

# CANADA-WIDE PRINCIPLES FOR EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

## Preamble

Stewardship, or the responsible management of the environment and its natural resources, requires governments, industry and consumers to assume a greater responsibility for ensuring that the products we manufacture, use, reuse or dispose of have a minimum impact on the environment.

Canada ranks as one of the highest producers of solid waste per capita in the world. The latest survey by Statistics Canada shows that in the year 2002 just over 32.4 million tonnes of waste were managed in Canada with only 25% of this being recycled or reused. Governments across Canada are struggling with the rising costs associated with managing the country's increasing quantity of wastes being generated across the country. Governments also recognize that increasing quantities and types of wastes are producing harmful impacts to our environment and wasting valuable resources.

CCME has explored the potential for extended producer responsibility (EPR) as a public policy to help address the problems associated with our growing waste stream. CCME determined that national definitions and principles for EPR would promote harmonization of approaches and help provide a level playing field for application of EPR initiatives across the country.

## Definitions

**“Extended producer responsibility (EPR)”** means 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.<sup>1</sup>

Two related features of EPR policy include:

- 1) Increasing producer responsibility by shifting responsibility upstream toward the producer and away from municipalities and/or regional or provincial waste management authorities.
- 2) Providing incentives to producers to incorporate environmental considerations in the design of their products.

Stewardship processes/programs/regulations may result in EPR as long as there is consistency with principles of EPR.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition for EPR.  
<<http://www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/9701041e.pdf>>

“**Producer**” means the most responsible entity which may include but is not limited to the brandowner, manufacturer, franchisee, assembler, filler, distributor, retailer or first importer of the product who sells, offers for sale, or distributes the product in or into a jurisdiction.

## **Canada-wide Principles for Extended Producer Responsibility**

In accordance with the CCME guiding principles for pollution prevention, producers are responsible for their products at end-of-life. CCME has developed a list of Canada-Wide Extended Producer Responsibility Principles (EPR) for management of waste materials, in consultation with stakeholders.

The objective of the Canada-Wide Principles for EPR is to assist and support jurisdictions in the development of EPR programs. The overarching goals of the principles are to minimize environmental impacts, maximize environmental benefits, promote the transfer of end-of-life responsibility for the product and/or material to the producer, and encourage design for environment (DfE). Design for environment (DfE) examines a product's entire lifecycle and proposes changes to how a product is designed in order to minimize its environmental footprint. Incorporating DfE may contribute to natural resource and energy conservation, biodiversity preservation, source reduction, waste minimization, and pollution prevention.

While recognizing differences in the legislative/regulatory framework and existing programs among jurisdictions, CCME encourages regional or national cooperation in the development of EPR programs. Specific measures undertaken by each jurisdiction are at their discretion, with the goal of effective, efficient, and harmonized implementation.

To promote harmonization of approaches to the greatest extent possible, CCME endorses the following guiding principles for the design and development of EPR policies and programs<sup>2</sup>:

### **I. Environmental Principles**

1. To the greatest extent possible, programs seek to reduce the environmental impact of a product.
2. EPR programs are consistent with the 4R waste management hierarchy:
  - a. Reduce, including reduction in toxicity and redesign of products for improved reusability or recyclability
  - b. Reuse
  - c. Recycle
  - d. Recovery, of materials and/or energy

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<sup>2</sup> Based on principles originally proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

3. EPR programs encourage producers to incorporate design for environment to minimize impacts to environment and human health.

## **II. Program Design Principles**

4. EPR programs transfer end-of-life responsibility for waste product or materials to producers from municipalities and other waste management authorities.
5. Potential programs undergo a comprehensive analysis to assess whether they are appropriate for EPR and to define the role of the various actors in the product chain.
6. Policy instruments selected are flexible and determined on a case-by-case basis.
7. Local governments and other stakeholders are engaged to discuss environmental goals, objectives, priorities and performance measurement, and to enhance a program's acceptability and effectiveness.
8. EPR program and policy development and implementation is based on transparency

## **III. Implementation Principles**

9. Programs and policies are designed and implemented in a way that environmental benefits are maximized while economic dislocations are minimized.
10. A communication strategy is devised to inform participants in the product chain, including consumers, about the program and enlist their support and co-operation.
11. EPR programs undergo periodic evaluations to ensure that they are functioning appropriately, are subject to performance measurement, and include accessible and transparent reporting.
12. Costs of program management are not borne by general taxpayers.
13. Consumers have reasonable access to collection systems without charge, to maximize recovery opportunities.