

SLUDGE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR ENERGY RECOVERY USING
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE GUIDELINES

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“ Kerana sesungguhnya sesudah kesulitan, ada kemudahan...
Sesungguhnya sesudah kesulitan ada kemudahan...”
(Al-Insyirah: 5-6)

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ABSTRACT

Treatment and disposal of sewage sludge generate considerable amounts of methane gas (CH₄) and have the potential to pose environmental challenges to wastewater treatment. In recent years, the level of awareness on climate change issue in Malaysia has been raised. In support of this action, Iskandar Malaysia (IM) is selected as an eco-friendly city. The selection of sludge management strategies is crucial because various combinations of treatment technologies and disposal methods exhibit different emission rates. To achieve sustainable sludge management, this study aims to investigate and compare two different scenarios for mitigation of methane gas (CH₄) using 2006 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines. These scenarios involve landfill, incineration, beneficial use, anaerobic digestion and composting. In order to observe the differences in CH₄ gas emission and solid reduction, baseline studies were applied within a period of time (2005-2025) with two different scenarios (business as usual, BaU and counter measure, CM). The year 2025 was chosen as the target years based on IM Comprehensive Development Plan 2025. The BaU scenario represents the current sludge management (SM) without mitigation measures. The CM scenario represents SM with mitigation measures, which includes anaerobic digestion, incineration, composting, landfill and its beneficial use. The use of IPCC method assists the quantification process, based on the calculation of emission factor times activity data calculation. The study areas included sewage treatment plants (STP) located in IM. The current SM in IM uses dewatering and landfill as the disposal options, which consists of drying beds (DB), pond desilting, mechanical sludge treatment (belt filter press and centrifuge system), desludging tanker, and Geobag. The results show that both scenarios present a significant reduction of solids. The BaU scenario offers up to 38.5% potential for solid reduction in the sludge. While the CM scenario offers up to 67.3% of the solid reduction in the sludge by 2025. In BaU scenario, a total of 114,582 tons of solids is estimated to be disposed to the landfill by 2025. However, by applying the mitigation option, an estimated 2,292 tons of solids will be disposed to landfill by 2025. This is about 98% reduction of solids sent to the landfill. The current CH₄ emission is approximately 32 Gg CH₄ under the BaU scenario and estimated to increase to 37 Gg CH₄ by 2025. With the CM scenario, the CH₄ emission can be decreased to 77% or to 28.4 Gg CH₄/year. The anaerobic digestion can serve as the treatment option to generate up to 62 Gg CH₄. There is an increase of energy up to 71% from the treatment category, while 64% of energy increases in overall. By 2025, an estimated amount of 8.6 Gg CH₄/year is released under the CM scenario. However, under the BaU scenario without any mitigation measures, 37 Gg CH₄/year was estimated to be released into the atmosphere by 2025.

ABSTRAK

Proses rawatan dan pelupusan enapcemar menghasilkan gas metana (CH_4) yang berpotensi untuk menjejaskan alam sekitar, terutamanya dalam proses merawat air sisa kumbahan. Pada masa kini, tahap kesedaran dalam menangani perubahan iklim semakin meningkat di Malaysia. Iskandar Malaysia (IM) telah dipilih sebagai bandar mesra alam sebagai tanda menyokong tindakan ini. Pemilihan strategi pengurusan enapcemar adalah penting kerana gabungan teknologi rawatan dan kaedah pelupusan enapcemar yang berbeza akan menghasilkan kadar pelepasan gas yang berbeza. Untuk mencapai pengurusan enapcemar yang mapan, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dan membandingkan perbezaan pelepasan gas CH_4 di dalam dua senario pengurusan enapcemar berdasarkan 2006 *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Senario-senario tersebut melibatkan tapak pelupusan, pembakaran, kegunaan berfaedah, pencernaan anaerobik dan pengkomposan. Untuk melihat perbezaan pelepasan gas dan pengurangan pepejal, kajian garis dasar dijalankan dalam tempoh masa tertentu (2005-2025) bagi dua senario yang berbeza (seperti biasa, BaU dan langkah pengurangan, CM). Tahun 2025 telah dipilih berdasarkan Rancangan Pembangunan Komprehensif IM 2025. Senario BaU merupakan senario pengurusan enapcemar tanpa langkah pengurangan, manakala senario CM mempunyai langkah pengurangan (pencernaan anaerobik, pembakaran, pengkomposan, tapak pelupusan dan kegunaan berfaedah). Garis panduan IPCC 2006 digunakan dalam proses kuantifikasi iaitu pengiraan faktor pelepasan didarab dengan data aktiviti. Loji-loji rawatan kumbahan (STP) di IM dipilih sebagai kawasan kajian. Sistem pengurusan enapcemar semasa di loji-loji ini adalah penyahairan dan tapak pelupusan. Teknologi penyahairan terdiri daripada *drying beds* (DB), pengeluaran kelodak kolam, rawatan enapcemar secara mekanikal (*belt filter press* dan system emparan), pengosongan tangki, dan *Geobag*. Hasil keputusan menunjukkan terdapat pengurangan pepejal yang ketara melalui dua senario ini. Sebanyak 38.5% pepejal dapat dikurangkan jika senario BaU dipilih. Namun begitu, sebanyak 67.3% pepejal dapat dikurangkan melalui senario CM. Selain itu, dianggarkan sebanyak 114,582 tan pepejal akan dilupuskan pada tahun 2025 dengan senario BaU. Walau bagaimanapun, dengan memilih CM, hanya 2,292 tan pepejal dianggarkan akan dilupuskan pada tahun 2025. Pengurangan sebanyak 98% pepejal yang dihantar ke tapak pelupusan dilihat dapat dilakukan. Pelepasan gas CH_4 semasa adalah 32 Gg CH_4 . Jika senario BaU dipilih, pelepasan gas CH_4 akan meningkat sehingga 37 Gg CH_4 . Sebaliknya, jika senario CM dipilih, pelepasan gas akan menurun sehingga 77% dengan 28.4 Gg CH_4 . AD sebagai rawatan pilihan berpotensi untuk menjana 62 Gg CH_4 . Kenaikan tenaga sebanyak 71% dicatatkan bagi kategori rawatan, manakala peningkatan sebanyak 64% dianggarkan secara keseluruhan. Menjelang 2025, dianggarkan sebanyak 8.6 Gg CH_4 akan dilepaskan dalam senario CM. Walau bagaimanapun, jika senario BaU dipilih tanpa sebarang langkah pengurangan, dianggarkan sebanyak 37 Gg CH_4 akan dilepaskan ke atmosfera.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BaU	Business as Usual
CH ₄	Methane
CM	Counter Measure
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CO ₂ Eq	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
FiT	Feed in Tariff
Gg	Giga Gram
GHG	Green House Gas
IM	Iskandar Malaysia
IWK	Indah Water Konsortium
N ₂ O	Nitrous Oxide
SM	Sludge Management
STP	Sludge Treatment Plants
SWM	Solid Waste Management
WWTP	Waste water Treatment Plant

LIST OF SYMBOLS

m^3	cubic meter
Gg	giga gram
kg	kilogram

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Problem

In December 2010, Prime Minister Najib Razak made a bold statement before the whole world regarding Malaysia's commitment to lessen up to 40% of carbon emission intensity with respect to gross development production (GDP) by 2020. The announcement was made during COP 15 that was held in Copenhagen (Siong, 2013). This commitment could be made possible with financial help—obviously—from developed countries. Central to this is the proposed Renewable Energy Act. This challenge has provided opportunities for Malaysians to investigate future emissions from various sectors as well as Malaysia's renewable energy from different sources and emissions, including potential energy recovery from sewage sludge in Malaysia (Veerannan, 2011). It is perceived that the management of wastewater sludge is a standout amongst the most discriminating ecological issues because of the quick increment in sludge production as an aftereffect of sewerage augmentation, new establishments, and improvements of existing facilities (Ujang and Salmiati, 2011). Sludge is created under distinctive technical, financial, and social settings, hence obliging diverse methodologies and different solutions for an ideal management procedure (Spinosa, 2011).

As the amount of sludge generated continuously increases, and with the rising awareness, it has become necessary to include considerations on energy and resource consumption, costs, normative and legal requirements, as well as public acceptance (Abu-Orf *et al.*, 2011). The rapid increase in sludge production has additionally brought to light the rising concern in the sludge final disposal: landfill. Tighter and more stringent laws and regulations on sludge final disposal have led to the build-up of landfill cells due to the increasing sludge disposal. There is a noteworthy concern of uncontrolled odours leaving the facility boundary during handling and disposal activities when sewage sludge is being received. Sources of the odours may include loaded and emptied hauling vehicles, track out and spillage of sewage sludge on haul roads or public roads near the facility, the management of sewage sludge at the working face, and the increased landfill gas production (Allen, 2012).

Overall, the development of a sludge management system needs to be seen within the framework of “sustainability” concept prioritized for developing countries. Thus, the advancement of correct and practical sludge management systems must be encouraged mainly through integrated approaches addressed towards the reduction of the amount of sludge to be discarded. Among the approaches are the application of reuse option intended to recover useful products or energy instead of simple disposal ones, development of integrated systems that are self-sustaining from the energy point of view, production of materials that can be safely handled from the environmental aspect and conveniently marketed, and development of operational systems appropriate to local context including social ones (Spinosa, 2011).

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Ujang and Salmiati (2011), the rise in the population has led to the increase in sludge volume. Moreover, due to the expanding development in the country, the volume of wastewater generation will increase annually and the volume

of the sludge produced from the treatment process will proportionately increase as well. This will bring about an increase in sludge waste disposed of to the landfill sites and also increase in the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from the landfill sites.

In Malaysia, there is currently a rising awareness in support of tackling climate change. In line with Malaysian government's effort to support United Nations of Environment Programme (UNEP) through the implementation of climate change endeavours into the developmental process, a pilot study had been conducted in Iskandar Malaysia (IM) where the findings were obtained by modelling and facilitating the transition of IM, one of the fastest growing areas in Malaysia, in the effort for creating a low-carbon society for every sector which naturally includes waste management (Gomi *et al.*, 2012). According to the work by Khazanah Nasional (2006) and Ho *et al.* (2013), it is projected that the population living in the city will increase from 1.35 million in 2005 to over 3 million by 2025, and the gross domestic product (GDP) will almost quadruple from Malaysian Ringgit (MYR) 35.7 billion to MYR141.4 billion over the same period. For now, the current annual emissions of IM are 12.6 million tonnes of CO₂. Under the business as usual (BaU) scenario, the GHG emissions will increase to 45.5 million t-CO₂ or 3.6 times higher than in 2005. By implementing the mitigation options available by 2025, the emissions should be able to be reduced by 60% and suppressed to 19.6 million t-CO₂ (Gomi *et al.*, 2009).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has developed a number of methods to assist countries in quantifying GHG emissions from various sectors. The most recent method developed is the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National GHG Inventories (2006 IPCC). The guidelines are internationally accepted and designed to allow countries to determine their GHG emissions. In 1994 and 2000, Malaysia applied the IPCC Guidelines to produce the Initial and Second National Communication to the UNFCCC report on the country's own GHG inventory. However, both reports used the former "Revised IPCC 1996 Guidelines" for the GHG calculation. In support of a low-carbon society, the use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines would allow IM to portray emissions from sludge management by forecasting

potential emissions from current and proposed treatment and disposal options that would assist in the decision making process.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research was to evaluate energy recovery potential via sludge management from sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Iskandar Malaysia. To achieve this, three objectives were identified:

- i. To investigate the technology used for sludge treatment and disposal pertaining to their use in Iskandar Malaysia
- ii. To investigate greenhouse gas estimation methods and apply their principle to the water industry, sludge management in particular.
- iii. To compare the conceptual model for each option by highlighting the energy inputs and CH₄ emissions for business as usual (BaU) and counter measure (CM) scenarios.

1.4 Scope of Research

- i. The type of sludge that is of interest in this research is domestic sludge; industrial sludge is not considered.
- ii. The local authorities in Iskandar Malaysia involved were Johor Bahru Tengah Municipal Council (MPJBT), Kulai Municipal Council (MPKu), and Johor

Bahru City Council (MJB) only, whereas Pasir Gudang Municipal Council (MPPG) and Johor Bahru City Council (MJB) were excluded.

- iii. The data used in this research was secondary data. The secondary data collection was done throughout this research and retrieved from government websites, blueprints, reports, journals, and articles from reliable sources. Retrieved data, if deemed fit and suitable, was then used as a variable in the calculation of potential CH₄ emissions.

1.5 Significance of Research

The significance of this research is to be able to forecast methane (CH₄) emission from sludge management in IM based on different treatment technologies and assumptions. The increase in CH₄ emission was estimated based on (1) 2025 BaU (Business as Usual without mitigation measures) and (2) 2025 CM (with Counter Mitigation measures) assumptions of employed technologies as well as the potential to reduce the emissions by low-carbon measures available by the year 2025. This research is expected to assist the study area in making decisions on which sludge treatment and disposal options are suitable for local implementation in order to achieve a low-carbon scenario in the water treatment industry.

5.2 Recommendations

A number of recommendations are as follows:

- IPCC offers a series of methods, from general to detail. However, due to the use of secondary data, the most general method were used. Highly recommended, that if primary data were to be collected, a more detailed approach can be applied.
- The use of default values for methane potential and emission factor are internationally used, including in this research, which covers broad spectrum. Values that represent Malaysia conditions were not made available, since previous two National Communication (INC and NC2) report, used default values provided by IPCC.

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