Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release
and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to
Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and
Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Working Group of the Parties

Sixth meeting,
Geneva, 9 November 2018
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Development of the Protocol

References in existing official documents that are relevant to the implementation of the strategic plan for 2015-2020[*]

1. The below table provides a non-exhaustive overview on linkages between the text of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), a document on Systemic issues concerning the implementation of the Protocol and recommendations on how to address them (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/6/Add.2) and the Strategic plan for 2015–2020 for the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/2014/4/Add.1). The references from the documents are grouped according to the five pillars of work[2] (Items A to E in the table) and based on the general provisions and core elements defined in articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol. Passages that relate to these pillars are cited in separate columns for each document named in the header of the table.

2. Other official documents also contain references which Parties may find helpful in their work to implement the strategic plan 2015-2020 (e.g. Synthesis reports on the implementation of the Protocol ECE/MP.PRTR/2014/5 and Synthesis report on the implementation of the Protocol and overview of progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020 ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/10). In particular, the Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PP/7) is a comprehensive guidance document on the Protocol, which clarifies in more detail many aspects also related to the implementation of the Protocol's strategic plan for 2015–2020.

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[*] This document was not formally edited.
[2] See para. 8 of the note on Development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/5 and para. 12 of the Progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/5).

Item	Strategic plan for 2015–2020 for the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers ECE/MP.PRTR/2014/4/Add.1	Protocol	Systemic issues concerning the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and recommendations on how to address them ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/6/Add.2
A.	**Integration at national level**		
	para 8: (c) Improve access to information in the PRTR electronic database(s) through a free, dedicated, user-friendly website with *links to other websites and databases on subject matters relating to environmental protection*; para 11: [..] Parties should *include all relevant public authorities at the national, regional and local levels* (e.g., those responsible for environment, justice, water, agriculture, transport, industry, health, education and foreign issues). [..]	Article 1 (Objective) The objective of this Protocol is to enhance public access to information through the establishment of coherent, *integrated*, nationwide pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs) in accordance with the provisions of this Protocol, which could *facilitate public participation in environmental decision-making as well as contribute to the prevention and reduction of pollution of the environment*. Article 3 (General provisions), para 5: 5. To reduce duplicative reporting, pollutant release and transfer register systems may be *integrated* to the degree practicable *with existing information sources* such as reporting mechanisms under licences or operating permits.	para 54(b): (b) Use an *integrated reporting form for all environmental data* and store the information in a database that is searchable from different points of view and for different reporting obligations (e.g., see the national implementation reports submitted by the Flemish and Walloon Regions of Belgium). Key aspects related to this practice are: (i) To *avoid double reporting*; (ii) To have the *same source data for all reporting requirements*, resulting in the process being transparent (enabling to trace all data), consistent and comparable, reported and backed by the facility operator (Tier 3 detailed information) and verified and validated by the competent authority;
B.	**Harmonization at international level**		
	Relevant to reach 2030 Agenda, para 5: 5. Our long-term vision is: [..] *move towards sustainable and environmentally sound development*.	Article 3 (General provisions), para 6: 6. Parties shall strive to achieve *convergence among national pollutant release and transfer registers*.	paras 49-50; 59: Recommendations 49. In the light of the general issue of limited resources for international cooperation, Parties should more actively exchange information with other Parties and combine their efforts with the aim of more easily overcoming common obstacles. Obstacles occur in the process of

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	Raise the impact of the Protocol, para 6: 6. We see it as our mission: [..] (b) To raise the impact of the Protocol by *increasing the number of Parties within the ECE* region *and* by encouraging States *outside the region* to accede to the Protocol or to apply its principles and provisions; para 9: (c) To promote *synergies with international organizations* through, e.g., the International PRTR Coordinating Group; (d) To *promote synergies with ECE and global MEAs*.		implementing the Protocol as well as in operating a PRTR system. Parties can work together, for example, through: (a) Sharing experience more widely using electronic means; (b) Creating a working group with neighbouring countries to combine limited resources and make use of synergies; (c) Making information available in ECE languages such as English, provided that there are available resources to do so; (d) Participating in sessions and workshops, e.g., of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs and the International PRTR Coordinating Group; (e) Including a component on PRTR cooperation in economic cooperation plans, such as trade agreements; (f) Using PRTR data as a basis for cross-border cooperation, e.g., related to projects for water protection or reducing emissions to air, or in the framework of other conventions, such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention). 50. Parties are also encouraged to use existing tools, such as the PRTR capacity-building database and PRTR:learn. In that context, feedback from users will help to develop such tools and further and increase their value in solving PRTR-related problems. 59. Good practices regarding international cooperation include: (a) Pragmatic cooperation between neighbouring countries (e.g., the Nordic PRTR group, comprising Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden; Switzerland allowing Liechtenstein to use its electronic database for reporting; and countries sharing data with their neighbours through E-PRTR); (b) Where there are other relevant fields of cooperation, such as economic cooperation, including a component for cooperation regarding PRTRs, as has been

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			done between Israel and Japan under the coordination of the Israeli Foreign Ministry (see the national implementation report submitted by Israel); (c) Using PRTR data as basis for cross-border cooperation, e.g., related to projects for water protection or reduction of emissions to air, and in the framework of other agreements, such as the Basel Convention.
C.	**Awareness and ease of access and use**		
	Para 5: 5. Our long-term vision is: (a) To contribute towards ensuring the right of every person of present and future generations to a healthy community through *easy, user-friendly and free publicly accessible information about pollution of the environment by means of PRTRs*; (b) To contribute to the prevention and reduction of pollution of the environment by *increasing transparency* [..] Para 8: (c) Improve access to information in the PRTR electronic database(s) through a free, dedicated, user-friendly website with *links to other websites and databases on subject matters relating to environmental protection*;	Article 4 (Core elements of a PRTR-system), h): (h) Is coherent and designed to be user-friendly and publicly accessible, including in electronic form; Article 5 (Design and structure), para 4: 4. The register shall be designed for *maximum ease of public access* through electronic means, such as the Internet. The design shall allow that, under normal operating conditions, the information on the register is continuously and immediately available through electronic means. Article 15 (Capacity-building): 1. Each Party shall *promote public awareness* of its pollutant release and transfer register, and shall *ensure that assistance and guidance are provided in accessing its register*	paras 25-26; 57; 58: Recommendations 25. In addition to the promotion of the Protocol and capacity-building activities, and with the aim to enable to implement article 15, it seems appropriate for Parties to the Protocol to: (a) Measure stakeholder awareness; (b) Analyse how PRTR systems are used; (c) Analyse how existing PRTR systems can be more useful for different groups of stakeholders; (d) Identify ways to foster public involvement, including the tools and best practices for doing so. 26. In this context, it is recommended that efforts be made at the national as well as international levels to: (a) Identify potential stakeholder groups and especially those that could benefit more from using PRTR data; (b) Collect and share information about what kind of PRTR-related information the public and other stakeholders already consult; (c) Understand what kind of further information they would like to consult. 57. Good practices for website design and improving the usability of the PRTR are: (a) To have a multilingual design and/or the availability of information in

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		and in understanding and using the information contained in it. 2. Each Party should provide adequate capacity-building for and guidance to the responsible authorities and bodies to assist them in carrying out their duties under this Protocol.	several languages, including English and national language(s) (e.g., see the national implementation reports submitted by Serbia, Spain or Switzerland); (b) To test the website among people outside the organization or agency setting up the PRTR before launching the site. This can provide useful information on how to build a user-friendly website with quick and easy access to emission data (e.g., see the national implementation report submitted by Norway); (c) To provide information on various chemical substances used in production processes and emitted from their use, as well as their possible impacts on human health. This is a relevant tool to inform the public according to its needs and demands (e.g., see the national implementation reports submitted by Latvia or Spain); (d) To supply additional explanations and/or information for the public, e.g., a section of the website with material containing relevant legal and technical references; (e) To include tools for data visualization, for example, the possibility to view graphics showing time series data (e.g., see the national implementation report submitted by Spain); (f) To provide more possibilities for searching, consultation, or queries than foreseen in the Protocol (e.g., see the national implementation reports submitted by France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain or Sweden). 58. In promoting PRTRs and awareness-raising, among others, it is a good practice to: (a) Strengthen international activities to promote the national register (e.g., see the national implementation reports submitted by Germany, Spain or Sweden); (b) Collect and analyse statistics about visitors or users of PRTR web pages, their queries and other related information (e.g.,

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			see the national implementation reports submitted by Spain or Switzerland).
D.	**Scope of the Protocol**		
	para 10: Focal area III (Development of the Protocol)	Article 6 (Scope of the register), para 1:	paras 11-12; 18; 20; 35-36; 39; 41-43; 56: Recommendations
	10. To achieve development of the Protocol, Parties, supported by the Protocol bodies, will endeavour to implement the following objectives:	1. Each Party shall ensure that its register includes the information on:	11. Parties should strive for systematic quality assessment of the data contained in their PRTR; the methodology for this should be continuously improved. In this context the full implementation of article 10 is essential.
	(a) In line with the Protocol's article 6, paragraph 2, and using experience gained from the development of national PRTRs and the implementation of the Protocol, as well as taking into account relevant international processes, identify areas for possible future improvements in annexes I and II to the Protocol;	(a) Releases of pollutants required to be reported under article 7, paragraph 2; (b) Off-site transfers required to be reported under article 7, paragraph 2; and (c) *Releases of pollutants from diffuse sources* required under article 7, paragraph 4.	12. In order to avoid giving the false impression of completeness of a PRTR, Parties should ensure that the lack of public access to specific PRTR data be clearly marked in the register, by applying paragraph 3 of article 12. 18. To ensure the completeness of reporting with respect to PRTRs where diffuse sources have not been integrated into a PRTR system, Parties should start taking steps in the inclusion process and be able to give a timeline for its implementation, while striving to achieve consistency and reliability. They should not hesitate to seek initial advice from Compliance Committee experts and can draw on a number of resources related to the issue, such as the 2008 Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PP/7, p. 63 ff.), and resources from those Protocol Parties that are more advanced in the field and make related documents available on their PRTR web pages. A listing of such resources should be compiled, for example, on the PRTR.net web portal, and Parties should provide the secretariat with relevant information and weblinks to this end.
	(b) Inclusion of *specific requirements for releases of pollutants from diffuse sources* where and when necessary (art. 7, para. 7); (c) Considering the *inclusion of other aspects*, such as information on energy and water consumption, on-site transfers of waste or storage (art. 6, para. 2); (d) Use of the Protocol on PRTRs *as*	Article 6 (Scope of the register), para 2: 2. Having assessed the experience gained from the development of national pollutant release and transfer registers and the implementation of this Protocol, and taking into account relevant international processes, the Meeting of the Parties shall review the reporting requirements under this Protocol and shall consider the following issues in its further development:	20. Challenges related to the reporting on releases to land must be discussed at the national and international levels and the underlying challenges identified and addressed in order to enable Parties to fulfil the Protocol's provisions and make

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	a tool for assessing the development of a green economy in the context of *sustainable development*.	(a) Revision of the *activities* specified in annex I; (b) Revision of the *pollutants* specified in annex II; (c) Revision of the *thresholds* in annexes I and II; and (d) *Inclusion of other relevant aspects* such as information on on-site transfers, storage, the specification of reporting requirements for diffuse sources or the development of criteria for including pollutants under this Protocol. Article 7 (Reporting requirements), para 4: 4. Each Party shall ensure that its competent authority collects, or shall *designate one or more public authorities or competent bodies to collect, the information on releases of pollutants from diffuse sources* specified in paragraphs 7 and 8, for inclusion in its register.	knowledge on releases of pollutants to land available to the public. 35. The Protocol sets out the minimum requirements for activities and pollutants to be covered by Parties' PRTRs. These should be seen as the minimum common basis for establishing PRTRs. Parties are encouraged to expand the activities and pollutants covered by their PRTRs at the national level in accordance with their priorities. Exchange of information and views among Parties on the added value of these enhanced national sets of requirements in relation to activities and pollutants and how they help to reach the Protocol's objective to contribute to the prevention and reduction of pollution of the environment should also be encouraged. 36. Moreover, article 6, paragraph 2, of the Protocol provides that the Parties may consider a number of issues in relation to the Protocol's further development, such as the revision of annexes I to III and the inclusion of other substantive aspects. This is to be done in the light of experience in the implementation of the Protocol and taking into account relevant developments on PRTRs at the international level. 39. Parties should consider if more guidance on inclusion of emissions from diffuse sources is needed. Methodological and technical exchange among the Parties and with other ECE multilateral environmental agreements could be helpful in combination with the sharing of good practices and software tools for the graphic display of data from diffuse sources. 41. Parties should carefully check if they need to undertake efforts to fully comply with the requirements of article 7, paragraphs 5 and 6. 42. In order to make the PRTRs more useful, Parties should consider providing additional important optional information, such as:

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		Article 7 (Reporting requirements), para 7: 7. Each Party shall present on its register, in an adequate spatial disaggregation, the information on releases of pollutants from diffuse sources for which that Party determines that data are being collected by the relevant authorities and can be practicably included. Where the Party determines that no such data exist, it shall take **measures to initiate reporting on releases of relevant pollutants from one or more diffuse sources in accordance with its national priorities.** Article 10 (Quality assessment), para 2: 2. Each Party shall ensure that the data contained in its register are subject to quality assessment by the competent authority, in particular as to their **completeness, consistency and credibility,** taking into account any guidelines that may be developed by the Meeting of the Parties.	(a) The number of employees or production volume; (b) Energy and water consumption; (c) Fuel provided (energy sector); (d) Lower thresholds for waste amounts; (e) Waste codes; (f) Regional codes; (g) The river basin district; (h) NACE codes. 43. Upon request, the Compliance Committee or the Bureau could offer preliminary assistance in order to find appropriate solutions for good practice. 56. Good practices regarding pollutants, activities and emissions from diffuse sources include: (a) Making a **periodic analysis of reporting** to the PRTR system and adjusting practices according to the results, as appropriate, to effectively reflect new developments (e.g., see the national implementation report submitted by Serbia); (b) Including **data on diffuse emissions from products**, considering the gradual improvement of methodologies for obtaining such data (e.g., see the national implementation report submitted by Denmark).
E.	**Data (including its reporting, management and quality)**		
	para 8: Focal area I (Implementation of the Protocol by each Party) (a) Data is collected through **integrated**	Article 7 (Reporting requirements), para 6: 6. The information referred to in paragraph 5 (c) to (e) shall include information on releases	para 45: Recommendations 45. Data should be made available as soon as possible in order to increase the usefulness of the database to the public. For example, a significant number of Parties

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	and preferably electronic reporting tool(s) and is made available through an electronic database, thereby facilitating the use of this data for multiple purposes and the sharing of information according to shared environmental information system (SEIS) principles to be developed throughout the ECE region; (b) *Calculation methodologies for the preparation of data for PRTR reporting*, which could be easily adapted and used in all countries, are collected and widely disseminated; para 9: Focal area II (Lifting barriers to ratification and expansion beyond the ECE region) (d) To promote *synergies with ECE and global MEAs*.	and transfers resulting from routine activities and *from extraordinary events*.	reported in the 2014 reporting cycle that they made data available within 12 months after the end of the reporting year. Parties may also be able to share insight with interested peers about practical arrangements related to this practice, including, e.g., on how to achieve a 100 per cent rate for electronic submission of PRTR data. para 54: 54. Among good practices regarding the database design are to: (a) Use open source software for cost reduction and possible cooperation in the further development of the database software (e.g., see the national implementation report submitted by Germany); (c) *Provide owners and/or operators and the competent authorities with simplified reporting procedures and easy access through the design of the electronic reporting system* (e.g., see the national implementation reports submitted by Austria, Serbia or Spain); (d) Aim for *100 per cent online reporting*; (e) Provide the possibility to download PRTR search results in file format (e.g., see the national implementation reports submitted by Spain or Switzerland).