

## **TOWARDS A SAARC REGIONAL CONVENTION ON SOUND E-WASTE MANAGEMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The accelerated rate of technological advancement has led to an increasing rate of consumption and rapid rate of obsolescence of electrical and electronic products. Thus, electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) has currently become the largest growing waste stream. In the year 2012, almost 48.9 million metric tons of e-waste was produced around the world, which is an average of 7 kg for each of the 7 billion world population. The current practices of e-waste management in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries experience a number of dilemmas like health risk raised due to primitive disposal and informal recycling methods; lack of comprehensively documented data which make difficulty in realizing the magnitude of the problem; inadequate financial strength; lack of skilled and professional workforce with diverse management, organizational and logistical experience; lack of legislation or enforcement surrounding; and lack of objective to evaluate the alternatives in economically sustainable and environmentally sensitive management of e-waste. This study is an attempt to put forward a presumable regional approach to diminish the emerging problem of ewaste of SAARC countries. The methodology adopted was desk research techniques. The paper suggests possible course of action which is intended to address the e-waste problem of SAARC region covering; (1) undertake regional awareness campaigns on health risks associated with e-wastes; and implement and enforce regional minimum health standards to minimize the adverse effects of e-waste on the environment and human health; (2) create a regional database to develop a comprehensive understanding of the main sources of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) imports, and the extent, status and trends of e-waste movement around the SAARC region; and establish regional minimum technical standards for major categories of imported EEE; (3) establish a funding organization to finance for inventory, collection, storage, recycling and removal of e-wastes and for research and development; (4) maintain a regional task force with experienced and expertise individuals in the management and operation of e-waste collection actions; and establish a regional training center to train the people engaged in the field; (5) establish a regional research center; and develop proper guidance on ewaste handling and best practice in Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and end of life management options. In order to make the approach reality, the paper emphasizes the obligation of a SAARC regional convention on sound e-waste management.

**Key words:** e-waste management, SAARC, convention, electrical and electronic equipment (EEE)