

Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

Enhance public access to information and contribute to the prevention and reduction of pollution of the environment.

Kristof Douçot
29 August 2024



UNECE

Content

- **Background** – Principle 10 of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development
- **Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers – A brief summary**
- **Global map on PRTRs**
- **PRTR related global processes**
- **Protocol on PRTRs – minimum requirements for PRTRs**
- **Use of PRTRs**
- **Concluding remarks**

Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers



- PRTRs are **online inventories of pollution** from industrial sites and other sources.
- Over the past few decades, PRTRs have emerged as an important **digital tool in the field of chemicals management**.
- By bringing information on polluting emissions into the public domain, PRTRs raise awareness about major sources of threat to health and the environment and **enable the public to play a more effective role in participating in the decision-making processes** related to such threats.
- The resulting increase in **transparency** can create pressure on companies to reduce the pollution burden arising from their activities.
- Furthermore, through **integrating PRTRs with other environmental and socio-economic databases**, decision-makers can use them for different purposes, such as spatial planning, risk assessment, assessment of resources consumption and transition to a circular economy.

Linkages

- Due to the **cross-cutting nature of PRTRs**, they help to achieve a number of **SDGs**, including SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure and SDG 12 on sustainable production and consumption.
- PRTRs also support other related process, such as the **Global Framework on Chemicals** and **existing and future MEAs** with pollution related reporting obligations and data integration and recent **UNEA resolutions**.

Challenges / Opportunities

- Common challenges regarding **enhancing globally the digital access to information on pollutant releases**. Challenges include the interoperability between databases, data equivalence, duplication of work/reporting for different government entities.
- The **regular and structured exchange between Countries, NGOs and other organizations** makes it significantly easier for stakeholders to overcome hurdles and understanding the full potential of a digital transformation with regard to data on pollution and the respective digital platforms.
- The Protocol on PRTRs to the Aarhus Convention, serviced by UNECE, is the only example of **applying detailed legally binding standards on how data on pollutants must be made available to the public**. The Protocol is open for accession by any UN Member State. A number of policy instruments, such as the OECD council act on PRTR, also support promotion of PRTRs.

Origins

Agenda 21/Rio Principles

- 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, gave global recognition to the importance of public access to information on environmental pollution, including emissions inventories
- Agenda 21, the global plan of action adopted at the Rio Conference, recommends in chapter 19 that Governments should collect sufficient data about potentially hazardous substances and, with the cooperation of industry and the public, implement and improve databases on toxic chemicals, including inventories of emissions.

Aarhus Convention and Escazu Agreement implement Principle 10:

“Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided. “

Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters: Legal Framework

- **Adoption:** 25 June 1998, Aarhus, Denmark
- **Entry into force:** 30 October 2001
- **Parties:** 47 Parties in total: including from EU, North, Eastern, South Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia subregions (45 States) + EU + Guinea Bissau
- **Accession:** Open for accession by any UN Member State
- **Objective:** Contribute to the protection of the rights of every person of present and future generation to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well being (supports UNGA Res. 76/300 of 28.7.2022)
- **Three pillars:** Access to information, Public participation in decision-making, Access to justice
- **Amendment:** on genetically modified organisms (decision II/1; not yet into force)
- **Protocol on PRTRs:** independent instrument, but at the same time, it strengthens the first pillar of the Aarhus Convention

Aarhus Convention toolbox:

[Update Recommendations on Electronic Information Tools](#)

[Maastricht Recommendations](#)

Other Guidelines and Recommendations
([Implementation Guide](#), [Almaty](#), [EIT](#))

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

[Aarhus Good
Practice Database](#)

Aarhus Convention
[publications](#)

Relevant findings of
Aarhus Convention
[Compliance Committee](#)

[Synthesis and national
implementation reports](#)

[Aarhus Clearinghouse](#)
National nodes

[Analytical studies and
jurisprudence database](#)

Resources by the [Special
Rapporteur on
Environmental Defenders](#)



Making information on pollution releases and waste transfers public, has led to companies reducing their pollution and identifying smarter production methods

Reporting tool for industry to provide data on their emissions (monitoring pollutant releases to water, air and land over time)

Database that facilitates data management

Data visualization tool that sets emissions in spatial and other context (e.g. health, infrastructure, demographic and economic data) and makes data accessible and more useful

Tool for fact-based decision making at multiple levels

Link with other MEAs and initiatives

- PRTRs are used for multiple reporting obligations and across sectors making best use of synergies
- PRTRs are used for the sound management of chemicals
- Strong linkage with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and initiatives e.g.:
 - the Stockholm Convention and its reporting mechanism
 - Minamata Convention and UNFCCC Climate Change related reporting

Protocol on PRTRs

Scope of the Protocol



- 65 activities (capacity/employee thresholds)
- 86 substances/substance categories, such as greenhouse gases, acid rain pollutants, ozone-depleting substances, heavy metals, substances covered by POP's Convention and certain carcinogens such as dioxins
- Releases to 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).

Advantages of a legally binding instrument – and implementation based on national needs



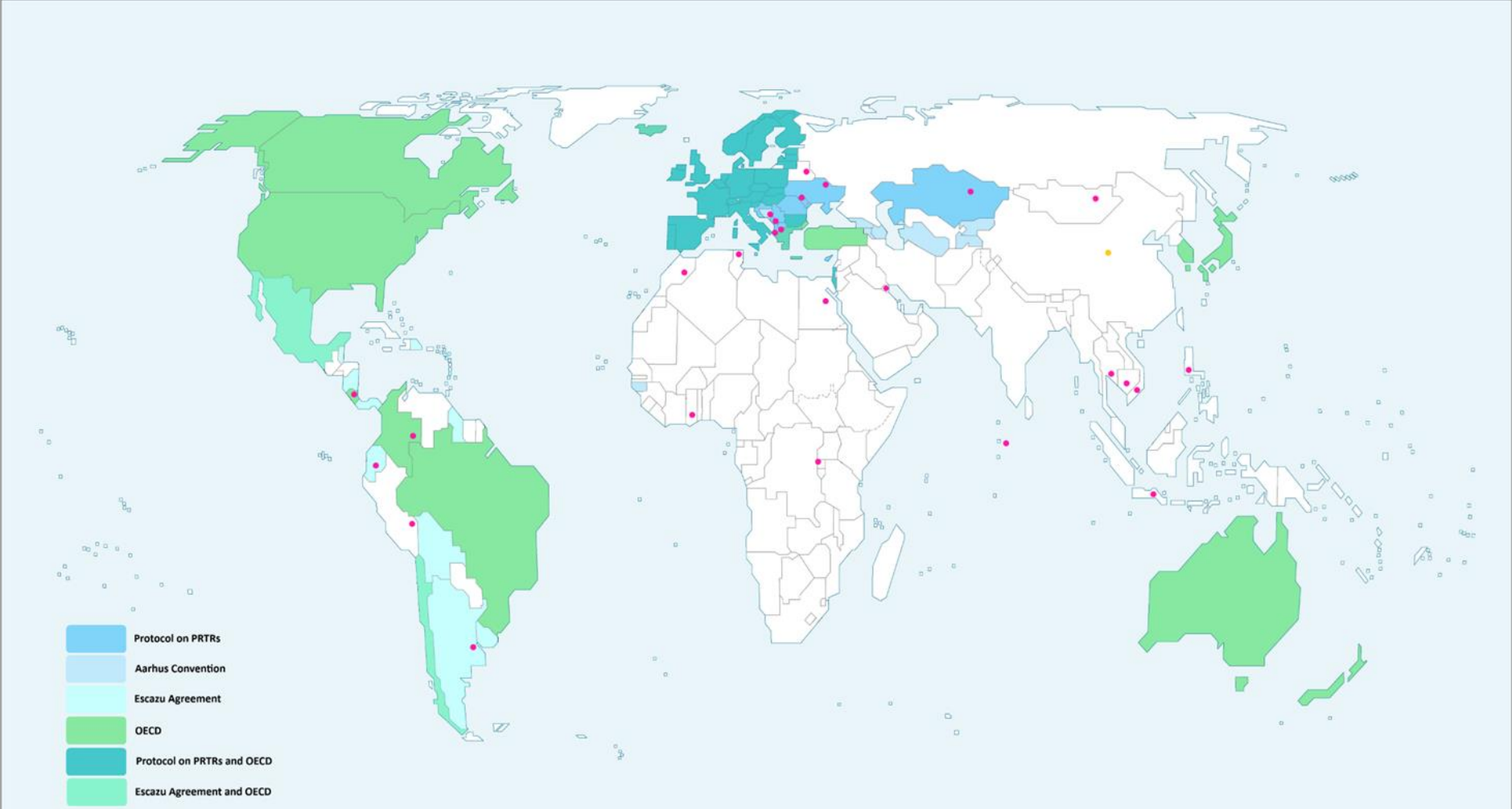
- Beneficial for national and international cooperation
 - Strong signal to other entities
- Beneficial for good governance, environmental security and socio-economic development
 - Real progress through commitment
- Provides solid structure through which partner organizations (international organizations,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

Legal and moral commitment to PRTRs globally



STYLIZED MAP OF THE WORLD

UNITED NATIONS
Geospatial



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Major gaps in achieving the sound management of chemicals and waste - three UNEP reports that highlight PRTRs as a solution

- Measuring Progress Towards achieving the environmental dimension of the **SDGs**: MeaProg2019.pdf (see page 10 with a box on PRTRs in the recommendations section)
- Inventory and analysis report: existing indicators on **chemicals and waste management** SAICM/IP.4/INF/39: [SAICM IP.4 INF 39.pdf](#) (pages 14 and 15)
- Global Chemicals Outlook II: From Legacies to Innovative Solutions: [Global Chemicals Outlook II: From Legacies to Innovative Solutions | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)



**GLOBAL
CHEMICALS
OUTLOOK II**
FROM LEGACIES TO
INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS
ANALYSIS REPORT (2019)

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Key developments – UNEA 5 resolutions

- Resolution 7: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste
- Resolution 8: Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution
- Resolution 11: Enhancing Circular Economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production
- Resolution 12: Environmental aspects of minerals and metals management
- Resolution 14: End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument



*“Monitoring and reporting are fragmented at the global, regional and national levels, and are inadequate to track progress towards global goals and targets, requiring the development of globally agreed definitions to assist in harmonising these processes. **The Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) provides an important model as it requires reporting on pollutant releases and transfers by operators and owners on the production facilities of plastics and some associated chemicals, as well as reporting on recovery and final disposal operations.**”*

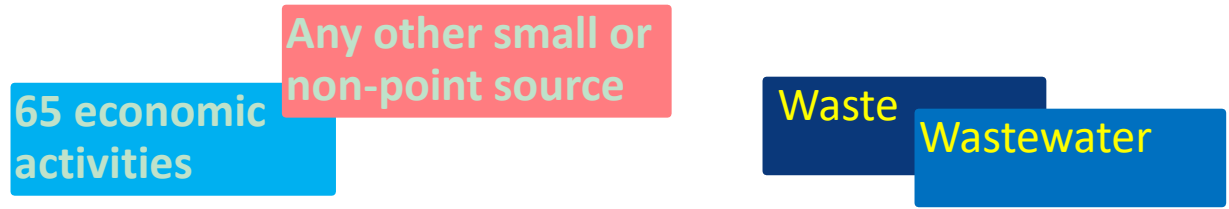
Key developments – UNEA 6 resolutions

UNEA 6: Held 26 February – 1 March 2024 in Nairobi

- **UNEP/EA.6/L.12 on sound management of chemicals and waste;**
- UNEP/EA.6/L.8 on environmental aspects of minerals and metals management;
- UNEP/EA.6/L.11 - Promoting sustainable lifestyles;
- UNEP/EA.6/L.15 - Environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflict; and
- **Three resolutions that aim at promoting synergies, cooperation and collaboration in achieving multilateral cooperation: UNEP/EA.6/L.6, UNEP/EA.6/L.7 and UNEP/EA.6/L.9.**

Link with other MEAs and initiatives

- Pollution Information Portals and the right to know: Strengthening access to information on releases of hazardous substances – submission from March 2024 to the Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights
- PRTRs are used for multiple reporting obligations and across sectors making best use of synergies
- PRTRs are used for the sound management of chemicals
- Strong linkage with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and initiatives e.g.:
 - the Stockholm Convention and its reporting mechanism
 - Minamata Convention and UNFCCC Climate Change related reporting



86 substances
GHGs
POPs, Phenols
Heavy metals
Pesticides, TOC,
PM10, etc.

Environmental media

- Air
- Water
- Land

INTEGRATION
CONTEXT



PRTR tool

Not limited to a specific pollutant or media

Broad scope addressing variety of pollution related issues

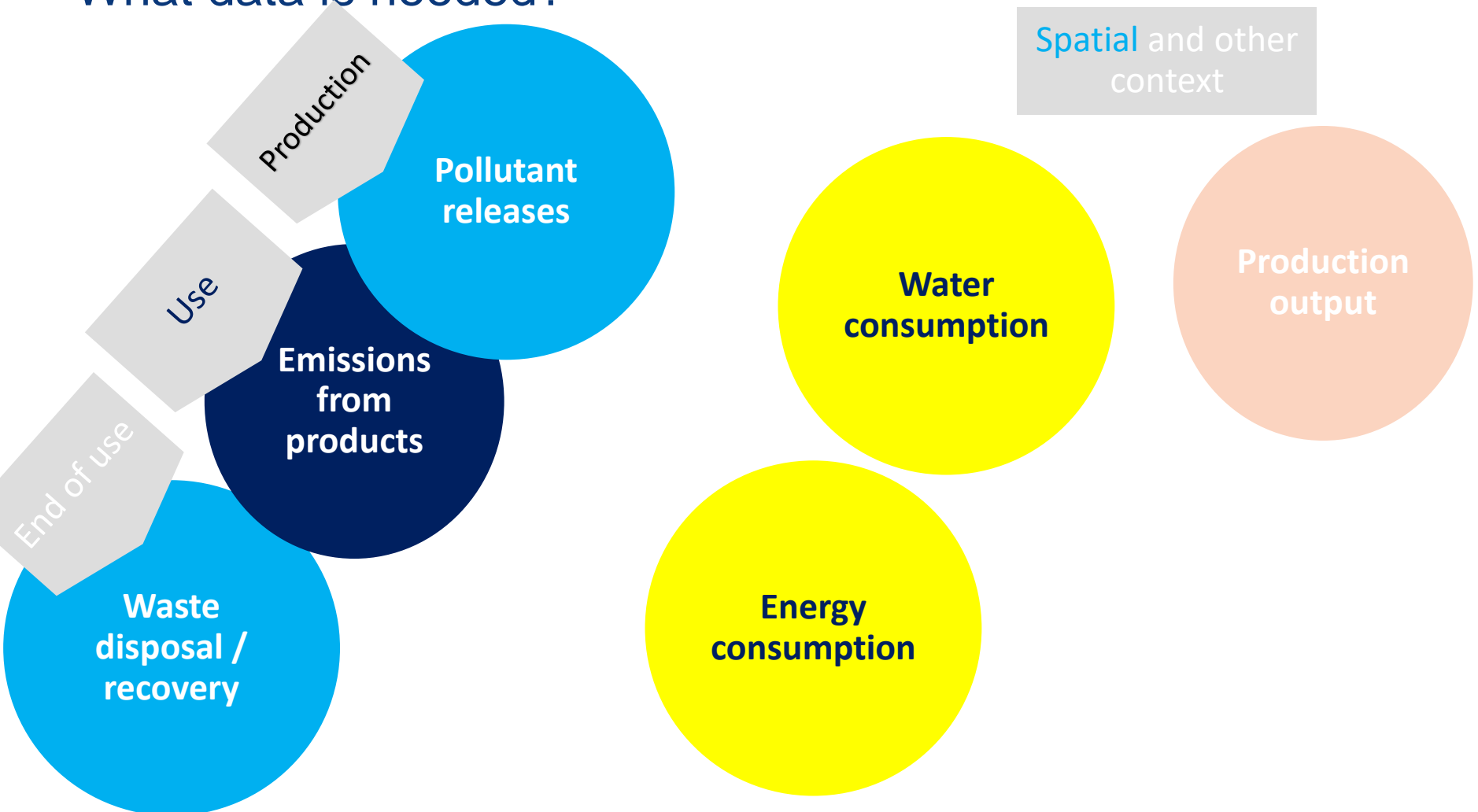
Public participation

Access Information

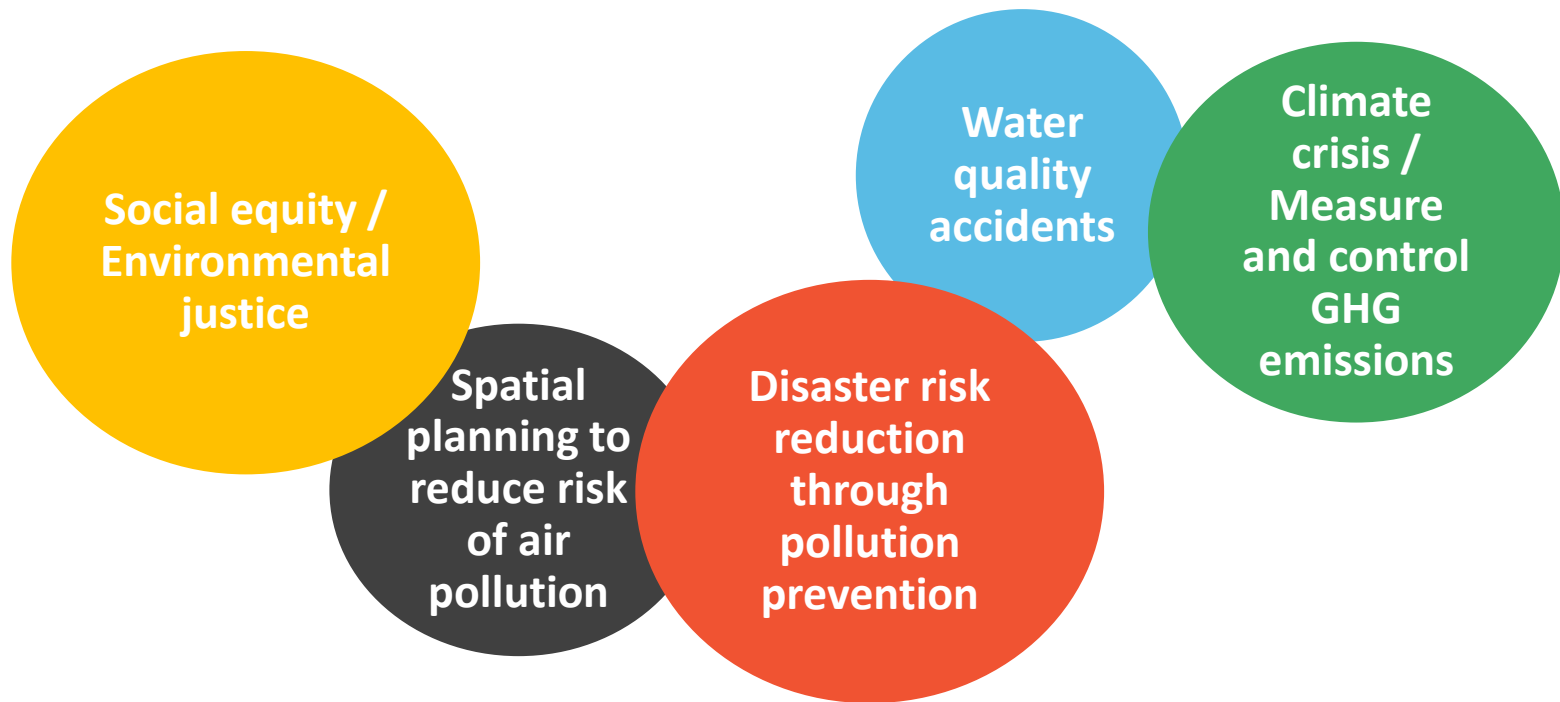
INTEGRATION
CONTEXT

PRTR use cases: Green economy and circularity

What data is needed?



Examples for uses of PRTR data



Other examples for uses of PRTR data

EEA publications and science papers

Link pollutant releases with environmental and health costs

Use PRTR releases to mark policy goals : reduce releases by 30%

Survey 2020
ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2020/4

Improve monitoring of input and output parameters for industrial activities

Serbia

Chile Put into practice polluters pay principle

Climate crisis / Measure and control GHG emissions

European CO2 emission trading (EU ETS)

USA

Share and scale pollution prevention techniques

Japan

Tools for local governments

Israel

Improved decision-making processes based on environmental and human health-related information

Prepare reports on specific issues

Facilitate policy analysis and policy adaptation

All countries

Key areas for PRTR development and use



- The following table was prepared under the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs. provides an overview of key areas for development of the Protocol, based on the use of PRTRs, and their relevance to different articles of the Protocol.
- It includes the required actions and potential gains.
- Each action will eventually require efforts in order to ensure its implementation.
- Considering that levels of development of PRTRs in different countries vary significantly, such actions will depend on the circumstances of each country (for example: economic circumstances; technical potential; federal/national frameworks; available expertise).

Report on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers - Annex Key areas for development based on use of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

<i>Key areas for development based on use of PRTR</i>	<i>Action required</i>	<i>Gain</i>	<i>Relevant article</i>
A. Sustainable development- and circular economy-related reporting.	Integrated reporting on resource consumption and improved reporting on disposal and recovery operations (annex III) under article 7 (reporting requirements) and, for example, article 5 (design and structure). The establishment of an easy linkage/traceability between products and their production facility. For such a link to be effective, it would be necessary to promote the Protocol's ratification in countries with a significant part in global trade in products and waste.	Reviewing and analysing policy implementation and prioritizing actions.	Preamble, articles 5–7 and annexes I–III.
B. Reporting to other multilateral environmental agreements.	Implementation of a modular build for PRTR systems to allow for the accommodation of different minimum requirements to different data sets. Inclusion of all relevant activities and substances.	Increasing quality and cost-effectiveness in the implementation of different multilateral environmental agreements, including on climate change.	Article 7 and annexes I–III.
C. Implementing the “polluter pays” principle.	National cooperation between different authorities, in particular finance-related authorities. Additional efforts regarding data accuracy.	Possible synergies for countries that choose to implement the “polluter pays” principle on the basis of PRTR reporting and widened usefulness of PRTRs outside the environmental sector.	Preamble.
D. Promoting “actions to reduce pollution” and sharing pollution prevention methods.	Adding information on production output to the reporting requirements, to allow for better analysis of the effectiveness of measures to reduce pollution releases and waste production and improve sustainability of production processes, and asking to share pollution prevention methods as part of the reporting.	Facilitating the analysis and up-scaling of applied good practices in pollution prevention.	Articles 4–7.
E. Using PRTR infrastructure to provide a modular platform for storage of different data sets, including from measuring campaigns and projects that do not include long-term maintenance of the data collected.	Analysing existing national systems and developing a road map for a joint modular platform to streamline reporting and dataflows. There is also a need to call for joint efforts to promote the establishment of PRTRs in countries and regions that currently do not have such systems.	Streamlining reporting and dataflows inside Governments as well as for other reporting and non-reporting users.	Article 7.
F. Integration with data and information from other sectors, such as health, economy and infrastructure.	There are a variety of possibilities for integration of data and information. In particular, ways to link different web pages versus combining databases in a single platform need to be considered.	Improving the quality of decision-making of data users through a broadened knowledge base.	Article 3.
G. Improving data on waste management.	Revising current provisions on reporting of wastes and hazardous wastes, including the disposal and recovery operations in annex III, with a view to improving Parties’ knowledge about waste- and recycling-related issues and to harmonizing those provisions with relevant obligations under other international agreements (namely, the Basel Convention).	Improving waste management and improving quality and cost-efficiency in reporting on other international waste-related obligations.	Article 7 and annex III.

A.	Sustainable development- and circular economy-related reporting.	<p>Integrated reporting on resource consumption and improved reporting on disposal and recovery operations (annex III) under article 7 (reporting requirements) and, for example, article 5 (design and structure). The establishment of an easy linkage/traceability between products and their production facility. For such a link to be effective, it would be necessary to promote the Protocol's ratification in countries with a significant part in global trade in products and waste.</p>	Reviewing and analysing policy implementation and prioritizing actions.	Preamble, articles 5–7 and annexes I–III.
----	--	---	---	---

B. Reporting to other multilateral environmental agreements.	Implementation of a modular build for PRTR systems to allow for the accommodation of different minimum requirements to different data sets. Inclusion of all relevant activities and substances.	Increasing quality and cost-effectiveness in the implementation of different multilateral environmental agreements, including on climate change.	Article 7 and annexes I–III.
--	---	--	------------------------------

C. Implementing the “polluter pays” principle.	National cooperation between different authorities, in particular finance-related authorities.	Possible synergies for countries that choose to implement the “polluter pays” principle on the basis of PRTR reporting and widened usefulness of PRTRs outside the environmental sector.	Preamble.
	Additional efforts regarding data accuracy.		

D.	Promoting “actions to reduce pollution” and sharing pollution prevention methods.	Adding information on production output to the reporting requirements, to allow for better analysis of the effectiveness of measures to reduce pollution releases and waste production and improve sustainability of production processes, and asking to share pollution prevention methods as part of the reporting.	Facilitating the analysis and up-scaling of applied good practices in pollution prevention.	Articles 4–7.
----	---	---	---	---------------

E. Using PRTR infrastructure to provide a modular platform for storage of different data sets, including from measuring campaigns and projects that do not include long-term maintenance of the data collected.	Analysing existing national systems and developing a road map for a joint modular platform to streamline reporting and dataflows. There is also a need to call for joint efforts to promote the establishment of PRTRs in countries and regions that currently do not have such systems.	Streamlining reporting and dataflows inside Governments as well as for other reporting and non-reporting users.	Article 7.
---	--	---	------------

F.	Integration with data and information from other sectors, such as health, economy and infrastructure.	There are a variety of possibilities for integration of data and information. In particular, ways to link different web pages versus combining databases in a single platform need to be considered.	Improving the quality of decision-making of data users through a broadened knowledge base.	Article 3.
----	---	--	--	------------

G. Improving data on waste management.	Revising current provisions on reporting of wastes and hazardous wastes, including the disposal and recovery operations in annex III, with a view to improving Parties' knowledge about waste- and recycling-related issues and to harmonizing those provisions with relevant obligations under other international agreements (namely, the Basel Convention).	Improving waste management and improving quality and cost-efficiency in reporting on other international waste- related obligations.	Article 7 and annex III.
--	--	--	--------------------------

Item	Possible Issues	Why are they useful?
A. Integration at the national level		
A1	Align at a single window access – one-stop approach for current and data reporting to government authorities	Reduce costs for different government authorities; Facilitate reporting for companies and citizens; Facilitate cross-sector collaboration; Improve data collection conditions; Create a streamlined and more transparent source of data for users; Enable cross-sector compatible data collection obligations and the different data compatible databases compatible and factors on their respective numbers of users and uses.
A2	Provide context to the PRTR data and use PRTR as context for non-PRTR data	Improve usefulness of data for different users and uses; Create knowledge by linking contextual information data, including possible risks to human health and the environment, and the improve consistency and the public understanding and interpretation of the public data/PRTR information; Further facilitate the correct interpretation of factors; Allow use of data for benchmarking purposes.
A3	Show permits, inspection reports and/or non-compliance reports (PNCR)	Useful to help users of the website to see more of the website picture.
A4	Link PRTR usage with gov portals and related information with other	Reduce costs; Support high window access – one-stop approach.
A5	Shape the image of what “PRTR” stands for	Improve knowledge about PRTR systems and facilitate cooperation with national partners; Improve common understanding of PRTR, also in cooperation with other systems for data management and data exchange; Integrate PRTRs in combination data as an international level best practice approach.
B. Integration PRTR as tool for benchmarking sustainability, including a benchmark of 2016 Agenda and SDGs		
B1	Harmonization at the international level	Reduce costs; Make available PRTR data to track progress in achieving the sustainable development goals; Facilitate for formal decision making processes.
B2	Improve consistency of data between different systems	Improve comparability of data between different systems; Increase usefulness of the global scale, including for global benchmarking initiatives, i.e. climate change and water and air pollution; Enable cross-border data exchange and transfer; Improve data quality on a global scale.
B3	Support stable and continuing progress of PRTR systems by cross-sectoral national relations and international cooperation	Overcome limitations of individual national good practices towards PRTRs; Ensure progress improving harmonization of PRTR systems globally.
B4	Increase efforts aimed at involvement of stakeholders with similar industrial potential	Increase usability of data from contributing with similar industrial potential; Improve PRTRs' quality in a cost-effective compatible data as support for data benchmarking at a global scale.
B5	Review activities and their capacity thresholds concerning other reporting obligations	Provide a better basis for using PRTR data in other reporting; Harmonize different approaches, such as by adding activities which are in the VOC, BTEX, Hexachlorocyclohexane, heavy capacity to include HFC, perfluorinated gases and reporting etc.
B6	Identify common data set common to all national and international PRTRs and share it via where different solutions for different countries exist, as needed	Improve and standardize international cooperation; Reduce costs; Improve quality of services at different levels.
B7	Use existing PRTR standards when developing possible compatible for a formalized approach at the national level, e.g. linked with the development of the SAMM post-2020 process	Provide a harmonized and data driven approach for the development of a shared management plan.
C. Awareness and ease of access and use		
C1	Build steps to improve process user and public confidence in PRTRs	Increase awareness on PRTR related matters with stakeholders; Build a sense of responsibility with NGOs, industrial sector representatives and other stakeholders and social actors that may play a role in the use and development of PRTR.
C2	Develop better website and sharing of PRTR data	Reduce barriers for easy use of PRTR data.
C3	Allow users to report bugs directly	Facilitate the use of data for specific applications, e.g. by consultants and members.
C4	Simplify and reduce complexity of PRTRs	Increase awareness on PRTR related matters, ease of use of PRTRs, seek user feedback; Communicate more easily the value of PRTRs to users – stakeholders and decision makers; Increase the public relevance of PRTR related activities.
C5	Maintain and improve relevance of the Protocol in comparison and compliance with other regulations and initiatives including private sector and NGOs initiatives	Improve degree of awareness on PRTR in related international forums.
C6	Develop and use PRTR related activities to support the broader possible awareness of chemical risks as a pre-condition for chemical safety (see Chapter 7, paragraph 27)	Improve awareness of PRTR and provide stakeholders with comprehensive knowledge on pollutant releases in addition to current information such as risk assessment, toxicological and epidemiological data; Increase efforts to ensure that it consistently aligns with chemical substances as well as pollutants; Raise the level of concern for the quality of environmental data by the public and politicians and the need to allow for long-term support of sound chemical management.
C7	Encourage reports from other PRTR data professionally (scientists, companies, NGOs, consultants, government agencies etc.) for the sake of users of data work available through the PRTR website	The results of the professional work will be made available to general public and other stakeholders who may benefit from having such information; Promote awareness on PRTR related topics.
C8	Provide information support for consumer and facilitate the availability of products	Increase usefulness of PRTRs by helping users, e.g. between consumers and producers; Encourage and enable companies to include data on PRTRs in other contexts; Provide information on relative pollution per consumer article; Enable PRTR related data to be available to consumers in the production facilities; Enable PRTR related data to be available to consumers in the consumption sites; This will also provide a cost for companies who have their data in using international standards for their products in the future; Promote environmental change between activities managing PRTR data and organizations that use pollutants/information for certification of products.
C9	Add content relevant to risk assessment	Provide e.g. information on toxicity of substances and aggregate pollutants with (see guidance on implementation of the Protocol).
C10	Apply an appropriate budget for PRTR governance to match the financial resources for data development and maintenance	Increased awareness and use of PRTRs, necessary for the fullness of the Protocol's objectives.
D. Scope of the Protocol		
D1	Revise the list of pollutants	Increase consistency with other environmental reporting obligations; Make the PRTR easy to use in various contexts and in a timely and periodic development; Facilitate to consider the reporting process for updates and amendments; Improve the national data user compliance for other MRAs; Improve the overall picture of pollutant releases available to the public; Make PRTRs to become more dynamic and thus, more useful systems.
D2	Review thresholds, especially pollution thresholds, with an aim to lower them wherever possible	Improve the completeness of the PRTR data set, including e.g. about 90% of emergency releases; Avoid pollution related reporting of activities, which are below the values set or specific values for reporting administrative burden to industry; Improve access to PRTR datasets by researchers and other stakeholders that visit applications regarding the application of PRTR thresholds.
D3	Review the list of activities	Review existing lists/inventories among MRAs in terms of activity thresholds and codes used to identify the type of activities; Improve usefulness and up-date PRTRs to become more dynamic and thus, more useful systems.
D4	Add releases of chemicals from products, e.g. as defined minimum from products in use	Improve completeness of PRTRs and support sustainable decision-making with PRTR data.
D5	Add information about climate change aspects of different pollutants and other hazardous materials	Provide a more complete picture of activities; Make use of examples where PRTR is a platform for climate change; Increase usefulness for different stakeholders.
D6	Include releases (e.g. energy and heat) consumption and other developments (e.g. production releases) from PRTRs	Improve relevance of PRTRs for tracking progress in achieving the sustainable development goals; Enable to assess environmental performance of facilities.
D7	Present appropriate data on vehicles	Provide a more complete picture of activities.
D8	Provide information about the quality of environmental media through PRTRs, in spatial aggregation	Improve relevance of PRTRs for tracking progress in achieving the sustainable development goals; Improve usefulness of PRTRs and make use of examples by using PRTRs as platform for other datasets.
E. Data (including data reporting, management and quality)		
E1	Align at a single window access – one-stop approach for current and data reporting to government authorities	Reduce costs for different government authorities; Facilitate reporting for companies and citizens; Facilitate cross-sector collaboration; Improve data collection conditions; Create a streamlined and more transparent source of data for users; Enable cross-sector compatible data collection obligations and the different data compatible databases compatible and factors on their respective numbers of users and uses.
E2	Further develop and harmonize methods and methods to improve the PRTR data	Overcome the level of consistency among the PRTRs worldwide; Make use of examples with formal national and international activities; Promote the use of standards already used in “other” international environmental agreements (e.g. CO2 and other GHG under the UNFCCC framework);
E3	Report on results by pollutants, not by amount	Improve usefulness of data; Facilitate reporting.
E4	Influence on national policies in different areas and timely manner	Use PRTR maps to provide a visualized picture of information on possible accidental releases of pollutants for the concerned public; manner

List of possible specific actions that could further the implementation of the Protocol and its strategic plan for 2015-2020

[PRTR.WG.1.2018.Inf.3.pdf \(unece.org\)](https://www.unece.org/prtr/Pages/PRTR.WG.1.2018.Inf.3.pdf)

Item	Possible actions	Why are they useful?
A.	Integration at the national level	
A1	Aim at a single window access / one-stop-shop approach for current and future reporting to government authorities	Reduce costs for different government authorities; Facilitate reporting for operators and owners; Facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration; Improve inter-ministerial coordination; Create a streamlined and more transparent source of data for users; Render numerous non-compatible data collection obligations and thus different non-compatible databases compatible and increase their respective numbers of users and uses.
A2	Provide context to the PRTR data and use PRTR as context for non-PRTR data	Improve usefulness of data for different users and uses; Create knowledge by adding contextual information to data, including possible risks to human health and the environment, and thus improve journalists and the public's understanding and interpretation of the published PRTR information; Further facilitate the correct comparison of facilities; Allow use of data for benchmarking purposes.
A2a	Show permits, inspection reports and relevant monitoring reports (PDF)	Useful to help users of the website to see more of the whole picture.
A2b	Join PRTR maps with geo portals and cadastral information web sites	Reduce costs; Support single window access / one-stop-shop approach.
A3	Sharpen the image of what "PRTR" stands for	Improve knowledge about PRTR-systems and facilitate cooperation with national partners. Shape common understanding of PRTRs, also on complex issues, such as integration with other systems for data management and dissemination; integration should be coordinated also on an international level with binding agreements.
A4	Integrate PRTR as tool for achieving sustainability, including achievement of 2030 Agenda and SDGs	Reduce costs; Make available PRTR data to track success in achieving the sustainable development goals; Facilitate fact-based decisions making processes.

B.	Harmonization at the international level	
B1	Understand and make available information on equivalence between different systems and methodologies applied in different countries.	Improve comparability of data between different systems; Increase usefulness at the global scale, including for global transboundary related issues, i.e. climate change and water and air pollution; Reduce costs through facilitated knowledge transfer; Improve data quality on a global scale.
B2	Support stable and continuing progress of PRTR-systems by strengthen multilateral solutions and international cooperation	Overcome limitations of individual national good practices related to PRTRs; Ensure progress in improving harmonization of PRTR systems globally.
B3	Increase efforts aimed at involvement of countries/regions with sizable industrial potential	Increase usability of data from countries/regions with sizable industrial potential; Improve PRTRs quality as a tool to provide comparable data as support for decision making at a global scale.
B4	Revise activities and their capacity thresholds concerning other reporting obligations	Provide a better basis for using PRTR data in other reporting; Harmonize different approaches, such as by adding activities which are in the VOC Solvents Emissions Directive, lower capacities to include GHG management plans and reporting, etc.
B5	Identify elements that are common for all national and international PRTRs, and those areas where different solutions for different countries/regions are needed	Improve and streamline international cooperation; Reduce costs; Improve quality of services at different levels.
B6	Use existing PRTR-standards when developing possible concepts for a chemical management plan at national level, e.g. linked with developments in the SAICM post 2020 process	Provide a harmonized and data driven approach for the development of chemical management plans.

C.	Awareness and ease of access and use	
C1	Seek ways to improve private sector and public involvement in PRTRs	Increase awareness on PRTR related matters with stakeholders; Build a sense of responsibility with NGOs, industrial sector representatives and other stakeholders and social actors that may play a more active role in the use and development of PRTRs.
C2	Develop better sorting and filtering of PRTR data	Reduce hurdles for easy use of PRTR data.
C3	Allow users to export large datasets	Facilitate the use of data for specific applications, e.g. by consultants and researchers.
C4	Simplify and reduce complexity of PRTRs	Increase awareness on PRTR related matters, ease of use of PRTRs with non-expert stakeholders; Communicate more easily the added value PRTRs represent to stakeholders and decision-makers; Increase the political relevance of PRTR related activities.
C5	Maintain and improve relevance of the Protocol in comparison and cooperation with other organizations and initiatives including private sector and NGO initiatives	Improve degree of awareness on PRTR in related international fora.
C6	Develop and use PRTR related activities to support the broadest possible awareness of chemical risks as a prerequisite for chemical safety (see chapter 19, agenda 21)	Improve awareness of PRTRs and provide stakeholders with a trusted resource for knowledge on pollutant emissions in addition to current sources such as ad-hoc news coverage on pollutant related issues; Provide a consistent, non-dramatic educational background on implication of living in a society that is constantly dealing with chemical substances as well as pollution; Raise the level of concern for the quality of environmental media by the public and politicians and therefore allow for long-term support of sound chemical management.
C7	Encourage/require those who use PRTR data professionally (scientists, companies, NGOs, journalists, government agencies, etc.) to make results of their work available through the PRTR webpage	The results of the professionals' work will be made available to general public and other stakeholders who may benefit from learning about specific issues; Promote awareness on PRTR related topics.
C8	Provide information important for consumer and facilitate the traceability of products	Increase usefulness of PRTRs by bridging gaps, e.g. between consumers and producers; Encourage and enable companies to link to facilities listed in PRTRs of other countries; Provide information on relative pollution per consumer article; Provide information on chemical substances in products and used in the production facilities; Use PRTR-related data for certification of products and companies as to increase transparency; this will also provide a tool for companies to advertise their efforts in setting environmental standards for their production facilities; Promote cooperation and synergy between authorities managing PRTR data and organizations that use pollution related data for certification of products.
C9	Add context relevant to risk assessment.	Provide e.g. information on toxicity of substances and aggregate pollution levels (see guidance on implementation of the Protocol).
C10	Apply an appropriate budget for PRTR promotion to match the financial resources put into its development and maintenance.	Increased awareness and use of PRTRs necessary for the fulfilment of the Protocol's objective.

D.	Scope of the Protocol	
D1	Review the list of pollutants	<p>Increase coherency with other environmental reporting obligations;</p> <p>Make the PRTR stay up-to-date on relevant economic and scientific and political developments;</p> <p>Facilitate to streamline the reporting process for operators and governments;</p> <p>Improve the national data set (completeness) for other MEAs;</p> <p>Improve the overall picture of pollutant emissions available to the public;</p> <p>Help PRTRs to become more dynamic and, thus, more useful systems.</p>
D2	Review thresholds, especially pollutant thresholds, with an aim to lower or remove them	<p>Improve the completeness of the PRTR data set, reflecting e.g. about 90% of current pollutant emissions;</p> <p>Avoid problems related to reporting of emissions close to threshold values without significantly increasing administrative burden to industry;</p> <p>Improve trust in PRTR datasets by researches and other stakeholders that voice skepticisms regarding the application of PRTR thresholds.</p>
D3	Review the list of activities	<p>Remove existing inconsistencies among MEAs in terms of both activity thresholds and codes used to identify the type of activities;</p> <p>Improve usefulness and up-date PRTRs to become more dynamic and, thus, more useful systems.</p>
D4	Add releases of chemicals from products e.g. as diffuse emission from products in use	<p>Improve completeness of PRTRs and support sustainable decision making with PRTR data.</p>
D5	Add information about obsolete storage places of different pollutants and other hazardous materials	<p>Provide a more complete picture of emissions;</p> <p>Make use of synergies when using PRTR as a platform for related topics;</p> <p>Increase usefulness for different stakeholders.</p>
D6	Include resource (e.g. energy and water) consumption and other data/parameters (e.g. production volume) into PRTRs	<p>Improve relevance of PRTRs for tracking success in achieving the sustainable development goals;</p> <p>Enable to assess environmental performance of facilities.</p>
D7	Present aqua culture data on website	<p>Provide a more complete picture of emissions.</p>
D8	Provide information about the quality of environmental media through PRTRs in spatial aggregation.	<p>Improve relevance of PRTRs for tracking success in achieving the sustainable development goals;</p> <p>Improve usefulness of PRTRs and make use of synergies by using PRTRs as a platform for other datasets.</p>

E.	Data (including its reporting, management and quality)	
E1	Aim at a single window access / one-stop-shop approach for current and future reporting to government authorities	<p>Reduce costs for different government authorities; Facilitate reporting for operators and owners; Improve data quality; Create a streamlined and more transparent source of data for users; Render numerous non-compatible data collection obligations and thus different non-compatible databases compatible and increase their respective numbers of users and uses.</p>
E2	Further develop and harmonize methods and methodologies used to obtain PRTR data	<p>Decrease the level of inconsistency among the PRTRs worldwide; Make use of synergies with related national and international activities; Promote the use of standards already used in “other” international environmental agreements (e.g.: CO2 and other GHG under the UNFCCC framework).</p>
E3	Report on waste by pollutants, not by amount	<p>Improve usefulness of data; Facilitate reporting.</p>
E4	Inform on accidental pollutant releases in a differentiated and timely manner	<p>Use PRTR maps to provide a trusted platform of information on possible accidental releases of pollutants for the concerned public.</p>

Main achievements in supporting countries

- Protocol on PRTRs - prototype for establishing PRTRs across the globe
- Protocol enabled countries to establish coordinated reporting systems on pollutants
- Encouraged innovative and efficient approaches to PRTRs use
 - *cost-efficient international reporting*
 - *support polluter pays principle*
 - *support complex decisions on economic, social and environmental matters*
- Int Org contributed different expertise - important role for capacity building and advisory support
 - *technical matters (e.g. UNITAR, UNEP, OECD)*
 - *policy recommendations (OECD, UNEP, ECE)*
 - *legal and institutional frameworks (ECE, UNEP)*
- Global Round Tables: Exceptional cooperation and synergy – UNECE & OECD, UNEP and UNITAR

Further steps in assisting countries

- Increase integration of PRTR systems, other databases and environmental information portals
- Improve harmonization of PRTRs internationally
- Raise awareness of decision-makers: use of PRTRs for policies in other sectors (health, energy, trade etc)
- Promote informed decision-making processes
- Promote simple, single window reporting by polluters through integrating a variety of national and international reporting obligations
- Improve transparency and trust between different stakeholders

<https://unece.org/env/pp/protocol-on-prtrs-introduction>

<https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/tenth-meeting-working-group-parties-protocol-prtrs>



Thank you!