***The International***

***e-Stewards®***

***Certification Program***

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**Background**

In 2002, the Basel Action Network (BAN) and the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition released the report and film entitled *“Exporting Harm,”* exposing the horrific ‘recycling’ of toxic electronic waste (“e-waste”) in China. A year later the groups launched a program designed to identify globally responsible recyclers, known as “The Electronics Recycler’s Pledge of True Stewardship,” and in 2005 BAN documented the dumping of equipment supposedly exported for reuse and repair to Nigeria, in a film and report entitled, *“The Digital Dump: Exporting Reuse and Abuse to Africa,”* where 75% of ‘reusable’ equipment received was useless waste. In 2008, BAN revisited China with CBS TV News magazine “60 Minutes,” and the resulting program revealed that the situation there had become far worse, with the deadly toxic e-waste processing and dumping operations spread even further into farmlands.

Unfortunately, the e-waste export crisis has been worsening steadily as it continues to not only victimize communities and environments in developing countries, but also hurts the truly responsible recyclers in the industry through cost externalization and the resulting unfair competition. While the Pledge program was successful in diverting toxic e-waste away from developing countries, it became clear that a more rigorous, comprehensive program was needed to truly differentiate the recycling industry leaders from those less scrupulous – an independent certification program that all stakeholders can rely on.

**e-Stewards: *The Highest Standard***

In answer to this pressing need, the Basel Action Network created an electronics recycling standard in conjunction with some of the best companies in the industry, experts in occupational health and safety, certification, and data security. Already hailed as the ‘gold standard’, the e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronic Equipment® is written for international use and is consistent with international waste trade rules, social accountability, and international environmental management system norms. Imbedded within the e-Stewards Standard is the complete set of requirements of ISO 14001 (for environmental management systems), occupational health and safety system requirements, Basel Convention and OECD trade rule compliance requirements, and industry-specific performance requirements. It is designed to be a *“one stop shop”* for conscientious recyclers wishing to differentiate themselves

from unscrupulous operators that have unfortunately dominated the industry landscape to

date.

The e-Stewards initiative is also a *program*. Only e-Stewards recyclers benefit from extensive sales and marketing support of the e-Stewards programs.

A guidance document is provided with the Standard to facilitate understanding and implementation of a management system that meets world class standards. Here is a sampling of some key requirements of the e-Stewards Standard, which must be met for certification:

1. The requirements of ISO 14001 must be met in full;

2. Health and safety system requirements, comparable to OHSAS 18001, specific to managing   
 e-waste;

3. The principles in the global social accountability standard, SA 8000, must be observed;

4. Electronics recycling industry performance requirements must be met, including:

• Strict control of exportation of hazardous electronic wastes, in conformance with the   
 Amendment to the Basel Convention and other existing laws;

• Safe on-site handling of hazardous e-waste and other problematic components and   
 materials, as well as workplace toxins monitoring;

• Accountability for the entire downstream recycling chain for the toxic materials;

• When data security services are offered, they must meet specified guidelines for media   
 sanitization**,** and provide customers with agreed upon indemnity;

• Legitimate re-use and refurbishment of tested and fully functional equipment only;

• Restrictions on disposal options for toxic materials and prohibition on use of prison and   
 child labor;

• Requirements for insurance provisions;

• Collection and reporting of data relative to the industry for benchmarking and   
 improvement; and

• Provision of site closure plans when potentially hazardous processing technologies have   
 been used.

**Independent Accreditation & Certification**

BAN has developed a global standard that raises the bar for the electronics recycling industry, and requires those who meet it to be formally recognized by the established, accredited third party certification system. This certification will initially be offered in the 38 OECD/EU/EFTA countries, and eventually globally.

Accreditation of the e-Stewards Certification Bodies is currently provided by ANSI/ASQ

National Accreditation Board (ANAB), which is internationally recognized through its membership and leadership within the International Accreditation Forum and through

bilateral and multi-cooperative agreements with other leading national accreditation

bodies.

The certification bodies that are authorized to participate in the e-Stewards program are

all ISO 14001 accredited and have demonstrated background in both the electronics and

recycling industries. All have capacity, capability and qualification to operate globally.

Certified e-Stewards Recyclers can distinguish themselves in the industry, providing customers with a high level of confidence that they operate in conformity with the world’s highest principles of environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and international law.

***For more information visit***: www.e-stewards.org

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What is the e-Stewards Certification program?

e-Stewards Certification is rapidly emerging as the leading global program designed to enable individuals and organizations who dispose of their old electronic equipment to easily identify recyclers that adhere to the highest standard of environmental responsibility and worker protection.  e-Stewards Certification is open to electronics recyclers, refurbishers and processors in all developed countries.

Certified e-Stewards recyclers adhere to the *e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronic Equipment*®; written by the environmental community with leaders in the industry to protect human health and the global environment. While there are other guidelines written for the recycling industry, the e-Stewards Standard is the only e-waste standard that:

* Requires a certified ISO 14001 environmental management system that builds in occupational health and safety requirements specific to the electronics recycling industry, minimizing exposure of recycling workers to hazards
* Prohibits all toxic waste from being disposed of in solid waste landfills and incinerators
* Requires full compliance with existing international hazardous waste treaties for exports and imports of electronics, and specifically prohibits the export of hazardous waste from developed to developing countries
* Prohibits the use of prison labor in the recycling of toxic electronics, which often have sensitive data embedded
* Requires extensive baseline protections for and monitoring of recycling workers in every country, including developed nations where toxic exposures are routinely taking place
* Is written for international use

For more details, see [How to Become an e-Stewards Recycler](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/how-to-become-an-e-stewards-recycler/), [FAQs on its background](http://e-stewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/FAQs-About-e-Stewards-CERTIFICATION.pdf), [FAQs on how it works](http://e-stewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/FAQs-How-Certification-Works-1.pdf), and [primer on the e-Stewards Standard](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/program-details/).

The e-Stewards certification program provides a high level of confidence that a recycler consistently conforms to the e-Stewards Standard.  Recyclers must be certified by accredited, independent and specially trained e-Stewards certification bodies, via rigorous, on-site audits that are performed at least once a year.

* e-Stewards certification bodies are fully accredited by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB).
* A high standard of consistent auditor performance is assured across the program through a rigorous, professional auditor training program covering the certification program and requirements, international law and a recycling industry primer.

In addition, BAN provides constant oversight of all levels of the program (recyclers, auditor training, certification and accreditation bodies) to ensure on-going integrity of the certifications.

[Here is an overview of](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/e-stewards-certification-process/) how the certification process works.

**Additional reasons to choose the e-Stewards program**

Here are a few reasons that e-Stewards Certification is the industry’s highest assurance that e-waste is disposed of the right way:

* **Top-to-bottom designed to solve the e-waste problem:** e-Stewards Certification provides an end-to-end accountability trail that proves e-waste recycling is performed in a manner consistent with the core objectives of data security, health and worker safety, no export of toxic materials to developing countries, no prison labor and no dumping or incineration.
* **Independent of industry interest groups:** The e-Stewards Initiative is managed by an independent organization committed to solving the e-waste crisis.   While the engagement and support of leading recycling companies and industry experts helps ensure that the Standard remains practical and economically viable, the ultimate litmus test for every aspect of the Standard is the environmental and health goals that drive the need to have a standard in the first place.  The other major e-recycling standard in the United States is a much looser set of guidelines written to a large extent by the very industry that is at the core of the existing crisis.
* **Rigorous verification system:** Both the certification and accreditation programs were built with strong controls and oversight in order to create the highest level of confidence that a service provider consistently meets the e-Stewards Standard.

As our [comparisons of e-Stewards and competitive certification programs](http://e-stewards.org/?page_id=392) show, other standards simply do not adequately address the foundational issues of export, and environmental, worker, and data protection.  Only e-Stewards Recyclers meet the highest standard and can prove it!

**How to become an e-Stewards Recycler**

The e-Stewards Certification program combines a highly rigorous, mainstream verification system with the highest standard for electronics recycling. This standard (the e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronics®) fully incorporates ISO 14001, *the* global standard for environmental management systems. All Certified e-Stewards Recyclers will therefore be both ISO 14001 certified and meet industry-specific requirements for globally responsible recycling and refurbishment of electronic equipment.

If a company or organization wishes to become certified, the following are steps typically taken to achieve e-Stewards certification. Details follow:

* Review the [Standard](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/the-e-steward-standard/) and [Sanctioned Interpretations](http://e-stewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/SI7-FINAL.pdf) which are important interpretations of and changes to the Standard that have been made since its inception
* Obtain and review the Marketing & Licensing Agreement by contacting [inform@ban.org](mailto:inform@ban.org)
* Get quotes from [Certifying Bodies](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/certifying-bodies/) to conduct the audits
* [Evaluate costs](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/how-to-become-an-e-stewards-recycler/evaluating-e-stewards-recycler-certification-costs/) and investigate [avenues for financial assistance](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/how-to-become-an-e-stewards-recycler/evaluating-e-stewards-recycler-certification-costs/)
* Prepare – [Appendix A](http://e-stewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/e-StewardsStandardGuidanceDocument.pdf) of the Standard is a Guidance Document, and [Appendix C](http://e-stewards.org/standard-appendixes/appendix-c/) provides tools and resources to help you implement the Standard. [e-Stewards Management System Implementation Training](http://training.us.saiglobal.com/course/promotion.aspx?id=a0c200000011TX5AAM) is also available for certifying recyclers.
* Schedule Stage 1 audit
* Address any issues identified
* Schedule Stage 2 audit
* Execute BAN’s Marketing and Licensing agreement
* Receive Certification
* Promote your company as a Certified e-Stewards Recycler!

Here are the details:

1. Review the [e-Stewards Standard and supporting materials](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/the-e-steward-standard/).  This should include reviewing the current Sanctioned Interpretations of the Standard, to understand any clarifications or changes to the Standard.  Note: there is a fee for the full standard although you may view the free, non-ISO version for information which is for information purposes only.
2. Review the requirements for multi-site organizations (see below), if applicable, and the e-Stewards Recycler Licensing Agreement with BAN, which is signed after the completion of the audit process
3. Optional: conduct a gap analysis between your current system and operations and what is needed to operate in conformance with the e-Stewards Standard.
4. Set up, document, and internally evaluate your environmental management system to operate in conformance with the e-Stewards Standard including ISO 14001.  Operate your EMS long enough to obtain necessary records.
5. 3-6 months prior to readiness for auditing, request bids from one or more e-Stewards Certification Bodies (CB) for auditing services, including all e-waste locations in developed countries, and the 3 year audit cycle (see “Multi-site e-Stewards Recyclers” below).  If your organization is already ISO 14001 certified, request information on transferring your existing ISO 14001 certification and therefore reduced costs for your initial e-Stewards audit.
6. Contract with a CB of choice and schedule the Stage 1 audit, to determine readiness for the Stage 2 audit.
7. Schedule and complete the Stage 2 audit, and resolve all non-conformities identified during the audit. This may require a return audit.
8. Sign a marketing and licensing agreement with BAN, and pay an annual fee based on annual revenue generated by e-waste operations.  Plan your marketing strategy, with support from BAN.
9. Receive accredited certification of operations to ISO 14001 and e-Stewards Standard.
10. Begin marketing your operation(s) as a certified e-Stewards company.

After initial certification, auditors return annually at a minimum, to perform surveillance audits (at lower costs) and to ensure consistent conformity with the Standard over time.  The certification is for a three years period, as is typical for ISO certifications.  After this, a new 3 year audit cycle begins.

Multi-site e-Stewards Recyclers:

Companies/organizations with e-waste recycling operations at multiple locations are required to have all locations certified to the standard within 18 months of the issuance of the first certificate for any individual site, and must commit to and contract with its certifying body for certification of all its operational sites at the outset. This certification can be held either in the form of individual site certificates or in a single multi-site certificate which encompasses all sites.

e-Stewards program costs

There are three costs associated with e-Stewards Certification:

1. Internal preparation costs
2. Contracting with a Certifying Body for the audits
3. The Marketing and Licensing Fee required to use the e-Stewards brand

For complete information on evaluating costs, see [e-Stewards Recycling Certification Costs](http://e-stewards.org/certification-overview/how-to-become-an-e-stewards-recycler/evaluating-e-stewards-recycler-certification-costs/).