

Global and complementary actions for electronics extended producer responsibility

*A thought paper for
International E-waste Day 2022*

Consumption rates of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) have grown drastically in the last few decades, causing a rapid increase in the amount of e-waste generated. On average, the total weight of global EEE consumption excluding photovoltaic panels increases by 2.5 million metric tonnes every year.

The collection of e-waste is important to help prepare for potential material shortages and supply chain disruption, to improve environmental and human health conditions, to create jobs, reduce the digital divide and ultimately shift to a circular economy.

E-waste collection is increasingly being carried out in response to regulation where the extended producer responsibility (EPR) principle is the driver. Within EPR, the manufacturers are responsible for the environmental impact of their products.

As part of a collaboration for [International E-waste Day 2022](#), the International Telecommunication Union, the WEEE Forum, and StEP Initiative have prepared this thought paper presenting complementary solutions and concepts to propel e-waste collection rates in line with EPR-based regulation, whilst also delving into the perceived need for an international regime around EPR to assist with harmonization efforts.

Key Messages:

- Complementary actions need to be explored to create an enabling environment for e-waste collection to keep up with the rising generation of e-waste, both to complement existing EPR regulation and in places where there is no existing policy framework.
- Complementary actions can be wide in scope, from commercially or not-for-profit driven to solution-based actions, including deposit-return or refund schemes, public-private-partnerships, as well as the all-actors-approach and the best-of-two worlds philosophy.
- Not only producers but all relevant actors, including regulators, consumers, and recyclers, must play a role in the EPR system in order to successfully increase the collection of e-waste.
- Complementary actions can operate across national borders, but these would benefit greatly from an international regime, with the objective of overseeing a global approach to tackling e-waste and of ensuring the harmonization of national EPR approaches.
- An international regime, a global secretariat, a partnership structure, a global treaty or other UN initiative to cover several critical areas of e-waste management and related EPR approaches would reduce the current fragmentation of stakeholders in the electronics sector and increase open dialogue between governments and industry.

