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Economic and Environmental Evaluation of Nitrogen Removal and Recovery

Methods from Wastewater

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Abstract

The driver for waste-based economic growth is long-term strategic design, and a paradigm-shift from waste treatment to resource recovery. This study aims to use an integrated modelling approach to evaluate the holistic economic and environmental profiles of three alternative nitrogen removal and recovery methods integrated into wastewater treatment systems, including conventional nitrification-denitrification, Anammox, and the anaerobic ion exchange route, to provide insights into N recovery system designs which are key elements in building a sustainable circular economy. Our results suggest that ion exchange is a promising technology showing high N removal-recovery efficiency from municipal wastewater and delivering competitive sustainability scores. In comparison with the well-developed conventional route, ion exchange and Anammox are undergoing significant research and development; as highlighted in sensitivity analyses, there is considerable room for process design and optimization of ion exchange systems to achieve economically and environmentally optimal performance.

Keywords: nitrification/denitrification; Anammox; Ion exchange; wastewater treatment; Life Cycle Analysis (LCA).

[†]Equivalent contribution

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