

Institutional Framework for Faecal Sludge Collection and Transport in Burkina Faso

ONEA, the Burkina Faso National Utility for Water and Sanitation collaborates with Sandec to improve faecal sludge management by strengthening stakeholder capacity and designing an institutional framework. Magalie Bassan¹, Linda Strande¹

Need for an institutional framework

The current sanitation policy in Burkina Faso comprises four main components:

- The environmental code [1] specifies proper disposal of urban waste.
- A decree regulates urban waste storage, collection & transport (C&T), treatment and disposal, and requires faecal sludge (FS) to be transported to authorised sites.
- The discharge standard sets limits for pollutants released into air, water and soil.
- The public hygiene code appoints municipalities to manage urban waste and sanitation services.

Yet, no document defines responsibilities and quality standards for the FS supply chain. Due to the long distances to illegal discharge areas and harassment by the police and the population, the mechanical emptiers face difficulties in disposing of FS. To alleviate this situation, ONEA plans to build three FS treatment plants (FSTPs) in Ouagadougou.

Since emptiers are not involved in urban planning programmes, they do not benefit from government assistance and have poor business management skills [2]. On account of financial difficulties, only 60% of the emptiers surveyed in 2007 were active in 2010 [3]. Thus, strengthening the organisation of emptiers and involving them in the planning process is a priority.

Emptiers involvement

Meetings with emptiers have revealed significant weaknesses in their professional

association and financial management skills. Workshops were held to raise their awareness about the benefits of a new institutional organisation. The meetings gradually built up trust, and task groups developed regulatory texts for FS management considering emptiers' constraints.

Participative process outputs

The following four documents were created to organise and professionalise the sector (Fig. 1):

1. A decree on FS C&T regulating:
 - Type of FS and obligation to discharge at authorised sites.
 - Provision of an official address for businesses and payment of discharge fees at FSTPs.
 - Required safety and health measures.
 - Right of emptiers to establish their service price.
2. A municipal licence authorising emptiers who adhere to this decree to deliver C&T services for three years.
3. A partnership agreement between ONEA and the municipality defining their responsibilities to raise awareness of the population, establish discharge and treatment sites, enforce the regulatory texts, and assist the emptiers.
4. Guidelines informing the emptiers about on-site sanitation, safety, hygiene, and financial management.

Perspectives

The emptiers are key stakeholders. Involving them in developing the required regulations guarantees their appropriateness. To ensure the success of this institutional setup, several measures are needed:

- The Emptiers Association needs to be strengthened to become a strong interlocutor for the authorities, to improve working conditions of the employees and to optimise their financial balance.
- Access to FSTPs and official discharge sites require good roads, reasonable opening times and discharge fees.
- ONEA and the authorities should be committed to strengthening the emptiers' capacities, to involving them in sanitation programmes and informing the population on the management of on-site sanitation.
- Financial mechanisms should be developed to ensure viability of the entire system.
- Frequent meetings should be held for ongoing evaluation and optimisation of the sector.

This participative process has initiated a collaboration with the emptiers – often not considered in urban planning – and provided other stakeholders insight into their difficulties. This is crucial, as it improves recognition of the essential public services the emptiers provide. The exchange between authorities, sanitation experts and emptiers improves the quality standard of these services in terms of hygiene, safety and environmental protection. Both the participative process and the resulting documents may readily be adapted to other countries and contribute to appropriate FS management.

- [1] Assemblée des députés du peuple du Burkina Faso, (1997): Code de l'environnement au Burkina Faso. 005/97/ADP.
- [2] Bassan, M., Mbéguéré, M. et al. (2011): Integrated faecal sludge management scheme for the cities of Burkina Faso. 2nd IWA Development Congress. IWA, Malaysia.
- [3] Koanda, H., Bassan, M. et al. (2010): Rapport d'analyse institutionnelle de la gestion des boues de vidange dans la ville de Ouagadougou. Eawag, Switzerland.

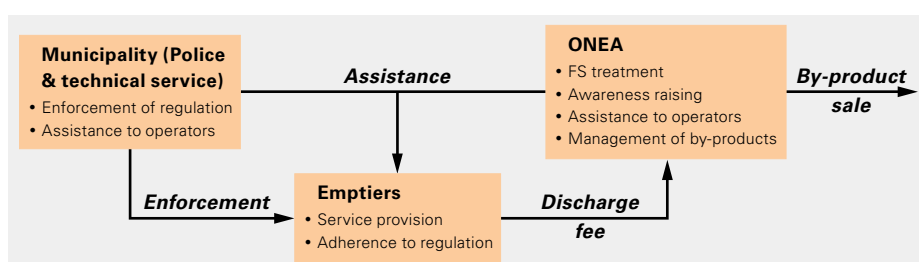


Figure 1: Stakeholders' responsibilities and their relationships.

¹ Eawag/Sandec, Switzerland

Contact: magalie.bassan@eawag.ch