

QUESTION 8/2

Strategies and policies for the proper disposal or reuse of telecommunication/ICT waste material

1 Statement of the situation or problem

The growth of telecommunications/ICTs, especially in developing countries, has been exponential in recent years. For instance, between 2002 and 2007, mobile-phone penetration in the Americas region grew from 19 to 70 terminals per 100 inhabitants. Globally, the share of mobile-phone subscriptions in developing countries increased by 20 percentage points, from 44 per cent to 64 per cent over the same period of time.

The growth of electrical and electronic equipment and their peripherals, as well as the continuous updating of technology, has generated a significant growth in telecommunication/ICT waste. It is estimated that between 20 and 50 million tonnes of telecommunication/ICT waste are generated every year worldwide. However, recycling and responsible disposal of telecommunication/ICT waste remain at low levels, making it difficult to even find figures on this issue at regional level.

The consequences of not carrying out proper recycling or disposal are environmental problems of large magnitude, especially for developing countries.

The exponential growth of telecommunication/ICT terminals, the associated high turnover of terminals and advances in technology make it imperative to put forward actions in the immediate future to prevent the environmental catastrophe that would result in developing countries if we fail to produce an adequate regulatory framework and work towards policies that address this problem.

2 Question or issue for study

Strategies to develop a responsible approach to, and comprehensive treatment of, telecommunication/ICT waste: policy and regulatory actions required in developing countries, in close collaboration with ITU-T Study Group 5.

3 Expected output

The final expected output is a report with recommendations and actions to be taken by developing countries to implement a comprehensive system of telecommunication/ICT waste management.

This final report should contain the technical classification of e-waste related to telecommunication/ICT policy recommendations, together with regulatory proposals, economic models and methods of financing for developing countries.

4 Timing

Four years with an interim report by 2016, and a final report by 2018.

5 Proposers/sponsors

Participants in the ad hoc Group of WTDC-14 Committee 3 on Objective 5.

6 Sources of input

- Member States
- Sector Members
- Associates.

7 Target audience

Target audience	Developed countries	Developing countries ¹
Telecom policy-makers	Yes	Yes
Telecom regulators	Yes	Yes
Service providers/operators	Yes	Yes
Manufacturers	Yes	Yes

a) Target audience – Who specifically will use the output

Telecom regulators, telecom policy-makers, service providers/operators and manufacturers, principally of developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs).

b) Proposed methods for the implementation of the results

A set of guidelines and recommendations about the strategies for a responsible and comprehensive approach to the treatment of waste related to telecommunications/ICTs: policy and regulatory actions required in developing countries and LDCs.

This guide could be implemented by the developing countries and LDCs, as well as operators and manufacturers, in the establishment of actions for a responsible and integral treatment of waste related to telecommunications/ICTs.

8 Proposed methods of handling the Question or issue

a) How?

1) Within a study group:

It is proposed to perform the following tasks within Study Group 1:

- Technical classification of telecommunication/ICT waste, according to the components and hazardous substances.
- Identify and assess the problems countries and/or regions face in the implementation of a comprehensive telecommunication/ICT waste management system.
- Experiences of various developed and developing countries, as well as manufacturers and operators, in the comprehensive management of telecommunication/ICT waste, including policy, regulatory and economic studies, methods of financing, among others.

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

- iv) Examine how the transfer of information and knowledge, training and skills development in people and institutions can strengthen the ability of countries to manage the handling of telecommunication/ICT waste. Browse effective systems for sharing information that assists in these tasks.
- 2) Within regular BDT activity:
- Programmes ☐
 - Projects ☐
 - Expert consultants ☐
- 3) In other ways – describe (e.g. regional, within other organizations, jointly with other organizations, etc.) ☐

b) Why?

To elaborate the set of guidelines, it would be necessary to have the experience of the different countries, operators and manufacturers, as well as different organizations related with the topic who could provide information.

The study group must develop questionnaires and the set of guidelines.

9 Coordination and collaboration

- Regular ITU-D activities
- Other study group Questions or issues
- Regional organizations, as appropriate
- Work in progress in the other ITU Sectors.

10 Other relevant information