

Study Session 6: Collaboration, learning and review

[Return to the main course page](#)

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Introduction

By this stage, you will have done a thorough analysis of the national and local context that you're working in and developed overall programme objectives as well as localised implementation plans. It is now time to pause and review your plans to make sure that nothing – and no one – has been missed. Now is the time to double-check that the programme is designed to reach everyone in the target area in a way that is sustainable in the long term. Working with the right stakeholders in both the design and implementation is an important part of ensuring this will happen. You will learn more about the value of partnerships in this study session.

It is also the time to circle back and check that it is still feasible to deliver the plans and achieve the programme objectives with the human and financial resources available. Considering the enabling environment, you need to think about how plans are embedded in local institutions and what they will realistically have capacity to continue, once the programme's funding ends. Understanding what is working and how within the programme is key to adapting plans to increase impact and sustainability. As such, you should also review the programme's monitoring, evaluation and learning components at this stage.

This study session ends with a conclusion to the course.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

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

6.1 Recognise the advantages of collaboration and partnerships.

6.2 Explain the importance of generating and sharing learning for successful implementation of rural sanitation programmes.

CONTINUE

6.1 Partnerships and coordination

Successful programmes need effective collaboration and cooperation with diverse stakeholders, some of whom will also be partners in the programme. The stakeholders range from national government and ministries through local government, NGOs (international and local), private sector, civil society organisations, and not least, the communities themselves with whom effective communication and cooperation is a vital ingredient (Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 Community engagement is an important part of programme plans.

You will recall from Study Session 1 that part of the enabling environment (EE) review involved finding out about the 'institutional arrangements' referring to the structures, coordination mechanisms, roles and responsibilities of the relevant government departments, organisations and other institutions involved in implementation of rural sanitation programmes. EE review also included appraisal of different stakeholders' capacity to implement at the required scale. This information should inform who is engaged in coordinating, designing and implementing programmes and therefore with whom you need to collaborate.

Once an implementation strategy is in place, you need to check that institutional and other arrangements correspond to the requirements for implementation. Key questions to consider are:

- Are the arrangements appropriate for the implementation approaches you intend to use?
- Are coordination and communication systems between partners in place?

- Will additional arrangements (and capacity) be required at the start in order to implement specific approaches you have planned?
- Will additional capacity be required as implementation scales up? And can this need be met through capacity development during the initial phase of the programme?

Another factor to be aware of is that the pace and volume of programme activities may vary during the life of the programme and this may affect capacity needs and relationships with other stakeholders. There may also be geographical variations to consider. Remote regions often suffer from lack of capacity and experience in key implementation elements e.g. implementation actors may be reluctant to set up offices in areas with only limited work opportunities, or may struggle to recruit staff in remote areas. In large-scale programmes there is greater potential for more of these sorts of variation so preparing for them and adapting to change is very important.

Good working relationships with other stakeholders is an important aspect of any programme but there are two key areas worthy of special attention: partnerships with other, non-WASH, sectors and partnerships with local government.

6.1.1 Cross-sectoral partnerships

There is often overlap in the remit, approaches, and experiences of those working across different aspects of rural development and it is important that sanitation programmes are coordinated and aligned with other programmes such as nutrition, health, education and environment, particularly where capacity and resources are scarce. Learning from and supporting each other across sectors helps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes. For example, where the sanitation sector has limited evidence about what works in difficult contexts, stakeholders from another sector may have relevant learning. Working in partnership with others will enable you to use their expertise as a resource to support your sanitation programme design and implementation, and vice versa. It is therefore particularly important in the programme analysis, design and review phases to engage with and involve area representatives in other sectors. As well as different sectors, think about different types of stakeholders to engage too. They may include local government, development partners, faith-based organisations, community groups, private sector and others.

6.1.2 Local government partnerships

Local government will be a key stakeholder in almost all large-scale rural sanitation programmes. They are often responsible for community-based behaviour change and for long-term support and monitoring. However, you need to consider that the local government you are working with may not have sufficient numbers of staff with the appropriate skills for a large-scale, inclusive programme that expects initial interventions to reach everyone in large numbers of communities per year, and then has growing numbers of communities that require follow up, monitoring and support.

There are other practical aspects of local government capabilities to be aware of. For example: Will they be able to meet transport needs? Will there be sufficient budget for travel expenses? Will the staff be able to devote enough time to the programme given they are likely to have other government duties? In the past, some programmes have under-estimated the demands on local government staff with unintended consequences for both programme effectiveness (which can be reduced if government staff cannot play their roles fully) and on other government services (which can be affected adversely if staff are diverted away from them).

Leadership is also important. Effective use of local government staff for implementing large-scale programmes depends on local leaders (and their superiors) understanding the programme's benefits. The leadership and government teams must be fully committed to support the programme both during implementation and afterwards in order to sustain the outcomes and services that have been developed.

Other important questions for local government are about their commitment to equity and inclusion. Do the staff have sufficient motivation and incentives for effective implementation of inclusive programme activities? How successful were previous government-led programmes for community WASH? Were women, girls and other vulnerable groups meaningfully engaged in these programmes?

6.1.3 Options if capacity is limited

If your review of available capacity among partners and collaborators, particularly the capacity of local government, reveals there are limitations that could have a constraining or damaging effect on your programme, there are a number of options available. You could:

- Developing additional capacity within local government by putting a capacity development plan in place e.g. skills training. For sustainability, a capacity development plan should focus on the

transfer of skills to government and other local partners over the life of the programme, with the aim that all of the long-term services are continued when the programme ends.

- Increase capacity temporarily by contracting in additional partners. For example, you could hire NGOs, consultants, private firms, academics etc. on short-term contracts as long as these partners have the right skill sets and that any contracts do not limit the development of more sustainable capacity options. Note there may be cost considerations if non-government partners are employed by the programme.
- Divide implementation roles and responsibilities between different programme partners. For example, local government could focus on longer-term roles such as support and monitoring while partners with short-term contracts provide additional capacity during peak implementation periods.
- Use non-WASH local government staff with campaign experience during peak implementation periods. For example, use local government staff from education or health sectors which not only boosts capacity but also raises cross-sectoral awareness and buy-in to programme. Case Study 6.1 describes an example where schoolteachers were used for a CLTS project in Ethiopia.
- Advocate through activities aimed at decision makers for appropriate capacity and resources to be allocated to under-capacity areas so that services can be sustained once the programme ends.

Case Study 6.1 CLTS facilitators in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, Health Extension Workers (HEWs) provide the main government outreach for health activities in rural communities. Their duties cover all aspects of healthcare for people in their communities and they are also responsible for monitoring sanitation progress.

As part of a larger programme, Plan International Ethiopia ran a project in which HEWs were used as the main CLTS facilitators. A progress review found that HEWs in Amhara region were struggling to find time for the CLTS work alongside their other numerous responsibilities, and that they were not proving effective at CLTS triggering. This was found to be partly because they were young women who were well known to the communities through their other work and thus lacked the influence to change sanitation behaviour. As a

result, the Amhara project team decided to use schoolteachers as the primary CLTS facilitators, with follow-up support and monitoring provided by the HEWs. This revised model proved more effective and sustainable. The schoolteachers were better able to influence the community and the reduced burden on the HEWs fitted better with their other routine duties.

(Adapted from Robinson, 2016)

CONTINUE

6.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Another important part of your review at this stage is to check the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plans for the programme. As you learned in Study Session 2, monitoring and evaluation of rural sanitation and hygiene programmes should observe and check the progress, quality, sustainability and equity of implementation, outcomes and impacts. Given the lack of evidence about what works in particular contexts, it is also important that we proactively learn from programmes and share lessons both within programmes and beyond.

As you review the programme's MEL plans, consider questions such as:

- Are plans aligned with national and regional MEL systems and processes?
- Do plans cover all aspects of the programme's results framework?
- How will the quality of MEL data be assured?
- Do the MEL plans cover documenting and disseminating findings, as well as generating them?
- Do plans include disaggregation of data to identify differential outcomes (i.e. lower outcomes for women and girls, and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups) and ensure that implementation addresses inequalities, and that any gains are sustained?
- Is there adequate staff capacity and budget to implement the MEL plans as designed?

Just as it is important to engage diverse stakeholders in the programme design, it is important that you get different perspectives on the MEL plans. Think about who will be expected to engage with different parts of the plans and get their input. This should include those collecting, recording, storing, analysing, communicating and using information generated by the plans both within the programme lifetime and any parts of the MEL plans that are expected to be used beyond the programme.

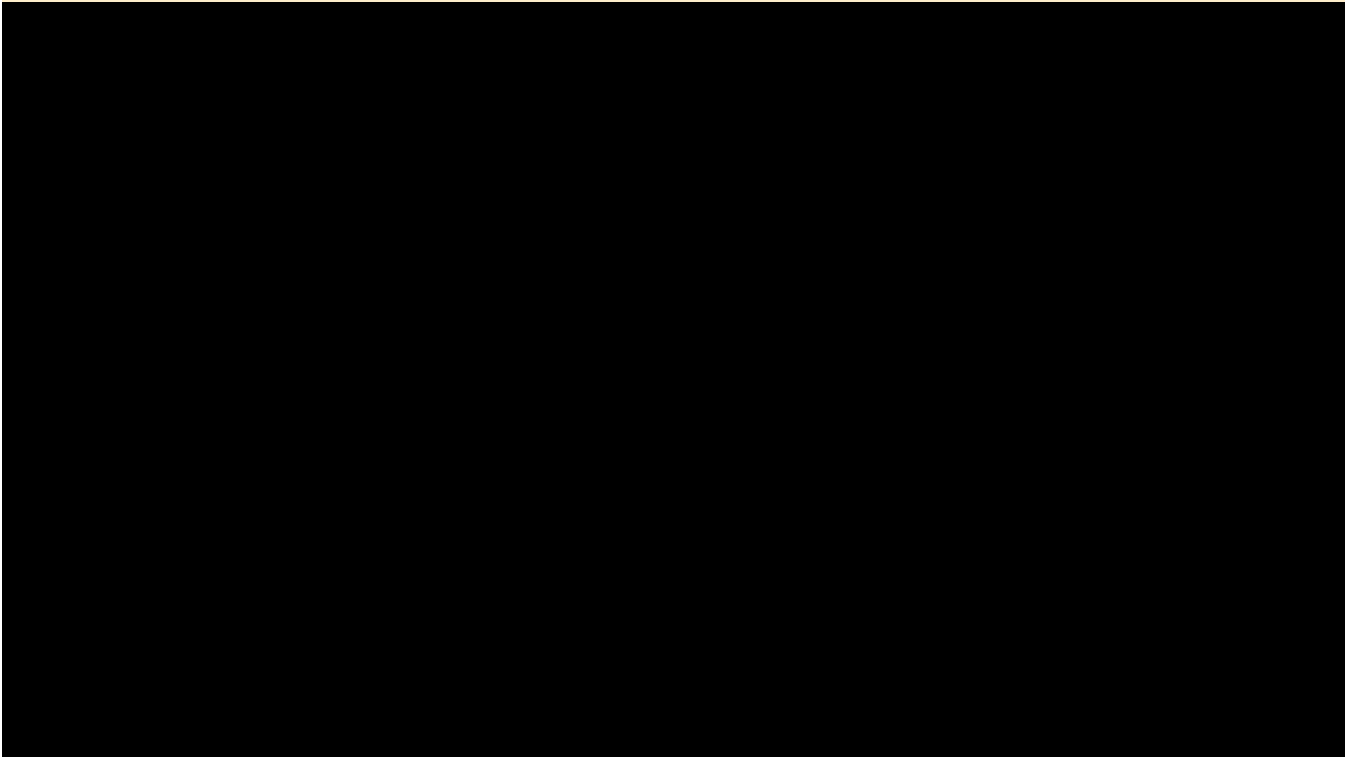
6.2.1 Knowledge sharing

Reliable and regular monitoring and evaluation of what is working (and what is not) is essential for adaptive programming and course correction. For MEL data to be used for these purposes, it must be made available to decision makers and implementers quickly and in an accessible format. Given the lack of evidence around what works with regard to some aspects of rural sanitation programming – such as in difficult contexts – it is also important to make learning available to other stakeholders for whom it may be useful. Knowledge sharing is therefore an essential component of MEL.

One programme that is sharing knowledge well is the Cambodia Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement Programme (CRSHIP), a Global Sanitation Fund-supported programme that is using real-time and action learning techniques to increase its impact. The project focuses on generating real-time, emergent learning for implementing partners, to solve complex problems as they occur. Building on renowned research, the learning and documentation activities are designed to inform strategic and adaptive programming, while supporting the rigorous documentation of knowledge and evidence.

Activity 6.1 Sharing knowledge in Cambodia

Watch this video to learn more about CRSHIP's learning and documentation project. As you watch, note the ways in which knowledge was shared in the project.



Video 6.1 Real time learning and documentation in CRSHIP (6 minutes).

Video 6.1 transcript: Real time learning and documentation in CRSHIP

[00:00:00.00] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[00:00:07.60] NARRATOR: Approximately seven million Cambodians living in rural areas do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities, according to 2014 estimates in a demographic and health survey for Cambodia. The Cambodia Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement Programme, CRSHIP, aims to increase access to safe sanitation and to promote the sustainable practice of key sanitation and hygiene behaviours in rural Cambodia.

[00:00:32.44] The first phase of CRSHIP, CRSHIP 1, focused on six provinces. Starting in 2016, CRSHIP began its second phase, expanding to another five provinces, including Kampot, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, Kratie, and Prey Veng.

SUTHAVARIDH LEMPHO: [Non-English speech]

[00:01:03.61] NARRATOR: Although there were successes in CRSHIP 1, the Programme encountered many challenges and fell short of achieving its targets. By identifying opportunities and challenges in real time, the

strategy for implementation can become more adaptive and appropriate. Therefore, the learning and documentation team, also known as the L&D team, was introduced in CRSHIP 2.

[00:01:25.70] RAFAEL NF CATALLA: The learning and documentation grant is one of the four large grants in CRSHIP 2. L&D grant is very important to CRSHIP 2. Because first, it facilitates learning between and among our IPs (implementation partners), and with PDRDs (Provincial Department of Rural Development), and even at the national level. It also gives us the documentation of this learning.

[00:01:47.10] It is important to document this learning. Because we immediately apply what we learn from the field. The other side of that is we need to document everything, so that we have a basis for future work, for future actions. And then this is also the basis for sharing to other programmes or other projects, so that they can learn from us.

[00:02:06.30] VEASNA KY: Two [INAUDIBLE] that we encounter without support from L&D team. So the first one is about our sharing limitation. We don't have a lot of time to share with each other. The second challenge, I would feel, is the fact that we have less of documentation and learning.

[00:02:22.66] NARRATOR: To help solve complex implementation problems within CRSHIP and to increase the overall effectiveness and quality of the results on the ground, the L&D team has introduced several tools to CRSHIP 2.

[00:02:35.92] JAMES DUMPERT: One of those tools being the learning network, which is just an online platform for implementation partners to share about their challenges, their activities. These tools are also helpful for management to see what's really happening on the ground. We've also introduced other opportunities for them to pause and reflect.

[00:02:51.82] These are essentially meetings where they get to talk to each other, discuss their challenges, reflect on their past activities, where everybody can really start thinking about what is the lessons that they have learned so far and how they can move to improve the Programme in the future.

[00:03:05.36] The other things that we have introduced into CRSHIP Programme has been research-- so proactive research programmes that quickly go in and out when we want to focus on a specific topic, understand the challenge fully and a little bit more in depth, and help expand that knowledge to implementation partners, so that they can do their jobs better.

[00:03:24.78] [MUSIC PLAYING]

SOPHAL CHIM: [Non-English speech]

UDOM SOK EK: [Non-English speech]

[00:04:21.20] NARRATOR: In addition to introducing new tools, the L&D team has also focused on capacity building among partners. This helps to ensure that all partners take an active role in applying and contributing to the learnings.

SOPHAL CHIM: [Non-English speech]

SREYMOM VORN: [Non-English speech]

[00:05:11.96] JAMES DUMPERT: So over the last couple of six months, we've spent a lot of time just looking internally, learning within the Programme about how the Programme will work, who we are, what sort of things that we need to focus in on. The biggest achievement we've had so far is that we really have been able to develop a true learning network throughout the CRSHIP Programme, with implementation partners, along management, and, of course, with our government partners, as well.

[00:05:35.87] We really feel like we've developed a good community or what many people call a community of practice. But now, moving forward into the future, we want to start sharing more, getting those lessons learned that we have in CRSHIP outside to other partners. So we have a lot of really exciting things coming in CRSHIP. We really feel like we have a lot to offer to not only the Cambodia WASH sector but other global sectors, as well.

[00:06:01.28] [MUSIC PLAYING]


How was knowledge shared in the CRSHIP project? What benefits did people derive from these activities?

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

Reveal full discussion for Activity 6.1

 In addition, the learning and lessons are being consolidated into short narratives, reflection papers and other documentation, to further inform programme implementation, with plans to start sharing learning within the wider sector.

There were many benefits from these knowledge-sharing activities. CRSHIP's learning and documentation project has enabled partners to make adjustments to their approaches rapidly and in real time. Documentation of learning has been important for ensuring learning is applied immediately and used in future and in other projects. The learning and documentation project has also facilitated better networking and relationship building, new ideas, and increased visibility for issues of common concern among stakeholders.



Complete the content above before moving on.

6.3 Programme cost review

This study session has touched on various aspects of the 'review' component in the centre of the simple programme cycle shown in Figure 6.2, which you first met in the introduction to the course. As well as checking the capacity and human resources available for the programme, review processes also need to check financial resources.

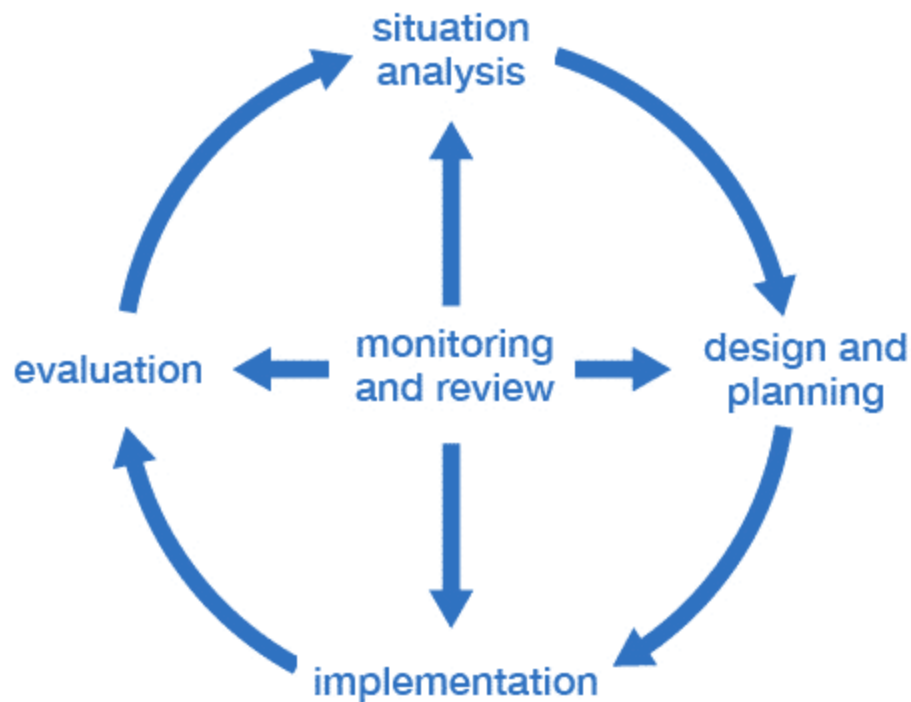


Figure 6.2 Simple programme cycle.

Programme cost is an obvious but critical factor in the programme design and so needs careful monitoring and review throughout a programme's life. The cost estimates made in the early analysis and design phases must be reviewed and amended once detailed implementation plans are in place. All components should be included to develop separate costings for each area within the programme. The costs of the common programme components can then be added to produce an overall programme budget.

Programme budgets sometimes fail to allow sufficient resources for core programme components e.g. monitoring, evaluation and learning, enabling environment strengthening and programme management) or for longer-term activities such as sustainability support mechanisms and sustainability monitoring so the check and review process should ensure that all these components are included.

CONTINUE

6.4 Conclusion to the course

This course set out to offer a new way of thinking about rural sanitation programming – a way of thinking that was flexible, responsive and adaptable. In particular it aimed to provide the knowledge and skills that would help practitioners to make rural sanitation programmes:

- Appropriate for the location, informed by evidence and policy.
- Collaborative, making the most of potential partnerships.
- Inclusive, so that everyone in the target area can benefit and no-one is left behind.
- Adaptable, recognising that a blend of approaches may work better than a single approach and changes might be needed over time.

We hope that you have enjoyed the course and feel better equipped to contribute to making rural sanitation programmes more successful and sustainable as we move towards the SDG target date of 2030.

Summary of Study Session 6

In Study Session 6, you have learned that:

- 1 Establishing successful partnerships with relevant stakeholders is an important part of rural sanitation programming.
- 2 Once an implementation strategy is in place, various checks are needed to ensure institutional and other arrangements with partners and other stakeholders are appropriate for the implementation plans.

3

Collaboration with other sectors such as health, education, nutrition and environment can be beneficial.

4

Local government are key stakeholders in rural sanitation programmes so their available resources and capacity should be carefully assessed.

5

If capacity is limited, there are various options that can be considered to fill the gaps.

6

Review processes should look at MEL plans and check they are adequate for all purposes.

7

Knowledge sharing within and across programmes helps practitioners learn and build on experience of others.

8

Programme costs should be routinely monitored.

Return to the [main course page](#) to complete the survey and look through the extra resources.

Well done on completing the course!