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Saturday 28 July 2012, 1.30pm to 5.00pm

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SINGAPORE NEWS

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Waste treatment fast becoming a big business

By Rachel Kelly | Posted: 19 July 2012 2102 hrs

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SINGAPORE: Every year, some 1.25 billion tonnes of solid waste is created globally.

According to the World Bank, this will double by 2025.

While this is creating a challenge for governments around the globe, waste treatment is fast becoming a big business.

Road construction and maintenance firm Samwoh has been converting material from old buildings such as enbloc housing projects, and recycling it into useable surface for road, aircraft, and seaport pavement.

But Samwoh said the road to paving the streets of Singapore sustainably was not an easy one.

Ho Nyok Yong, director, Samwoh, said: "More than 10 years ago, I think the green industry was not very popular. We set up the concrete recycling plant, and at that time the authorities were not agreeable to use it, so we went into the red for many years. But our management was quite persistent on this part... they feel that this is our future."

Samwoh said the market is picking up pace.

In the past, recycled material may have had a premium over conventional paving in terms of price, but Samwoh said that has changed, thanks to advancements in technology.

If purchased in large volumes, it said this can bring a 20 per cent reduction in costs.

And it's not just waste from construction sites that can provide good recyclable potential.

Singapore firm Cimelia Resource Recovery is turning old computers, mobile phones, other e-waste, and even so called "white goods" such as washing machines into precious metals and recycled plastics.

For example, it takes 1 tonne of computer circuit boards to create 2kg of silver, and 200 grammes of gold.

Mohamed Gani Mohamed Ansari, executive director, Cimelia Resource Recovery, said: "E-waste is one waste that is growing very fast in the world now, and of course the growth rate is about 7 to 10 per cent per year. So when it comes to end of life it has to go somewhere, so the proper handling is very important."

Cimelia said it currently handles on average 2,000 tonnes of waste at its facility every month.



Photos 1 of 1

Video

Waste treatment fast becoming a big business