

# Sustainable Development Strategy Bulletin # 2

Welcome to the second issue of the SD Strategy Bulletin.

In this issue, we will take a closer look at a key issue relating to sustainability in the area of Solid Waste Management — Producer Responsibility Schemes. We will also provide further details of some upcoming events to be organized by the Council for Sustainable Development in connection with the SD Strategy public engagement process.



We hope that you will find this bulletin useful and informative. We would be glad to receive your views and contributions.



## Producer Responsibility Schemes:

### What are these schemes?

As the name implies, "Producer Responsibility" places a responsibility on the producers of consumer goods to help manage the waste associated with the use of such goods. Under a Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS), manufacturers as well as importers, retailers and consumers may be required to pay towards the cost of waste management (including recycling) or to manage themselves the disposal of these products or their packaging. Hence "Producer Responsibility" is often referred to as "Extended Producer Responsibility" or "Product Responsibility".

### Who are the "producers"?

When talking about a PRS, generally speaking, the "producers" are the manufacturers of goods. Manufacturers are in a good position to influence the amount of waste associated with individual products, as the way they design or package their goods helps determine how much waste is generated and whether the products can be recycled or reused easily.

### Why are PRS an important issue for waste reduction?

Although consumers have little direct control over the design of products and packaging, we can of course choose **not** to buy products with excessive packaging or that are not designed to be re-used or re-cycled. But we may not always have

viable choices that would allow us to make this type of "sustainable purchasing" decision. A way of dealing with this problem at source is to put an onus on producers to minimize waste through PRS.

### Are we doing this in Hong Kong?

We have no mandatory PRS locally. However, a voluntary scheme for mobile phone batteries - the Mobile Phone Battery Recovery and Recycling Programme - was introduced in April 2002. Consumers can put their old mobile phone batteries in collection bins (see photo) at collection points (such as mobile phone shops). The collected batteries are sorted and shipped overseas for recycling.



The Government is planning to introduce PRS in Hong Kong for four types of goods - tyres, batteries, electrical and electronic equipment (including computers), and beverage containers. This scheme will not only concern producers, importers and retailers, but will also benefit from your support as a consumer.

### What is the experience overseas?

1) **Tyres** - **Taiwan** has introduced PRS legislations on tyres and other products, whereby manufacturers and importers have to contribute to the cost of collecting and recycling "end-of-life" products. In **Sweden** and **the Netherlands**, manufacturers and importers must take back used tyres for reuse or recycling.

2) **Batteries**: **Norway** introduced a PRS for environmentally harmful batteries in the early 1990s. Such batteries are collected and converted into raw materials for new batteries or other products. In this way, hazardous materials are retained in a "closed loop". Collection points are situated close to clients to ensure a high return rate. In 2003, *almost 100%* of environmentally harmful batteries were collected.

3) **Electrical and Electronic Equipment** - **Japan** has enacted PRS legislation on electric household appliances, with an initial focus on large items such as TV sets, refrigerators, washing machines and air-conditioners. **Norway** and **Sweden** have also introduced PRS regulations for electrical and electronic products.

4) **Beverage Containers** - Ten States in the **USA** and eight provinces in **Canada** require beverage producers to implement "deposit-return" programmes for beverage containers. As a result, over 75% of deposit-return cans and bottles sold are recycled, compared with 25% in states with no such programmes. In Canada, producers make a standard bottle design, such that 97% of bottles returned to the producer can be used for refilling.



**Response Update:** The on-line discussion forum on the SD Strategy website at [www.susdev.org.hk](http://www.susdev.org.hk) continues to be the most popular venue for feedback on the "Invitation and Response" document: *Sustainable Development: Making Choices for Our Future*. Respondents have created around 50 threads on the Pilot Areas, and the total number of postings is more than 230. The most active threads are those on issues related to solar power, grid connection, energy from waste, recycling, public understanding of SD, NT development, sustainable urban design and greening in the urban area. Other respondents are mailing or e-mailing written responses directly to the Council for Sustainable Development. We will post some of these responses on the website soon so as to stimulate more discussion.

## Coming Events

### Roving Exhibition

The roving exhibition on the "Invitation and Response" (IR) Document will start appearing at public venues around Hong Kong on **19 August**.

The exhibition, which has been organized in partnership with the Business Environment Council, Friends of the Earth (HK), the HK Council of Social Service and the HK People's Council for Sustainable Development, will introduce the key principles of sustainable development, illustrate ways in which we can be a more sustainable community and provide



further information on issues outlined in the IR document. There will be interactive computer features, video clips, hands-on exhibits and models and of course, plenty of ways in which you can give your views on choices for our future.

The Council will set up a "Wishing Well" to collect your responses, as well as a "Vision Statement Board" where you can sign to show your support for SD.

So far, we have the following confirmed dates and venues for the exhibition:

| <b>August</b>                  | <b>September</b>                    | <b>October</b>           |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19-21: Queensway Govt. Offices | 4-5: Plaza Hollywood                | 8-10: HK Central Library |
| 26-28: Wan Chai Revenue Tower  | 9-11: MTR Central Station           | 13-15: Olympian City II  |
|                                | 17-19: Festival Walk                |                          |
|                                | 23-25: Cheung Sha Wan Govt. Offices |                          |

More venues and dates will be announced soon on the SD Strategy website.

## Pilot Area Forum – Solid Waste Management

To provide further background on specific issues related to the Pilot Areas covered in the IR document, we will organize three Pilot Area Forums in the coming months. The Forums will feature speakers from various sectors giving their response to some of the key questions raised in the document, and will give participants more information and varied perspectives on these questions.

The first Pilot Area Forum, on Solid Waste Management is scheduled for the morning of Saturday 28 August at Sports House (next to the HK Stadium in Happy Valley). As seats are limited, registration (by email to [enquiry@susdev.org.hk](mailto:enquiry@susdev.org.hk)) is required.

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