

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY - GOOD PRACTICE AND NEW PARADIGM

Vesna Pavlović

University of Montenegro, MARDS Department, Cetinjski put b.b. Podgorica, Montenegro

Abstract. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a producer-focused mechanism that aims to reduce waste, particularly plastic waste, by increasing recycling and decreasing dependency on new raw materials. EPR moves the cost of managing post use products partially or fully from local governments to the producing industry.

Key words: Waste management, recycling, awareness, national policy, EPR, PRO.

1 Problem definition

Under the current Law on Waste Management from 2016, extended producer responsibility (EPR) applies to companies that manufacture, import or sell electrical and electronic equipment, vehicles, tyres, batteries or packaging; the companies must organise the collection and disposal of the waste generated by these products. Although EPR is prescribed in the Law on Waste Management, it has not been implemented so far. As the new Law on Waste Management is anticipated to be adopted by the end of 2021, it is expected that EPR will be implemented between 2022 and 2024. According to the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism (2021), one of the reasons that EPR was not properly implemented earlier is because of the way the collection of the fees was set up. The idea was to collect the EPR fees directly from customs on arrival of the goods in the country. However, because product and waste codes do not match, this system never worked. In the new Law on Waste Management, this responsibility and the collection of the fees will be organised by producer responsibility organisations (Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, 2021).

2 Background

Montenegro is a small country (650.000 people) with 23 municipalities divided in 3 main regions. There are 155 small unregulated landfills/dumpsites (under 100 m³) 68 medium unregulated dump sites (under 100-1000 m³) and 50 bigger than 1000 m³ across the country. Approximately 60% of total waste collected in the country end up in those unregulated landfills. According to data provided by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism,

national targets of waste collection for 2017 are between 65% to 95% depending on the municipalities. According to the Report on implementation of State Waste management plan for 2017, around 20% of waste is disposed on temporary landfills while most of waste (61%) is disposed on sanitary landfills in Bar and in Podgorica. The waste management infrastructure in Montenegro is still under developed.

EPR is increasingly recognised worldwide as an efficient waste management policy to help improve recycling and reduce landfilling of products and materials. EPR programs, such as those implemented in the European Union, ensure that the producers, manufacturers, brand owners, and first importers of products and packaging are given the legal responsibility for collection, recycling, and end-of-life management of materials.

3 Research methodology and our progress

This correspondence and the framework for the research is based on author's experience in working in environmental protection on state level and analysis of relevant state documents. This analysis will show if there is existing solution for this issue, it's shortcomings, what is the purpose of our solution and why we don't expect it to have those shortcomings, which actions will be undertaken to implement our solution, why is better than previous, for how much and under which conditions.

4 Future works

Further work will be focused on the comprehensive analysis of existing waste management documentation.

The benefits of extended producer responsibility policies may be categorised as economic, environmental, and social. The cost for the management and coordination of the disposal of solid waste is most often the responsibility of local municipalities. Rising levels of waste generation, more stringent technical requirements for the operation of landfills and incinerators, and increasing difficulty in constructing new waste disposal facilities due to public opposition all contribute to the growing cost of waste disposal. The project will rise the waste management problems on governmental level. The government—specifically, local municipalities—is generally fiscally and physically responsible for waste disposal.

Environmental motivations for extended producer responsibility include increasing product recyclability, decreasing use of toxic components in products, and reducing the amount of material that is sent to a landfill or incinerator rather than reused or recycled.

5 Conclusions

Although the EPR is envisaged by the new Law on Waste Management, nothing has done yet. The legal framework in Montenegro is guided by the Law on Waste Management, which aims to transpose the EU waste legislation, but the implementation is lacking. The adoption of the new Law on Waste Management was planned for 2021 (still not adopted) and aimed to further harmonise Montenegrin waste legislation with EU legislation. Action is especially needed to set up infrastructure for separate waste collection and recycling and to provide adequate financial and human resources, including those for inspection activities. Currently, the targets do not match the waste management performance. In the new Law on Waste

Management, it is of high importance to set realistic targets that are underpinned by implementation strategies, including planning and financing of investments, building up capacities and ensuring proper enforcement mechanisms.



Vesna Pavlović has been working in Ministry of Finance, department for EU integrations, for almost 7 years. Previously, she worked for the UNDP Montenegro in the area of Climate Change, and also at the Institute for Public Health in Montenegro. She graduated at the Faculty of Natural Science and Mathematics, University of Montenegro, Department of Biology and at the same Faculty defended her master theses in the field of ecology of fishes. In the academic year 2021/22, she enrolled in Doctoral studies in the Sustainable Development Program at the University of Montenegro.