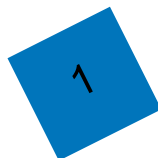




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SOLVING THE E-WASTE PROBLEM

Basel COP StEP Event

E-waste Prevention, Take-back System Design and Policy Approaches

Focussing on Transboundary flows

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Agenda

- 1. Introduction and background to White Paper*
- 2. Content of the White Paper*
- 3. Controlling Transboundary Flows*

Introduction and Background

- E-waste volumes are increasing all over the world at a current rate of about 5%
- E-waste is of significant interest among policymakers because it poses both threats to the environment and human health as well as potential opportunities to retain valuable resources, generate jobs and create business opportunities.
- The primary objective of the White Paper is to provide guidance to policymakers and system architects on the policy tools, collection systems, financing systems and potential alternatives that may be used to operate such systems.

Content of the White Paper

- Sections 2 and 3 of this paper seek to define and address the **rules that govern the take-back system**.
- Section 4 covers the **operational areas** of the prevention and takeback system.
- Section 5 covers **how such a system can be financed** to ensure that all of the management activities and operational functions can be carried and ensures its sustainability and eventual success.
- Section 6 covers the topic of **transboundary flows of used products and e-waste**.

Controlling Transboundary Flows of used Products and E-waste



Source: Greenpeace, Basel Action Network

How do you ensure that the beneficial trade in used electrical and electronic equipment continues, since it provides cheap products for repair and second hand markets, helps bridge the digital divide and provides a source of meaningful employment, while stopping the harmful export of e-waste that is beyond repair and that only contributes to harming both the natural environment and human health in the destination countries

Issues facing those wishing to confront the dilemma

1. Consistent legal definitions between second hands goods for immediate reuse (without any additional processes), used products sent for repair and e-waste destined for recycling
2. Enforcement of the established rules

Consistent legal definitions

- Major challenge in controlling unwanted flows
- Added complication is the dual nature of e-waste as both a potential toxic bad and a valuable resource
- There has been a focus on the intended purpose of the shipment: reuse, recovery or disposal
 - very complicated to ascertain from an objective point of view
- There are inconsistencies between national policy and international agreements with regard to the definition of e-waste and most importantly the definition of hazardous
- Almost impossible for classifications to keep pace with all the developments in product type and composition
 - This ensures that all classification lists are either incomplete or out of date

Enforcement

- Complexity around the definitions creates a grey area into which millions of tonnes of e-waste has disappeared
- Detailed monitoring very challenging given large volume of global trade
- Poor cooperation and information sharing at nearly all levels of enforcement
- Testing requirement complicated to enforce
- Penalties are very weak and are not a deterrent
- Complex ownership chain also impedes enforcement

Potential Consequences of over-restrictive policy

- May lead to increase in e-waste and reduced reuse
- Could increase production of new equipment since manufacturers will no longer be able to operate cost effective global repair operations
- May have little impact on negative trade since many actors in this area are already willing to break the law to ship e-waste illegally

Policy Options

- Invest in enforcement
- Require all ‘legal’ shipments of used EEE to be properly packaged
- Restrictions – only after implementing previous policy options
 - Prohibit e-waste imports
 - Partial ban based on age and product type
- Certified Reuse Channels

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