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The water table level, and groundwater use should be taken into consideration in order to avoid contaminating drinking water. If groundwater is not used for drinking or alternative cost effective sources can be used, then these options should be explored before assuming that groundwater contamination by pit latrines is a problem. Where groundwater is used for drinking and to prevent its contamination, the bottom of the pit should be at least 1.5m above the water table <sup>3</sup>. In addition, the pit

should be installed in areas located down gradient of drinking water sources, and at a minimum horizontal distance of 15m <sup>5</sup>.

Excreta, cleansing water, flushwater and dry cleansing materials should be the only inputs to this system; other inputs such as menstrual hygiene products and other solid wastes are common and may contribute significantly to pit contents. As this will result in pits filling

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up more rapidly and make it more difficult to empty, an appropriate container for disposal of these wastes should be provided in the toilet cubicle. (Some grey-water in the pit may help degradation, but excessive amounts of greywater may lead to quick filling of the pit and/or excessive leaching.)

**Education:** If the user plans to plant a tree in the covered pit, then space and site conditions for the tree when fully grown need to be taken into account. The tree should not be planted in raw excreta but into the soil filling on top of the pit contents<sup>2</sup>.

## Operation and maintenance considerations

**Responsibilities:** The user is commonly responsible for the construction of the toilet and pit, although they may pay a mason to carry out the work. The user will be responsible for cleaning and repairs to the toilet, including the slab, seat/squat hole, drop-hole, cover/lid and superstructure<sup>2</sup>.

To reduce smells and insect breeding, a cup of soil, ash or sawdust is added to the pit after each defecation, while periodically...

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To ensure... (text continues with technical details)

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