



Belarusian Research Center
"Ecology"



Global Project on the Implementation of PRTRs as a tool for POPs reporting, dissemination and awareness raising for Belarus, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Peru

National Inception Workshop Report

The Belarusian Research Center "Ecology"

Minsk, Belarus

17 August 2017

The project is implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and Belarusian Research Center "Ecology" with the financial support of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Report on the National inception workshop, held in Minsk on August 17, 2017.

Summary

Based on the agreement signed on 18 April 2016 between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research granted a financial support for implementation of the project “Global Project on the Implementation of PRTRs as a tool for POPs reporting, dissemination and awareness raising for Belarus, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Peru” (Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 233 of 29.03.2017). The National inception workshop was held within the framework of the project activities.

The purpose of the National inception workshop was to present the project and current activities to the national stakeholders and agree on the objectives and scope of the national PRTR, as well as to approve the work plan for the implementation of the project at national level.

During this workshop, the National Coordination Team (NCT) and the National Steering Committee (NSC) were officially elected and endorsed.

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Introduction

The Belarusian Research Center "Ecology", in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus with the financial support of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) held the National inception workshop. The purpose of the National inception workshop was to present the project and current activities to the national stakeholders and agree on the objectives and scope of the national PRTR, as well as to approve the work plan for the implementation of the project at national level.

A. Attendance

The National inception workshop was attended by the representatives from:

1. Ministries and State bodies:

*The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, the House of Representatives;
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus;
Ministry of Housing and Communal Services of the Republic of Belarus;
Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus;
The National Centre of Legislation and Legal Research of the Republic of Belarus;
National Center for Legal Information;
National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus;*

2. State agencies and organisations:

*Minsk City Executive Committee;
Minsk Regional Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection;
Brest Regional Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection;
Grodno Regional Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection;
Mogilev Regional Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection;
Vitebsk Regional Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection;
State institution "Main State Inspection for Seed, Quarantine and Plant Protection";
Belarusian State University;
Institute of Nature Management of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus;
The Aarhus Center of the Republic of Belarus;
The Republican Scientific Research Center "Ecology";*

3. Industrial Sector:

*State Unitary Enterprise "Belenergo";
CUE "Complex for Processing and Disposal of Toxic Wastes of the Gomel Region";
OJSC Mogilevkhimvolokno;*

4. UN organisations via Skype:

*Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe;
The United Nations Institute for Training and Research;*

5. NGOs:

*Public Association "Belarusian Republican Union of Lawyers";
Public Association "Ecopravo";
Center for Environmental Solutions.*

B. Sequence of Procedures

The National inception workshop was opened by the Head of the Aarhus Center of the Republic of Belarus Olga Zaharova, the Director of the Republican Scientific Research Center "Ecology" Sergei Melnov and the National coordinator of the project Ivan Narkevich.

In their opening statement the speakers noted that issues relating to PRTRs are becoming more important from year to year, the project is designed to achieve the goal of monitoring and reporting POPs releases into the environment and, as a consequence, to minimize the releases and transfers of these pollutants into air, water and land. Public participation in the decision-making process on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) also became an important issue to be discussed during the project implementation. The speakers also stressed that the preparation of scientific and educational programs, especially for women and children (the groups that have difficulties to perceive the complex technical information), is of great importance. Based on the fact that RUE SRC "Ecology" maintains the POPs database and the Aarhus Center of the Republic of Belarus located in the RUE SRC "Ecology", this establishment had been selected as an Executive Agency for project Implementation. The speakers expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for their support and help.

The first session – Experience of the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

At the first session, the representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Kristof Doucot, made a presentation via Skype.

After signing the Protocol in 2003 in Kiev, it was ratified by 32 countries and it entered into force in October 2009. It was noted that the Protocol established unified minimum releases' requirements, which is important for international cooperation for comparability of data and for facilitating of the exchange of information. According to the Protocol, each country can set the thresholds increased that are established by the Protocol.

The Protocol is actively cooperating with other Conventions (for example, the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants) with which the synergies are observed.

The Protocol has its advantages: it promotes the international and national cooperation. The Protocol implies the creation of a multilateral functional system that assists the Parties of this Protocol to exchange the information and develop recommendations and new legal documents.

Compliance with the legislation and information disclosure requirements is an important characteristic of the Protocol; since it is a legally binding document so its Signatories are obliged

to fulfill reporting obligations. Each country that has ratified the Protocol should appoint a national coordinator who oversees the implementation of the Protocol in the country.

It was also noted that the non-governmental organizations play an important role in promoting the Protocol both at the national and local levels. There are a number of international organizations that also play an important role in supporting countries to implement the Protocol, for example, the UN Organizations, the Secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and conventions between countries, as well as the OSCE, UNEP and UNITAR.

In the framework of international cooperation on the Aarhus Convention (the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters), the Aarhus Centers have been established and supported by the OSCE. They play an important role in promoting the ideas of the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol in the country and ensure the rights of citizens for access to the information and awareness. This structure is sufficiently stable and ensures unity in the exchange of information, cooperation and mutual assistance between the Parties.

The Protocol requires of countries to create a PRTR friendly to the user, in the form of the database with a simple and intuitive interface. The Register should be interconnected with the other relevant databases. The system should not be static, it must be able to be updated and be up-to-date. It also requires the creation of a common database, which will provide the ability to search information by sources of releases, by enterprises, by the types of activity, by pollutants, and by environmental media in which the pollutants are released (water, air and soil pollution).

Development and implementation of a PRTR is a very complex and long-term step-by-step process, so it is very important to share the experience of those countries that have already passed this way.

The following questions were raised and discussed:

Question: How can we motivate the enterprises to provide the reporting that does not lie within their obligations (i.e. provide on the voluntary basis)?

Answer:

As the experience of other countries that have already implemented the PRTR system shows, the benefits for the industry depend on how this system was created and implemented in the country. There is also a big difference between the initial stage of the PRTR system implementation and the operational stage when the system is already fully implemented and working. On this initial stage, the industry can't always see the benefits that they can obtain from the fully working system in the future, such as reducing the releases and expenditures. When the PRTR Protocol is ratified and the reporting becomes mandatory for the industry, in this case the reporting became a part of the obligations towards the country. In those countries where reporting is provided through PRTRs, the industry itself stands for the developing of this system. It is also possible to simplify the filing process and to give the support from the state.

The second session – Experience of the development and operation of the PRTRs under the Global Project on the implementation of PRTRs as a tool for POPs reporting, dissemination and awareness raising for Belarus, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Peru.

At the second session, the representative of UNITAR, Mr. Andrea Cararo, the project manager, delivered a talk broadcast via Skype.

Information is usually put into the PRTR system from periodic annual reports, which are submitted by enterprises. The information in the PRTR system should be available for the public, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, other companies and the media via the Internet, with the search filter (by type of industrial enterprise, by type of pollutant, by type of activity and by the volume of the release of pollutants). The management of the PRTR system and maintenance of its database is carried out by a body or institution that is responsible for PRTRs in the country.

The information contained in the PRTR database can be used for the following purposes:

- for determining trends and tendencies in environmental pollution;
- for the evaluation of environmental policy;
- for determination of the potential risk of emissions for human health;
- for tracking progress in the part of production processes and what efforts have being made by manufacturing enterprises for “greening” the technological processes;
- for identifying the potentially hot spots of pollution;
- for the development of socially responsible investments; as the quoting, which is carried out as part of this process, helps to determine the area of responsibility of an enterprise;
- for determining prices for real estate;
- for tax purposes.

The PRTR system differs from the classical emission inventory system and represents a shift from a so-called command and control policy to an approach that ensures the participation of different stakeholders (the media, the government, the public, the industry, etc.). An important aspect is the involvement of all stakeholders. Another feature of the PRTR system is the multimedia presentation of information using the various maps and graphs.

The PRTR system should be considered as a tool:

- to address the global environmental problems;
- to improve the national reporting;
- to assist governments in disseminating of the information.

Benefits of the PRTR system for the government

The PRTR system allows the government:

- To identify the national priorities;
- To identify the priority environmental areas;
- to achieve goals and targets in the field of ecology and economics;

- to identify the risks and to reduce the impact of these risks;
- to ensure the compliance with the provisions of the various international conventions and agreements (example: Stockholm Convention).

Benefits of the PRTR system for the industry

Reporting on PRTRs is often perceived as an additional burden on industrial enterprises, but many enterprises see the new opportunities in the PRTR system.

The PRTR system can help enterprises:

- to implement emission prevention programs;
- to identify the problems that arise during the production process. After the identification of the problem, industries can implement more environmentally-friendly opportunities for a cleaner and cost-efficient production.

For industrial enterprises, the process of preparing information and reporting on emissions is an opportunity to analyze the production process, to identify the leaks, to compare their releases by some chemicals with the releases from a similar enterprise, to identify the existing problems and correct them accordingly, to evaluate the state of the manufacturing process, to improve it on time and thereby to reduce the costs.

The PRTR system allows the industry to interact with the public and the people who live in proximity to a particular industrial enterprise in order to improve the ecological conditions for their living, thereby enhancing the image of the industrial enterprise and increasing competitiveness of its products.

Benefits of the PRTR system for the public

The PRTR system allows the public:

- To have more information about the risks that the various chemicals present;
- To understand how various environmental decisions are adopted;
- To understand how management in this area is carried out;
- To obtain information that can be used for educational purposes through university training;
- To have information on the activities of a particular enterprise and its chemicals, which is useful for people living near these enterprises (people should be aware of what chemicals are used and what kind of risk these substances pose in the event of the release or emergency).

The main results of this project should be:

- the national proposals for the PRTR system updated for all countries participating in this project;
- the regulatory framework for PRTR, legislative acts regulating this system and this sphere, which are developed in parallel with national proposals;

- testing of PRTR systems, which is a pilot launch of these systems, as a result of which the countries will increase their capacity to collect data for PRTR;
- the obtained first data in the pilot launch of PRTR systems will improve the public access to this data and help to disseminate this information;
- the revised guidelines on PRTR, in particular on the inclusion of data on POPs in the PRTR system;
- comparable PRTR systems in the participating countries of the project, which can be compared with each other.

Activities for the Global Project scheduled for 2017:

- an analysis of the national PRTR infrastructure, which identifies the base for the establishment of PRTR systems, the gaps in legislation, the need for adoption of the new legislation, the list of industrial branches relevant to reporting under the PRTR system;
- updating the national proposals on PRTR systems, carried out on the basis of an analysis of the national PRTR infrastructure;
- Elaboration of national legislation (Moldova and Cambodia prepared the draft Decrees of the Ministry of Natural Resources relating PRTR), what means to introduce of a provision on PRTR into the existing regulatory framework or to adopt of a law on PRTR;
- organization of PRTR trainings for stakeholders (government, media and industry), which includes, first of all, the training of coaches (key specialists who will later conduct training in their country);
- preparation of a national strategy on public access to environmental information and PRTR data, explaining how countries will promote the dissemination of information (seminars, conferences, etc.);
- the development by the UNITAR the online modules on relevant topics related to PRTR, in particular on online reporting via the Internet or evaluation methodologies;
- update by the UNITAR the guidelines on assessment techniques and other issues (once the guidelines have been updated, they will be sent to the countries participating in the project).

Experience and lessons learned during the project implementation:

Currently, the second phase of the project is undergoing, the first phase was held until 2012. As a result of the implementation of the first phase, all countries:

- noted the importance of a multilateral approach and involvement of all stakeholders, as well as the importance of involving local people, local authorities and local industry representatives in this work;
- noted and reported on their plans to develop national legislation on PRTR, many countries spoke for the formalization of the executive force for the PRTR system;
- noted that the submission of reporting from the enterprise should take place electronically, in order to avoid errors that may arise on paper carriers;
- noted the importance to define clearly the requirements for confidentiality of information from the very beginning, so that enterprises understand when they can refuse to provide data (these issues should be clearly described in the legislation, so that later there will not be confusion and disputes);

- noted that the very active information-raising, awareness-raising companies were effective in informing about PRTR systems and their creation.

The results of the performed stages of the project showed that all countries have developed their national proposals for the development of PRTR systems, but in many cases these proposals have not received any support and specific resources have not been allocated for their implementation. Therefore, the countries noted the importance issue that all these proposals should not simply remain documents prepared within the framework of the project, but they must go forward in order to obtain the government approval for further implementation.

An important point is that the PRTR system should be closely linked to the national priorities and the national agenda. Ratification of the Kiev Protocol is a significant confirmation that this is an important work and the key step forward. For Belarus, this is an excellent opportunity in the framework of the Global Project to bring the matter to an end and ratify the Protocol in the next year.

A few important points:

- interaction between the national coordinator and industry (requirements for the successful implementation of the PRTR system);
- providing the clear instructions and guidelines (this is important for the industry to be involved in the PRTR data submission process).

At the end of his presentation, Mr. Andrea Cararo presented the PRTR platform developed by the UNITAR, which provides information on project implementation in different countries, on upcoming events, various publications and other materials. The platform hosts the Forum on Chemicals and Waste, which includes sub-sections on PRTR, nanotechnology and mercury. To participate in the different topic discussions users need to register on the site. In the absence of any question, you can open a new topic on the forum. The Forum can be used as a means to establish contacts and links with the other PRTR experts and share knowledge and experiences on PRTR implementation.

Question: *What progress has been made in other countries regarding this project?*

Answer:

There are a number of countries that have achieved certain successes, in particular Peru completed the assessment report on infrastructure, prepared a national proposal and currently conducts trainings on PRTR system in different regions of the country for industry representatives. By the end of the year in Peru the pilot testing of the PRTR system will begin and the first data will be provided.

Another good practice from Peru is the regional cooperation. In the first phase of the project, PRTR systems were implemented in Chile and Mexico, now these countries have the fully functional systems. Peru came forward with an initiative to organise a regional meeting between Ecuador, Peru and Chile in order to share experiences and exchange views. Therefore, it is necessary to use the regional cooperation to the maximum. If neighboring countries are

developing PRTR systems then it is necessary to cooperate since there are many common problems.

Belarus can communicate with Moldova, which participates in the project and successfully implements it, now they are hiring a company that will develop software for reporting to the PRTR. Kazakhstan is another participant, which successfully implements the project. National coordinators of Belarus could communicate with the national coordinators of these countries in order to exchange experiences and opinions.

Cambodia prepared a national proposal, now they are developing a national strategy for data dissemination and planning to begin a national training on assessment methods.

In Ecuador, there is a slight delay from the schedule due to the political situation and the change of leadership of the Ministry of Natural Resources, but together with the neighboring countries they will quickly join the work and in September 2017 plan to hold the inception workshop.

The project is under implementation, some delays of the schedule take place also in Belarus, but it is expected that Belarus will soon provide the first results and successfully implement the project.

Answer from the National PRTR Coordinator (I. Narkevich):

Belarus is intensively involved in the work, the national coordinating group has been established, a national steering committee has been nominated, and a national plan has been developed, approved and will be discussed during this seminar.

The third session – The Plan of the implementation of the Project including project activities, monitoring and updating information and further progress in realization of the national PRTR in Belarus

At the third session a representative of RUE "BRC "Ecology" Mr. Ivan Narkevitch, the National coordinator of the Project, presented the Plan of the implementation that includes the following stages:

1. Create the National Coordination Team (NCT) – It is in charge of the day-to-day management of the national project activities and acts as secretariat for the project in the country. (performed)
2. Create the National Steering Committee (NSC) – It is committed to the project at the national level. (performed)
3. Hold the national inception workshop – Information on the content of the project and its implementation plan will be presented and discussed, as well as develop the PRTR current situation. The participating stakeholders discuss and agree on the objectives of the national PRTR and ways to achieve them. This workshop will officially announce the project at the country level, as well as present and endorse the NCT and the NSC.
4. Prepare the assessment report on existing PRTR related materials and relevant infrastructures at the national level – The report on existing PRTR related materials and infrastructure will identify the gaps in the country and serve as a basis to update the national PRTR executive proposal. The assessment report will be referred to members of NSC and UNITAR, and also will be available to the public. (The work is started on the

- report and will be finalized by the end of September (in Russian) and by the beginning of November (in English)
5. Develop draft national plan for further implementation PRTR (national executive proposal), based on proposals to address the gaps and shortcomings identified in the assessment of existing relevant PRTR materials and infrastructure. Submit for consideration and approval the draft national plan for further implementation of the PRTR (national executive proposal) in the National Steering Committee. Submit to UNITAR the national plan for further implementation of the PRTR (national executive proposal) approved by the National Steering Committee. (prepared and approved by the end of November)
 6. Development of the national guides on estimation techniques for the volume of the pollutants for inclusion in the National PRTR for key and priority sectors – for key sectors (enterprises of the industrial and agricultural complex, housing and utilities infrastructures, energy, etc.) (2018)
 7. Develop and perform training programs and technical support elements related to the implementation of a PRTR, which will include at least 6 training sessions and will follow a training-of-trainers approach – The training will be tailor-made to each specific sector. For this purpose, workshops will be organized for each sector to assess knowledge and needs on PRTR training. The training programme and modules will be designed based on these assessments. Training are scheduled to take place starting in April 2018 according to the Contingency plan of the project. The topics of the trainings will be defined after the finalizing of the activities №5-7 of the Contingency plan: preparation of the national executive proposal, national strategy for public access to PRTR and guides on estimation techniques.
 8. Conduct a national pilot on using PRTR to report on POPs; prepare and submit to the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention under Art.15 of the Convention the national progress report on the state of pilot. – All aspects of the PRTR pilot reporting trial will be evaluated, and its experience will be summarized in a report, including key challenges, lessons learned, best practices and recommendations to be incorporated into a fully fledged national PRTR reporting scheme for POPs and other priority chemicals. (by June, 2018)
 9. Develop the national strategy for public access to environmental information and PRTR; place on a regular basis of the information on PRTR and news concerning the implementation of the project on web portal and other relevant media. – Identify key representatives from civil society; organize a workshop to jointly development of the national strategy for access to environmental information and PRTR. (by February, 2018)
 - 10.1 Develop the draft legal documents for accession to the Protocol on PRTR (by November, 2018)
 - 10.2 Submission of draft legal documents for accession to the Protocol on PRTRs to the National Steering Committee for consideration and approval. (by December, 2018)
 - 10.3 The introduction of the draft legal documents to the relevant national government bodies for accession to the Protocol on PRTRs for further approval and adoption. (by January, 2018)
 11. Organisation of the national final workshop. – It will present the project experiences at the national level, its achievements, outcomes, lessons learned and best practices, as well as

the key findings from the PRTR reports. It will also discuss and agree on the next steps in the implementation of the national PRTR and its use to report POPs and other priority chemicals. (Estimated date - December 2018).

The fourth session – Presentation of the PRTR team within the Republic Scientific and Research Unitary Enterprise “Ecology” (RUE “BRC “Ecology”). Elections and approval of the National Steering Committee (NSC).

Candidature of the members of the National Coordinating Team and the National Coordinating Committee were confirmed at the meeting. During this session the vote took place; the participants of the workshop unanimously voted "yes" for the approval of the composition of NCT and NSC.

The National Coordinating Team consists of the following staff of RUE "BRC "Ecology":

1. Sergei Melnov – Director of the RUE SRC Ecology, Chairman of the NCT;
2. Ivan Narkevich – National coordinator of the project;
3. Kristina Gonchar – National consultant on Industry;
4. Dmitry Melekh – Administrator of the project, national consultant on Waste;
5. Aleksandr Gavdel – National consultant on POPs reporting;
6. Natalia Dashkevitch – Secretary of the NCT.

The National Steering Committee consists of the following representatives of various Ministries and organizations:

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus
Sergey Zavyalov – Head of the Department of Regulation of Effects on Atmospheric Air and Water Resources
Andrei Pilipchuk – Deputy Head of the Department of Regulation of Effects on Atmospheric Air and Water Resources
Tatyana Evdaseva – Head of Information and Public Relations Department
Svetlana Kozakevich – Deputy Head of International Cooperation Department
2. Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus
Oksana Voskobovich – Deputy Head of Division - Head of Metallurgy Department of the Division of metallurgy and machine tool industry.
3. Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Belarus
Natalia Malceva – Consultant of the Department of Energy Efficiency, Ecology and Science
4. Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus
Andrey Apanovich – State institution "Main State Inspection for Seed, Quarantine and Plant Protection"
5. National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus
Ekaterina Poleshchuk - Head of the Main Department for Statistics of Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus

6. The Aarhus Center of the Republic of Belarus
Olga Zaharova – Head of The Aarhus Center of the Republic of Belarus
7. The Institution "Center for Environmental Solutions"
Evgenii Lobanov – Director, Manager of the Program for Waste and Chemical Safety
8. Institute of Nature Management of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus
Sergei Kakareka – Doctor of Technical Sciences, Head of the Laboratory of Transboundary Pollution
9. National Center for Legal Information
Ekaterina Shved – Junior Researcher of the Department of scientific and methodological support of legal informatization of the Division of legal informatization management
10. Public Association "Belarusian Republican Union of Lawyers"
Yulia Abramovich – Head of the Legal Department

The fifth session – The result of the Project “Designing and implementing a Pollution Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) in the Hrodna Oblast of the Republic of Belarus”

At the fifth session, a representative of RUE "BRC "Ecology" Mr. Dmitry Melekh, Administrator of the project, made a presentation about the results of the Project “Designing and implementing a Pollution Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) in the Hrodna Oblast of the Republic of Belarus”. The project was implemented with the financial support of the Zoi Ecological Network (Geneva, Switzerland) in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ENVSEC) in the framework of the international initiative "Environment and Security".

As a result of the project, the following work was carried out:

- Analysis of the European and world experience of PRTR implementation;
- Realization of experimental prototype of PRTR of Grodno region: structure, database, WEB interface;
- Collection of information from industrial enterprises in the Grodno region and filling out the PRTR database (data on the Internet);
- Implementation of a fully operational version of the PRTR of the Grodno region on the Internet to ensure public access (<http://prtr.ecoinfo.by>);
- Development of an information video on access to the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) in the Grodno region of the Republic of Belarus for members of the public <https://vimeo.com/203071900>
- Round table in Grodno following the results of the development, filling and testing of PRTRs in the Grodno region
- A social research to study the effectiveness of informing the public about pollutant emissions by industrial enterprises using the publicly accessible PRTR website on the Internet (short report)

Any lessons learned from this regional project? Findings that could be helpful in the implementation of PRTR at national level? Lessons learned from the pilot project for Grodno region:

- The enterprises insist on the point that the PRTR reporting should simplify the existing reporting;
- The persons who authorized to make political decisions (management of industrial enterprises) should participate from the early stage in the implementation of the activities of the pilot PRTR, which will allow enterprises to be involved in the reporting of the National PRTR;
- The lessons learned from the pilot project will be incorporated in the national Belarusian PRTR.

The sixth session –Plenary discussion on the further implementation activities of PRTR in the Republic of Belarus, including issues of the accession to the Protocol

The following topical issues were discussed at this session:

- Opportunities for using a PRTR not only for POPs, but also for other chemicals;
- improvement of statistical reporting of the Republic of Belarus using PRTR;
- public access to environmental information;
- the feasibility and practical value of PRTRs;
- data categories required for inclusion in the PRTR;
- adaptation and updating of existing legislation on PRTRs;
- sequence of actions for joining PRTRs;
- technical and legal component of PRTR development;
- adaptation of statistical reporting on emissions using PRTRs;
- international cooperation with the Parties to the Protocol within the framework of PRTR implementation, including this project.

Major findings

- The Republic of Belarus in the framework of the Global Project on the Implementation of PRTRs as a tool for POPs reporting, dissemination and awareness raising, has already performed the following phases of the project plan:
 - The National Coordinating Team has been established and approved. It is in charge of the day-to-day management of the national project activities and acts as secretariat for the project in the country, responsible for hiring the national consultants, supervising and revising their work, for the organization of workshops, preparation and submission of project implementation reports to UNITAR.
 - A National Steering Committee has been established and approved, which is responsible to the project at the national level. The Committee analyzes and approves the results of the project and actively participates in the project activities;
 - A National inception workshop on the Global Project was held;
 - The preparation of the assessment report on existing PRTR related materials and the relevant infrastructures at the national level began.
- PRTR will be used not only for POPs reporting, but also for other pollutants, such as pollutants of the 1st class of hazard and heavy metals according to the national classification (for example, cadmium, chromium, mercury, nickel, lead, zinc, asbestos).
- Belarus has the opportunity, based on the experience of other countries in developing PRTR, to identify the necessary directions for the development and operation of a national PRTR.
- The PRTR will simplify the reporting requirements and exclude the possibility of duplicating the reports, helping industries and the government to reduce the resources spent to comply with different reporting.
- Some substances in the PRTR are not directly released, but are transformed from others (these data cannot be obtained from existing reporting), therefore additional questionnaires should be used and some of the releases in any case will not be covered even by the Register.
- Technical and methodological developments to include POPs in the PRTR reporting will be conducted.
- Existing legislation should be revised for the purposes of PRTR as a tool for reporting and informing on POPs.
- Some pollutants (POPs) that included in reporting under the Stockholm Convention are recorded in the Register at certain thresholds according to the PRTR protocol, while emissions with small thresholds should be reported for POPs reporting. Thus, it is necessary to take into account the releases not only from the industries listed in the PRTR protocol, but also from sources that are key for each country. Belarus plans to include in national PRTR enterprises that have POPs releases regardless of the amount of releases even if they don't reach the thresholds according to the PRTR protocol. The enterprises that have special permission for POPs releases will also participate even if they don't have releases in a particular year.

- At the moment, some enterprises are ready to voluntarily provide the necessary information for the PRTR, since this system simplifies the preparation of reports. The enterprises (33) that participated in pilot project for Grodno region will also provide their data for national PRTR. At this moment after the preliminary evaluation we start to work with many enterprises to determine the amount of releases and their correspondence with the thresholds according to the protocol. Based on the fact that Belarus doesn't have legal acts that oblige industry to provide their data in PRTR, the final decision will be depend only from good will of the enterprises.