

Division 44

Environment and Infrastructure

sector project

ecosan – ecologically and economically sustainable

wastewater management and sanitation systems

ecosan – closing the loop

**Proceedings of the 2nd international symposium,
7th –11th April 2003, Lübeck, Germany**

Eschborn 2004

Foreword

Two and a half years after the first ecological sanitation conference in Bonn, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH and the International Water Association (IWA) jointly organised and held the 2nd International Symposium on ecological sanitation “ecosan – closing the loop” in April 2003 in Lübeck.

Having assumed my new position as Director Environment and Infrastructure at the GTZ shortly before, my colleagues entrusted me with the moderation of the opening session of this symposium. The contributions made during this session from a wide range of representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations underlined in an impressive manner both, the seriousness of the current crisis in supplying sanitation and its inter-relationship with the water crisis. The description of currently ongoing wastage and deterioration of our natural resources, in contrast to the motivation and vision of the speakers and participants in constructively addressing innovative views and solutions was rather impressive for professionals and newcomers to the subject. Already the opening session made quite clear that a vibrant international dialogue on the many facets of ecological sanitation already exists, not just in the direction North- South, but equally South-South and North-North. It became quite clear that appropriate, holistic and sustainable sanitation alternatives must be implemented as soon as possible --- and worldwide.

The “ecosan community” has come a long way since the first ecosan symposium, organised by the GTZ in October 2000 in Bonn, in establishing an active international network, and in drawing interest and attention from around the world. This was evident from the fact that for the second symposium the number of participants had doubled and we had to extend it from two to five days due to the large number of interesting papers submitted for presentation and discussion.

The first ecosan symposium was held with the aim of establishing a status what has been achieved and to define necessary international actions to further promote innovation in sanitation including the contribution of German technical co-operation to this work. This symposium highlighted the need for an improved system of knowledge management, an increase in the number of pilot projects, particularly in urban areas, and a strengthening of the international ecosan network. As a result, in May 2001, GTZ started a new supra-regional research and development project, ecosan, financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ), which turned needs identified during the first symposium into its main activities.

Since then, with the active support of the GTZ ecosan project, the international ecosan network has become a dynamic and productive community involved in a wide range of activities around the world. It was a pleasure during the 2nd International Symposium to see this network continue to grow and include, for example, representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Commission participating and signalling their interest in becoming involved in ecological sanitation. Ecosan has also begun to attract the attention of national policy makers, as demonstrated by the keynote address of The Hon. Maria Mutagamba, the Ugandan Minister of State for Water expressing her governments’ interest in ecosystem-based sanitation solutions and her strong conviction that these would contribute to the development of Uganda.

Apart from expanding and supporting the ecosan network, this second symposium provided experts from a wide range of disciplines with the opportunity for a professional exchange. The attendance of 350 enthusiastic experts from a wide range of disciplines from 60 countries ensured that the exchange was fruitful and addressed the complexity of the transition to new sanitation concepts. A further goal of the symposium was to develop a set of recommendations for the up-scaling and further development of ecosan, which the conference adopted as the "Ten Lübeck Recommendations for Action" on the final day.

Overall, the conference proved to be an important contribution of the German Federal Government to achieving the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people without access to adequate sanitary systems by 2015.

Since the symposium, the interest in ecological sanitation has continued to grow further. The electronic ecosan-Newsletter, produced on a quarterly basis by the highly motivated staff of the GTZ ecosan sector project, is sent to over 4700 subscribers and requests for further assistance are received by the ecosan team on a regular basis.

With these proceedings we want to provide a comprehensive overview of current activities, ideas and debates within the growing global ecosan network targeting a successful, worldwide re-orientation towards ecological sanitation in both the North and the South. We regard our work as an essential contribution to sustainable integrated management of water and other natural resources and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Continuing this work in the spirit of the symposium, the GTZ sector project will support and strengthen this network. We are committed to further support this worldwide activity by co-operative development and implementation of pilot projects, particularly in urban areas. We want to be successful by including international and local partners, and through the active dissemination and exchange of theoretical and practical know-how and information on existing and new ecosan-related developments. On behalf of the GTZ ecosan-team I cordially invite any party interested in productive co-operation to contact us and take part!

But before that, I wish you an interesting and inspiring reading!

Arno D. Tomowski

Director Environment and Infrastructure

In December 2003

Acknowledgments

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And finally to all the participants, who, with an abundance of energy and positive engagement made the five days in Lübeck such a memorable experience for us. This conference gave many of us the chance to “close the loop” with colleagues from a diverse range of backgrounds and a wide range of experience, allowing us all to learn from one another.

To you all we would like to express our sincere gratitude

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