

Abu Dhabi's first door-to-door waste recycling scheme has been launched by the Centre of Waste Management, the body responsible for all waste operations in the city.

The scheme involves distribution of two garbage bins to each household – a green one for recyclables and a black bin for other waste. They will be collected by private companies contracted by the CWM.

This is currently only a pilot project, operating in areas of Khalidiya, Bein Al Jisrein and Officers City. But over the next year, "the scheme will be rolled out to cover the entire city," according to Majid Al Mansouri. In the next few weeks, the scheme will also be extended to Al Ain and then Al Gharbia.

There are also some fine details to be worked out – the dual-bin system isn't necessarily convenient for apartment block residents – and CWM says it is considering imposing penalties on those who do not recycle, though "this proposal is pending approval".

"We are launching an eco-friendly recycling scheme, the first of its kind in the region, to help make our city a greener place," said Majid Al Mansouri. "Its success depends on the participation of each member of the public and our aim is to create awareness to ensure maximum cooperation."

On average, every Abu Dhabi resident generates about 4.2kg of rubbish per day. The average in developed countries is around 1.5kg.

In 2007-2008, the emirate produced 5.9 million tonnes of waste. Most of it ended up in landfills and dump sites, where biodegradable waste generated a large amount of methane.

Currently, you'd be hard pressed to find a recycling bin to dispose of your bottles and papers in the city. Supposedly, that is about to change – EEG (Emirates Environmental Group) is working on a number of projects including proposed recycling centres within Abu Dhabi, and the Centre of Waste Management is considering other recycling schemes.

In the meantime, as the inhabitants of Abu Dhabi await the emergence of the plans for a greener future, the recycling bins at Spinney's car park in Khalidiya will have to suffice.

However, making sure that all the waste is placed into the correct bins is a major issue that recycling companies face. The facilities all rely on users making an effort to separate the materials - too many people simply dump all kinds of rubbish into the recycling bins.

Recycling bin locations in Abu Dhabi

Spinney's Khalidya car park – aluminium, paper, plastic and glass

ADCO – newspapers and aluminium

ADMA – OPCO – newspapers, aluminium and plastic bottles

Al Diar Capital Hotel, behind the premises – paper and plastic

ALHOSN University, Women's Campus – aluminium, plastics, paper

ADNEC – aluminium, paper, plastic and glass

EEG and CWM both claim to be working on website updates to show individuals where they dispose of waste consciously within Abu Dhabi: www.eeg-uae.org and www.cwm.ae

Used mobile phones

Envirofone is a specialist mobile phone recycler headquartered in Europe. People are encouraged to drop their old phones in one of the characteristic green Envirofone dump bins; they will be collected and subsequently sorted and transported out of the country for processing (sometimes the phone can be refurbished, but more usually it is dismantled and the metals recovered -- mobile phones contain beryllium, cadmium, lithium, mercury, silver, a bit of gold and of course a lot of plastic).

This is an Etisalat-sponsored campaign which has so far recovered over 200,000 phones and over 52 tonnes of waste.

The drop boxes are in Etisalat regional head office buildings. They should also be found at ADNOC petrol stations, du business centres, Spinney's supermarkets, Magrudy's Book Stores, and some FedEx locations.

'Green' broadband

Etisalat is proud of its green credentials, pointing for instance to new Residential Gateway software which will be available early next year and allows customers to pre-schedule their wireless Internet connection – it can automatically turns off at selected times to reduce electricity consumption.

The entire island of Abu Dhabi is due to be upgraded to what Etisalat is calling 'Green Broadband', by which it means fibre-optic cabling rather than copper wire. The whole entire country should be connected by 2011.