

WEPSI Policy/Regulations subgroup meeting
5 March 2002, 12:15 -2

Attendees: Lori Stole, Betty Patton, Dick Schmidt, Jim Sheire, Shirli Axelrod (at 1:00), Craig Lorch, (at 1:15)

It was planned to discuss the draft outline of an infrastructure study that had been sent out, as well as environmentally sound management with respect to the OECD drafts. However, there was not anyone on the call who was prepared to do so except for its authors. So instead we started with discussion of the SVTC/BAN report that was released last week. This led to a decision to perform a SWOT analysis of Asian Markets.

The objective of a SWOT is to define an ideal state and compare that with the current state. This is a good way to get all the issues out for examination. So we set the following ideal state and proceeded.

Ideal State: Utilize all markets for electronic scrap with confidence of proper environmental handling

Existing State: Lack of confidence in some overseas markets, and consequent avoided use

Strengths: (internal)

- Utilizes empty ships, maximize back haul agreements
- Getting resources closer to OEMs (how close are Asian OEMs from Asian recyclers?), allowing highest and best use (Asia+ Japan = 88% of new CRTs made in 2000)
- Confident of proper environmental handling of materials regardless of market location
- Info feedback loop going to OEMs, because they're taking back their own materials at EOL
- Access to the cheaper overseas labor

Weaknesses: (internal)

- Lack of regulatory control from us, of the overseas recycling practices
- Does not encourage local US market development
- Takes minimum to moderate value product and adds transportation overhead, (does this apply if ship goes back anyhow, and has to go back to OEM anyhow?)
- Forces local US recyclers to compete with low labor cost in Asia

Opportunities: (external)

- allows closed loop, zero waste concept
- eliminate toxic material disposal opportunities by circular reuse
- minimize raw material extraction, (in itself under questionable environmental standards?)

Threats: (external)

1. The evolution of product design decreases the chances of old equipment being recycled into new.
2. Perhaps we couldn't adequately control the recycling processes in other countries.
3. No local jobs created.

Talking briefly about the infrastructure study; Shirli asked about the study done by Sound Resources. We could evaluate the methodologies used for this. As it turns out this study was done primarily by Betty Patton for Sound Resources, so she can supply that information to us.

We also discussed how we could categorize business types for the study purposes. As we talked about it, it became clear that there are some grey areas.

All on the call agreed that plastics and what actually happens to them, are a real concern. It was mentioned that E-Waste News, Feb issue, back page mentions a UN environment program that had standards for plastics recyclers. It was also asked what kinds of markets exist for plastics with BFRs. Eco labels have restrictions on chlorinated plastics.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- Lori and Betty will continue to refine the infrastructure study outline, and will send out for subgroup review about 3/18.
- Lori will prepare a document outlining the differences between the OECD document on environmentally sound management, the IAER certification system, and any additional pieces that seem to be missing. She will be making contacts on this during the NEPSI and EPR2 meetings next week as well. The paper will be out for your review also about 3/18.
- Our next call is scheduled for 3/19 at 1:15-3:00. This will probably be our last call as a subgroup. We will be preparing our report for the 3/27 multi-stakeholder meeting. It needs to be in the form of the action items we recommend in these areas, which will then be included in the final WEPSI action plan. I hope everyone will be able to participate so we have a good discussion of those items.