



WASTE NO TIME

British cleantech CEO, Chris Williams, of ISB Global, identifies key steps to achieve UK's 2035 waste and recycling targets.

Recent UK government statistics show that the volume of waste recycled by local authorities in England decreased by eight percentage points between 2022 and 2023. This fall in recycling undermines the government's own target to minimise waste and deliver a 65% recycling rate for all municipal waste by 2035.

Chris Williams, founder and CEO of ISB Global, the UK based provider of software to the global waste management sector, explains the four key considerations for the UK government and for businesses that will get the country back on track to achieve its 2035 recycling target.

DON'T JUST DEAL WITH WASTE – PREVENT IT ENTIRELY

Shifting to a 'zero to landfill' approach increases the transparency of waste objectives and also lays out clear standards for companies to work towards.

Chris Williams said, 'In the UK, the government uses the waste hierarchy model. This has been extremely useful – in fact, we use it ourselves here at ISB Global. However, we also recognise that simply dealing with waste isn't enough anymore – we have to aim to prevent any waste from occurring in the first place.

'Replacing the current waste hierarchy with a model that genuinely delivers on the prevention of waste would deliver by far the most benefit for the environment. Similarly, a zero to landfill approach is easier to measure than a standard zero waste target and allows companies to manage their waste streams more effectively.'

PRIORITISE EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

Increasing the pressure on businesses to make sustainable choices will incentivise them to better support the circular economy.

'Responsible production includes the introduction of EPR, where manufacturers and producers have a responsibility to look at the entire lifecycle of a product, from raw materials used to what happens at end of life,' explained Chris.

'In countries such as France and Germany, EPR is heavily legislated, and in others (the UK for example) it is more like 'guidance'. We know that most businesses will only make the effort to change their practices when they face scrutiny – from customers, legislators, shareholders, or all three. The more that businesses are encouraged to take a more

ethical and climate driven approach, the more likely we are to have better, more sustainable and less wasteful products arriving on the market.'

MOVE TO A MORE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

According to sustainability charity, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, there are three underlying principles that make up the circular economy:

- Elimination of waste and pollution.
- Circulation of products and materials.
- Regeneration of nature.

'The circular economy model can be applied to organisations of all sizes, and for individuals too,' said Chris. 'It is regenerative by design – all processes are developed with these principles in mind. An example of this in practice is in Chile, where the government has looked at how it can transform the way its economy works to take advantage of the opportunities available.'

'There are certainly costs involved in this type of transition. But successful change only happens with the proper investment. In the case of manufacturing, companies must

look at all of their business and operating processes – from the raw materials they use to make their products all the way through to what happens to these same products at their end of life.'

ADOPT NEW TECHNOLOGY

There are a range of technology innovations that businesses and waste management and recycling companies can leverage to reduce the volume of waste they produce.

'Technology is essential for correctly weighing, sorting and processing the various types of waste,' explained Chris. 'It is responsible for the logistics of collections, the management of secondary material streams and ensures compliance with local and national legislation.'

'None of the changes we need to make can happen without technology. Companies who want to reduce their waste must accurately collect, analyse and understand data to see where and how to make the necessary changes to their processes. To do so, they must replace their existing systems with new ones that provide more precision and in-depth analysis and insight. In this way, they can cut waste levels and improve their efficiency as well.'