Study Session 4: Planning for local implementation

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Introduction

At this stage in the programming process, you move on to planning what you are going to do in more detail, in other words, your plans for implementation. With the collected data and analysis at national and local levels you have an informed understanding of the nature of the different areas within the overall programme. Based on that analysis, this study session offers a suggested categorisation of rural areas that will guide you in the selection of implementation strategies.

Study Session 5 follows on from this by outlining the various implementation strategies and approaches that could be employed and suggests appropriate options for the different types of rural contexts.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4

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

4.1 Use area analysis information to identify the characteristics of rural areas that will influence the selection of appropriate implementation strategies.

4.2 Respond to the additional challenges for sanitation programmes in difficult rural contexts.

4.1 Typology of rural contexts

The data collected for area situation analysis, especially information about the physical location, will enable you to categorise the rural context of each area within the programme. Three broad types of rural context have been proposed in order to simplify the classification. These three context types are adapted from the OECD classification of rural regions (OECD, 2017) and provide a simple framework for the analysis of context type. Alternative typologies can be used where appropriate or where national typologies already exist. The main aim is to distinguish between physical, economic and social contexts that may need different implementation strategies, or where variations are required because of particular challenges.

The three types of rural context are:

1 **Rural remote** – rural communities far from urban areas.

2 **Rural on-road** – rural communities that are well connected with urban areas.

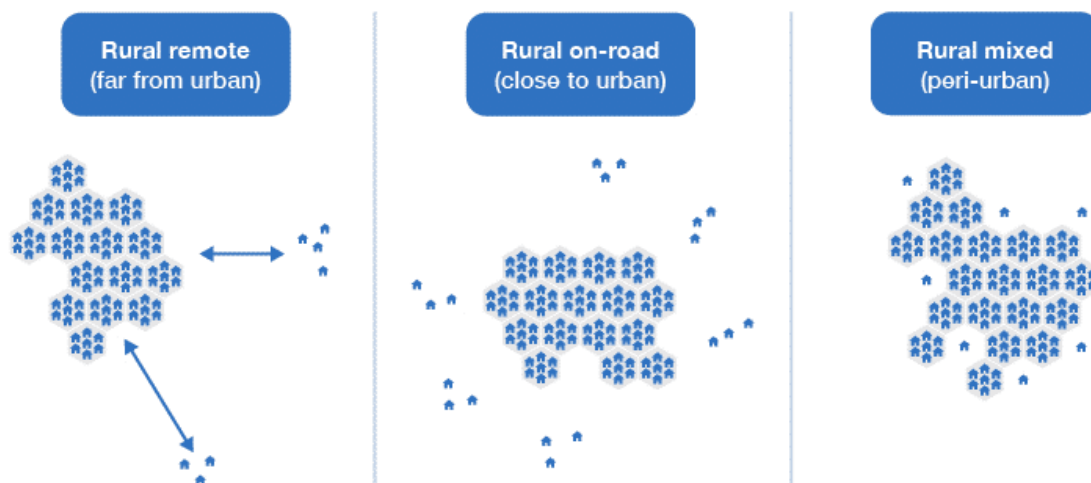3 **Rural mixed** – peri-urban communities with mixed rural and urban characteristics.

Figure 4.1 Three types of rural context.

The physical, economic and social characteristics that determine the type of rural context are multi-dimensional with two contexts unlikely to have exactly the same mix of characteristics. It is important to recognise that there is a continuum of contexts. This continuum ranges from remote rural communities with scattered populations and limited market connection all the way up to 'mixed' rural communities with larger populations in more congested, peri-urban settings with good market connections.

Some or all of the following characteristics should be present to classify an area as one of the below three rural context types.

Context type 1: Rural remote

Typical characteristics:

- small and remote communities

- seasonal roads or no roads

- low population density

- predominantly agricultural livelihood

- low market reach (i.e. low availability of any products and services)

- low availability of sanitation products and services

- low affordability of sanitation products and services

- few sanitation finance options (few finance institutions or services available)

- low social heterogeneity i.e. socially homogenous communities.

Context type 2: Rural on-road

Typical characteristics:

- small to medium communities connected with rural centres

- easy access on all-weather roads to urban centres

- low to medium population density

- agricultural and other livelihoods

- low to medium market reach

- low availability of sanitation products and services in the local market

- low affordability of sanitation products and services

- some options for sanitation finance

- mid-range social heterogeneity.

Context type 3: Rural mixed

Typical characteristics:

- large rural settlements and peri-urban areas

- easy access on all-weather roads to urban centres

- medium to high population density: some congestion problems

- mixed livelihoods

- typically more tenants (rented accommodation) than other contexts

- medium to high market reach

- medium availability of sanitation products and services in the local market

- low to medium affordability of sanitation products and services

- increased options for sanitation finance

- high social heterogeneity.

Some populations and programme areas will have characteristics of more than one context type and may be difficult to classify. The intention of the broad three-context classification is to simplify assessment of the wide range of contexts found in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, while encouraging recognition that one combination of rural sanitation approaches is unlikely to be appropriate for an entire programme area.

More nuanced physical and economic context assessment will be possible for specific programme areas, as well as consideration of additional social factors such as norms, beliefs and levels of social cohesion. As some approaches rely on these more than others, it is important to have some understanding of how these social factors vary across the target areas.

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4.2 How does the typology help?

The purpose of this classification is to help you identify the most appropriate implementation approach or mix of approaches for that context. For each context, the particular conditions will have implications for implementation.

In **rural remote** contexts (for example, Figure 4.2), the main implications are:

- Transport is difficult and/or expensive, which limits the effectiveness and reach of market-based sanitation and increases the costs of **external support**.

- Low affordability of sanitation products and services and few finance options; also typically more homogenous populations with higher social cohesion. This favours community-based approaches, local technology solutions (until the market develops and reach increases) and **internal support** to disadvantaged groups.

Figure 4.2 A rural remote community in Madagascar.

In **rural on-road** contexts, the main implications are:

- Some transport options are available so there is more potential for market-based sanitation. The cost of external support is less than in rural remote areas.

- Some finance channels are available but options for sanitation finance may be limited. There is increased potential for external support to disadvantaged groups.

In **rural mixed** contexts, the main implications are:

- Improved transport options and market reach so there is more potential for market-based sanitation.

- Greater population heterogeneity and typically less social cohesion so less potential for community-based approaches.

- Increased need for sanitation finance and support. Disadvantaged groups face severe sanitation challenges. Higher population densities increase the impacts of inadequate sanitation.

- Issues of tenure (property owned by others) and congestion (no space to construct a toilet) can limit the potential for household solutions. Implementation approaches often have to involve the community, landlords, and local governments.

- A wider range of faecal exposure routes with some open defecation but also many other potential sanitation problems e.g. hanging toilets; flying toilets; excreta and faecal sludge discharged and washed into public spaces and water bodies; and solid waste blocking drains and sewers.

The effects of these implications on implementation are discussed further in Study Session 5.

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4.3 Difficult contexts

In addition to these three rural context types, there are a number of other 'difficult contexts' that you need to be prepared to face and are often inadequately addressed by most programmes. Previously, communities or households in these difficult contexts were often excluded, or left until last, in rural sanitation programmes. In other words, they are often the people and communities identified as the 'last mile'. In such contexts, implementation tends to be more challenging and could mean you need to think of, and test, new and different approaches. You should also be prepared for higher costs, lower chances of success and increased risks of sustainability problems.

The following conditions have been identified as common challenges to rural sanitation programmes that come under the heading of 'difficult contexts'. You will need to find out if any of these conditions are found in your programme area and if so, develop effective implementation strategies to try to overcome the challenges. Typical 'difficult contexts' include:

- Disaster-affected (e.g. flood, drought, landslide, tropical storm) or disaster-prone areas.

- Conflict-affected and insecure areas.

- Camps or communities for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees (Figure 4.3a).

- Waterside areas and locations with seasonal flooding (e.g. coastal, delta, island, river or lake-side communities) (Figure 4.3b).

- Water-scarce areas (e.g. arid and semi-arid lands).

- Challenging physical conditions (e.g. rocky ground, sandy soils or other soil types likely to collapse, high groundwater table).

- Material-scarce areas (e.g. communities with few local materials available for construction, maintenance or replacement of facilities).

Figure 4.3 Difficult physical and geographical contexts. **(a) Hillside IDP camp in Myanmar.**

Figure 4.3 Difficult physical and geographical contexts. **(b) Living by the waterside in Madagascar in a house regularly flooded by rising sea tides.**

Mobile communities (nomadic, semi-nomadic, or seasonal) present a particular challenge to rural sanitation programmes. These communities include pastoralists, small-scale miners (who mine deposits until exhausted, then move on), farmers (who move around with agricultural seasons), fishing communities (who may also have seasonal mobility) and other migrant worker groups.

Some groups move between fixed locations in a predictable manner e.g. transhumant pastoralists; others stay in a similar area but move from place to place building new houses or huts periodically; and others are more truly nomadic, living in portable dwellings that they carry with them. Most of these groups practise open defecation and perceive little benefit from hygienic sanitation facilities. In these situations, the social context and attitudes of the people are as much the cause of difficulty as the physical or geographical context. This was also found in a recent study in Tanzania to identify and understand the last mile, described in Case Study 4.1.

Case Study 4.1 SNV Tanzania and the last mile

Since 2017, SNV and the Government of Tanzania have been implementing the Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All (SS4HA) programme in eight Tanzanian districts. The programme has been successful and by early 2019, the number of households using toilets had increased to 90% but the remaining 10% – the last mile – were still practising open defecation or sharing toilets. SNV Tanzania wanted to find out the reasons why. From the results of a household survey they identified three main categories of people in this 10%. These were:

- 'defiant' households that had the resources to build latrines for themselves but chose not to; they preferred to continue to practise open defecation or use shared toilets

- socially isolated households that did not have a financially able family member to support them

- geographically isolated households that are far from places where they could get information about sanitation options.

These survey results were not what was expected and gave valuable insights into the underlying causes of continuing open defecation. The survey was followed up with workshops with key stakeholders including heads of households from these groups. Workshop discussions explored the reasons behind the attitudes and behaviours and this encouraged the programme team to come up with creative ideas for addressing the problems. For example, they discovered that lack of knowledge was a recurring problem and that raising awareness once was not enough. They therefore plan to develop communication strategies that provide repeated awareness raising of desired sanitation behaviours and target these specifically to the groups they had identified as the last mile.

(Adapted from SNV, 2019)

For all the 'difficult contexts', specific implementation strategies with adequate capacity and budget are required. Where strategies do not already exist, formative research and piloting of targeted implementation approaches may be required. Adaptive programming is particularly important in these cases where tested approaches are not available. Adequate flexibility and resources should be built into the programme so that

targeted approaches can be tested, evaluated and refined until they work well, and then can be scaled up across the programme.

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4.4 Setting area objectives and targets

The overall programme objectives and targets were determined during the national (or subnational) analysis process. In the area planning phase, all stakeholders including local government and development partners should agree on specific area objectives and targets that will contribute to the overall programme aims, and also support wider national development goals. Objectives then lead to the development of costed implementation plans. Each component should be costed, based on estimates of the capacity, time and resources required.

Other key factors to keep in mind when setting objectives are the overarching themes of gender equality, inclusion and sustainability and the need to incorporate these into aims for the programme (see Study Session 1 for details of these themes).

The high level goal for sanitation programmes is achievement of the SDG targets by 2030. If resources or capacity are limited, it may be necessary to prioritise particular elements of the sanitation SDG and allow for different rates of progress. For example, in some areas, accelerated progress that aims for the maximum possible improvement may be possible but in other areas, slower, more incremental small-scale improvements could be the better option while capacity and governance systems are developed and strengthened. Identifying potential bottlenecks to progress and putting appropriate resources towards resolving them will help reach the SDG goal on schedule.

Summary of Study Session 4

In Study Session 4, you have learned that:

1. Rural contexts can be classified in three main types: rural remote, rural on-road and rural mixed.

2. The physical, economic and social characteristics of these three types have implications for decisions on implementation strategies.

3. A fourth type of rural context can be described as 'difficult'. This may be due to physical and geographical conditions or for socio-economic reasons. Difficult contexts are more challenging for rural sanitation programmes and may need new and different approaches.

4. Classification of rural context type will inform plans and decisions about area objectives and targets for the programme.

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