

EPD awards contract for pilot scheme to collect plastic beverage containers by reverse vending machines

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) announced today (August 24) that the contract for the one-year Pilot Scheme on the Application of Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs) for collection of plastic beverage containers has been awarded through open tender to A.S. Watson Group (HK) Limited (the contractor).

The EPD has conducted an open tendering exercise earlier to invite a service provider to install 60 RVMs under a pilot scheme at locations such as public places or government facilities with higher foot traffic with a view to facilitating the return of used beverage containers by the public, paving the way for the introduction of a producer responsibility scheme on plastic beverage containers (PPRS).

An EPD spokesman said, "The Government is planning to introduce a new PPRS and will consider providing a rebate to encourage the return of used plastic beverage containers for proper recycling. Experience in other places suggests that the use of RVMs to collect plastic beverage containers can enhance the operational efficiency of the PPRS as well as the quality of beverage containers collected. The pilot scheme will test the application of RVMs in a local context."

Under the contract of the pilot scheme, the contractor is required to advise the EPD on the operational arrangements for the 60 RVMs. It also has to provide a cash rebate to members of the public who return plastic beverage containers through the RVMs. All the plastic containers collected will be delivered to suitable recyclers for proper treatment and recycling locally.

The spokesman added, "On commencement of the contract on August 24, 2020, the contractor will have a preparatory period of about three months to set up the first batch of RVMs, including their operating and cash rebate systems, as well as the collection services for the plastic beverage containers. The contractor is also required to provide an ambassador service to promote the scheme and assist the public in proper use of the RVMs, and a hotline for the public to make enquiries or reports."