



# UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics – waste and water

Environment Statistics Section  
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

Prepared for eleventh meeting of the Expert Group on  
Environment and Climate Change Statistics (EG-ECCS)

14-17 October 2024



# Outline

1. **History and context of the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics**
2. **Ex post analysis of the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics – 2022**
3. **User attention on the Questionnaire demonstrating why country-owned data are much preferred**
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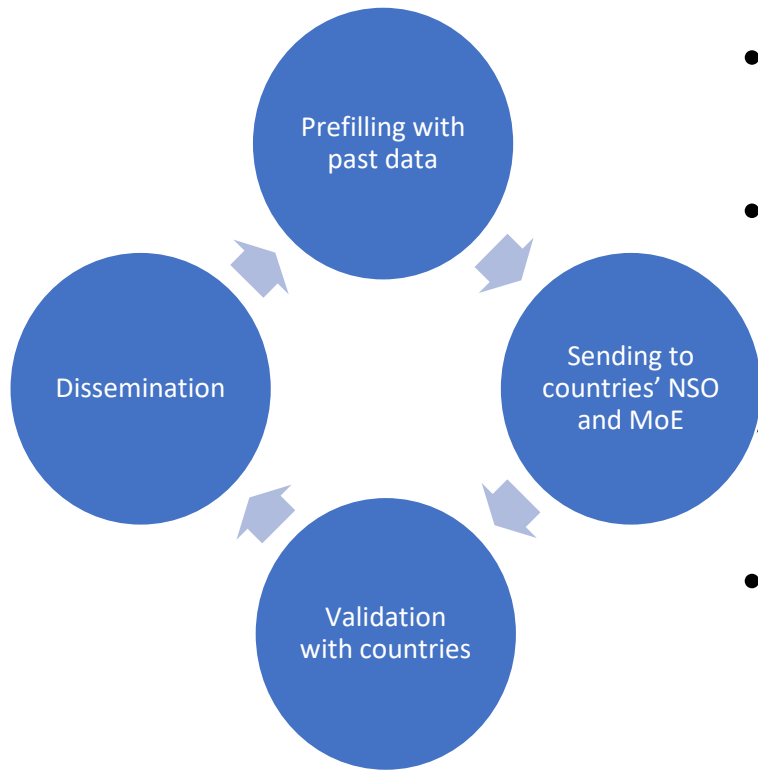


# 1. UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics

- 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 28<sup>th</sup> session (1995); reinforced at 34<sup>th</sup> 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: 46%; 2022: approx. 47%).

- 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 data collection (2024) is the 12<sup>th</sup> one. Questionnaires were sent to countries in October, 2024. There are changes! Looking forward to your collaboration once again.



# 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](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.
- **Tailored queries:** Per solicitation from key users (often World Health Organization, UN Environment Programme, UN-HABITAT, UN Institute for Training and Research, academia).
- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Database:** <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal> Country data sourced from the Questionnaire published alongside country data from other sources.
- **UNdata:** <https://data.un.org/Default.aspx> Web-based data service for the global user community.





**United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and United Nations Environment Programme**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE 2024 ON ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS**

**Section: WATER**

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United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and United Nations Environment Programme

## QUESTIONNAIRE 2024 ON ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

### Section: WASTE

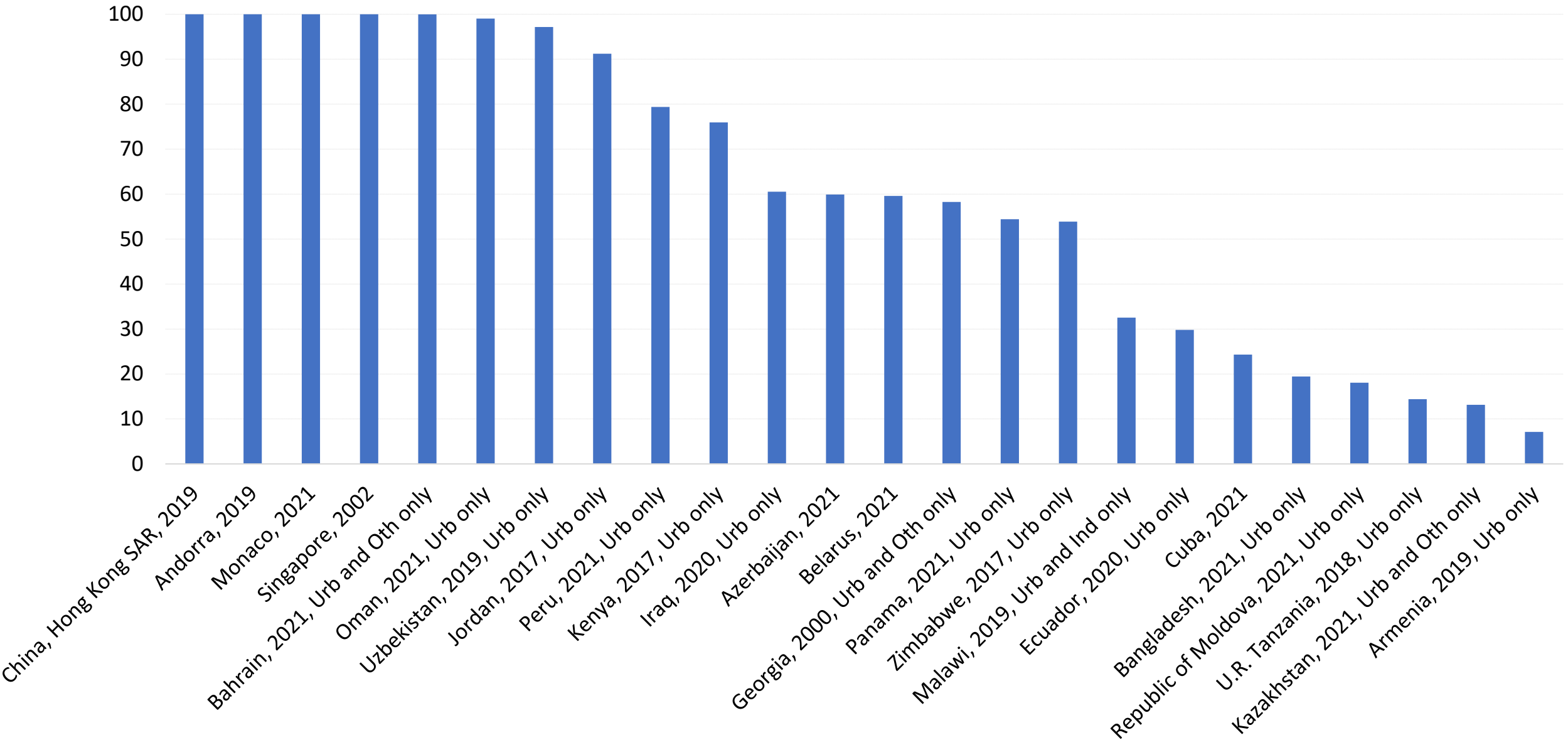
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## 2. Ex post analysis of the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics - 2022

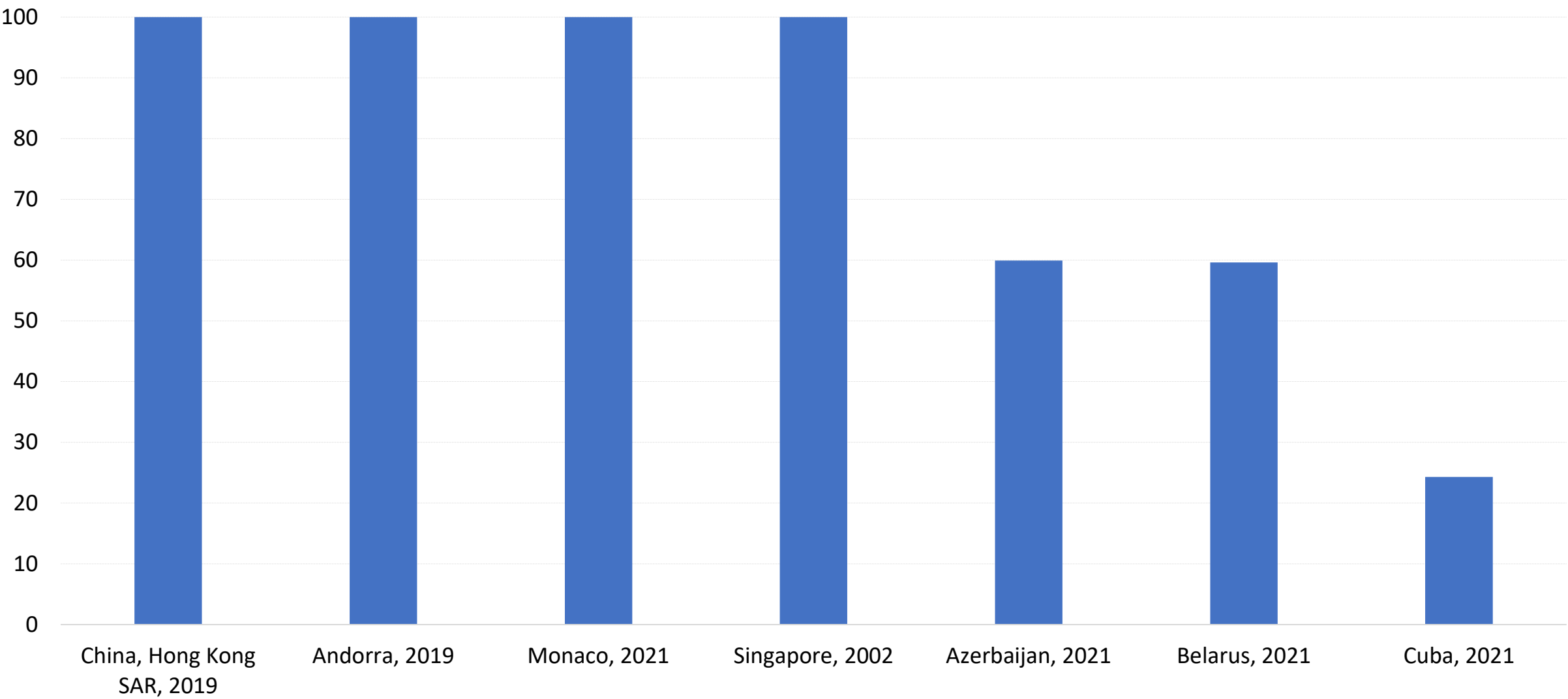
- Database on water and waste statistics housed by UNSD continues to grow, and with it:
  - (i) the institutional strength of UNSD to conduct this data collection exercise; and
  - (ii) the value of data submitted by countries as it is stored and of value for purposes such as long-term time series analysis.
- UNSD and key stakeholders keep collaborating to validate and discuss raw data sets to help check and improve their quality.
  - (i) WHO and UN-HABITAT for wastewater statistics, water treatment levels, population connected to wastewater treatment. Contributes to SDG 6.3.1
  - (ii) UNITAR for e-waste statistics. Supports SDG 12.5.1
  - (iii) UNEP for food waste statistics. Will contribute to SDG 12.3.1 (b)
- Continued collaboration at international level is helping reduce burden to countries, and helping improve value and transparency of data submitted by countries.
- Imperfections remain. Response rate hovers around 50%. Countries switching to the scope of the Joint Questionnaire (e.g. Costa Rica and Colombia in 2022; Peru in 2024) typically contribute to a lowered response rate to the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire. For every variable, increased response rates would be appreciated.

SDG indicator 6.3.1: Percentage of wastewater safely treated. n=24. All data sourced from UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire. Urb = Urban wastewater treatment; Oth = Other wastewater treatment; ind = Independent wastewater treatment. Data remain sporadic to the point of potentially being mis-leading.





SDG indicator 6.3.1: Percentage of wastewater safely treated. n=7.



### 3. User attention on the Questionnaire demonstrating why country-owned data are much preferred (I)

- Policy analysis, research papers by those analysing waste, flows of waste, material flows, etc. frequently reference the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire and value the country-owned data within it.
- This is credit to the countries providing data and their collaboration with the United Nations.



[Published by UNEP, February 2024.](#)

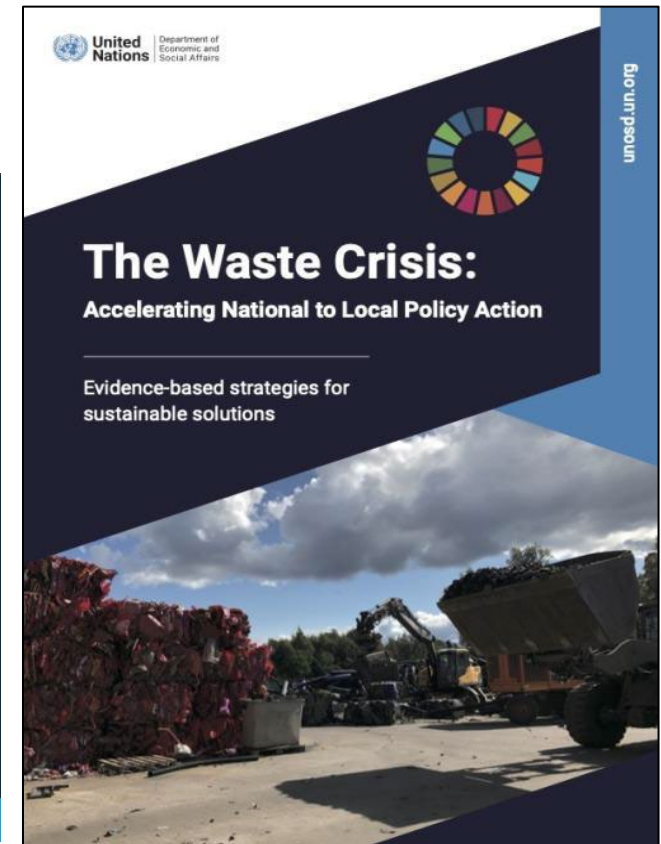
[World Bank, 2018](#)



[Published by UNITAR, 2024.](#)



[Published by UNEP, 2024.](#)



[Published by UNODS, DESA, 2024.](#)

# User attention on the Questionnaire demonstrating why country-owned data are much preferred (II)

← → ↺ 🏠 🔍 nature.com/articles/s41586-024-07758-6

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### A local-to-global emissions inventory of macroplastic pollution

[Nature Journal reference, 4 Sept 2024](#)



#### Monitoring Safely Treated Domestic Wastewater Flows

A Methodological Note for SDG indicator 6.3.1

World Health Organization

August 2024

[SDG 6.3.1 Methodological Note, WHO](#)



#### Progress on the proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater flows safely treated

Mid-term status of SDG Indicator 6.3.1 and acceleration needs, with a special focus on climate change, wastewater reuse and health

2024



United Nations



[Progress on 6.3.1, UN WATER](#)

## 4. Changes in the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics – 2024

- Very minor edits are made to several definitions concerning water statistics; such edits will cause no interruption to existing time series.
- Changes are made to maintain close harmonization between the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire and the Joint OECD/Eurostat Questionnaire and also to better agree with demand for System of Environment-Economic Accounting (SEEA) purposes.
- Nine terms are affected. Within “Precipitation”, the word “wet” is removed.
- For, “Internal Flow”, “run-off” is used rather than “river run-off” so as to be more comprehensive.
- “Glaciers, snow and ice” are added to river, streams, brooks and lakes as examples of “Freshwater”.
- Any potential burden toward countries is expected to be minimal or none at all.



# Changes in the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics – 2024

- A brand new table with eight variables on Food Waste Generation is added.

**Table R7: Food Waste Generation**

Line	Category	Unit	2022	2023
1	Total food waste generated (=2+3+4)	tonnes		
2	Amounts generated by: Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles (ISIC 47)	tonnes		
3	Food Service (ISIC 49-52, 55, 56, 84, 85)	tonnes		
4	Households	tonnes		
5	Total food waste generated: edible parts (=6+7+8)	tonnes		
6	Amounts generated by: Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles (ISIC 47)	tonnes		
7	Food Service (ISIC 49-52, 55, 56, 84, 85)	tonnes		
8	Households	tonnes		



# Changes in the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics – 2024

- UNEP approached UNSD to demonstrate demand for this addition.
- Similar to there being a table on e-waste added to the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire in 2018, a pilot exercise has been conducted prior.
- Careful considerations were made while adding new content. e.g.
  - application of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC);
  - consideration of unit of measurement (tonnes);
  - identifying reputable sources for newly added terms such as “food waste: edible parts”; “food waste”; “food waste generated”.



# UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics – 2024 on Water and Waste

- The UNSD/ UNEP Questionnaire 2024 on Environment Statistics (water and waste sections) and an accompanying letter was sent out to approximately 170 countries and territories earlier this month.
- We ask that the completed Questionnaire be returned to UNSD not later than **Friday 6 December 2024**.
- UNSD is planning a presentation and question and answer session in November. Colleagues working on the water and waste questionnaires are invited to attend.
- Your office's responses will ensure that data reported by countries are validated by UNSD and thereafter made available on UNSD's website.
- By providing data to this Questionnaire, an important contribution will be made to ensure that data from your country feed into national policy decisions and international reporting, such as for the SDGs.



# Thank You!

UNSD Environment Statistics Section  
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