

Telecom sector tackles e-waste

Innovative recycling program encourages the reuse and recycling of smartphones

The Hague, June 18, 2018 - After plastic soup, e-waste, which is the fastest growing waste stream in the world*, is now also threatening to become a serious problem. [T-Mobile](#) is the first telecoms provider to tackle this problem together with its customers. The organization is launching an innovative recycling program today to tackle e-waste in an innovative way and stimulate circularity in the telecoms sector. With the [Recycle Deal](#) T-Mobile is offering customers not only the latest phone, but also the possibility of actively contributing to reducing e-waste. Customers are given the option at the end of a contract to sell their handset back to T-Mobile, after which it will be recycled or presented for reuse. In the new program, T-Mobile is working in close collaboration with [Closing the Loop](#), winner of the Dutch Circular Award 2018, with its unique [One-for-One concept](#). This way T-Mobile guarantees that one 'waste handset' will be recycled for every handset sold with a Recycle Deal.

In the past ten years over 7 billion smartphones have been produced** worldwide. One of the consequences of this is that there is a rapidly growing waste stream of 'old' mobile phones. Marieke Snoep, Executive Director Consumer Market: "After purchasing a new handset, the old one still all too often ends up at the bottom of the kitchen drawer or becomes waste. At a moment like this we, as a telecoms provider, need to take our responsibility and actively contribute to more sustainable use of the valuable raw materials, such as gold, silver and copper, contained in old handsets. That responsibility only stops at the end of a handset's life, when raw materials can be recycled or reused. As part of the Recycle Deal, customers buy the latest smartphone and, at the same time, help to reduce e-waste. This way we work on the Recycle Movement together with our employees, customers and partners. That is a major step towards circularity in the telecoms sector and our ambition to turn phones into waste-free consumer items. We hope to inspire consumers as well as other players on the telecoms market with this."

Closing the Loop

Two-thirds of all handsets that are recycled end up in countries that do not have a proper recycling infrastructure. A lot of handsets end up there for a third or sometimes fourth life and ultimately still become waste. To ensure that handsets from these countries are also recycled safely, T-Mobile is working, in its new recycling program, in close collaboration with Closing the Loop. This organization developed a unique [One-for-One concept](#), whereby for every phone that is sold for reuse, a 'waste phone' is saved from the e-waste garbage dump. Together with local partners in Africa and Asia, they ensure that the metals that are extracted for the production of a new mobile phone are compensated for by collecting and recycling a 'waste phone'. This is how the phones ultimately become waste-free. Joost de Kluijver, Director Closing the Loop: "The collaboration with T-Mobile helps us achieve our ambition to turn mobile phones into the first fully circular product. In our opinion the mobile phone is the first product that can achieve closed loop recycling at a global level. T-Mobile is the very first in Europe to promote proper reuse of smartphones in this way. We're extremely pleased about this. Hopefully others in the sector will follow suit."

How does the Recycle Deal work?

As from today, customers can choose a subscription (including a handset) with the Recycle Deal option. T-Mobile buys the handset back from the customer at the end of the subscription at a preset value and then ensures that the handset is reused or recycled in a sustainable way. Those phones that are given a second life do not add to electronic waste in developing countries because the same number of handsets will be collected locally and then recycled. This way the entire handset chain contributes to a circular market. Customers can also opt to keep the handset, in which case they will pay the residual amount later. When customers opt to sell back their handset the monthly amount payable in respect of the handset compared with a handset credit without Recycle Deal will be lower.

* source: [Closing the Loop](#)

** source: [Greenpeace: The Global impact of ten years of smartphones](#)

Notes for press

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