THE OECD DATABASE ON POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:

HOW TO UPDATE AND COMPLEMENT THE INFORMATION

June 2016
TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO ADD INFORMATION TO THE OECD DATABASE ON POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT ........................................................................................................................................... 3

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................................................. 3
2. Log-in .................................................................................................................................................................................. 4
3. Modifying the information concerning an instrument already included in the database ........................................ 6
4. Providing information about an instrument not previously included in the database ............................................ 12
5. Disappearing policy instruments? .................................................................................................................................. 17
6. Validation of the information you have provided ........................................................................................................ 18
7. Mark a record for suppression ...................................................................................................................................... 19
8. Further information on the subscheme forms for different instrument categories ................................................. 21

Figures

Figure 1. Where to find the login button .......................................................................................................................... 3
Figure 2. Log-in .................................................................................................................................................................. 4
Figure 3. Private zone of the database on policy instruments for the environment ......................................................... 5
Figure 4. Modifying an existing entry ............................................................................................................................... 6
Figure 5. Main form for taxes, fees and charges ................................................................................................................ 7
Figure 6. Using the help texts ........................................................................................................................................... 8
Figure 7. List of tax-bases ................................................................................................................................................ 8
Figure 8. Form for entering tax-base information ........................................................................................................... 9
Figure 9. Main form for instruments other than taxes, fees and charges ....................................................................... 10
Figure 10. List of subschemes for non-tax instruments .................................................................................................. 11
Figure 11. Form for environmentally motivated subsidy subschemes ........................................................................... 11
Figure 12. Form for creating a new entry .......................................................................................................................... 12
Figure 13. Form for adding a new entry ............................................................................................................................ 13
Figure 14. Main form for deposit-refund systems ........................................................................................................... 13
Figure 15. Subscheme list for a new policy instrument ..................................................................................................... 14
Figure 16. Form for adding a new subscheme to a newly added policy instrument ......................................................... 14
Figure 17. Subscheme form after a subscheme has been added to a policy instrument ................................................ 15
Figure 18. List of subschemes for a new policy instrument ............................................................................................... 16
Figure 19. Form for entering information on subschemes ............................................................................................... 16
Figure 20. Form for deleting or restoring subschemes .................................................................................................... 17
Figure 21. List of unfinished entries ................................................................................................................................. 17
Figure 22. Form for selecting a scheme for validation ...................................................................................................... 18
Figure 23. Overview of information on an instrument ready to be validated ................................................................. 18
Figure 24. Form for marking a record for suppression ................................................................................................... 19
Figure 25. Overview of information on a policy instrument for deletion ....................................................................... 20
Figure 26. Form for subschemes of emission or permit trading systems ................................................................. 21
Figure 27. Form for subschemes of environmentally motivated subsidies .................................................................... 22
Figure 28. Form for subschemes of voluntary approaches ............................................................................................. 23
Figure 29. Form for subschemes of deposit-refund systems ............................................................................................ 24
HOW TO ADD INFORMATION TO THE OECD DATABASE ON POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Introduction

1. The OECD, previously in co-operation with the European Environment Agency (EEA), has developed a database on environmentally related taxes, other economic instruments and voluntary approaches used for environmental policy which is freely available to government officials, researchers, industry, NGOs and the public at large at www.oecd.org/env/policies/database. The Database has hundreds of users every month and the information has to be as up-to-date and comprehensive as possible.

2. This note gives an explanation on how to update and complement information within the database. This is done via a password-protected part of the database, available to authorised users by clicking on the “Login” button in the upper-right corner at www.oecd.org/env/policies/database, cf. Figure 1.

Figure 1. Where to find the login button

3. If you have additional questions or comments concerning the database or the use of the updating routine, please contact Miguel Cárdenas Rodríguez (miguel.cardenasrodriguez@oecd.org) or Nils Axel Braathen (Nils-Axel.Braathen@oecd.org).
2. Log-in

4. Whereas anyone can see and use the information contained in the database, only authorised persons can alter the information. All authorised persons need to prepare their own personal usernames and passwords by following the procedure on the login window that opens up, as shown in Figure 2 below. There is no upper limit on the number of accounts that can be created for each country – but a given login ID should not be shared with any other users.

5. When attempting to log in go to the updating website, you will see a window like the one illustrated in Figure 2. Your “Login” is the email address that has been registered for you in the OECD’s Event Management System – the email address through which you generally will have received this user’s guide. The password has to be selected by you. If you do not already have an account at OECDdirect, please click on the blue symbol next to the words “Create Account”, marked 1. This will allow you to define your own password. If you already have a password, fill in the username and the password in the respective fields, and click on the button marked 2. If you have an account, but have forgotten your password, please click on “Reset password”.

6. During the web session you will find a number of symbols. If you place the mouse over them, a small window will appear with additional information on how to proceed, and clarifications on the information you are requested to provide.

Figure 2. Log-in

1. There needs to be only one user per account, since this would help to identify the person that created or modified an entry in case any clarification is needed.
7. Once you have submitted your username and password, the screen shown in Figure 3 appears. On the left, you can see two panels, headed by [Private zone] and [Instruments]. The “Private zone” is only for authorised users to enter information for their assigned country. Under [Home (public zone)], you can view the Database as it is accessible to all users. Via the “Instruments” panel, you can access and edit the all information previously entered into the Database for your country.

Figure 3. Private zone of the database on policy instruments for the environment

8. To enter and edit information into the database, you have the following options, in the “Private zone” panel of the screen:

- **Create a new entry**: Choose this option if you want to provide information on an instrument which is not at all included in the database, either because the instrument is new or because the previous coverage of the database was incomplete. See Section 4 below for further information.

- **Continue an unfinished entry**: Choose this option if you want to continue to work on an instrument that has not yet been validated (i.e. where you have not yet informed the database administrators that new information has been added). See Section 3 for further information.

- **Validate a finished entry**: Choose this option when you would like to notify the database administrators that new information has been added. Please see further information contained in Section 6.

- **Mark a record for suppression**: Choose this option if you would like to mark a scheme for deletion. Please note that you should only delete schemes which never should have been entered into the database. If you want to indicate that a scheme has been discontinued, make no changes here, but modify the scheme name in the relevant Main form by placing the signs “# -- ” in front of the name. See further explanation below in Section 7.
3. Modifying the information concerning an instrument already included in the database

9. Existing entries can be modified via the “Instruments” panel by clicking on the respective instrument category. The database covers the following instrument categories:
   - Environmentally taxes, fees and charges;
   - Tradable permits systems / quota trading systems / emission trading systems;
   - Deposit-refund systems;
   - Environmentally motivated subsidies;
   - Voluntary approaches used for environmental policy

10. When an instrument category is selected, you will be taken to a new window such as the one shown in Figure 4, which in this example shows the information for the taxes, fees and charges category. The overview over existing instruments also shows when the information on each instrument was last updated – and by whom the last modification was made. By default, you will see the policy instruments of the given category ordered from older to newer updated entries. If relevant, you can see more entries by clicking on “Next” below the list of tax names. In order to see the names of the instruments of other categories, please click on the relevant instrument category on the left under the panel “Instruments”.

![Figure 4. Modifying an existing entry](image)

11. Once you have found the instrument that you want to modify, please click on the name in the list. If the instrument in question is a tax, fee or charge a window as shown in Figure 5 will appear. A slightly different window will appear if the instrument is of one of the other categories, but the principle is exactly the same. The window contains a few fields where free-text information can be filled-in directly, a few “drop-down lists” where choices can be made between pre-defined options – and a number of “blue buttons”, e.g. [Revenues, Refunds, Payments, Responsibility, Recipient, Exemptions]. Each of these buttons provides links to other “Forms”, where more information on the instrument in question should be provided. It is very important that you click on all of the “blue buttons”, and complement or update the information contained there as needed. In many cases, these forms provide the most important information for the users of the database.
Figure 5. Main form for taxes, fees and charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Taxes-Fees-Charges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year of introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revision date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revision Details</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introducing Authority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National / federal parliament</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministry of Finance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administering Authority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National / federal Ministry of Finance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day to Day Authority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National / federal tax administration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Revenue Service</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Tax Details**
- Evaluation Places: Please provide references to any publications that evaluate the tax or charge in question.

- Website: Please provide addresses of any web-sites that provide additional information on the tax or charge in question.

http://www.sii.cl/portales/inversionistas/imp_chile/impuesto_combustibles_ing.htm

Contact person:
- **Danse Chanda**
- **Internal Revenue Service (SII)**
12. The symbols provide clarifications on the information you are requested to provide. To illustrate this point, Figure 6 shows how your screen will look if you place the mouse over the symbol just next to (from Figure 5).

![Figure 6. Using the help texts](image)

13. Once you have clicked all the blue buttons and provided or updated all the relevant information in the main form, please click on the button labelled “Tax-bases” in the upper part of the screen. You will then see a window similar to the one shown in Figure 7. In the example given here, several different tax-bases are included under the “Tax on motor vehicle ownership”. Of course, different taxes do not always cover a large number of tax-bases – and in some cases, there is only one tax base per tax.

![Figure 7. List of tax-bases](image)

14. In this screen (Figure 7), you are able to see, and update, the information concerning one of the tax-bases listed by clicking on the relevant tax-base name (screen in Figure 8). To add a new tax-base, please click on “New subscheme”. To mark a tax-base that is no longer in use for deletion, please click on “Modify” next to its name, and then on “Delete”. To restore a tax-base that you mistakenly marked for deletion, please click on “Modify” and then on “Restore”.

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8
15. The screen in Figure 8 opens once an existing tax-base is selected to be updated. Here you can modify the information regarding the tax rate. You are only asked to give information on the tax rate expressed in your national currency. In most cases, for international comparison purposes, the system will automatically calculate the tax rates expressed in Euro. You can also modify the classification of the tax-base in question into the pre-defined “general tax-base” categories that you find in the drop-down list, and you can complement/modify the information concerning the exact definition of the tax-base.

Figure 8. Form for entering tax-base information

16. This form also contains the three buttons . These buttons provide links to separate forms where the tax-base in question can be related to a specific household expenditure category (according to the UN’s COICOP classification system), a specific production sector (according to UN’s ISIC Rev3.1 code) or a specific product code (according to the Harmonised System of the World Customs Organisation or the Combined Nomenclature of the European Union). Similar buttons are also included for tax exemptions, tax refund mechanisms, and for each of the
divisions.

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2 An exception is for countries for which OECD’s database does not have information regarding the relevant exchange rate. In these cases, database administrators will manually fill-in the tax rate expressed in Euro.


5 See http://www.wcoomd.org/ie/En/SearchHistoricalDocuments/search.html.
subschemes of other instrument categories. The information you provide in this window is of great importance, since it will significantly improve the possibilities for undertaking statistical analyses of the instruments in the database. Once all the information regarding a given tax-base has been filled in, please click on [Submit].

17. For instruments other than taxes, fees or charges, a slightly different Main Form than the one shown in Figure 5 will appear (for example, see Figure 9 below for the case of an environmentally motivated subsidy). One difference compared to Figure 5 is that there are fewer “blue buttons” that need to be addressed in the Main Form. It is, however, **important that you click on all the relevant blue buttons** in order to provide information asked, e.g. [Domains] and [EMS Annual Costs].

![Figure 9. Main form for instruments other than taxes, fees and charges](image)

The CN Combined Nomenclature is comprised of the Harmonized System nomenclature with further Community subdivisions, see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/combined_nomenclature/index_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/combined_nomenclature/index_en.html).
18. Once you have completed the Main Form, click on the button on labelled “Subschemes” at the top of the screen. This will take you to a list of one or more parts of the instrument (scheme) in question, e.g. Figure 10 below. In some cases there will only be one subscheme listed – which would mean that the instrument does not contain special rules for certain products, sectors, geographical areas, etc. However, if special conditions do apply, several subschemes should be listed.

**Figure 10. List of subschemes for non-tax instruments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme Name</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home insulation grant</td>
<td>Environmentally motivated subsidy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. When clicking on one of the names in the list of subschemes, you will be taken to a new form whose appearance varies between instrument categories. Figure 11 shows the relevant form for an environmentally motivated subsidy scheme (see Section 8 for further information on the subscheme forms for different instrument categories).

**Figure 11. Form for environmentally motivated subsidy subschemes**
20. Please notice that for all the non-tax types of instruments there are special fields asking for links between the instrument in question and other policy instruments. Information on such links will facilitate studies of instrument mixes used for environmental policy and will also make updating the scheme in the future much easier. Also, please remember that you can find additional information on the type of information you are requested to provide in each database “field” by placing the mouse over the related symbol.

4. Providing information about an instrument not previously included in the database

21. This section explains the procedure to create entries for instruments with no previous information in the database. From Figure 3 presented above, please select “Create a new entry”, the screen displayed in Figure 12 will appear.

![Figure 12. Form for creating a new entry](image)

22. Please fill in the name in English of the policy instrument in question in the box headed “Name”. In the “drop-down list” in the middle of the screen, please indicate the type of instrument. As mentioned before, the database covers the following categories:

1. Deposit-refund systems
2. Environmentally motivated subsidies
3. Taxes – Fees/Charges and charges
4. Tradable permits systems / quota trading systems / emission trading systems
5. Voluntary approaches used for environmental policy

23. For all instrument categories except environmentally related taxes, fees or charges, you should also indicate the main purpose of the instrument or scheme in question in the field towards the bottom of the form.

24. For illustration purposes, information concerning a hypothetical deposit-refund scheme called “Demo January 2015” has been filled in Figure 13 below. Once you have filled in the relevant information, please click on Add.

7. If an instrument does not belong to any of these categories, it should not be included in the database. If you are in doubt, please contact one of the database administrators.
Once you have created a record for the new policy instrument, a screen similar to what is shown in Figure 14 will appear (the window might be slightly different according to the type of instrument). In the example used here, a deposit-refund was added. The first lines will already be filled in with the information you provided in the previous window.
26. As mentioned before, you should click on the blue button at top of the screen, which is labelled “Tax-bases” if the instrument you have added is a tax, fee or a charge, or is labelled “Subschemes” if the instrument is of one of the other categories covered by the database. However, in the case of a newly created instrument, as in Figure 15, there will no subschemes or tax-bases in the subsequent list. To create a new subscheme, please click on the <strong>New subscheme</strong> button, which will open up the window depicted in Figure 16.

![Figure 15. Subscheme list for a new policy instrument](image)

![Figure 16. Form for adding a new subscheme to a newly added policy instrument](image)

27. Please fill in a relevant name for each subscheme or tax-base. The name of the subscheme could have different levels of detail. For example, for some tax-bases the name could often be relatively obvious – like e.g. “Unleaded petrol with sulphur content below 0.05%” or “Adult entry fee for X national park”. However, for a subscheme that is part of a broader tradable permit system (for example for SO₂) with special rules for a given sector (e.g., the steel sector), an appropriate subscheme name would have to include these elements in the name (e.g. “SO₂ emission trading system -- Steel sector”).

28. Policy instruments applying different tax-bases or subschemes according to certain rules would have to explicitly include these rules in their name. For example, subsidies to promote energy efficiency improvements in buildings in general could be named “Subsidies to promote energy efficiency improvements in schools”, if the rules that apply to schools differ from the rules concerning other buildings. Furthermore, within a broad subsidy scheme, one subscheme could, provide grants, while another subscheme could provide subsidised loans, and a third loan guarantees with subsidised fees, for a given purpose. In such a case, this information needs to be included in the name of the (three distinct) subschemes.

29. For deposit-refund system for bottles in general, a possible subscheme could be a deposit-refund system for milk bottles, if deposit rates for milk bottles differ from those applied to other bottle types.
Moreover, if the instrument is a voluntary programme for certification of “environmentally friendly producers” in general, a possible subscheme could be a certification programme for “environmentally friendly producers in the aluminium industry”, if special rules of the programme apply to the aluminium industry.

30. Once you have filled-in a name, please click on “Submit”. A form, similar to the screen shown in Figure 17, will appear with the name of the new subscheme (here highlighted in red) entered in the list of “Existing subschemes”. You can now enter the name of one or more additional subschemes. In order to start adding information regarding a given subscheme, you first need to click on “Previous page” (highlighted in read in Figure 17) and then select the respective subscheme name.

31. After clicking on “Previous page”, your screen will look similar to the screen shown in Figure 18. You can now either:

1. Click on the blue button labelled “New subscheme”, in order to add still more subschemes to the scheme;
2. Click on one of the subscheme names (here highlighted in red), in order to provide further information about that subscheme;
3. Click on the text “Modify” (here highlighted in green), in case you should want to delete a subscheme that you had entered by a mistake;
4. Click on the link to “Main non taxes” (here highlighted in blue), in order to be taken back to the main form. (If the new instrument you had created was a tax or a fee/charge, the link would be called “Main taxes”.)
32. After clicking on a subscheme name (alternative 2), your screen will be similar to that of Figure 19, depending on what type of instrument you are providing information about. (The subscheme forms for different instrument types are explained further in Section 8 below.)

33. Instead, clicking on “Modify” (alternative 3 above) will lead to a screen similar to what is illustrated in Figure 20 below. In the example used in Figure 20, one had clicked on the subscheme “Another test for milk bottles”, and this subscheme name appears one the grey line further down in the form (here highlighted in red). To mark the subscheme for deletion, please click on the button “Delete” below. A red “X” will appear next to the subscheme name (instead of the “✔”), as is the case for “Still one
more test for milk bottles” in this example (marked here in blue). If you would like to keep a subscheme already marked for deletion, please click on its name once more and then click on “Restore”.

**Figure 20.** Form for deleting or restoring subschemes

5. **Disappearing policy instruments?**

34. Please note that if you have started to provide information concerning a given instrument, *this instrument will no longer appear in the list of existing instruments* discussed in relation to Figure 4 above, and will instead be “moved” to the list of “unfinished entries”. To be able to further modify the information provided for an instrument, please select the option “Continue an unfinished entry” (which you can find under the “Private zone” panel). You will then be taken to a list of instruments on which you (or one of your colleagues) have started to modify the information, and which has not yet been “validated”.

35. Once you click on “Continue an unfinished entry”, you will then be taken to a list similar to the one shown in Figure 21 below. You can continue working on an entry by clicking on the name of the instrument.

**Figure 21.** List of unfinished entries
6. Validation of the information you have provided

36. Once you have finished providing information on a new or an existing policy instrument, you need to validate the information, i.e. to make the database administrators aware that the information is ready to be uploaded on the open Internet website (www.oecd.org/env/policies/database), so that all users of the database can see it.

37. In order to validate a record, click on “Validate a finished entry”, located on the left-hand side of the window, under the “Private zone” panel. You will be taken to the list of unfinished entries, from which you can choose the entry to validate (e.g. Figure 22).

38. Clicking on the scheme you wish to validate will take you to an overview of the information you have entered, as shown in Figure 23. Notice that, in the example presented below, relatively little information has been entered concerning the instrument.

![Figure 22. Form for selecting a scheme for validation](image)

![Figure 23. Overview of information on an instrument ready to be validated](image)
39. If you believe that the information provided is correct and as complete as possible, please click on the “validate” button in the upper left part of the window. The database administrators will see that the record is ready for up-loading the next time they log-on to the database.

40. Please note that until the database administrators have confirmed the validation you made, you will not be able to make any further modifications to this particular instrument, i.e. it will neither appear in the list of “existing entries”, nor in the list of “unfinished entries”.

41. If you find that, while reading the overview, further modifications need to be made before validation, just go back to the “Continue an unfinished entry” to make the necessary modifications – and later come back here to validate the complemented information.

7. Mark a record for suppression

42. The last task listed in Section 2 above is to “Mark a record for suppression”. By selecting this option in the “Private zone” panel, you will be taken to a window similar to the one seen in Figure 24 below:

Figure 24. Form for marking a record for suppression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country: Germany</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Updated</th>
<th>Updated by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demo January 2015</td>
<td>Taxes-Fees/Charges</td>
<td>Thursday, January 29, 2013 5:48:00 PM</td>
<td>Johannes ARLINGHAUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo January 2015</td>
<td>Deposit-refund system</td>
<td>Johann ARLINGHAUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo January 2015</td>
<td>Deposit-refund system</td>
<td>Johann ARLINGHAUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy for building isolation</td>
<td>Environmentally motivated subsidy</td>
<td>Thursday, January 29, 2013 6:00:00 PM</td>
<td>Johann ARLINGHAUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo January 2015</td>
<td>Taxes-Fees/Charges</td>
<td>Monday, January 26, 2015 5:18:00 PM</td>
<td>Johann ARLINGHAUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo January 2015</td>
<td>Tradable permits system</td>
<td>Johann ARLINGHAUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy for Demonstration January 2015</td>
<td>Tradable permits system</td>
<td>Johann ARLINGHAUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43. Clicking on one of the names in the list will open another window, where a part of the information on the selected instrument is shown, as in Figure 25.
44. Clicking on the “Delete” button in the lower part will send a message to the database administrators that a given instrument should be deleted – but it will not automatically delete the record. If you delete an entry by mistake, it will be possible for the database administrators to restore it. Please contact one of them, if necessary.

45. However, as indicated in relation to Figure 24, you should only mark for deletion policy instruments (or “schemes”) that have been entered by a mistake in the first place. This could be the case if, for example, a given instrument has been included twice in the database (e.g. with slightly different names).

46. Discontinued policy instruments, e.g. if a subsidy or tax is terminated, should not be marked for deletion. Instead, you should open the instrument in the form described in Figure 7 or 10, click on the blue button “Scheme name” in the upper left corner, and add “# -- ” in front of the existing scheme name. Further, in the field “Revisions date”, you should insert the date when the scheme was terminated, and in the field “Revision details”, you should explain that the scheme was discontinued – and, if possible say why, if there was a dominating reason for the termination.

47. In this way, it will inter alia be most easy for outside users of the database to see for themselves that an instrument they might have heard about no longer is in use. It will also be possible for them to find information e.g. on the revenues collected by a tax or charge while it was in operation, etc.
8. Further information on the subscheme forms for different instrument categories

Figure 26 provides further explanation of the inputs that are being requested for subschemes of emission or permit trading systems.

**Figure 26. Form for subschemes of emission or permit trading systems**

- Please enter information here about the environmental domain of this subscheme; for example CO₂, SO₂, NOx, fishing quotas, etc.
- Please look at the "Options" above for explanation.
- Please enter information here about any revenues raised through the sale of permits or quotas related to this subscheme.
- Please provide information about the type of trading system for this subscheme.
- Please provide information regarding the spatial scale of this subscheme.
- Please indicate what exactly is the object that can be traded, e.g. a tonne of CO₂ or SO₂.
- Please indicate who can take part in the trading, e.g. all industrial plants or owners of fishing boats.
- Please indicate how compliance with the rules of the trading system is being monitored.
- Please provide information about how the permits or quotas are being first allocated.
- Please indicate if there are any sanctions for non-compliance, and, if "yes", which ones.
- Please indicate if there are any formal links between this trading system and any taxes or charges.
- Please indicate if there are any formal links with any other policy instruments.
- Please provide any information you can about the administrative costs of the trading system.
- Please provide any other relevant information about this subscheme of the trading system.
Similarly, Figure 27 provides further explanation of the inputs that are being requested for environmentally motivated subsidy subschemes.

Figure 27. Form for subschemes of environmentally motivated subsidies
50. Figure 28 provides further explanation of the inputs that are being requested for deposit-refund subschemes.

**Figure 28. Form for subschemes of voluntary approaches**

- Please provide information about the participants covered by this subscheme (e.g. any individual firm, industry organisations, individual farmers, etc.)
- Please enter information here about the environmental domain of this subscheme; for example CO2, land use, waste prevention, etc.
- Please indicate if the subscheme is linked to particular household expenditure categories or ISIC economic sectors. It is not important to indicate the product category number.
- Please provide information about the type of voluntary approach (e.g. negotiated agreement, voluntary programme).
- Please provide information about the regional scope of this subscheme (e.g. national, regional, local).
- Please provide information about the legal status of this subscheme (legally binding or not).
- Please give information about compliance monitoring.
- Please indicate if there are any sanctions for non-compliance.
- Please indicate if third parties or new entrants can adhere to the subscheme.
- Please indicate if special measures are taken in order to limit free-riding under this subscheme.
- Please indicate whether the subscheme is target-based or implementation-based.
- If it is target-based, please indicate if there are targets for individual firms.
- Please give information about formal links to other policy instruments.
- Please indicate if a “business-as-usual” scenario was elaborated prior to the implementation of this subscheme.
- Please indicate if documentation is available about any environmental improvements, beyond the BaU.
- Please provide any information you can about the administrative costs of this subscheme.
- Please provide any other information you can about this subscheme.
Finally, Figure 29 provides further explanation of the inputs that are being requested for deposit-refund subschemes.

**Figure 29. Form for subschemes of deposit-refund systems**

Please provide information about the type of products that this subscheme of the deposit-refund system covers (e.g. batteries, tyres, glass bottles, aluminium cans, etc.).

Please provide information about the amount people have to pay as a deposit when buying a product covered by this subscheme, and the amount they will receive as a return if they hand back the product after use.

Please indicate if the subscheme is linked to particular household expenditure categories or ISIC economic sectors. It is not important to indicate the product category number.

Please provide information about the share of products covered by this subscheme that are being returned after use.

Please indicate if the subscheme is formally linked to a particular environmentally related tax (e.g. an exemption in a packaging tax might be given to packaging covered by a deposit-refund system).

Please indicate if there are any formal links between this subscheme and any other policy instruments.

Please provide any information you can about the administrative costs of this subscheme.

Please provide any other relevant information about this subscheme.