Indicators

G4-EN22

TOTAL WATER DISCHARGE BY QUALITY AND DESTINATION

a. Report the total volume of planned and unplanned water discharges by:
   - Destination
   - Quality of the water including treatment method
   - Whether it was reused by another organization

b. Report standards, methodologies, and assumptions used.

GUIDANCE

Relevance

The amount and quality of the water discharged by the organization is directly linked to ecological impact and operational costs. By progressively improving the quality of discharged water or reducing volumes, the organization has the potential to reduce its impact on the surrounding environment. Unmanaged discharge of effluents with a high chemical or nutrient load (principally nitrogen, phosphorous, or potassium) can have a significant impact on receiving waters. This, in turn, can affect the quality of the water supply available to the organization and its relationship with communities and other water users.

Discharging effluents or process water to a facility for treatment not only reduces pollution levels, but can also lower the organization's financial costs and the risk of regulatory action for non-compliance with environmental regulation. All of this enhances the organization's social license to operate.

Compilation

Identify planned and unplanned water discharges (excluding collected rainwater and domestic sewage) by destination and indicate how it is treated. If the organization does not have a meter to measure water discharges, this figure needs to be estimated by subtracting the approximate volume consumed on-site from the volume withdrawn as reported in G4-EN8.

Organizations that discharge effluents or process water report water quality in terms of total volumes of effluent using standard effluent parameters such as Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) or Total Suspended Solids (TSS). The specific choice of quality parameters will vary depending on the organization's products, services, and operations.

The selection of parameters is to be consistent with those used in the organization's sector.

Water quality metrics may vary depending on national or regional regulations.

Definitions

See Glossary in *Implementation Manual*, p. 244

- Total water discharge

Documentation sources

Potential sources of information about the volume of water discharged by the organization include flow meters (point-source discharges or when discharges are released through a pipe) and regulatory permits.