



Memo

24 May 2006

from: MG
to: ISSUE partners and WASTE staff
re: understanding the *ecological sanitation* concept

Understanding the concept of 'ecological sanitation'

In this memo WASTE wants to express its understanding of ecological sanitation, within the context of the ISSUE programme; what does ecological sanitation mean in practice? What is considered an ecological sanitation system within the ISSUE programme? What is the difference between an ecological sanitation system and a conventional sanitation system?

The understanding of ecological sanitation within the context of the ISSUE programme can be formulated in the following general terms:

--- long version ---

“Ecological sanitation systems, concerning the management of human bodily waste and grey water, are based on the idea that urine, faeces and water are resources in the ecological loop. An ecological sanitation system protects public health, prevents pollution of water, soil, and air, and takes care of the carrying capacity of the environment. Another aspect of ecological sanitation, which makes ecological sanitation unique among the broad spectrum of types of sanitation, is the fact that these systems are designed to optimise the resource efficiency concerning nutrients, water, and energy. Within this context, ecological sanitation can provide appropriate sanitation options for all.”

--- short version ---

What is Ecological Sanitation?

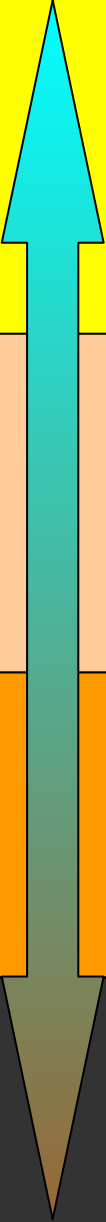
Sanitation refers to the management of human excreta and grey water.

Within the ISSUE programme we use the term Ecological Sanitation for sanitation systems that are based on the idea that urine, faeces and water are resources in an ecological loop.

An Ecological Sanitation system:

- ◆ *protects public and occupational health.*
- ◆ *prevents pollution of the environment (water, soil and air).*
- ◆ *does not exceed the carrying capacity of the local natural environment.*
- ◆ *is designed to optimise the use of nutrients, water and energy.*
- ◆ *is appropriate in the local context*

The following figure illustrates the characteristics of different sanitation types:

Type of sanitation	Characteristics
Ecological Sanitation (EcoSan) 	<p><u>Ecological focus:</u> Application of water as transport medium is open Planned resource efficiency (nutrients, water and energy)</p> <p><u>Environmental focus:</u> Minimise water use Avoid pollution of surface and groundwater</p> <p><u>Health focus:</u> Create barriers between pathogens and humans</p>
Environmental sanitation	<p><u>Ecological focus:</u> None</p> <p><u>Environmental focus:</u> Minimise water use Avoid pollution of surface and groundwater</p> <p><u>Health focus:</u> Create barriers between pathogens and humans</p>
Conventional sanitation	<p><u>Ecological focus:</u> None</p> <p><u>Environmental focus:</u> None</p> <p><u>Health focus:</u> Create barriers between pathogens and humans</p>
No sanitation	<p><u>Ecological focus:</u> None</p> <p><u>Environmental focus:</u> None</p> <p><u>Health focus:</u> None</p> <p style="text-align: right;">} Only goal is to get disposed of stool</p>