

INVITATION FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Proposal for Framework Programme on Capacity Building in preparation for the implementation of the Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

The Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) to the Aarhus Convention¹ is the first legally binding international instrument on pollutant release and transfer registers. It was adopted at an extraordinary meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention on 21 May 2003 during the Kiev Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe". The Protocol is open to all States, including those that are not members of UNECE or Parties to the Aarhus Convention. To date 36 States and the European Community are Signatories.²

The Protocol on PRTRs is intended to guarantee public access to information on releases and transfers of certain pollutants through national registers that can be searched through the Internet. Facilities will be required to report annually on their releases (into the environment) and transfers of certain pollutants. This information will be placed on a public register, known as a pollutant release and transfer register or PRTR.

A pollutant release and transfer register (PRTR) is an inventory of pollutant releases and transfers from industrial sites and other sources. PRTRs contain information on pollutants from specific industrial sites and information on releases of certain pollutants to air, land and water considered to pose the most significant threats to environment or health. PRTRs also contain information on waste which is transferred from one facility to a waste disposal site or recovery facility. PRTRs may also contain information on pollution from other sources, such as pollution from traffic to air, from agriculture to water and from small polluting enterprises to land, water or air. The public can search through the Internet for specific information related to companies, geographical locations, etc. Such registers facilitate public participation in decision-making and contribute to the prevention and reduction of environmental pollution.

Core elements of the Protocol on PRTRs

- Each Party to the Protocol will be required to establish a publicly Internet-accessible and user-friendly PRTR.
- The PRTR will cover information on at least 86 pollutants, including greenhouse gases, acid rain pollutants, heavy metals, dangerous pesticides and cancer-causing chemicals.
- Mandatory annual reporting will be required for a wide range of activities, including refineries, thermal power stations, the chemical and mining industries, waste incinerators, wood and paper production and processing, waste water treatment facilities and intensive agriculture and aquaculture among others, where these activities are carried out on a significant scale. The national registers also provide a framework for reporting on pollution from diffuse sources such as traffic, agriculture and small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Parties should strive to achieve convergence between their national registers so that information on the registers can be compared worldwide.
- Public awareness of the register should be promoted and Parties to the Protocol should provide assistance to the public in accessing the register and in understanding and using its information.

Framework programme on capacity-building activities

At its first meeting in February 2004, the UNECE Working Group on PRTRs welcomed the efforts that UNECE, UNEP and UNITAR were making to coordinate their work on PRTRs and invited them to refine and further develop a proposal for a framework programme. It also welcomed the work of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) and encouraged the United Nations bodies to explore possibilities with the REC for a coordinated approach.

In accordance with this mandate, UNECE, UNEP, UNITAR and the REC have jointly developed a framework programme on regional, subregional and national PRTR capacity-building. The programme will be open to other interested organizations.

¹ The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted in Aarhus, Denmark, in June 1998.

² Signatory states are Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The framework programme includes the following proposed activities:

Regional activities

- Development of guidance on technical issues related to compliance and implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs (UNECE, UNITAR and REC); and
- Further development of the Virtual Classroom on PRTRs (<http://prtrvc.unitar.org>) to give technical assistance to the implementation of the Protocol (UNECE and UNITAR).

Subregional activities

- Workshops on legal, institutional and/or technical themes related to the Protocol's implementation, along the model of the workshops conducted in partnership with the REC and the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia RECs prior to the coming into force of the Aarhus Convention (UNEP, UNITAR and the REC); and
- Workshops and study tours bringing experts from countries developing PRTRs to countries with operational PRTRs to share experience and expertise (REC).

National activities

- Training programmes on legal, institutional and/or technical aspects of developing a pilot PRTR (UNECE, UNEP/GRID-Arendal and REC);
- Assessment of existing reporting systems in comparison with the Protocol on PRTRs and good practice models (UNECE);
- Identification of needs/priorities to develop legislative and institutional frameworks for PRTRs (UNECE, UNITAR and REC);
- Development of a strategy on establishing national PRTR systems, in cooperation with relevant government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders (UNECE, UNITAR and REC);
- Capacity building for governments, NGOs and other stakeholders on PRTR issues (UNITAR and REC); and
- Public education to promote understanding of the benefits and use of PRTR systems (UNECE, UNEP, UNITAR and REC).

Results of the framework programme

- Country strategies to establish PRTR systems and to ratify/implement the Protocol on PRTRs;
- Review of existing reporting systems identifying gaps and needs, and providing recommendations on developing legislative and institutional frameworks for PRTRs;
- Operational 'Virtual Classroom' Internet discussion forums;
- Pilot projects in selected countries resulting in progress towards PRTR systems;
- Transparent process involving the public and other stakeholders; and
- Strengthened capacities of Governments, NGOs and the private sector for understanding and developing PRTRs.

Capacity-building activities

To assist donors with identification of capacity-building needs, the partner organizations have developed a matrix of capacity-building activities: http://www.unece.org/env/documents/2007/pp/ece_mp_pp_ac_1_2007_L_8_e.pdf

Invitation for financial support

To support the implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs, UNECE, UNEP, UNITAR, REC and their partners wish to commence the activities contained in the Framework Programme as soon as possible. However, they will require financial support to implement the Programme and they welcome enquiries from all interested parties.

For further information

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