



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP



Terms of Reference

Work Stream Two of the Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste on further and systematic e-waste knowledge sharing among UN entities

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. As part of the recommendations of the report, it was proposed to the EMG Senior Officials, that a need remains to identify methods for sharing data, knowledge and expertise among UN entities, in order to reduce the duplication of their efforts in tackling e-waste. To facilitate knowledge sharing, and to make coordination and collaboration easier, it has been recommended that a central platform or database be developed with the facility to store information on initiatives undertaken to tackle e-waste.
3. Such a platform may facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and best practices to support the implementation of e-waste-related work; and to ensure easier access to guidance, proposals and information on previous and upcoming e-waste projects and programmes.
4. At the 23rd Senior Officials' meeting, the action point on establishing means for further and systematic sharing of knowledge among UN entities on e-waste management partnerships and programmes, including developing a repository of project expertise, country level information and related data, was approved.
5. Several online platforms and websites already exist that aim to share knowledge on topics that relate to waste and the environment. None of these existing platforms provides any specific and tailored support for UN entities – among UN entities – in tackling e-waste.

Nor do they help bring these entities together to support each other specifically on the topic of e-waste.

Examples of existing knowledge platforms:

- The [Green Growth Knowledge Platform](#) is a global network of international organizations and experts that identifies and addresses major knowledge gaps in green growth theory and practice. The GGKP offers practitioners and policymakers the policy guidance, good practices, tools, and data necessary to support the transition to a green economy.
- The UNU-led [Step E-waste World Map](#) is a database which provides comparable, country-level data on the amount of electrical and electronic equipment put on the market and the resulting amount of e-waste generated in most countries around the world.
- The ITU's [Global Portal on E-waste](#) is a list of resources intended to empower and equip institutional and governmental capabilities in order to aid in the reduction of e-waste and municipal waste.
- The [MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative](#) brings together Multilateral Environmental Agreements to develop harmonized and interoperable information systems for the benefit of Parties and the environment community at large.

II. Purpose, composition and responsibilities

6. At the 5th teleconference of the IMG on Tackling E-waste, the UN Environment Law Division, and Pollution and Health Branch indicated their interest in taking a supporting role in work stream 2, with support provided by the EMG secretariat. During subsequent informal discussions, the United Nations University also highlighted their interest in taking a supporting role.
7. The objective of this work stream is to prepare a work plan to support the development of an online knowledge platform – a standalone knowledge platform – which will enable UN entities to share information and their expertise on the topic of e-waste. The plan will provide preparatory information on making the necessary arrangements to establish the platform as a first step towards UN system-wide coordination.
8. Such a platform may comprise a library of publications and resources, an interactive calendar of e-waste meetings and events, a comprehensive list of contacts and their details, funding sources and support, and learning and training tools for e-waste practitioners etc.
9. It is envisaged that the work plan for this platform will focus on two areas; the substantive element of the platform (i.e. what it contains and provides to its users) and the operational element (i.e. what may be required logistically to establish, maintain and keep

the platform up to date; including the financial requirements). More details are provided below on substantive and operational issues.

Substantive:

10. The supporting entities involved in this work stream, with assistance from the EMG secretariat, will identify possible topics and themes of the online platform. Communication with the wider IMG Membership, for their input and needs regarding such an online space, will be required. Email and telephone communication, including discussions during each teleconference of the IMG, will provide opportunities for communication with fellow UN entities.
11. Other substantive elements might include identifying the sort of information that is valuable to individual UN entities, including new information that is not currently easy to access; whilst also, recognizing what information is mutually valuable for all UN entities specifically with the aim to increase coordination and to help entities learn from each other.
12. The supporting entities might also consider the type of information that would be made available online, including the audience of the platform; for example, whether its scope might be to act as a standalone space to support only UN entities or as a space for all e-waste actors including those outside the UN system.
13. In preparing the work plan, the supporting entities will ensure that efforts to consider how the interaction between UN entities' e-waste-related projects and programmes, and the full life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment, can best be displayed or presented in the platform's design and usability.

Operational:

14. Supporting entities, with assistance from the EMG secretariat, will identify, discuss and plan for the basic foreseen operational requirements of such a standalone knowledge sharing platform. Communication via email, telephone and during each teleconference of the IMG, will be central to hearing the views of fellow UN entities.
15. During the preparation of the work plan, close coordination with UNU will be required, especially, in the context of the proposed revitalisation of the UNU-led Step E-waste World Map, based on new statistical information sourced from the UNU-ITU-ISWA statistics partnership. The liaison with and support from partners outside the UN system for the revitalisation of the World Map platform, may provide a useful insight into support for the proposed UN-wide e-waste knowledge sharing platform.

16. Operational elements to be outlined as part of the work plan, could include key considerations such as: the envisaged contribution of resources by IMG Members, the attempt to secure external support for the platform's development, decision on the host entity, and the procedures which would be required to constantly maintain the platform by feeding it with information from UN entities.
17. Supporting entities, with the assistance from the EMG secretariat and in consultation with the wider IMG membership, will – in particular – identify methods for funding both the platform's development and its long-term maintenance. Possible approaches to initial financing may include minor contributions from IMG Members, whilst long-term maintenance and updating would require longer-term investment; perhaps from partners outside the UN system. Consequently, a financial understanding of the platform's development and maintenance should be incorporated into the work plan.
18. Further operational elements which need to be considered in the work plan for an online knowledge sharing platform include its longevity. In order to be of use and of value to the UN system, an online space as such, would gain in value only if its content remains up to date and increases progressively with more and more new information from UN entities.
19. The output of work stream two will result in the drafting of a short work plan to be issued to Senior Officials of UN entities, which will include suggestions on both the substantive and operational sides of the platform.
20. With the outputs of the other work streams, and the mapping exercise contained in the recent *e-waste report*, it is envisaged that this combination including the knowledge sharing platform work plan, will support further thinking and action at a senior level, around more e-waste partnerships, collaboration and synergies.

III. Expected outcomes

21. In case a coalition or cooperation agreement, coordination mechanism or high-level partnership on tackling e-waste, or likewise, is signed among heads of UN entities, it is foreseen that such a knowledge sharing platform could be included as a substantive element to pursue as a next step.
22. The knowledge platform would ideally lead to a greater recognition that sharing our information and knowledge – and possibly our resources – is effective and feasible in bringing our e-waste efforts together. As mentioned above, a platform with these capabilities could provide a tangible next step following a high-level coalition or agreement on strengthening collaboration and coordination on tackling e-waste.

23. The platform will help provide access to peer support relating to designing and implementing e-waste projects, it will help make communication easier among the UN entities involved in tackling e-waste, and will allow these entities to gain greater understanding about where the UN's efforts are strongest and weakest.

IV. Finalised work plan

Task type, task description and date	
February 2018	
Deliverable: (w/c February 19 th)	Distribute substantive themes/topics of platform to IMG.
March 2018	
Deliverable: (w/c March 5 th)	Receive inputs from IMG on substantive themes/topics.
Deliverable: (w/c March 19 th)	Completion of Work Plan's Chp.2 on substantive section.
Meeting: (w/c March 19 th)	Discuss the following at the 7 th IMG meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foreseen duration of the platform 2. Long and Short-term funding possibilities 3. The individual or partnership host 4. Maintaining and updating the platform 5. Acquiring a formal expression of interest
April 2018	
Deliverable: (w/c April 23 rd)	Completion of Work Plan's Chp.3 on operational section.
Meeting: (w/c April 23 rd)	WS2 team call to review Chp.2 and Chp.3 progress.
May 2018	
Deliverable: (w/c May 14 th)	Finalise Work Plan.
Meeting: (w/c May 14 th)	WS2 team call if required for any finishing touches.
June 2018	
Meeting: (w/c June 4 th)	Present Work Plan for comments at 8 th IMG meeting.
August 2018	
Deliverable: (w/c August 6 th)	Finalise and submit Work Plan for the 24 th Senior Officials' Meeting.
September 2018	
Meeting: (September)	Technical Segment presentation on Work Plan.