

# WASH ALLIANCE LEARNING EVENT #2

## FAECAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT IN BANGLADESH



How to ensure sustainable WASH services in a developing context? Three speakers shared their experiences on Faecal Sludge Management in Bangladesh. During our event at the World Water Week in Stockholm they presented their approaches and cases. The central questions they posed were driving the discussions that followed. Below, we will share with you what we have learned during this second learning event, and what we need to learn in the future.

### FAECAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT



WAI Learning Sessions are set up to share experiences and learn from each other, but also to explore new insights. This learning session is the second out of a range of 4 Learning Sessions. [Visit our website](#) for more information.

MIRIAM OTOO - IWMI

## 1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & VIABLE BUSINESS CASES ON FAECAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT

There are significant opportunities to generate social benefits from faecal sludge treatment and also monetize the reuse value in ways that enable public and private sectors to achieve higher degrees of cost recovery or to generate profits for a better delivery of sanitation services. As we make a paradigm shift towards more market-driven options for faecal sludge management, it is timely to analyse emerging business models for testing and dissemination in the public and private sectors.

There are different business models for Faecal Sludge Management that have great potential to support the sustainability of waste management enterprises - from Emptying & Transport models to Emptying for Reuse models. There is a great opportunity to reduce operational and maintenance (O&M) costs and/or use generated revenues from sale of recovered resources to bridge financial gaps and complement other supporting mechanisms for making faecal management more attractive.

Sustainable Faecal Sludge Management requires important guiding principles to be taken into account. It goes without saying that one of the most important principles is the role of (governmental) institutions in creating an enabling environment for FSM and setting up the right operating structures, such as licensing and regulation. Engaging all stakeholders is important for awareness creation as well. In many situations, governmental institutions appear to be unaware of the sanitation and waste problem. Factual information and empirical cases demonstrating the effects of poor faecal sludge management can serve as a catalyst to encourage engagement of policymakers.

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*Creating an enabling environment for FSM and setting up the right operating structures are guiding principles for successful FSM*

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*Click to view the presentation*



A question that remains for the future is:

**HOW DO WE TRANSLATE COST RECOVERY FROM REUSE TO BENEFIT THE ENTIRE SANITATION SERVICE CHAIN?**

## RIAD IMAM MAHMUD - MAX FOUNDATION

### 2. EXPERIENCES WITH FAECAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) emerged as a second-generation sanitation problem with major challenges including:

- Predominant onsite sanitation options
- Problems related to emptying and disposal of pit contents
- Absence of proper pit-emptying services in the latrines
- The pit-contents are often drained into the surrounding low lying areas manually
- Lack of political commitment, finance and resources

An important instrument to address these challenges is raising awareness on the business opportunities in FSM, and training entrepreneurs and sweepers in this domain. These trainings should be both business and technically orientated. The business side should focus on supporting the management of customers and developing calendars to schedule the collection times of the faecal sludge. The technical side should focus on approaches for safe handling in desludging. This includes for example safe manual pit emptying and bottom soaking of the waste water.

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*FSM training elements should be both business and technically orientated*

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If we want to take Faecal Sludge Management in Bangladesh to the next level,

**WE NEED BETTER AND SAFER TECHNOLOGY, SOLID POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND MORE ELABORATED, BUSINESS BASED SOLUTIONS.**

## VALENTIN POST - WASTE

### 3. THE DIAMOND APPROACH

The foundation for successful business models in solid waste and faecal sludge management is making sure to involve and connect all different stakeholders. WASTE calls this their Diamond Approach that ensures sustainable development and continuous growth.

The diamond shows you need a business and an enabling environment, in which the stakeholders are able to communicate and cooperate, to stimulate local business. Every single stakeholder needs to know its role and self-reliance of all stakeholders is key.

This approach should be tailored towards specific needs, whether it is improvement in emptying, local financial innovation or licensing. In faecal sludge management in India and Bangladesh, WASTE and its partners have set up over 600,000 sanitation systems allowing for safe local reuse of faecal sludge and at larger scale through businesses making products out of human waste using different technologies.

Faecal Sludge reuse is a strong economic development driver. Business production should be kept small, this means not more than 300 tons max per year. Otherwise, it is not possible to market the product. Decentralised units will function better than large, centralised ones, with lower capital and running costs. It's important that we do not think big, but think small and putting FSM to use.

The role of the government can be disruptive in this context. It's important to convince them of the values of (reuse of) human waste. Many farmers already use it! You need to know your market: creating awareness is important.

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*Faecal Sludge reuse is a strong economic development driver.  
But don't think big, think small.*

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*Click to view the presentation*



Presenter question:

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT HAPPEN IF THE NGO OR CONSULTANT IS PART OF THE DIAMOND**