

PRESS INFORMATION

Saubermacher and ARA start 'digi-Cycle' pilot project DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN THE COLLECTION OF PET BOTTLES AND DRINKS CANS

Vienna, 22 July 2021 Altstoff Recycling Austria AG (ARA) and Saubermacher AG are joining forces to advance the recycling economy in Austria. With digi-Cycle, the two pioneers in resource management, supported by the Austrian drinks industry, are introducing a digital incentive system to stimulate separated collection of drinks packaging in yellow containers and yellow bags or in blue containers. Rewards aim to increase waste separation and recycling. Convenience and transparency are at the heart of the system – simply download the app, scan the code on the bottle or drinks can and collect rewards. The pilot project for the recycling economy of the future is due to launch in Styria in August 2021.

In August 2021, all eyes in Austria's recycling economy will be on Gnas in Styria, the location of a new pilot project by Saubermacher and ARA featuring the launch of 'digi-Cycle', the new digital solution for the recycling of drinks packaging. Ralf Mittermayr, CEO of Saubermacher AG, is looking forward to the pilot getting under way: 'We're taking the EU's circular economy targets into account, as well as climate protection, and are driving the digitisation of the circular economy. digi-Cycle will open up new ways of increasing recycling rates for plastic bottles and drinks cans.' With its technical capabilities, the app has already attracted international attention. 'digi-Cycle has the potential to be expanded to other products, like batteries and electrical equipment,' explains Mittermayr.

'Separating packaging for recycling is part of people's everyday behaviour and surveys confirm that people are happy with the yellow container/yellow bag and blue container system in Austria,' adds ARA Chairman Christoph Scharff. 'But we're eager to see more packaging go for recycling. With that in mind, it seemed only logical to work with Saubermacher to seek out an innovative solution that builds on the familiar system, but at the same time creates new incentives that will help to increase separated collection. The positive effects are pretty clear – more recycled materials, climate protection, less waste and less littering – and all with maximum efficiency. digit-Cycle meets all of these requirements.' ARA already has experience with incentive schemes for separated packaging: ARA subsidiary Austria Glas Recycling successfully launched the 'glasartig' app in 2014, the first in the industry to do so.

Minister for Climate Protection Gewessler and State Secretary Brunner welcome the pilot project

'The beauty and diversity of our nature are unique and contribute towards our well-being and relaxation. We need to make sure that empties and waste are properly disposed so that that beauty is not destroyed by littering. Ideas like digi-Cycle can

make a real difference when it comes to proper collection and recycling. The opportunities that digitisation presents are something that we can take advantage of in the recycling economy. I welcome the pilot project starting this August and await the evaluation results with interest,' says Minister for Climate Protection Leonore Gewessler.

State Secretary Magnus Brunner is also positive about the initiative: 'The digi-Cycle project is taking a new and exciting approach. Innovation and digitisation are the key to future-proof solutions that will help in the fight against littering.'

digi-Cycle is being supported by leading organisations in the Austrian drinks industry, including Brau Union Österreich, Rauch, Red Bull, Vöslauer and Coca-Cola Österreich. 'As a producer, we are pro-active in taking measures to ensure that our drinks packaging is collected and recycled. At Coca-Cola, we are confident that digitisation will be a real game changer in this regard. That's why we develop and support digital projects that actively involve consumers in the packaging recycling process and reward them for collecting their waste properly. digi-Cycle is a further innovation to support climate protection,' explains Herbert Bauer, General Manager of Coca-Cola HBC Österreich.

digi-Cycle the most practical and extensive solution to date

digi-Cycle finds use not only at the collection island or in waste collection facilities – it is also designed for yellow bag collection. 'That really adds convenience for consumers. Thanks to the code, consumers can use the digi-Cycle app to scan their packaging at home and then dispose of it conveniently, without having to stand and read every item of packaging in front of the collection container,' explains Mittermayr. This is made possible thanks to a combination of GPS data and QR codes. In addition, with digi-Cycle, all assigned codes are unique, thus preventing the risk of fraud through repeat scanning. A comprehensive, externally verified data protection concept is also in place to ensure that the electronic process is legally compliant.

Styrian town of Gnas to become a research laboratory

At the start of the innovative pilot project in August 2021, consumers in the market town of Gnas will be issued with PET bottles and drinks cans bearing digital codes. In addition, the yellow containers, yellow bags and blue containers will all be given QR codes. The project will also be accompanied by consumer surveys and waste sorting analyses. 'We're extremely excited about the results and are optimistic that the rewards and user friendliness of digi-Cycle will help to boost collection volumes,' explains an optimistic Scharff. The pilot project will run until September 2021.

Statements from partners in the drinks industry

'Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and helping to ensure climate protection are our core concern. We welcome the digi-Cycle pilot project, which is a milestone in Austria's recycling economy in Gnas in Styria.'

Gabriela Maria Straka, member of the Management Board at Brau Union Österreich

'Rauch is the first drinks manufacturer in the world to produce ice tea and fruit juice in 100% recycled PET containers. That's why we're even more excited to be a part of this

initiative – after all, we can only recycle if we receive bottles back from consumers.’

Daniel Wüstner, Managing Director at Rauch Fruchtsäfte

‘Recycling has always been important to Red Bull. We’re always happy to support innovative projects that help to boost separated collection of materials.’

Oliver Kiefer, Global Head of Sustainability at Red Bull GmbH

Photo:

From left to right: Ralf Mittermayr (CEO Saubermacher AG), Herbert Bauer (General Manager Coca-Cola HBC Österreich), Christoph Scharff (Chairman ARA AG)

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About ARA

Future. Circular. Economy. Altstoff Recycling Austria AG (ARA) has been a driving force in the Austrian waste and recycling industry for nearly 30 years and is a market leader in collection and recycling systems for packaging, electrical devices and batteries. Consumers have access to around 1.9 million collection containers, plus 1.8 million households use the yellow bag for collection. ARA AG serves more than 15,000 commercial customers. The company is owned by local companies and as a not-for-profit, is not profit-oriented.

About Saubermacher Dienstleistungs AG

Saubermacher AG is an international disposal and recycling company based in Feldkirchen, near Graz. The family company was founded in 1979 by Hans and Margret Roth and is a competent partner for approx. 1600 municipalities and over 42,000 businesses. The company employs some 3,100 employees in Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and the UAE. Saubermacher sees digitisation as a way to increase benefits for customers and improve recycling. The area of Waste Intelligence has been a focus of the environmental pioneer for several years. In addition, Saubermacher is the most sustainable waste disposal company in the world: in the 2020 sustainability assessment, GRESB awarded the company first place for the third time. Further information can be found at www.saubermacher.at

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