

Step 8

Set regulations



The goal is for the septage to be pumped regularly from every septic tank. Only a designated and licensed service provider can perform the scheduled desludging operation. All buildings that receive periodic desludging must pay the tariff set by the municipality. Treatment of the septage must be conducted until the effluent meets a specified environmental standard. All of the above will only happen if there are regulations. Promotion and compliance strategies must be prepared for the regulations.

8.1 MUST BE MANDATORY

Scheduled desludging is a mandatory act. Regardless of how empty or full its content, a septic tank must be desludged periodically at the specified time. This mandatory requirement is the essence of scheduled desludging which distinguishes it from the regular desludging service that households and building owners take for practical and economic reasons. Enforceable regulation is needed in a city before they can initiate a scheduled desludging scheme in the area. The regulation also needs to mention that the scheduled desludging operation will be carried out only by a designated service provider appointed by the municipality.

A city however should not make regulation specifically only for scheduled desludging. It is recommended that all scheduled desludging provisions should be parts of a more comprehensive regulation on septage or fecal sludge management. In other parts, the regulation should contain provisions related to septic tanks, septage transportation, septage treatment, and reuse of treated sludge (Figure 8.1).

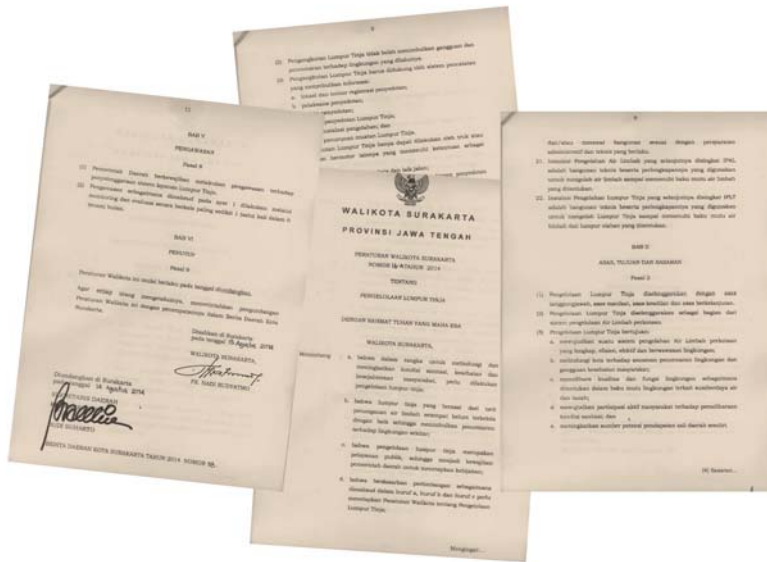


Figure 8.1 The Mayor Regulation of Surakarta No. 16A of 2014 on Septage Management clearly puts periodical desludging as a mandatory measure for every septic tank user. It requires each septic tank to be desludged every 3 years. The regulation also contains provisions on institutional, technical, and financial aspects.

8.2 MANY THINGS TO COVER

The septage management regulation must contain a number of provisions which either directly or indirectly support the development and operation sustainability of scheduled desludging in the city (see [Figure 8.2](#)). These provisions include (a) prerequisites of a good septic tank, (b) institutional setup of septage management, (c) private sector partnerships in septage management, (d) implementation of on-demand desludging service, (e) billing and payment mechanism, (f) septage treatment effluent quality standard and (g) treated sludge quality standard. See [Annex C](#) for the example of a regulation on septage management.

The regulatory framework for septage management must also contain provisions regarding the determination of desludging tariff, both for scheduled and on-demand desludging. To anticipate frequent tariff changes, cities must make specific regulation regarding scheduled desludging tariffs. The same applies to the level of septage treatment. As such, any changes in scheduled desludging and septage treatment tariffs will not require that the whole regulation on septage management be changed.

8.3 REGULATIONS ARE HIERARCHICAL

Provisions for domestic wastewater and septage management must be placed in a series of hierarchical regulations (see [Figure 8.3](#)). The definition, obligations and guidance relating to septage management should be placed in the regulation of a mayor or district head or governor. Changes to the provisions of the regulations at this level do not require parliamentary approval. It will be easy and quick for the municipality to adjust the septage management provisions in the future. As shown in the previous

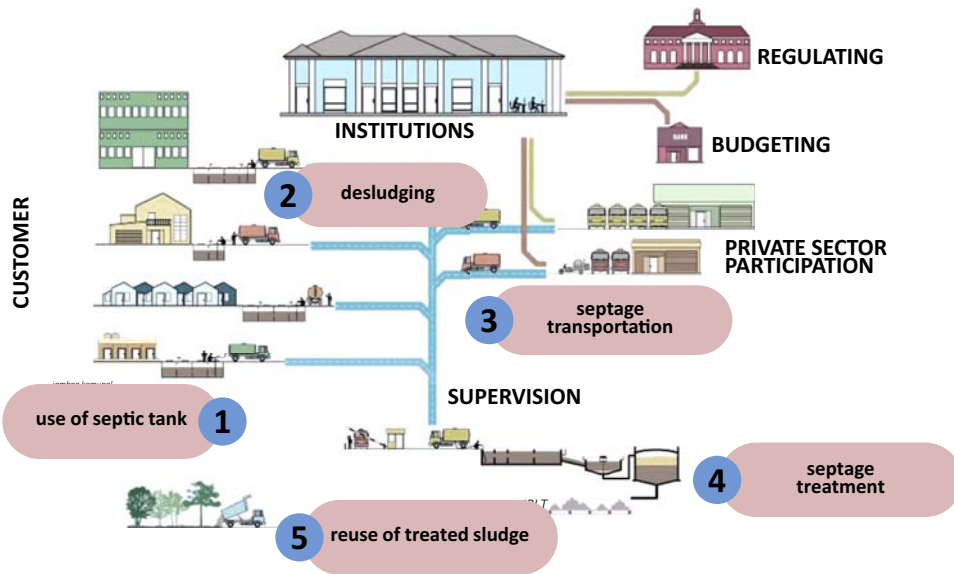


Figure 8.2 The regulation on septage management must cover the issues shown above. Obligation to regularly desludge each septic tank should be included in the regulation to allow a scheduled desludging scheme to be implemented in a city.

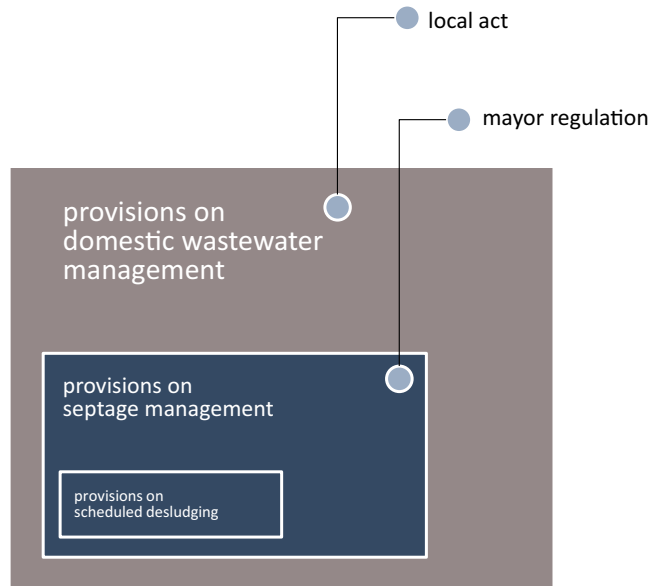


Figure 8.3 Regulation of septage management should be part of the more comprehensive domestic wastewater management provisions. Hierarchically, the provisions for wastewater management should have a higher regulatory status while the provisions for the septage management are placed in the city government's regulation.

diagram, regulations at this level need to include provisions relating to institutional roles, private partnerships and payment mechanism for tariffs.

The principles and general provisions should be included in a regulation at the level of local act or local law, that is, the scope of wastewater management, types of services, role of local government, responsibilities of each party, etc. In the local act, the municipality is ordered to provide domestic wastewater management services while households are instructed to manage the wastewater they generate. Local act should contain various legal consequences of violating the provisions, that is, warning, fines and confinement.

As mentioned earlier, we should make provisions regarding tariff rates or septage service accounts in a separate regulation with a lower hierarchy. This needs to be done to anticipate adjustments of tariff in the future. It is very practical if the provisions on tariff are contained in the regulation at the level of the decision letter of the director of the scheduled desludging service provider. This is certainly possible if the city government or regent regulation states that the authority to determine the tariff is transferred to the director of the service provider.

8.4 FOSTER COMPLIANCE

Domestic wastewater management regulations in several countries include various types of legal consequences that can be imposed to those who violate the provisions. That includes written warning, rehabilitation order, fines, penalties and imprisonment. However, the city still needs a strategy to prevent households and building owners from violating provisions of domestic wastewater management; this is particularly to ensure households and building owners use proper septic tanks and maintain their performance by conducting regular desludging, or to connect to sewerage system.

Compliance strategy of a city might include:

- First, the municipality must inform the public about the obligation to manage their wastewater. Houses and buildings can use septic tanks as long as they conform with specification standard and periodic desludging requirement.
- Second, the municipality must ensure that the construction permit or building renovation permit are only granted after the proponent can present a proper plan of the septic tank construction.
- Third, the municipality needs to establish a septic tank registration and control system where each septic tank will have a certificate of conformance.
- Fourth, the municipality needs to conduct a regular septic tank inspection program to ensure that each septic tank is still in a good condition and has fulfilled its obligation of scheduled desludging (Figure 8.4).
- Fifth, the municipality needs to link the ownership of certificate of conformance of the septic tank with the payment of property taxes or with the building transaction process.

In addition, municipality should also prepare a financial or technical assistance program to help households to build a proper septic tank.

8.5 PROMOTE REGULATIONS

Municipalities often assume the public is aware of and has an understanding of their obligations in managing their wastewater. The fact is they have never heard of such a regulation. They do not know about the legal consequences of violating the provisions. To promote the obligations, the municipality needs to



Figure 8.4 The municipality needs to regularly inspect every septic tank in its area, particularly to find out the condition, the utilization and the last desludging conducted. It is also necessary for the municipality to check on under-construction septic tanks.

develop a strong communication strategy which outline all activities and communication means to reach the main target groups.

A press conference at least should be conducted after a regulation is formalized. In addition, a series of seminars and public gatherings are made to ensure households are aware of their obligation to conduct periodical septic tank desludging. Flyers are made to be distributed by the municipality and community groups to households. More about the promotion is discussed in **Step 13: Promote service**.