



Designing Take back Systems for E-Waste

A Toxics Link Workshop

11th December, New Delhi

E- Waste, one of the fastest growing waste segments globally, is of significant concern on account of high volumes and toxic material content. Rapid technological innovation and lower product prices are contributing to shorter product life span leading to frequent replacements and mounting waste volumes. Along with enormous quantities and toxicity, E-waste also contains valuable non-renewal materials; hence the necessity to recycle materials and reduce burden on mining of virgin materials. Recovery of these materials without any adverse impact on environment requires a set of complex operations and highly advanced technology. Some of these complexities and concerns for environment created conditions for the policy-makers in many parts of the world to involve the producers / product manufacturers to own responsibility for the end of life disposal of these products and introduction of a policy tool 'Extended Producer Responsibility' (EPR).

E-Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011 was notified by Government of India in May 2011 and came into force in May 2012. The said Rules are based on EPR principle and assign responsibility to producers for collection and processing. The one year period was provided to the stakeholder, specially the producers, to set up systems and infrastructure for an effective take back program and further channelization of this toxic waste. Unfortunately, there is not much progress on the take back system as most stakeholders lack clarity on feasible and possible models which have potential of achieving success in a vast country like India.

Collection or take back systems have been one of the most challenging tasks in implementation of E-waste Rules in developed and developing countries. The policy makers and implementers have been analyzing and engaging with various models globally to draw in the bulk consumers and the individual consumers in the system and to ensure high compliance. The presence of a large informal sector in India further complicates this system, posing serious challenge in creation of clean waste channels. The country has witnessed the growth and emergence of recycling infrastructure, but it continues to struggle in defining and adopting sustainable waste collection mechanism which is the backbone for any successful E waste management system.

There is a need to understand some of the systems currently operational in many other countries and then analyze and identify those fundamentals that can be suitably adopted in Indian conditions.

This brings us to some key questions of

1. What kind of Take back system will work in India



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2. How do we decide the scale of such collection system
3. Do we need to have different models for different product groups
4. How to gather the right data to monitor and improve the take back system

Toxics Link proposes to explore these questions and come up with some solutions with the help of national and international experts. The day long workshop on 11th December, 2012 will bring together stakeholders from all over the world to discuss the existing take back models and possible options for India.

Participants

- Ministry
- Central Pollution Control Board
- State Pollution Control Boards
- Producers (as defined in the E-waste Rules)
- Recyclers
- International agencies
- Select Civil Society Organisations