

IOMC PRTR Co-ordinating Group

Report to the IOCC

Standard Format for Status Reports of IOMC Coordinating Groups, Approved by IOCC
– October 1998.

1. Issues for consideration and actions requested of the IOCC

No issues for consideration and action, since this was the final meeting of the IOMC PRTR Co-ordinating Group.

2. Background information relevant to the issues and actions

Please, see the attached Summary Record of the 13th Meeting of the PRTR CG.

3. Brief summary of the current main focus of the coordinating group's efforts

- The group had its thirteenth and last meeting on 6 June 2005.
- Due to the abolishment of the IOMC PRTR CG, participants had a lengthy discussion on the possible continuation of the international PRTR co-ordination. Participants emphasized the need to continue co-ordinating international PRTR activities, in particular capacity building in the context of implementing the UNECE PRTR protocol. Consequently, an independent “International PRTR Co-ordinating Group” should be re-established and its meetings should be held back-to-back with international chemicals meetings which all relevant organisations would attend, such as the meetings of the UNECE Working Group on PRTRs in Geneva or the OECD PRTR Task Force, but would not be under the auspices of any particular body. UNECE would provide the Secretariat for this activity on an interim basis.

4. Coordinating Group Meeting Schedule

The first meeting of the “*International PRTR Co-ordinating Group*” would be organized back-to-back with the 9th OECD PRTR TF meeting that will take place in Ghent, Belgium, March 2006.

5. List of Members of Coordinating Group

The list of the PRTR GC members is attached.

6. List of participants in meeting(s) of coordinating group being reported.

See the attached draft Summary Record of the June 2005 meeting.

Paris, September 5, 2005

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ANNEX

Draft Summary Record of the 13th Meeting of the IOMC PRTR Co-ordinating Group

Paris, 6 June 2005

1. The thirteenth, and last meeting of the IOMC PRTR Co-ordinating Group (CG) was held in Paris on 6 June 2005. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Charlie Corbishley, UK, and supported by Henrik Harjula and Jacy McGaw from the OECD secretariat. The agenda of the meeting is attached as annex 1, and the list of participants as annex 2. Summary Record of the 12th meeting was adopted without any changes.

Abolishment of the IOMC PRTR Co-ordinating Group

2. The Chairman, Mr. Charlie Corbishley, presented the background that led to the abolishment of the IOMC PRTR CG. The IOCC decided in June 2004 to undertake a full review of each of its five Co-ordinating Groups. To this end, the Chairman of the IOCC, Mr. N. van der Graaff, circulated on 11 August 2004 a letter to all CGs inviting them to provide proposals and justifications for either the retention or the abolishment of the IOMC Co-ordinating Groups. At the 16 November 2004 PRTR CG meeting all participants emphasized the importance of the continuous co-ordination of the PRTR work and supported the retention of the PRTR CG under the supervision of the IOMC/IOCC. The response to the IOCC questionnaire was submitted to IOCC on 24 November 2004.

3. The IOCC met in January 2005 and reviewed the status of the five IOMC Co-ordinating Groups. In particular, the meeting considered the recommendations made by each group with respect to their proposed continuation or abolishment. Concerning the Co-ordinating Group on PRTRs, the IOCC agreed that this group should be discontinued as an IOMC entity [PRTRCG(2005)13/2]. The meeting considered that this CG had achieved its objectives and that it could continue more efficiently under other auspices, such as the existing OECD Task Force that gathers the same stakeholders as the CG. In addition, it was suggested that information exchange on PRTRs could easily continue via the Internet. The IOCC noted that the CG would meet one more time (in the margins of the June 2005 OECD Joint Meeting) and that this last meeting would provide an opportunity for the group to finalize work as an IOMC entity. The IOCC will review the final report of the CG at the time of its 24th meeting to take place during the second half of 2005.

4. At the second session of the UNECE Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), held in Geneva, April 2005, the members discussed the continuation of the international PRTR CG as “an independent international forum not falling under the auspices of any particular agency and for the holding of back-to-back meetings with other relevant meetings.”

5. At the April 2005 meeting of the OECD PRTR Task Force held in San Francisco, participants discussed the possibility to incorporate the IOMC CG tasks into the mandate of the OECD TF on PRTRs. There was some support for the idea that the TF could assume some of the responsibilities of the IOMC PRTR CG but with a number of reservations. Specifically, these were to ensure that the technical PRTR work of the TF was not undermined by a shift towards more politicized work that has previously been carried out under the IOMC PRTR CG and the agreement and need for other organisations and countries to recognise the TF as a suitable basis for holding discussions on these matters. The TF agreed to widen their membership and unanimously agreed to propose to the last meeting of the IOMC PRTR CG the following: *“To promote communication and a close working relationship between the OECD Task Force on PRTRs and relevant organisations on the various aspects of the PRTR work, the relevant organisations, including the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC), Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) and European Environment Bureau (EEB), will be invited to nominate experts to participate in the meetings of the Task Force.”* [ENV/JM/RD(2005)8].

6. The participants of the IOMC PRTR CG welcomed the OECD invitation to participate in the work of the PRTR TF. However, participants also emphasized the need to continue co-ordination of international PRTR activities, in particular capacity building in the context of implementing the UNECE

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PRTR protocol. In addition, UNECE, supported by UNEP and UNITAR, required this co-ordination not to take place under a particular organisation, but rather under a self-standing independent body. An "*International PRTR Co-ordinating Group*" should be re-established and its meetings should be held back-to-back with international chemicals meetings which all relevant organisations would attend, such as the meetings of the UNECE Working Group on PRTRs in Geneva or the OECD PRTR Task Force, but would not be under the auspices of any particular body. UNECE indicated that, were OECD unable to provide secretariat services to the International PRTR Co-ordinating Group, UNECE would be willing, on an interim basis, to provide such services. Canada and USA informed the meeting that they do not participate in the UNECE PRTR Working Group meeting in Geneva and so practically for them a meeting back to back with the OECD PRTR Task Force was a better option.

7. It was finally agreed that:

- An independent "*International PRTR Co-ordinating Group*" be established for co-ordinating international PRTR work on an interim basis;
- Its meetings should for the time being be organised back-to-back with the OECD TF meetings, provided that these meetings are held in Europe;
- The first meeting of the International PRTR Co-ordinating Group would be organized back-to-back with the 9th PRTR TF meeting that will take place in Ghent, Belgium, March 2006;
- UNECE would provide the Secretariat for this activity on an interim basis; and
- The possibility that the International PRTR CG might find a future 'home' under the auspices of the SAICM process should be kept under review as that process develops.

Update on PRTR Activities

8. **OECD:** Henrik Harjula reported the major outcome of the OECD PRTR Task Force meeting that took place on 25-27 April 2005:

- **Sharing the PRTR Data:** The database on "Sharing and Comparing of PRTR Data" has been on the agenda of the TF on PRTRs for a number of years. So far the TF has not been able to decide on the final status of this database. While at the April 2005 TF meeting everyone applauded Japan's efforts in the development of this database, some concerns were expressed regarding the "comparing" part of the database. The TF decided: i) To continue work on the sharing of PRTR data; ii) To terminate, for the time being, the work on the comparing of PRTR data; and iii) On a process which may lead to making the database publicly available;
- **Scoping studies:** The scoping study on "*releases from products*" will be presented to the Joint Meeting for consideration in February 2006. This will be a priority work area for the TF in 2005-2006. Another TF's priority work area for 2005-2006 is a scoping study on the "*crosswalk*". The purpose of this work is to relate waste categories and pollutant information for waste transfers. Also this scoping study will be presented to the Joint Meeting for consideration in February 2006. Since no lead country has yet been identified for a scoping study on releases from "*small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)*", it was agreed to defer further discussion on this issue until the next meeting of the TF in March 2006;
- **Resource Centre:** The centre had 12 000 hits during the first six months of its existence (October 2004-March 2005). Upcoming improvements include the addition of new functionality to allow

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the listing of all available documents for a specific country or organization. It also include the development of a password protected on-line data entry form, which will allow all member countries to update their country specific documents. A procedure guide for the addition, editing, and deletion of documents is currently being prepared and should be available during the summer. Canada also proposed a few options to increase the visibility and use of the Resource Centre, which included greater promotion of the Resource Centre on the member country PRTR web sites; and

- **New Guidance Documents:** Two new guidance documents will be prepared during 2005: i) *Framework for Selecting and Applying RETs*; and ii) *Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) of PRTR Data*.

9. **UNEP:** UNEP in cooperation with Canada started a project to promote PRTR activities amongst ASEAN countries. The project is funded from the Canadian POPs fund and aims at providing means for monitoring POPs and other chemical releases in the region. A regional awareness raising workshop was held in Penang, Malaysia in August 2004 as the startup activity for this project. The workshop was attended by participants from ten ASEAN countries, representing governments, industrial associations and non-governmental organizations, as well as experts from Environment Canada and International Organizations. The second phase consists of two pilot projects to be carried out in the region this year.

10. **UNECE:** Michael Stanley-Jones reported on the status of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and preparations for its entry into force, including capacity building activities undertaken in the UNECE region.

i) Second Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

At the time of the second meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, 25-27 May 2005 (ECE/MP.PP/2005/19) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the PRTR Protocol had 37 Signatories and no instruments of ratification had as yet been deposited. The European Commission had announced at the Almaty meeting that it had taken the necessary procedural steps towards ratification of the Protocol. Two Parties, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, also had announced that measures were being taken towards ratification of the Protocol in the near future. It is expected that the instrument would enter into force by 2007.

ii) Working Group on PRTRs

The second meeting of the Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) had been held 13-15 April 2005. Its members discussed analyses of options for rules of procedure (ECE/MP.PP/AC.1/2005/3) and a compliance mechanism (ECE/MP.PP/AC.1/2005/4) under the Protocol and agreed that draft decisions establishing separate rules of procedure and a separate compliance review mechanism for the Protocol should provide for a separate bureau and compliance committee respectively.

The third meeting of the Working Group on PRTRs will be held 17-19 May 2006 in Geneva.

iii) PRTR Guidance Document

The Working Group reviewed a draft guidance document on implementation of the Protocol prepared by the secretariat and agreed it would be useful to produce the guidance as an official UNECE publication by the end of 2005 for use by countries seeking to establish PRTRs in line with the requirements of the Protocol. The secretariat is requested to incorporate and revise the document by the beginning of September 2005. The document would then be opened for a final round of comments until the end of October 2005, at which time the secretariat and Bureau would finalize the guidance document for

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publication. Comments on the successive drafts of the guidance document had been posted on the PRTR Virtual Classroom operated by UNITAR.

iv) PRTR Implementation Cost Study

Laura Altinger presented on a study, "Implementation costs of the Aarhus Convention Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers" initiated by the UNECE secretariat and under the leadership of the UNECE Economic Analysis Division. It was meant to assist countries with developing realistic cost forecasts of PRTR implementation in countries using a country-by-country approach. A theoretical spreadsheet model had been developed under the study in early 2005. A flowchart diagram representing the full stream of reporting alternatives under the Protocol was also produced and circulated to the CG. UNECE invited CG members to consider participating in the next phase of the study which aims to collect data to populate and test the empirical model. Once completed, the study could be issued as additional guidance for States implementing PRTR systems.

v) Capacity building

In consultation with UNEP and UNITAR, the UNECE secretariat had prepared an updated version of a matrix of PRTR capacity-building activities. It had been posted to the Working Group on PRTRs' web page (<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.docs.htm>).

vi) Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy

The UNECE secretariat reported that the Aarhus Clearinghouse, a web portal which had been designed with the assistance of UNEP/GRID-Arendal and launched by UNECE in July 2004 to provide information of relevance to the Convention and Protocol on PRTRs as well as principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, had attracted more than 36,000 visits in during the first quarter of 2005 (<http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org>).

11. **UNITAR:** A forum contributing to PRTR awareness raising had been initiated in the PRTR Virtual Classroom in February 2005 with the facilitation of Greenwomen (Kazakhstan) and was conducted in the Russian language. A second PRTR discussion forum, aimed at assisting with development of the PRTR guidance document and facilitated by UNECE, had been re-established in April 2005 and will continue to operate through the end of 2005.

12. **EU:** The proposed E-PRTR Regulation is currently being taken forward within the European Union. This regulation will implement the needs of the UNECE PRTR Protocol and in addition, the regulation places some further requirements on member states. These additional requirements include further substances that have been added to the reporting list and more definitions in terms of what constitutes emissions to land. Negotiations are underway in the European Council Working Group on the Environment and within the European Parliament, A first reading deal is being pursued under the Luxembourg Presidency.

13. **CEC:** It was announced that the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation were hosting a meeting in Monterrey, Mexico between October 17th and 18th, 2005. The goals of the meeting are:

- 1) To establish partnerships across North America in order to support the implementation of the RETC in Mexico; and
- 2) To raise awareness among the Mexican public and industrial sector about the importance of open dialogue on issues related to pollutant releases and environmental risks and safety.

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14. **Canada:** Canada has launched a new on-line one-window reporting system for the collection of PRTR data.
15. **USA:** John Dombrowski reported on the development of PRTR in Chile.

National Proposal for the Implementation of the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register in Chile

- The PRTR implementation process began in Chile in 2002, as part of the Work Plan of the Chile-Canada Commission for Environmental Cooperation, with a workshop that included international experts from Canada, the United States, Mexico, and a representative of UNITAR. Thereafter, a feasibility study was undertaken, which prompted the creation of a National Coordination Group made up of representatives from public sector agencies, the private sector, environmental organizations and academia. In July 2003, a cooperative agreement between US EPA and UNITAR was commenced to implement a PRTR design and capacity building project in Chile. The first phase of this cooperative agreement was dedicated to workgroup meetings to design the key features of a PRTR system for Chile. Then, a pilot reporting trial was conducted on a limited scale to test the PRTR system and to gain necessary experience directly applicable to the design of the PRTR. The final phases of this cooperative agreement include the development of a national proposal for the implementation of a PRTR system in Chile and a implementation workshop to set implementation in motion, catalyze broad policy support for the national PRTR proposal and initiate follow-up actions such as the drafting of legislation. This final implementation workshop will be held in Santiago, Chile on August 18, 2005; and
- The National Proposal for Chile's PRTR was prepared by the National Environmental Commission, CONAMA, and commented on by national stakeholders. The objective of this proposal is to establish the specifications of the technical, administrative, institutional, and legal elements of the implementation of a national PRTR system in Chile. Under this proposal CONAMA will administer the PRTR, managing the PRTR Central System Node that will accept the transfer of information from sectorial agencies. In fact, one of the perceived benefits of this national PRTR is that it will facilitate the standardization of different sectorial databases and generate comparable data. According to this national PRTR proposal for Chile, those chemicals covered under emission standards presently in force or in preparation, and those chemicals covered under Chile's international convention commitments will be included in the PRTR.

IFCS Forum V

16. The three action points for the IFCS were discussed in some detail at the previous meeting, however, any decision on these three areas was put on hold pending discussions at the then forthcoming IOCC meeting in January 2005. This delay has resulted in very limited time frame for taking forward any actions for IFCS.

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17. It was agreed that the Chairman, Charlie Corbishley, would contact the Forum secretariat, to see whether anything meaningful on PRTRs could be provided at FORUM V within the limited time frame available for preparations.

Global portal to PRTRs

18. At the November 2004 meeting of the IOMC PRTR CG, an outline was provided on the suggested global web portal (www.prtr.net) to PRTR information. Participants had several comments on the suggested structure. These included adding information on potential funding opportunities, including details of relevant R&D programmes, adding a site map and search functions. Questions were raised on who is the audience for the site, how will the site help the co-ordination of PRTR work, who will host the website, and what are the hosting, maintenance and upkeep costs?

19. Following the abolishment of the IOMC PRTR CG (June 2005), it was proposed that the OECD TF on PRTRs continue this work. To this end, the issue was addressed at the April 2005 meeting of the TF. A number of countries expressed their support for this effort, however, no country yet volunteered to take the lead in this project.

20. The Chairman presented this issue to the IOMC PRTR CG on 6 June 2005. The group agreed to the proposal that the OECD PRTR TF continue this effort. However, the TF should be reporting on the progress to the CG.

Other business

21. No other issues were raised.

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Appendix 1

Draft Agenda 13th Meeting of the IOMC PRTR Co-ordinating Group

Date: Monday 6 June 2005

Location: 19, rue Franqueville, 75116 Paris (OECD Headquarters)
Room 11

Start time: 10h00

- I. Opening remarks – Charlie Corbishley, Chairman
- II. Abolishment of the IOMC PRTR CG:
 - Continuation of the co-ordination of PRTR work, following the abolishment of the IOMC PRTR CG; and
 - Sponsorship and logistics of the co-ordination work.
- III. Progress reports and roles of major PRTR activities:
 - OECD
 - UNEP
 - UNITAR
 - UNECE
 - Other members
- IV. Supporting PRTR work through Internet – establishment of a “prtr.net”.
- V. PRTR activities in relation to Forum V:
 - Invitation by the 58th meeting of the FSC for a recommendation on a possible decision item for FORUM V;
 - Proposal to consider a report for FORUM V on how national PRTRs can help countries to meet their reporting requirements under several chemicals-related conventions (FORUM III recommendation); and
 - Consider the role as “Champion” for IFCS PRTR related recommendations (see attached ToR for “Champions”). The IOMC PRTR CG was identified as a possible “Champion” at the 58th meeting of the FSC.
- VI. Any other business.

List of Meeting Documents

PRTRCG(2005)13/1	Agenda
PRTRCG(2005)13/2	IOCC letter concerning the abolishment of PRTR Coordinating Group
PRTRCG(2004)12/6	PRTR website document
PRTRCG(2004)12/5	IFCS Champion – Terms of Reference
ENV/JM/RD(2005)8	Outcome of the 8 th Meeting of the Task Force on PRTRs

Appendix 2

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PARTICIPANTS LIST FOR MEETING OF THE 13TH IOMC PRTR CO-ORDINATING GROUP

6 June 2005

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Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in

Paris, September 5, 2005

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