



Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Report Card, 2011

Q&A

Q. What is the intention of this Report Card?

A. EPR Canada set about to benchmark, score and monitor what the federal, provincial and territorial governments are doing to develop policies, programs and practices that further the objectives and implementation of extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Q. What - in plain language - does EPR mean?

A. Extended producer responsibility or EPR is an environmental policy approach where a producer's physical and financial responsibility for a product or package is extended to the post-consumer stage of the life cycle. As a policy approach it provides incentives to producers to incorporate environmental considerations into the design of their products and packages. A key element of EPR is transferring the responsibility to design, operate and pay for waste diversion programs from municipalities/waste authorities to producers and brandowners.

Only programs where producers are solely and fully responsible for design, operation and financing and where they are accountable for the program's environmental performance are considered full EPR. Programs that have some of these elements are referred to as stewardship or partial EPR programs.

Q. Why is it important to promote EPR as a means of managing products and packaging?

A. EPR makes producers and manufacturers responsible and accountable for designing, implementing and paying for programs that manage products and packaging when consumers are finished with them. Producers and manufacturers have control over what products and packaging they introduce into the marketplace and therefore they have the greatest ability to reduce the environmental impact of such materials.

Q. Who is EPR Canada and why are you doing this EPR Report Card?

A. EPR Canada is a new not-for-profit organization of like-minded professionals who have been involved in EPR policies and programs since their inception in the 1990s. Our report card is focused on government EPR policies and regulations because government legislation and actions play a key role in stimulating private sector activity in EPR program development, performance and monitoring. It is our expectation that preparing an annual report card of this nature will encourage leadership, innovation and best practices in EPR policies and programs. We also are hoping to encourage the evolution of product stewardship and partial EPR programs further towards full EPR programs.

Q. Who funded your efforts?

A. The majority of our work is self-funded by the eight founding members. We have received \$5,000 in funding support from the Ontario Waste Management Association to offset start-up web development and translation costs.

Q. Why have you measured EPR policies against CCME? Who is CCME?

A. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) is a federal-provincial-territorial collaboration among the ministers to facilitate jurisdictions working together on national and inter-provincial/territorial environmental issues of mutual interest and concern. One of the areas where CCME has been active is EPR where a collaborative effort resulted in the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR (CAP) that was adopted by all jurisdictions in October 2009. In the Action Plan, jurisdictions committed to meeting identified targets and timelines for establishing EPR programs for an agreed upon set of products and materials.

Q. Do you have examples of the best EPR programs in Canada?

A. The programs in Canada that best follow the EPR model are the paint and paint container programs in Quebec and Prince Edward Island. Several provinces also have programs in place for materials such as waste oil, used tires, pharmaceuticals and used electrical and electronic products that follow many of the EPR principles. A number also are working to move existing stewardship and partial EPR programs towards full EPR.

Q. What are the barriers to full EPR?

A. One of the issues facing governments looking to expand and deepen EPR programs (i.e. to full EPR) is the policy and regulatory challenge of transitioning responsibility to producers to design, operate and finance diversion programs, while ensuring that the mechanisms are in place to require producer-operated programs to deliver on the desired environmental outcomes (which, after all, is what these programs are all about). Cost internalization for environmental programs and the addition of visible fees at the point of purchase are important issues regarding how to encourage design for the environment and the delivery of the most cost effective, sustainable programs.

Q. How did EPR Canada acquire information to establish the scores given to each jurisdiction?

A. EPR Canada developed a survey questionnaire and sent it to the federal, the 10 provincial and the three territorial governments in Canada asking them to answer the questions and return the surveys. EPR Canada members evaluated and weighed the answers, based on a weighting criteria described in the questionnaire, and arrived at a consensus score. All but one jurisdiction (Nunavut) responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire and the weighting process are posted on www.eprcanada.ca.

Q. Are you intending to repeat this process next year?

A. EPR Canada intends to undertake a similar survey and publish a report card or in this year, a summary, for the years 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. The questionnaire may be modified to clarify questions and to solicit more information on key EPR performance indicators and diversion outcomes.

Contacts:

Geoff Love
Extended Producer Responsibility Canada
Ph. 519-305-0984
Cel. 647-248-2500
loveenvironment@rogers.com

Duncan Bury
Extended Producer Responsibility Canada
Ph. 613-729-0499
Cel: 613-406-8262
duncan@duncanburyconsulting.ca