

Instruction Note on export of second hand and scrap equipment

1. The preamble of the Swico Convention on Recycling and Disposal specifies that preference is to be given to reuse over material recycling if this can extend a product's useful life.
2. Consequently the Swico Environmental Commission has the task of forwarding used equipment to recycling companies if reuse is ruled out, i.e. if the used equipment is scrap equipment.
3. End customers, or dealers and manufactures/importers that take back equipment, decide whether a piece of equipment or parts can be reused. The Swico partners (recycling companies, logistics companies, dismantling companies and collection points) are not permitted to sell or give away parts of equipment or entire sets of equipment. Furthermore, Swico partners may not render services on behalf of suppliers in the triage process.
4. Material handed in at collection points by private individuals is considered scrap and is therefore forwarded directly to the recycling companies. Experience shows that equipment handed in by private individuals contains very little that can be reused. In accordance with the agreement the collection points may not resell equipment or parts.
5. For ecological reasons it is envisaged that reusing equipment in Switzerland be urgently reviewed. Training centres and social institutions would be glad to purchase second-hand equipment, or accept it as a donation, to lessen their budget demands.
6. The following should be observed in the case of exporting scrap and second-hand equipment:
 - a) The sorting process and testing must be carried out thoroughly in Switzerland such that the proportion of equipment that cannot be used is less than 5%. If the sorting process is not carried out in the own company, clarification should be sought as to whether a social institution (e.g. a workshop for the disabled) can perform such work. If the proportion exceeds 5%, an application for an export licence for scrap material must be filed with FOEN.
 - b) Exporting scrap equipment in non [OECD countries](#) is prohibited in accordance with the Basel Convention.
 - c) Second-hand equipment may be exported worldwide. However, we recommend that second-hand equipment only be exported if the final country of destination and the receiving organisation are known, and a guarantee has been given that at the end of its useful life such equipment can also be recycled in an environmentally compatible manner. Organisations that are not able furnish clear proof of the country of destination are not recommended for used equipment.
7. The question as to whether or not equipment is to be exported cannot be conclusively answered in every case. From the point of view of extending a product's useful life we are definitely in favour of it. However, the consequences for the environment may be highly questionable, as was made clear by the export of electronic waste to developing countries. The exporter must, therefore, be aware of the conflicting situation and consequently decide how it can answer for it on the grounds of ethical principles and its company's guidelines. This applies, in particular, if financial interests play a part.