

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Zero Waste Scotland has announced plans of a trial scheme that could see convenience stores given funding for next-generation recycling services. We caught up with the group's Project Manager Marion Croy to find out more.

BY KEVIN SCOTT

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SCHEME

To be eligible to apply for a grant your project must fulfil the following criteria:

- * Your project will need to be located in Scotland
- * Your project must source its inputs from the waste streams in Scotland
- * You will need to demonstrate that the project is not viable without the Zero Waste Scotland funding intervention
- * Your project will need to be commercially sustainable in the medium and long term
- * Your project must be able to demonstrate clearly defined and when possible, secured end markets for the recyclables collected
- * You project must provide access to required monitoring and evaluation data, which may be used to prepare press releases and best practice cases studies to encourage replication of the pilot projects across Scotland
- * You will need to demonstrate an environmental commitment and undertake an overall environmental impact assessment of your project
- * You will need to demonstrate a commitment to Health & Safety and plans to ensure the safety of the general public and the waste management operatives who will be using the project assets.

The Scottish Government has a much-publicised vision for a waste-free Scotland. To achieve this utopian ideal requires stringent targets for recycling and waste management such as a 70% recycling rate by 2025 (it is currently a commendable 38%). So, Zero Waste Scotland – the body charged with delivering the Government's strategy – is just about to pilot a new project centering on two areas: Deposit and Return systems and Reverse Vending schemes. £900,000 in funding has been made available for the pilot projects, which will run from this month until September 2013.

Marion Croy, Project Manager Deposit and Return Systems, Zero Waste Scotland, says: "The aim of the pilots are to increase recycling rates of bottles, cans and containers and increase the quality of material collected. It can be a really simple collection system, which is situated in-store, or there can be more complex systems which would still work in a c-store."

In order to know what would best suit your

own business, it is worth knowing how each system works.

So, deposit and return systems can produce high recycling rates and high quality material that can be used for closed loop recycling. In its simplest form, deposit and return systems charge an additional fee on each container which is purchased. The consumer can then have this deposit refunded at dedicated return points when the empty container is deposited. This provides a strong economic incentive for waste materials (which have been discarded) to be returned, source segregated, and sent to locations which ultimately result in them being recycled.

Meanwhile, reverse vending systems allow the take back of containers (which have had no deposit levied) in exchange for a reward. Equipment used to provide this facility is usually an automated reverse vending machine (RVM), which can, depending on its level of sophistication, recognise different container types and materials, source separate them, in some cases, compact materials to increase storage, and dispense a

reward to the facilities user.

"Rewards are available for consumers, which is a big draw. Retailers can administer tokens, or give loyalty card points, if they have such a system," says Croy.

It is the reverse vending system that is likely to appeal most to retailers. With no deposits to be concerned about, the system allows the retailer to show commitment to an environmental cause whilst being able to ensure customers are visiting the store with increasing frequency. "International experience tells us that people do use their local shop to recycle. So we're keen to see how that translates in Scotland," says Croy.

So, if you want to apply, all you have to do is visit www.zerowastescotland.org.uk and download the application form. Applications must be in by 28th September, although the trials begin this month. Croy says: "We would encourage convenience retailers to apply. All we'd need from them if they're successful is data on the materials they collect from customers for recycling and to discuss how they promote the system."