**Call for Proposals**

**‘Regional circular economy study in the electronics sector (Central and Eastern Europe)’**

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| Desired final outcome: | The desired final outcome of this project will be a regional study in the electronics sector in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)[[1]](#footnote-1) (regional focus, with prioritization of a few countries for analysis) that supports the development of circular approaches for the management of electronics. This regional electronics lifecycle study will provide a strategic overview of the current capacity, approaches and initiatives that exist in CEE for sustainable management of electronics from manufacture to disposal. A specific focus should be put on the sound management and phasing out of chemicals of concern in the value chain. The analysis should include regional electronics flows information, an assessment of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes and Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs), waste management capacities, regulations such as Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS), as well as brand restricted substance lists and voluntary tools such as labels. The narrative should be strengthened by good practice cases that demonstrate the circularity approach in the region. Based on this research and analysis, the study will provide a roadmap of priority actions at sub-national, national and regional level, assigning timelines, M&E indicators and stakeholder roles.  The study is to be delivered in English and in Russian. It is to be based on a consultation process involving industry (large enterprises as well as SMEs), as well as government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, with a good geographical balance in terms of regional representation. |
| Project proposals sought: | Applicants should submit project proposals in English in the template provided |
| Who can apply: | Academia (Research Institutes and Universities), Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Not-for-Profit Organisations (NPOs), including not-for-profit industry associations from the CEE region |
| Project budget: | The maximum budget for this project is USD 50,000, with in-kind contribution expected from the applicant |
| Project duration: | The project implementation period is from July 2020 until February 2021 |
| How to apply: | Please send your project proposal using the template attached, addressed to Ms. Bettina Heller [Bettina.heller@un.org](mailto:Bettina.heller@un.org) |
| Timeline for application:   * Submission deadline * Notification of selection | 29 May 2020, COB (19h CET)  15 June 2020 |

**Background**

This task is mandated under the UNEP project entitled “[Global best practices on emerging chemical policy issues of concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)](https://chemicalswithoutconcern.org/content/presenting-project-global-best-practices-emerging-policy-issues-concern-under-saicm)”, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). One component of this project aims at increasing the ambition of different stakeholders to track and control chemicals along the value chains of the electronics sector.

Electronic products have become an essential part of daily life. At the same time, in many parts of the world rapid replacement cycles have become the norm, with current disposal practices resulting in most of the energy, resources and value embodied in electronic products getting lost: Only 20% of 2016’s e-waste is documented to have been collected and recycled despite its rich content of high-value recoverable materials. The majority of these materials likely ended up in incineration, in landfills, or treated by the informal sector. The unsound management of e-waste leads to loss of valuable resources; air, water and soil pollution to the local environment from hazardous substances; contamination of the global environment via release of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and mercury; and health risks to the informal workers and communities close to the toxic waste dump sites. A circular model for electronics will ‘close the loop’ through actions across the upstream, mid-stream and downstream of value chain, including designing for product lifetime extension, promoting repair and refurbishment and improving recycling. While general recommendations can be provided at a global level, specifics of transitioning towards a more circular electronics value chain have to be identified at regional level.

Circularity’s underlying principle is that – inspired by nature-based solutions – materials should be kept at their highest possible value along the value chain to disconnect the use of natural resources and environmental impacts from economic activity and human well-being. Circular practices should be implementing sound management of chemicals, and pay particular attention to chemicals of concerns, with the objective to reach a non-toxic, circular model. Circularity promotes the idea that stakeholders at all points along the value chain need to be engaged in transforming the current economic model. Lifecycle thinking enables the identification of strategic interventions is embedded in the definition of the value retention loops which circularity builds upon[[2]](#footnote-2). These are:

* ***Reduce by design****: reducing the amount of material used, particularly raw material, should be applied as an overall guiding principle from the earliest stages of design of products and services;*
* ***Refuse, reduce and re-use****: Users have strong leverage for contributing to the circularity of products by keeping them in use for as long as possible and not buying superfluous and unsustainable products;*
* ***Repair, refurbish and remanufacture****: Producers, in cooperation with their users, have an opportunity to extend the lifespan of their products by repairing or upgrading them so that they can continue to provide users with their function/service;*
* ***Repurpose and recycle****: Producers, in cooperation with other businesses (waste handlers, recyclers, raw material producers etc.) need to work together to ensure discarded goods and components are not lost to disposal processes but are instead used as materials in other product systems.*

**Objective and deliverables of the project**

The overall objective of this project is the development of a regional study that assesses current capacities, approaches and initiatives present in the CEE region; and proposes recommendations for action and a roadmap to transition towards a Circular Economy in the electronics sector in the CEE region[[3]](#footnote-3):

* The study should take a life cycle thinking approach, taking into account what happens at each of the stages of an electronic product’s lifecycle: from raw material acquisition through manufacture, distribution, product use and disposal, while at the same time emphasizing circular approaches, such as product lifetime extension, re-use, remanufacturing, refurbishment and recycling.
* The study should have a specific focus on the sound management of chemicals and phasing out of chemicals of concern along the entire life cycle of electronic products, including environmentally sound recycling as well as appropriate disposal channels for hazardous components.
* The study should also include a mapping of the electronic products’ flows in the region, building on existing data. This should include a quantification of types of electronic products manufactured/ assembled and sold, as well as e-waste flows. The assessment and recommendations should consider the existence, scope and current status of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes (including existence and status of Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) in the region and membership in those), regulations such as RoHS, green/ sustainable procurement, regulations around the informal sector and their enforcement, as well as brand restricted substance lists and voluntary tools such as labels, and capacity for recycling and sound management of waste. For the latter, the study should list the registered e-waste recyclers in target countries in the region and assess their capacities and channels.
* The study is to be designed and formatted by the partner, and to be delivered in English and in Russian.

In order to develop the study, and the roadmap it contains, the partner is expected to lead a regional consultation process (online) involving industry (large enterprises as well as SMEs), as well as government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, with a good geographical balance in terms of regional representation. The involvement of industry (producers and their suppliers) is of particular importance to ensure their buy-in for the roadmap developed under this study, and to ensure the roadmap brings together common elements of diverse existing initiatives.

**The qualification of the project proposal**

Project proposals are sought which meet the following criteria:

* Proposals with clear objectives and a feasible implementation plan;
* Proposals with a strong technical and scientific component on developing an electronics sector study based on life cycle and circular economy thinking, as well as a value chain approach (holistic perspective, with a focus on chemicals);
* Proposals with a clear plan on how to work at regional as well as selected country level, along with plans for obtaining detailed and quantified site-level information (on e.g. waste and recycling processes and sites);
* Proposals with a convincing stakeholder engagement and consultation plan;
* Proposals outlining how they will develop and gain buy-in for actionable, prioritized and realistic recommendations for furthering circularity in the electronics sector; and
* Proposals outlining a track record and convening power/ network of the applicant

**Who can apply?**

Applications are sought from Academia (Research Institutes, Universities), Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Not-for-Profit Organisations (NPOs), including not-for-profit industry associations from the CEE region. The applying institution shall have a good track record on:

* Possessing a good understanding of sustainable consumption and production topics, circular economy and life cycle thinking, as well as chemicals management
* Proven expertise and experience in the electronics sector
* Proven experience with chemicals management and/or the nexus of chemicals of concern and their regulation
* Proven expertise and experience on formulating recommendations based on scientific analysis and multi-stakeholder consultations as well as giving guidance on interpreting such recommendations
* Proven experience of carrying out multi-stakeholder consultations and strong network in the electronics sector
* Published high quality reports or peer-reviewed journal papers related to the mentioned topics
* Fluency in both written and spoken English required, knowledge of any of the CEE languages an asset

**How to apply?**

Applicants should submit an application in English in the attached template by the indicated deadline to Bettina Heller [bettina.heller@un.org](mailto:bettina.heller@un.org).

**Application template:**

**Call for proposal on ‘Regional circular economy study in the electronics sector (Central and Eastern Europe)’**

Please email completed application to Ms. Bettina HELLER [bettina.heller@un.org](mailto:bettina.heller@un.org).

**Applicant organization**

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| **Applicant organization** |  |
| **Applicant organization contact details** | Contact name:  Email address:  Phone Number:  Address:  Country[[4]](#footnote-4) (registered in): |
| **NFP status** | Registered Not For Profit : 🞎 Yes 🞎 No (please provide NFP registration document) |
| **Project team member names** |  |
| **Project organization and team’s prior engagement with UN Environment Programme or other international organisations** |  |
| **Project organization and team’s prior experience in the fields of circular economy, life cycle approaches, and electronics and its associated chemicals** *(please provide a short list of relevant projects and publications etc.)* |  |
| **Project organization or team’s access to electronic sector stakeholders/ networks in the region**  (up to 300 words)  *Please describe which networks/ fora/ associations you plan to engage and how you will reach them, for the for consultation and for stakeholder buy in, including the engagement of industry* |  |

**Project information**

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| **Methodology**  (up to 600 words)  *Please provide further details on the intended methodology or approach to be used in this project, including methods for collecting and evaluating existing studies, initiatives, approaches and capacities in the region, giving interpretation guidance and extracting recommendations (no need for a comprehensive literature review, please only provide the actual methodology or approach that will be used in the project). Please highlight how you will implement the specific focus on chemicals in this work. Please also describe which individual countries in the region you would prioritize in the analysis and why, which sources of data and information will be obtained from which regional/ national/ local partners and institutes.* |  |
| **Project plan and activities**  (up to 500 words)  *The project plan should include all activities, resources and skills utilized in a schedule to achieve the project objectives (including the stocktaking/ assessment, development of roadmap and how to engage which stakeholders in consultations to reach buy in).* |  |
| **Project deliverables and milestones with detailed timeline**  (up to 500 words)  *The project deliverables are the major steps or activities that align with the project plan and that can be used to monitor successful project implementation. Responses here can be provided in text, tables or figures.* | You can also use a separate Excel/Word file to visualize the work arrangement, if it does not fit into the table here. Please make sure to attach it in your email. |
| **Project total budget and allocation against deliverables and activities**  *Project budget should include table with costs allocated against deliverables and activities, and funds received from UNEP and other sources (co- financing and in kind contribution)* | The budget can be provided in a separate Excel/Word file, if it does not fit into the table here. Please make sure to attach it in your email. |
| **Additional support, sponsorship or in-kind contribution from other organisations projects** (not mandatory, up to 200 words)  *Please describe the extent and nature of any additional external support* |  |

1. CEE comprising Central Europe (new EU member states), West Balkan countries, Caucasus and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. More information on value retention processes is available from the UNEP Circularity Platform at [www.unep.org/circularity](http://www.unep.org/circularity) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The scope should be regional level, while prioritizing a few countries (around 5, to be proposed by the partner considering sub-regional balance) in the region for the analysis [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Your organization needs to be registered in a country of the CEE region [↑](#footnote-ref-4)