



2 August 2017 - As digital and tech devices become more available worldwide, their responsible disposal is becoming a challenge for many countries. Up to [50 million tonnes](#) of electronic waste are expected to be dumped in 2017, and only a small portion is being managed safely and sustainably.

In addition to the increase in production of electrical and electronic equipment worldwide, there is an increase in the pace with which new technologies are being developed. As a result, the amount of electronic waste, or e-waste, is growing rapidly. Used, broken, or obsolete equipment, such as mobile phones, laptops, televisions and batteries contain substances that pose considerable environmental and health risks, especially if not disposed of properly.

It has been estimated that between [0.5 and 1.3 million tonnes](#) of used and waste electrical and electronic equipment are shipped out of the European Union each year, representing between 16 and 38% of the e-waste collected.

“Innovative solutions to combat “e-waste” are emerging,” [writes](#) Achim Steiner, Administrator of UNDP and former Executive Director of UNEP. “Not only can recycling reduce pressure on the environment, it can also create jobs and generate income. Indeed, the global waste market sector – from collection to recycling – is estimated to be worth US\$410 billion a year, excluding a very large informal sector,”

One of the innovative solutions to combat e-waste has come from a [partnership between UNDP and a Chinese tech-giant](#)

. An app was developed where the user could ask for e-waste to be picked up, and the simplicity of the app made it a great success. From small beginnings in only a couple of cities, it has now expanded to about 22 cities.

As the focus on how technology can help reach the Sustainable Development Goals intensifies, so should the question of how e-Waste is managed. This will contribute to the achievement of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) , in particular [SDG12](#) , to "ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns", and to target

[3.2 in the Connect 2020 Agenda](#)

which aims to reduce the volume of redundant e-waste by 50% by 2020.

To facilitate reaching these goals, the UN International Telecommunications Union (ITU) partnered with the UN University (UNU) and the Solid Waste Association to form the [Global e-Waste Statistics Partnership](#)

. With the correct data we can create best practices, as well as preventing illegal dumping, promote recycling and create jobs in the reuse, refurbishment and recycling sector.

"ITU has a track record of providing the world with the most reliable and trustworthy ICT-related data," [said](#) ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao. "We are pleased to be part of this partnership and to lend our expertise and our long-standing experience in data collection to assist countries to track and measure their e-waste, so that responsible e-waste management can be implemented."

**Additional links:**

- UNRICs related articles:  
[Jordkloden oversvømmes av elektronisk søppel](#)
- Video: [E-waste - A priority emerging policy issue](#)