



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Decisions related to Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Chemicals and Wastes

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legal Recommendation

STATUS:

- OECD Council Recommendation on Implementing PRTRs originally adopted on February 19, 1996
- Canada is an adherent of this recommendation
- Canada is an ongoing member of the OECD

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Web Links:**

- [OECD PRTR](#) website
- [OECD Resource Centre](#) for PRTRs
- [Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory](#)

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

January 2020

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

A Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) is a publicly accessible database of chemicals or pollutants released to air, water and soil, and transferred off-site for treatment. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) assists in the development and implementation of PRTRs by developing practical tools and guidance for member countries.

Canada plays a key leadership role in advancing PRTR development through participation in international meetings, and mentoring numerous countries in the establishment of their own program. As well, Canada served as a lead country in the development of the [OECD Resource Centre](#) website.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of OECD PRTR activities is to provide countries with practical tools and guidance to implement a national program. Member countries establish PRTRs under the OECD's Environment, Health and Safety Programme.

The OECD assists PRTR development and implementation internationally, and supports an annual meeting of the PRTR Working Group.

KEY ELEMENTS

Canada is an active participant in the PRTR Working Group. It attends the annual PRTR Working Group meeting, and provides support to the various activities and reports of this group through presentations at workshops and input on documents. Areas on which Canada provides input include sharing knowledge on the NPRI annual cycle, developing a list of chemicals, and PRTR harmonization.

Canada also collaborates with the OECD in PRTR capacity-building activities. The [Recommendation of the Council on Establishing and Implementing PRTRs](#), published by the Working Group on PRTRs, was updated in 2018 with Canada's participation.

EXPECTED RESULTS

OECD and PRTR Working Group activities aim to facilitate the development and implementation of PRTRs internationally. This work is expected to improve data quality, explore data

applications that facilitate public access, and harmonize PRTRs across countries.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Canada is an active participant in the OECD's PRTR Working Group, as an OECD member.

Canada's primary input has been to provide technical expertise for advancing PRTR research and development on topics such as release estimation techniques, activities to make data publicly available, and the harmonization of reporting requirements

Canada and the OECD also collaborate on PRTR capacity building. Canada assists countries in developing and implementing their own PRTR and by providing technical support throughout the process.

This arrangement is important to Canada since, through participation in OECD Working Groups, it will establish its role in program development on an international level and network with PRTR experts from around the world.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

Environment and Climate Change Canada's main activities related to PRTRs include:

- Advancing PRTR research and development on topics such as release estimation techniques, activities to make data publicly available, and the harmonization of reporting requirements;
- Mentoring countries in the development of their national PRTR;
- Participation in the annual OECD's PRTR Working Group meeting; and
- Participation in other projects and activities of the PRTR Working Group (e.g., compilation of release estimation technique manuals, publication of guidance manuals on establishing a PRTR).

Reports

Reports and documents released by the OECD can be found on the [OECD PRTR](#) website.

Results

Canada's participation in the OECD's PRTR activities plays a key role in fulfilling the Government's international commitments, and in supporting domestic programs to reduce pollutant releases. Information gained on best practices for other countries' PRTR is valuable when improving Canada's PRTR.

Over the past fifteen years, Canada has assisted countries such as Peru, Mexico, Malaysia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Chile to build their own PRTRs.