



# Factsheet

**Country:** India

**Project:** Indo-European E-waste Initiative (IEeWASTE)

## Scenario

The electronics industry is the world's largest and fastest growing manufacturing industry. Recent policy changes in India have led to an additional tremendous influx of leading multinational companies to set up electronic manufacturing facilities and research and development centres for hardware and software in the sector. The domestic market is characterised by strong economic growth and rapidly changing consumption patterns. This growth has significant socio-economic impact. The increase in consumption rates of electrical and electronic products and higher obsolescence rates are leading to growing generation of e-waste (waste electronic and electrical equipment or WEEE). In India, recycling of e-waste is almost entirely left to the informal sector which does not have adequate means to handle either the increasing quantities or certain processes, leading to intolerable risk for human health and the environment. In cooperation with the Manufacturers' Association for Information Technology in India, the GTZ, Adelphi Research, and Austria Recycling support the Indian side in their efforts to improve the situation of e-waste handling. This is achieved by strengthening links between India and the EU to exchange best practices, policies and technologies in selected Indian mega cities.

## Project goals

The Indo-European e-Waste Initiatives' objectives are manifold. Among the most important purposes is the reduction of environmental degradation by providing improved technologies and skills for e-waste management and recycling in India. An improved e-waste management leads also to an extension of income generation opportunities of (informal) e-waste recyclers as e-waste contains considerable quantities of valuable materials such as precious or other useful metals (e.g. gold and aluminium), and offers viable and profitable business opportunities. Strongly connected and an also very important goal is to improve environmental, health and living conditions of the predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled workers and the local population of surrounding areas. This aim can be achieved by raising awareness, enhancing capacities of the sector and identifying alternatives to handle the critical (toxic) e-waste fractions. Furthermore, pilot cooperation models between the formal and the informal sector are planned to create safe workplaces and stable income for the urban dwellers working in the (informal) e-waste recycling sector. A last major goal is to strengthen links between EU and India to exchange best practices, policies and technologies.

## Project measurements

The project follows an integrated approach to reach its goals. A necessary national e-waste assessment was already completed in its first phase. It revealed that a total of 330,000 MT of e-waste is generated annually in India, while an additional 50,000 MT is illegally imported into the country. However, only 19,000 MT of this is recycled due to high refurbishing and reuse of electronics products in the country and also due to poor recycling infrastructure.

Further project outputs consist of stakeholder involvement, action research and association building. Target groups are workers of (informal) enterprises, scrap dealers and importers of e-waste, owners of recycling units, downstream metal and glass smelting and other industries, intermediaries, relevant stakeholders and responsible government bodies. All the actions are supported by training programmes and awareness activities. One project highlight of 2009 was an exposure visit to Germany conducted by an Indian delegation of eight members of the informal e-waste sector. Manual and automatic best practice examples in relevant German e-waste companies were visited and analysed. Several work shops and presentations with European experts took place.

To engage as many as possible stakeholders in the handling processes of e-waste, multi-stakeholder dialogues with the industry, NGOs, manufacturer's association and governmental bodies for providing recommendations to the e-waste guidelines are also part of the initiative. Also workshops, key player dialogues and roundtables have been and will be conducted for consensus building on drawing up a road map for efficient e-waste management system.

Generating an information base for the restructuring of basic processes and policy reforms through the documentation of best practices of e-waste management in developing as well as developed countries, sustainable e-waste legislation and models proposing the assimilation of the informal sector in formal e-waste management are also an achievement by the initiative. Furthermore, a range of mechanisms are being developed for communicating with the formal and informal sector to provide practical measures and translating the information into an acceptable practice.



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