



# Fact sheet

Version of March 2017

## Swiss Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (SwissPRTR)

SwissPRTR is Switzerland's publicly accessible Swiss Pollutant Release and Transfer Register. It provides information about releases of specific pollutants in the air, water or soil, as well as transfers of wastes and pollutants in wastewater. Accordingly, SwissPRTR helps inform the public of the environmental situation and reduce the environmental impact in Switzerland.

The **legal basis** of SwissPRTR is the Ordinance of 15 December 2006 on the Register relating to Pollutant Release and the Transfer of Waste and of Pollutants in Waste Water (**PRTR-V Ordinance, PRTR-O**).

## SwissPRTR and VeVA-Online: differences and usefulness in the SwissPRTR reporting process

Facilities with installations in accordance with Annex 1 PRTR-O are required to report more than two tonnes of hazardous waste per year in SwissPRTR. For that purpose, hazardous waste data may be imported directly from the VeVA-Online database. In addition, VeVA-Online has a useful feature that allows facilities and cantons to check the quantities of hazardous waste reported in SwissPRTR. Nevertheless, VeVA-Online and SwissPRTR are in no way redundant systems, as they differ significantly in purpose and content. This fact sheet describes these differences in detail and discusses how VeVA-Online can be very useful in the PRTR reporting process.

### 1 Basic differences between VeVA-Online and SwissPRTR

VeVA-Online <a href="https://www.veva-online.admin.ch">https://www.veva-online.admin.ch</a>	PRTR (as concerns hazardous waste) <a href="http://www.prtr.admin.ch/">http://www.prtr.admin.ch/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The data are <b>reliable</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Public</b> access to information is the focus</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies that <b>accept hazardous waste</b> are required to report (waste disposal companies)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies that <b>produce hazardous waste</b> are required to report</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comprehensive</b> documentation/</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reporting requirement is de-</li> </ul>

completeness is a focus	signed so that the <b>most relevant point sources</b> are covered (only > 2 t, only hazardous waste from installations required to report to PRTR)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Detailed identification</b> of hazardous waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only the <b>total quantity</b> of hazardous waste is disclosed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are <b>no reporting thresholds</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are two levels of <b>reporting thresholds: level 1: facility (Annex 1 PRTR)</b> and <b>level 2: quantity of hazardous waste (Art. 4, letter b PRTR)</b></li> </ul>

### Conclusions:

- There are important differences in the target, purpose, type and origin of the data
- Due to these differences, the databases provide often significantly different total quantities of hazardous wastes
- Synergies: assignment of VeVA hazardous waste definitions and categories (reclamation/disposal); possibility of data transfer; shared expertise

## 2 Facilities that use VeVA-Online to report to SwissPRTR

**Recommendation:** Use the import function in the PRTR software.

**Step 1:** If your facility does not have access to VeVA-Online, you can request it for free. A VeVA-Online facility number will need to be assigned to you for that purpose. To receive your facility number, you must provide the cantonal authorities, preferably by e-mail or fax, the full address of the facility, the telephone number, e-mail address and name of the competent contact person. Further information and a list of cantonal offices are available here:

<https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/de/home/themen/abfall/fachinformationen/abfallpolitik-und-massnahmen/vollzugshilfe-ueber-den-verkehr-mit-sonderabfaellen-und-anderen-/pflichten-der-inhaberinnen-und-inhaber-bei-der-uebergabe-von-abf/pflichten-der-abgeberbetriebe/erteilung-einer-betriebsnummer-durch-den-kanton.html>

**Step 2:** Import the data. To record transfers of waste in SwissPRTR, click on “Launch VeVA import” instead of “New entry”. Then, log in using your VeVA login information (facility number, VeVA password).

**Step 3:** Review the data and remove hazardous waste data that do not have to be reported, if desired. In addition to sources within facilities, waste-producing facilities can also use the query feature to retrieve data in VeVA-Online for review: Using the query feature, it is possible to obtain a summary of details (e.g. type of hazardous waste) that do not appear in SwissPRTR. A total reporting threshold of 2 tonnes of hazardous waste (Art. 4, letter b PRTR) applies. Hazardous waste should be reported only if it is related to the business activity (in-

stallation; Annex 1 PRTR). Two examples of this distinction are provided in section 3. A justification must be provided, if requested, for hazardous waste that is not reported to SwissPRTR. It is easier to review the data when an explanatory remark has been added to the report, which is why the addition of such a remark is highly recommended. However, if so desired, the VeVA import can also be accepted as is, including hazardous wastes that do not absolutely have to be reported. For many facilities, the quantities of hazardous waste in VeVA-Online match the quantities that must be reported in SwissPRTR. Yet another advantage of importing VeVA-Online data directly into SwissPRTR is that the reclamation and disposal categories are automatically assigned.

### 3 Using VeVA-Online to review data (cantons and facilities)

A comparison of PRTR and VeVA-Online reveals significant differences in the purpose and content of both databases. More specifically, VeVA-Online also records information about hazardous wastes from installations and processes that essentially do not need to be reported in PRTR (e.g. illuminants, batteries, waste from hospitals or automobile repair centres). Accordingly, the total quantities of hazardous waste entered in the VeVA-Online and SwissPRTR databases are different in several ways. When comparing data at the level of an individual facility that must report to SwissPRTR, many of these basic, somewhat branch-related differences are immaterial as far as the reporting requirement is concerned. Thus, there are usually very little or no differences at all between VeVA-Online and SwissPRTR when it comes to an individual facility subject to the reporting requirement. There are several possible reasons for this:

#### Situation 1: A facility reports significantly less in SwissPRTR than in VeVA-Online

There are 3 possible explanations:

**Explanation 1: Justified omissions of hazardous waste** not directly related to the business activity that is subject to a PRTR reporting requirement (Installation; Annex 1 PRTR).

Example 1:

*Asbestos is removed as part of the renovation work performed in an office building. The resulting waste and hazardous waste are not directly related to the production installation, which is why they do not have to be reported.*

Example 2:

*When checking the data, the canton notices that the quantity of hazardous waste reported by the facility in the SwissPRTR is around 40% less than the quantity reported in VeVA-Online. A more precise analysis of VeVA-Online data shows that this difference can be mainly explained by the fact that the VeVA-Online data also include sewer sludge, batteries and fluorescent tubes, which are not directly related to the business activity subject to the PRTR reporting requirement. A remaining uncertainty of 6% is acceptable.*

**Explanation 2: Incomplete report by a facility that must report to the PRTR**

The internal records of the facility subject to the PRTR reporting requirement are incomplete. The report is rejected by the canton. The facility transfers the quantities reported in VeVA-Online or corrects the report in another traceable way.

**Explanation 3: Incorrect reports from the waste disposal company**

Finally, it is also possible that the VeVA report is incorrect. However, experience shows that the information in VeVA-Online is usually fairly reliable. This should be expected since one of the key VeVA goals is to record complete information about all hazardous waste movements. In addition, hazardous waste producers (facilities that must report to PRTR) and waste disposal companies (facilities that must report to VeVA) both have an interest in correctly recording quantities in the event of a transfer, since financial obligations result from this. However, it should be noted that data imported from VeVA-Online into SwissPRTR in the first two months of the year may still be incomplete in some cases due to the deadline for reporting hazardous waste under the OMW (within 30 business days of the end of each quarter). Nevertheless, if more in-depth explanations of discrepancies are required, these should not delay reports in SwissPRTR. The responsibility of providing a complete, traceable report in SwissPRTR lies with the hazardous waste producer (facilities required to report to PRTR).

**Situation 2: A facility reports significantly more hazardous waste in SwissPRTR than in VeVA-Online**

This indicates that the internal statistics of the waste-producing facility are incorrect or that the waste disposal companies have produced incorrect reports. Discovering this discrepancy can help expose mistakes in the reporting process (producer or disposer). In the analysis, consideration should be given to the fact that VeVA-Online only records transfers from the premises. VeVA reports are not produced for movements within an area and there is no PRTR reporting requirement for this either. In other words, the treatment of hazardous waste in the same area may in some cases lead to incorrect interpretations.

**Which discrepancy is significant?**

The answer to this question is at the discretion of the cantons, which check the traceability of the reports. However, it is important to consider the different purposes of the databases: SwissPRTR, on the one hand, makes the facility subject to the PRTR reporting requirement individually responsible for its reported data with the goal of making the total quantity of hazardous waste publicly accessible. VeVA-Online, on the other hand, is reliable and targets very detailed and complete reports from waste disposal companies. In addition, proportionality compared to other data collection methods should be at least kept in mind when interpreting discrepancies. For that matter, differences of 10%, for example, may be deemed acceptable.

Abbreviations:

PRTRO	Ordinance of 15 December 2006 on the Register relating to Pollutant Release and the Transfer of Waste and of Pollutants in Waste Water (SR 814.017).
OMW	Ordinance of 22 June 2005 on Movements of Waste (SR 814.610)

