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Public Relations

# The effect of EPR regulations on the recycling infrastructure in SA

by Amanda Mkhize 2 November 24, 2022



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The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
Regulations which came into effect in May 2021,
aims to ensure that producers are accountable for
the entire life cycle of the products they place on
the market, from conception to post-consumer
waste disposal.

But according to Patricia Schröder, spokesperson for the producer responsibility organisation (PRO) Circular Energy, its influence will extend well beyond the producers.

"The regulations can impact – and in fact benefit – many of the different waste management and recycling service providers

Waste management and recycling service providers can furthermore be divided into "informal" and "formal" sectors. The former include waste pickers; private shop owners and private repair service providers. The latter comprises waste operators (both public and private); retail group executives; franchisees; organised bodies representing the implementing agents; and landfill operators.

Impact and opportunities for informal sector
Although informal waste collectors worry that
PRO's take-back programs may jeopardise their
ability to make a living from collection for
recycling, Schröder emphasises that they still play a
valuable role in the waste industry.

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Environment (DFFE). As such they have proposed measures to try and address this, including ensuring fair remuneration for the services informal waste pickers offer."

All informal waste collectors, reclaimers and pickers are urged to register with the National Waste Picker Registration Database for collection services. They can find out more from their respective representative associations.

Schröder says private shop owners can benefit by creating their own "take-back programes" for customers. "For instance, customers are frequently relieved when retailers indicate they can assist with recycling their old devices. Returning these objects to a location where they will be responsibly and lawfully disposed of is a satisfying alternative. Take-back programs managed by a PRO help retailers earn extra cash by recycling or processing this e-waste.

Impact and opportunities for formal sector Schröder notes that retailers and franchisees can partner with a PRO to enable them to fulfil their recycling and EPR mandates.

"This is all done while enabling the company to fund other EPR scheme components, including mentoring and training programs, enterprise development, and equipment and infrastructure assistance."

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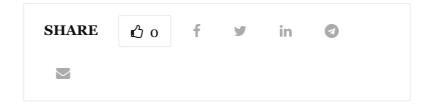
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# waste, "Schröder adds

In terms of landfills, she says the EPR Regulations and take-back schemes will also lighten their load.

"Although South Africa lacks official information on its landfill space, those in the waste management sector concur that the nation is on the edge of a crisis. By making the manufacturers financially and/or operationally accountable for their products at end-of-life, more waste will be kept out of landfills," Schröder summarises.



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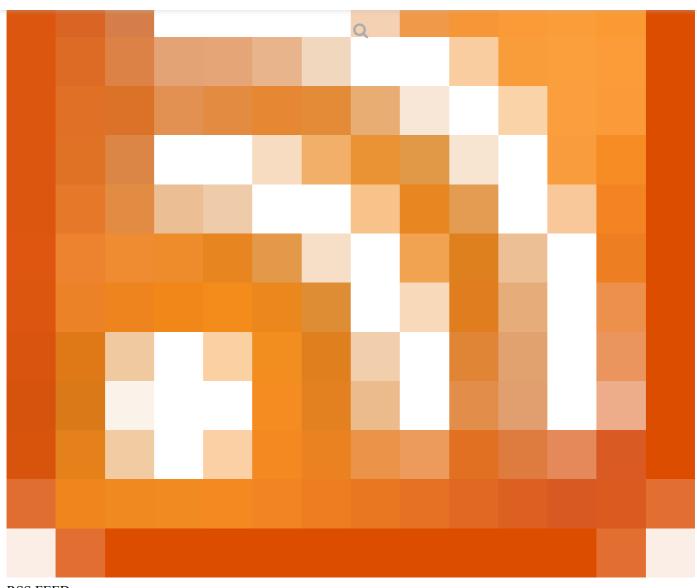




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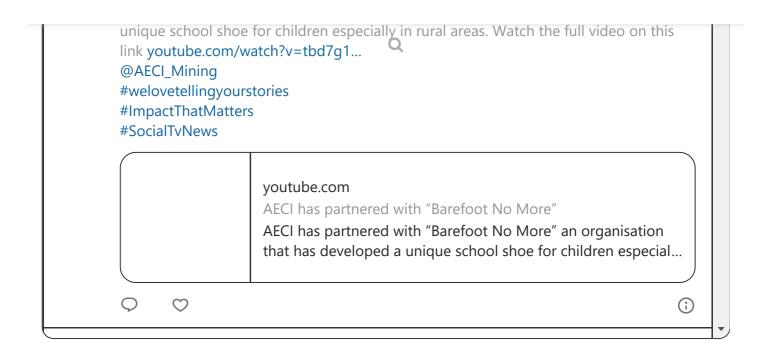
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