

STUDY ON A POLICY FRAMEWORK TO CONTROL THE TRANSBOUNDARY MOVEMENT OF E-WASTE

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Home Appliance Recycling Law, Law for the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources*

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Since 2000, there are several reports from NGO's on environmentally unsound recycling of e-waste in developing countries. For example, the Basel Action Network reported in 2002, a very serious polluted e-waste recycling site in Guiyu , a small village in China. Since e-waste contains hazardous substances, it is controlled under the Basel Convention (Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal) if it is destined for recycle. However, if it is a secondhand product (for direct reuse), there are no international frameworks to control. Furthermore, to distinguish second-hands from recyclables is often difficult, and the life span of exported second-hand products is very short in many cases.

2. RESEARCH QUESTION

When considering the transboundary movement of e-waste from a developed country (i.e. Japan) to a developing country (i.e. China) as a “product chain”, at least the first stage of consumption is placed in developed country. In this sense, a developed country has certain responsibility to this issue and through discharging the responsibility the country could contribute to the solution of this issue. The goal of this study is to clarify the responsibility and to find out how to discharge the responsibility in the policy. Especially, re-considering the e-waste related EPR legislation in Japan.

3. GRADUAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

For a sound transboundary movement of e-waste, it is needed to achieve several policy standards. In example, in the International Policy (Policy for the import/export of e-waste), the ratification of Basel Convention and their implementation to the domestic policy is needed. For the domestic policy (Policy through production, consumption, recycle and disposal), basic requirements of waste management policy, extended producer responsibility should be established. In addition, environmental or emission standards are also basic policies needed to be achieved. For the all policies mentioned above, capacity of implementation is necessary. It is very difficult to achieve these policies in one time. A gradual policy development is unavoidable.

4. RELATION OF EPR POLICY AND TRANSBOUNDARY MOVEMENT

Before achieving the policy standard mentioned before, policy to prevent the pollution is needed in the upper stream of the product chain, for example in the outflow of exporting countries. Thus to decrease incentive of exporting e-waste is needed. Since the implementation of EPR policy in Japan has lead to the increase of e-waste export, EPR policy design should be reconsidered to decrease incentives to export.