



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

EMG

Terms of Reference

Work Stream One of the Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste on programmatic analysis and strengthening collaboration

I. Introduction

1. As per the [Terms of Reference](#) of the Environment Management Group (EMG) IMG on Tackling E-waste, a mapping of existing e-waste initiatives has been carried out by Members of the group. Information on existing standards, guidelines and best practices have been documented and made available in the report, [United Nations System-wide Response to Tackling E-waste](#) produced by the IMG.
2. Through this report, the initial mapping exercise has provided a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of UN entities' in-country projects, standards, guidelines and general project-level activities designed to address global e-waste issues.
3. As a next step to the initial mapping exercise, the *Terms of Reference* of the EMG's IMG on Tackling E-waste outlines plans to next develop a system-wide approach and a related strategy for implementation within the UN system to address the global e-waste challenge. It is proposed that this strategy would include, among other areas, a coordinated approach towards e-waste management, standard-setting, quantification and qualification of e-waste issues, and further training and guidance for e-waste stakeholders.
4. To accompany this system-wide strategy, the IMG *Terms of Reference* indicate the need for work-plan preparations and a financial strategy; all in all, helping to maximize system-wide coordinated action and coherence.
5. As part of the recommendations of the report on *System-wide Response to Tackling E-waste*, and through informal discussions with Members of the IMG, it was proposed to the EMG Senior Officials that further analysis is required before any system-wide strategy or financial plans be laid out.

6. The report has provided a good situational analysis of the UN system's e-waste activities and its project-level characteristics. By building on this, and acting as a bridge between the initial mapping of the report and the proposed system-wide strategy and financial plans for coordinated action and coherence, work stream one will involve undertaking a short and precise programmatic analysis of collective gaps across the UN system.
7. As approved at the 24th EMG Senior Officials' Meeting, work stream one will 'undertake a gap analysis for identifying possible long-term programmatic cooperation and collaboration on tackling e-waste'. This analysis will examine the UN system's strengths and weaknesses by exploring areas where e-waste is present in UN entities' programmes of work, in the e-waste-related decisions and goals of these entities, and in their available funding and staffing etc. for e-waste-related work.
8. These factors will be analysed against the life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment. By exploring the collective gaps across the UN system under this context, it is foreseen that challenges which exist in relation to particular stages of the life-cycle of e-waste and corresponding measures by UN entities as set out in our programmes of work, decisions and resource allocation etc., might be identified.
9. The "collective gaps" across the UN system, in the coordination among UN entities, may for example refer to limited recognition as part of our programmes of work, limited resources or a variation in e-waste-related decisions or goals and targets etc. It is envisaged that the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats across the UN at a programmatic level, as well as available expertise, geographical coverage, types of engagement with the Member States – beyond simply our activities at project-level – will be identified.
10. It is also envisaged that, as a consequence of this programmatic analysis under work stream one, as well as the initial mapping exercise of the report on System-wide Response to Tackling E-waste, an adequate understanding of the UN system's e-waste capabilities will have been achieved. In turn, it is foreseen that the time will then be apt to embark on the initially proposed system-wide strategy and financial planning for coordinated action and coherence mentioned in the opening paragraphs above.
11. During the 5th teleconference of the IMG in October 2017, UN entities expressed their belief in the importance of also exploring the needs of stakeholders involved in e-waste activities at the national level. Whilst a significant level of attention is being paid to the actions of the UN system and its capabilities to tackle global e-waste challenges, as part of these exercises, little has been done to consult national stakeholders about what support they actually require.

12. In response to these beliefs, work stream one will in addition to the programmatic analysis, prepare a brief note that includes thoughts and ideas, including suggestions and responses from the wider IMG on Tackling E-waste, on how to best engage stakeholders through an assessment of their needs corresponding to managing e-waste in their country across the full life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment.
13. The term 'need' refers to specific e-waste challenges that the different sectoral stakeholders are facing, and the level of support that is being provided to them by UN entities. Whilst Members of the IMG on Tackling E-waste might perform an analysis of the UN system and identify a particular strength or weakness, the support that is actually required by stakeholders may not be identified. For this reason, the brief note exploring possibilities for undertaking an analysis of stakeholders' needs, is proposed.

II. Purpose, composition and responsibilities

14. In the 5th teleconference of the IMG on Tackling E-waste, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the UN Environment Pollution and Health Branch indicated their interest in taking a leading role in work stream one, with support provided by the EMG secretariat.
15. As explained in the introductory section, work stream one has 2 objectives. These are as follows:
 - Prepare an analysis exploring UN entities' programmes of work, their available resources and decisions, and goals and targets relating to tackling e-waste, with the aim to identify gaps across the UN system where we might be struggling to address particular stages of the life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment.
 - Prepare a brief note, documenting possible approaches for a future assessment by UN entities, of the needs of stakeholders (actors) involved across the life-cycle stages of electrical and electronic equipment, (in a particular region or country(ies)).

Objective One

16. Currently, there are at least over 20 UN and related entities in the international community who are addressing global e-waste challenges. Across the UN itself, there have been over 150 notable initiatives undertaken and designed to tackle e-waste. According to the report on the *System-wide Response to Tackling E-waste*, only 15% of the 154 initiatives identified actually comprised collaboration and partnership – among UN entities only.

17. From a UN system-wide perspective, grand partnerships and system-wide collaboration in most cases have remained sub-optimal. The duplication of efforts to tackle e-waste remain ad-hoc, on a project-by-project basis, whenever there is funding available. Entity-by-entity efforts to address e-waste issues that are multidimensional and cross-sectoral in nature on an industry and societal basis, might likely benefit from strengthened programmatic collaboration to bring relevant skill sets together.
18. In order to begin discussing how to strengthen collaboration across the UN system, the importance of undertaking a programmatic analysis has been highlighted. It will allow the IMG to recognise the comparative advantages of UN entities; those for example relating to the different sectors and dimensions of e-waste.
19. It is suggested that the most active UN entities involved in tackling e-waste, should be closely involved in this analysis. As identified by the *System-wide Response to Tackling E-waste* report, these entities include: UNU, UNIDO, BRS, UN Environment, ITU, ILO, UNDP and UNITAR.
20. The analysis may probe factors relating to: funding and staffing, the resource requirements of entities, their decisions and mandates, expertise, geographical coverage, forms of engagement with the Member States, the range of activities in their programme of work in different areas, such as policy and legislation, science, information, technical assistance and capacity development, the future plans and e-waste project pipeline, funding received so far to implement technical assistance and capacity development, and the receipt of funding from external sources etc.
21. The analysis may equally involve the current and past activities of UN entities, relating to the engagement of private sector entities, their involvement with various organisations such as non-traditional actors like start-ups and entrepreneurs, or original equipment manufacturers, and the recycling sector etc.
22. Based on the findings from UN entities involved in work stream one, the output of objective one will include a brief descriptive analysis, complemented by a SWOT analysis looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of programmatic collaboration on tackling e-waste.
23. It is expected that this analysis will complement the previous report on the *System-wide Response to Tackling E-waste* by providing an additional level of information, detailing the UN's system-wide programmatic position on e-waste. Fundamentally, the analysis will act as a step between the initial mapping exercise of the report, and long-standing plans to develop a system-wide strategy and financial plans for coordinated action and coherence.

It is hoped that the analysis will make the possibilities and the difficulties of system-wide programmatic collaboration on tackling e-waste much clearer.

Objective 2

24. Throughout the duration of the IMG on Tackling E-waste, it has been highlighted that a wide spectrum of stakeholders exists who are involved in e-waste management at the national, regional and global levels. Some of these stakeholders, such as the communications authorities, have not been involved in national e-waste management initiatives because they are not considered as traditional stakeholders in the waste management related initiatives.
25. UN entities active in the area of e-waste are already aware of the needs of their constituencies. However, a comprehensive compilation of the types of stakeholders engaged with the UN system as well as their needs has not been undertaken so far.
26. It is suggested that in the proposed note, reference is made to the mapping of various stakeholders involved in e-waste and a multi-stakeholder approach needs assessment that includes non-traditional stakeholders.
27. Stakeholders may for example, be referred to as Basel Convention Focal Points and competent authorities, Basel Convention Regional Centres, environment ministries (if different from the competent authorities), information and communication technology ministries, customs authorities, port authorities, police, and municipal authorities, original equipment manufacturers, e-waste management solution providers, academia, small, medium and large businesses, civil society and non-governmental organisations.
28. In support of the preparation of work for objective 2, consultations with the representatives of identified range of stakeholders, mentioned above will be undertaken to hear their views as to how the UN system can engage with them in a more coherent and efficient manner.
29. It is expected that the output of objective 2, will lead to the drafting of a brief note. The purpose of this note will be to highlight the importance of ensuring that UN e-waste interventions, actions and projects remain relevant to the location's context and the work of stakeholders tasked with addressing e-waste issues.
30. The note will contribute to the long-term aspirations of many representatives of the IMG on Tackling E-waste, relating to the concept of possibly developing procedures in the long-run, for working closely with key national stakeholders in identifying and documenting the support they require to tackle their country's e-waste issues.

31. It is expected that the brief note will complement other areas of the IMG's work, by raising awareness about the importance of looking into how the UN supports Member States – by connecting with them directly to hear their opinions – rather than by uniquely and repeatedly analysing our own system.
32. In addition to being complementary to other areas of the IMG's work, it is expected that based on thoughts and ideas of IMG Members, the note as a subtle first step will shed new light on the possibilities which the UN system has at its disposal to work closely with key stakeholders to hear their views on their country's e-waste challenges.

III. Expected outcomes

33. The complementarity of objective one to the initial mapping exercise of the report on *System-wide Response to Tackling E-waste*, has already been highlighted. As an outcome of the programmatic analysis – the first objective of this work stream – it is anticipated that Senior Officials of the key e-waste actors across the UN system, notably UNU, UNIDO, BRS, UN Environment, ITU, ILO, UNDP and UNITAR, will recognise and support the facilitation of system-wide programmatic collaboration.
34. As mentioned beforehand, it may be possible to gain a clearer understanding of who has a comparative advantage across the system, whilst at the same time where resources or skills could be shared to sustain one another – or to support currently under-addressed life-cycle stages of electrical and electronic equipment.
35. After having gained a clearer vision of the programmatic situation, and after having recognised the possibilities of system-wide programmatic collaboration, it is hoped that core UN entities might consider decisions to look further into joint programming, an e-waste coalition or initial non-binding cooperation agreement, or into rekindling existing ideas such as a one UN E-waste inter-agency coordination mechanism.
36. As an outcome, it is expected that the UN system could be provided with a much clearer picture of the entry points and new opportunities through which to engage national stakeholders in tackling e-waste issues in a given region or country.

IV. Finalised work plan – objective one

Task type, task description and date	
February 2018	
Meeting: (w/c February 19 th)	WS1 team meeting to bring together questions and scope.
March 2018	
Deliverable: (w/c March 5 th)	Prepare questions in consultation with key UN e-waste entities.
Deliverable: (w/c March 5 th)	Complete and finalise questions, and distribution method.
Deliverable: (w/c March 12 th)	Distribute questions to key UN e-waste entities.
Meeting: (w/c March 19 th)	7 th IMG meeting to report progress and answer any queries.
April 2018	
Meeting: (w/c April 16 th)	WS1 team meeting to discuss presentation of responses.
Deliverable: (w/c April 23 rd)	Receive all responses from UN e-waste entities.
May 2018	
Meeting: (w/c May 14 th)	WS1 team meeting if required for any finishing touches.
Deliverable: (w/c May 28 th)	Document and present all responses.
June 2018	
Meeting: (w/c June 4 th)	Present draft analysis for comments at 8 th IMG meeting.
August 2018	
Deliverable: (w/c August 6 th)	Finalise and submit analysis for the 24 th Senior Officials' Meeting.
September 2018	
Meeting: (September)	Technical Segment presentation on findings from WS1.