

Environmental services



Iain Robinson

H2Ology

H2Ology developed an innovative way to process waste water and a new metering system for water usage and drainage.

Key message

Scottish Enterprise support was important in assisting the company both to develop its ideas into marketable products, and then to market them.

About the company

LOCATION

Selkirk

INDUSTRY

Environmental services

INNOVATION CATEGORY

New product/process

Scottish Enterprise has supported award-winning Selkirk firm H₂Ology in a number of recent projects, most notably in the development of a filtration system that allows public authorities to recycle both the waste run-off water from roads, and the solids contained within it; and an online metering system that enables commercial water users to save money and resources by both measuring their water use accurately and adjusting practices to make the most efficient use of it.

Challenge

In the first case, H₂Ology made use of loan finance from Scottish Enterprise to help it develop and market an innovative Treatment and Recycling Plant (TARP) for processing waste water collected off roads. The system adapts a US technology to clean and recycle the water. But H₂Ology, working in partnership with Edinburgh University and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, was also eager to find a way of recycling the sand, grit and other materials extracted from the water.

In the second instance, the company looked to develop a convenient metering system for commercial water consumers, to overcome inaccuracies in utility metering, benchmark usage against appropriate comparators and help firms minimise water and drainage costs that can easily run into six figures annually for large-scale users.

Solution

With Scottish Enterprise support, H₂Ology was able to form the necessary academic and industrial partnerships to take the TARP idea from the drawing board to the marketplace. In its first year it has sold the system to four local authorities, and managing director Iain Robinson estimates a further ten potential sales. Scottish Enterprise help, says Iain, was particularly valuable in marketing the system, through both a dedicated website and printed promotional material.

The online water metering system is also now in use with industrial customers, and Scottish Enterprise is supporting H₂Ology to market it to hoteliers, as well as to seek recognition of the company's innovative environmental work in the demanding but prestigious VIBES (Vision in Business for the Environment Scotland) Awards.

Benefit

The TARP system, says Iain, "quite honestly is saving councils hundreds of thousands of pounds a year." Previously, authorities had trouble disposing of the dirty water from road gulleys because, being a liquid, it was unsuited to landfill. Now the water can be cleaned and re-used, and the solids extracted from it can be used for roadfill and other purposes.

The online metering both provides for more accurate metering of water usage than is available from the utilities, whose systems can sometimes charge customers for undetected underground leaks, and allows businesses to benchmark their consumption against best standards and adapt processes accordingly.

Testimonial

Iain stresses the importance for companies of maintaining a close relationship with their account managers, "Ours has been excellent," he says. "He has given us full support, understands our business thoroughly and meets us regularly. He's not a box-ticking man – he really wants to understand the business, and even sits in on our board meetings."

Scottish Enterprise

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