

A photograph of a smiling woman, likely from a rural area, wearing a green and white striped shawl. The background is a warm, reddish-brown wall.

## Study Session 2: Essential components of a sanitation programme

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## Introduction

Based on the information and evidence from the national-level context analysis, plans need to be developed and decisions made on what the programme is all about. The basic essentials of programme design in any field of work could be characterised as answers to these four questions:

- What do you want to achieve?
- How are you going to do it?
- Do you have the resources to do it?
- How do you know if you've done it?

This study session elaborates on these key questions and outlines the essential components of large-scale sanitation programmes. It also continues to emphasise the need to incorporate the themes of equity, gender and sustainability into programming activities.

## Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

After you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 2.1** Describe the essential components of sanitation programmes.
- 2.2** Outline some additional components of large-scale programmes.

CONTINUE

## 2.1 Defining the programme

To answer the question 'what do you want to achieve?', you first need to define the geographical area(s) to be covered by the programme and set out the objectives you are aiming to achieve. The terminology of programme aims can be confusing so Box 2.1 explains some of the terms used.

### Box 2.1 Outputs, outcomes, objectives and other terminology

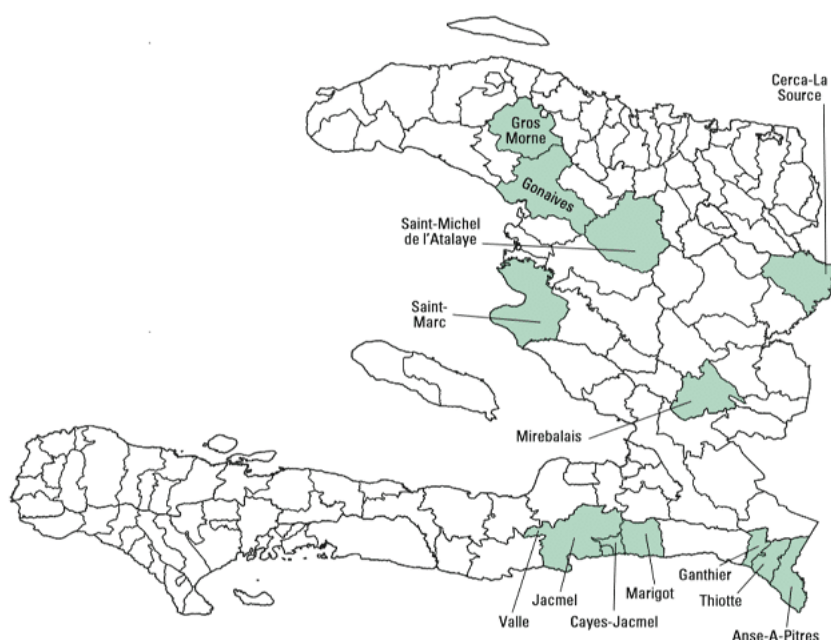
There are a variety of different terms used in programme management to describe the purpose and achievements of a programme. Some terms have similar meanings and people may even use them interchangeably, although others would argue they are not the same. Different organisations and institutions may have

preferences for one over another so you may need to adapt to unfamiliar conventions.

- **Goal** refers to a broad, high level intention at national or global level, for example the Sustainable Development Goals.
  - **Objectives** are set at the start of a programme and define its purpose, for example, to increase rates of handwashing or to reduce cases of diarrhoea in children.
  - **Targets** define objectives more specifically, for example to increase rates of handwashing by 50% in the programme area by a specified date.
  - An **indicator** is something that can be seen, measured or counted and that provides evidence of progress towards a target.
  - **Outputs** are the things (deliverables) produced by a project or programme. These could be new toilets and handwashing facilities, events and activities such as training sessions, CLTS promotion activities, production of hygiene advice posters etc.
  - **Outcomes** can be defined as the effects of the outputs, usually in the short- to medium-term. Examples could be the number of people who have access to sanitation at the end of the programme, or attendance at training sessions, or the number of communities that achieve ODF status.
- Note that, in practice, the term 'outcomes and objectives' may be used to mean the same thing. The objectives are, in effect, the planned or intended outcomes and the outcomes describe the achievement, or not, of the objectives.
- **Impacts** are the long-term effects and consequences of a programme's activities. Examples could be a fall in the incidence of diarrhoeal disease, improved school attendance or hand pumps that last longer because they are well-maintained.

### 2.1.1 Setting the programme area

The overall programme area may be made up of several sub-areas which could be provinces, regions, districts, or other administrative areas. Figure 2.1 shows an example from Haiti where a programme covered several different communes spread across the country (UNICEF, 2017).



Source: UNICEF Haiti

**Figure 2.1** Map of Haiti showing the separate communes (in green) of UNICEF's country programme for Community Approaches to Total Sanitation.

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Wherever possible, programmes should target areas with high levels of deprivation because improvements in these areas tend to provide the greatest benefits. Other key target areas would be those with high levels of demand and need, for example where local governments are willing to support the programme or where hard to reach or vulnerable populations are not receiving other assistance.

It is essential to seek opportunities to work with government and other partners in order to take advantage of possible synergies and avoid tension and conflicting goals. For example, priority areas identified from the situation analysis should be compared with the priority areas proposed under other government plans and strategies, and with the working areas of other government and development partner programmes.

Economies of scale and scope should also be considered when selecting the programme area because efficiency gains may be possible by grouping areas together. A minimum size of programme may be necessary to enable cost-effective implementation of some approaches.

## 2.1.2 Setting objectives and targets

Programmes need to have a range of objectives and targets with consideration of both quantitative and qualitative outcomes and the timescale for achieving them. These may be set out in a 'results framework' detailing the main targets, indicators and scheduled dates, usually presented as a large table. The results framework strongly influences the design of implementation processes and other programme activities, and also drives the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework and its indicators.

There are several things to think about when setting objectives:

### What you already know

Objectives should be based on evidence from the situation analysis, lessons learned and other parts of the context analysis, for example, current data on ODF success rates or handwashing levels. National priorities should direct programme objectives and targets, including the programme contribution towards national sector goals such as the 2030 SDG sanitation target.

### Be realistic

However, these high level goals should be kept in perspective. Programme objectives and targets need to be realistic, reflecting what is possible in the programme duration given the contextual challenges in the programme area. Over-ambitious targets can lead to pressure for quick results, over-reporting, problems with sustainability and equity, challenges to evaluation findings, and reduced sector credibility and support.

### Threshold levels

Emerging evidence suggests that rates of access and use of sanitation need to be high and community-wide before health benefits become apparent. Rural sanitation programmes should aim to saturate implementation areas so that sustained use of safely managed sanitation is always above an appropriate minimum threshold level in all targeted communities, rather than promoting small gains across large populations. This objective should also encourage more inclusive interventions because high sustained use requires that approaches are developed to reach everyone within the target communities.

### Equity, gender and sustainability

The inclusion of specific equity, gender and sustainability objectives in the programme results framework will encourage greater attention to these important areas. This includes appropriate adaptations to all implementation approaches, including allowance for any additional resources required. Consulting diverse stakeholders including girls, women and people from vulnerable groups will be an important part of developing these adaptations to ensure they are appropriately designed and resourced. An example of objectives (outcomes) for sustainability can be found in Case Study 2.1.

### Other public health concerns



If programmes want to achieve substantial health benefits then, in addition to improving sanitation, they could also tackle other significant faecal exposure pathways. This could be by adding targets for access to safe water, plans for improving personal hygiene, food hygiene and disease vector control, or reducing exposure to animal waste.

## Case Study 2.1 Sustainability outcomes in Bangladesh

The South Asia WASH Results Programme (SAWRP) aims to improve water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and behaviours among more than 2.25 million people in rural Bangladesh and Pakistan (Figure 2.2). Implemented by a consortium led by Plan International UK, the programme is funded by the UK's Department for International Development on a Payment by Results basis whereby payments are contingent on achievement of agreed outputs and outcomes, with external verification.



**Figure 2.2** Barisal District, Bangladesh: one of the areas where SAWRP is being implemented.

To increase the programme's sustainability, SAWRP is working towards the following sustainability outcomes in its target areas:

1

**Institutional (government)** – Local WASH governance structures are present and active, in line with National Policy.

2

**Institutional (private sector)** – Appropriate technologies and services are available through the local private sector, with financing options providing access for all.

3

**Institutional (civil society)** – Communities and civil society are engaged in advocating for improved WASH services.

4

**Functionality** – WASH infrastructure is functioning and maintained.

5

**Environmental** – WASH infrastructure protects the environment and public health, and is resilient.

6

**Social/equity and inclusion** – There is sustained demand for WASH services and behaviour change, with inclusive access for all.

For each intended outcome, implementing partners have identified specific outputs tailored to their implementation contexts and associated indicators. Once a year, partners from across the consortium come together in a workshop setting to review progress, share learning and agree priorities for the coming year. Given the challenges of measuring sustainability and the lack of benchmarks in the rural sanitation sector, an important part of the workshop includes reviewing and improving the outputs and indicators themselves, based on learning and experience.

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## 2.2 Programme planning and management

Having defined the programme area and objectives, the next step is to plan (or review) the activities that will lead to achieving those objectives within the programme timeframe; in other words, 'how are you going to do it?' Another question, closely allied to this, is 'who are you going to do it with?' Developing relationships with your partners and decisions on roles and responsibilities are all vital parts of the process.

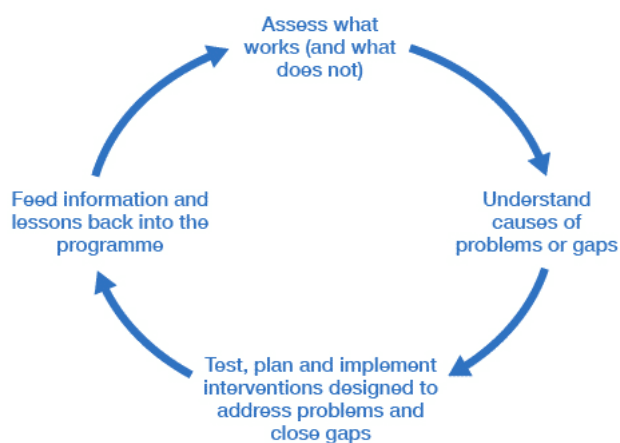
**Programme management** includes planning and management of all the activities of a programme with the intention of improving performance. Some key components to be considered are outlined in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1** Key aspects of programme management

Component	Questions to consider
Time	<p>Have realistic time estimates been made for the main interventions and activities?</p> <p>Have allowances been made for unexpected delays, bottlenecks and setbacks, and time required to tackle them?</p> <p>Are there any political challenges or events that might affect progress e.g. elections?</p> <p>Have you allowed sufficient time to engage with or consult hard to reach groups?</p>
Implementation	<p>What approach or approaches will be adopted?</p> <p>Will there be different approaches for different geographic areas? (Implementation is discussed in Study Session 5.)</p>

Component	Questions to consider
Capacity	<p>Is the required capacity for implementation available?</p> <p>Have you considered the number of communities that an implementation team can support and how many teams will be required?</p>
Costs	<p>What is the estimated cost of achieving the proposed objectives and targets?</p> <p>Is adequate funding available?</p> <p>Is funding secure for the duration of the programme? (See Section 2.3)</p>
Review	<p>Are suitable plans for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems in place? (See Section 2.4)</p>
Equity	<p>Has adequate allowance been made for the additional challenges and costs of reaching the previously unreached and covering 'the last mile'?</p>
Sustainability	<p>Have realistic allowances been made for the capacity and resources required to support sustainability?</p>

In addition to being able to find answers to these questions, one essential requirement for programme managers is to be adaptable and responsive to change. In the past, programmes were often designed around a single implementation approach but nowadays the principles of **adaptive management** are needed. Adaptive management means taking an iterative approach that reviews the evidence of past performance, builds on that experience to inform future actions, and responds rapidly to the feedback. The iterative cycle of adaptive management steps is shown in Figure 2.3.



**Figure 2.3** Adaptive management: an iterative process.

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## 2.3 Resource requirements: costs and capacity

With overall plans in place, there needs to be a careful assessment of the resources required to achieve the goals. Programme decisions will be strongly influenced by the relative costs, and cost-effectiveness, of different implementation strategies and approaches.

An outline of the overall programme budget should be made during the planning phase based on the estimated costs of achieving the proposed programme objectives. This estimated budget should be reviewed later on once implementation strategies have been prepared for each programme area using the more detailed information available at that time. (Further information on budgets and costings can be found in the *Guidance on Costing of Rural Sanitation Approaches*, see *Further reading*.)

As well as financial resources, human resources will be needed. The capacity appraisal part of your enabling environment review (see Study Session 1) will provide the basis for planning. Large-scale programmes with multiple implementation components across varying contexts require significant numbers of women and men with different skills and capabilities. If the resources are not available then a capacity development plan will be needed, which should try to take account of everything needed by programme actors and partners to fulfil their roles and responsibilities competently.

You should also plan for the possible need for additional resources that may emerge later in the programme cycle. Adaptive management needs resource and time built in for considering feedback and adjusting plans accordingly. This needs to be considered early in planning.

CONTINUE

## 2.4 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

The final question from the list of basic essentials introduced at the start of this study session is 'how do you know if you've done it?' This can be answered by the related processes of **monitoring** (continuous assessment of performance) and **evaluation** (analysis of monitoring data to assess progress), which lead on to **learning** (using and applying the knowledge and information acquired). MEL systems and processes need to be designed into the programme from the start so that progress can be measured. Baseline surveys and studies may be required to describe initial conditions, against which progress and performance can be compared.

From Figure 2.3 you can see that regular assessment of what is working, or not working, is essential for adaptive management so that you can respond to the changing situation. To do this effectively needs rapid feedback systems, often based on real-time monitoring and evaluation of programme performance. Use of mobile phones for monitoring has dramatically reduced the time, resources and capacity required to generate usable data for managers. Smartphone monitoring systems are now being used by large-scale rural sanitation programmes in Africa and Asia to monitor progress and verify results (see Case Study 2.2). The inclusiveness of monitoring systems should also be carefully considered and in some cases different approaches might be needed to assess progress for particular groups or vulnerable populations.

### Case Study 2.2 Mobile-to-web monitoring of rural sanitation in Zambia

Mobile-to-web (M2W) monitoring of rural sanitation in Zambia was first used in 2013. This was a collaboration between UNICEF, Akros (technical partner) and the Zambian Ministry of Local Government and Housing. The system used free, open-source software and simple SMS text messages from mobile phones to replace the previous paper-based system for the transfer of data from community to district to central level (Figure 2.4).



**Figure 2.4** A community volunteer uses his phone to send data on key sanitation indicators to a central server for analysis.

The key advantages of the real-time monitoring system are:

- Use of low-cost mobile phones with simple protocols for easy reporting and analysis.
- Greater accountability, better data quality and higher cost efficiency (per targeted community).
- Good quality and timely information is available to inform the targeting of interventions and follow-up services.

The system not only provides data for programme managers but also allows rapid and automatic feedback to the communities so they are kept aware of their sanitation status and that of other communities. This awareness and transparency encourages and further motivates behaviour change.

(Adapted from UNICEF, 2015 and Markle et al., 2017)

Programme evaluation should produce a systematic and objective assessment of the programme's design, implementation and results. The evaluation should aim to assess the achievement of the objectives as well as the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the programme.

External evaluations, third party monitoring and verification (e.g. sustainability checks), programme reviews and rapid learning activities help to strengthen accountability during implementation, ensuring that information on the programme and its results is readily available and shared with all key stakeholders. These activities need to be planned in advance (especially where baseline data are required), and their costs need to be included in the programme budget. Efforts should be made to document lessons learned and identify potential pitfalls throughout the programme, with periodic reflection and learning events as well as sharing of results with other stakeholders.

CONTINUE

## 2.5 Working at scale

Setting objectives, assessing resources, budgeting, evaluating outcomes – these are all parts of any programme. For large-scale sanitation programmes there are additional components and opportunities.



## 2.5.1 Horizontal learning

**Horizontal learning** means learning from other people working in a similar situation or with similar experiences to your own, as opposed to receiving top-down instruction from higher up (vertical learning). Horizontal learning is critical to the spread and scaling up of effective strategies, implementation approaches and practices. Active processes are required to seek out and share the learning generated by a programme in ways that motivate actors to make positive changes based on the lessons learned. The learning systems should also ensure that local learning is passed upwards to inform national and even global policy and systems.

Larger programmes provide more opportunities for horizontal learning when teams working in different programme areas are brought together to share their experiences, as illustrated in Case Study 2.3.

### Case Study 2.3 Rapid Action Learning workshops in India

The Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) is a national rural sanitation programme in India; the name roughly translates as 'Clean India Mission-Rural'. Rapid Action Learning (RAL) workshops have been used in the SBM-G programme as an efficient means for sharing innovation, good practices and lessons learned among teams of people from different districts (Figure 2.5). A typical RAL workshop includes sharing and learning activities, field visits and action planning to translate what has been learned into practice.

The workshop process is distinctive and carefully planned to encourage horizontal learning. The workshops are:

- Designed and facilitated to be participatory, informal, enjoyable and useful.
- For sharing and learning horizontally peer-to-peer and between levels. Most interactions are sideways not top-down. Senior staff are in a listening not lecturing mode.
- Designed to enable participants to pick up ideas from one another.
- Concerned with practical actions which can be taken to scale i.e. district, divisional, state and/or country-wide.
- Focused on what is working, innovations, and successes and also challenges and solutions.
- Democratic, decentralised and participatory, giving voice to all participants and levels and respecting all contributions.



**Figure 2.5** The majority of participants at RAL workshops are government staff working on the SBM-G.

(Adapted from IDS, 2018a)

## Activity 2.1 Horizontal learning

A village solves a local problem that another nearby community also faces. One approach is to go to the second village, tell them what is wrong and teach them how to solve the problem; another approach is to invite representatives from the second village to visit the first village and learn from their experiences of solving the problem.

Which approach do you think will work better?

**You can copy and paste your answer onto your Learner Journal before you click on Reveal.**

Type your answer here and then click Reveal

Reveal

### 2.5.2 Enabling environment strengthening

Enabling environment appraisal was described in Study Session 1. With large-scale programmes there are opportunities to develop and strengthen the enabling environment that are not feasible in smaller projects and programmes. Enabling environment strengthening, also sometimes referred to as sector strengthening or systems strengthening, could mean development and improvement in one or more of the elements of the enabling environment but can also extend to other functions such as availability of products and services.

UNICEF propose a six-step process for strengthening the enabling environment (EE) that emphasises the importance of collaboration with government and development partners. The six steps are:

1

**Agree** – Build consensus and leadership to improve the sector and forge alliances with development partners.

2

**Assess** – Work with the government and partners to carry out a systematic analysis and assessment of the existing EE.

3

**Plan** – Facilitate a government-led process to design a comprehensive programme for strengthening EE and agree on roles for the government and development partners.

4

**Invest** – Develop a realistic investment plan. Secure financing from existing channels and develop new financing sources and mechanisms to support the plan.

5

**Implement** – A detailed implementation plan for support to strengthen the EE including timeline, budget and human resource requirements.

6

**Monitor and evaluate** – With development partners, support government efforts to monitor EE progress and improvements.

An example of EE strengthening is briefly described in Case Study 2.4

## Case Study 2.4 Enabling environment strengthening in India

Scaling Up Rural Sanitation was an initiative started in 2007 by the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP). WSP were supporting government efforts in several countries to improve rural sanitation at scale, including targeted activities to strengthen the enabling environment. Baseline assessments were made in 2007 and repeated three years later to assess progress. A simplified version of WSP's framework for enabling environment assessment is shown in Figure 2.6 with the results for two Indian states, Himachal Pradesh (HP) and Madhya Pradesh (MP).

Dimension of enabling environment	Himachal Pradesh		Madhya Pradesh	
	2007	2010	2007	2010
Policy, strategy and direction	medium	high	low	low
Institutional arrangements	high	high	medium	medium
Financing and incentives	high	high	low	high
Monitoring and evaluation	low	high	low	medium
Implementation capacity	medium	high	low	medium
Availability of products and services	low	high	low	low

**KEY**

low	Needs improvement
medium	Progress made, but still not high performing
high	Performing at a high level

**Figure 2.6** Progress in strengthening WASH enabling environment functions between baseline (2007) and endline (2010) in Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, India.

The baseline assessment identified areas of weakness in the enabling environment so these could be targeted for support to address the gaps. Figure 2.6 reveals that after three years, repeat assessment showed that HP had made significant progress and was performing at a high level in all areas but MP was still in need of improvement. The contrast was explained by the strong political support for WSP's programme at state government level in HP that was lacking in the much larger and poorer state of MP (Figure 2.7).





**Figure 2.7** Women carry jars of water as they head out to defecate in open on the outskirts of a town in Madhya Pradesh.

(Adapted from Rosensweig et al., 2012)

Large-scale programmes often need to address WASH governance issues, and shape wider enabling conditions to encourage sustained and equitable outcomes and services. In areas where WASH governance is inadequate (e.g. political commitment to rural sanitation is low, sector policy is not implemented, sector coordination is not working well, monitoring data are unreliable, sanitation finance is limited, government capacity for support to rural sanitation and hygiene is low), then higher programme investment and more intensive support (and monitoring) may be required in order to tackle the extensive governance issues and develop workable approaches.

CONTINUE

## Summary of Study Session 2

In Study Session 2, you have learned that:

1

Building on the information gathered in the national level context analysis, defining rural sanitation programmes starts with setting the overall programme area.

2

Programme objectives and targets should be based on existing knowledge and be realistic. Equity, gender and sustainability should be built into objectives from the start.

3

Programme management should be adaptive i.e. it should be an iterative process that responds and adapts to change.

4

Setting budgets and identifying human resource requirements are essential aspects of programme planning.

5

Monitoring, evaluation and learning systems should be planned from the start.

6

Large-scale, area-wide programmes give added opportunities for horizontal learning and strengthening of the enabling environment.

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