



Extended Producer Responsibility on Plastics – Learnings from the Nordics

Extended Producer Responsibility, EPR, is often mentioned as a key measure to transform the largely linear global plastics economy towards a more circular one. The aim of this report was to gather experiences from the Nordic countries' long history of EPR as a government policy instrument and create learnings for the future development and expansion of EPR schemes in the Nordics and other countries.

The Nordic countries have an extensive experience with EPR, including schemes for various product categories like packaging, electronics, and single-use plastics.

Why EPR?

EPR systems have multiple aims; to change public behavior, increase recyclability and the recycling rate, and to finance take-back, information and recycling.

Methodology

The methodology for this study included literature reviews and semi-structured interviews with authorities in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. These interviews gathered insights from the implementation of various EPR systems, focusing on challenges and success factors.

Key findings

The report notes diverse EPR implementations across the Nordics, each facing unique challenges and success factors.

- **Common issues related to EPR systems include administrative burdens, unclear roles and limited influence on product design and waste generation.**
- **Success factors include single waste stream systems, such as PET bottle return systems, collaboration between producers, municipalities and Producer Responsibility Organizations, coupled with transparent systems seen to be success factors for effective implementation of EPR schemes.**

Conclusion

The report concludes that EPR should be viewed as a complement to policies directly targeting waste generation sources.

Although it may not be feasible to introduce separate systems for each packaging and product type, more stringent design requirements, combined with development of material quality standards for more types of recycled plastics, could be beneficial.

Harmonizing design requirements, reporting requirements and fee models across the EU could reduce the administrative burden on producers and possibly prevent freeriding to some extent. Differentiated fees also promote higher recyclability, as seen in Sweden.

“The fee structure and reporting obligations differ between the Nordic countries, making compliance complicated and resource intensive for international producers.”

Want to read more about EPR in the Nordics? Please click [here](#) to review the report.