Centre for Science and Environment’s (CSE) PSU – Lucknow conducted a Training on Preparation of Bye-laws for Faecal Sludge and Septage Management, in towns of Uttar Pradesh. It is under CSE’s initiative on Water and waste management in Ganga towns for pollution abatement. With support of CSE, Department of Urban Development (DoUD), Uttar Pradesh has prepared the ‘State Model Bye-laws for Faecal Sludge and Septage Management’. The model document will provide the necessary guidance to ULBs for preparing the FSSM bye-laws as per their contextual requirement. Hence, the bye-laws will help them in moving towards inclusive and sustainable sanitation in Uttar Pradesh. Further the bye-laws will enable and establish a regulatory framework at city level for safe management of faecal sludge and septage. The training was designed to prepare and verse ULBs on the usage of the State Model Bye-laws for Faecal Sludge and Septage Management’ Model document. In total 73 representatives (EOs, AE, JE, SFI and DPM) from 52 ULBs across the Uttar Pradesh state participated in the onsite training.

The introductory session was taken by Mr. P.K. Srivastava, Additional Mission Director (AMRUT), who set the context by giving the current scenario of FSSM infrastructure in the state. He further presented on the need of FSSM bye-laws for smooth and sustainable FSSM in the towns. He explained interlinkages between FSSM bye laws and environmental protection laws and acts, water acts, and wastewater
management protocols. He pushed the ULBs to initiate the process of drafting the FSSM bye-laws with the help of model FSSM bye-laws document and carving it in their respective city context. He ended his presentation by providing timelines for drafting, formulating, publishing and gazette notifying the FSSM Bye-laws. According to the time line 52 ULBs will be able to complete the process of FSSM bye Laws Gazette notification by mid-January 2024.

The training then focused on the model FSSM bye-laws document. Mr. Harsh Yadava, Programme Officer CSE introduced the document to the participants and covered the chapter-1 on definitions. He explained about specific focus to be made on the dates, serial number and ULB name at particular places. He explained various definitions, terms and variables used in the bye-laws document. He highlighted points to the participants where participants are required to be careful while drafting their respective cities bye-laws. Chapter 2 and 3 were explained by Mr. Hari Prakash, Deputy Program Manager, at CSE. He discussed about necessary attention to be given on the regulatory framework around management of waste water coming from establishments. How the city can put cap on the allowable wastewater discharged from the premises. Mr. Hari also highlighted the correct design to be followed for construction of septic tanks in the city and described it by referring the annexure-1 of the model bye-laws document based on IS codes 2470.

The chapter 4 and 5 of the model bye-laws document covers the process ULBs can adopt to regularize the private desludging service providers in the city. Mr. Harsh Yadava, explained the process to be followed for registration and licensing of private desludgers. He also highlighted the various rules and regulations, trainings and monitoring process, which desludgers have to adhere to after getting linked with the ULB. The participants appreciated the detailed coverage of regulations for private desludgers in the model bye-laws document. The clauses of desludgers insurance and linking them to government schemes were appreciated as it would create a sense of belongingness for each other i.e ULB and private desludgers. In describing chapter 4 and 5 a crucial debate was about the method for adopting the desludging fees in the city. Mr. Sarim Ansari, Program Officer at CSE, introduced the participants with an MS-excel based tool “Desludging Cost Calculator”. The tool is prepared by CSE by researching and creating a method that can help ULBs to decide upon relevant and realistic desludging fees in their respective cities. Sarim explained the calculator and presented a hands on demo by putting a case values. The tool was highly appreciated by the participants which helps in understanding the various factors involved in deciding the desludging fees.

The final chapters 6 and 7 described the regulations around treatment of faecal sludge and septage and administrative responsibilities, liabilities and measures of ULBs respectively. Hari Prakash, discussed these chapters by helping participants to recognize the points where they have to put city specific contexts and holistically ponder to ensure sustainable management. In the regulations for administrative measures Hari highlighted the points where ULBs have to put fines in cases of non-compliances. He also explained roles of ULBs in case of disputes or any accidents. At the end Mr Subrata Chakraborty, Senior Programme Manager at CSE discussed with participants on their doubts and city specific challenges. Towards the end of the training, Mr. P.K. Srivastava gave the concluding remarks. He again emphasized on following the timeline showed during the training for getting the gazette notification of FSSM bye-laws.