

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs)

Working Group of the Parties
First meeting
Geneva, 28-29 November 2011

DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES¹
as adopted by the Working Group at its first meeting

Item 1: Training on a cost model to support implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs

The Working Group attended a training session on a cost model to support implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2011/3) and agreed that it was a useful tool that should be applied at national level. The Working Group also agreed that progress in relation to the cost model use be monitored and addressed at the next meeting of the Working Group and that the PRTR cost model be included in the agenda at future sub regional PRTR workshops, as appropriate.

The Working Group requested the secretariat:

- i) to conduct an email survey of National Focal Points (NFPs) to ascertain who pays for the cost of pollutant monitoring in the respective countries;
- ii) to send an email to NFPs to confirm where the cost model documents are available online, and to describe the two formats of the cost model that are available i.e. Excel format and SQL Server database format;
- iii) to explore opportunities for translation of relevant cost model files into the Russian.

Item 2: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2011/1.

Item 3: Status of ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the report by the secretariat on the status of ratification of the PRTR Protocol and agreed to encourage Signatories and other interested States to proceed with accession to the Protocol as soon as possible;
- ii) took note of the report by Serbia, which ratified the Protocol on 23 November 2011;

¹ This paper was not formally edited. The decisions and outcomes contained in the paper will be incorporated in the report of the meeting.

iii) took note of progressing developments toward ratification of the Protocol described by delegates in Ukraine (which aims to complete ratification by the end of 2012), Tajikistan, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova (which aims to complete ratification by the end of 2015).

Item 4: Designation of National Focal Points

The Working Group took note of the report prepared by the secretariat on the status of designation of National Focal Points (PRTR/WG.1/2011/Inf.2) and in accordance with the decision of the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs (Report of the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2, para.32), called upon those Governments, which have not designated a focal point to date, to proceed with designation as soon as possible.

Item 5: Promotion and capacity-building

a) Promotion and capacity-building: Coordination mechanisms

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the Report on the sixth Aarhus Convention capacity-building coordination meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG-13/Inf.8) and of the report on the sixth meeting of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Coordinating Group (PRTRCG(2011)V/2);
- ii) called upon international organisations to cooperate closely on the implementation of the projects and programmes related to PRTRs;
- iii) called upon governments to strengthen cooperation between experts dealing with the Aarhus Convention and those dealing with PRTRs to ensure coordination at national level;
- iv) called upon countries to keep international organizations informed of their bilateral PRTR-related cooperation with developing countries and with countries with economies in transition, as to ensure synergies;
- v) agreed to consider the possibility to hold a dedicated meeting on capacity building back-to-back with meetings of the Working Group, when needed;
- vi) took note of the information that the United Kingdom, Czech Republic and UNECE will develop a concept for the “cross walk project” (a scoping study of the pollutant-specific and waste-specific approaches to reporting), with a view to developing a more comprehensive project proposal and its eventual submission for funding;
- vii) agreed on the holding of a back-to-back meeting with the OECD PRTR Task Force and organising under the auspices of OECD and UNECE a joint global-wide round table on PRTRs to take place in 2013.

b) Promotion and capacity-building: Side events

The Working Group took note of the reports on the side event at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, Kazakhstan, 21–23 September 2011) and on the side event organised during the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 29 June–1 July 2011) and mandated the secretariat and the Bureau to follow up on a possible side event at the Rio+20 Conference, in cooperation with the Bureau of the Aarhus Convention.

c) Promotion and capacity-building: Subregional workshops

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the report on the Workshop on Electronic Information Tools to Support the Implementation of the Aarhus Convention in South-Eastern Europe (ECE/MP.PP/2011/4);
- ii) took note of the brief by the secretariat on and thanked Belarus for hosting the subregional workshop held in Minsk on 3-4 November 2011 and requested the secretariat to prepare a report on the workshop for the next meeting of the Working Group;
- iii) strongly encouraged countries and organisations to use the results of the workshops for their relevant activities;
- iv) took note of the proposals by delegations regarding possible future subregional workshops and mandated the secretariat and the Bureau to follow up on this.

d) Promotion and capacity-building: Communication strategy, electronic tools and publications

The Working Group:

- i) welcomed the Communication Strategy (Report of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Addendum ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.2)), and committed to implement it;
- ii) welcomed the publications on ‘Your Right to a Healthy Community. A simplified guide to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers’ and on ‘Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers’ and committed to translate them to national languages as soon as possible;
- iii) took note of the report on recent developments regarding the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy and the PRTR.net Global Portal and thanked GRID Arendal for cooperation on this activity;

- iv) reconfirmed its commitment to use the capacity building matrix as a tool to exchange information on the capacity-building activities;
- v) took note of the presentation by UNITAR on PRTR Learn and requested the secretariat and UNITAR to work closely as to ensure the effective use of PRTR.net and PRTR Learn

e) Promotion and capacity-building: Other relevant activities

The Working Group

- i) took note of the report on capacity-building activities (ECE/MP.PP/2011/8), and of the report on the implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2011/9), which were submitted to the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention at its fourth session and also took note of reports by individual delegations. It expressed its appreciation to Spain for its tremendous work in promoting the Protocol to countries in Latin America;
- ii) welcomed the interest in PRTRs in Latin America reported by UNITAR and mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to follow up on the promotion of the Protocol to Latin America;
- iii) took note of the proposal by Belarus on establishing a possible resource centre to support ratification and implementation of the Protocol in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and requested Belarus in consultation with these countries and interested partners to prepare a concept note in relation to this activity for consideration by the Bureau and by the Working Group at its next meeting;
- iv) took note of the information provided by OECD regarding specific resource documents available on PRTR.net;
- v) requested that the secretariat facilitate bilateral missions between countries.

Item 6: Technical Assistance Mechanism

The Working Group took note of the report submitted by the secretariat on a technical assistance mechanism (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2011/4) and agreed that the establishment of a separate capacity building fund or mechanism is not required.

The Working Group mandated the secretariat to prepare for its next meeting a note describing different modalities on possible technical assistance, including development of joint projects, respecting the following principles:

- i) further synergies between organisations, in particular UNECE, UNEP, UNITAR, GEF and OECD should be further strengthened and pursued in a more structured way;

- ii) existing bodies under the Protocol and capacity building coordinating mechanisms have proved they are functioning well and should be relied upon;
- iii) countries are invited to provide 'in kind contributions' and bilateral cooperation and access to free PRTR software should be promoted;
- iv) synergies with other UNECE conventions should be explored.

Item 7: Technical assessment of the Protocol's provisions

The Working Group agreed that no amendments to the provisions of the Protocol are needed at this time and that the experience needs to be gathered before such a review should take place.

Item 8: Compliance Committee and reporting mechanism

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the report of the first meeting of the Compliance Committee (ECE/MP.PRTR/C.1/2011/2);
- ii) took note of the report by the secretariat and the decision of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention regarding translation of national implementation reports (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1) and requested the secretariat to further examine and monitor the issue of translation of National Implementation Reports (by virtue of Decision IV/4 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1)) and to keep the Working Group and the Bureau informed on the related developments;
- iii) mandated the secretariat to develop an online reporting tool for the Protocol and the Bureau to oversee this task.

Item 9: Implementation of the Convention's and the Protocol's work programmes during 2010–2011

The Working Group took note of the report on the implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2011/9) and of the informal note submitted by the secretariat on activities not included in the aforementioned report (PRTR/WG.1/2011/Inf.3) and requested the secretariat to report on progress in implementing the work programme at its next meeting.

Item 10: Financial matters

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the report on the implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2011/9);
- ii) took note with concern of the financial situation described in the aforementioned report and in the informal note prepared by the secretariat (PRTR/WG.1/2011/Inf.4) and thanked those governments and organisations, which contributed to the implementation of the work programme;
- iii) agreed to ensure funding as far as possible to support at least the core activities in 2012 to the same level as was provided in 2011.

Item 11: Calendar of meetings

The Working Group agreed to hold its next meeting in the period 19-21 November 2012.

Item 12: Other business

The Chair informed the Working Group about a project to support ratification and implementation of the UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in Central Asia, and outcomes of the informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-chairs of the UNECE MEAs, held on 22nd November 2011.

The Working Group took note of the fact that no Party indicated its interest to host the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the PRTR Protocol and decided to consider this issue at its next meeting.

Item 13: Adoption of decisions and outcomes of the meeting

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the meeting (as contained in this document) and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate these adopted outcomes and decisions.
