

Taking Responsibility for Clothing Waste: Learnings from a Global Scan

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines how product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes are deployed around the world in the transition to a circular economy for fashion.

Design/methodology/approach: Analysis of initiatives in 12 jurisdictions across 4 continents through desktop research, employing the lens of responsive regulatory theory.

Findings: Numerous voluntary initiatives with PS characteristics operate at a pilot or regional scale, with the most impactful being those that are closely tailored to country context and engaging stakeholders across the value chain. Although only one mandatory EPR scheme is in operation, others are in development.

Practical implications: Arguing for a place-based approach closely attuned to the local context, the paper applies regulatory theory to propose sanctions and supports that may be progressively employed to strengthen regulation over time.

Originality/value: This paper offers a global look at initiatives for clothing waste management, and contributes to scholarship on how theories of circularity, responsibility and stewardship are applied and practiced around the world.

Keywords: fashion, clothing, circular economy, regulation, global, local, textile waste, product stewardship, extended producer responsibility.

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