

E-Waste Management in Bangladesh: Governance Challenges and Way Forward

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) works with a vision of an effectively governed Bangladesh where public affairs, business, politics, and the daily lives of the people will be free from corruption, and all powers exercised at all levels will be held accountable. To achieve this, TIB carries out various activities, including research and evidence-based policy advocacy on important issues, institutions, and sectors of public interest; raising awareness; building stakeholders' capacity; and actively engaging citizens, especially young people, to encourage better governance and fight corruption. Good governance in waste management is crucial for preventing environmental pollution, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguarding public health. In this regard, TIB is implementing a dedicated project to promote good governance in waste management.

Globally, electronic waste (e-waste) generation is rising rapidly, and

Bangladesh is no exception. This trend is especially troubling given the country's limited capacity for formal recycling and the dominance of the informal sector in e-waste handling and processing. Although a legal framework—the Hazardous Waste (E-waste) Management Rules, 2021—has been enacted to regulate e-waste management in Bangladesh, awareness and compliance among key stakeholders remain limited, particularly regarding their specific legal obligations. In this context, TIB published a research report titled “E-waste Management in Bangladesh: Governance Challenges and Way Forward” on December 30, 2025. The main goal of the study was to examine the governance challenges in ensuring effective e-waste management in Bangladesh and to explore possible solutions. The full research report and related documents have already been shared with relevant stakeholders and are also available on TIB's website.¹

¹ The full research report, along with Bangla and English executive summaries, and the presentation, are available here: <https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/articles/research/7424>

The Hazardous Waste (E-Waste) Management Rules, 2021, assign clear responsibilities to all stakeholders in the e-waste management chain, including producers, consumers, collectors, storage providers, transporters, repairers, and recyclers. The rules specify that producers, importers, and distributors of electronic and electrical equipment are responsible for collecting e-waste for recycling or disposal, with a collection target of 10% in the first year, rising to 50% by the fifth year after the rules' start date. Four years into implementation, there is still no reliable nationwide inventory to track progress against these targets. Additionally, the Department of Environment (DoE) has failed to take any visible, effective measures to bring producers, importers, or distributors into its registration scheme under these rules. On the other hand, informal actors in e-waste management are not completely informal in practice; most hold trade licenses and other business registrations. While they mainly operate outside the oversight of the DoE, they are regulated by other government agencies. Although these actors significantly help reduce or prevent e-waste from ending up in landfills, their sorting, storage, and dismantling methods pose serious risks to human health and the environment. Although 14 enterprises involved in e-waste management are registered with the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, half of them still operate without DoE registration. The lack of sufficient priority, commitment, coordination, and institutional coordination between the

DoE and local government institutions in enforcing the e-waste Rules has created serious governance gaps. Due to limited capacity and flawed administrative processes, these agencies have failed to fulfill their responsibilities with transparency and accountability, thereby severely undermining sustainable e-waste management in Bangladesh.

The study also reveals several irregularities in e-waste exports and evidence of the import of banned end-of-life and refurbished electrical and electronic products. Findings show that the country's largest e-waste exporting company has exported quantities of e-waste exceeding those authorized under the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1992). Despite clear bans under the Hazardous Waste (E-Waste) Management Rules, 2021, and the Import Policy Order, 2021–2024, refurbished office equipment, computers, and electronic products continue to be imported and are widely available in the local market. Even after the implementation of the Hazardous Waste (E-waste) Management Rules, 2021, a total of 14,985 metric tons of banned e-waste were imported into Bangladesh during the period 2022–2024. Amid declining foreign currency reserves, USD 700,000 was spent on importing this volume of e-waste.

Based on the findings of the study, TIB presents the following recommendations through this policy brief for consideration by the relevant authorities—

Sl. No.	Recommendations	Implementing Agency
1.	<p>The Hazardous Waste (E-waste) Management Rules, 2021 need to be amended by-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding the scope of e-waste classification in Schedule 1 of the E-waste Management Rules, 2021, to include electric vehicles, solar panels, etc. Adding specific provisions on incentives and penalties for implementing the rules. Including provisions for the formation of a National Coordination Committee. Adding specific rules regarding conditions and penalties for exporting e-waste. 	Department of Environment (DoE); Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
2.	<p>A technical guideline for e-waste management needs to be developed, which will include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The environmental management and occupational health and safety measures that must be present at the recycling precincts; Conditions informal recyclers must comply with to obtain registration and clearance; Specific instructions on how to phase out hazardous substances in electronics; A disaster waste management protocol to manage e-waste generated during disasters. 	Department of Environment (DoE); Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
3.	<p>A separate Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guideline shall be developed for private-sector entities engaged in manufacturing, assembling, importing, and marketing electronic equipment. The guideline should include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A phased implementation roadmap, clearly identifying the categories of electronic products for which EPR obligations will be introduced first; and Approaches to e-waste collection and funding mechanisms for Producer Responsibility Organizations (PRO). 	Department of Environment (DoE); Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
4.	<p>The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) should prepare an e-waste inventory in accordance with the United Nations University's <i>E-waste Statistics: Guidelines on Classifications, Reporting, and Indicators</i>.</p>	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS); Department of Environment (DoE).
5.	<p>A roadmap should be developed to integrate informal businesses (collectors) into the e-waste management system, with monitoring and oversight. The roadmap should also specify-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures to mitigate health risks and provide social protection for individuals employed in this sector; Budget allocations for incentives to promote environmentally friendly collection and segregation practices. 	Department of Environment (DoE); Local Government Division (LGD); City Corporations, Municipalities, and Union Parishads.

6.	A separate trade license category should be established for e-waste businesses to make them easily identifiable and ensure the relevant authorities oversee them.	Local Government Division (LGD); City Corporations, Municipalities, and Union Parishads.
7.	The customs department needs to be empowered to increase its ability to control the import and export of e-waste and the import of old electronic products.	Bangladesh Customs; Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCIE), Ministry of Commerce; National Board of Revenue (NBR); Department of Environment (DoE).
8.	An e-waste disposal policy should be developed with input from relevant stakeholders and be applicable to both government and non-government offices. The policy should outline best practices for the inventory management of electrical equipment, storage standards, and auction procedures to prevent bidding by businesses not registered under the Hazardous Waste (E-waste) Management Rules, 2021.	Department of Environment (DoE); Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority, Ministry of Finance.
9.	The draft Electric Vehicle Industry Development Policy (2025) should include comprehensive guidelines for managing e-waste generated by electric vehicles. EPR guidelines should also be established for electric vehicle manufacturers and importers.	Ministry of Industries; Department of Environment (DoE); Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).
10.	DoE and other local government authorities (city corporations, municipalities, and union parishads) should take immediate steps to raise public awareness about e-waste management.	Department of Environment (DoE); Local Government Division; City Corporations, Municipalities, and Union Parishads.
11.	DoE's capacity should be increased to enforce e-waste management rules, and an automated system should be implemented to register e-waste businesses and submit their annual reports.	Department of Environment (DoE); Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
12.	A coordination mechanism must be established among all stakeholders involved in e-waste management, including the DoE, BTRC, local government institutions, and other relevant parties.	Department of Environment (DoE); BTRC; Local Government Division.

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