

Working group 1: Awareness raising and access to environmental information

Strengthening the capacities for developing a national PRTR in Mongolia

Background and Context:

A PRTR is an environmental and public database, or inventory, of potentially harmful releases and transfers to air, water and soil. It brings together information about which substances are being released, where, how much and by whom. Usually once a year, industrial facilities emitting more than a certain threshold of defined pollutants reports their data to the national authority in charge of PRTRs. The data is then aggregated and made available for public consultation. On the long-term, PRTRs provide governments with trends of emissions. They also create a powerful incentive for reporting facilities to take voluntary measures to cut down their emission, as well as encouraging them to go completely transparent. PRTRs usually present three similar main features: I) An online reporting software for facilities to submit data; II) A structured database where the emissions are stored and listed; and III) A PRTR website where data is presented to the public on an aggregate form using maps, reports and charts.

With the financial support of UN Environment Programme, via the SAICM Quick Strat Programme Trust Fund, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Mongolia and UNITAR are executing the project *Strengthening Capacities for Developing a National Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) in Support of SAICM Implementation in Mongolia*. The objective of the project is to build technical and institutional PRTRs capacities in the country to design a PRTR system and run a pilot project. It is expected to be completed by December 2018.

Nature and objective:

Public access to environmental information is an essential feature of PRTRs as it contributes to make informed decisions on environmental policies through a display of data. A national communication strategy is needed to ensure public awareness and participation to PRTRs. Indeed, an awareness raising campaign promote the visibility and the credibility of the national PRTR project, as well as informing and educating people about it. In addition, the civil society is not the only one to benefit from a PRTR: government and industries have also their interest in having the environmental information presented in a comprehensive way. Identifying the key stakeholders and they role regarding a communication strategy allows an efficient access to environmental information as well as enhances the value of the data, as different technics and tools can be used to present it to reach a variety of users.

Three points need to be kept in mind while answering the questions below:

- 1) Inform the public that PRTR data exist
- 2) Ensure an easy public access to PRTR data
- 3) Provide information, education and training concerning the meaning and use of the data.

Understanding and highlighting the key aspects regarding an efficient public access to environmental information will allow stakeholders to gather ideas on essential component as well as to address potential challenges.

Activities and outputs:

Concretely, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Identify all the relevant stakeholders and their roles regarding an efficient strategy of awareness raising.
- Provide different tools to allow a broad diffusion of PRTR data.
- Undertake an analysis of the current situation in Mongolia regarding access to public to environmental information.

The following output will be delivered:

- A draft strategy for an outreach campaign regarding PRTR data.

Questions for discussion in the working group:

Procedural:

- Workplan:
 - What are the concrete steps to implement the above listed activities?
 - What are the intermediate milestones?
 - What is a realistic schedule?
- Roles and responsibilities:
 - What is the role of national PRTR stakeholders (Government, Industry, Civil Society)?
 - Which national institution should be involved at this stage?

Substantive:

- What is the goal of the national PRTR?
- Who are the relevant stakeholders?
- How should data be disseminated?
- Is the PRTR data report understandable or more contextual information is needed? If yes, which type of information should be included (e.g. toxicology, impact on human health and the environment, etc.)?
- Which tools should be used to communicate data at national level? For example, social media, smartphone application, advertisement, press releases, TV shows and news, events, etc.

In addressing these questions, it may be useful to consult:

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/Cornell_CIPA_Report_on TRI.pdf; and part II of the *Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer register* <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.guidancedev.html>

Key bullet points of the awareness raising campaign for public access to environmental information can be summarized in the table below:

Aspects of awareness raising	Description/implementation
What is the central message(s)?	
What is/are the goal of the awareness raising campaign?	
Relevant national stakeholders (Tailored to Mongolia's situation)	Who? Why?
What activities should be undertaken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars and training: • Awareness raising events: • Webpage: • Others (please specify)
Which tools should be used to disseminate data?	
What level of public involvement should be necessary to ensure success?	
Which material should be utilized?	
What could be a realistic workplan/ timeframe?	
What could be the challenges and difficulties of public access to information?	
How could be the challenges be overcome?	