



UNSD showcase of practical use of country-owned waste data for SDGs

Environment Statistics Section
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
Prepared for tenth meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics (EGES)
3, 4, 6 and 10 October 2023

UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics



- Since 1999, UNSD has completed 11 data collections on water and waste data (usually biennially) from about 160-170 UN member states. Mandated by UNSC 28th session (1995); reinforced at 34th session (2003).
- [Questionnaires](#) are sent to National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Environment.
- Questionnaires are not sent to Eurostat and OECD members and candidate members. 170+ member states in previous years; about 163 member states in the 2022 collection cycle
- Response rate typically hovers around 50% (2018: 52%; 2020: approx.: 46%; 2022: 46%).
- No imputation, no estimation. No change in variables collected in 2022 compared to 2020. Instead, focus is more on boosting response rates, especially to those variables related to SDG indicators
- The current (2022) data collection has just been finalised. Thank you for your collaboration!



UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics: disseminated outputs

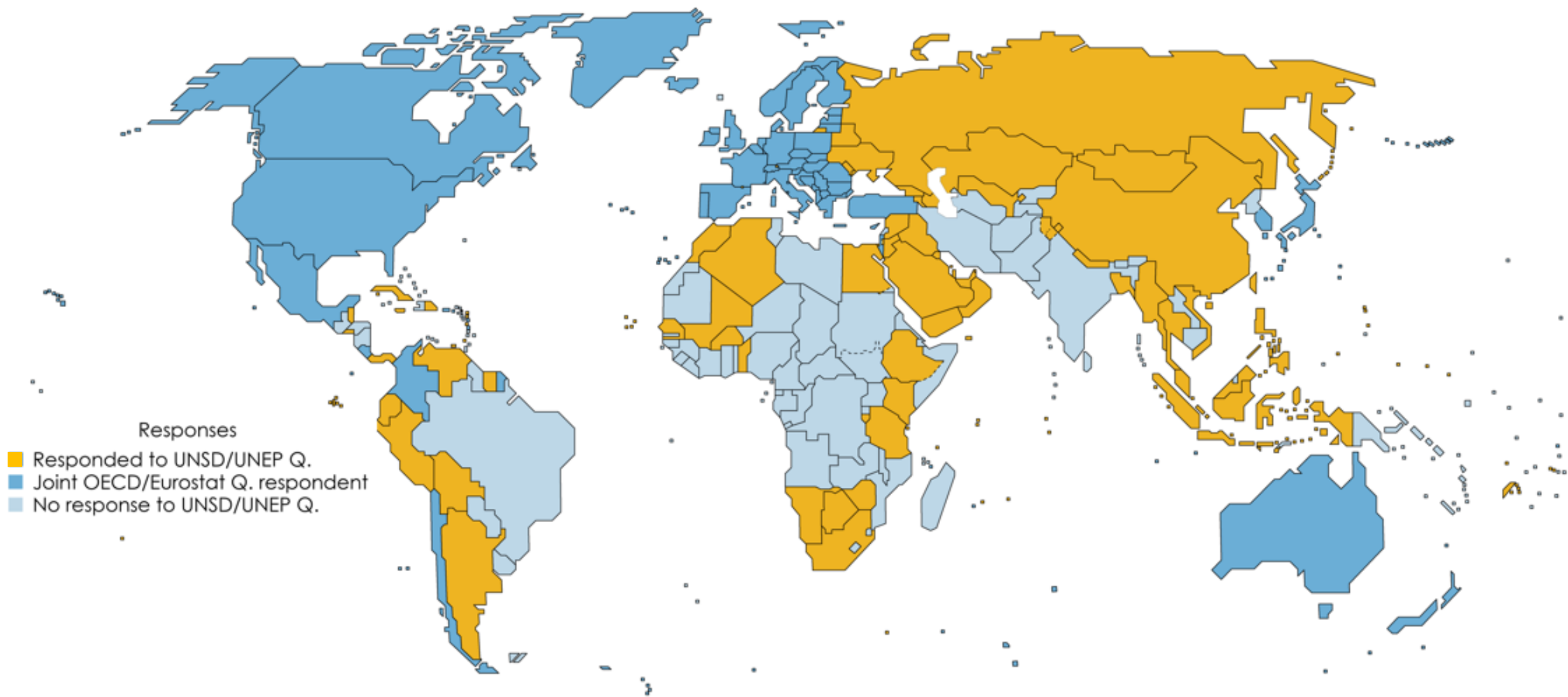
- **UNSD environmental indicators:** <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envstats/qindicators> Time series, or most recently available data for selected variables provided by countries. Disseminated after completion of collection cycle.
- **Country files:** https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envstats/country_files Individual country data on water and waste. Disseminated periodically during collection cycle. Demand from key users to view Country files as soon as possible.
- **Country snapshots:** <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envstats/snapshots/> Individual country data spanning many environmental themes.
- **SDG Global Database:** <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal> Country Files are referenced as a source throughout.
- **UNdata:** <https://data.un.org/Default.aspx> refer to Environment Statistics Database.
- **Tailored queries:** Per solicitation from key users (often World Health Organization, UN Environment Programme, UN-HABITAT, academia).



UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics

- **References for further details on the Questionnaire:**
- **Presentations from the 2022 EGES:**
 - Stressed the multiple uses of the Questionnaire and other issues at the time of the 2020 data collection cycle
 - https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envstats/fdes/EGES9/Sess2.1_UNSD_Water.pdf
 - https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envstats/fdes/EGES9/Sess2.7_UNSD_Waste.pdf
- **Generic information on the UNSD webpage:**
 - <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envstats/questionnaire>
- **12 months ago, 2022 cycle had just been sent, hence methodological advancements were presented at the EGES**
- **Today, 2022 cycle is almost completed, hence some data and results are being presented.**

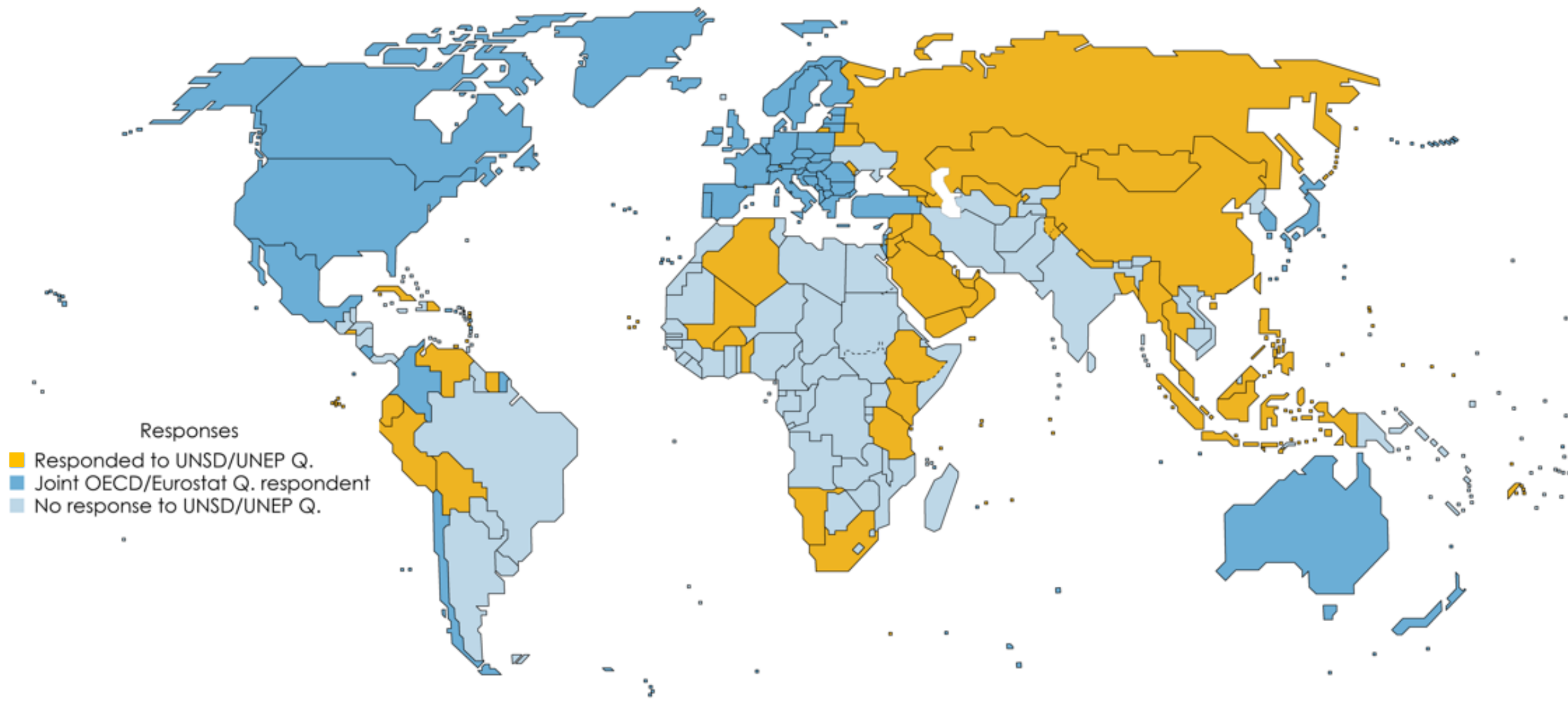
Responses to UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics (2022)



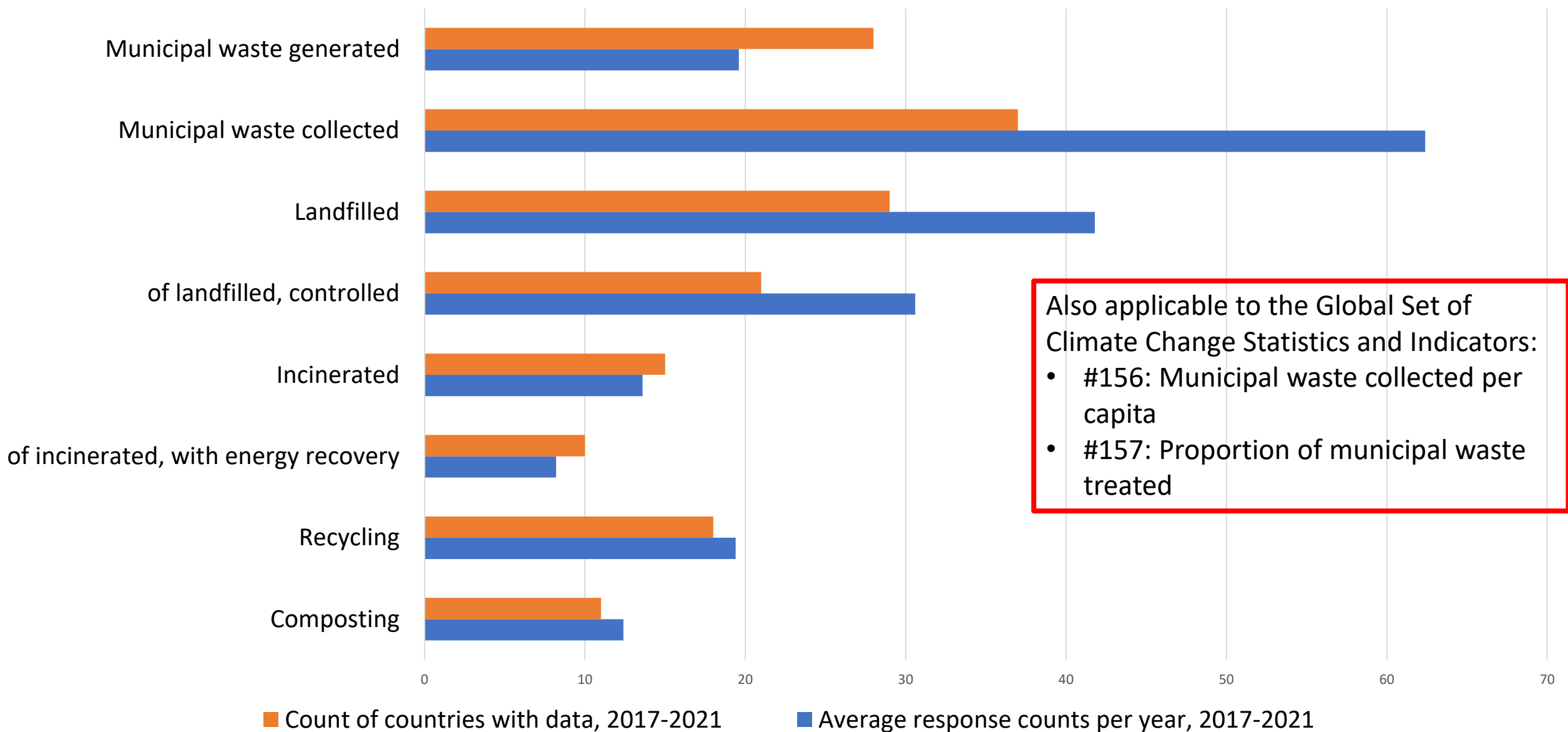
Responses

- Responded to UNSD/UNEP Q.
- Joint OECD/Eurostat Q. respondent
- No response to UNSD/UNEP Q.

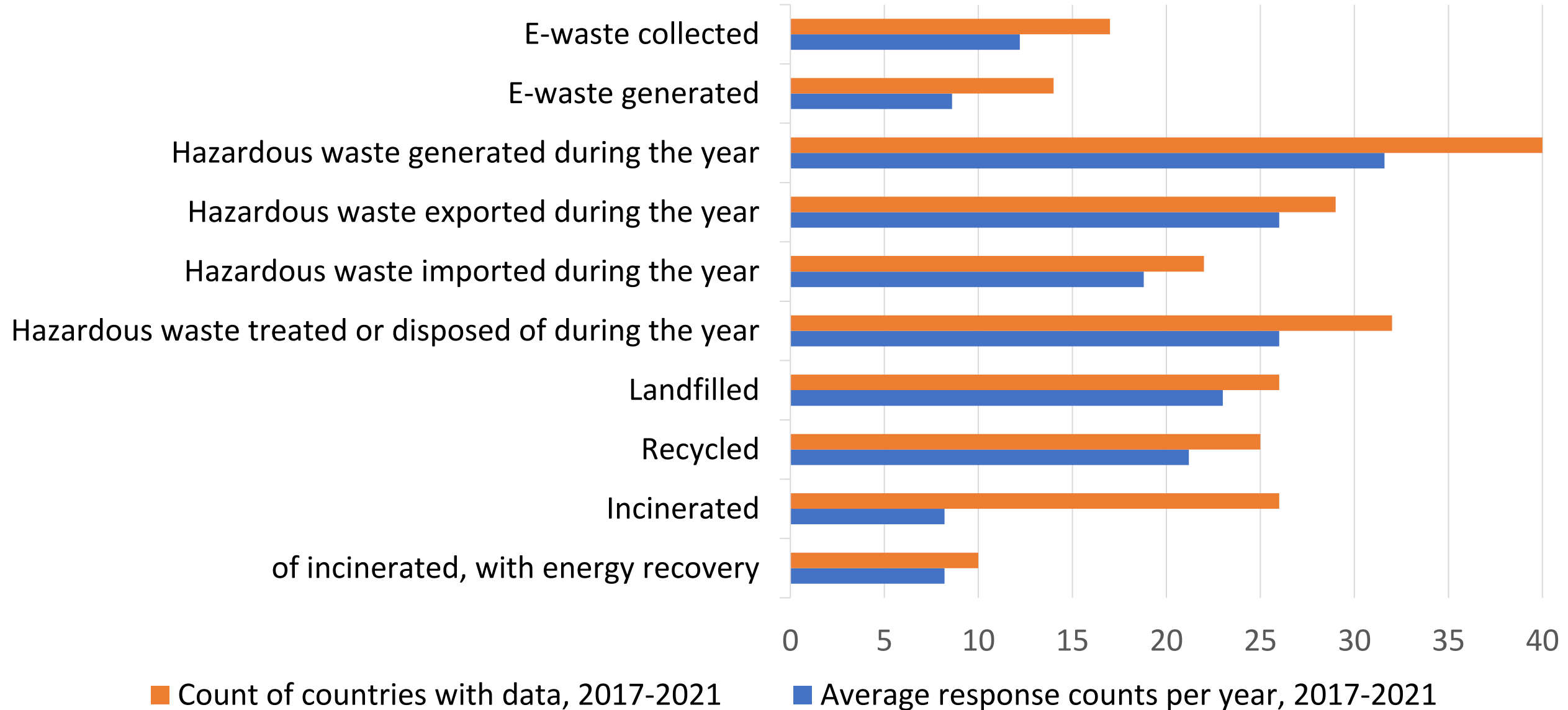
Responses to UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics (2022) - Waste Section



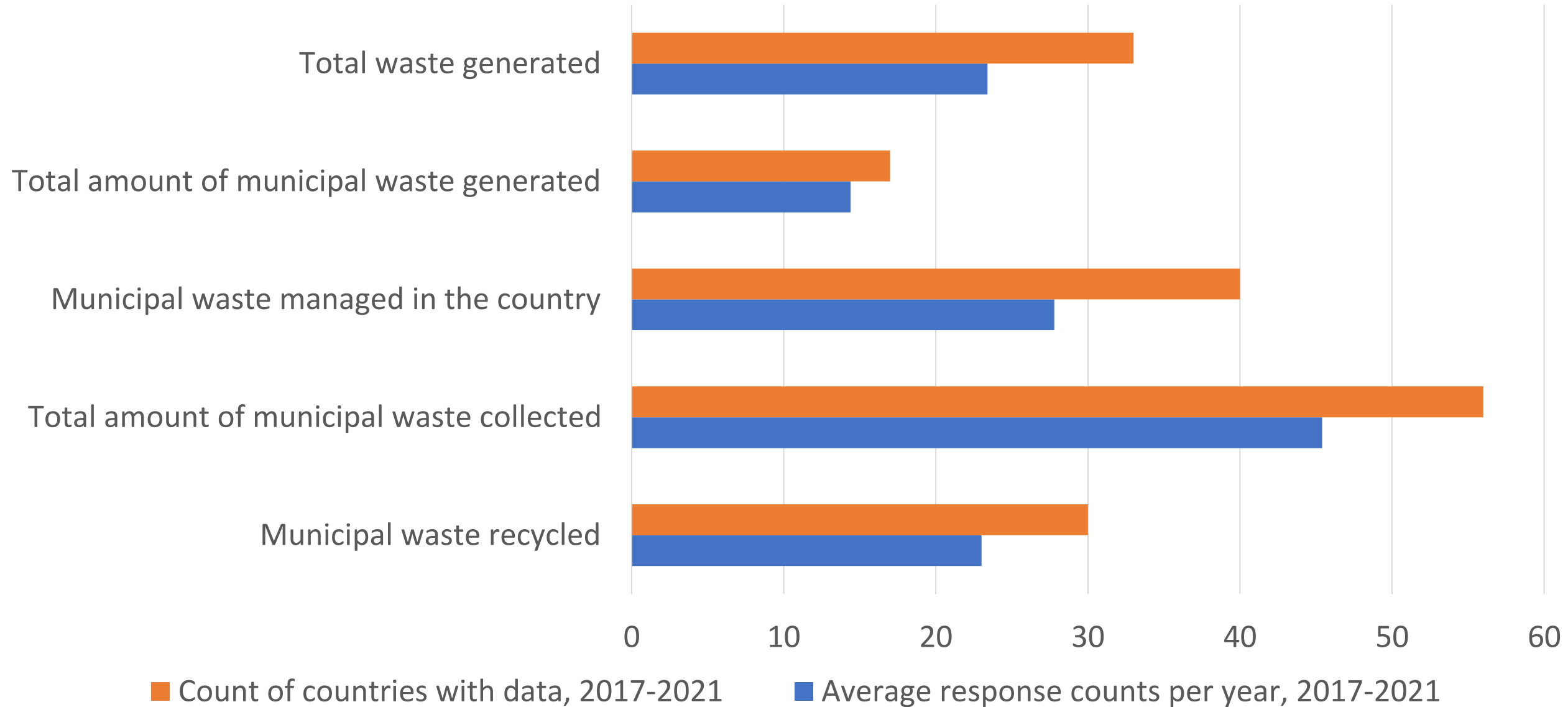
How is the supply of data to meet demand for SDG 11.6.1 (UNSD co-custodian with WHO, HABITAT, OECD and Eurostat)



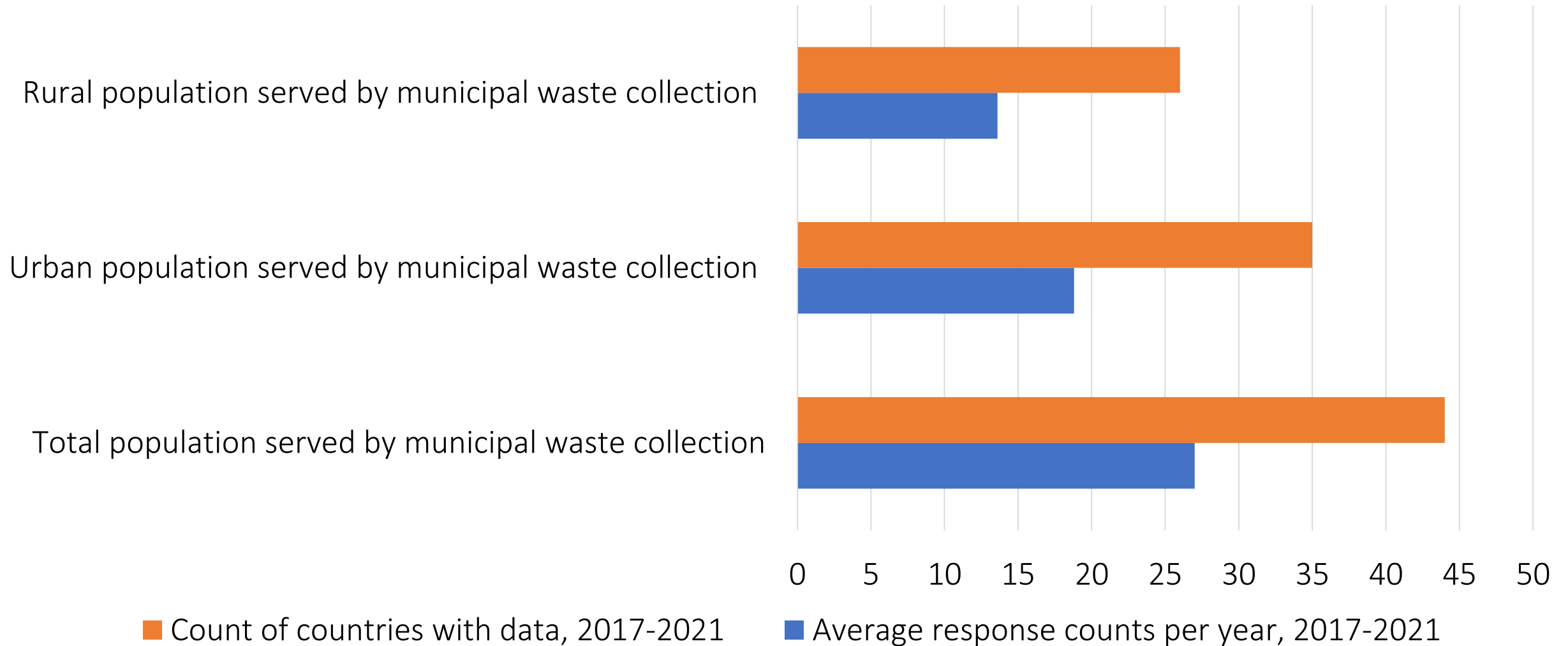
How is the supply of data to meet demand for SDG 12.4.2 (UNSD co-custodian with UNEP)



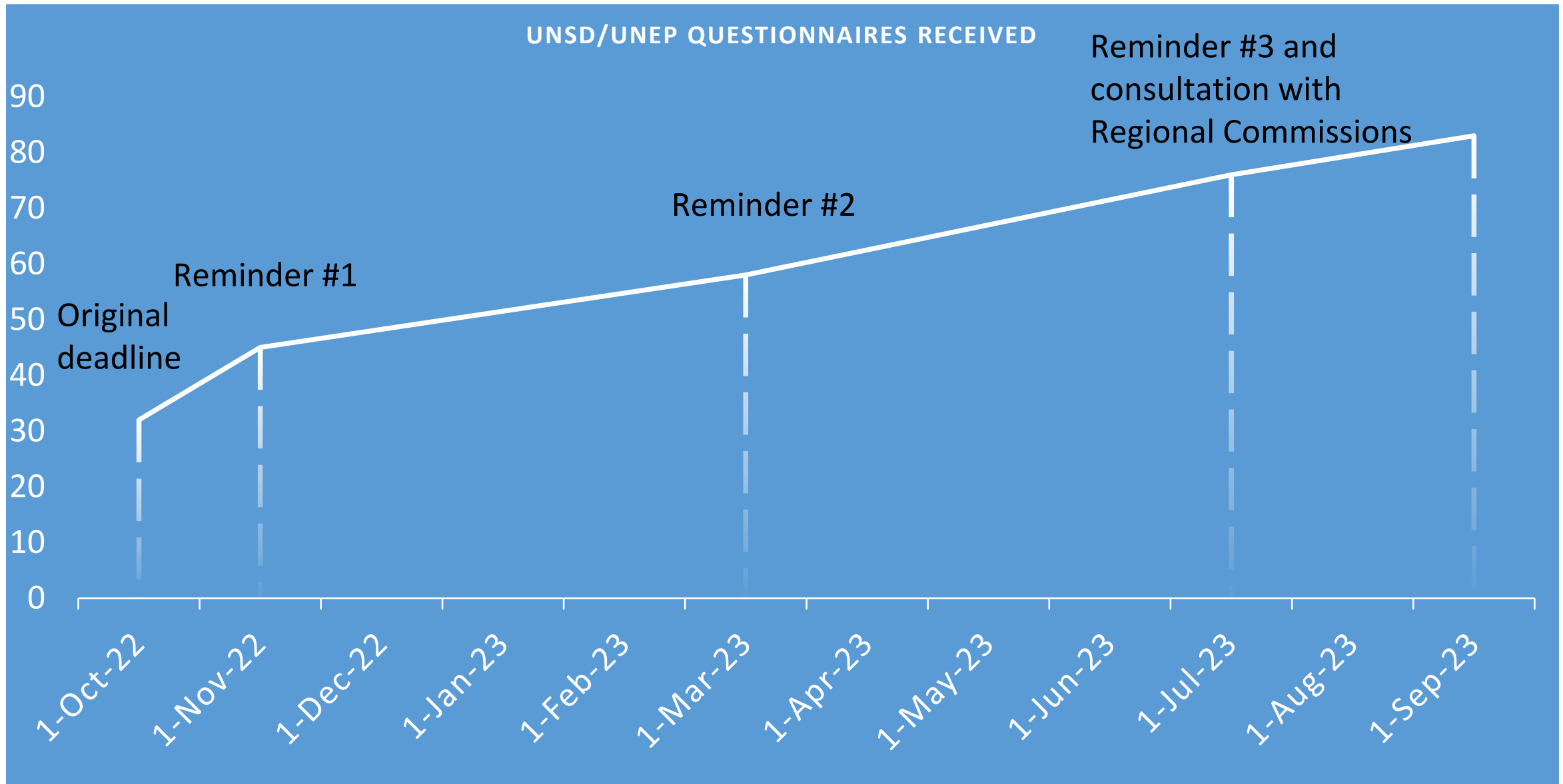
How is the supply of data to meet demand for SDG 12.5.1 (UNSD co-custodian with UNEP)



How is the supply of data to meet demand for the Global Set of Climate Change Statistics and Indicators (Proportion of population served by municipal waste collection)



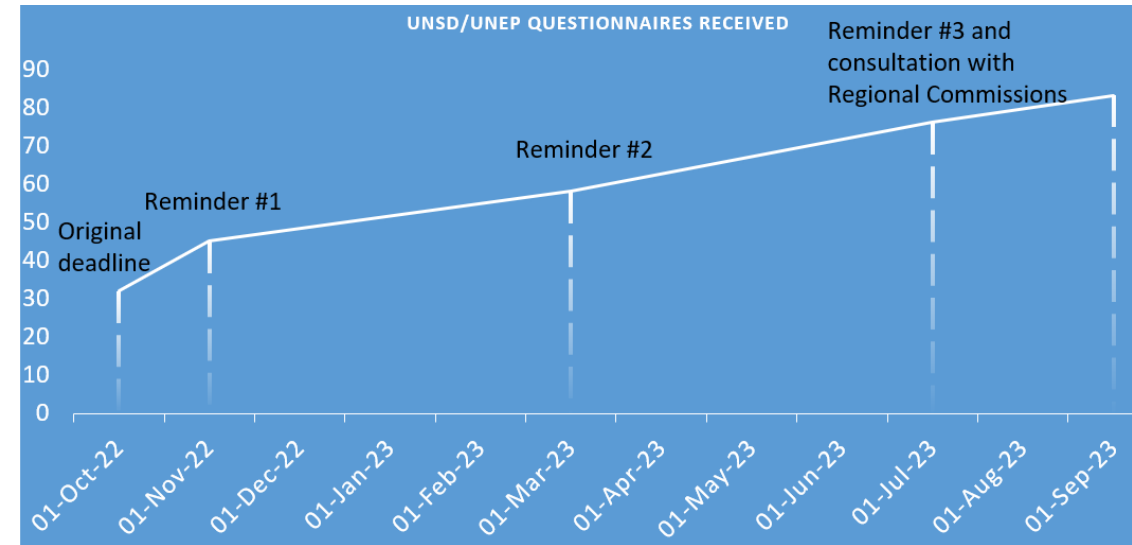
Possible ways to increase response rates





Possible ways to increase response rates

- UNSD and this EGES to make request for countries to strongly encourage formalization of responding to international questionnaires in programs of work within-country.
- **Could the EGES request the Statistical Commission to encourage countries to provide data to the international questionnaires on water and waste statistics to meet various policy demands (SDG-related, Paris Agreement, etc.)?** The current context is that the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire was mandated by the Statistical Commission in 1995 and reinforced in 2003. In 2023, the context and value of the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire (and other international questionnaires such as the Joint OECD/Eurostat Questionnaire on the State of the Environment, and the FAO AQUASTAT Questionnaire) has advanced per various policy demands.
- Colleagues within member states are encouraged to advocate for links between Questionnaire-related work and the Paris Agreement.
- Considering the below chart, what strategies could UNSD apply to increase countries' responses?





UNSD's effort to improve country responses and possible forward steps

- In 2021 and 2022, UNSD started offering multilateral calls as information sessions about the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics with selected agencies such as WHO, HABITAT, UNEP, and regional commissions. These were quite well received (about 15 to 50 participants on each call from member states).
- In 2023, UNSD continues to offer bilateral calls (via professional or social media) with any country who wishes to discuss the Questionnaire. Five such calls were held for the 2022 data collection cycle (with Fiji, Grenada, Mozambique, Oman, UAE), and this helped boost response rates and data quality.
- UNSD typically liaises with member states in person on the margins of capacity development workshops and the UN Statistical Commission.



Observations and way forward

- Response rates to the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics remain a challenge. Typically those variables collected over a longer period of time have more stable time series.
- Demand for data, statistics, information, etc. concerning water and waste is ever-increasing. Moreover, statistics on water and waste are being called upon in many policy contexts (e.g. Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Environmental-Economic Accounting, Disaster Risk Reduction, etc.).
- The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics, alongside the Joint OECD/Eurostat Questionnaire on the State of the Environment, has existed for so long that its metadata and definitions already have a long history of being peer reviewed. Metadata and definitions may be reviewed and edited as new policy frameworks continue come along.
- Various institutions within countries may be in possession of data which meets SDG or other policy demand, but not necessarily be aware of it.



Observations and way forward

- How can the data collected be presented and arranged so that it can convince policy makers of its value to climate change, disaster risk reduction, environmental management, water or waste resources management etc.?
- In cases where countries genuinely have the data which is in demand, how can a country ensure the data are used for international collection and policy purposes?
- How good a metric, and what insight does a simple count of the number member state responses serve? Should there be a greater focus on fragmentation of response rates? (e.g. by the two themes, water and waste)



Grateful to countries for their contributions and for continued supply of data (and detailed footnote explanations) for this Questionnaire.

Grateful to international partners who help improve the quality of the data, and its application to policy.

Thank You!

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