Setting the scene – Capacity-building activities under the Protocol on PRTRs

7th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs / 28 November, 2019
Improving implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs with technical assistance...

1. Subregional workshops
   - for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia; Minsk 2011
   - for South-Eastern Europe and Israel; Sarajevo 2013
   - for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia; Minsk 2016

2. Matching country needs with available expertise, bilateral sessions in WGPs

3. Global Round Tables on PRTRs
   - Jointly with OECD and in cooperation with UNITAR and UNEP; Geneva 2013, Madrid 2015, Geneva 2018

4. Technical assistance via electronic tools
   - to facilitate the collection, dissemination and exchange of information related to PRTR
     - PRTR.net; PRTR:Learn (with OECD and UNITAR)

5. Technical assistance via guidance materials

6. Thematic surveys

7. Cooperation on country-specific projects implemented by partner organizations
• Streamlining capacity-building activities and developing synergies with relevant international organizations;

Examples:
- Servicing meetings of the International PRTR Coordinating Group
- Close cooperation with UNITAR, UNEP, OECD, EEA
- Liaising with the Human Rights Council on implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes
- Activities and workshops jointly with other MEAs (e.g. CLRTAP)

• Reporting and compliance mechanism
  - To monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Protocol and to facilitate reporting, review of compliance and exchange of experience;
  - Second reporting cycle completed in 2017;
  - Compliance Committee together with the Working Group of the Parties and the Bureau developing material on lessons learned and identifying systemic issues for further improvement of implementing PRTRs.
Protocol on PRTRs resources

- **UNECE PRTR website**
  
  https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.html
  
  contains relevant data, links, list of meetings, and publications

- E.g. Publications
  - Simplified Guide to the Protocol on PRTRs (2011)
  - Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs (2008);
  - Guidance on reporting on the Protocol’s implementation (2017)
  - Synthesis report on the implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs (2014, 2017)
  - Recommendations to address systemic challenges to the implementation of the Protocol (2017);
  - Promotion of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (2014)
Workshops

Cover the various aspects of PRTR implementation, e.g.:

- The institutional and regulatory framework for data collection, dissemination and access to information
- PRTR data quality and management
- Access to data and its dissemination, including capacity building for data usage and public awareness
- Scope of the Protocol: Activities, substances, releases
- The Protocol in the context of other international processes
Issues identified in the past remain relevant

E.g. various key problems and needs identified at the 2013 capacity-building workshop in Sarajevo:

• A lack of trained governmental officials;
• A lack of awareness on PRTRs;
• A lack of clarity in existing legislation on PRTRs;
• A lack of clear and user-friendly guidelines for the use of the industry;
• Limited human resources and uneven distribution of relevant expertise;
• Legal issues in some countries in relation to data confidentiality, data dissemination or data acquisition;
• Confusion caused by the existence of various parallel regulatory and reporting regimes;
• A lack of competent and efficient inspection mechanisms that could monitor compliance with the provisions of the Protocol;
• Administrative barriers within the competent authorities hindering the process of data collection and dissemination.
Issues identified in the past remain relevant

Needs identified at the 2013 capacity-building workshop in Sarajevo:

• Serbia approached Germany and Norway to request assistance in establishing an integrated system for data collection that would allow for the provision of data by the industry only once;

Example 2016 at capacity-building workshop in Minsk:

• In Serbia each facility needed to report only once to fulfil its different reporting obligations and therefore with no duplication of reporting...

... Furthermore, all emissions needed to be reported, with no limitations based on reporting thresholds. In addition, owners or operators were asked to report on, e.g., used raw materials, fuels and production output. The Serbian system exceeded the requirements under the Protocol in that regard with benefits for data quality assurance based on the additional data available to the authorities. While the data was reported to the authorities it was not necessarily made available to the public. The strong information technology support further allowed the Serbian register to run with a smaller number of regular staff to assure, e.g., the quality of the data. Responding to a question, the Serbian representative further noted that the reporting by small facilities was sometimes a challenge, but mainly when operators or owners changed and the new staff was not yet familiar with the reporting process. These issues could successfully be addressed in direct consultations with the operators or owners.
Advantages of an international legally binding instrument – and implementation based on national needs

• Beneficial for national and international cooperation
  → Strong signal to other entities
• Beneficial for good governance, environmental security and socio-economic development
  → Real progress through commitment
• Provides solid structure through which partner organizations (international organizations, IFIs, bilateral donors) can efficiently channel their support
  → Security and trust for new partnerships
Points to consider for dynamic development of PRTRs

Link national needs and international instrument

• National priority areas:
  - Technology transfer: PRTRs help to share methods of pollution prevention at national and international level.
  - Shift to renewable energy: Integrating resource consumption in your reporting system including e.g. energy consumption can significantly support sound decision making.
  - List of substances that takes into account the interests from different parts of the government, the public and industry: PM10/PM2.5, SO2, Lead, Mercury, Green House Gas emissions.

• Ratification of the legally binging Protocol on PRTRs helps to:
  - Benefit from its solid multilateral cooperation framework;
  - Bring global knowledge and expertise to the country in a systemic way; and
  - Sends a strong signal to other countries and entities of the commitment to promote effective public access to PRTR data.
Points to consider for dynamic development of PRTRs

Step by step implementation

• To keep in mind that it is a long process to develop a functional system and it is important not to keep the system static but continuously evolving in order to maintain its relevance and interest among users.

• Rome was not build in a day: Building PRTRs is a step by step process. E.g. First facilities report on paper, then in word docs, then in excel tables, and then in an online reporting directly in the data base…

• Promote the register to the public and to make use of its full potential. It is also important to put the information into a context in order to make data useful.

• Need to understand usefulness for users and effort involved for reporting entities.

• Authorities have data on other substances/activities/parameters which they could more easily make available by adding them to PRTRs?

• Industry needs to report on substances which are not part of PRTR in any case? This information could be also made available without meaning additional effort for the industry.
Thank you for your attention!

https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.html
https://www.prtr.net/