TRI Data Quality Practices
Thursday, 1:00-1:55 p.m.
Atrium Ballroom

Comparing TRI Data with Other EPA Datasets

Velu Senthil and Audrey Kanet, Presenters

Annually EPA compiles the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) data submitted by facilities and makes the data available to the public. The TRI Program is committed to providing high quality data to the public. The TRI Program conducts various data quality activities throughout the life cycle of the TRI data collection process and public data release. One of the data quality activities is comparing TRI data with other EPA datasets such as National Emissions Inventory (NEI), Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMR), and Chemical Data Reports (CDR) to maximize compliance and quality of TRI data.

Canadian Experiences with Improving Quality of Pollutant Release Data, and Trends in Reported Pollutant Releases in Canada

Jody Rosenberger, Presenter

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) manages the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI), which is the Canadian equivalent of the United States Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). Data quality is defined broadly for the NPRI, and is looked at from the perspective of whether the published information meets the needs of data users. Stemming from efforts to better understand the needs of users of NPRI data, ECCC has undertaken a variety of activities to improve the quality of data. These activities have covered indicators of data quality such as accuracy, reliability and completeness, as well as for broader parameters such as relevance, accessibility, timeliness, and understandability. Future efforts in the near term will aim to improve the understandability of NPRI data, for example by providing examples of linkages to other relevant environmental datasets and additional contextual information, to support a longer-term transition from data to knowledge. NPRI has been collecting and publishing data on releases (to air, water and land), disposals and recycling of numerous pollutants since 1993. As such, it is interesting to look at changes in the data over time, and the drivers behind those trends. Identified drivers include changes to the requirements themselves (e.g., addition of substances, reduction of substance thresholds, inclusion of new activities, and removal of exemptions), changes in reporting facilities due to economic or other considerations, changes in release estimation or measurement techniques, and reductions in releases due to pollution prevention or regulatory efforts.

Communication: The Foundation of Increasing Data Accuracy and Improving Reports

Gary Vegh, Presenter

In TRI reporting, having accurate raw data to work from is paramount. Because the emissions that are reported for Toxics Release Inventory are a direct result of the materials that are processed in a facility, final reporting accuracy hinges on having credible material data. However, manufacturers often report having difficulty securing accurate and comprehensive material chemical composition data from their vendors. For this reason, ERA sees communication and the relationship between reporter and vendor to be an essential, yet overlooked link in the chain of TRI reporting and accountability. To address this, ERA has developed a sophisticated data-sharing bridge that allows reporters to obtain complete and accurate material chemical composition data from their vendors electronically, without compromising confidentiality or security for either party. This digital data portal is more accurate, secure, and faster than traditional methods of TRI data transmission. This short presentation will endeavor to highlight the importance of working together with vendors/suppliers to prioritize more comprehensive data sharing throughout the supply chain as a means of improving TRI reporting, which is mutually beneficial for the manufacturing industry, the community, and the environment. Whether it is done via a digital portal, or some other means of communication, improving how we communicate data related to materials is a fundamental aspect of proper, accurate TRI reporting that is often overlooked. Participants will come away with an understanding of how they can improve their own TRI accuracy, transparency, and be prepared for NextGen reporting by improving the quality of their incoming materials data, which will in turn reduce their burden on locating and correcting reporting errors later in the TRI submission process.