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Preface

Until 20 years ago, the combination of the term "source separation" and "wastewater" was hardly found in the scientific literature. Source separation was mainly an issue for those interested in the treatment of solid waste. Today, source separation is one of the most exciting developments in the area of wastewater treatment, driven by the increasingly visible resource restrictions of the 21st century.

The book, which you now hold in your hands, is a landmark in this development. It summarizes in a systematic and thorough way the advantages and challenges of source separation and shows that this notion is inherently connected to decentralization, another of today's important issues. The book, however, does not stay conceptual. As a process engineer by education and by heart, I have enjoyed immensely the technology part, where a whole new world of processes and techniques opens up. Most of the new technologies not only ensure safe discharge, but also allow for the recovery of precious resources.

From the chapters on the international experience, I realized how many different drivers and challenges all lead in the direction of source separation and decentralization. Although I was aware of many of the pilot projects from the literature, I am impressed by this condensed presentation of more than a decade of experience in a number of different countries. And I must agree with my colleagues of a life-time, Peter Wilderer and Bruce Beck, who in the two last chapters both dare to pronounce the possibility of a paradigm shift in wastewater treatment: It certainly looks as if a new field has evolved.

I wish you an inspiring reading and learning experience and hope that the next generation of wastewater professionals will develop this innovative and exciting approach into maturity. The world desperately needs a new approach to wastewater management and based on my experience, I predict that this approach will include source separation and decentralization.

Willi Gujer