



WSSCC Management Response to the Global Sanitation Fund

Independent Mid-Term Evaluation Synthesis Report

This document provides the WSSCC Management Response to the main findings of a Synthesis Report of Mid-Term Evaluations (MTEs) conducted for seven country programmes supported by the Global Sanitation Fund (GSF). The Management Response addresses issues raised by the MTEs concerning: achievement of planned targets; expression of theory of change; sustainability of behavior change; role of sanitation marketing; focus on gender and equality; and monitoring, learning, and documentation of country driven approaches to improving sustainable sanitation and hygiene behaviors. Each section of this Response includes an analysis of the main themes and related actions that the GSF and its partners are undertaking in their continued efforts to achieve universal access.

WSSCC Management would like to remind the reader that the MTEs have evaluated an ambitious funding mechanism that is breaking new ground. From the very start it was acknowledged that there would be much "learning by doing", and indeed the MTEs are one step in this process. Introducing ambitious approaches to demonstrate that sustainable behavior change is possible at scale, while creating a range of new systems, has been a monumental task. The GSF is determined to continue to work with partners and stakeholders, contributing to achievement of universal access to adequate sanitation and improved hygiene behavior, leaving no one behind in this journey. In doing so, the GSF will seek evidence of what truly works to strengthen implementation of existing programmes while also informing the development of new programmes, ensuring that innovations and best practices are made available for adoption and adaptation within and between countries.

Specific actions to be taken include:

- Further develop and document the concept of GSF-supported country programme evolution and the phases that country driven programmes pass through, ensuring a comprehensive description of how change happens (i.e., theory of change) and how different programmatic outcome areas fit together and are sequenced. This conceptualization will be made widely available through a WSSCC publication and through various events and presentations.
- Document contributions of the GSF, and the country driven programmes it supports, to the strengthening of enabling environments and institutional sustainability. Promising and best practices and approaches will be identified and shared with country partners so that they can be used according to local contexts. Increased attention will be placed on establishing relevant indicators, and monitoring and reporting on the processes involved in strengthening enabling environments from the local to national level.
- Further examine and sharpen thinking regarding the role and balance of demand creation and supply side efforts, based upon evidence and innovations at the community level. Partnerships will be established with institutions experienced in small business development, supporting local



entrepreneurs and providing access to micro-finance so that households can affordably attain their aspirations in toilet design.

- Document and further develop operational practices leading to sustainable behavior change, including pre- and post-triggering interventions and approaches that ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable, marginalized and hard-to-reach, while also meeting the particular needs of women and girls.
- Expand learning methodologies, closely associated with programme monitoring, including continued support for cross country exchanges and facilitation of intensive reflection among behaviour change practitioners to share knowledge and identify tools and techniques to promote sustainability.
- Continue to explore how best to monitor and report on improved access and use through a thorough review and revision of the GSF Results Framework, a review and revision of verification protocols, revised Terms of Reference (TOR) for outcome surveys, and a revision of the TOR for periodic evaluations to ensure that accurate and useful information is available in a timely manner for decision making.
- Redouble efforts to reach the most vulnerable, marginalized and at-risk, including women and girls, while ensuring documentation and reporting. This will include a thorough review of current efforts within GSF-supported programmes; identification, sharing and roll out of best and promising practices; establishment of clear definitions within countries on target groups; and adequate monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Introduction

In this report the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) provides a response to the main findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) Synthesis Report (October 2015), prepared by the evaluator, IOD PARC. The Synthesis Report is a consolidation of the findings and recommendations of separate independent MTEs conducted in 2013, 2014 and 2015 for seven country programmes supported by the Global Sanitation Fund (GSF).¹ It looks at efforts by governments, external agencies and various non-State actors to design and execute national sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes. It examines how these empower tens of thousands of households per country to organize actions and mobilize investments to end the practice of open defecation, improve sanitation and change hygiene behaviour.

The MTEs are reviews of performance at year 3 or 4 of 5-7 year programmatic interventions. They offer country stakeholders, Executing Agencies, Sub-grantees, and WSSCC staff a valuable opportunity to learn and make course corrections that can improve subsequent performance, while also informing the development of new country programmes. Each country MTE report received a management response after issuance of the final country reports and subsequently the country partners have taken corrective

¹ Madagascar, Nepal, Senegal, Malawi, India, Cambodia and Uganda.



actions to address the recommendations made in the MTE country reports. Similarly and where this was felt appropriate, the WSSCC Secretariat in Geneva acted on many of the MTE conclusions and recommendations before the Synthesis Report was issued.

The management response takes note of the positive findings of the Synthesis Report, but in the interest of strengthening future performance, it devotes attention primarily to the critical reflections of the evaluation findings and recommendations. These concern, but are not confined to the initial delays in achievement of the range of planned results, the extent to which households and communities climb the sanitation ladder, limitations of programme approaches to sanitation marketing, sustainability of outcomes, equality of access to services, and impediments to effective monitoring and documentation. For each critical reflection, the management response provides a brief comment followed by a more elaborate explanation about the issues at stake and preliminary actions WSSCC is taking to address the challenges at hand. The report concludes with next steps the Council will take to implement its response, specifically the 2016 GSF work plan that includes a schedule of on-going and planned actions and processes to address the main findings and recommendations of the MTE.

Achievement of targets according to schedule

The GSF is pleased that the MTE process confirmed that “all of the country programmes have delivered Open Defecation Free (ODF) communities,” that the “GSF delivery model has been tested and shown to be viable using different organisational configurations,” and that the “GSF is perceived to have contributed to national ownership in addressing sanitation and to have helped strengthen relevant institutions”.

WSSCC has noted that the evaluation team finds the delivery model viable: achieving results at scale, contributing to national ownership, and strengthening the institutions of the much-neglected sanitation and hygiene sub-sector. The Council views third party, independent verification as essential. The validation of the results -- and the tools used to achieve these results – confirms “proof of concept.” WSSCC also appreciates that the MTE finds the model flexible enough to handle diverse country contexts such that governments can modify the institutional arrangements to accommodate political, social and economic conditions. This finding will encourage other governments to consider utilizing GSF to establish sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes as a means to translate policies into action and achieve results at scale.

While the GSF recognises that at the time of the individual country evaluations delivery against targets was still behind schedule, in most countries a longer start-up phase led to accelerated delivery of key results when entering the implementation phase. Utilisation of sufficient time during the start-up phase allowed for the creation of a solid foundation required to enhance enabling environments and achieve sustainable results based on factors such as effective collaboration and coalition building, quality planning, careful selection of staff and Sub-grantees, and capacity building activities. The lessons learned from this experience have been used in the development of future GSF-supported programmes, including development of adequate timelines for achievement of results.

In spite of initial delays, the GSF is pleased to report the achievement of nearly 11 million people living in ODF environments at the end of 2015 against a 2016 target of 15 million as outlined in the WSSCC



Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2012-2016. In addition, WSSCC regards the effects of GSF-funded programmes as going far beyond these results in terms of promoting community development, enhancing broad-based collaboration, strengthening cooperation between community organizations and local government, increasing the capacity of local governments, and strengthening the enabling environment needed to ensure sustainability of gains achieved.

Theory of change

One key reflection of the MTE process was that while the GSF is showing success in terms of working at scale, the GSF-supported programmes did not have a sufficiently explicit theory of change on how their efforts would lead to sustainable, equitable, universal access and use of improved sanitation and hygiene facilities and services. Among others, this was encapsulated in the finding that “The CPPs have not developed a clear theory of change taking into account the political economy of how change happens in each country and looking at how the different GSF outcome areas fit together or might be effectively sequenced”.

WSSCC found this observation particularly constructive. The set of outcome areas of each of the country programmes -- demand creation, sanitation marketing, advocacy, and knowledge management -- reflect the thinking of the organization in 2008 when the Council established the GSF. Nearly eight years on, with a portfolio of 13 countries, the approach has evolved and many innovations have emerged. WSSCC will therefore need to reflect, review performance, assess trends, and make more explicit its theory of change. The MTE process has triggered a great deal of thinking in this regard, and WSSCC has recently prepared a strategy paper that conceptualizes the GSF as having three distinct but strongly overlapping phases. These are in brief:

Phase 1: Programme design

From the outset, GSF financing serves as a conduit for actors across the sector to come together and discuss how to create a context-specific, replicable model for transforming their country’s sanitation and hygiene situation at a national scale. Instilling strong national ownership through this collaborative process is crucial. Consequently, a requirement for GSF funding is the existence of a nationally recognised, typically government-led coordinating body for the sanitation sub-sector (e.g. National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee), which takes leadership in developing or strengthening a ‘roadmap’ to reach national sanitation coverage and use and, as first step, in developing a national sanitation and hygiene improvement programme supported by the GSF. The design phase includes the mechanics of initiating the implementation of the programme. This involves contracting the Executing Agency, Implementing Partners, and Country Programme Monitors, as well as dedicating significant time to orienting policy makers, local governments, and various organizations to the methods of CLTS, institutional triggering, and related mechanisms for decentralized implementation.

Phase 2: Demonstration of results at scale

GSF-supported programmes produce visible results verified by third parties that demonstrate that the “road map” is not an elusive dream; that it is possible to radically transform the sanitation and hygiene status of millions of people in each country through collective behaviour change in a relatively short period of time at relatively low cost. Moreover, these results are achieved with a nationally owned delivery model that can be expanded geographically and deployed at scale.



Phase 3: Transition to national coverage

In this phase, the results of the programme are used as the basis for replicating the delivery model to support achieving the national sanitation objectives as stated in the “roadmap.” This evidence-based advocacy, strongly led by the Programme Coordinating Mechanism (PCM) with the Executing Agency and WSSCC National Coordinator (NC), aims to catalyse further a nationally owned process and mobilize the resources necessary to finance the “road map.” Importantly, the rapid results at scale and at relatively low cost, help senior government officials make the political case for public investment. Government buy-in encourages external support agencies to contribute to the “road map,” a prospect that is likely given that the major players have been serving on the PCM and part of the process from the design phase onwards.

The above schema remains a work-in-progress to be further developed as part of the preparatory process of the WSSCC strategic plan 2017-2020, yet already points to several interesting features. These include a more ambitious notion of what WSSCC means by “change.” Where as in 2008 the objective of the GSF was to hit specific targets on ODF and on improved sanitation and hygiene, the 2020 goal is to leverage these results for the purposes of supporting efforts by countries to realize universal access. The essence of the theory of change is that the decentralized implementation mechanisms deployed by GSF-supported sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes are political and advocacy instruments as well as a model for delivery at scale. Related to this theory of change and deeply embedded in it, is a renewed role for National Coordinators to deploy the advocacy and knowledge management tools of WSSCC within a strategic engagement plan aimed at leveraging GSF results and mechanisms. In 2008, the establishment of the GSF warranted a stand-alone financing facility. Looking ahead, the Council will combine its advocacy, networking and knowledge management functions with the Fund to assist member States to achieve their national sanitation targets – a process already underway. WSSCC foresees further iterations of its theory of change that it will incorporate as part of the preparation of the strategic plan, with emphasis on appropriate supply-side approaches and equity, two key issues raised by the MTE to which we now turn.

Sustainability, slippage and sanitation marketing

The Synthesis Report states that “there has been limited focus on sustainability both at a service delivery and institutional level” and that “the GSF operational model is imbalanced and (...) GSF as it is currently being delivered, has swung too far towards a demand focus” which “has limited its focus on sustainability”.

WSSCC agrees that the GSF should further examine the balance between demand creation and sanitation marketing. This observation has led to internal discussions among individual country teams and among staff members across the GSF portfolio. The result is a sharpening of the thinking about what is meant by demand creation, slippage and supply-side approaches. It also compels WSSCC to pinpoint where the GSF adds value and where it needs to be strengthened. One management response is that the organization needs to consider leveraging its work on demand creation by collaborating with institutions that have expertise in small business development and are well placed to promote sanitation marketing. A second response is that the focus of WSSCC on demand creation has resulted in a set of operational practices that extends beyond ODF that the Council should document and further develop. Third, while the balance of the GSF operational model has not fully focused on development of



sanitation marketing, this has not limited its focus on sustainability. On the contrary, its robust application of demand creation has resulted in methods to reduce slippage and sustain improved sanitation and good hygiene behaviour that are extremely useful to the sanitation sub-sector.

Supply-side approaches

The approach for WSSCC in future will be to continue to promote innovations that are emerging in many of the national sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes, while at the same time forging new partnerships with institutions with expertise in small business development. As the MTE acknowledges, the balance between behaviour change activities and supply-side approaches is less pronounced in some countries than it is in others. In Cambodia, India and Madagascar, for example, there has been significant innovation on supply-side approaches. The GSF should promote local entrepreneurs in developing low-cost, local material products for sanitation and hygiene that enable households to move up the sanitation (and hygiene) ladder. Micro-finance is being introduced in Tanzania and Ethiopia, as well as in Nepal in ways that households can access higher forms of sanitation and hygiene. It will therefore be important for WSSCC to elevate innovations and identify ways to make these available within and between countries.

This said, national sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes supported by GSF could further promote the supply-side component of the operational model. This could include assessing the supply chain -- from manufacturing to wholesale distribution, to retail marketing -- of either sanitation or hygiene products. Similarly, there can be more work to support the thousands of builders who construct sanitation facilities. In order to address this, WSSCC will explore partnerships with international and local institutions that specialize in small business development. This is already emerging in Uganda where the GSF is working to layer small business development initiatives on to the GSF-supported programme. The WSSCC long-term prospectus and funding request chart a course for the Council to pursue such partnerships systematically. In general, the Council believes that there are limits to its ability to develop internal expertise on small business development and that it could be best for WSSCC and individual Executing Agencies and PCMs to facilitate partnerships with organizations that have such expertise.

Behaviour change

The focus of national sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes on behaviour change has resulted in the development of a set of practices that has extended beyond methods for achieving ODF villages. These have not been adequately documented and will need to be further developed. Initially, the respective PCMs, EAs, and implementing partners had concentrated on pre-triggering and triggering methods. Over time, however, they applied the concepts of Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) more widely, triggering not only communities but also local governments, forms of traditional authority, and national policy makers in a methodology known as “institutional triggering.” This approach varies from country to country. In India, it has meant a strategy of engaging District Magistrates, State civil servants, and State and National elected officials. In Nepal and several other countries, it has been about using ODF celebrations to raise awareness among government officials and other non-ODF communities. In Madagascar, the EAs and implementing partners have developed a more precise methodology known as the “U” Approach, a tool of engagement that applies CLTS at commune, fokontany and then local community levels, then back up to districts, regional and national governments.



In addition to institutional triggering, the behaviour change component in several national sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes has included post-ODF follow up interventions. These developed in part as a response to the country MTEs (back in 2014 and 2015), as well as to parallel sustainability assessments. One such methodology, Follow-Up Mandona, involves working with natural leaders who emerged during pre-triggering and triggering exercises to re-engage community members. Rather than simply monitor progress, natural leaders work with external facilitators to engage multiple households, literally going “door to door” or “toilet to toilet,” collectively improving shoddy toilets and hand washing facilities on the spot. Pioneered in Madagascar, WSSCC has facilitated peer exchanges in various combinations among Madagascar, Uganda, Togo, and Benin to develop the methodology in diverse contexts. A recent exchange between Uganda and Ethiopia has provided the basis for contrasting different models of post-ODF follow up that radically expand the notion of demand creation.

Improved Sanitation

The Synthesis Report observed that there is an imbalance in the GSF operational arrangements privileging demand creation over sanitation marketing. However, it infers that this imbalance has confined the GSF model to ODF. WSSCC contends that while this may have been partially true in 2013 and 2014 when some of the country MTEs were conducted, the inference can no longer be applied.

It is clear that the GSF model needs further improvement but has moved well beyond ODF. The robust approach to behaviour change, replete with institutional triggering and post-ODF follow up constitutes a set of methods that contribute directly to access and use of improved sanitation. Despite limitations on supply-side approaches, programmes supported by GSF improved sanitation for an average of 500,000 people per country.

The evidence shows that collective behaviour change is powerful. When applied through GSF-supported programmes, it has empowered individual households to cease defecating in the open and to invest in sanitation. In the case of most households participating in these programmes, the investment was substantial. It resulted in funding sufficient to construct latrines that were of a standard recognized by governments in accordance with JMP guidelines.

Sustainability

The Synthesis Report observed that the GSF imbalanced approach – too much on demand creation and not enough on sanitation marketing -- “limited its focus on sustainability.” The Council agrees that sustainability is a huge issue in the sanitation sub-sector generally and for WSSCC in particular. However, the local actors implementing programmes supported by GSF demonstrate that a robust application of demand creation has contributed significantly to sustainability (see above). There is a role for sanitation marketing for households in a position to move up the sanitation ladder but it is no panacea for sustainability. On the contrary, sanitation marketing without substantial investments in collective behaviour change will result in poor use and maintenance of sanitation facilities and in lack of handwashing at critical times. An overemphasis on sanitation marketing can also have a negative effect on communities becoming ODF when high-cost toilets result in households waiting for long periods to build toilets while they collect the needed funds.

WSSCC views sustainability as a multi-faceted and complex issue that will require constant attention and innovation. In response to the Synthesis Report, the individual country programmes supported by the GSF and the Secretariat have embarked on intensive reflection among behaviour change practitioners to



share knowledge and identify tools to ensure sustainability. One common thread emerging from these discussions is the need for an enabling environment. This involves a variety of factors addressing all dimensions of sustainability (e.g. institutional, financial, technical, social, environmental) such as support for community champions of sanitation and hygiene; capacity building for implementing partners; broadened involvement of multi-sector stakeholders; support for national policies, systems and roadmaps; increased sectoral coordination; and adequate resourcing for sanitation and hygiene programmes. The GSF will continue to explore how best to monitor and report on improvements in enabling environments leading to sustainability. This will be done, in part, through a thorough review and revision of the GSF Results Framework during 2016.

For the GSF, sustainability at the institutional level starts with broad-based country ownership. This is envisaged in all programmes at the outset through the country-led design process. The GSF recognises the important role to be performed by governments, including local governments. The GSF continues to promote strong government involvement, in spite of challenges posed when there is a lack of decentralized structures or low capacity. GSF-supported programmes reinforce efforts to strengthen local capacity on planning and monitoring, but are also gaining experience with innovative implementation tools and approaches developed to strengthen local government buy-in by GSF partners. A key point is that all actors are clear on the role they play in a broader sanitation movement. Another important aspect related to sustainability involves financial resources, specifically the adequate resourcing of programmes aimed at universal access to sanitation and improved hygiene behaviours. This financial sustainability is a critical aspect in transitioning to national coverage, and should include government allocations to sustain results.

The GSF is investing on multiple fronts to address the challenge of sustaining ODF status and addressing slippage. This includes identifying and analysing slippage patterns and risk factors as well as behavioural, socio-economic and environmental factors that positively or negatively affect sustainability of sanitation and hygiene behaviours. It also involves continued analysis and innovation to recognise and pre-empt slippage patterns and potential risk factors, and a strong focus on strengthening methods and tools for continued post-ODF community engagement. These approaches and others are currently shared and contextualised through peer exchanges between GSF stakeholders. In addition, in-depth studies on ODF sustainability, behaviour reinforcement factors and slippage factors are planned in several countries, a GSF working paper on Slippage and Sustainability is due to appear in 2016, and ongoing exchanges on this theme are taking place through a series of learning events and e-discussions.

Gender and equality

The MTE Synthesis Report finds that “there have been challenges associated with delivering equitable services in particular addressing the needs of women, the elderly, marginalised groups and the disabled”. WSSCC highly values its traditional focus on promoting and advocating for services for the most vulnerable groups in society and the Council’s long-held, core principles of equality and non-discrimination. It therefore agrees with the Evaluation that GSF programming needs to overcome challenges and be held accountable to these principles and standards. In 2016, the GSF will address this observation by assessing country programme approaches, sharing good practices across countries, and better monitoring of how GSF programmes reach marginalised and vulnerable groups. In addition, the Council in 2016 will embark on innovative programming that integrates training on MHM and disability



in GSF-supported national sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes. The goal will be to translate the training into practical approaches informed by GSF decentralized implementation methods so that the intentions of policy guidelines and capacity building become a reality for hundreds of thousands of households.

WSSCC recognizes the challenges raised in the Synthesis Report are all the more relevant because of the emphasis placed on equity in the Sustainable Development Goals. Fortunately, and as is recognized by the Evaluation, the GSF model has most of the ingredients in place. GSF's country selection process, for example, takes into account a range of criteria including the Human Development Index, under five morbidity and mortality, and sanitation coverage data. In country programme design, the GSF attempts to target its resources to areas and populations where they are most needed and can have the most impact. In all seven evaluated countries, the sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes supported by the GSF were designed to reach geographically remote communities, low-income and socially marginalized populations. This continues to be a key principle of the GSF and it takes to heart the suggestions for additional political economy analysis in the programme design stage to even better identify structural vulnerabilities.

The Council takes seriously the need to address multiple forms of vulnerability associated with absence of access to adequate sanitation and hygiene. Vulnerability can be assessed in a number of different ways, notably by income, geographic location, gender, ethnicity, physical ability and the human life cycle. While to a certain extent such vulnerabilities can be assessed externally, based on statistical data and indicators, WSSCC feels it is important also to obtain a good understanding of the compound effects of several vulnerability aspects, leaving some more exposed to inequality and discrimination than other, less vulnerable groups, even in the same community. This is why a localised understanding of what constitutes vulnerability is key, by allowing community members to develop their own definitions and processes to assess and identify vulnerable people in their communities, and agree on appropriate solutions to support these people.

The GSF-supported programme in Cambodia has adapted a Participatory Social Assessment and Mapping (PSAM) and opportunities will be explored to utilize this tool in other countries. The need for community self-assessment links strongly to the CLTS spirit of 'local problems and local solutions.' When well facilitated, CLTS is inclusive, captures inequality, and brings forth a process through which a community identifies strategies for addressing the sanitation needs of marginalised groups. Poorly facilitated CLTS, on the other hand, can perpetuate forms of inequality. Quality control of CLTS facilitation (pre, during and post triggering and ODF) is therefore paramount for effective implementation of GSF-supported programmes and a key aspect of Executing Agency' and Sub-grantee roles.

The GSF is finding that one of the most effective ways to ensure an inclusive implementation strategy is through pre-triggering sessions. This CLTS phase is sometimes neglected or misunderstood, but can enable facilitators, together with the community, to identify vulnerable groups that might require specific attention during the actual triggering and post-triggering activities, and internal solidarity mechanisms to support these groups throughout the CLTS process and beyond. In this respect, the GSF is gaining more experience with building on existing internal community support mechanisms, such as the traditional 'asam-pokonolona' system of collective community work in Madagascar and cross-financing systems in Nepal and Senegal, and through innovative approaches such as the powerful post



triggering and post ODF approach called, 'Follow-up Mandona' currently being applied in Madagascar, in addition to post-ODF approaches being used in Uganda, Nigeria, Togo, Nepal and Malawi.

Such processes might not always capture intra-household inequality, much of which centres around gender. In order to better understand gender dynamics and the impact of CLTS approaches on these dynamics the GSF undertook a first gender analysis in its Madagascar programme in 2015 and plans to undertake follow-up studies in 2016.

As much is happening at the community-level in terms of equality and non-discrimination, the GSF will do more to monitor systematically, disaggregate and report the impact of its activities on different vulnerable groups, within communities and more broadly – while taking care not to further stigmatizing individuals. The GSF should improve its monitoring and data collection of smart equality indicators; it needs to document and harmonise certain practices and principles around equality and non-discrimination; and its needs to ensure 'processing capacity' at the Secretariat to better analyse data, apply and report on the equality and non-discrimination aspects of its programmes. At the same time, it is essential this does not lead to a parallel process and is as much as possible aligned with national systems for monitoring and planning. This was an important aspect of the in-depth M&E assessment the GSF commissioned in 2015, the recommendations of which will be acted on in 2016.

Monitoring, learning, and documentation

The Synthesis Report found that “the limited results framework and push for immediate results in outcome 1 (access and use) have meant that learning and capacity development have not been a central element of the programmes. (...) While learning is happening, it is not being effectively captured and is ad hoc rather than planned.” The Council recognises the need to assess its results framework and monitoring systems and initiate necessary improvements. In 2015, in response to the findings of the first set of MTEs carried out in 2014 and early 2015, the GSF commissioned a detailed M&E system diagnosis. This study pointed out both strengths and challenges in GSF M&E. It found that in an effort to capture a wider range of processes beyond ODF, improved sanitation and hand washing, WSSCC expanded the GSF results framework to include too many indicators, and need to focus instead on a key number of access and use indicators. The assessment also raised the challenge of capturing disaggregated data and the nuances of behavioural and slippage patterns. The GSF now plans to conduct a full review and revision of its results framework during 2016, along with adjusted Terms of Reference for evaluations.

As another response to the Evaluation, the Secretariat in 2015 made several institutional changes to strengthen learning, documentation and communications components of its work. It established a Learning and Documentation Task Team and it brought into the GSF Department two staff members, including one senior colleague. The Task Team and staff are working with country programmes on improved documentation through a number of new product lines (see for example the 2015 GSF in Focus Madagascar case study and a number of forthcoming publications in Quarter 1 of 2016); on sharing and systematising learning and adaptive programming cycles; on coordinating a growing number of inter-country exchanges; supporting a growing number of (applied) research pieces; and capacity building and support on the more technical aspects of programme documentation and communications. In 2016, GSF is therefore expecting a noticeable shift in how it shares its learning and documentation with the wider sector. Examples in 2015 included learning events around AfricaSan and a pre-SACOSAN workshop co-organised by WSSCC. A GSF global learning event is to be held in April, 2016.



Regarding learning and documentation for capacity building, the GSF identified three distinct objectives and processes. First, continued programmatic learning aimed to improve programme outcomes and effectiveness. Second, (applied) research to either deepen understanding, evaluate, or assess outcomes and impact of processes and programmes. And third, analysis and documentation of promising and best practices, innovations and processes, mainly designed to share more broadly, with external partners and across country programmes. An analysis of current learning and programming practices in all 13 GSF country programmes has highlighted a range in systematisation of adaptive learning processes. This includes systems for documenting and testing emerging approaches for use by Sub-grantees, use of learning grants, and regular learning meetings and workshops. WSSCC is analysing all these different variations in order to identify ways and areas for further systemisation, without losing space for innovation and adaptation where needed. Continued programmatic learning also requires systems to share and apply learning across country programmes. With regards to inter-country learning, WSSCC has since 2014 embarked on a growing number of country exchange missions between 2 to 3 countries at a time, enabling very concrete, applied learning addressing specific challenges. These exchanges have led to the development of close inter-personal relationships and inter-programme networks.

GSF programmes are contributing to a growing organisational research agenda. Ongoing research includes, for example, a study with LSHTM into effectiveness of handwashing promotion interventions in a CLTS programme in Nigeria; a multi-country Value for Money study; a joint UNICEF-GSF study on the CLTSH approach in Ethiopia; and an assessment of psycho-social stress of women and girls linked to the GSF sanitation programme in India as part of a broader set of WSSCC- 3iE impact evaluations. Planned studies for 2016 include factors and patterns of slippage and behavioural patterns in Madagascar and an assessment of the sustainability of ODF in Nepal, India, and Malawi.

Next Steps in the MTE Process

Recommendations from individual country programme MTEs have been reviewed by the GSF and in-country stakeholders and partners. The GSF and its in-country partners have agreed on actions, and timelines have been identified to follow-up on accepted MTE recommendations. Progress against planned and ongoing actions will be reported on by responsible organisations and monitored. The above sections with discussion of the main Synthesis Report findings already touched upon a number of actions the GSF and its partners are undertaking to address concerns raised. The GSF is developing an action plan, with timeline, to monitor achievement of these activities. This will form an integral part of the 2016 GSF annual work plan.