GLOBAL ROUND TABLE ON PRTRs

Geneva, 19 November 2013

The event was organised in Geneva on 19 November 2013 under the auspices of UNECE and OECD, in cooperation with UNITAR. The round table took stock of successes and challenges in implementing the PRTR Protocol and PRTRs systems to date in order to create a snapshot which can guide future activities towards implementation of new PRTRs, and enhancements to existing PRTRs.

PRTRs: benefits and opportunities

Mr Stephen De Vito
Environmental Protection Agency, United States

PRTR Information in Sustainability: The need to Define its Role

Key messages

►PRTR information can be used to achieve global sustainability. For example PRTR data can:
►Demonstrate the reduction in the use of toxic chemicals in industrial manufacture;

►Reflect green chemistry and green engineering achievements.

Frameworks for using PRTR data and information to assess progress towards sustainability are being developed by the US and the OECD

Mr Øyvind Hetland
Norwegian Environment Agency

PRTRs to show use of resources-Energy consumption and waste minimisation

Key messages
►PRTRs can help estimate the use of resources.
►PRTR data on energy consumption and hazardous waste can be used to present valuable insights on resource use efficiency.
►Direct comparisons between individual facilities need to make use of information which might not be contained in a standard PRTR, but which nevertheless can be accessed on a case by case basis.

Mr Marcos Serrano
Ministry of Environment
Chile

How PRTRs could function as a single window for environmental reporting

Benefits of single window PRTR system:
► Operators use one unique portal to comply with all reporting requirements;
►Homologation of data;
►Duplication of reports is avoided;
►Data can be used to report to other international standards.

PRTRs: benefits and opportunities

Ms Silvia Nicolaescu
Ministry of Environment
Republic of Moldova

Develop national inventories in compliance with international agreements

Key messages
An efficient PRTR system is understood as a tool ready to help:
►fulfil a variety of international obligations and
►serve as a single database for national reporting.

Ms Kristina Saarinen
Environment Institute
Finland

GHG Emission Inventories

Key messages
The use of PRTR data in greenhouse gas emission inventories can improve the overall accuracy of inventories provided that the following constraints are addressed:
►PRTR and GHG emission inventories have different data aggregation levels and documentation needs;
►PRTR data cover only part of activities and sectors included under GHG inventories;
►GHG emission inventories cover all emission sources whereas PRTRs cover data from facilities only above a certain capacity and/or emission threshold;
►When used in emission inventories, PRTR data should be available at the level of detail needed for the GHG inventory;
►Use consistent data (e.g. fuel consumption) in both PRTR and emission inventories.

PRTR data should be verified by authorities to meet the requirements before it used in the inventory.

Mr Jan Maršák
Ministry of Environment
Czech Republic

Communicate environmental information to the public

Key messages
In order for PRTRs to be a useful tool to communicate environmental information:
►PRTRs should be user-friendly and ensure accessibility;
►Data should be provided in different forms for different audiences ;
►Additional information about pollutants including health impact is needed;
►Analysis of PRTR data in connection with other existing data sources (economic, social, statistical) should be provided.

Good practices in PRTRs implementation

Ms Sabrina Andrade
Ministry of the Environment
Brazil

PRTR, How to ensure effective involvement of enterprises

Brazil

►PRTR data is being reported to the PRTR register but remains unpublished.
►Data will only be made available after validation and certification of the programme (expected in 2015).

Mr Uri Shilhav
Ministry of Environmental Protection, Israel

How the PRTRs data is managed

Israel

Rapid progress in the implementation of PRTR since ratification of Protocol on PRTRs (January 2013).
Recommendations based on the Israeli experience:
►Acceding to the Kiev Protocol;
►Displaying political and management commitment;
►Providing capacity building for reporting facilities, and
►Analysing and assimilating data within the data collecting organization.

Mr Dmytro Skrylnikov
Bureau of Environmental Investigation

PRTRs implementation in countries with economies in transition
Challenges for implementation of PRTRs in countries with economies in transition:
►Establishment of a regulatory framework through ratification of the Protocol;
►Amendment of existing legislation;
adoption of new legislation on PRTRs;
►Uncertainty whether to use and adapt existing data collection and reporting systems or start a new PRTR system;
►Challenges in the development of institutional structure and capacity;
►Lack of coordination and information sharing between institutions;
►Technical issues concerning data management;
►Access to and dissemination of data;
►Education and awareness raising among stakeholders.

Good practices in PRTRs implementation

Mr Íñigo De Vicente-Mingarro
PRTR-España,
Ministry of Agriculture Food,
and Environment of Spain

Estimation techniques in PRTRs

Key issues: type of sources (point/diffuse /other industrial sources), RETs selection, comparability /coherence.

Spanish experience:
Releases to air, water and lad were reported in three steps:
►Pollutant selection;
►Total emission calculation (considering normal operating, fugitive, diffuse, and accidental emissions when appropriate;
►Measurement/Calculation/Expert Judgement code selection specifying in each case the standards/ methodologies used to determine the emission value.

Off-site transfer of wastes was reported in four steps:
►Identification of waste type using the European List of Wastes;
►Total amount transferred; ►Measurement/Calculation/Expert Judgement code selection;
►Waste treatment operation and whether the transport was transboundary or not.

Challenges exist with respect to estimate releases from diffuse sources): activity data, water quality, national statistics, land uses.

Ms Mara Silina
European Environmental
Bureau/European ECO Forum

Role of NGOs and needs of PRTR data users

Key messages
NGOs play an important role in the implementation of the Kiev Protocol and the improvement of established PRTRs.

Needs:
►Lower thresholds of pollutant emissions;
►Extension of list of pollutants (to include e.g. the presence of any Substance of Very High Concern (SVHC));
►independent monitoring of the reporting (due to the lack of trust of official data by the public);
►need to compare and link PRTR data with statistics from other areas (e.g. health);
►harmonization of different PRTR systems at the global level in order to present data in a more comparable way.

Harmonised PRTRs

Ms Eva Goossens
European Environment Agency

E-PRTR
E-PRTR is an example of harmonized PRTR system.
Achievements: Data quality, data on releases to air are mostly complete and consistent when compared to other inventories.
Challenge: Inventory of releases to soil.

Improving the implementation of E-PRTR through:
►Enhancing quality of data and user confidence;
►Improving data use and exchange, and
►Examining the legal basis of the E-PRTR and links with other legislation.
A clear potential for wider use by multiple stakeholders has been identified.

Ms Marcia Cecilia Suazo Hernandez
Ministry of the Environment
Honduras

Central America and Dominican Republic PRTR

Efforts to homologate PRTR data among Central American countries Principal areas for improvement are:
►Standardization of data;
►Technical and scientific training;
►Building of long-term capacities to ensure sustainability of the national PRTRs.

Mr Stephen De Vito
Environmental Protection Agency, United States

PRTRs in North America

US Toxic Release Inventory has been updated by:
►rulemaking activities (e.g. electronic reporting);
►collaboration with universities, students and professors (“university challenge”);
►access to pollution prevention information.
CEC achievements:
►Website provides harmonized PRTR data from Canada, Mexico and the United States;
►Harmonized data allowed the visualisation of historical trends of emissions to air from electric utilities for all of North America.

Action Plan to Enhance the Comparability of PRTRs in North America:
►Laid out the strategy for improving the information available for decision-making in North America.

International Forums dealing with PRTRs

Mr Nicholas Obe
Vice-Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the ECE Protocol on PRTRs

Protocol on PRTRs:
First legally binding tool for strengthening public access to environmental data.

Strength of a legally binding instrument lay in its multilateral institutional framework which:
►facilitates exchange of experience and good practices;
►facilitates preparation of guidance material and recommendations;
►facilitates development of additional legally binding instruments ;
►facilitates capacity building (through subregional workshops matching country needs with available expertise and through country-specific projects implemented by partner organisations);
►Sends a strong signal of a commitment to effective governance and democracy

Mr Noriyuki Suzuki
Chair of the Task Force on PRTRs under OECD

OECD activities on PRTRs

Starting from a few members, OECD members have introduced PRTRs after the 1996 Council recommendation.
Initial focus of OECD activities was establishing PRTRs in member countries.

OECD activities have shifted into:
►Data Quality;
►Release Estimation Techniques;
►Harmonisation of PRTR systems;
►Practical use of PRTR data;
►Use of PRTRs to foster sustainable development

Mr Hirofumi Aizawa
Environment Directorate, OECD

OECD activities on PRTRs
PRTR data was considered for various uses such as revising OECD Environmental Core Indicators.

OECD and UNITAR are developing a PRTR modul for the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals Toolbox for Decision-making in Chemicals Management.

OECD works closely with ECE, UNEP, UNITAR on PRTRs.

Mr Jorge Ocaña
UNEP - DTIE
Chemicals Branch/GEF Operations

PRTRs and GEF

UNEP's GEF-funded PRTR project 2009-2012 helped:
►Implement a PRTR in Chile;
►Develop National PRTR Executive Proposals (PRTR design) in Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Peru, Thailand and Ukraine.

New GEF-funded PRTR project to implement PRTRs by 2018 in Belarus, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Peru and Republic of Moldova.

Summary of outcomes by the two Chairs of the Joint Round Table

Mr Michel Amand (ECE Protocol on PRTRs) and Mr Noriyuki Suzuki (OECD Task Force on PRTRs)

- PRTRs should be a tool to effectively communicate environmental information to the public
- PRTRs could be used to report on other relevant international commitments
- The “single window” approach to environmental reporting through PRTR systems had proven to be the most effective. Countries should strive to establish it.
- Efforts should be made to provide capacity-building and raise awareness among various authorities, the public and industry
- PRTR data could be used to detect achievements in green chemistry and green engineering, thereby measuring progress in sustainability
- International forums dealing with PRTRs should continue strengthening synergies and work in close partnership on further implementation around the globe.
- Multiple experiences from a variety of countries and subregions further show that accession to the PRTR Protocol and implementing PRTR systems are both feasible.

Links:

Global Round table official page: http://www.unece.org/prtr_grt2013.html

OECD official page on PRTRs: http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/pollutant-release-transfer-register/

Public Participation home page: http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/pollutant-release-transfer-register/