



5th
INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
ADVANCES IN CLEANER PRODUCTION

“CLEANER PRODUCTION TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION”

**Defining the Role of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registries (PRTR's)
in Global Sustainability**

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Pollutant Release and Transfer Registry (PRTR) systems have been established throughout the world to track emissions and other industrial waste management quantities (e.g. quantities recycled or burned for energy recovery) of potentially harmful chemicals. Currently, at least 50 countries have either established their own PRTR or implemented a pilot PRTR. More PRTRs are expected to come into existence in the coming years.

PRTRs have long been recognized and used as practical and powerful pollution prevention tools. The use of PRTR data as a means to measure the effectiveness of industrial pollution prevention practices within a country is increasing. For example, in recent years the United States Environmental Protection Agency has promoted the use of its Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) database (the U.S.' PRTR) to identify and publically recognize facilities, companies, and industry sectors that are implementing green chemistry and engineering practices that reduce emissions or other waste quantities of toxic chemicals, and encourages other facilities or companies to do the same.

The use of PRTRs as a pollution prevention tool on a global scale, however, is not as widespread. This is primarily due to differences among countries in regard to their respective PRTR reporting (legal) requirements, sector coverage, and chemical coverage. These differences make the comparability and integration of data collected by multiple PRTRs difficult, and confounds use of the data for global-scale analyses.

Nonetheless, as a result of the ever increasing emphasis on sustainable development as an international priority, there is a growing need to evaluate progress towards reducing emissions and other waste management quantities of harmful chemicals at the global level, not just at the country-specific, regional, or continental levels. Hence, more attention is being placed on the use of information collected and made available by PRTRs to assess progress towards worldwide sustainable development, since data from multiple PRTR systems that can be harmonized or combined enables the tracking of releases and other waste management quantities of toxic chemicals globally. Efforts are underway within international organizations such as the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to improve the comparability and integration of data collected by multiple PRTRs for use in global scale analyses.

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This presentation will provide background on the evolution of PRTRs, how PRTR data are being used at the country level to assess green manufacturing processes, and an overview of efforts within international organizations to improve the comparability and integration of data collected by multiple PRTRs for use in global scale analyses to assess progress towards sustainable development.