ресторант Златна Рибка

Фабрик бар енд динър

Кинг-Конг Бургер

Зелена алея на славата

Blend Bar&dinner

Caramel Bar & dinner

Food Halle

Ресторант Къщата с часовника

Факултет по химия и фармация, Софийски университет "Св. Климент Охридски"

СНЕК БАР СПОРТЕС

Зелена алея на славата

Ресторант Месарницата на Южен Полът

Софийска гимназия по строителство, архитектура и геодезия Христо Ботев

Ресторант Утопия Форест

Утопия бийч парк

Утопия бийч парк

Хотел Утопия Форест



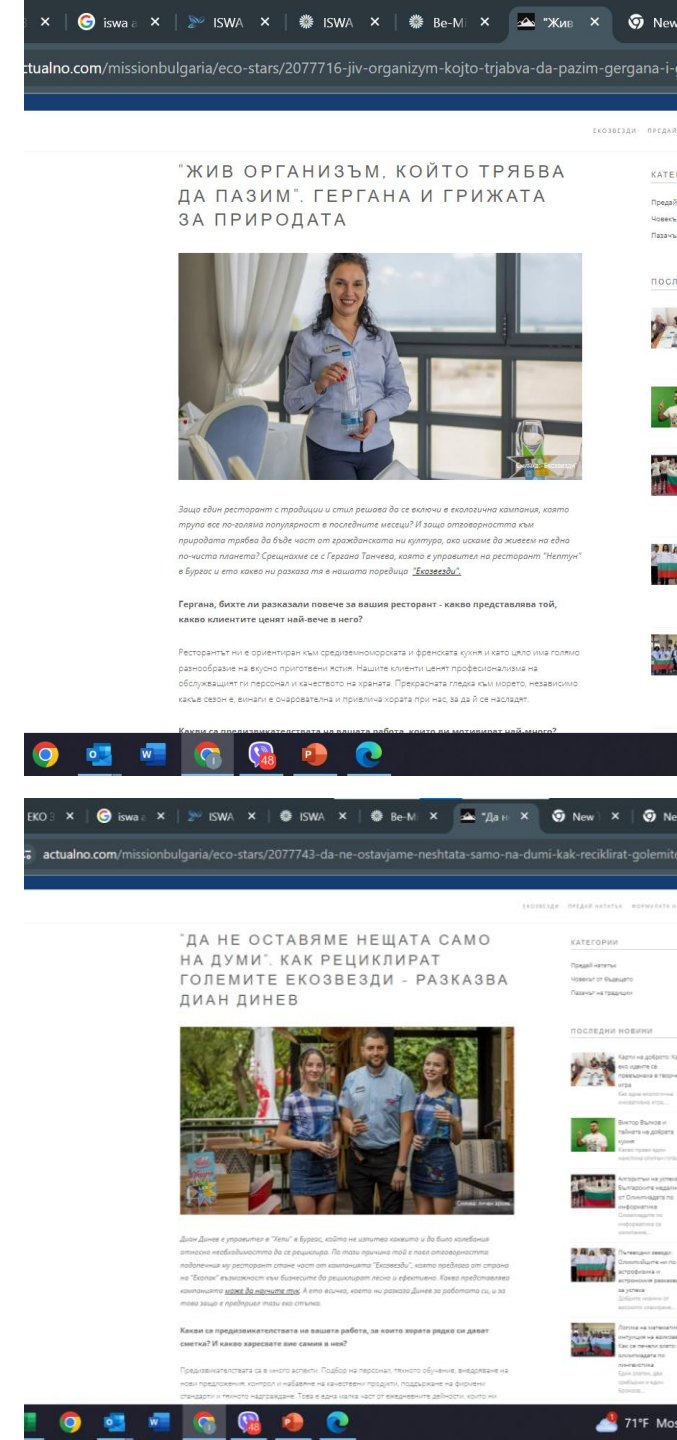
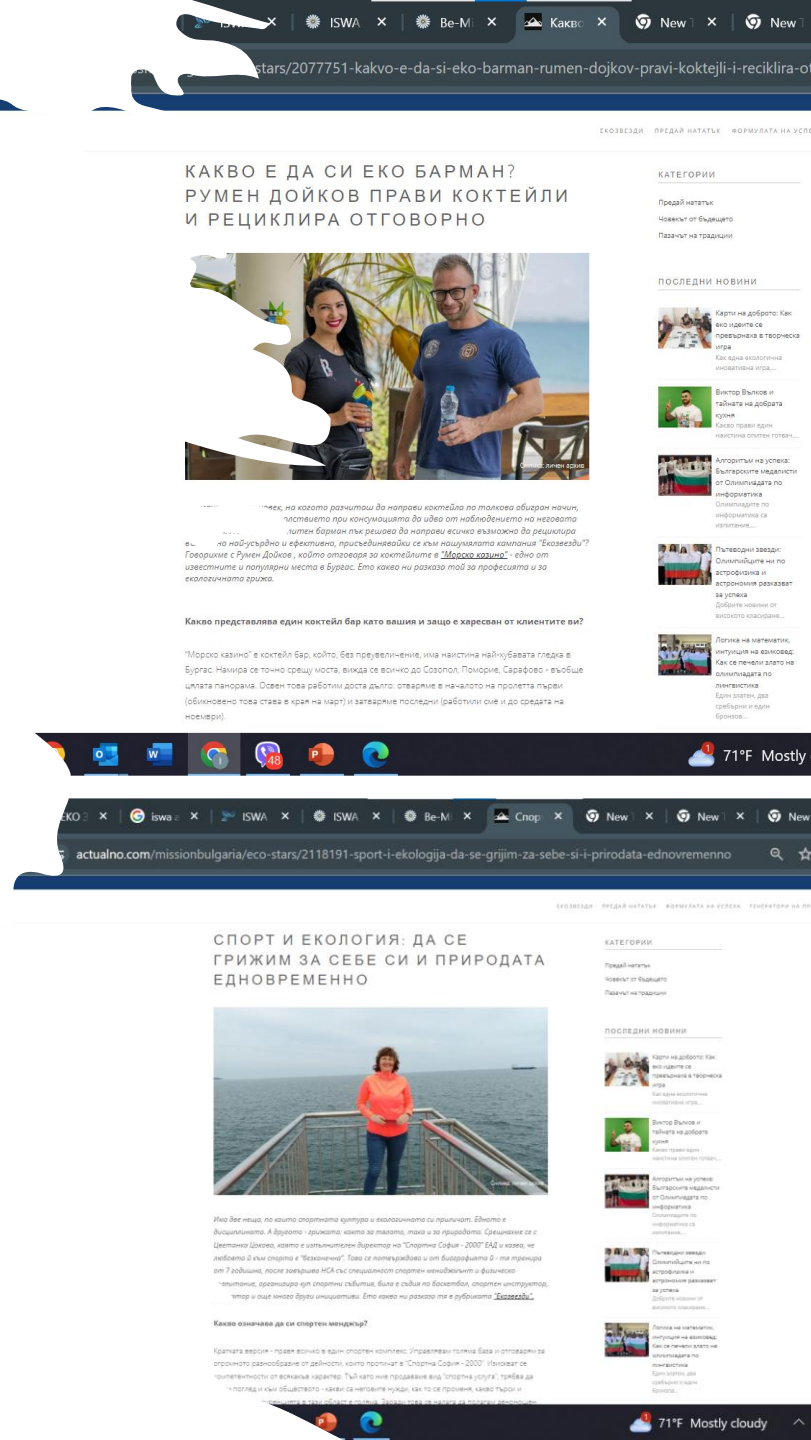
The importance of being earnest

- Deliberate engagement of ordinary people – employees or managers in participating establishments to endorse the “recycling cause” personally
- Two main “campaign faces ” - a fitness coach and a restaurant chef – non of whom were already “famous”
- “authentic storytellers” , who agreed to shoot photos and videos for the campaign without any royalty

“just ordinary” influencers

LET THEM Share the pride

- Another 15 establishments in Sofia, Plovdiv and Burgas also became #ECOstars ambassadors by
 - Media interviews profiling
 - Photo shoots at locations
- Social media posts to promote the people behind the campaign and their authentic stories, explaining why they care about recycling, nature, the future generation and the world we live in.



Awards - recognition

Ecopack along with partners and municipalities organized 3 award ceremonies – in Sofia, Plovdiv and Burgas for the top 20 schools, bars, fitness centers in the ecorating platform in each city.



Communication results (Jun'23 – March'24)

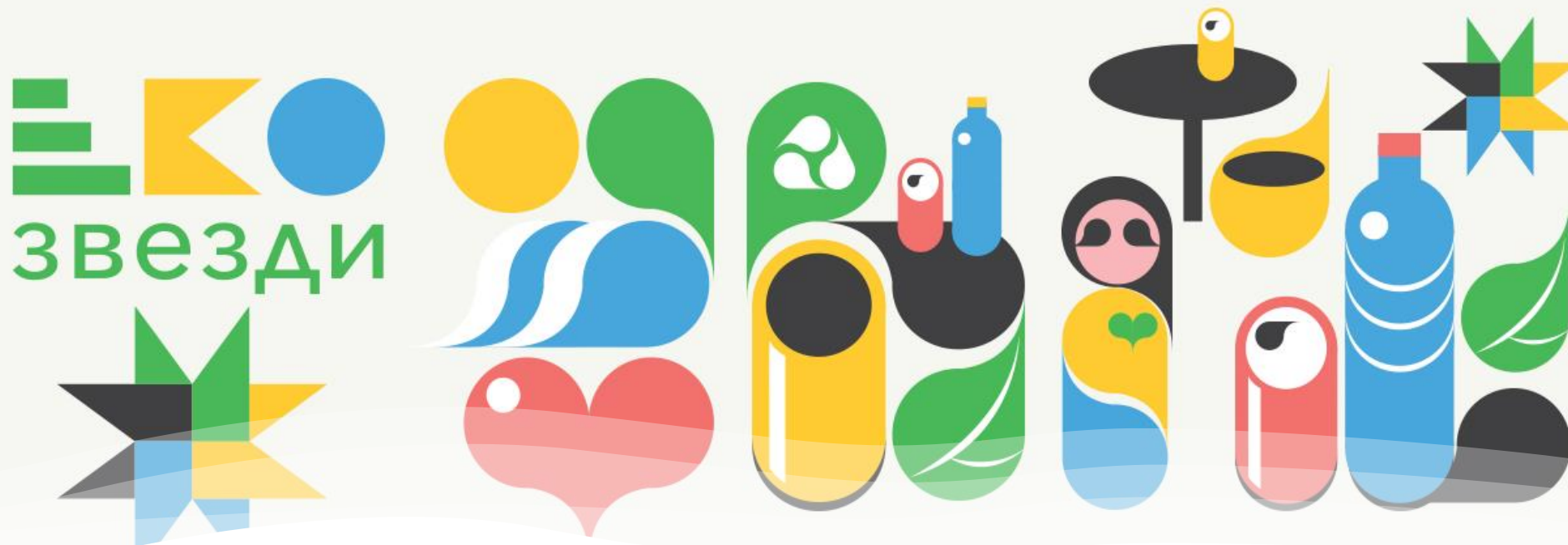
- FB/ Instagram
 - Reach: Over 500 000 unique viewers
 - Over 40 000 visits to the landing pages of the campaign and 121 000 engagements in
- Over 60 earned media publications, including **No1 rated TV channel evening news**
- Arena Cinema 30-sec pre-runs with co-branded promo clip shown to 20 000 viewers
- Reach of media interviews (promoting ecostars ambassadors) – 120 000
- Institutional support – deputy mayors in Sofia and Burgas as well as municipal councilors attended the award events

BTV evening news story on ECOstars



РЕЦИКЛИРАЙ В ТВОЕТО ЗАВЕДЕНИЕ!

www.ecopack.bg/eko-zvezdi



- The #ECOstars campaign managed to start the change in small businesses perception of separate collection – **transforming it from obligation to an asset to brag and be proud with.**
- In only 9 months the campaign participation achieved a trendy status supported by the over 9 000 votes for the 300 locations in the ecorating platform.
- With a very modest support for paid placements (both social and traditional media does not exceed 12 500 EUR for the whole 9-month period) ECOstars built its success mostly on organic interest and social sharing
- The campaign will continue in 2024 with a design re-vamp and targeted outdoor to further stimulate expansion, as well as loyalty and pride among the businesses and their “recycling” teams.