



Lagos, Nigeria

Person in the Port Project



solving the e-waste problem



The Person in the Port Project¹

Private consumers and business users purchase ever more electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) around the globe. The United Nations University (UNU) predicts that e-waste will rise from the current 41 million tonnes produced each year to 47 million tonnes in 2017. While in countries with market economies in transition and in developing countries², e-waste is mainly generated from equipment that has ceased to function, industrialized countries generate part of their e-waste from functional equipment that consumers replace with a newer version.

This trend is due to the shortening innovation cycles of EEE, and because repairable EEE is not repaired. While functional used EEE has no market in industrialized countries but instead is collected and treated at additional cost, it still can sell for considerable prices in developing countries and in countries with market

economies in transition. This situation explains why used EEE is exported from developed countries to developing countries.

Non-functional and non-repairable EEE is illegally exported together with functional used EEE to developing countries, where the valuable parts are removed and the non-valuable fractions are disposed of in a way that poses threats to the environment and to human health. The Person-in-the-Port project addresses the need for improved understanding of the quantity, quality and drivers of these exports in order to enable the useful export of functional EEE while preventing illegal exports of non-functional EEE.

The UNU, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA) and the Basel Convention Coordination





Centre for Africa (BCCC) in Nigeria – all members of the Solving the E-waste Problem (Step) Initiative – are partnering together in this project with Electronic Recyclers International (ERI) and will gather information and reliable data on the import of used EEE and e-waste into Nigeria, one of the main countries in West Africa through which used EEE flows.

The project focuses on identifying the types and amounts of e-waste/used EEE imported, its functional status, how it is packaged, labelled and transported, its origin (exporting countries), and what will become of it once it arrives in Nigeria.

The project hired an expert who will be trained and stationed in the harbours of Lagos for approximately six months starting in January 2015 to collect qualitative

and quantitative information on imports of used EEE and to evaluate them together with the other partners in the project.

The information collected will provide an opportunity to understand the scope of the problem in Nigeria, how imports are characterized (in terms of what is stated in the shipping document versus what is really in the containers), the economic drivers influencing used EEE imports and the prevalence of illegal practices.

The information will help analyse how these illegal practices can be curtailed while maintaining the beneficial aspects making inexpensive used EEE available to lower income people in developing countries who would otherwise have no access to EEE.



¹ This project is funded by the US-EPA and the Senior Expert Service (SES) Germany

² In the further document, the term „developing countries“ is used to address both the countries with market economies in transition as well as developing countries

Contact Address

Basel Convention Coordinating Centre For Training & Technology Transfer for the African Region

Federal Ministry of Environment – University
of Ibadan Linkage

Centre For Cleaner Production Technology
& Hazardous Waste Management

1 Ijoma Road

University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Tel: +234 803 301 3378

Fax: +234 2 810 3168

Homepage: www.basel.org.ng

Email: oluwaseunbadejo@basel.org.ng

chidiabsu@yahoo.co.uk



United Nations University

Institute for the Advanced Study
of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)

Operating Unit SCYCLE

Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1

53113 Bonn, Germany

Tel.: +49-228-815-0271

Fax: +49-228-815-0299

Homepage: www.ias.unu.edu

Email: scycle@unu.edu



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-IAS

Institute for the Advanced Study
of Sustainability