



Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) *Opportunities and challenges of this policy approach in the packaging sector*

Andrew Brown

OECD Environment Directorate

Forum on EPR for Plastic Wastes

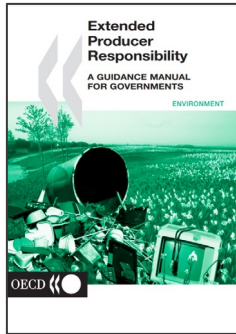
9 October 2023



OECD work on EPR schemes and on plastics

Key reports on EPR Research from 1994

2001



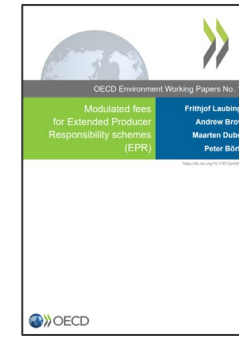
2016



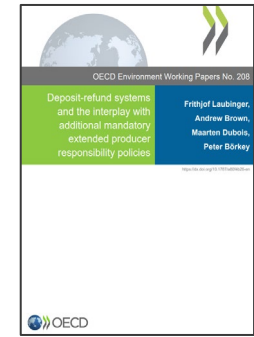
2019



2021



2022

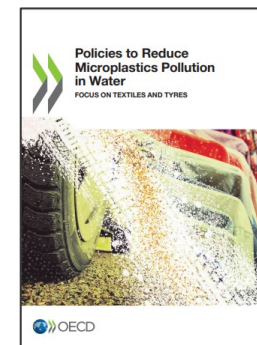


Key reports on plastics

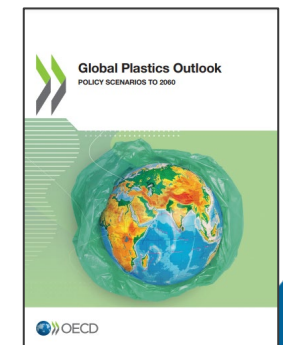
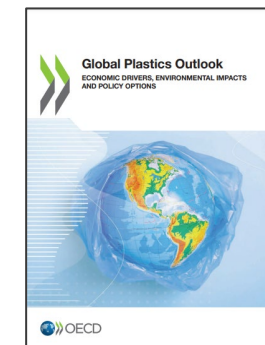
2018



2021

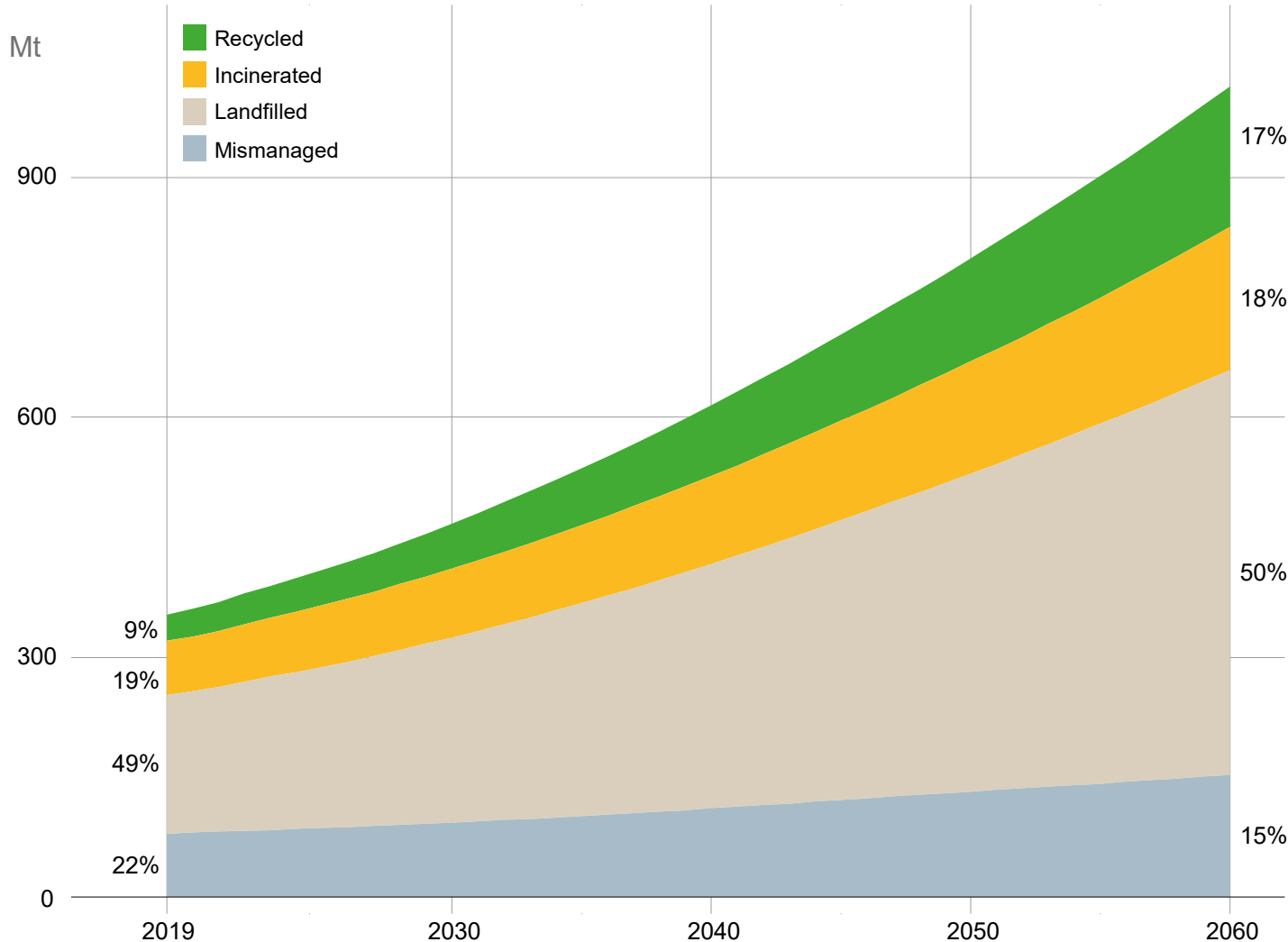


2022





In 2060, plastic waste will triple; half will still be landfilled

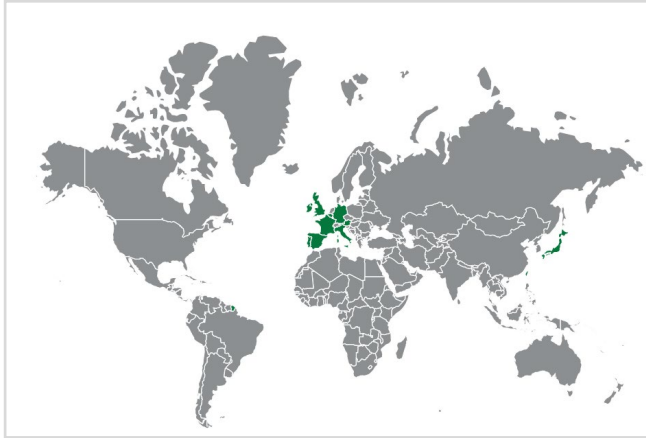


- A growing volume and complexity of waste
- Loss of material value, environmental and health impacts
- Drains public sector financial resources

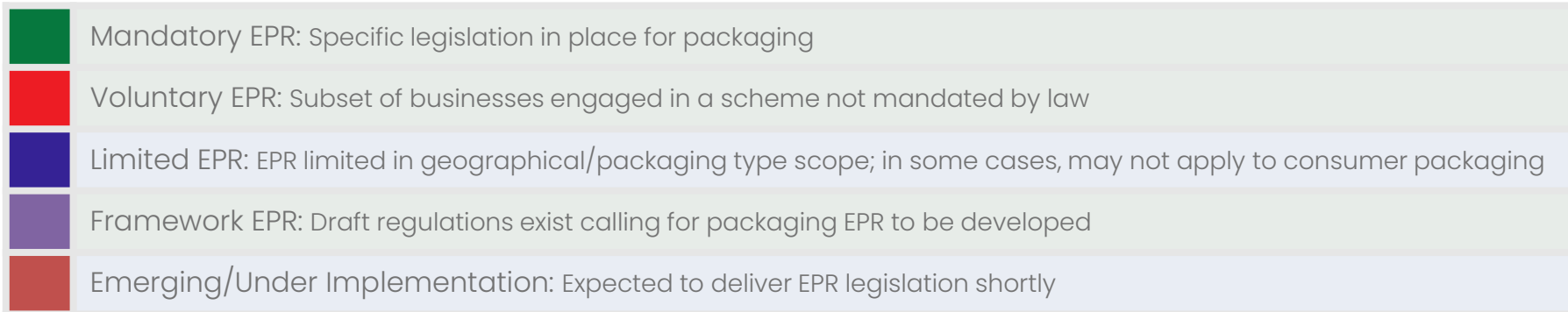
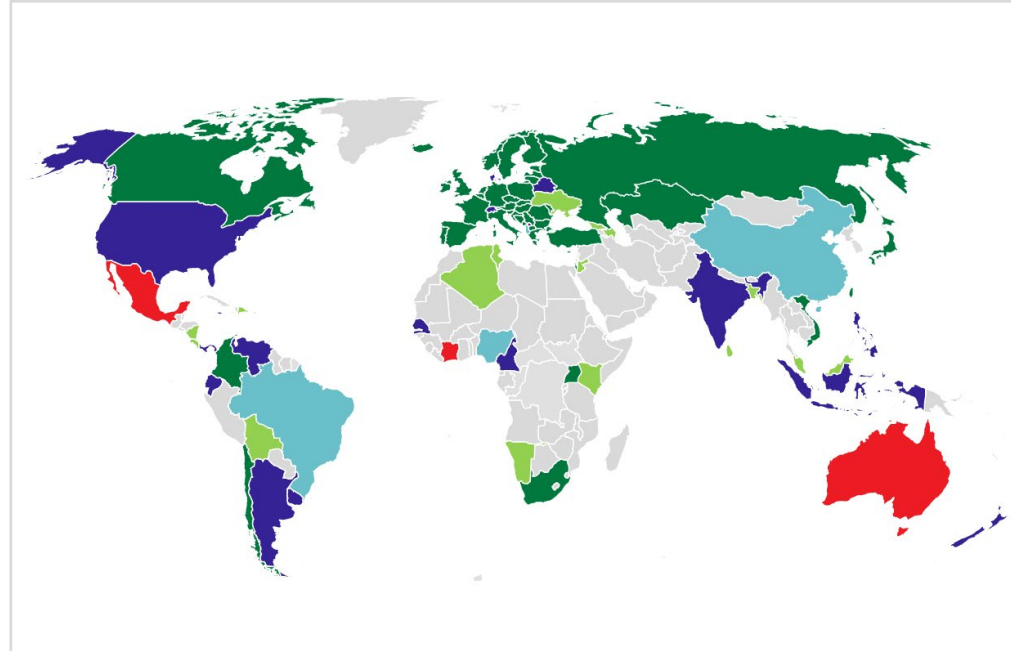


Packaging EPR is more commonly found in OECD countries

Packaging EPR in 2000



Packaging EPR in April 2023

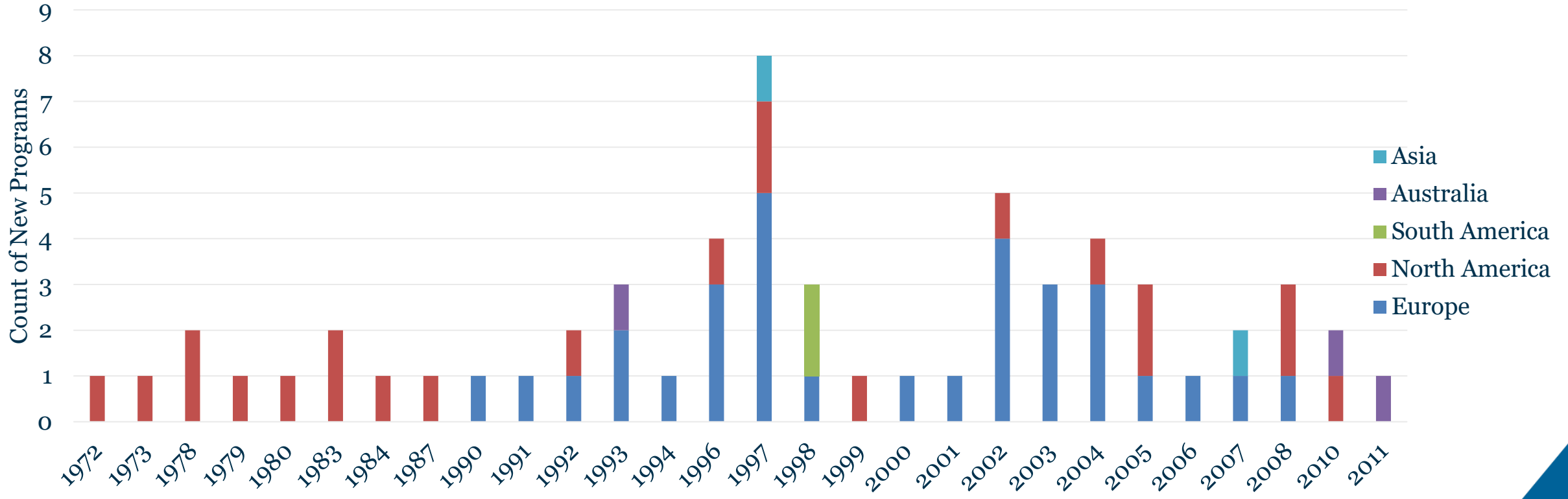


Source:



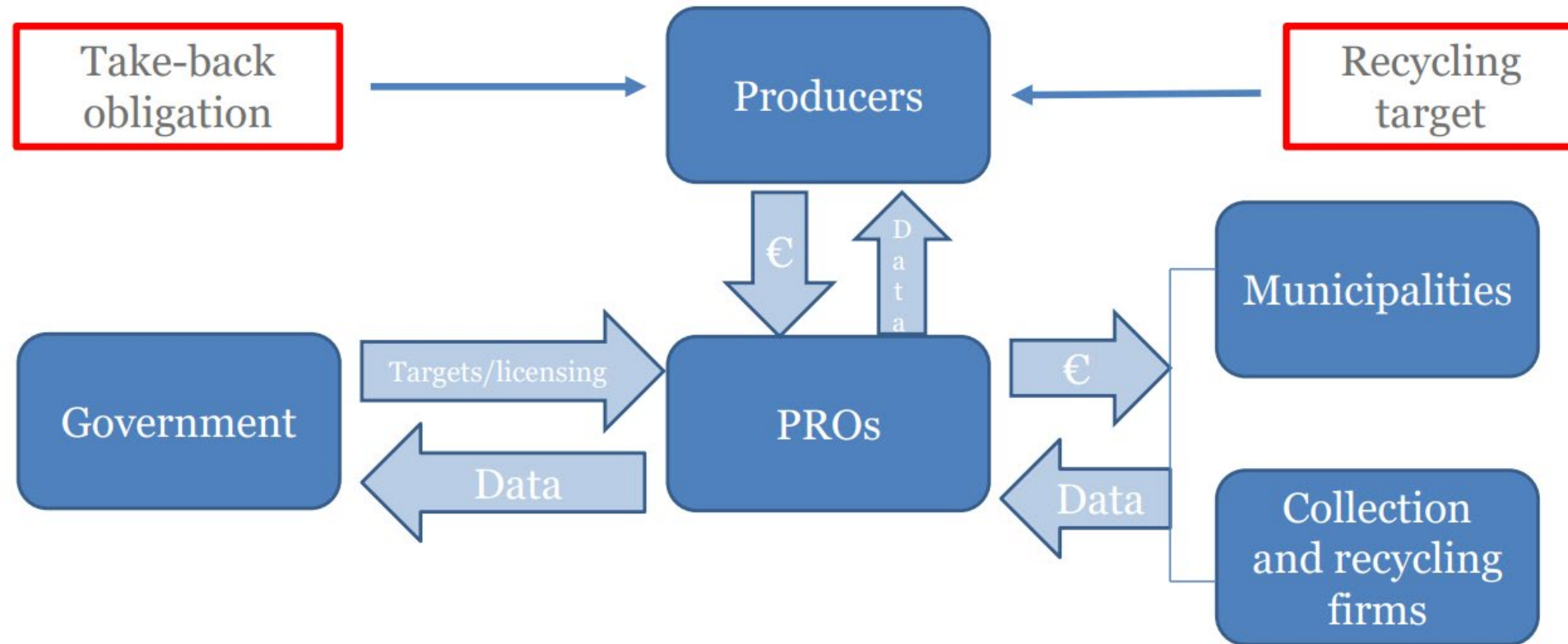


The use of EPR for packaging from 1972 to 2011





Typical set-up of EPR take-back systems



- **EPR can not be run by the private sector alone**
- Strong government involvement required
 - To enforce a level playing field
 - To enforce environmental standards and targets



EPR assigns producers responsibility for post-consumer products

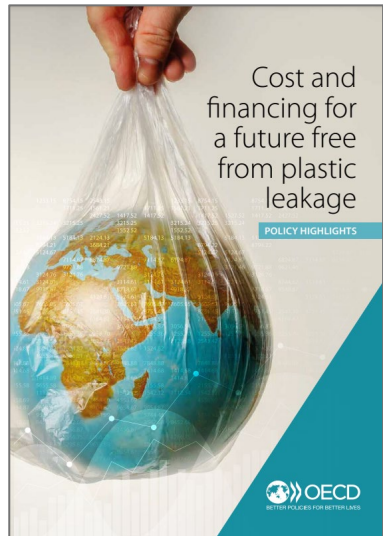
- EPR principally aims to:
 1. Shift some costs of environmentally sound waste management from the public sector to producers and consumers
 2. Increase material recovery rates
 3. Incentivise design for the environment
- Proponents argue that producers have a ‘specialised expertise’ that enables them to achieve aims 2 and 3



1) EPR generates revenues for waste management



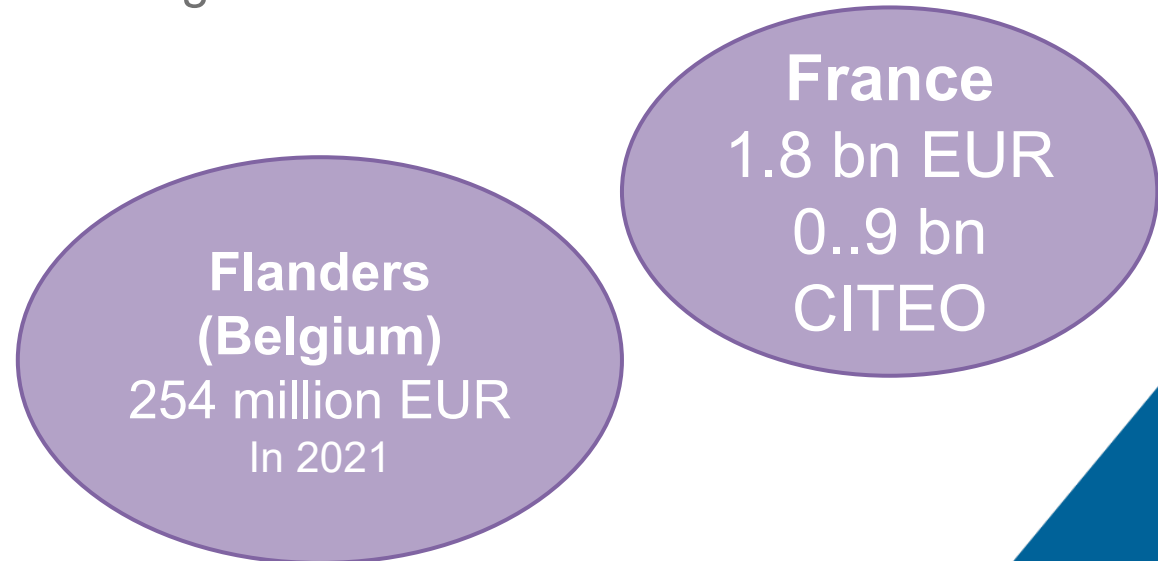
Eliminating plastic pollution will be costly for low and middle-income countries



Building basic waste management infrastructure will cost more than EUR 25bn per year (EUR 6.5 per capita)

EPR generates revenues

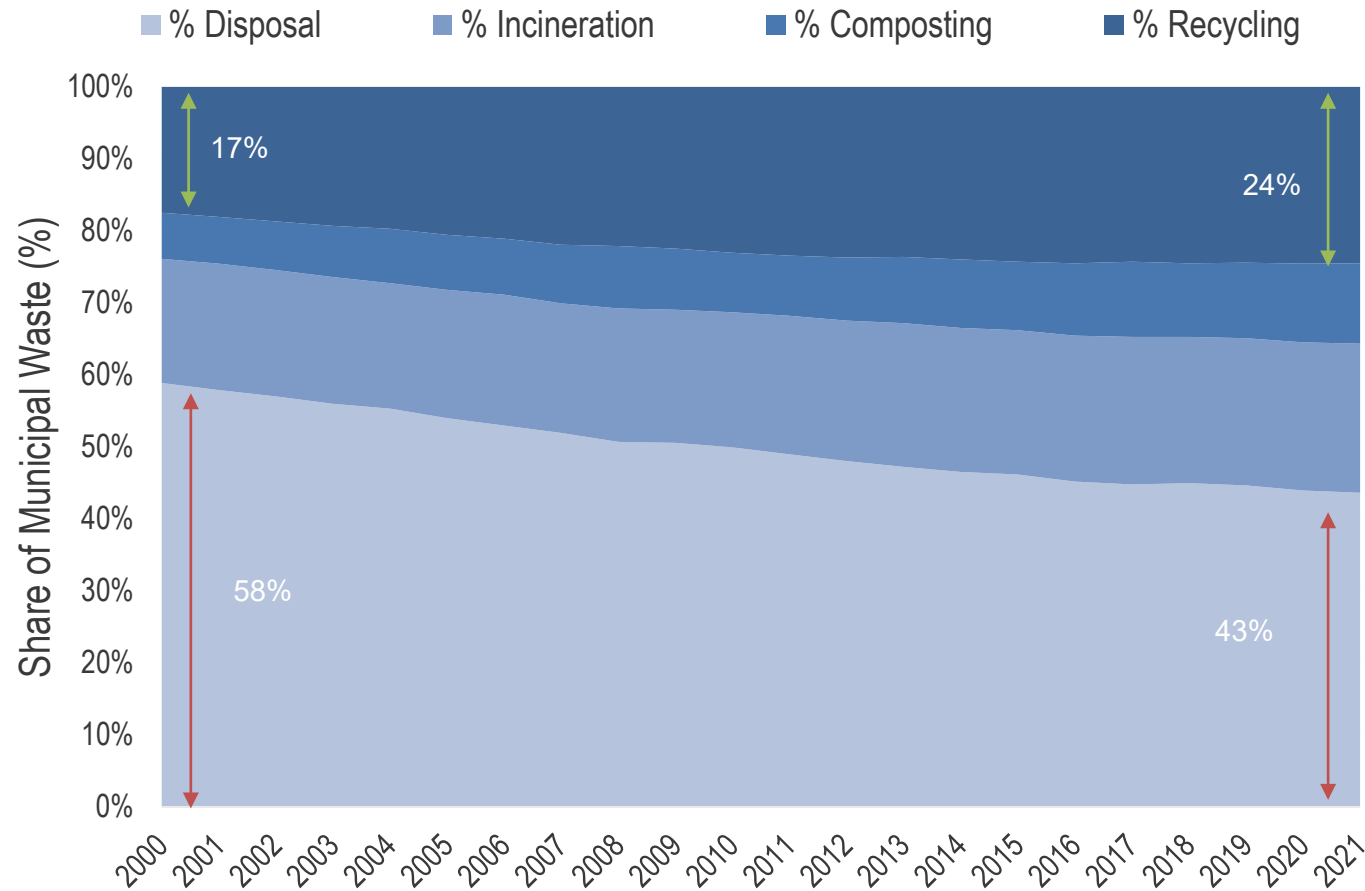
Current EPRs help local governments to recoup approximately 10% of their waste management costs:





2) EPR supports recycling and material recovery

Evolution of recycling rates in OECD (2000-2021)



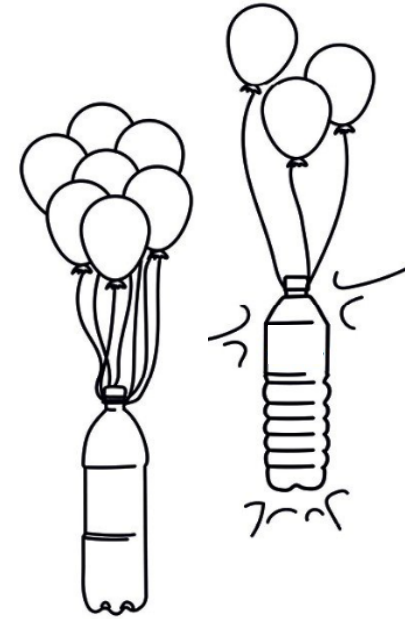
Source: oecd.dot.stat (2023)



3) EPR can incentivise eco-design and reduction

Modulation of EPR fees can provide incentives for sustainable product design:

- Reduction in material: Light-weighting
 - *Evidence in lighter food packaging*
- Design for recycling
 - *First projects in Italy, France, Belgium*
- Design for reuse
 - *Currently hypothetical*



➤ EPR fee modulation works best when aligned with other policy tools and harmonised across markets



EPR is included in the zero draft of the international agreement on plastic pollution

Each party “**shall**” or “**is encouraged to**” establish and operate an EPR to:

- incentivize increased recyclability,
- promote higher recycling rates, and
- enhance the accountability of producers and importers for safe and environmentally sound management



EPR is a promising approach for solving global packaging waste issues, but faces challenges

Domestic Challenges

- Incentivising design for the environment
- Diminishing marginal gains in recovery rates and increasing costs
- Concerns about competition/anti-trust
- Ensuring cost effectiveness
- Administrative oversight capacity
- Minimise free-riding and non-compliance
- Governance, transparency, complexity

Additionally... Low and Middle Income countries face:

- Limited existing waste management capacity
- Incorporating existing informal collection
- Creating a legal framework for PROs to operate
- Missing successful examples

International challenges

- Transparency
- Cross border harmonisation
- Coordinating finance across borders
- Lack and fragmentation of expertise





The Global Action Partnership will be a forum for collectively addressing challenges



*There are gaps:
capacity development,
innovative EPR designs, and
to think jointly at a global
scale...*

Create a
common
understanding

Build an EPR
Community

Socialize
EPR as a
policy tool

Provide
coordinated
technical
support and
engage
stakeholders

Jointly
think
ahead



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Andrew Brown, Andrew.Brown@oecd.org

Links to relevant OECD work:

- <https://www.oecd.org/environment/extended-producer-responsibility.htm>
- <https://www.oecd.org/environment/plastics/>
- oe.cd/recircle