



a toxics-free future

www.ipen.org

ipen@ipen.org

International SAICM Implementation Project (ISIP)

In 2010, in an effort to demonstrate SAICM implementation via IPEN Participating Organizations, IPEN launched an International SAICM Implementation Project, also known as ISIP. ISIP aims to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities pertaining to national priorities, in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy.

In particular, the ISIP supports the Governance objective of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 26, which calls for enhanced "cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels."

In addition, ISIP builds on the 2008-2009 Global SAICM Outreach Campaign to raise awareness about SAICM and strengthen collaboration among the public interest, health and labor sectors.

ISIP Objectives

ISIP's four objectives include:

- Promoting the need for sound chemicals management
- Advancing National SAICM Implementation
- Promoting global SAICM implementation by global civil society
- Building capacity among NGOs developing countries and countries with economies in transition

Title of activity: Awareness and Learning Initiative of E-waste Hazard in Bangladesh

NGO: Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO)

Country: Bangladesh

Date: August 2010

Elements of SAICM Covered:

Activities relating to identification and assessment of where issues relating to the sound management of chemicals arise during the lifespan of electrical and electronic products, including the design of such products, green chemistry, recycling and disposal, in particular in the context of the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm conventions, participation in the workshop on electronic waste to be held in the margins of the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group meeting of the Basel Convention and follow up recommendations and options for the SAICM OEWG and ICCM3 (ICCM2 decision II/4)

Definition of e-waste and near end of life items and the hazardous chemicals contained in them:

The term “E-waste” means the electronic wastes. It can be defined as all secondary electronic equipment including computers, entertainment devices, mobile phones, television sets, refrigerators, etc. whether sold, donated or discarded by their original owners. It is a popular informal name for electronic products nearing the end of their “useful life.” Much of the electronic equipment can be reused, refurbished, or recycled.

Description of the situation with regard to e-waste that is generated in the country vs. waste that enters the country:

Bangladesh indicates a rapid economic growth with emerging market for consumers of electric, electronic gadgets, and home appliances. These demands have created a circumstance of increasing amounts of locally produced electronics products and increasing demand for re-using these products. Equipment is largely refurbished and recycled in semiformal and informal sectors. Re-use or recycling of equipment and dumping are creating risks these days. These electronic wastes can cause environmental and health hazards. At present, there is a lack of awareness and adequate information gap on e-waste hazards. Bangladesh imported old computers, printers and monitors in bulk quantity in the years 2000 to 2003, around 20-35 containers in a year for a total of 105 containers. That electronic equipment was 3 to 5 years old during shipment. It was estimated that the e-equipment become scrap and e-waste within the next 2 to 4 years.

Description of the current practices for dealing with e-waste and near end of life electrical equipment:

The practice from consumers’ point of view is to use and throw away; and around 40% of consumers dump rejected e-equipments anywhere and everywhere. 73% of repair services dump the rejected e-equipments in a storeroom for recycling and reuse.

The process of recycling in Bangladesh is very injurious and hazardous; there is no proper waste management guideline or regulation. Reuse of e-equipment is a common practice in Bangladesh. E-equipment recycling and dismantling is a growing business, although there is no e-waste dismantling facility in the formal sector. All the recycling is being carried out by the informal sector. 120,000 urban poor forms the informal sector and are involved in the recycling trade chain of Dhaka city. 15% of the total generated waste in Dhaka (mainly inorganic) which amounts 475 tones, are recycled daily. Within this amount of waste only 20 to 35% recycled and rest laid in to landfills, rivers, ponds, drains, lake, canals and open spaces.

Description of any contaminated sites that have resulted from e-waste:

In Dhaka, the areas with the most concentrated disposal and storage of E-waste are Islampur, Kamrangirchar, Jinjira, Mirpur (11, 12) and Mohammadpur. And in Chittagong, Sitakund is extremely contaminated by E-waste disposed of by the surrounding ship breaking yards.

Islampur is one of the polluted areas of Dhaka City, which are mainly contaminated by the E-waste. It is situated near the Buriganga River. Open landfill and disposal in this river makes the environment more vulnerable, as those directly affect the aquatic life and the river water quality.

Jinjira is another area in Dhaka which is famous for the production of electronic parts. This area is also contaminated by E-wastes generated here. Roadside engineering and repair workshops are not well enough conscious about this problem and dump their wastes at open area. These wastes deteriorate the soil quality and also harm the public health.

Project Outcomes:

Description of the activity conducted:

A survey was conducted from September 2009 to June 2010 in Dhaka and Chittagong to determine the volume of E-waste generated by six “E-waste” products; television, computer, mobile phone, CFL bulb, medical and dental equipments. Of these products, we also selected at least four target groups- importers, retailers, repairers and consumers- for each product.

Each group consisted of 10 contributors except the mobile phones groups (which had 30 members).

ESDO conducted the survey at the stadium market, IDB Bhaban and Eastern Plaza to survey the status of E-waste generating equipment like televisions, computers and mobile phone sets respectively. A survey was also conducted among a variety of CFL bulb purchasers to evaluate the condition of generation of E-waste from the CFL bulb and mercury bulbs. The survey showed that there are no manufacturers of those products in Bangladesh. There are only importers, retailers, repair shops, and assembler and service providers. It is clear that the production of E-waste from the electronic sector is increasing exponentially in Bangladesh. It generates a huge amount of E-waste from this sector from the products that enter the country as imported goods.

ESDO also produced and published a public booklet on e-waste, an e-waste Bangladesh website: www.esdo.org/ewaste, a small electronic flier, a power point presentation, bookmark, and poster. In addition, ESDO disclosed the study findings and formally launched the national campaign through a press briefing.

Impact on target groups:

The target groups of this research work are the government authorities, non-government organizations, civil society and media (print and electronic). ESDO received an appreciating response from the target groups. They displayed their curiosity by asking questions at the press briefing. Media widely covered the event and issue.

Impact on target policies:

ESDO just launched its research report, and we understand that it is too early to expect any legal policy within this very short time. But we are hoping to have a realistic legal planning and policies regarding this issue.

Outreach to stakeholders:

The importers, assemblers, retailers, repair shops and the consumers were involved in this survey work. ESDO tried to collect the highest quality information from them about the generation, consumption and disposal of E-wastes by using an appropriate questionnaire.

Deliverables, outputs and/or products:

1. Study Report
2. A public booklet on E-waste
3. E-waste Bangladesh website: www.esdo.org/ewaste
4. A small electronic flier
5. A power point presentation
6. Bookmark
7. Poster

Communication efforts:

ESDO organized a press briefing to let the media, NGOs, public and the government know about this issue, which is neglected but important. ESDO has launched a web site regarding this E-waste issue. The link is www.esdo.org/ewaste. Moreover, we always give emphasis on the awareness level of very general persons. So ICE (Information, Communication and Education) materials were also launched. ICE materials included posters, electronic fliers, booklet and bookmarks (both in Bangla and English).

SAICM National Focal Point:

Dr. Aparup Chowdhury
Joint Secretary (Env)
Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF)
E-mail: js-env@moef.gov.bd

NGO Recommendations for next steps:

Till now there have been no effective steps taken in Bangladesh to stop generating e-waste, nor are there any strict disposal guidelines for this sludge. The following actions can be taken as part of a way forward:

1. Inventory of E-waste in large cities of Bangladesh.
2. Develop E-waste policy and guideline with consultation with the relevant stakeholders.
3. Establish efficient collection system at least for selected electronic waste.
4. Registration and capacity development of E-waste recyclers.
5. Introduction of Environmental Management System in E-waste sector.
6. Establish E-waste tracking mechanism in order to update the inventory.
7. Involve the children and youth for e-waste learning and knowledge/information dissemination.
8. Awareness-raising and development of communication material (poster, leaflets, brochure, TV spot).
9. Monitor e-waste trafficking and shipment.