

# Extended Producer's Responsibility (EPR): Notes for UPSC

Extended Producer's Responsibility (EPR) is a concept under which producers are given a significant responsibility— financial and/or physical – for the treatment or disposal of products post-consumption.

This article will give details about the concept, which candidates appearing for the IAS Exams will find useful.

## Definition of EPR

Extended Producers Responsibility is essentially the use of financial incentives to encourage manufacturers to design environmentally friendly products by making producers accountable for their product management during end-stage consumption. This is different from product stewardship, which advocates a shared responsibility across the chain of custody of a product, in that it attempts to relieve local governments of the costs of managing certain priority products by requiring manufacturers to internalize the cost of recycling within the product price. EPR is based on the principle that usually brand owners have the greatest control over product design and marketing and have the greatest ability and responsibility to reduce toxicity and waste.

EPR may take the form of a reuse, buyback, or recycling program. The producer may also choose to delegate this responsibility to a third party, a so-called producer responsibility organization (PRO), which is paid by the producer for used-product management. In this way, EPR shifts the responsibility for waste management from government to private industry, obliging producers, importers and/or sellers to internalise waste management costs in their product prices and ensure the safe handling of their products.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of EPR

Like all policy approaches regarding the environment, Extended Product Responsibility has its fair share of advantages and disadvantages.

They are as follows:

### Advantages

- When producers face either financial or physical stress of recycling their electronics after use, they may be incentivized or financially motivated to design more sustainable, less toxic, and more easily recyclable electronics.

- Using fewer materials and designing products to last longer can directly reduce producers' end-of-life costs.
- One of the advantages for EPR is that it becomes more and more effective as the EPR policy puts pressure on countries that export their E-waste. As the pressure mounts it will encourage these countries in deciding against exporting their wastes and build recycling facilities of their own.

### **Disadvantages**

- It is speculated that such laws could increase the cost of electronics because producers would add recycling costs into the initial price tag.
- There are concerns that manufacturers may use takeback programs to pull secondhand electronics off the reuse market, by shredding rather than reusing or repairing goods that come in for recycling.
- Fees are set in place to help incentivize recycling, but this may deter the use of manufacturing with better materials for the different electronic products.

## **Questions relevant to Extended Producers Responsibility**

### **How effective is EPR?**

EPR policies have been known to contribute to packaging waste reduction and increase recycling activities. EPR policies are having a positive impact throughout the years in many countries.

### **What is EPR in plastic?**

Extended Producer Responsibility or EPR is a legislative strategy used by most industrialised nations to promote chemical recycling of plastic waste.