



CHAPTER  3

YOUR SHARE OF ECO- RESPONSIBILITIES



3.1

PRS is a key policy tool for waste reduction, recovery and recycling identified in *A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste* published in December 2005. A PRS organises stakeholders to share the responsibility (financial and/or physical) for the treatment or disposal of end-of-life products so as to minimise the environmental impact. This is a key strategy under this term of Government.



The Government will 3.2 continue to take the lead.

We propose to appoint a glass management contractor (“GMC”) by way of open tender. This contractor will be tasked to collect waste glass beverage bottles and treat them to become reusable materials. With the GMC, we aim to —

- (a) *Achieve a high recovery rate:* International experience indicates that mandatory PRSs on glass beverage bottles could achieve a recovery rate ranging from 60% to close to 100%. As a start, we expect that about 70% of all waste glass beverage bottles generated, i.e. about 38,000 tonnes annually on the basis of 2011 figure, can be recovered.
- (b) *Provide a convenient collection system:* An annual tonnage of 38,000 means a daily throughput of over 100 tonnes. That exceeds the combined monthly capacity of all existing voluntary programmes. We need more easily accessible collection facilities, including recycle bins specifically designed for glass collection. The GMC is also responsible for operating several regional collection points to facilitate disposal in bulk by, say, the catering sector.
- (c) *Maintain high treatment standards:* The Government will set standards and promote professionalism, so that the handling of waste glass beverage bottles will be environmentally sound from collection to transportation to recycling facilities.



Do you know ?

Glass Recycle Bins

Given the brittle nature of glass bottles, some of the glass recycle bins in the city are by design different from the other conventional recycle bins used for paper, plastics and metal. Special features have been introduced such that the recycle bins are equipped with a baffle made of resilient materials under the circular opening on the top to reduce the dropping speed. There is also shock-absorption rubber inside the bins. These features can minimise the noise generated and avoid breakage. In addition the front-loading design helps reduce the need for manual lifting by cleaning workers in collecting the glass bottles, further safeguarding their occupational safety and health.

3.3

Furthermore, the Government will continue to promote green procurement to sustain and encourage demand for products that contain recycled glass. The Government will also play a key role in publicity and public education to promote the recycling of waste glass beverage bottles. Governments in many other jurisdictions like Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, have also adopted a similar approach in playing a key role for such initiative. Please see [Annex C](#).





We are a major commercial source of waste glass bottles and should play our part.

Mr. James Lu of the Hong Kong Hotels Association witnessed the launch of the Glass Container Recycling Programme for the Hotel Sector in November 2008, a major trade-led glass recycling programme in Hong Kong. By now, some 2,400 tonnes of glass bottles have been recovered for reuse in the production of eco-pavers.

Do you think this work?

3.4

All those who are engaged in businesses associated with glass-bottled beverages (e.g. suppliers and retailers) or waste glass beverage bottles (e.g. collectors and recyclers) will be affected by the mandatory PRS. There are several aspects to our proposed scheme.



3.5

Beverage suppliers to pay a recycling fee. We propose to collect the recycling fee from beverage suppliers, who are principally food distributors or importers registered under the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap 612). They will be required to submit data periodically to the Government on the amount of glass beverage bottles they have provided to retailers or consumers for local consumption and on that basis pay the recycling fee. Imposing the fee on suppliers is easier than on retailers because the former are already registered. There are some 1,700 companies registered for importing or distributing different kinds of beverages. Charging retailers would be much more difficult because of the sheer number of them. Surveys compiled by Census and Statistics Department show there are some 14,000 establishments in the retail business on food, alcohol, drinks & tobacco in 2010⁴. On top of that, nearly 6,000 premises having liquor licenses, and there are some 20,000 businesses engaged in the retail sales of beverages based on 2011 data.

Remark :

4. Source : Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail Trades, and Accommodation and Food Services Sectors (2010 Edition), Census and Statistics Department.

Consultation Question #2

At present, a person who carries out a food importation or distribution business must be registered under the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap 612). Do you agree that the recycling fee for the PRS should be collected from those registered food importers and distributors who import or distribute glass-bottled beverages for local consumption? Who else would also be in the position to serve as the anchor point for the fee?



3.6

Beverage retailers to provide relevant recycling information.

Providing relevant information to consumers serves to promote source separation of waste for recycling. We propose to make the provision of information a statutory obligation so that beverage retailers, such as supermarkets and convenience stores, should take the initiative to advise consumers on the location of the nearby collection points. This can magnify the publicity effect and also enable beverage retailers to participate in the mandatory PRS as a key stakeholder in the supply chain of beverages.



Consultation Question #3

For ordinary consumers, do you find it helpful if a beverage retailer could advise you on how to participate in glass bottle recycling? For beverage retailers, are there any practical difficulties that would prevent you from providing recycling-related information to consumers?

3.7

Glass bottle recyclers to be licensed. Although glass is chemically non-hazardous, it is fragile and should be handled with care to avoid causing any accident particularly when glass bottles are stockpiled in large quantity. Moreover, automated recycling processes such as crushing and grinding might produce dust and noise which possibly disturb the neighbourhood. We propose that a new licensing requirement be introduced under the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap 354) so that glass bottle recyclers will adopt best practices and statutory standards in terms of environmental hygiene and occupational health. The licensing system will also facilitate the Government in monitoring the collection and recycling processes to ensure that the collected glass bottles are properly recycled to meet the relevant technical specifications.



Consultation Question #4

As a matter of principle, we should ensure that any end-of-life products under a PRS are efficiently collected for environmentally sound recycling processes to produce reusable materials. Do you agree that new licensing control for the processing of waste glass beverage bottles could contribute to the accomplishment of the said objective of the PRS?



Exemption applies to beverage suppliers with corporate recycling plans.

3.8

Notwithstanding paragraph 3.5, we are aware that some local beverage manufacturers have their own system to recover their glass bottles for rebottling. They normally work with restaurants and other retailers who receive and return the empty bottles to the manufacturers. The used bottles would then be cleaned and sterilised for reuse. The cycle may be repeated for as many as 30 times before bottles are sent for recycling.



3.9

Such reuse/recycling initiatives contribute positively to better resource management. We propose to exempt those suppliers who reuse and/or recycling glass bottles subject to periodic compliance audits. In such circumstances, the relevant beverage suppliers would not be liable to pay any recycling fee for their glass beverage bottles. This exemption is fair and in line with the “polluter pays” principle because instead of entering into the general waste stream, these glass beverage bottles are in fact recovered for reuse and should not be subject to the same fee as applied to other in single-use bottles.

Consultation Question #5

Do you agree that beverage suppliers with a satisfactory corporate reuse/recycling plan could be exempted from the payment of a recycling fee? Are you aware of any other stakeholders who should also be entitled to similar exemption?

Should we include a landfill
ban on glass beverage bottles?

3.10

Under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (Cap 603), a mandatory PRS may include restrictions on the disposal of certain products at designated waste disposal facilities such as landfills and refuse transfer stations. This is to recognize that when there is a complete PRS solution for the proper collection and recycling of certain products, waste producers should practise source separation. A landfill ban will be implemented for WEEE.



3.11

We have considered whether a landfill ban can also be imposed on waste glass beverage bottles. A landfill ban will:

- (a) give a strong signal to the community that reducing pressure on landfill is one of the key objectives of this proposal;
- (b) reinforce the message that every waste producer has a share of eco-responsibility to practise source separation to divert glass beverage bottles from the waste stream to the alternative reuse outlets through the PRS; and
- (c) provide a tool for operators of waste reception facilities to refuse glass beverage bottles, especially those in bulk, from being accepted as waste to be landfilled.

3.12

Yet, we should also acknowledge the possible operational challenges and concerns. Such bottles are small in size and can be difficult to spot when mixed with ordinary trash. It would be operationally very difficult if not impossible to distinguish the targeted bottles from other bottles not included in the proposal at landfills or other waste reception facilities such as refuse collection points. Ensuring compliance at the waste disposal facilities will be a challenge.

3.13

International experience is split on whether a landfill ban has to be implemented with a mandatory PRS on glass. Such a ban is common in Europe but in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, where a government-led PRS is implemented, a landfill ban is not in force. We would like to invite views from the community in this regard.

Consultation Question #6

Do you agree that a landfill ban on glass beverage bottles should be introduced? If yes, how it should be refined for better implementation?

