

Public-Private Partnership Tests Separated Waste Collection

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A Tetra Pak vehicle sitting in a parking lot. The vehicles were used to collect food packaging from residents. **Daria Shipacheva**

Residents of central Moscow may soon be asked to sort their trash following a successful garbage-separation project last month.

The effort, which was organized by packaging maker Tetra Pak in association with the city's Central Administrative District, began in mid-September and lasted three weeks. Organizers praised the initial outcome.

"The results are good. The initiative is going to be expanded," said Irina Davydenko, PR director of BeeTL agency, which worked on the project on behalf of the city and TetraPak.

The effort was part of a campaign funded by Tetra Pak to collect used food packaging.

Local authorities picked up on the Tetra Pak initiative after a successful test run in April,

and they decided to use this relatively simple experiment, which asked local residents to collect used cartons for milk, juice and other liquids, to test Muscovites' readiness to sort their garbage.

Based on the results, authorities are considering extending the program to other types of waste, such as glass and plastic, Davydenko said.

Tetra Pak collection vehicles were placed at three different locations in the city center for one week and then moved, covering nine areas during the campaign.

Environmentalists were stationed at the collection points to explain the concept of separate waste collection. Davydenko said that after talking to these experts people often came back with their colleagues, having collected cardboard food containers from all over the office. Schoolchildren and teachers also participated in the initiative.

Errors in publicizing the initiative may have affected turnout, however.

"The dates were not shown correctly, and many sources posted photos and even videos with colored bins for different types of waste. This has nothing to do with our initiative," Davydenko said.

While September's effort was concentrated mainly in the Central Administrative District, Tetra Pak's overall campaign addressed broader swaths of the city but without help from officials.

Results elsewhere were far more modest, however.

"It depends on the area," said a volunteer collector at Kolomenskaya metro station. "Here, about five people come every day. Last week, I worked at Babushkinskaya. There it was about 15 per day."

Many pedestrians in the area where Tetra Pak was working on its own failed to notice the collection vehicle.

"I hadn't seen it before you asked. Of course, we would have come if we had known before," a passer-by said.

Yet not all citizens are ready to change their mindset.

"No, we wouldn't have come for this specifically, even if we had known. We don't collect cartons," another passer-by said.

Volunteers reported that although many people came and asked questions, only a few returned with cartons for recycling.

Nonetheless, the project will continue and is likely to be expanded.

"We expect that authorities of other districts will take part in the next stage of the program," Davydenko said.

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