



The end is in sight for “glass to glass CRT recycling” May 2008

Sony Corp, one of the best known manufacturers of televisions, ended the production of CRT based televisions at the end of March 2008 closing down one of a dwindling number of “glass to glass” recycling routes for scrap CRT glass.

Sony Corp. ended production of cathode-ray tubes in Japan in 2004, but continued to produce the old-style TVs under the "Trinitron" brand at plants in Singapore and Malaysia to meet limited demand in Latin America and parts of Asia.

Now it has decided to pull the plug on the remaining operations joining other well known brands such as Hitachi and Panasonic who have stopped production of CRTs in favour of LCD based units.

Currently the most commonly used recycling route for CRTs is so called “glass to glass” where small percentages of recycled glass are added to raw materials to produce new CRTs. Due to the risk of contamination the maximum quantity of old CRT glass used in new CRTs rarely exceeds 10% as manufacturers are not prepared to compromise quality to cut costs.

An article in the Electronics Times published in May 2008 puts the global demand for CRT based TVs at 90 million in 2008. Assuming 5Kg of leaded glass per CRT with 10% recycled CRT glass content, the global demand for waste leaded CRT glass for “glass to glass recycling” is 45,000 tonnes. It appears that this recycling route is nearing saturation and as more and more countries introduce laws banning TV disposal to landfill, the quantity of leaded CRT glass being collected is increasing at the same time as the demand is falling off.

Nulife Glass have opened the loop on CRT recycling, the process recovers the lead from the glass producing lead ingots with a purity in excess of 99% and a glass sand suitable for use in a range of applications. This “glass to product” recycling route avoids the need to export hazardous CRT glass thousands of miles around the world for treatment where it may be illegally dumped or processed in an unsafe manner as identified by the Basel Action Network. www.BAN.org