

## **Reliable statistics on wastewater**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The Joint Questionnaire is supported by a Manual, to explain concepts, identify best practices, and recommend approaches for each table, that was developed and published in 2004.

For wastewater, technical and conceptual problems and obstacles to good quality data were identified, that may apply to any statistical data collection in this field.

First, the correct understanding and definition of boundaries between the various steps from the generation to discharge, but also the objectives for each part of the questionnaire and the connections between the tables, is a clear prerequisite to correctly allocate the figures in the various parts of the questionnaire.

Second, most of the misunderstandings between technical and statistical experts can be solved by clarification of the definitions and terms, especially through the use of simple schemes and available norms, EN 1085 being the most important.

Third, reliable statistics look for a complete coverage, but most of the existing data collections use thresholds to report only the biggest sources or only the biggest discharges. As they are reliable, the use of these figures is recommended but should be completed by expert judgement, specific surveys or emission factors and to set priorities for the data collection effort. And in the reporting process, a clear description of the main hypothesis and limits with the national return should help the correct use of the data.