



Global responsibility

For over 30 years, VEKA has led the world in the environmentally responsible use of PVC-U in building products.

A commitment nearly as old as the industry itself has seen VEKA leading the way in minimising the environmental impact at every stage of a product's life, including manufacture, fabrication, energy efficiency in use and eventually recycling. Worldwide, VEKA was the first PVC-U system supplier ever to invest in a purpose-built recycling plant – the VEKA Umwelttechnik factory at Behringen in Germany.

A major feature of the facility is VEKA's 'closed-loop' technology – recycling to a suitable grade to make new window frames rather than lower-grade products such as underground drain/sewage pipes. We believe that it can only be true recycling when a window can be made into a window, thus extending the life of a specific product towards a theoretical infinity.

In 1994 VEKA launched VEKA Recycling, the biggest initiative of its kind in the UK, aimed at collecting and pre-processing post-consumer frames for recycling at VEKA Umwelttechnik.

Also, in the last few years, VEKA has:

- Supported the design of the UK's first BFRC 'A' Rated window and the first fully reinforced, double-glazed window to gain the 'A' Rating*
- Actively encouraged its fabricators to retain all off-cuts for recycling
- Trained all of its personnel in environmental issues
- Gained accreditation to ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems Licence No EMS 59308).
- Become the 1st systems company to register for the BFRC Door Energy Ratings Scheme.

* The BFRC (British Fenestration Ratings Council) labelling system is aimed at quantifying a window's thermal efficiency on a scale from 'A' – the most efficient – to 'C', clearly displayed on a colour-coded label. The inclusion of factors such as solar gain means that the 'A' rated window is energy-positive, that is it can take in more energy from outside than it lets out.



VEKA Umwelttechnik A unique resource

The VEKA Umwelttechnik factory, at Behringen, Germany, was the first facility of its kind anywhere in the world, purpose-built to handle window industry waste. Another unique factor is that the facility can – and does – reprocess the PVC-U to a suitable grade to be made into new window frames rather than lower grade end-uses where consistency, aesthetics and light-stability are less of an issue. To VEKA Umwelttechnik, truly recycling a window means just that – turning windows into windows...into windows... into windows!

Using advanced technology, the facility is able to reprocess not only the PVC-U from post-consumer window frames but also the glass, metal and rubber. The process also segregates different coloured profiles to retain the visual purity of recyclate PVC-U.

VEKA Umwelttechnik, launched in 1993, has the capacity to process 50,000 tonnes of post-consumer PVC-U a year, a volume that is expected to increase as VEKA Recycling gathers pace in the UK.

VEKA and Vinyl Plus A whole-industry vision



VEKA is a wholehearted supporter and active partner of Vinyl Plus, "The voluntary commitment of the PVC industry to sustainable development." Launched in 2000, the initiative set out a medium-term plan for the global PVC-U industry to reduce the environmental impact of its use in building materials.

VEKA supports the initiative's principal commitments:

- Compliance with all agreed PVC production emission standards
- A target of halving use of lead stabilisers by 2010 and eliminating them by 2015 (VEKA has been among the pioneers in the development and use of Calcium Organic stabilisers)
- To aim to recycle 200,000 tonnes of all post-consumer PVC-U window profile by 2010
- Support for self-funding of research and development into new recycling and recovery technologies
- Establishment of partnerships with public authorities to promote best practice and recycling schemes at local level



VEKA Recycling our 'grave to cradle' policy

Early in 2007, VEKA Umwelttechnik initiated what is thought to be the biggest-ever recycling initiative of its kind by any UK system supplier with the launch of VEKA Recycling.

Based on the significant investment of a primary processing facility in Kent and a collection hub in Northern England, the initiative links major refurbishment sites all over the UK, collecting complete post-consumer windows* – from any original manufacturer's profile, for reprocessing.

Its purpose is not only to collate the entire operation but also to process the material into a form that can be transported more fuel-efficiently to VEKA Umwelttechnik – avoiding the irony of wasting natural resources in order to save them. As demand increases, it is planned to create a full recycling facility in the UK.

Many installation companies have not been slow to note that removal and recycling this way offers real cost benefits over landfill as well as the obvious reduction in environmental impact.

VEKA Recycling is equally capable of reprocessing any PVC-U window, irrespective of the original system manufacturer, eliminating any need for recognition or selection.



Enhanced energy efficiency – With appropriate argon-filled triple glazed units, Matrix 70 can achieve U-values as low as 0.8



Infinity: 84% reduction on carbon footprint vs virgin material

"The Building Research Establishment supports the evidence of the British Plastics Federation that a PVC-U window should be expected to have: "a service life of at least 35 years under normal urban and non-aggressive conditions."

