

Regional Ecological Sanitation Workshop

Background

South Asia and in particular the rural centers in South Asia are at a very crucial juncture. The water security and public health situation in most of the rural areas in south Asia is very poor due to inefficient ways of handling the existing as well as newly augmented fresh water supplies. The Urban centers are seen as water guzzlers by the Peri-urban and rural areas from where the water is diverted to cities. Uncontained and untreated excreta, does not only threaten the health for the unprotected rural poor but also causes damage to the entire rural economies with increased strain on health systems, and loss of productivity.

Given the huge scale of capacity development needs in the field of Ecological Sanitation (a.k.a EcoSan) , it is necessary to create a resource pool of guides well versed with the concept so as to take up capacity building activities in a well networked manner.

It is in this context that **Cap Net South Asia Regional Secretariat** feels that there is a strong need to address the sanitation issues and start building capacities and synergies in the region

Ecological Sanitation

Introduction to Ecological Sanitation: - A contentious approach to sanitation is ecological sanitation where sanitation can be viewed as a three-step process dealing with human excreta, containment, sanitization and recycling. The objective is to protect human health and the environment while reducing the use of water in the sanitation system and recycling nutrients.

The concept behind ecological sanitation (Ecosan) is that sanitation problems could be solved more sustainably and efficiently if the resources contained in excreta and wastewater were recovered and used rather than discharged into the water bodies and the surrounding environment

The technology of eco-sanitation has been tried out at in different parts of rural areas in small scale in almost all countries of South Asia but could not progress much for various reasons like lack of awareness, lack of availability of products, absence of government support etc.

The existing trend of very centralized water supply and sewage treatment systems is being increasingly challenged on grounds of operational difficulty, high energy and environmental costs. The effectiveness of decentralized water supply and sanitation systems has been proved many a times and has a proven advantage of spreading water scarcity and operation problems.

With this background, it is proposed that a **3 day** Regional level workshop on eco-sanitation technologies and an initiation meeting of a network of guides be organized for developing capacities in understanding eco-sanitation and discussing the feasibility of forming a network of users across South Asia to take the debate forward as well as start individual actions for collective lobbying.

Rationale: As a matter of principle that problems that are not created do not need to be solved. And EcoSan does precisely the same. EcoSan generates opportunities that add value to human waste and possibilities of decentralized waste management are more amenable to citizen involvement all the while reducing pressure on public system. This can open up spaces for constructive engagement with local government on administrative matters – an area that is yet untapped. This workshop is an attempt to Explore Positive opportunities that are currently available – at policy, project and program level and the need to exploit this phase.

Objectives of holding a two and half – day Workshop

1. Introducing the approach of Ecological Sanitation
2. To kick start discussion, of civil society, and user groups on eco-sanitation and implications of missing the right time to act.
3. To put forth the idea of local community as a valid stakeholder in the governance and management of local sanitation situation.
4. To discuss the feasibility of forming a network of users across South Asia/ screen the need in comparison with already existing networks (for example WESnet etc)
5. Establish a network of guides to help new initiatives avoid pitfalls and failures.

Expected Outcomes:

- a) Enhanced capacities of the participants to coordinate eco-sanitation efforts at their own levels and areas.
- b) Capacity building needs identified and action plan formalized for further interventions.
- c) Networks of sensitized individuals and organizations formed for furtherance of the work.
- d) A schedule of follow-up actions to support and sustain these individuals/organizations (hubs/nuclei/forums)

Target Group Professionals of water supply and sanitation sector (NGOs, Networks, Public Institutions, Research and Training Institutions): 20 -25

Targeted countries : India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka

Duration Three Days

Dates February – 15th - 17th 2008

Venue Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

Organiser

Regional Secretariat (RS) of Cap Net South Asia

(www.capnetsouthasia.org)



Sponsors: Cap Net, South Africa

(www.cap-net.org)



Arghyam Trust, India

(www.arghyam.org)



Partners: Wes-Net India

(www.wesnetindia.org)



Cap Net India

(www.capnetsouthasia.org/countrycap_india_cordinatorname.htm#topcn)



To Participate : Send your Professional details in brief along with a 1 pager on why you feel the need to participate to the below mentioned address by 20th December, 2007.

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