Working group 3: PRTR Implementation

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:

Reporting to PRTRs is often first seen as a burden. Indeed, from the industries side, new costs related to reporting obligations can emerge and new tasks will appear as facilities will have to calculate and report their own emission. National authorities are also concerned about new administrative tasks and responsibilities. However, despite the initial concerns, the reporting exercise will provide benefits to all national stakeholders. Industries will report once a year their environmental emissions through an online PRTR software and government will be able to monitor and report national data to comply with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Stockholm Convention on POPs and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Both parties will save time and resources instead of replicating the process for every single inventory or reporting requirement. Other benefits ensue from reporting to a PRTR and they need to be highlighted and understood by the stakeholders. A thorough appreciation of the implications and benefits of reporting to PRTR data will allow stakeholders to catalyse potential positive impacts as well as to address potential challenges.

Activities and outputs:

Concretely, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Identification of the benefits and challenges of PRTR reporting.

- Suggestions on how to simplify PRTRs reporting requirements.
- Highlights of the main needs regarding PRTR reporting from the industry and the government side.

The following output will be delivered:

- A summary of national the national PRTR implementation.

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:

- Which challenges may arise while implementing a PRTR and how can these be addressed?
- Are there existing materials at a national level which discuss the potential implications of reporting environmental emissions for industries?
- How are the national IT capacities in the country?
- How are the engineering and technical training?
- Which sectors are likely to be particularly reticent to reporting and why?
- What kind of State incentives could be provided to reporting businesses?
- What type of compliance mechanism should be adopted for non-reporting industries?

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

UNITAR Series of PRTR Technical

Support Materials - No. 2 *Guidance for Facilities on PRTR Data Estimation and Reporting*

http://cwm.unitar.org/publications/publications/cw/prtr/prtr_en/prtr_tech_support_2_nov2003.pdf;

UNITAR Guidance Series for Implementing a National PRTR Design Project, Supplement 3: Implementing a PRTR Reporting trial

http://cwm.unitar.org/cwmplatformscms/site/assets/files/1237/prtr3.pdf

and the *Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer register*

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

The information collected can be summarized following the format of the table below:

Risks and challenges	Best Practices (Drawing from previous similar situation in the Mongolian experience)	Possible solutions	Additional training activities (Optional)
Knowledge regarding release estimation techniques			
Approval of the draft law on PRTR			
IT expertise and development of knowledge			
Confidentiality claim from the industries			
Other risks or challenges that come to mind			