Sustainability and Maintenance

**Sustainability:** According to the UNICEF supply manual, including a sustainability plan, which addresses maintenance and upkeep should be part of the overall project, including identification of funding sources for maintenance.[[1]](#footnote-0) Ideally accessibility consultants will also be trained to consider features to promote greening and sustainability. For example, considering sensor-based lighting to conserve energy if more lighting is recommended.

**Quality checks:** Quality assurance checks need to be made to maintain safety when adding accessibility features in premises and facilities. For example, when grab-rails are installed next to a toilet cubicle make sure they can withstand weight or pressure. A lack of quality assurance could lead to an embarrassing – or dangerous – experience.

**Maintenance:** Regular maintenance of the infrastructure is essential for safety, accessibility and reliability. Run-down or poorly maintained infrastructure is a hazard and can lead to accidents. Funding for maintenance or refurbishment should be budgeted and planned for with clear timeframes. Removing waste, rubbish, snow, mud or sticks from pathways promotes accessibility. Regular cleaning of toilets and maintaining clear spaces in corridors also positively impact accessibility and safety. Training for cleaning, security and maintenance staff, or personnel may also be required, in line with the UNICEF Supply Manual.[[2]](#footnote-1)

**Safety management – critical issues to be addressed in risk management plans:**

* Emergency plans need to consider and address the needs of persons with disabilities for evacuation or exit (egress).
* Materials stored in or blocking accessible toilets make them unusable and dangerous.
* Low-hanging tree branches or electrical wires hanging over pathways and walkways can create a safety hazard, especially for persons with vision impairment or who are blind.
* Holes or rough and uneven surfaces in roadways and sidewalks are hazards for children, adults and older persons with mobility aids, using wheelchairs, or who are blind and using white canes or assistant animals such as guide dogs.
* Waterlogged conditions or snow and mud on walkways, roadways and paths can make them impassable for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids, strollers, or white canes.
* Tactile walking surface indicators and other information that has guiding information incorrectly placed. For example, it is dangerous in contexts when the tiles are facing the wrong direction or and direct people who are blind or have visual impairment into obstacles or hazards without warning indicators, or where construction, trees or bus stop signs and seats have been added directly in the way of or onto the ‘parallel’ guiding path.

1. UNICEF Supply Manual, Chapter 06, Section 11, para 13.1 “a sustainability plan addressing the maintenance and upkeep requirements of the project should be [...] of the overall project where responsible parties and funding sources are identified for the maintenance project.” [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. UNICEF Supply Manual, Chapter 06, Section 11, para. 13.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)