



Policy, legislative and institutional framework and stakeholders in Municipal Solid Waste Management (MSWM) in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the roles of the various stakeholders in MSWM in Ghana. The policy and the legislative framework as well as the various institutions responsible for ensuring MSWM are discussed. Suggestion to improve the MSWM in Ghana is also outlined.

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Keywords

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Introduction

All human activities generate liquid, solid or gaseous waste which may be hazardous or non-hazardous. There is the need to manage these wastes in a sustainable and an integrated manner with minimal effects on human health and the environment. Integrated management of these wastes, however, becomes a problem, as many nations continue to urbanize rapidly. In Ghana, municipal solid waste management is the direct responsibility of the waste management and the environmental health and sanitation departments of municipal and district assemblies respectively. Various policy and legislations exists for sound management of municipal Solid wastes. This is complemented by well defined roles of various stakeholders. This paper seeks to discuss the policies available and the various roles of stakeholder to tackle the problem of solid waste management in Ghana.

Policies and Legislations

There are also existing policies and legislation in place to ensure that solid, hazardous and radioactive waste management issues are addressed. The policies and legislation include:

- National Environmental Policy 1991
- Local Government Act (Act 462)
- Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1994
- Water Resources Commission Act 1996
- National Building Regulations 1996
- Environmental Sanitation policy, 1999
- Environmental Assessment Regulations 1999
- Radiation Protection Instrument, LI 1559, 1993

There are guidelines and standards for waste management including National Environmental Quality Standards Regulations (2000), Guidelines for the Management of Healthcare and Veterinary Waste (2002) and Guidelines for the Development and Management of Landfills in Ghana (2002). All these emanate from the National Environmental Action Plan. The environmental sanitation policy 1999 looks at the;

- Basic principles of environmental sanitation problems and constraints.
- The roles and responsibilities assigned to communities, ministries, departments and agencies and the private sector and how they impinge on environmental management and protection.
- Legislation and law enforcement.
- Criteria for specifying services and programmes.
- Funding, equipment and supplies among others.

The Environmental Sanitation Policy of Ghana (ESP), 1999 recognizes the Ministry of Local Government, Rural development and the Environment as the main agency responsible for policy formulation on sanitation. The policy recognizes the importance of environmental sanitation and its link to good health, improved productivity and general welfare of the Ghanaian citizenry.

The National Environmental Action Plan (1991-2000) accords a high premium on environmental sanitation issues. Under the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), the Environmental Protection Agency is delegated to set out minimum acceptable amounts of all pollutants (solid, liquid and gaseous emissions) disposed into the environment. This is to ensure the sustainability of production and consumption activities. Part of the Environmental Sanitation Policy (ESP), 1999 stipulated that less than 30% of residents are served by an acceptable household toilet facility and solid waste collection services respectively.

Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) currently mandates industries to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on all major projects to address the impacts of emissions to the environment. This is the only guideline discouraging unsustainable practices by industries. However, residential and commercial entities are under no obligation to any firm policy concerning the generation of household solid waste apart from the financial commitment to waste collectors (Fobil, 2001).

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Under Section 79 of the Local Government Act (Act 462), the Municipal, Metropolitan and District assemblies (MMDAs) are enjoined and empowered to make appropriate bye-laws that would address waste management and disposal issues among others. The Akwapim South Municipal Assembly bye-laws include the following:

- Section 1 on refuse disposal which prohibits any person to dispose off filth in unauthorized places except dumps authorized by the Municipal Assembly.
- Section 2 also enjoins residents to be responsible of their immediate surroundings.
- Section 4 of the sanitation bye-laws caters for general hygiene practices for good night soil management.

Punitive measures for offenders of these bye-laws could be found under Section 7 which prescribes a fine of not less than 20 Ghana Cedis (\$13) or a prison term not exceeding three months or both by a court or public tribunal. However, there is lack of strict enforcement of these bye-laws, which are even not deterrent enough. These bye-laws have been developed from existing guidelines which include:

- Establishment of zones for the provision of environmental sanitation services Inclusion of public participation in waste management.
- Designation of areas for final disposal sites.
- Adequate provision for collection, intermediate storage, treatment and disposal of solid and liquid waste by developers.
- Licensing and monitoring of environmental sanitation service providers and implementing tariffs for environmental sanitation services and service provision by private contractors and/or franchises.
- Ownership of wastes.
- Waste storage.
- Management and disposal of hazardous wastes.
- Communal and individual recycling initiatives.
- Allowable toilet facilities and disposal of excreta wastes.
- Activities and behaviour of individuals and institutions which cause or are likely to cause environmental pollution.
- Enforcement and provision of domestic toilets in every residential, commercial and industrial property.
- Inclusion in development permits of conditions to prevent overcrowding, pollution and blockage of drainage channels and blocking and encroachment at reserved areas.
- Guidelines on animal rearing, burial and cremation.

Stakeholders in MSW Management in Ghana

There are numerous stakeholders for municipal solid waste management in Ghana. The overall responsibility lies with the public sector. It makes sure that there is an appropriate legal and regulatory framework for municipal solid waste management. They address issues such as public contracting and liability rules. The public sector also provides support services in the form of organizing professional training programmes for staff to ensure effective and efficient inter-sectoral partnerships and integrated solid waste management. They also ensure that the environmental health needs of cities as well as the public health and sanitation needs are met. The lead sector agency for environmental sanitation is the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment (MLGRDE) whose functions include co-ordination and formulation of environmental sanitation policy, developing technical guidelines on environmental sanitation services and their management, promulgation of national legislation and model bye-laws and the direction and supervision of the National Environmental

Sanitation Policy Co-ordination Council. The Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology is responsible for setting standards and guidelines for environmental quality. The Ministry of Health is responsible for managing and providing health data, supporting hygiene education activities, and contributing to regulations and standard-setting for environmental sanitation services. Environmental Protection Agency is the regulatory authority responsible for implementing waste management guidelines. At the municipal, metropolitan and district assembly levels, the Waste management Department have the oversight responsibility of functions including the collection, intermediate storage and disposal of solid wastes.

Educational Institutions are responsible for hygiene education in schools, universities and technical institutions respectively.

Training Institutions responsible for ensuring adequate human resources to man the various public sectors or institutions responsible for environmental sanitation include the School of Hygiene, Institute of Local Government Studies, and the Universities.

Although broad policies at the national level are necessary, local municipal authorities are invariably directly involved in municipal solid waste collection and disposal. In Ghana, one of the structures of the local Government administration was the creation of waste management departments or Environmental health and sanitation departments to manage solid wastes. In exercising the power given them according to Section 79 of the local Government Act, 1993, the district assemblies have established bye-laws, which help the responsible authority for waste management to perform their functions effectively. The function includes among others the management of fleet of trucks including refuse trucks and containers and the collection and disposal of solid waste generated in areas of their jurisdiction. The environmental health and sanitation department also promotes better environmental practices and also protects the public against injurious environmental nuisances and hazards. In addition they are responsible for promotion of good environmental health practices, public education, enforcement of environmental and health standards as well as monitoring of the environment and environmental sanitation services.

The formal private sector is comprised of officially registered municipal solid waste institutions, which have formal business licenses, organized labour forces and some capital investments. The overall purpose of such institutions is to generate profit on investment. Formal private sector can be involved in one or more of municipal solid waste collection, materials recovery, materials remanufacture, incineration, composting and landfill operation. They may also participate in municipal solid waste management through entering into contracts with Government to perform municipal solid waste services, sub-contracting the performance of certain municipal solid waste services to other businesses and individuals and trading in and/or remanufacturing recovered waste materials.

One such formal private organization operating is Zoom lion company Limited. They have special contractual arrangements with the municipal authorities. They are responsible for providing communal containers at strategic locations (such as lorry stations, markets and residential areas), and lifting these communal containers when filled to capacity. They get paid according to the capacity and number of containers they lift for disposal. They are also responsible for sweeping ceremonial streets, public spaces as well as organizing

house-to-house refuse collection, however house-to-house refuse collection is yet to be organized at the municipality.

The informal private sector consists of unregistered, unregulated and casual family/community enterprises and individuals who add value to recovered waste materials. These small scale and labour-intensive enterprises, usually is carried out by “waste pickers” or “scavengers”, door-to-door itinerant waste buyers and informal waste traders and recoverers. They collect some waste materials directly from city streets but most waste materials are collected from dump sites and landfills. The materials mostly collected are various types of glass, paper, metals and plastics. Those engaging directly in informal material recovery are usually driven by poverty. They gain many of their housing; clothing needs, fuel, work needs and sometimes food needs from the waste materials of the more affluent.

As residents, urban service users and taxpayers, members of communities have a direct interest in the quality of municipal solid waste management. When dissatisfied they may take the initiative to organize themselves into community-based organizations with the direct goal of improving municipal solid waste source separation, recycling and/or overall waste collection and disposal activities. Such groups may already be active in communities (e.g. neighbourhood committees, youth and women groups, religious organizations, political parties) or they may be created to address specific issues on municipal solid waste collection and disposal. Community members can often become influential in effecting improved municipal solid waste management if they act collectively through community-based organizations than if they act as individual citizens (Taylor, 1999). Non-governmental organizations can become direct advocates/facilitators for particular improvements in municipal solid waste management. They often add credibility to the important role of the informal sector of waste recovery and remanufacture in the minds of officials in the public sector and formal private sector. Non-governmental organizations can also act as intermediaries between community-based organizations and local municipal governments and / or private contractors in:

- 1) Receiving and disbursing funds from donors for improved municipal solid waste management.
- 2) Experimenting with alternative municipal solid waste material recovery and collection services.
- 3) Mobilizing overall local communities for improved solid waste management.

In Ghana, for example, community-based and non-governmental organizations have responsibilities to assist communities in community mobilization, assisting district assemblies, town and area councils, unit committees and communities in planning, funding and development of community sanitation infrastructure for the safe disposal of wastes and the prevention of soil, air and water pollution. Non-governmental organizations involved in sanitation include the CONIWAS i.e. Ghana Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation, TREND, involved in training, research and networking for the development of delivery and sustained management of water and environmental sanitation facilities, RCNG (Resource Centre Network Ghana) involved in strengthening information and knowledge management within the water and sanitation sector in Ghana.

Conclusion and recommendations

Efforts made by various stakeholders working actively to ensure a sustainable and integrated municipal Solid Waste management in Ghana cannot be under-estimated. This is backed by a sound legislative and policy framework by the Government. There is the need to ensure that punitive measures are reviewed and made more deterrent to offenders of bye-laws .

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