

# INDIA STARES AT A PILE OF SOLAR E-WASTE

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Infrastructure: Energy incl. Renewable & Non-renewable

By 2050, India will likely stare at a pile of a new category of electronic waste, namely solar e-waste, says a study made public on Thursday. Currently, India's e-waste rules have no laws mandating solar cell manufacturers to recycle or dispose waste from this sector.

"India's PV (photovoltaic) waste volume is estimated to grow to 200,000 tonnes by 2030 and around 1.8 million tonnes by 2050," said the study by Bridge To India (BTI), an energy consultancy firm.

India is among the leading markets for solar cells in the world, buoyed by the government's commitment to install 100 GW of solar power by 2022. So far, India has installed solar cells for about 28 GW and this is largely from imported solar PV cells.

Solar cell modules are made by processing sand to make silicon, casting silicon ingots, using wafers to create cells and then assembling them to make modules.

India's domestic manufacturers are largely involved in assembling cells and modules.

These modules are 80% glass and aluminium, and non-hazardous. Other materials used, including polymers, metals, metallic compounds and alloys, and are classified as potentially hazardous, says the study.

"India is poorly positioned to handle PV waste as it doesn't yet have policy guidelines on the same...a lack of a policy framework is coupled with the fact that even basic recycling facilities for laminated glass and e-waste are unavailable. Despite the e-waste regulation being in place for over seven years, only less than 4% of estimated e-waste is recycled in the organised sector as per the latest estimates from the Central Pollution Control Board," say the authors of the report.

"While the solar sector continues to grow robustly, there is no clarity on solar waste management in India," said Vinay Rustagi, Managing Director, BTI.

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