

Guidance on Programming for Rural Sanitation

BRIEFING NOTE



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The SDGs have raised the ambition: universal access to sanitation. WaterAid, UNICEF and Plan International have joined forces to accelerate progress, by developing guidance on the design of rural sanitation programmes that deliver at scale, equitably and sustainably.

This briefing note introduces the content of the guidance and outlines its three main sections: (1) Introduction, (2) National analysis & programme strategy, and (3) Area implementation strategy.

The guidance outlines a process for robust national and subnational context analysis, and proposes sets of implementation approaches based on four 'zones' or typologies of communities (rural remote, rural on-road, rural mixed, and difficult contexts). Each zone will require specific implementation strategies, that can only be designed locally.

For each zone, the guidance identifies core components and themes, context-specific implementation strategies, and additional approaches to be considered by programme designers and implementers. The guidance is available at washmatters.wateraid.org/Rural-San.

Introduction

The SDGs have raised the ambition: universal access to sanitation.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 calls for universal access to sanitation. The SDG target 6.2 on sanitation and hygiene highlights equity, with reference to women and girls and those in vulnerable situations, and the need to eliminate open defecation. The SDG core indicator sets the bar at the ‘safely-managed’ service level.

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Yet progress during the run-up to and early stages of the SDG period has been too slow, and concerns about equity and sustainability remain. In response, WaterAid, UNICEF and Plan International have joined forces to rethink the way rural sanitation programmes are designed and implemented.

by developing guidance on the design of rural sanitation programmes that deliver at scale, equitably and sustainably.

The result is the “Guidance on Programming for Rural Sanitation”, aimed to help design large-scale sanitation programmes in rural communities, with a focus on the achievement of sustained and equitable sanitation outcomes at the household and community level. These key principles run through the guidance and should be built in to all rural sanitation programmes:

Partnerships	Area-wide	Context and evidence-based	Flexible and adaptive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with government, in coordination with other sector stakeholders, and through alliances with other sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with local governments and strengthen local systems, by working across administrative units and targeting everyone within these units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design based on the context and evidence of what has worked; if evidence is limited, conduct formative research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop programmes that are flexible and adaptive, with continuous efforts to learn and feedback loops for course correction

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- Introduction
- National analysis & programme strategy
- Area implementation strategy

The guidance builds on existing evidence and lessons learned from large-scale programmes, collected through a desk review and interviews and complemented by a consultation with sector experts.

National analysis and programme strategy

Programme design is informed by a national analysis and aligned to government objectives, including these steps:	The design of a large-scale rural sanitation programme begins with a national analysis of: the situation, lessons learned, bottlenecks to progress, and the available capacity. The analysis informs the programme strategy, which should contribute to government objectives and align with other sector programmes and investments. The process builds on existing information, and includes several elements:
1.1 Situation analysis	A situation analysis, examining the status of sanitation, hygiene and water supply; key health, nutrition and poverty indicators; gender dynamics; and markers of vulnerability for different populations.
1.2 Lessons learnt	A review of evaluations and research of previous rural sanitation programmes, compiling lessons on what has worked what has not and why. It should focus on the drivers and barriers to sanitation and hygiene behaviour change, and the extent to which sanitation and hygiene outcomes and services are sustainable and equitable.
1.3 'Enabling environment' assessment	<p>An assessment of the enabling environment: the wider conditions that support the effectiveness, sustainability and scaling of rural sanitation programmes. We recommend using the five 'building blocks' defined by the Sanitation and Water for All global partnership for the assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sector policy and strategy: sector goals, implementation strategies and service delivery models.• Institutional arrangements: roles and responsibilities, coordination mechanisms, and legal and regulatory frameworks.• Sector financing: expenditure frameworks, sector budgets, financial data.• Planning, monitoring and review: planning processes, mechanisms for evaluation and review of sector performance, and accountability mechanisms.• Capacity development: institutional capacity (structures, training and incentives), and capacity of partners and individuals.
1.4 Capacity appraisal	An appraisal of the capacity – such as institutional arrangements, actors and skills – to implement large scale rural sanitation programmes is an important step. This appraisal should consider current capacity, and capacity that needs to be developed that for new programme strategies and alternative delivery models.

The analysis then informs the programme strategy, and objectives, including...

The national analysis will shape the rural sanitation programme. It will also identify other opportunities for intervention, mainly around national advocacy to improve the enabling environment or to increase capacity (elements not covered in the guidance). Key decisions about programme design at this stage include:

the scale and focal areas of the programme,

Programme area. Where there are limited experiences of effective at scale rural sanitation programmes, it is necessary to develop local models of success to test what works and convince national decision-makers of the benefits of investing in large-scale sanitation programmes. Area-wide programmes can then be developed for selected districts, to support local governments' progressive efforts to ensure total district sanitation services.

the main objectives and targets,

Main programme objectives and targets. Objectives and targets set a vision and enable monitoring, evaluation, learning and social accountability, which in turn allow for course correction. Objectives and targets can be both quantitative and qualitative and should cover levels of sanitation coverage, service levels, equity and sustainability targets, institutional aspects, and other relevant concerns.

and the overall programme strategy.

Programme strategy. The programme strategy should respond to the conditions identified in the national analysis and be tailored to the objectives and targets. To enable adaptive management, the programme strategy should include these core components: A. Monitoring, evaluation and learning; B. Enabling environment strengthening; C. Cost assessment; and D. Programme management and capacity development.



Pelagie HIEN (54) on her tricycle posing next to her adapted latrine, with her niece Marie Madeleine and her nephew Samson, at Dissin, Burkina Faso, October 2016.

Area implementation strategy

Focusing in on the programme areas, a similar analysis is needed,

Implementation strategies and plans need to be tailored to each programme area – such as a district or province – and based on a solid understanding of the context. Similar to the national analysis, for each programme area, programme managers should analyse: area situation analysis (2.1), lessons learnt, ‘enabling environment’ assessment (2.2), and capacity mapping (2.3).

At the level of the implementation area, there will be additional considerations, such as:

identifying communities based on their sanitation status,

Sanitation status. A baseline survey or existing subnational data can help describe the sanitation status of communities in the area: prevalence of open defecation, unimproved, limited (shared) or basic sanitation services; as well as the ODF status. This information can help determine whether the primary focus will be on stopping open defecation, upgrading facilities, or another aspect of sanitation. The targets set and approaches to be used strongly depend on the baseline sanitation status. The analysis should focus on inequalities and sustainability rates.

and categorising areas into ‘zones’ based on physical and economic typologies.

Physical and economic factors. Programmes will be impacted by:

- Road access, which impacts access by implementation teams and service providers, and may limit delivery of other basic services.
- Population density, which leads to higher risks of disease from open defecation and unimproved sanitation, but lower programme costs.
- Market reach, which defines the availability and affordability of sanitation-related products and services.
- Difficult contexts for sanitation services, such as high water tables, rocky areas, sandy soils or coastal areas.

The analysis can then identify the most similar ‘zone’ or typology of the area. We suggest four zones, adapted from OECD:

1. Rural remote, or rural communities far from urban areas
2. Rural on-road, or rural communities well-connected to urban areas
3. Rural mixed, sometimes defined as peri-urban communities
4. Difficult contexts, or hard-to-reach populations or places

The analysis informs area programme design (2.4) and implementation strategies.

Leadership of the local government of the administrative area is critical to the process of setting objectives and targets and selecting implementation strategies.

The implementation strategies can be tailored to the zones identified.

Implementation strategies can be tailored to the contexts in each area. The guide uses the four typologies of zones to propose a simplified way to think about developing context-specific implementation strategies. For each zone, we propose mix of implementation strategies, complemented by specific considerations. For instance, in remote communities where markets are weak, community-based approaches tend to be more effective. In communities close to urban areas with good market access, cash economies, and higher expectations for quality of service, market-based solutions might be more effective. The box below provides an example of the implementation strategy suggested for a “rural mixed” context.

Example implementation strategy from the guidance

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 3: RURAL MIXED

The main implications of the ‘rural mixed’ context on implementation are:

- Improved transport options and market reach: higher potential for market-based sanitation.
- Greater diversity and less social cohesion: lower potential for community-based approaches.
- Increased need and potential for sanitation finance and support: disadvantaged face severe sanitation challenges; higher population densities increase impacts of inadequate sanitation.
- Tenure and congestion issues limit potential for household solutions: approaches often have to involve community, landlords, local governments.
- A wider range of faecal exposure routes in rural mixed settings: 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).

Recommended approaches to be considered and combined in this context:

3 RURAL MIXED

E3 Peri-urban behaviour change approaches

F2 Market-based sanitation

G1 Sanitation finance

G2 Support to disadvantaged

G3 Support to shared sanitation

E3. Peri-urban community-based behaviour change: adapted options for sanitation behaviour change in rural mixed settings, including urban CLTS (in more urban settings); ‘shit flow diagrams’; institutional triggering and advocacy (including involvement of landlords, local authorities, local leaders and communities).

F2. Market-based sanitation: wide range of marketing interventions should be examined in contexts where markets reach most areas, products are considered generally affordable, and viable transport options exist. There may be a need to involve service providers in faecal sludge management.

G1. Sanitation finance: critical to the affordability and uptake of market-based sanitation by low income and disadvantaged households. More finance providers and options are likely to be available in rural mixed settings.

G2. Support for disadvantaged: some disadvantaged and vulnerable groups will not qualify for financial support, or may be excluded from or reluctant to join financial support processes. Consequently, other forms of external support should also be considered, including more institutional longer-term support mechanisms, e.g. inclusive policy and strategy; allocation of finance and capacity for inclusion in local government plans and budgets; and requirements to monitor sanitation and hygiene outcomes among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

G3. Support to shared sanitation: in some settings, households may not be able to construct private sanitation facilities due to tenure constraints (property owned by others), congestion (no space to construct toilets) or other issues. In such cases, a communal facility may be the most hygienic solution. It may be necessary to support construction and to facilitate agreements with landowners and local authorities. Sustainable management and use of communal toilets is a significant challenge, so careful monitoring is imperative.

Each area will require specific implementation strategies,

that can only be designed locally.

Based on the programme strategy, cost can be estimated.

The core components and themes, context-specific implementation strategies, and additional approaches are show in the following figure...

Each area requires a specific blend of implementation strategies and approaches to achieve success. There is no single 'right' way to design a programme; rather, the approach depends on each area's history and context, and available resources and capacity.

Decisions on the prioritization, combination, or phasing of implementation approaches and strategies must be made locally, and refined as lessons are learned and unreached populations and places are identified.

Once the programme is designed, programme cost can be estimated. Detailed guidance on programme costing is available separately. The costing guidance highlights the costs to consider for each programme component, and the importance of tracking direct and indirect costs during the life of the programme.

The figure below presents the core components all programmes need to include, complemented by the proposed context-specific implementation strategies. It also shows the core themes of equity and non-discrimination, gender equality and sustainability that all programmes must address. It also flags approaches that are important to reduce faecal exposure pathways beyond household sanitation: hygiene behaviour change communications, environmental sanitation, and nutrition-sensitive WASH. All these components, themes and approaches are covered in the guide's annexes.



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It is based on "Guidance on Programming for Rural Sanitation" available at: washmatters.wateraid.org/Rural-San

