



Recycling in Gibraltar - Making it happen!



The Ministry for the Environment was pleased to announce that as from Monday 19th May 2008 distinctly coloured recycling bins will be installed throughout Gibraltar for the purposes of recycling both tin and glass. The items collected in these bins is subsequently being transferred to a recycling plant in Spain for completion of the recycling process.

The green bins should be used for depositing glass bottles, drinking glasses, tumblers and jars only. The yellow bins, on the other hand, should only be used for disposing aluminium and steel drink cans, steel food tins, household aerosols and clean aluminium foil as well as metal bottle tops and metal lids from the glass bottles and jars. Any bags used for carrying these items should not be deposited in either the green or yellow bins. In fact, no other types of refuse, other than glass or cans should be deposited in these bins. You were also advised on the launch of this initiative that items to be deposited in the recycling bins should be given a quick clean and separated for this purpose. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated as this will ensure the success of the recycling scheme.

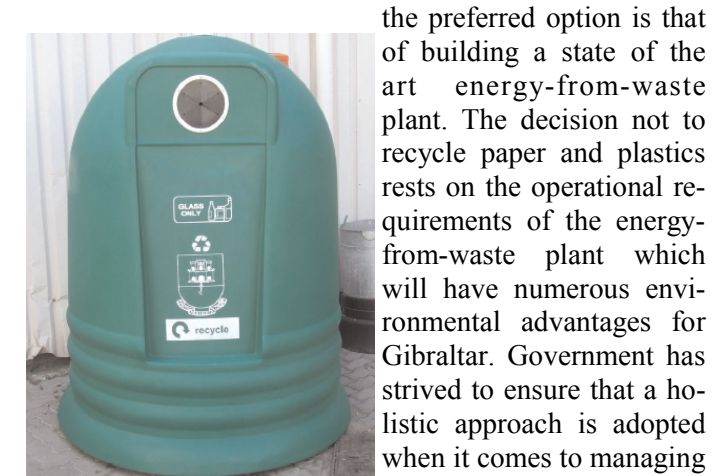


The launch of the scheme has seen numerous questions being asked such as where will the bins be located? Another question has been why are we not recycling paper and plastics? In terms of the actual location of the recycling bins, it should be stressed that this involves a process of trial and error whereby Government will identify those areas where there is a larger demand for containers and in doing so will have to relocate its resources accordingly. The size of the bins and the collection vehicle is also a limiting factor prohibiting the bins being placed in certain areas around Gibraltar. Nevertheless the bins are meant to be disposal points rather than the standard litter bins which are found throughout Gibraltar. The location of

the recycling bins is therefore under close review with the intention of providing the best possible service for recycling tin and glass in Gibraltar.

Recycling paper and plastic is somewhat more complex considering Gibraltar's need for self-sufficiency with regards to the management of waste produced locally. To this end, Government is currently drafting a Waste Management Strategy that will identify the best option for Gibraltar in terms of dealing with the majority of our waste including municipal waste.

Numerous strategies for dealing with the bulk of our municipal waste have been identified by Government and the preferred option is that of building a state of the art energy-from-waste plant. The decision not to recycle paper and plastics rests on the operational requirements of the energy-from-waste plant which will have numerous environmental advantages for Gibraltar. Government has strived to ensure that a holistic approach is adopted when it comes to managing our waste - one that ensures that Gibraltar sees tangible results from its 'waste resource' for the benefit of all.



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World Environment Day 2008

World Environment Day will be commemorated on the 5th June this year. This years theme, as chosen by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is *CO₂ - Kick the Habit*. The event will include an environmental trade fair which is open to the public . It will be held at the Tercentenary Sports Complex in the Victoria Stadium from 9.00 a.m to 2.00 p.m. For further information please contact the DoE on 50294.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment



These days, it's often cheaper and more convenient to buy a new piece of electrical and electronic equipment than to upgrade an old one. But what happens to old equipment once they've been abandoned for newer models? The refuse from discarded electronics products, also known as e-waste, often ends up in landfills or incinerators instead of being recycled. And that means toxic substances like lead, cadmium and mercury that are commonly used in these products can contaminate the land, water and air.

The broad aim of the Directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE Directive) is to address and minimise the environmental impacts of these items when they reach their end of life.

Dealing with this waste is an important issue as electronic goods are becoming increasingly short lived, and so ever increasing quantities of obsolete and broken equipment are thrown away. Electronic and electrical equipment makes up on average 4% of European municipal waste, and is growing three times faster than any other municipal waste stream.

Minister's column



It gives me great satisfaction to see the completion of the Department of the Environment's second issue of the newsletter *Enviro-watch*. I feel this is indeed an excellent opportunity to stress that the principle of raising awareness and providing general environmental information, that can be used by the public to make informed decisions, is a key component of Government's recognition to tackle the increasing plethora of global environmental issues.

'Thinking globally and acting locally' describes our respective commitment to better our environment. It also highlights the importance of the contributions that small communities like Gibraltar can have on collective problems such as climate change and waste management. I therefore hope that the publication of this issue of *Enviro-watch* is yet another small step in our determination to act locally and make a difference.

The Honourable Ernest Britto OBE ED

Electrical waste includes digital watches, fridges, TVs, computers and toys. Not only is this waste stream disparate in function but in addition the materials of which they are comprised vary considerably. For example an average TV contains 6% metal and 50% glass whereas a cooker is 89% metal and only 6% glass. Other materials used include plastics, ceramics and precious metals. The complex array of product types and materials make waste electrical and electronic equipment difficult to manage.

What can you do?



When buying new electronic or electrical items, choose ones which are durable, and which can be upgraded in the future if possible. Consider first if a current item of equipment can be upgraded, rather than being completely replaced. If an appliance has stopped working, before discarding it, see if it can be repaired. Rather than put unusable small appliances in the bin, take them to their appropriate disposal site. If you have bulky items to be discarded, such as fridges, computer monitors, etc, these also need to be disposed correctly.

Where to take your WEEE?



The Government has set up a temporary facility for the collection and sorting of all WEEE. It is situated at **Buena Vista** and operated by Gibraltar Community Projects. This sorting facility is available to the general public **Mondays to Fridays 8am to 8pm** and **Saturdays 8am to 1pm**. The facility is not open on Sundays or public holidays.

Once recorded, all WEEE items from the Buena Vista facility are transported across the border in order to be re-used or recycled. Keeping a record of all the WEEE items disposed will subsequently allow Government to assess how much WEEE is generated locally and more importantly, help Government meet EU targets with regards to recovering, re-using and recycling WEEE.

It is interesting to note that the energy savings made from WEEE produced in the EU is expected to amount to roughly the equivalent of 2.8 million tonnes of oil per year according to the EU Commission. Small communities like Gibraltar therefore also have a part to play in this initiative. Research carried out further suggests that 'electro-scrap' is the fastest growing waste stream increasing at 3-5% per year - faster than normal municipal waste - highlighting the need for action at the local and global level.

Don't put your waste electrical and electronic items in the bin!!!

What can I do for the environment?

Did you know that in Europe we produce enough waste packaging each year to weigh the same as 4,000 Eiffel Towers, that the transport sector is responsible for almost one quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions or that 80% of the fish stocks in the EU could face collapse due to over fishing?

The gravity of the environmental threats that surround us today leads us all to ask the question: 'Who is responsible? Industry? Government? Agriculture? Society?' As citizens, we react with indignation, anger or even with resignation. What can we do? What can I do as an isolated individual? The more we feel discouraged and impotent, the less we do.

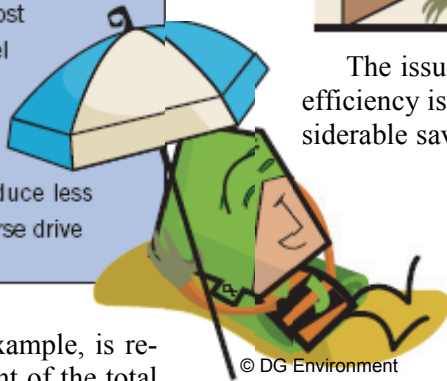
But the fact is, our personal behaviour does make a difference and it can help change things. We should not forget the power that we have both as consumers and as citizens. Through our choices, we can have a direct impact on the environment.

Air – Free Time

Did you know that if your car tyre pressure is below the recommended level by only 0.5 bars, you not only increase your petrol consumption by 5% but you also pollute more?

Did you know that driving in the fourth or even fifth gear is the most economical in terms of fuel consumption?

Did you know that by respecting the speed limit, you save petrol, produce less exhaust fumes, and of course drive more safely!



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The way we use our cars, for example, is responsible for a significant amount of the total greenhouse gas emissions in Europe - emissions that contribute to global climate change. But we can also do our bit in this case by for example using our cars less frequently and making use of public transport services. We can also choose a new car with a more fuel efficient engine or make sure our tyres are pumped up correctly to reduce resistance. Even travelling a bit lighter when we're out and about can help.

We all take energy for granted and as a consequence, over-consumption of energy has also become embedded in our daily lives - an issue which is having us rely on fossil fuels. The following tips should help us reduce our energy consumption.

- Switch off equipment and lighting when not in use - Even leaving equipment on standby consumes energy and wastes money.
- Consider installing timers/sensors in areas that hardly require lighting. Lighting an office overnight wastes enough energy for 1000 cups of tea!
- Minimise heating costs. Close windows/doors, lower thermostat and bundle up!
- Review insulation if possible.

Energy – Consumption

Did you know that 10% of household electricity bills in Europe cover the cost of standby energy consumption of household electrical appliances like televisions, computers, DVDs, and so on. This is equivalent to the electricity consumption of the whole of Belgium!

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The issue of saving water is similar in nature. Water efficiency is perhaps more difficult to achieve since considerable savings tend to be made in relation to freshwater usage in washrooms, urinals, etc. We all know that Gibraltar uses a saltwater

- Install taps that minimise water use.
- Check your water meter regularly.
- Report leaks promptly.
- Try to conserve water when washing, boiling, etc.

flush system so in our case, pumping costs can be avoided instead. This can be achieved by installing water-saving devices such as a dual flush system in bathrooms for example.

We often tend to forget about rubbish once it has been placed in the bin - a convenient truth considering that each person in Gibraltar disposes over half a tonne of waste per year. This increasing amount of waste is having a pronounced effect on the environment so what can you do? Well, do your bit to reduce waste by choosing reusable products instead of disposables. Buying products with minimal packaging will also help to reduce waste and whenever you can, recycle glass and tin - an initiative which has recently started in Gibraltar.



Business and the Environment

Environmental management systems such as EMAS – the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme – or ISO 14000 are designed to help organisations improve their environmental performance. These systems offer a clear structure that can be tailored to the management of environmental issues in any small, medium or large business depending on the activity of the entity.



Whether seeking to integrate environmental issues into day-to-day business while enhancing economic viability; being more transparent about what you are doing for the environment; improving your public image; or being trusted by environmental regulators, companies can benefit from environmental management systems.

An environmental management system can help to build a clear picture of the environmental impacts of a company, which can then be managed adequately. Environmental management systems are also flexible enough to adapt to changes since the environment is never static.

Image is everything

Good environmental management is a start, but organisations also need to handle public concerns and external scrutiny. A systematic and externally verified approach to environmental issues - considered as an overall proactive behaviour towards the environment - is key to a modern business strategy especially large businesses.

The visible side of environmental management systems are the environmental statements. These statements inform the public and interested parties about what a business is doing for the environment, why and how; thus differentiating it from its competitors. Businesses can also publicise their environmental credentials with a logo corresponding to the specific environmental management system adopted. The purpose of the logo is to inform target clients and the public at large, that the business in question has established and implemented an environmental management system and that the business systematically, objectively and consistently evaluates its own environmental performance.

There are a number of environmental management systems available and some of them actually compliment each other. On the international scene we have the ISO 14000 series of international standards on environmental management. It provides a framework for the development of an environmental management system and the supporting audit programme. ISO 14001 is the corner stone standard of the ISO 14000 series. At

the European level we have EMAS. Both systems are complementary but EMAS is more rigorous in some areas.

Advantages of Environmental Management Systems

- Reductions in energy and resource expenditures
- Improved employee morale
- Modernisation of management
- Better recognition by insurance/financial companies
- Improvement of public image
- Advantage for obtaining future public contracts
- Snowball effect on suppliers

Rise of greener businesses

The idea of becoming environmentally friendly is nothing new and has been a goal for many businesses since the late 1980s, following immense pressure from the environmental movement at the time.

In Gibraltar there seems to be a general lack of awareness on this issue. It seems as if businesses have generally mistaken sustainable business management as a principle that is not compatible with their daily undertakings. The reality is indeed totally different. Addressing the environment is increasingly being incorporated into the overall framework of management due to its clear-cut advantages. It is therefore of no surprise that over 50% of the FTSE 250 companies are already producing environmental reports and improving their environmental performance.

Perhaps more relevant to Gibraltar, environmental management systems can also be implemented in smaller or medium sized businesses. There is ample information available on how small businesses can improve their environmental performance and save money depending on the business type.

For further information on how you can take part please contact the DoE.



Useful Telephone Numbers

Department of the Environment	50294
Environmental Agency	70620
G.O.N.H.S.	72639
ESG	58009259
Friends of the Earth	77655 / 41073

This newsletter has been published using paper from sustainable forests

For further information please visit www.gibraltar.gov.gi