



MODERNISING URBAN SANITATION IN BANGLADESH



In Bangladesh improved sanitation in small and emerging towns consists largely of latrines and septic tanks. A major part of the human waste from these facilities is dumped untreated in waterways or on marginal land, harming the livelihoods and health of the poorest. Without proper faecal sludge management improved sanitation and hygiene is unattainable.

ONE MILLION PEOPLE TO ENJOY SAFER SANITATION

Investment in sanitation generally concentrates either on household toilets or sewerage construction. The grim reality in small and emerging towns, and even some larger cities, is that the vast majority of households rely on latrines or septic tanks, while faecal sludge management has been widely neglected by policy makers and local authorities. Of Bangladesh's 30 million urban inhabitants, about 42% have 'improved sanitation' (latrines or septic tanks). However, septic waste goes untreated except in some parts of Dhaka, which has the country's only treatment plant. Just 18% of the capital's 9 million people have sewerage systems.

The deteriorating quality of water resources and the environmental hazards related to unregulated waste disposal are now making the reality of the situation increasingly difficult to ignore.

This is not only an environmental problem, but also an equity problem. It is the richer and middle classes that construct septic tanks, but most sludge is emptied manually, posing a health risk to some of Bangladesh's most dispossessed communities who carry out this work. Sludge largely ends up being dumped untreated in drains, waterways and on marginal land, where it pollutes and poses a huge health risk, again mostly affecting the poorest communities.

Furthermore, construction, maintenance or emptying of latrines and septic tanks is largely unregulated and few households are aware of the hygienic considerations of waste beyond their toilet.

With funding support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the UK Department for International Development, SNV is initiating the project "Demonstration of pro-poor market-based solutions for faecal sludge management in urban centres of Southern Bangladesh". It aims to reform the way that human waste is managed in Bangladesh by developing faecal sludge management services in Khulna City Corporation area and the two small towns of Khustia and Jhenaidah in Khulna division. One million people will gain an improved living environment and access to safe faecal sludge management. The project will also give 250,000 people access to improved sanitation facilities.

A WIDE SPECTRUM OF PARTNERS

SNV strengthens the capacities of local organisations and governments, and promotes multi-stakeholder collaboration. The project will be implemented by SNV Bangladesh under the leadership and close cooperation with Khulna

WHY KHULNA?

Khulna is relatively accessible from the capital, but not part of it. It has an estimated urban population of 1.6 million in the city corporation and 1.2 million in 36 smaller towns (2011 census) of whom 35.8% live below the upper poverty line (vs 21.3% nationally). The project is proposed for the city corporation and two of its neighbouring towns which have populations of around 100,000 people.

City Corporation and will also work with Khulna University, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Khulna Water and Sewerage Authority, WaterAid Bangladesh and other relevant local expert organisations.

An advisory committee of representatives from the government and other sector stakeholders at the national level will be instrumental in linking with other sanitation initiatives and developing uptake of the tested business models beyond the proposed scope of the project.

SNV is engaging with a wide spectrum of partners to bring in specialised technical expertise on specific treatment options and re-use of faecal sludge. Ongoing innovation in

technical solutions will be an important part of the solution, and will be coupled with behaviour change of different consumers (households, businesses) and development of the private sector, including current informal service providers.

Local line-agencies often feel powerless to ensure compliance and simply do not have the means for regulation and enforcement. SNV brings stakeholders together to create a broader awareness and willingness for change. It also supports and builds capacity for assessment, planning and implementation of improvements in household sanitation and hygiene, as well as faecal sludge management.

BENEFITTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES	
This programme combines governance, private sector development and hygiene behaviour change processes, creating clear benefits for all involved.	
Families	Better health through improved hygiene practices and cleaner water sources
	Enhanced functioning of sanitation facilities/toilets
	Higher quality sanitation services from private sector
	The programme will particularly benefit low income families who bear the brunt of frequent and unsafe pit emptying.
Workers	Manual emptiers should be able to secure better income and safer working conditions.
Environment and local governance	Improved coordination between public and private sector stakeholders
	Reduced contamination of water resources and the environment
	Promoting sector leadership of local government agencies in regulation and enforcement of sanitary standards
	For the WASH sector it will create successful examples of sustainable safe FSM to enable replication of these models in other urban areas.

AT A GLANCE – KEY ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT

1. Consumer behaviour change	What will motivate users to consider sludge management as a serious issue? Unless demand for services is increased the market for sludge management services is limited. Behaviour change communication will be tailored to different consumer segments with special attention given to informal settlements, public areas and schools.
2. The project uses a pro poor market-based approach	It develops viable business models for toilet upgrading and faecal sludge emptying services, transport, treatment disposal and/or re-use. SNV will support the private sector to play key roles in sludge management. The project will work with manual emptier communities and local entrepreneurs to develop and test business models for mechanical emptying. In so doing it will generate increased income and improve the occupational safety of workers.
3. Strengthen sanitation governance	Onsite sanitation and disposal of human waste is largely unregulated in Bangladesh. At the moment faecal sludge management is not a priority – water management and sewerage infrastructure is. The project will work with local authorities and other stakeholders to strengthen regulations, planning (including of infrastructure development), standards, accreditation and enforcement of sanitary toilet facilities and safe sludge management practices. It will introduce health and safety standards for emptying.
4. Improve treatment, disposal and re-use of sludge in a financially viable, socially acceptable and environmentally safe way	The project will test new efficient and effective technology options that are expected to become available during the first phase of the programme. There is also a range of existing technology options that can be explored, considered and tested, including those supported by The Foundation. Research will also look at technical and financial solutions for upgrading unsanitary and unsafe toilets, especially in poorer neighbourhoods.

OUR PROJECT PARTNERS

“Demonstration of pro-poor market-based solutions for faecal sludge management in urban centres of Southern Bangladesh” is a project of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and Khulna City Corporation, in collaboration with Khulna University, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Khulna Water and Sewerage Authority and WaterAid Bangladesh. The project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the UK Department for International Development.

