UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP EMG

A proposal on the liaison between the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management and the Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste regarding internal e-waste management

E-waste management in the procurement of ICT equipment

At their 23rd meeting in September 2017, the Senior Officials of the UN Environment Management Group agreed on deepening the liaison between the Issue Management Group (IMG) on Tackling E-waste and the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management (ESM) in the UN. The aim of the former is to identify if/how cooperation on e-waste in the UN system could be further strengthened; whilst, the latter seeks to improve the internal environmental sustainability of UN entities.

It has been proposed that this liaison focusses on e-waste management internally within the UN system, in particular on procurement practices and the current guidelines in place for ICTs procurement.

This proposal outlines the possibility to select several UN entities to link respective focal points together, from the two IMGs, to identify purchasing practices and revise existing ICT procurement guidance – from an e-waste management perspective.

Deepening liaison between the two IMGs could mutually benefit staff from both groups in a particular UN entity, by opening up e-waste experts from the IMG on Tackling E-waste with focal points from the IMG on ESM who may hold more practical knowledge with respect to the organisation's procurement practices for ICTs.

It is proposed that the objective of this work stream is to request both linked focal points to identify the relevant information (below) – and if feasible – to briefly work together to provide a small collection of key recommendations on revising their organisation's ICTs procurement guidelines – from an e-waste management perspective. I.e., identifying how to better reduce e-waste through the use of guidelines. In many cases, ICTs are procured as part of a UN Campus-wide procurement process, rather than organisation-by-organisation; this consideration may need to be taken onboard.

The opportunity remains to broaden the reach of this work, beyond two or three UN entities, by seeking responses from several Members of the IMG on Tackling E-waste, specifically relating to the nine questions listed below.

It is anticipated that the information gathered as part of this work stream, including the collection of several recommendations for improved guidelines on ICTs procurement – from an e-waste perspective – may contribute to the improvement of e-waste management through procurement that supports a reduction in environmental footprint and that helps increase efficiency. The information gathered may also support internal waste management work of the IMG on ESM.

Several guidelines on procurement exist within the UN system; however, there may still be scope to tailor these towards e-waste during its end-of-use or end-of-life, and final disposal.

Whilst a small collection of key recommendations would be provided on existing procurement guidelines for ICTs, it is also proposed that alongside this work, responses be probed to nine short questions relating to the respective organisation's ICTs contract(s):

Procurement of ICT equipment:

1.) *From which company does the ICT equipment come from?*

2.) *Do you procure a service or the actual ICT items/products?*

3.) *What product types (e.g. laptops and PCs, printers and copiers, servers, mobile phones and cables etc.) are procured?*

4.) *What environmental considerations has your organisation adopted for the specification of ICTs (e.g. certified products, supply chain environmental/labour standards, take-back and producer responsibility by the company selling, purchasing only recycled parts etc.)?*

5.) *Is/are there corporate policy/specifications in place which aim to reduce the volume of e-waste, (e.g. disposal policies, limits on the number of devices issued to each staff member etc.)?*

6.) *Does your organisation have any voluntary procedures in place, i.e. to donate old ICT equipment? If so, what form do these take? If no, what are the barriers to doing this?*

Management of e-waste:

7.) *Please provide examples, from different locations where your organisation is based (e.g. headquarters/compounds/field offices etc.), of how e-waste is managed and whether it is recycled at these locations.*

8.) *Are there any challenges faced in managing your e-waste which you would like to share?*

9.) *Does your organisation's waste management contract include regular reporting by the contractor – for example on the quantities of collected waste streams, in particular on e-waste, and on the waste management processes/handling/disposal practices used by the contractor?*