



## International Workshop “Regional Integration for E Waste Management in Latin America”

Panama City, November 16 to 18, 2009

### Invitation

The Regional Platform on Electronic Waste in Latin America and the Caribbean (RELAC-IDRC/SUR) invites you to the Sixth **International Workshop “Towards Regional Integration for the Management of Electronic Waste in Latin America”** to take place November 16 to 18, 2009 at the Country Inns & Suites, Calzada Amador, Panama City, Panama.

### Background

This International Workshop will bring together those who are committed to the management of electronic waste in Latin America – key experts, actors involved in the issue and decision-makers in public and private sectors. The objective is to move forward in a process of collaboration that facilitates the development of a system for managing electronic waste appropriate to the regional context. With this aim, the Workshop will promote the exchange of the most recent knowledge and information, focusing on the most positive experiences, along with those dimensions most relevant and useful to interested parties in terms of their efforts to create management systems.

The RELAC Platform is an initiative that, with the support of the International Development Research Center (IDRC), has the mission of recognizing, highlighting and responding to the social, economic and cultural particularities of Latin America and the Caribbean regarding the implementation of treatment initiatives for electronic waste. In line with this agenda, over the last several months we have been active contributors to the creation and promotion of distinct initiatives that are taking place in different countries of the Region.

Currently, various preliminary actions in this field are underway, such as evaluations, collective working groups, collection activities/events, conferences and seminars. All of these have served as contributions to pioneering proposals on the management of electronic waste, with the goal of assuring the revitalization of values associated with the protection of the environment. Representatives from the public and private sectors have joined this experience gradually, thereby forming spaces of collective dialogue.

Although this process has signified an advance in this field in the Region, it is also true that we are still in the early stages of implementing solutions. This is why, as of yet, no Latin American country has adopted a system to control electronic waste in a holistic way. This means that we have a task pending and that there is a great deal of work to be taken on by representatives of diverse sectors.

The main point of reference for the design of a formula for proposals oriented towards solutions for the management of electronic waste in the Region has been the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). However, a series of regional particularities complicate and, hence, delay the adoption of this type of ready-made solution, capable of responding in a sustainable way to all the sources of electronic waste generation in our countries. The elusive figure of the producer, the digital divide, a lack of information, imprecise policies – these and other circumstances require the adaptation of the existing management model that is being implemented successfully in industrialized countries.

In this context, we hold that progress in the implementation of a management system for Latin America will require, simultaneously, drawing on the experience accumulated in the Region and the modification of the reference model utilized in industrialized countries. In order to respond to precisely this imperative, one of the central challenges of this meeting will be to collectively review and analyze areas of cooperation and fields of integration according to the interests of the different sectors involved, in such a way that we are able to overcome and resolve the conditions that slow down and/or impede the implementation of a management system for electronic waste in Latin America.

In another respect, it is fundamental to recognize the importance of education and information in relation to this problematic. In the majority of cases, the development process to which we have referred is carried out by experts and specialists on the topic. Given that this is a new issue in the Region, to a significant extent the substance and conditions involved in the process are unfamiliar, including to actors directly involved in said process. Our experience indicates that it is indispensable to develop and promote a plan of action for education regarding electronic waste that is crosscutting and intrinsic to all action taken on the issue. This plan must be directed at all involved sectors, especially users and the general population, since they will be the ones to assume a significant proportion of responsibility for integrating electronic equipment/devices in the current of the inverse production management system.

## Objective

Based on the background information outlined above, the main objective of this event can be defined as the following:

**To identify common ground for the development of a management system for electronic waste adapted to the LA regional context.**

In order to achieve this objective, the work agenda of these workshops will be organized according to three central themes:

1. **Knowledge on the actions and policies** of the diverse sectors involved in the development of practices related to the management of electronic waste in the Region. This includes the identification of the most important principles that are being applied in current proposals on the issue.
2. **Analysis of proposals regarding legal frameworks** that are being developed in some countries of the region. This implies the identification of the normative standards and procedures implemented.
3. **Education.** As already indicated, this should be considered to be a crosscutting dimension of all facets of the workshop and how it develops. Therefore, education should also be recognized as a commitment relevant to the other two central themes.

## Goals

Each of the central themes described above leads us towards the following goals:

- The evaluation of the current criteria for the implementation of actions in Latin America.
- The harmonization of principles and requirements regarding legal frameworks for the Region.
- The elaboration of recommendations and commitments for the implementation of a management system for electronic waste suitable to the characteristics and conditions in the Region.
- The identification of, and commitment to, actions related to education and the dissemination of information on the part of the diverse sectors participating in the Workshop.

An overarching aspect of these goals and an essential component of this event is the consolidation and fortification of a Latin American group representative of the public and private sectors that will assume the search for solutions regarding the management of electronic waste.

## Work methodology

During this Workshop, the work agenda will be carried out via the following activities:

- **Keynote addresses**, that will be presented by experts and will have the objective of providing relevant information and outlining the general state of affairs concerning electronic waste and, more specifically, the three central themes guiding this meeting.
- **Sectoral working groups**. There will be five working groups comprised of representatives from each of the relevant sectors in the Region working on electronic waste: government, producers, waste service management (recyclers and/or formal and informal refurbishing services). Each working group will consist of five or six participants. The lines of action of each working group will be the following: (a) the identification of operating standards in the sector; (b) a legal work framework; and (c) education and communication. In terms of results, each working group will produce proposals and commitments regarding future work.
- **Exchange sessions between sectors**. We are currently examining the possibility of incorporating sessions that would bring together two or more sectors as a means to address their necessities and interests.
- **Plenary sessions**. These sessions will bring together all participants and provide a space in which the proposals and commitments assumed by the diverse sectors can be presented.

Within this framework, this Workshop will offer a space of exchange and information sharing that will foster dialogue, facilitate the identification of points of convergence between the representatives present from the distinct sectors, and support the generation of consensus-based proposals that respond to the challenges and opportunities related to the management of electronic waste in Latin America.

We hope that you will be able to participate, and that the workshop will constitute an appropriate forum for the analysis and exchange of ideas, experiences and opinions.

If you are able to accept this invitation, we would appreciate your confirmation as soon as possible. This will allow us to provide you with more precise information and to begin to establish a fluid dialogue with you.



