

Barriers to Composting in Scotland

An analysis of issues raised in open discussion

REMADE Scotland

June 2001



1. Introduction

This report summarises notes and subsequent analysis of detailed discussions about the barriers to composting in Scotland. This discussion took place as a facilitated meeting at East Kilbride on 24 April 2001.

Those present represented a broad cross section of the Scottish waste management industry working towards recycling of organics. Participants were from:

- **The Public sector**

- Local Authority
- Regulators
- Education

- **Commercial Sector**

- Waste Managers
- Landscapers
- Buyers
- Agriculture
- Machinery and Engineering

The group considered the long term issues of barriers to composting common to any potential operator or user of products. It was acknowledged that there are always additional local barriers such as logistical or site constraints.

Barriers were categorised in terms of topic and then as either REMADE Scotland or Non-REMADE responsibilities. Priority of each issue was assessed through discussion and by the number of participants that had listed a topic as of particular importance to them during 'break-out' time.

REMADE tasks were prioritised both through as high (H), medium (M) and low (L) and suggested timescale of 1,2 or 3 years. For instance a topic of category M2 is a medium priority and should be tackled over a two year period to solve the problem.

Non-REMADE tasks were identified but not further assessed for priority or timescale. Nonetheless, those with responsibility for such issues should consider how these can be addressed through appropriate development or funding.

2. Barriers

These were considered as:

Finance

1. REMADE

- a. Influence project eligibility for, and dispersal of, landfill tax credits (LTC) (jump start discussions regarding appropriateness of dispersal of monies).

M 1

2. NON -REMADE

- a. Start-up capital
- b. Manpower costs
- c. Resources for change (business assistance)
- d. Council budgets too small for 'Public Funded Initiative'
- e. PFI vs. charity
- f. Space for segregated collection
- g. Concrete / hard standing or lack of!
- h. Grants – Remade may assist in obtaining grant funds (e.g., Landfill tax)
- i. Cost – Remade's cost model may assist
- j. Investment – long term – Remade illustrating a better environment for lending, lack of confidence in the banking sector may be influence by demonstrating success

Overall – there was great concern over various financial issues; funding, capital and operational costs. However, much of this relates to company or authority development that cannot be influenced by REMADE. Where REMADE does have a role is in the lobbying to ensure that projects fit the criteria for meeting appropriate national targets such as environmental and recycling objectives are highly prioritised for eligibility to LTC funding.

Technology

1. REMADE

- a. Separation – develop fact sheet, tools outlining appropriate technologies **M 1**
- b. Agronomic evidence that compost is effective under Scottish conditions. **M 2**
- c. Quality of end product – how to achieve needed quality, fit for purpose. **H 2**

Overall - There is a clear need for technological development to continue. Some technology is already available but is not known well enough and therefore should be promoted. In other areas, particularly in the use of compost, there are very clear problems in interpreting data on use and quality of products for Scottish markets. In particular climatic effects, particularly rainfall and temperature, linked to soil type are areas that must be demonstrated before market confidence in products will be secure.

Education

1. REMADE

- a. Systems analysis, or lack of joined up thinking – encouraging local authorities/decision makers to understand and implement integrated waste management programs. Identify target clusters/like minded people and target for face-to-face meetings. **H 1 (facilitate movement within industry)**

2. NON-REMADE

- a. Lack of skill and experience (operators)
- b. Consultants – facility design and end use (e.g. FACTS – qualification for advice on use of fertilisers, including compost)
- c. Education / awareness
- d. Source separation
- e. Communication with respect to standards
- f. Right people! Right job!
- g. Education

Overall – There is great concern over various educational needs. Although REMADE is not an education provider there is a need to facilitate the linking of various educational and training needs. Training in decision-making and systems analysis rather than vocational training fits more with the remit of REMADE. It might be considered strange that Health and Safety training was not considered a priority but this is already well developed and verified within all of the industry sectors.

Contract Issues

1. REMADE

- a. Contract revision – provide guidance on what is needed in contract language to meet recycling/composting directives.

H 1

- b. Provision of information on invitations to tender and assistance on specifications relating to composting / recycling objectives.

H 1

2. NON-REMADE

- a. Existing time on council contracts

Overall -Contract issues are of major significance in Scotland. Although contract development is the responsibility of individual parties REMADE can play a major role in helping make sure that composting, along with other recycling strategies, is achieved as easily as possible.

Markets/Marketing

1. REMADE

- a. Continue to define viable markets.

H 1-2

- b. Markets – particularly of poor quality products –how is it governed by customs and excise rules?

M 1

- c. Confusion on standards – which exist? Where are they going? Develop fact sheet.

M 1

- d. Market outlets – agriculture – what product is needed? What is the most realistic way to get volumes into agriculture?

M 1

- e. How to develop or influence the development of local markets.

H 1-2

- f. GIS mapping of agricultural land to determine those which would most benefit from compost amendment and which geographically can be accessed.

M 2

2. NON-REMADE

- a. Marketing vs. standards (use of class 1 vs. class 2 composts)

Overall - There is serious concern over market size and requirements and this requires a multi-skilled approach. Markets are linked to technical developments of use in agriculture (See Technology, above). Market development still requires clarification of standards both in terms of user requirements and regulators.

Incentives

1. NON-REMADE

- a. Incentive vs. penalty for sources (gate-fee related and prosecution-related respectively)
- b. Private Initiatives – no incentive for private investment
- c. No incentive to individuals – possible incentive lies in lower council tax or split – cost levels for those that do/ do not separate

Attitudes

1. REMADE

- a. Landfill operators – waste management vs. product manufacturing mindset. **H 1**
- b. Apathy within the waste management sector - there is a need for continued promotion. **M 2**
- c. Lack of cooperation in waste sector. **M 2**
- d. Automatic assumption of high cost – critical analysis must be encouraged. **M 2**
- e. Complexity of legislation results in paralysis of decision making – clarity of interpretation through fact sheets and guidance is needed. **H 1**
- f. Lack of commitment to develop from pilot-scale projects – better promotion of the successes is needed. **H 1**

2. NON-REMADE
 - a. Attitude of public
 - b. Must be simple for householders, managers and local authorities
 - c. Council staffing conflicts and union demarcation
 - d. Public concept of 'waste'
 - e. Political will
 - f. Perception of waste as waste – end use issues

Overall - There is great concern over a variety of attitudinal issues with REMADE can assist by encouraging information collation and dissemination. This must also be promoted through group activities but also by direct one-to-one assistance.

Collection

1. REMADE
 - a. Collection systems for different types of feedstocks – need for fact sheets, costing model for example systems **H 1**
2. NON-REMADE
 - a. Cost and logistics of source separation
 - b. Contaminated waste stream (feedstock)

Overall – There is continued need for analysis of collection protocols. Much of this revolves around cost and assistance in developing a cost model for collection options would be a major help.

Regulation/ Legislation

1. REMADE
 - a. Uncertainty over the scope of future regulations – need for a single reference point of regulations, draft directives and working papers. **H 1**
 - b. Planning regulation – require detailed guidance information about composting, develop a flow diagram for planning and permitting. **H 1**
2. NON-REMADE
 - a. Packaging regulation change for LCA
 - b. Changes in legislation are on-going and causing paralysis
 - c. SEPA – lack of consistent approach between officers, tendency to 'goldplate'

- d. Degradable plastic/packaging waste
- e. European tendering rules

Overall - there is great concern over a variety of regulatory and legislative issues that need clarification. REMADE cannot address this in isolation and needs to work closely with industry and regulators. Regulation of compost-related activities are not unique and need to be considered together with other waste management and recycling commodities.

Interactions and scale of priorities relevant to **REMADE** and non-REMADE programmes

