

Nokia extends mobile phone recycling scheme to the UAE

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Dubai: People typically have five mobile phones cluttering up drawers waiting to be resold or just left to collect dust, but now Nokia has extended its recycling scheme to the UAE to give old phones a purpose.

Recycling boxes will be available across the UAE for people to drop their old and unwanted phones into and collect a voucher to download music from Nokia in return.

The phones will be sent to Europe to be taken apart and recycled by 10 Nokia approved companies with 80 centres between them.

Electronic waste, or E-Waste, is an issue for which a strategic plan needs to be drawn to deal with valuable materials, said Habiba Al Marashi, chairperson of the Emirates Environment Group (EEG), which has partnered with Nokia.

"The UAE is seen as a consumer society, a throw-away society - getting young generations to think sustainably is one of our biggest challenges. Initiatives like this makes economic sense as products are recycled which saves energy and resources," Habiba said.

Domestic waste alone in the Gulf Cooperation Council region amounts to 120 million tonnes with the UAE featuring highly among them. In Dubai, each resident produces 1.5 tonnes of waste a year, Habiba said.

According to a survey conducted by Nokia in 13 countries including in the UAE, only three per cent of people recycle their mobile phones, and three out of every four people added that they have not even thought about recycling their devices.

Nearly half were unaware that it is even possible to do so. In the UAE, around 65 per cent of people said they do not consider their mobile phone as something they can recycle and 59 per cent admitted they did not know it is even possible to do so. The Nokia and EEG Take Back Programme will show people otherwise.

According to Mia Ranta-aho, senior Environmental manager, at Nokia Middle East and Africa, 1 billion people use Nokia phones worldwide.

"If each of the three billion people globally owning mobiles brought back just one unused device we could save 240,000 tones of raw materials and reduce greenhouse gases to the same effect as taking four million cars off the road."

Around 80 per cent of a mobile phone can be recycled with plastics, precious metals and pollutants being reused to make new phones.

(Gulf News)