

## Backgrounder

### Toner and Ink Cartridge Recycling

As part of its sustainability program, Epson has developed a collection and recycling system for used products. In 1999, it became the first company in Japan to voluntarily collect and recycle used information equipment (printers, scanners, projectors, POS systems, etc) from corporations and in 2005, it implemented the WEEE directive in its European operations. It has also created independent schemes for the collection and recycling of Epson toner and ink cartridges.

Epson began its web-based toner recycling scheme in Europe in February 2006 and has been recycling laser supplies since December 2007. It provides two complete services, free-of-charge, to customers. These can be accessed via [www.epson.com/recycle](http://www.epson.com/recycle).

The Box Collection, which is done in partnership with reverse logistics providers Kuehne and Nagel (K+N), provides a collection system for bigger businesses. Users can put in a request for empty toner collection boxes from K+N through the Epson website. Once the empty box has been filled, they can place a request for the box to be picked up by a K+N truck from a specific user location on a specific date. The boxes are ultimately consolidated at the K+N European box centre before being forwarded to a recycling centre.

The Postal Collection, which is done in partnership with reverse logistics provider Cycleon, provides a collection system to smaller businesses and other customers. Consumers provide their contact details to Cycleon who sends them a label with a unique number via email, post or website. The label is attached to the used toner cartridge which is deposited in a mail box, local post office or place of work. The Postal service delivers the package to the local Cycleon depot, where it is forwarded to their European consolidation centre before being sent to a recycling plant.

During the recycling process for both schemes, the cartridges are broken up using an energy efficient process and separated into raw materials before being used in the manufacture of a variety of new products. Epson is also investigating the possibility of creating a range of remanufactured toner cartridges that will match the quality of newly made cartridges.

Both programs are currently available in the UK, Ireland, Spain, Italy, France and Germany, while the box collection scheme is also available in, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and South Africa. This programme is constantly expanding and will soon be available in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Although cartridges are not covered by the WEEE directive, Epson well exceeds the recycling and recovery rates required by this piece of legislation.

In order to increase customer awareness of environmental issues, Epson launched a special toner cartridge Return and Recycle program in 2008 for its Aculaser M2000 & M4000 products. While the mechanics of the scheme are the same as those outlined above, customers that purchase the Return Toner Cartridge benefit from a 20% discount and commit to returning the empty cartridge via the Epson postal way collection scheme, so that it can be recycled.

Epson is also in the process of rolling out recycling schemes for its ink cartridges. The Express Cartridge Collection service, which was launched in January 2008, allows users go to their local express centre, which is listed on-line where they deposit their used cartridges in one of the collection boxes. Once full, the boxes are collected by a Kuehne and Nagel truck, and then forwarded to their European box centre where they are consolidated and transported to a recycling centre.

This service is currently available in the UK, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Sweden and France with plans to implement it in Italy in the near future.

While Epson has developed a way to refill their ink cartridges to produce a recycled cartridge that matches the quality of their new ones, this system is not yet available in Europe. At present, the collected cartridges are disassembled, sorted, and used as recycled materials so that no part goes to waste.

In September 2008, Epson will launch its Ink postal system along with a collection system, similar to the Ink Express, for the ink cartridges in Large Format Printers.

**For Further Information see:**

**Seiko Epson Corporation:**

[http://www.epson.co.jp/e/company/company\\_index.htm](http://www.epson.co.jp/e/company/company_index.htm)

**Corporate Profile:**

<http://www.epson.co.jp/e/company/pdf/epson2008.pdf>

**Sustainability Report:**

[http://www.epson.co.jp/e/community/sr/2007/pdf/2007\\_en\\_sr.pdf](http://www.epson.co.jp/e/community/sr/2007/pdf/2007_en_sr.pdf)

**Collect and Recycle:**

<http://content.epson-europe.com/environment/collectandrecycle/>