

What are the Targets for extended Producer responsibility and the obligations of Producers, Importers and brand owners?

Category wise targets have been fixed for Producers, importers and brand owners and for manufacturers or importers (added 2024) of plastic raw materials.

The guidelines give a methodology of arriving at the Eligible quantity of wastes; the EPR targets; obligations for recycling (excluding end of life disposal) as a percentage of extended procedure responsibility Targets; End of life disposal and mandatory use of recycled plastic content for each entity.

100% of the E.P.R. Targets are to be met by all entities by 2023-24. Relaxations may be granted by CPCB on a case-to-case basis.

It has also been provided that the E.P.R. targets in M.T. and category wise (Type of waste) shall be provided by all entities concerned as part of an Action plan on the centralised CPCB portal.

The obligations for reuse, recycling of waste and use of recycled plastic content in packaging shall be reviewed every 05 years.

The guidelines provide that the E.P.R. on plastic packaging will promote sustainable packaging as per CPCB guidelines. In case the obligated entity utilises plastic packaging, which is 100% biodegradable in the ambient environment leaving no traces of micro plastic or chemical residue or any other traces having adverse environmental and health impacts as certified by the CPCB/BIS/CIPET, the EPR Targets would not be applicable for such material.

The guidelines define “end of life disposal” to mean using plastic waste for generation of energy and includes co-processing (e.g. in Cement Kilns) or waste to oil or for road construction as per Indian Road Congress guidelines etc. and “Extended Producer Responsibility” as the responsibility of a ‘Producer’ for the environmentally sound Management of the product until the end of its life. (With use of multi layered packaging for packing excluded in the definition of ‘Producer’ in 2024, this may need serious attention and an answer to whether non brand packaging attracts EPR at all).

It has been provided that “Only those plastics which cannot be recycled will be sent for end-of-life disposal such as road construction, waste to energy, waste to oil, as per relevant guidelines issued by the Indian Road Congress or the Central Pollution Control Board from time to time.