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## Scottish plan for plastic waste

ALASDAIR REED

PLASTIC waste clogging up landfills could become a thing of the past, according to a fledgling Scottish company which has developed an innovative new method of recycling it without producing dangerous side-effects.

Landfills throughout the UK currently swallow more than two million tonnes of plastic each year, with Scottish sites receiving 200,000 tonnes of that - yet according to start-up Greenward Environmental Technology, it could not only be successfully recycled, but also transformed into assets in a "safe and environmentally-friendly way".

Currently the plastic that does not end up in landfills is recycled through polymer cracking, a method that produces hydrogen chloride gas and hydrocarbons, which if released into the atmosphere causes environmental damage as well as having serious health implications.

During last summer's heatwave, a French environmental agency suggested that summer smog and associated air pollution may have caused the deaths of thousands of French people.

However Greenward, a spin-out of Dundee University, has pioneered new technology that not only captures the dangerous chemicals, but turns them into marketable acid and salts.

Managing director David Hutson said the new method collects re-usable oils like other methods, but also destroys the dangerous PVC emissions and collects the problematic chlorine as an asset, releasing only carbon dioxide and water at the end of the process.

He said: "Each day, every two adults in the UK produce 250 grammes of plastic waste. Our technology not only produces the quality oils, but the catalyst also cleans up the problem of the chlorinated hydrocarbons."

John Mackenzie, a commercialisation facilitator at Dundee University, added: "This technology creates a win-win situation for everybody.

"It will not only recycle plastics, but will turn them back into fuel without any negative side-effects. Realistically, it's a solution for the world."

Greenward's innovation is also being seen as good news for the Scottish Executive, which has set ambitious targets for dealing with waste in their National Waste Plan.

By 2006, it is aiming to achieve 25 per cent recycling and composting of municipal waste, and by 2020 expects to have reduced landfill from 90 per cent to 30 per cent.

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Although Greenward is currently at the initial funding stage, seeking about £250,000 over the next two years, Hutson has already had interest from environmental agencies as well as local authorities, who "have assumed a heavy reliance on the development of technology to meet the challenges of diverting waste from landfill".

He believes that in Britain alone there is currently more than £250 million of market potential, and that the market is expanding rapidly due to increasing regulation both nationally and internationally.

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