

<b>Project 10</b>	<b>Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America</b>	<b>Responsible Project Manager at the CEC Secretariat</b>	Orlando Cabrera-Rivera
<b>Planned Allocation</b>	C\$526,000	<b>Working Group(s) associated with this work</b>	NAPRTR Officials

### Objective of Project

The main objectives of the project are to compile and disseminate information on the amounts, sources, and management of toxic contaminants from industrial activities in North America, and to promote the use of this information for the development of sound initiatives that will result in the reduction of industrial releases and transfers of pollutants of concern across the region.

### Background

Began in 1996, the CEC’s North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (NAPRTR) project initiative has been one of the key components of the CEC’s ongoing work on pollutants and environmental health. The PRTR project collects and analyzes information from the PRTR programs in Canada, Mexico and the United States on the amounts, sources, and handling of toxic chemical releases. This information is made available to a spectrum of users, including local governments, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and the general public through the CEC’s flagship publication, *Taking Stock*, and over the Internet, through <[www.cec.org/takingstock](http://www.cec.org/takingstock)>. The NAPRTR Officials Workgroup works on the implementation of the Action Plan to Improve the Comparability of PRTRs across North America, and seeks advice from experts and stakeholders on areas of study and analysis for the *Taking Stock* report.

### Rationale

Activities involved in the NAPRTR project support specific objectives and priorities stated in the CEC’s 2005–2010 Strategic Plan:

- Information for Decision-making—The annual publication of *Taking Stock*. Based on publicly available data from PRTR systems

in the three countries, this report offers comparative analyses and descriptions on the sources, amounts, and management of toxic chemicals from industrial activities in North America. The information in the report is made available in printed form and over the Internet at <[www.cec.org/takingstock](http://www.cec.org/takingstock)>. This project aims to provide information to support comparable environmental policies and practices throughout North America that promote reductions in pollutant releases from industrial activities. It also seeks to encourage relevant decision-making activities by governments, industry, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as to equip the general public with information concerning environmental issues.

- Capacity Building—Through this project, the three Parties work together on the identification of needs and corrective actions for consistent data collection, comparability, and quality across the PRTR systems in North America. The trilateral data analyses conducted under the NAPRTR project also provide the Parties with baseline information necessary to identify suspect data; validate the information collected, and improve the overall quality of their PRTRs.

The importance of this project stems from the fact that it adds value and relevance to the goals of the existing PRTR systems in North America. It offers enhanced access to important information to all the stakeholders for use in addressing environmental issues of concern at the local, regional, national, and trinational levels. The project also fosters the communication and cooperation among the three Parties in working toward the institutionalization and improvements of their own PRTR programs. The creation of Mexico’s RETC is one of the success stories associated with this project.

## Activities and Outputs

The implementation of the PRTR project involves the activities listed below.

- NAPRTR Officials Workgroup—Organize regular meetings and conference calls with PRTR officials to review and monitor the progress of the project, discuss and assess the projects needs, offer guidance and strategies for improvement, set priorities, and review relevant project documents and deliverables.
- Capacity-building Activities—Work with officials on developing and implementing ways to increase comparability and consistency in the areas of data reporting, collection, and quality assurance.
- Data Collection and Analysis—Collect information from the PRTRs of the three parties, conduct data quality assurance reviews and analyses and incorporate results of relevance and use to the Parties and stakeholders in the *Taking Stock* report. One goal is to provide this information in a format suitable for use in Web and mapping applications (e.g., in accordance with NAAF guidelines).
- Information Management Infrastructure—Explore innovative ways to improve the process of gathering, storing, and accessing the NAPRTR data in order to increase its usefulness in existing or future projects or applications (e.g., Query Builder, Atlas Mapping, and ad-hoc reporting for CEC programs).
- Outreach—Organize the annual PRTR Consultative Group meeting, which provides feedback on *Taking Stock* and the PRTR project, and offers input into areas of focus and analysis for future reports.

## Anticipated Outcomes and Performance Indicators

### *Direct Outcomes:*

- The direct outcome of the NAPRTR project is the creation of infrastructure that allows the three Parties to exchange information, reach a common vision, and work cooperatively in addressing issues related to the comparability, consistency and improvement needs of their respective PRTR programs.

### *Intermediate Outcomes:*

- This infrastructure permits the Parties to build capacity and seek policy changes that ultimately make possible the integration, relevance, and usefulness of the PRTR databases across North America.

### *Final Outcomes:*

- The final outcome of this project is the creation of an integrated North American PRTR program that supports the compilation and dissemination of quality, unbiased and comparable information. The ultimate goal of this program is that the use of this information results in positive actions such as informed policy decisions, cost-effective pollution prevention practices, and citizen awareness towards the reduction of hazardous substances released to the environment.

### *Performance Indicators:*

- Consistency in reporting requirements across PRTR programs, as recommended in the Action Plan to Enhance Comparability of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.
- Time between data collection and final report distribution.
- Level of information use in decision-making process by stakeholders.

Comment: It may be necessary to conduct a survey to measure the reach (awareness) and usefulness of the final information.

## Timetable and Project Sustainability

The NAPRTR project expects to achieve most of its goals in the next five to seven years. The sustainability of this project is possible due to its ability to demonstrate the relevance and usefulness of the information it provides, the success in the institutionalization of the RETC, the establishment of innovative ways to exchange the information, and the continuing cooperation of the PRTR officials. With a solid infrastructure in place, the project may go into a maintenance mode, in which monetary resources and the CEC's workload are significantly reduced. However, given the trinational scope of the project, the coordinating role of the CEC will need to continue. The work

envisioned over the next two to three years should focus on:

- Continuing the effort to increase the comparability and consistency of the PRTR data. This may include the use of supplemental information collected by the Parties outside their PRTR programs.
- Expediting the data collection and analysis process to provide timely information.
- Improving reports and outreach products to increase relevance and usefulness of the information for the Parties and stakeholders.
- Developing performance measures to gauge the effectiveness of the program.

### Communications

This project produces a number of valuable information resources and tools for the public, communities, and decision makers in North America. Decision makers may include environmental and trade policy developers and regulators at the federal, state/provincial, local, and tribal levels; nongovernmental organizations; academia; industry; and citizens. The project also expands the public access to information about how chemicals are managed within their communities, and seeks to stimulate reductions in pollutants by making factual information available to decision makers at all levels. The Parties and the CEC continually re-evaluate all projects and products to identify the key audiences and messages for each and to identify the most effective and streamlined outreach mechanisms for each audience.

*Taking Stock* is a flagship publication of the CEC, and is the primary communications vehicle for the PRTR project. A number of changes have occurred and more are contemplated, to improve the information provided to support decision-making by governments, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and the public. Some examples are the streamlining of the printed *Taking Stock* report and the enhancement of *Taking Stock Online*.

Additional effort will be put towards information management, outreach and

stakeholder briefings to ensure the most thorough and informed consideration of the CEC's PRTR project and annual *Taking Stock* reports.

### Information Management

Currently, *Taking Stock* information appears in two forms. One is an annual publication of approximately 150 pages, comprising text tables and figures, that compares comparable release and transfer data a number of different ways, e.g., by country, state or province; by chemical; and by media (air, water, land). The second form is through the electronic Web-based *Taking Stock Online* (accessible via the CEC website), which enables users to analyze the data through a searchable format. The CEC reviews and analyzes the basic data that are provided by each government. Through this analysis, the CEC extracts the data that are comparable; thus, the matched data set is a subset of the overall data provided by the governments. The matched data set is downloadable through the *Taking Stock Online* website. Future work includes re-designing the electronic database, upgrading and improving the functions of the online query builder, and ensuring the operational continuity of the database (currently provided and maintained by a contractor). This will enable users to do faster searches, obtain graphical representations of the data (graphs and thematic maps), conduct analyses and access more data online, thereby reducing the size of the printed version of *Taking Stock*. The intent is to increase the capacity and robustness of the online database in order to streamline the printed report, and in turn enhance the ability to disseminate and communicate this information.

While these approaches meet the need of getting information out to the public, there are additional ways of displaying the data, e.g., a geographic information system (GIS), the North American Atlas, etc. The national PRTR data currently include latitude/longitude data. Therefore, there is ample opportunity to apply new tools to make these data even more meaningful to interested parties.

## Implementation Plan

PROJECT 10 – Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America						
Objective – Make environmental information more widely available in order to facilitate local, national and regional action						
2008 Tasks	Key Outputs	Timing	Expected Outcomes	Beneficiaries (Reach)	Budget (C\$)	Future Activities
1. Complete data collection and trilateral analysis for <i>Taking Stock 2005</i>	A comparable and matched data set using the 2005 reporting year PRTR data from the Parties. This data set will become the basis for the <i>Taking Stock</i> report.	Dec 2007–Mar 2008 (contingent upon timely reception of Mexico’s data—t.b.d.)	Assessment of and recommendations for improvements in data comparability.	This information will assist Mexico’s RETC, the US TRI program, and Canada’s NPRI program in the evaluation of their data-reporting activities.	\$51,000	
2. Complete and publish <i>Taking Stock 2005</i> .	A North American comparative analysis of PRTR data to inform decision makers about the status, trends, and management of industrial pollutants. This information is available in printed form and online.	May	Dissemination of information for decision-making. Increase the public right-to-know about pollution sources. Assist local pollution control agencies in assessing areas of concern. Provide industry with information that could be used in adopting cost-effective pollution control measures.	General public, local and state/provincial governments, industry, and academic sectors, NGOs	\$110,000	
	Quality Assurance Summary <i>Report: Taking Stock 2005</i>	<p><i>Secretariat review:</i> Process begins with data collection from the Parties (Oct-Nov 2007). Consultants analyze the data, identify suspect data and establish matched data set. Follows review and corrections of key data elements (involving input from Parties). Writing begins in November. Target publication release date: late May 2008</p> <p><i>Stakeholder/Expert review:</i> The Special Feature Chapter is circulated to selected stakeholders/experts for a three-week review (Jan-Feb 2008)</p> <p><i>Party review—Drafting:</i> Three-week Party review of Trilateral Data chapter and the Special Feature Chapter</p>				

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		(Jan-Feb 2008)	<p><i>Public review:</i> The PRTR Consultative Group meets in November 2007 to discuss <i>Taking Stock</i> and advise on PRTR project priorities.</p> <p><i>Peer review:</i> The methodology for the CEC data analysis was peer-reviewed in the early years of the project. The methodology has not changed.</p> <p><i>Party review—Quality assurance:</i> Parties participate in a review of overall data after analysis by consultants, and can conduct Quality Assurance for identified suspect or erroneous data. The final <i>Taking Stock</i> report is provided to Parties six weeks in advance of release as an embargoed copy to give Parties time to prepare for publication (May 2008).</p> <p><i>Party clearance:</i> Four-week advance copy of the <i>TS05</i> News Release</p> <p><i>Publication:</i> Late May 2008</p>			
3. Upgrade and enhance <i>Taking Stock Online</i> . Consult with Parties about enhancements to database design and Web application	Incorporate data into <i>Taking Stock Online</i> to support electronic access and customized searches of the database, and enhance the information from the report by integrating graphics and mapping capabilities.	Dec	Value-added information for the users, and more efficient access to the data.		\$50,000	
	Quality Assurance Summary <i>Ongoing Database/Online service: Taking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extract data and prepare matched database (June-Dec 2008);</li> <li>Prepare data for online Query Builder – including latitudes/longitudes amenable to mapping applications (Feb–May 2008);</li> <li>Release data with publication of the <i>Taking Stock</i> report (May 2008).</li> </ul>				

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	<i>Stock Online</i> (2005 data)					
4. Collect and interpret data for <i>Taking Stock</i> 2006	<p>Development of a database of 2006 PRTR data from the Parties.</p> <p>A strategy for supplementing the NAPRTR data on pollutant releases and source information already collected by the Parties under other programs.</p> <p>Planning for <i>Taking Stock</i> 2006 report structure</p>	Sept	<p>A quality assured data set that to support the <i>Taking Stock</i> report and products.</p> <p>Recommendations of cost-effective actions to achieve data consistency</p>		\$140,000	
5. Capacity building to synchronize and expedite the PRTR data-processing efforts. Work with Mexico to support expediting data processing time and to improve electronic RETC data transfer between state and federal agencies.	Expedite availability of data for analysis and quality assurance.	Ongoing	Provide timely quality information to stakeholders and decision makers.		\$70,000	

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6. Present the NAPRTR efforts at USEPA International Emissions Inventory Conference; also at OECD to promote the North American approach to PRTRs. (also t.b.d.: present at the Annual Air and Waste Management Association meeting in Montreal, with focus on waste to energy technologies—May 2008)	Increasing visibility of the CEC, and enhancing outreach efforts of the NAPRTR	May–June		Environmental professionals, industry representatives, policy-makers, government representatives, international organizations	\$5,000	
7. Conduct stakeholder consultations through the annual PRTR Consultative Group meeting, which will be held in Mexico.	Receive input on potential focus area of <i>Taking Stock 2007</i> , and direction of PRTR project;  Build capacity of Mexico’s media and disseminate RETC and PRTR information to Mexican stakeholders.	Oct–Nov			\$100,000	
	Quality Assurance Summary <i>Background paper:</i>	<i>Secretariat review:</i> Oct–Nov 2008 <i>Party review</i> —Drafting: Two-week review by PRTR Officials, prior to the Oct-Nov 2008 meeting				

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	Discussion paper for annual Consultative Group meeting	<i>Public review:</i> The Discussion paper will be sent to the stakeholder group in advance of the Oct–Nov 2008 meeting, and will guide discussions during the meeting <i>Publication:</i> Prior to the Oct–Nov 2008 meeting				
<b>Total Cost:</b> \$526,000						
<b>Performance Measurement Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dates for release of RETC data and <i>Taking Stock</i> report.</li> <li>▪ <i>Taking Stock</i> website statistics (access, documents requested).</li> <li>▪ Number of pollutants reported that are common to all Parties.</li> </ul>						<b>Key Partners:</b> Key partners include PRTR officials from the three countries: Environment Canada, Mexico’s Semarnat, US EPA.