

The International e-Stewards® Certification Program



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*

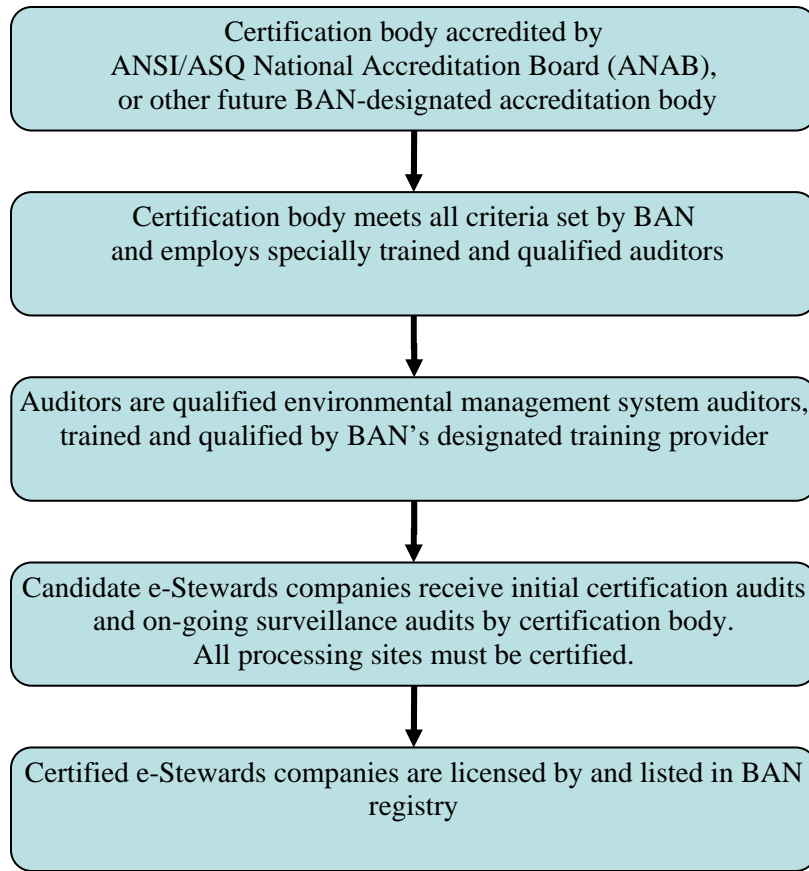
In answer to this pressing need, the Basel Action Network created an electronics recycling standard in conjunction with some of the best companies in the industry, experts in occupational health and safety, certification, and data security. Already hailed

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. 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.

e-Stewards Accredited Certification System

BAN has implemented a system by which e-waste recyclers, refurbishers, and processors may obtain independent third party certification of their conformance with the e-Stewards Standard. No claim for conformance to this Standard is legitimate unless it follows the designated process, described below:



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. Each qualifies through a series of independent and ongoing reviews, audits, and witnessed assessments as meeting the rigorous e-Stewards accreditation requirements.

All auditors employed by e-Stewards Certification Bodies are individually certified to perform environmental management system audits internationally within the accredited third party system. Furthermore, each one has been trained through a course specially developed by SAI-Global -- the premiere training organization in the industry.

Certification to the e-Stewards Standard requires that qualified auditors and accredited certification bodies conduct an initial assessment to verify conformance to the Standard. Following this, e-Stewards Recyclers will demonstrate ongoing conformance to auditors through on-site surveillance audits conducted annually at a minimum. During the process, valuable metrics reported by certified e-Stewards Recyclers to a BAN-designated central data base will provide an opportunity for e-Stewards recyclers to benchmark their progress against industry, as well as provide worker exposure data to inform future revisions to the Standard.

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.

Program Funding and Development

To fund the development of the certification program, BAN began charging a marketing and licensing fee in 2009 for those already qualified under its Pledge program for the use of the e-Stewards' name and logo. In addition, charitable foundations and a group of 14 recyclers, asset recovery companies, and processors called the e-Stewards Founders (listed at www.e-stewards.org) provided gifts or grants explicitly for the development of the independently audited e-Stewards Certification program. Certified e-Stewards Recyclers pay a marketing and licensing fee, scaled to the size of the company, to cover on-going costs of administering, promoting, and maintaining the certification program and the standard.

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

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