

Foreword

In a world in which sustained demographic and economic growth are exerting increasing pressures on natural resources, establishing a resource efficient economy is central to greening growth. The total volume of material extracted or harvested worldwide reached nearly 72 billion metric tonnes in 2010, doubling since 1980 and an estimated ten-fold increase over the last century. Curbing these trends requires policies that improve resource productivity and that ensure sustainable materials management, building on the principle of the 3Rs – reduce, reuse, recycle – and encouraging more sustainable consumption patterns.


In this context, extended producer responsibility (EPR), an environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle have become common. Currently about 400 such schemes are in operation across the world, most of them in the OECD and some in emerging market economies. While extended producer responsibility systems have contributed to significantly increasing material recovery rates from certain waste streams, as well as providing a reliable source of funding for the collection and recycling of waste, the economic and environmental performance of these systems appears to be highly disparate. As a consequence, there is a sustained debate about the way EPR systems should be designed.

This report contributes to this debate by providing updated guidance on the design of EPR. This work updates the OECD Guidance Manual for Governments, published in 2001, by drawing on recent experience, deepening the analysis in selected areas and adding a discussion on the particular challenges faced by developing countries.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide an introduction and compile updated guidance and recommendations on EPRs. These chapters constitute Part 1 of the Guidance. The remaining chapters constitute Part 2, and provide more in-depth analyses of a number of key elements of EPR schemes that underlie the updated guidance. Chapter 2 discusses governance, Chapter 3 competition, Chapter 4 design for the environment, and Chapter 5 on the informal sector. The annex provides summary versions of country case studies that were provided by member countries and partners as an input to the Global Forum on Environment focusing on Extended Producer Responsibility that took place in June 2014 in Tokyo.

This review was overseen by the OECD Working Party on Resource Productivity and Waste (WPRPW) and benefited from the documents prepared for, and the discussions at, the Global Forum on EPR that took place in Tokyo and the support provided by an ad hoc expert group.

At a time when many governments are grappling with the challenge of developing a policy mix that can support the transition towards a more resource efficient, circular economy, this report provides some valuable guidance concerning one of the policy approaches that can assist.



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The report brings together a number of papers that were prepared by several experts. Chapter 1, which provides an introduction and overview, was drafted by Brendan Gillespie (Consultant) and Peter Börkey (OECD), drawing on the other chapters. Chapter 2 on the governance of extended producer responsibility (EPR) was prepared by Reid Lifset and Gonzalo Urbina from Yale University; Chapter 3 on EPR and competition was developed by Sally van Siclen (Consultant); Chapter 4 on EPR and design for environment was drafted by Maarten Dubois and Jeff Peters from KU Leuven; Chapter 5 that focuses on the role of the informal sector was prepared by Anne Scheinberg, Brendan Gillespie (both consultants) and Shunta Yamaguchi (OECD). The report further incorporates a survey of EPR and literature review that was prepared by Daniel Kaffine from University of Colorado Boulder. The country case studies, of which summary versions are included in this report, were prepared by: Japan: Yasuhiko Hotta and Atsushi Santo (IGES), Tomohiro Tasaki (NIES), Hajime Yamakawa (Kyoto Prefectural University); Canada: Jacinthe Séguin (Environment Canada); People's Republic of China: Liu Chunlong, (MEP); France: Baptiste Legay (MEDDE); Belgium: Katleen Dierick and Roeland Bracke (OVAM); United States of America: Scott Cassel (Product Stewardship Institute); Australia: Bruce Edwards and Declan O'Connor-Cox (Department of Environment). Case studies for Chile and Colombia were developed with the help of the authorities and Christoph Vanderstricht (Ernst&Young). Maroussia Klep from the OECD Secretariat developed the summary versions of these.

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