

## **RANO WASH MID-TERM EVALUATION: SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS**

Rural Access to New Opportunities in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (RANO WASH) is a five-year, \$30 million United States Agency for International Development (USAID) water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activity in Madagascar, implemented by a consortium led by CARE International. The USAID Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Partnerships and Learning for Sustainability (WASHPaLS) Project conducted a mid-term evaluation of RANO WASH from April to August 2021 focused on program design and the extent and success of RANO WASH delivery against plans. This note lists key takeaways from the evaluation.

**DESIGN:** The evaluation team found the program to be ambitious, innovative, and perceived positively by a large majority of stakeholders, who commended its role as a collaborative sector leader. While deeming RANO WASH’s three-pillar design focused on governance (Strategic Objective [SO]1), private sector engagement (SO2), and behaviors and use (SO3) highly relevant, the team found that the program initially underestimated the complexity and implementation challenges. Introduction of systems thinking and a building blocks approach in 2019 helped clarify direction, but focus on modelling viable public-private partnership (PPP) water supply schemes left out many smaller, more remote communities within intervention communes.

**GOVERNANCE CAPACITY:** RANO WASH’s support to commune-level Technical WASH Services (STEAH) and Technical WASH Assistants (ATEAHs) is a cornerstone of the program’s strategy—one that the evaluation team considers a key contribution to the sector. Possible sustainability risks relate to the ambitious mix of skills required for ATEAHs, the lack of commune governance stability, and commune budgetary constraints. RANO WASH support to improved sector monitoring and evaluation was notable, but a unified sector vision is lacking. The program invested heavily in a range of community engagement and accountability platforms, contributing to local ownership and WASH prioritization. Overlap and confusion in roles between the various bodies and their dependence on RANO WASH pose some sustainability concerns.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS:** RANO WASH is contributing to a paradigm shift toward private sector management of rural water supply. It has demonstrated the potential of the PPP “construct–invest–manage” model and has informed the development of a national PPP model contract template. Households have shown ability to pay tariffs, but more inclusive planning and subsidization of connection costs can further improve access for vulnerable/remote populations.

**BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND USE:** There is scope to further investigate and develop a market-based sanitation and hygiene strategy for Madagascar with development partners and the Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, going beyond mason (for latrines) and seamstress (for menstrual hygiene management) training and support. RANO WASH’s multi-pronged sanitation and hygiene behavior change strategy has resulted in above-target open defecation free (ODF) achievement rates. Potential areas of concern include risks of mixed messages and misinformation by the multitude of actors, limited evidence of spillover and potential for scale of the Grow-Up Sticker method, potential adverse effects of “rewarding” ODF communities with water supply, the risk of community-sanctioned use of force and coercion adversely affecting people in vulnerable situations, and perceived pressure to buy while facing limited sanitation technology options and low ability to pay.

### **Five key recommendations:**

- Move toward a commune-wide, inclusive planning and design approach to cover entire communes with sustainable WASH services, but reduce the number of target communes.
- Continue to drive private sector engagement in WASH, but acknowledge and support transitional models of private and community-managed water supplies existing side by side.
- Work with government to formalize STEAH and ATEAH status and ensure inclusion in communal budget lines.
- Focus on scalable approaches to behavior change, with community ownership and a clear exit strategy, and ensure documentation of learning areas highlighted in the evaluation.
- Train implementing partners and commune stakeholders on Do No Harm principles and the potential consequences of using force or penalties as a means of behavior change motivation.