Designing a Handwashing with Soap Behavior Change Program. Sustainability.
The learning objectives include:

Define sustainability and discuss its importance; review core components for improving sustainability; and identify considerations for other programs.

For information on monitoring sustainability, please see Monitoring.
What does “sustainability” mean?

Within the context of this project, sustainability is defined as the continuation of handwashing behavior change programming that is planned, budgeted, executed, and monitored, by country stakeholders after the project has ended.
Sustainability is important to consider from the beginning for a number of reasons. First, over time, new people will enter a community. Behavior change programming is needed to ensure that they are aware of the benefits of handwashing with soap, and to encourage them to adopt the behavior.

Second, over time, people need to be reminded about the benefits of handwashing with soap in order for this behavior to become a habit.
WSP developed a framework to ensure sustainability of handwashing programming. The framework featured nine dimensions. Baseline and endline assessments were conducted to understand progress made in each country, in each dimension over the course of the project.

For more information, see Sustainability Dimensions and sample baseline and endline reports in Tools and Resources.
What is needed to ensure sustainability?

Here are some action areas to consider, based on WSP’s experience in four countries.

First, a clear and logical programming is more likely to help sector partners understand and mainstream programming.

To be considered ‘evidence-based’, the design of the intervention should be grounded on findings from formative research conducted among the target population. The research should identify what people are currently thinking, feeling, and doing around handwashing with soap.

For more on designing a behavior change intervention, see Behavior Change.
Second, it is important to strengthen political ownership at different levels.

Once national and local government authorities perceive the benefits of large-scale, evidence-based handwashing with soap programming, they are more likely to endorse it and commit to future replication and scaling up.

In Tanzania, political ownership was built through a process that included working with representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to develop communication materials; facilitating policy design; and developing a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by four ministries.
Third, work with a diverse range of partners. “Partners” goes beyond public sector agencies to include non-governmental organizations and for-profit, private sector entities.

These partners can play a crucial role to expand reach to new populations and helping to mobilize additional resources.

In Peru, mining and agricultural firms promoted handwashing with soap behavior change to strengthen their relationship with local communities. In addition, a plastics firm helped develop Super Jaboncin, a handwashing device which improved access to liquid soap in schools and homes.
Fourth, identify where and how to build capacity.

“Capacity” refers to the ability of partners or stakeholders to execute aspects of a handwashing behavior change program to achieve desired goals. Some aspects include:

- Community or outreach workers have the communication skills to promote behavior change

- Private and public sector entities have the skills to design and implement communication strategies to reach target audiences

- Government agencies routinely collect essential handwashing monitoring data
For example, in Peru, teachers who completed training and used the curriculum in their classrooms earned merit points that translated into increased earnings.

In Senegal, community relays that had traditionally been used to convey information, were instead, trained to strengthen mothers’ problem-solving abilities and to fortify mother’s intentions to handwash with soap. Performance monitoring, particularly just-in-time coaching, proved critical to transforming relays into community resources.
Dedicated funding refers to the need to have enough financial resources to develop, execute, and monitor the necessary activities to achieve the goals of a handwashing behavior change program.

Funding for HWWS is often combined with other activities

Dedicated funding refers to the need to have enough financial resources to develop, execute, and monitor the necessary activities to achieve the goals of a handwashing behavior change program. The funds may be entirely within one organization, or different organizations may allocate the budget.

However, in WSP’s experience, funding for handwashing is often combined with other activities, perhaps within a water or nutrition program. In these situations, the funding may be lost in favor of the larger program.
For example, in Tanzania, a budget to promote handwashing behavior change was included in a water program. In practice, the funds were used for water rather than handwashing. WSP worked with district governments to improve planning, budgeting, and implementing handwashing activities to ensure the budget was well-used. A key recommendation is to have a dedicated budget line for handwashing.
WSP’s experience has emphasized the importance of including handwashing indicators within routine monitoring systems at national and local levels. Once integrated, government and other partners can continue to monitor progress and results, and use data to guide programming and budget decisions.

Across the four countries, WSP provided indicators and helped governments adapt them into a range of instruments.

In Peru, handwashing indicators were integrated within the national performance monitoring system for schools; and in Senegal, within the management information system of PEPAM, the national water agency.

In Tanzania, indicators were integrated within the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy; and in Vietnam within the National Target Program for water supply and sanitation.

Please see Table of Indicators in Tools and Resources for a list of indicators from each country.
Four points to keep in mind when developing a strategy to ensure sustainability:

1. Start early: *Think about sustainability from the very beginning, starting at the project design stage.*

2. Define sustainability goals: *What do you envision in three years? in five? ... and what will it take to reach these goals?*

3. Revisit the sustainability strategy based on fieldwork and implementation: *Be prepared to make adjustments due to unforeseen events or challenges.*

4. Analyze strengths and limitations of stakeholders, programs, and potential partners. Look at those working at local and national levels and across public and private sectors. *Evaluate to assess how these will impact sustainability-- and plan accordingly.*
This completes the Sustainability module. To learn more, please see Key Terms and tips to Keep in Mind, and additional tools and resources related to handwashing.