

E-Waste in the Pacific

PacWaste (Pacific Hazardous Waste) is a four year project funded by the European Union and implemented by SPREP to improve regional hazardous waste management across the Pacific. A major component of the €7.85 million project is to take action to improve regional E-waste management across eight Pacific island countries.



Left: Old televisions contain Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs) that can release toxic substances.

Centre: There are usually many valuable components in E-waste that can be reclaimed.

Right: E-waste can leach harmful chemicals into the natural environment.

What is E-waste?

E-waste is discarded electrical and electronic equipment that is at the 'end of its life' or no longer suitable for use.

This includes:

- mobile phones, laptops, computers, photocopiers, printers
- toasters, hairdryers, refrigerators, air conditioning units
- televisions (especially older models with Cathode Ray Tubes), DVD players, stereos, cameras
- smoke detectors, medical equipment and thermostats.

E-WASTE

E-Waste and the Pacific

The use of electrical and electronic items in the Pacific is rapidly increasing and this results in more waste in island communities. E-waste contains a range of hazardous and toxic substances such as heavy metals and brominated flame retardants.

There are E-waste stockpiles in a number of Pacific island countries and territories. If these stockpiles are left to accumulate in landfills for long periods of time they will release these toxic substances and contaminate the environment.

E-waste contains valuable components such as copper, steel and gold that can be re-used or recovered and made into new products.

Sustainable management of E-waste requires the coordination of E-waste collection points, storage facilities and use of financial models based on 'user-pays' principles. In addition, training E-waste workers to identify valuable components and dismantling electronic items is also required.

How will PacWaste address E-Waste?

Information about the current state of E-waste management has been collected from eight participating countries across the Pacific region.

The reports will help identify and prioritise future actions to assist Pacific islands in improving E-waste management and better protect their communities.

Some of these actions will include:

- a media campaign to raise awareness about E-waste and promote the return of items to collection points for recycling
- provision of equipment and training for commercial operators in dismantling E-waste
- establishment of storage facilities and collection points
- assistance in the removal of E-waste stockpiles in priority countries if necessary
- support in developing best practices for reuse, recycling and export of economically recoverable components.

PacWaste is also helping Pacific island communities to improve the management of two other hazardous waste types identified as a priority for the Pacific – asbestos and healthcare waste.



Mobile phones are an increasing E-waste problem in the Pacific.



E-waste can leach harmful chemicals into the natural environment.



Copper can be extracted from motors and re-used.



Training workers to identify valuable components and dismantle E-waste is important for the Pacific.

Find out more

For more information about E-waste and PacWaste go to www.sprep.org/pacwaste

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PACIFIC HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT

