



Circular Electronics Initiative (CEI)

Circular Electronics Initiative (CEI) programme helps countries in the Global South to implement a system for circular management of Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment/products (WEEE).

Rationale

The growth of the global economy, the digitalization of today's businesses and society, and lowering of prices by efficient production has led to an explosive demand for electrical and electronic equipment globally. It is therefore not surprise, that Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment is one of the most complex and fastest growing waste flows globally. Most WEEE is currently treated by inadequate processes in the informal sector. While providing workers in this sector a livelihood, professionalizing this sector will give major benefits: avoiding human and terrestrial toxic effects, recovery of critical and bulk materials for re-use, and high carbon benefits by avoiding primary production of such materials.

The program helps national and sub-national governments to build capacities for a WEEE management framework and provide a level playing field for a professional WEEE infrastructure operated by the combination of a professionalized informal and formal sector.

Objectives and outcomes

The overall development objective of the program is to develop framework conditions that enable the implementation of sustainable re-use and recycling of WEEE practices in SECO partner countries. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) will be the overarching concept guiding the work on these elements.

The programme focuses on four outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Appropriate Institutional, Policy and Legislative Framework for E-Waste. This usually implies developing legislation (e.g. an EPR scheme that also provides finances for all outcomes listed here) and institutional government capacity. It may be that some elements for some waste streams are already in place, but that for instance new and fast growing WEEE streams like PV, EVs, etc. need specific attention.

Country/region

Egypt, Ghana, South Africa

Implementing partner

World Resources Forum
Association (WRFA)

Project duration

2025-2029

Total budget

CHF 5,000,000

SECO contribution

CHF 5,000,000

- Outcome 2: Clear normative requirements and verification/enforcement mechanisms. These normative requirements are crucial to create a level playing field and ensure that WEEE is processed without creating harm to workers and the environment.
- Outcome 3: Professionally functioning collection and treatment system supported by businesses and consumers. The two former Outcomes will incentivize and enable a professionally functioning WEEE management system with actors that manage to cover their financial costs. An important point of attention in this is looking how the informal sector that usually plays a big role in the initial waste management structure can be 'taken along' and upgraded.
- Outcomes 4: Adequate monitoring of the EEE value and waste chain. This element is crucial to understand the success of all interventions described in the previous outcomes. It further helps to quantify the benefits of the WEEE management system in terms of re-used amount of materials, avoided primary production, and hence saved carbon emissions. Last but not least, insight into who puts which EEE on the market in which volumes is crucial for fundraising via an EPR scheme, and hence crucial to make the WEEE system work.
- Outcomes 5: CEI concepts and methods are strengthened in exchange with the international community of practice and have proliferated as global public goods. This may for instance include approaches for monitoring and setting up waste statistics, the application of tools like LCA to assess environmental benefits, etc.

Governance Structure

The Programme Management runs under the responsibility of the World Resources Forum Association (WRFA). The CEI Steering Committee is comprised of SECO, the country coordinators and the technical coordinators. The SC's main role is to provide strategic guidance and monitoring of progress towards established outcomes, outputs and activities.

SECO is regularly and directly involved in the overall strategic steering, above all with regard to the preparation and the approval of the full-fledged interventions in the Country Component (country projects / special country measures) and the interventions under the Knowledge Component.

In each country a National Steering Committee was established and provide guidance for the implementation of single country-specific interventions. They are comprised of the main governmental stakeholders, the local SECO field office (Swiss Embassy), and a representative of WRFA.

Previous Results

SECO has supported partners in the Global South to spearhead the necessary transition in the area of e-waste. This was done via two subsequent "Sustainable Recycling Industries" (SRI) programmes from 2014-2018, and 2019-2023. These programmes focused on Peru, Colombia, Ghana, Egypt and South Africa. Thanks to the support, Colombia and Peru now have a functioning e-waste management system in place. While they hence made an orderly exit. In Egypt, Ghana and South Africa, support was shorter and major elements of the e-waste management system are in process but not yet fully secured.

Further information and contact details

CEI coordination at SECO: info.wehu.cooperation@seco.admin.ch

seco-cooperation.admin.ch
Climate and resource efficiency



seco-cooperation.admin.ch
Integration in value chains



Follow us on 
www.instagram.com/seco_cooperation/

Follow us on 
www.linkedin.com/company/seco-cooperation/