# Study Session 3: Understanding the local area

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## Introduction

The national level context analysis (including overall situation analysis, review of lessons learned, and capacity appraisal) enabled decisions to be made on the programme area and objectives. More detailed analysis of the context is now required in each of the proposed geographical areas of the programme so that specific implementation plans for those areas can be developed.

This study session outlines the information and analysis required to understand the local context and conditions in each area of your programme's activities.

## Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

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

**3.1** Describe the types of data required to understand local situations and how this understanding informs plans for implementation.

**3.2** Explain how the analysis and level of detail for large-scale programmes differs from smaller programmes.

## 3.1  From national to local level

The data needed to understand the local area context is similar to that described in Study Session 1 at national level but with a closer focus. It covers situation analysis, lessons learned, and enabling environment review including budget and capacity appraisal but all with some variations and at a more detailed level.

The primary purpose of context analysis at the local level is to inform decisions about the various **implementation strategies** (sets of interventions) that could be adopted. Different strategies will be required in different places so analysing the characteristics of communities, populations and places will help you choose the most appropriate strategy. In Study Session 4, you will read about a suggested classification of rural contexts to assist in decision making about strategies and interventions.

Later in the process, when you are developing detailed plans for implementation, the local context analysis for each area can be reviewed and compared with the identified requirements for the various interventions. If there is not enough capacity or budget to undertake everything required within, say, a normal five-year programme period, then some compromises and trade-offs may be necessary to ensure that objectives are achievable and targets are realistic. Again, this illustrates the value of iteration and adaptability in effective programming.

## 3.2  Sanitation and hygiene data

Review of sanitation and hygiene data at area (district), sub-area (sub-district) and community (where available) levels will enable you to identify the priority locations and the support they require. Some key sanitation indicators to look for are districts or communities with:

- High open defecation (OD) rates (which require broad support to tackle widespread sanitation deficiencies, as opposed to targeted support)

- High use of shared sanitation facilities (which require support to address reasons for shared use)

- High use of unimproved sanitation facilities (which require support for upgrading)

- High use of improved but not safely managed sanitation facilities (which require support for safe management)

- Low OD rates (close to being open defecation free).

An additional indicator to assess hygiene status is levels of use of handwashing facilities with soap, which may require targeted support to raise levels of handwashing and increase sustained behaviour change. Another aspect to consider is whether sanitation facilities are appropriately inclusive. Even where there is high sanitation coverage, it is important to check that public and community toilets are accessible for all and are female friendly with appropriate provision for women and girls including facilities for menstrual hygiene management (UNICEF, WaterAid and WSUP, 2018).

Where no data are available at area level or below, the programme should consider conducting formative research including a household survey to provide the detailed data required for the development of effective implementation strategies.

## Activity 3.1  Assessing inequalities

It is extremely important to include an assessment of inequalities in your local area analysis. To do this you need data sets that are disaggregated for several different characteristics of people and populations that could prevent them from accessing WASH services.

**Type your answer here and then click Reveal**

What characteristics might you need to consider?

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

Unfortunately, in many developing countries, data disaggregated on health status and sanitation access among disadvantaged or vulnerable groups may not be available below national level. It may be possible to collect some of these data through a baseline household survey as long as it is designed with that purpose in mind and has questions that will produce the necessary disaggregated data. However, where disadvantaged and vulnerable groups form a small proportion of the population, it can be difficult to obtain statistically significant results without large increases in the sample size of the survey.

Under these circumstances, other methods could be considered, for example, formative research could be conducted with specific population groups on the issues and barriers affecting them.

**CONTINUE**

## 3.3  Physical, economic and social factors

Local context analysis should include the physical, economic and social factors that influence implementation across the area. Some of this information should be readily available but you may need to collect additional data where it is not. For example, GIS mapping data may be useful for the physical factors.

The following factors should be assessed for the main sub-areas or zones within each programme area:

- **Road type/access** – Roads and road surfaces can affect access by implementation teams and service providers and may limit delivery of basic services (Figure 3.1).

- **Population density** – Higher population densities create higher risks of disease from open defecation and unimproved sanitation. Lower population densities may decrease visibility of problems from inadequate sanitation and can increase programme costs due to difficulties in reaching individual households and reduced economies of scale.

- **Availability of products and services** – Market reach and supply chain development will vary, with less reach in remote areas and more where roads, production and service provision are better.

- **Affordability of sanitation products and services** – Even if available, some products and services will be unaffordable to some populations, particularly poor households living in non-cash economies, or where transport and other transaction costs affect affordability.

- **Difficult physical contexts** – Challenging conditions such as a high water table, rocky or sandy soils, or high risk of flooding can affect the choice of sanitation technology.

- **Social heterogeneity** – The degree of **social heterogeneity** within communities and populations will influence the choice of implementation strategy. For example, engaging and mobilising people may be easier in socially homogenous communities. Social norms, cultural beliefs and levels of **social cohesion** also have the potential to influence sanitation behaviours, programme engagement, leadership and decision making within communities.

**Figure 3.1(a)** Road access can vary from **(a) none at all**, to (b) difficult, often to dry weather, to (c) accessible throughout the year.

**Figure 3.1(b)** Road access can vary from (a) none at all, to **(b) difficult**, often to dry weather, to (c) accessible throughout the year.

**Figure 3.1(c)** Road access can vary from (a) none at all, to (b) difficult, often to dry weather, to **(c) accessible throughout the year.**

Table 3.1 suggests a possible format for your assessment of these six factors with three suggested levels for each one. The idea is to copy the table on paper and use it as a checklist by adding ticks or crosses in the relevant boxes for each factor to give you a simple summary of the local conditions in each sub-area. You may wish to develop and adapt it for your specific circumstances.

**Table 3.1** Assessment of physical, economic and social context

| Factor | Level | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Road type/vehicle access** | no access for vehicles | seasonal access | all weather access |
| | | | |

| Factor | Level | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Population density** | high | medium | low |
| | | | |
| **Availability of the market** | none | limited | available |
| | | | |
| **Affordability** | unaffordable | barely affordable | affordable |
| | | | |
| **Difficult contexts** | very challenging | challenging | none |
| | | | |
| **Social heterogeneity** | high | medium | low |
| | | | |

**CONTINUE**

## 3.4 Lessons learned locally

Similar to the national analysis, your area analysis should review the lessons that can be learned from previous and ongoing interventions in the programme area by NGOs, government and any other actors. You

want to try and find answers to questions such as:

- Who is working where?

- What approaches have been used, or are being used?

- How will your new programme align with existing interventions and ensure complementary results?

- What lessons have been learned from previous and ongoing interventions in the area?

For example, you may find that CLTS will not work if it was done badly in the past, or if hardware subsidies had been administered in a neighbouring town that may make the community less interested in participating.

**CONTINUE**

## 3.5  Review of the local enabling environment

An enabling environment assessment is required at area level to check whether the building blocks are in place, to identify bottlenecks and constraints, and to determine what sort of support is required at this level.

### Activity 3.2  Local enabling environment

Think back to the five building blocks of an enabling environment that were introduced in Section 1.4.

How would you adapt these for enabling environment review at the local level?

**Type your answer here and then click Reveal**

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

**Reveal full discussion for Activity 3.2**

ⓘ At a local level, your review of *policy* would look at comparison of what is in place at area level with the national policy and planning requirements.

An important aspect of institutional arrangements would be *coordination* among other actors including local institutions because you want them to participate in the development of implementation plans.

*Financial* costs for providing and sustaining rural sanitation and hygiene services need to be assessed against existing budgets and capacity.

Local area *monitoring* should feed into national sector monitoring systems, while also meeting the programme needs (which may be more progressive than those of the

current national system) and generating accountability (both upwards and downwards).

You would also want to review *capacity*. If not already present, learning mechanisms may need to be developed and implemented at area level to capture, document and share learning.

Another key component is *sustainability* support. Institutional and management arrangements for long-term support need to be determined in recognition of the changed capacity and resources available once the programme has finished.

At a local level, you may also consider access to markets and the availability of sanitation products and services.

The strength of the area enabling environment will influence the plans for implementation. Where a strong enabling environment exists, the implementation strategy should be comprehensive, aiming to cover the programme area, move towards safely managed sanitation services, address inequalities and develop effective approaches to improve sustainability.

Where the enabling environment is weaker and few models of effective implementation are available, the implementation strategy should be more focused, aiming to target specific high priority areas where more supportive partners are available, and only scale up and tackle more difficult areas later. In these circumstances, programmes can incorporate activities to strengthen the local enabling environment, as illustrated in Case Study 3.1.

## Case Study 3.1  Sustainability and strengthening the local enabling environment in Niger

Sustainability results have been a critical issue for UNICEF's Accelerating Sanitation and Water for All programme. In this programme, agreements called 'sustainability compacts' were signed between UNICEF and national governments. These compacts set out government commitments to ensure services are functioning to an agreed standard for a minimum of 10 years and specify UNICEF's role in supporting this effort.

In Niger, at municipal level, the equivalent of a sustainability compact was signed in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding. These agreements laid out the responsibilities of the local government in the context of the support being provided to them. This included local level planning, setting up WASH committees, regular meetings, real time monitoring of services, 'clean village' competitions, and co-funding of these activities through tariffs collected from water supply services.

These activities strengthened the village level ownership of the programme through capacity building of village natural leaders, quarterly community self-assessments facilitated by the WASH committees, and participation in the clean village contests. These, in effect, established local WASH norms and sustained services.

To monitor this programme, sustainability checks are conducted to assess the sustainability of WASH facilities, services, and behaviours. These checks not only assess functionality of services but also look at conditions for future sustainability including how the local enabling environment at municipal and community levels has been strengthened.

### 3.5.1  Capacity appraisal

At area level, capacity appraisal needs to build on the previous high-level appraisal and provide detail on the availability and quality of specific capacities within the programme area. All key actors and partners should be considered, including:

- Government capacity (district, sub-district, village).

- Partner capacity (NGOs, community-based organisations, private consultants, academics, etc.).

- Private sector capacity (producers, entrepreneurs, service providers, transporters).

- Community capacity (leadership, social cohesion, existing development activities).

Essentially, you need to ask: what human resources – both time and skills – are required to achieve the programme's desired results? And, what resources are available in practice? If there is a difference between these two answers, you will either need to adjust the results targets to make them feasible with the capacity available, or find ways to increase capacity (or a combination of the two). In doing this, you should consider the capacity needed during the lifetime of the programme to achieve the results and also what will be needed to sustain them after the programme end-date.

**CONTINUE**

## 3.6 Differences of scale

Large scale, area-wide sanitation programmes have some significant differences from small scale or pilot programmes. In Study Session 2 you read about the wider opportunities for horizontal learning and enabling environment strengthening that come with larger programmes. There are other differences not only in terms of geographic coverage but also in the design, planning and delivery of the programmes. For example, when carrying out local context analysis with large scale programmes you will need to cover multiple areas to see what approaches are applicable across all target areas and what will need to be done differently. The map of Haiti in Figure 2.1 illustrates the wide distribution of multiple areas within one programme. With small scale programmes you are more likely to be working with more homogenous contexts, albeit with differences within communities.

There are also differences in the levels and types of data that are relevant at small and larger scales with different indicators used for monitoring and evaluation. Small scale programmes will typically focus on the number of household toilets constructed over a time period. Area-wide programmes will be interested not only in household level but also how many villages and districts are becoming open defecation free. The nationwide Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) programme in India provides an example that includes all levels. Local level monitoring provides data on the number of household toilets constructed as well as the number of ODF villages and districts. The robust management information system developed to support the monitoring and learning framework captures these data in real time as they are uploaded to the system from

all the states, regions and communities across India. Figure 3.2 is a screenshot of their monitoring website showing the reported situation at a fixed moment in time with data from household to national level
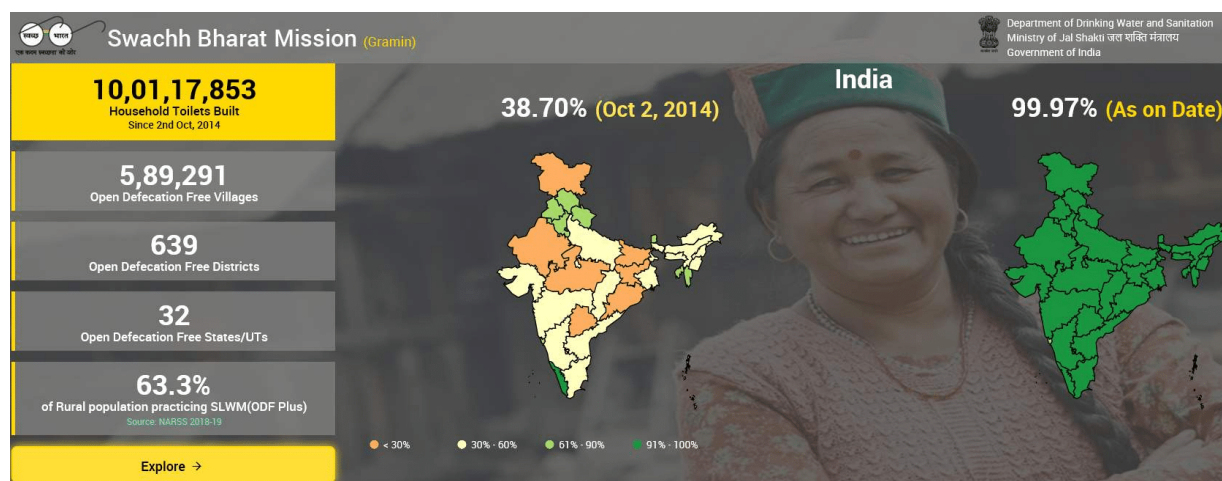


**Figure 3.2** Screenshot of the constantly updating Swachh Bharat Mission website showing reported real-time data of programme results as they were on 20 August 2019.

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As far as data is concerned, there are some potential drawbacks of working at a larger scale to keep in mind. One is the possibility that the detail of local level data may be lost when it is combined and collated into a simplified higher level summary. In particular there is a danger that disaggregation of data for gender or for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups may be lost at higher levels of reporting so this may need additional attention and checking. Another is that at a larger scale it may be difficult to measure use (as opposed to construction) of toilets which can lead to uncertain data. For example, the SBM data in Figure 3.2 indicates over 100 million toilets have been constructed since 2014 but the data does not reveal how many are in use.

The scale of area-wide programmes has additional benefits when national governments provide leadership and government agencies act as key facilitators. Government support brings many significant opportunities and greatly increases the chances of sustainable improvement. For example, Ethiopia's Health Extension Workers (HEWs) are staff of the Federal Ministry of Health and a critical part of the government's health extension programme. HEWs are trained and deployed as sanitation actors in rural and urban communities. This has had a significant impact on the progress achieved with sanitation in the country; Ethiopia has reduced open defecation by nearly 60 percentage points between 2000 and 2017 (JMP, 2019). In contrast, in Nigeria, the implementation of sanitation campaigns and projects is largely driven by international NGOs and development partners who have different implementation mechanisms and modalities. Although the starting

point in 2000 in Nigeria was significantly higher than Ethiopia, the percentage change over the same period has been very small, as shown in Figure 3.3.
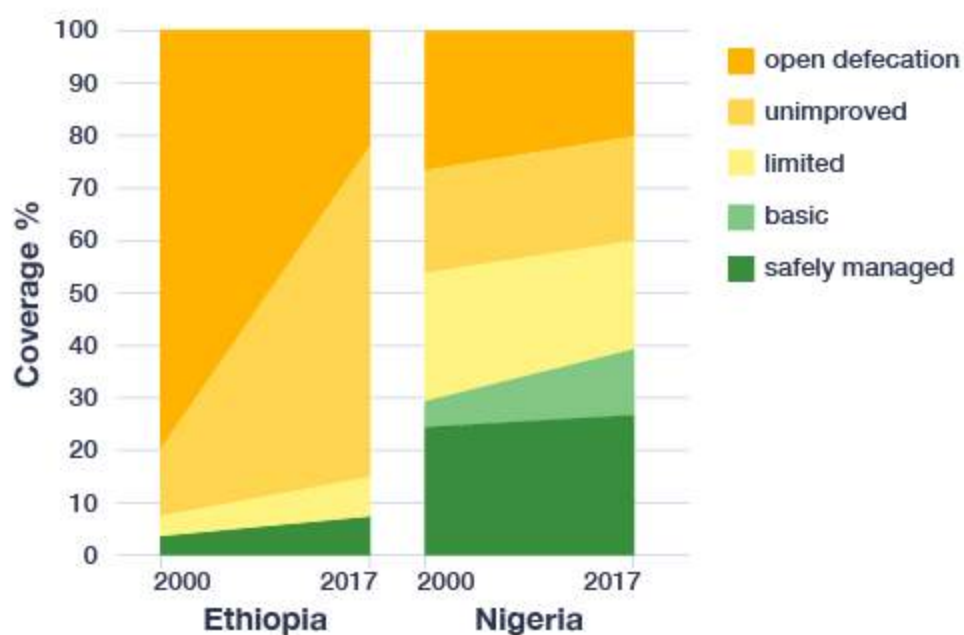


**Figure 3.3** Changing household sanitation service levels in Ethiopia and Nigeria from 2000 to 2017 (JMP, 2017).

## Activity 3.3  Eritrea's sanitation programme

Watch this video and identify the main stakeholders in Eritrea's sanitation programme at international, national and regional levels.

**Video 3.1** Using DfID funds to leverage WASH sector results in Eritrea (9 mins).

## Video 3.1 transcript: DFID Fund in Eritrea ⎯

[00:00:00.00] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[00:00:06.43] NARRATOR: The first national sanitation conference conducted in the capital Asmara on December 11th to 12th, 2018, marked a historic event in Eritrea, as the two-day conference brought together over 500 participants, including governors, sub-zoba administrators, and representatives of local government from all the six regions of the country to talk on the way forward to eliminate open defecation in Eritrea. And it was here in this very conference that Eritrea pledged to end open defecation nationwide by 2022.

[00:00:41.98] AMINA NURHUSSEIN: It is high time now for all the actors to concentrate their efforts by working more aggressively, and acting more collectively to their journey of making all of our villages open defecation-free villages by the year 2022.

[00:01:03.04] NARRATOR: The historic two-day conference was made possible through the contribution of DFID. DFID has helped the government to develop One WASH strategy and investment plan, which will be finalised by end of June 2019. This strategy has helped identify three main pillars, strengthening an enabling

environment at national level, improving zoba level programme design and implementation, provision of WASH services to communities and institutions based on demand and supply.

[00:01:33.32] IAN RICHARDS: The challenges are clearly great. But I do want to stress one very important point. It is that the 2022 plan, although ambitious, can be delivered. Why am I so convinced of this? It's because Eritrea is a small country. Because Eritreans work hard. Because communities work together. Because the great majority of people here understand the link between lack of sanitation and sickness. It's because we know that ODF works here in Eritrea.

[00:02:28.25] NARRATOR: DFID has also provided technical assistance in the design of climate-resilient WASH to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development [?. They have also supported WASH sector coordination at national level among the different partners.

[00:02:44.42] KAMAL KAR: Eritrea has all potentials, and all the qualities to achieve open defecation-free nation in Africa in the next two years. That's my personal feeling.

[00:03:02.54] NARRATOR: Spearheaded by the local government, all the six regions of the country have taken immediate response to the national sanitation conference, and held workshops to make their villages open defecation-free through the involvement of all their respective zoba stakeholders. An example is this workshop, held in Barentu, Gash-Barka region from 12 to 13 April 2019. In attendance were over 300 participants, including the governor, sub-zoba administrators, and representatives of local government and ministry of health.

[00:03:36.80] KAHSAY ASSRAT: [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[00:04:04.49] FISEHAYE HAYLE: [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[00:04:24.00] DAVID TSETSE: There's a level of commitment here that's so high and so fulfilling that I want to believe that this two year that the governor has said to declare this state will actually be realised.

[00:04:38.06] NARRATOR: Similarly, as in all the other regions of Eritrea, the reports presented featured the region's costed microplans, and the way forward, which were all openly discussed at the workshop.

[00:04:50.73] LIWAM TESFALIDET: [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[00:05:18.74] NARRATOR: The coming together of these zoba administrators, community leaders, governors, military commanders, and heads of various governmental institutions is testimony that the people in Eritrea are demonstrating the power of collective local action by taking initiatives to making all villages and nation open defecation-free by 2022, if not sooner.

[00:05:42.79] FRANCO KIBABA: [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[00:06:12.23] NARRATOR: The motto in Eritrea is leave no one behind. And community-led total sanitation CLTS is charged in schools, military camps, and institutions.

[00:06:23.81] ABDU YACOB: [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[00:06:41.45] NARRATOR: The many benefits of CLTS have been widely recognised and valued across Eritrea. And wherever it has been implemented, it has improved health, social behaviour, and the environment as a whole. The workshop in Barentu revealed that only in the first quarter of 2019, more than 808 villages have been triggered nationwide, while in just two months over 309 villages have been triggered in Gash-Barka alone.

[00:07:10.25] YIRGALEM SOLOMON: [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[00:07:35.24] NARRATOR: Throughout Eritrea, and especially in Gash-Barka, the military groups are fully involved in the elimination of ODF by supporting the community to build latrines, and taking the initiative in their camps to build latrines for trainees. Likewise, the Ministry of Education also pledged to build latrines in 223 schools in the region.

Eritrea national roadmap to scale up ODF is prepared. And development of cost-effective micro plans for sub-zoba is ongoing. And now there is requirement to mobilise support and resources for sanitation and hygiene in all zobas of the country.

[00:08:20.61] DAVID TSETSE: The last four or five years, we struggled to get a level of triggering. So by the time we end this year, we are looking at close to 1000. That is close to half of what we actually expect. But I must point, though, triggering and declaring ODF, there's a conversion rate that has to take place. But based on previous experience, at least, we're looking at 40% to 50% conversion rate. And if we achieve that, we still have our annual target of 356 villages per year. So yeah, I think it's just unbelievable.

[00:08:57.95] NARRATOR: This year, 2019, Eritrea has participated at the Sanitation For All meeting in Costa Rica, and the AfricaSan5 meeting in Cape Town, South Africa for the first time, where it committed on One WASH strategy and investment and ODF game plan.
[00:09:15.86] [MUSIC PLAYING]

Who are the main stakeholders in Eritrea's sanitation programme at international, national and regional levels?

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

**Type your answer here and then click Reveal**

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## Summary of Study Session 3

In Study Session 3, you have learned that:

**1** Context analysis at local level provides information needed to plan implementation strategies for the programme area.

**2** Data on access to sanitation and hygiene services enables programmes to identify and prioritise areas with low access and high OD rates.

**3** Disaggregated data may not be available at local levels and formative research may be needed to understand the sanitation situation for different genders and vulnerable groups.

**4** Key factors for local context are road access, population density, availability of markets, affordability, difficult physical contexts and social heterogeneity.

**5** Like the national level analysis, local context analysis includes learning lessons from past programmes and enabling environment review but with some variations for the smaller scale.

**6** Operating at large-scale on area-wide programmes has several differences compared to smaller scale programmes including the need to cater for a wider variety of local contexts,

different indicators and data sets for monitoring, and advantages of national government leadership.

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