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TERMS OF REFERENCE

FOR THE

NATIONAL POLLUTANT RELEASE INVENTORY

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER WORK GROUP

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Table of Content

1. Background	1
2. Mandate	1
3. Membership	2
4. Observers and Resource Persons	2
5. Roles and Responsibilities	3
<i>Members</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Environment Canada</i>	<i>3</i>
6. Conduct of Work Group Business	4
7. Expenses and Funding	5

1. Background

The National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) is Canada's legislated, publicly accessible inventory of pollutant releases (to air, water and land), disposals and transfers for recycling. It is a key resource for identifying pollution prevention priorities; supporting the assessment and risk management of chemicals, and air quality modelling; helping develop targeted regulations for reducing releases of toxic substances and air pollutants; encouraging actions to reduce the release of pollutants into the environment; improving public understanding on sources of pollution; and supporting international reporting.

The NPRI Multi-Stakeholder Work Group (Work Group) is the primary consultative body for the NPRI. The NPRI Work Group has been active in providing input and making recommendations regarding the program since its inception. The Work Group will continue to operate as a part of the broader NPRI consultation process which will include all interested Canadian stakeholders and the general public.

Environment Canada and the Work Group will jointly review this Terms of Reference at least once every three years to determine if modifications are required.

2. Mandate

The Work Group is a venue for information and ideas exchange between Government and stakeholders and among different stakeholder groups. The mandate of the Work Group is to provide input and recommendations on issues relevant to the NPRI program from a stakeholder perspective. Issues may include modifications to the NPRI substance list and reporting criteria, identifying and resolving data gaps, improving public access to and interpretation of pollutant data, and improving data quality. The Work Group is also intended to provide stakeholders with information on activities of the NPRI which may be shared with their constituencies or members.

It is important to note that the Work Group is not a decision making body. However, Environment Canada will consider all input and recommendations in making final decisions related to the NPRI.

3. Membership

The Work Group will consist of up to 20 members, each of whom will represent one or more organizations. The final list of members will aim to be proportional, based on the stakeholder category that they represent. As a guide, the Work Group membership will be allocated to the following stakeholder categories:

- Representatives of the reporting community, such as industry associations (maximum 50% members);
- Environmental or other non-governmental organizations (maximum 40% members);
- Aboriginal governments and organizations (maximum 10% members);

While member organizations will generally be self-nominated within the stakeholder categories, final selection is subject to approval by Environment Canada. In addition, Environment Canada may review or change membership as needed, for example to ensure a balanced representation.

Each member organization will identify a primary Work Group member. The member organization may identify an alternate, who will be expected to attend meetings if the primary Work Group member cannot attend. Both the member and alternate may attend a meeting of the Work Group, subject to space or other limitations, with prior approval from Environment Canada. However, when both a member and an alternate attend, only one will be permitted to intervene and the other will act as an observer, to maintain balanced representation among the different groups.

4. Observers and Resource Persons

A list of observers will be maintained by Environment Canada, who will receive communication that is sent to the Work Group. Observers are welcome to attend Work Group teleconferences. Observers are also welcome to attend face-to-face Work Group meetings provided they obtain prior approval from Environment Canada, and taking into account venue capacity, meeting balance, issues to be discussed, or other relevant considerations.

Observers are encouraged to contact Environment Canada with comments or questions by phone or email either before or after teleconferences and meetings but do not typically participate in member discussions.

Other government representatives may have an interest in NPRI matters and may participate in Work Group meetings as a resource person or observer. The primary role of a resource person is to contribute information and/or expertise to the working group as needed. However, the NPRI Work Group is not the forum for Environment Canada to consult with other government representatives therefore resource persons may not participate in the formulation of input or recommendations.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Members

Members of the Work Group are expected to be familiar with the NPRI, have an appropriate level of knowledge related to pollutant reporting and public disclosure, represent a broad constituency, and have experience in participating in multi-stakeholder discussions on behalf of their constituency.

The Work Group member's role is to communicate the issues raised by their constituents. Members of the Work Group will be expected to be prepared for meetings, make every effort to ensure that the views that they express reflect those of their constituency, and ensure their Work Group status and contact information is kept up to date. It is also expected that they will communicate the fact of their participation, the positions they will be taking on various issues, and the outcomes of the Work Group to the members of their respective constituencies. Members may bring issues to the table using the agenda development process.

Environment Canada

Environment Canada will chair the Work Group and provide secretariat support. The Chair of the NPRI Work Group will manage the meetings, foster an environment for productive discussions, manage conflict if necessary, and steer the meeting towards productive results.

The Secretariat will function as the Work Group's main point of contact for members. This includes planning meetings, arranging logistics, providing input mechanisms for members' comments, ensuring that members receive meeting materials as far in advance as possible (with a guideline of three weeks), drafting and circulating meeting summaries, managing membership, and ensuring the regular review of this Terms of Reference.

6. Conduct of Work Group Business

There will be a minimum of two teleconference meetings a year, and an objective to meet face-to-face at least every two years. Additional teleconferences, face-to-face meetings and email exchanges can be used as needed. In setting meeting dates, the Secretariat will attempt to accommodate the availability of as many members as possible.

The following guidelines will apply during Work Group meetings:

- Be open, respectful, and appreciative to the ideas of other members and participants.
- Work toward resolution of matters in a constructive, professional, and timely manner.
- Divergent views will be acknowledged and included in meeting summaries.
- Participants may communicate in the official language of their choice.
- Consultation materials will be provided in both official languages.

Background materials will be required at the beginning of the consultative process for a particular issue to allow for productive discussions, and will generally be the responsibility of the organization or person that provides the request for change. Environment Canada and Work Group members may assist with the development of such source materials in certain cases.

A meeting summary with action items will be shared with members. Summaries will be developed by the Secretariat, identifying views by sector where appropriate, but without individual name attributions. Members will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft prior to it becoming final.

Environment Canada and the Work Group may decide to form sub-groups to assist the Work Group with complex issues where there is a need for technical advice and support. Sub-groups must have clearly defined objectives, timelines and specific deliverables, defined within a Terms of Reference for that sub-group, to ensure the most efficient use of resources. Sub-group participants will be drawn from Work Group members and alternates. Additional participants may be invited to participate in the sub-groups, based on the needs and issues tabled. Sub-group membership should be balanced among the various stakeholder categories.

7. Expenses and Funding

Funding will be made available by Environment Canada, in accordance with Treasury Board guidelines and at Environment Canada's discretion, to cover travel, accommodation and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for those participants who require financial assistance to participate in face-to-face meetings of the Work Group.

Funding for specific deliverables, such as studies, may be made available by Environment Canada if required to further the work of the Work Group.