An analysis of E-waste ﬂows in China

From observations among collectors, collection points and secondhand markets, the following process emerges: it starts with a consumer. He/she wants to throw something away, and usually passes it along to a street hawker with a tricycle, who pays the consumeralittlefortheremainingvalueoftheproduct. This hawker then drives to a collection point (usually a street corner), where a trader takes the goods out of his/her hands, again for a small fee. This trader then drives to a secondhand market, where small shops are run by individual vendors. They buy goods from the traders, and resell them in one way or another. The ﬁnal buyers are often village people from the country side who cannot afford new equipment, students, or migrant workers whose stay in China’s cities is necessarily temporary.

We have already noted above that actual recycling in China is limited, and that the WEEE system consists of considerable re-selling and secondhand trading activities. In addition, recycling in China is actually an activity that generates considerable pollution.