



JUSTICE
AARHUS CONVENTION
for our environment

Introducing the Aarhus Convention and Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

Geneva
19 June 2017





Introduction to the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs

- Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention)
- Adopted in 1998 in Danish city of Aarhus, entered into force in 2001
- The current ratification status: 47 Parties, including EU and open globally upon approval by the Meeting of the Parties
- Has [the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers](#) adopted in 2003 and entered into force in 2009
- The current ratification status: 35 Parties, including EU, and open globally

“

AIM OF THE CONVENTION

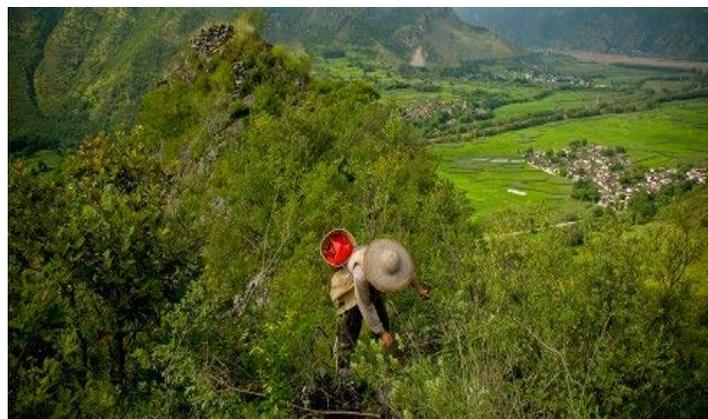
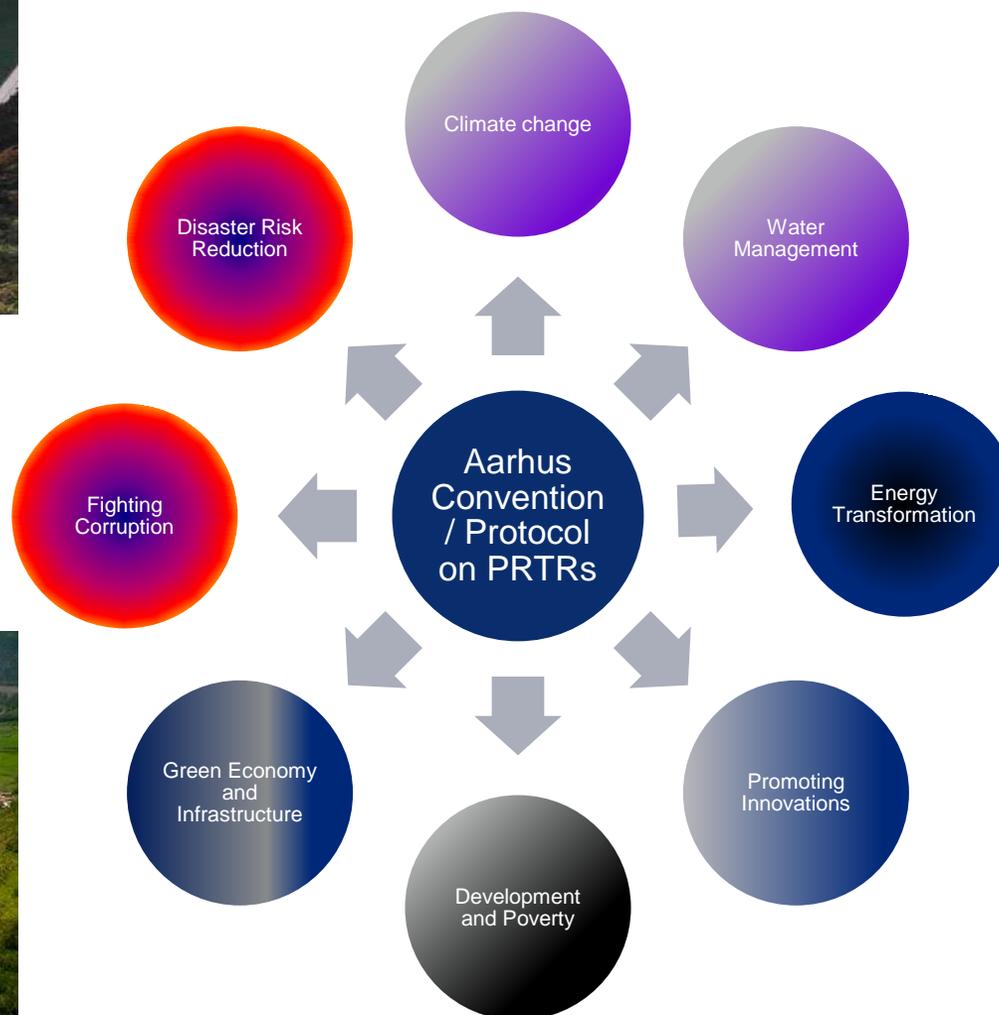
“In order to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being, each Party shall guarantee the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.”

(Article 1 of the Aarhus Convention)

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Assistance in addressing critical issues





Aarhus Convention underpins the importance of involvement of all actors to achieve sustainable development

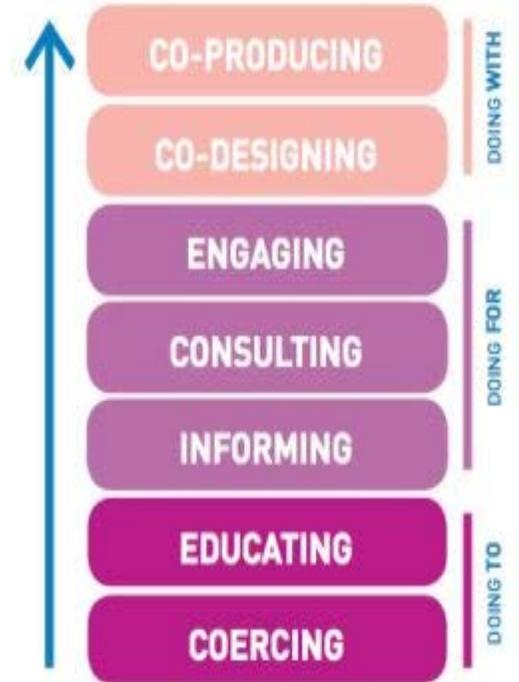
Underlying principles

■ Aarhus philosophy

- Sustainability needs involvement of all actors
- People should be entitled to have a say in issues affecting their life
- Appropriate recognition and support of organizations and groups promoting environmental protection
- Party's obligations to encourage developers, investors and operators to engage with the public as early as possible and provide the sufficient information on activities and products (e.g. thru voluntary eco-labelling or eco-auditing schemes)
- Effective and informed participation = Improved decision-making and implementation

■ Key features:

- Non-discriminatory
- Duty to our children
- 'Rights-based' approach
- A 'floor' not a 'ceiling'



Source: new economics foundation

These principles are especially relevant as the world embarks on implementing 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda



Structure of the text of the Convention

Preamble

Objectives Article 1

Definitions Article 2

General provisions Article 3

3 pillars of the Convention

1

Access to information

- Articles 4 and 5

2

Public participation in decision-making

- Articles 6-8 with an annex of activities

3

Access to justice

- Article 9

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TOOLS

Final provisions – Article 10-22

- Meeting of the Parties
- Voting rights

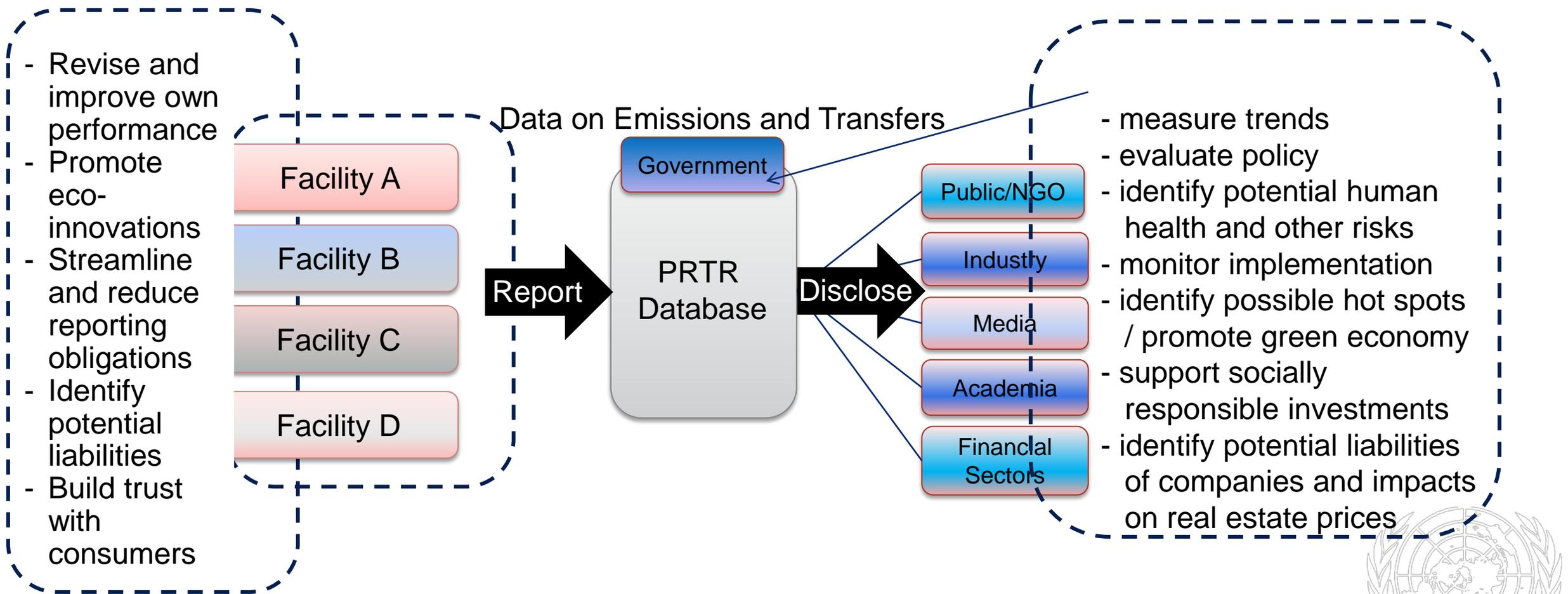
- Secretariat,
- Review of compliance

Annexes

GMO amendment



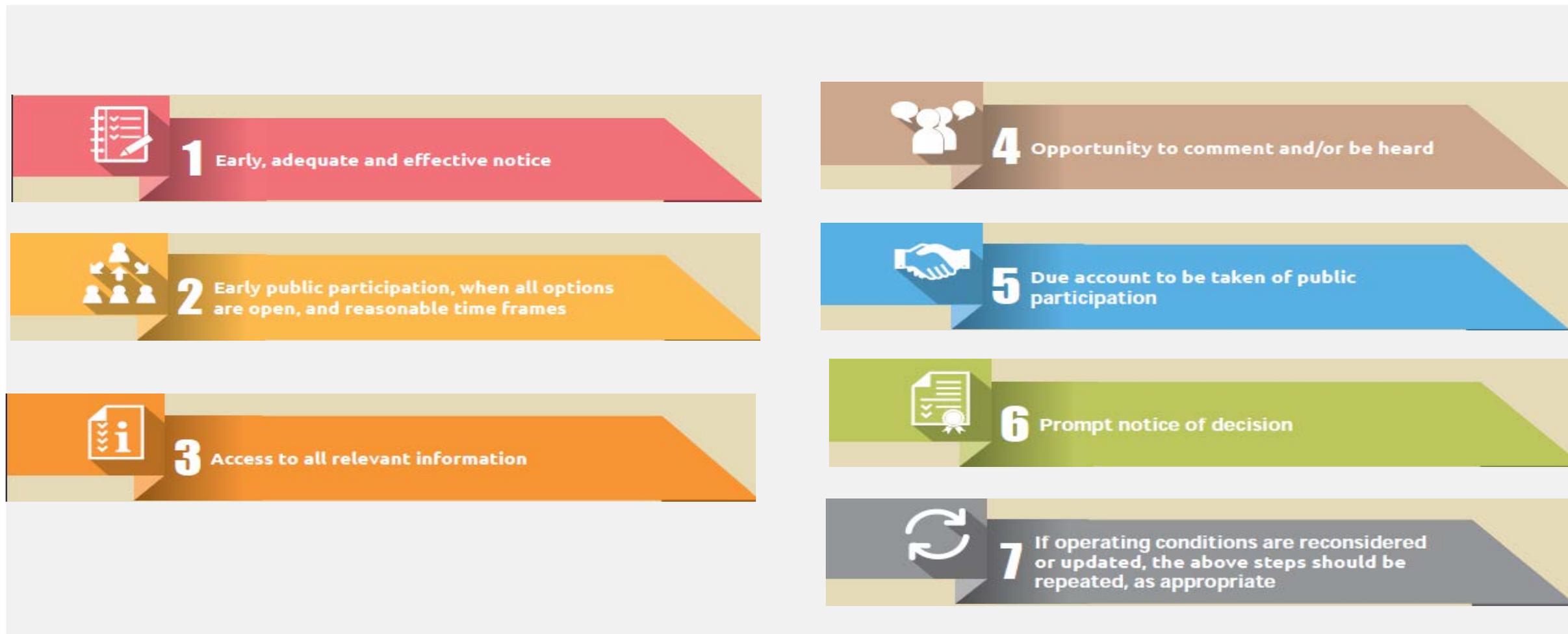
Protocol on PRTRs: win-win tool for industries, government and the public



Scope of the Protocol on PRTRs

- 65 activities (capacity/employee thresholds)
- 86 substances/substance categories. Releases-air, soil, water.
- Parties choose the capacity threshold system or employee threshold system for determining which facilities report.
- Off-site transfers of waste / wastewater. A threshold system defines which waste transfers have to be reported.
- Progressively include available data on diffuse releases.
- The Protocol sets minimum requirements. Parties developing PRTRs may go further, according to their national priorities and may include activities and substances that are additional to those listed in Annex I and Annex II).

Aarhus model for effective public participation in decision-making:



To learn more, follow [Task Force on Public Participation](#) and use the [Maastricht Recommendations](#) and [Good practice online database](#)



Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs tool box:

Maastricht Recommendations
Other Guidelines and Recommendations
(Implementation Guide, Almaty, EIT)

Guidance to Implementation of the Protocol and Simplified Guide
Guidance on reporting on the Protocol's implementation
Synthesis report on the implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs
Recommendations to address systemic challenges to the implementation of the Protocol (in preparation by the Protocol Compliance Committee)
Updated websites, including databases for national implementation reports <http://www2.unece.org/prtr-nir/> and PRTR capacity building: <http://apps.unece.org/ehl/pp/NIR/PRTRreports.asp>

Aarhus Good Practice Database
Case studies on electronic information tools

Sharing experiences by taking part in the Aarhus Convention's Task Forces (AI, PPDM, AJ)

Aarhus Convention publications

Relevant findings of Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee

National implementation reports and the Synthesis report

Analytical studies

Aarhus Clearinghouse (RSS Feeds)
National nodes

Jurisprudence Portal



Thank you!

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