

HOW TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN ODF STATUS

SEVEN TIPS FROM THE RANO WASH PROJECT

Introduction

The Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene has been implementing the «Madagasikara Madio Program» since October 2019, which aims to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) status throughout Madagascar. By the end of 2023, the Ministry has set a target for 90% of Malagasy that no longer defecate in the open and practice hand washing with soap, and 55% have access to basic sanitation services. To contribute to these goals, RANO WASH implemented several sanitation promotion activities and has enabled **316,206 people** to have access to improved non-shared toilets and **5,138 communities** and **57 Communes** to achieve ODF status.

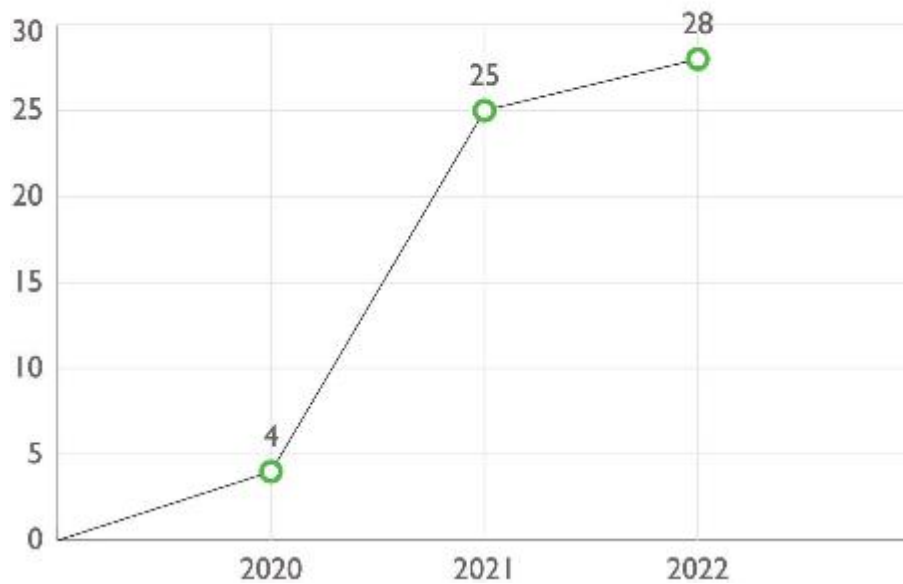
The achievement of this result has evolved over the last three years, as shown in the following infographic:

RANO WASH or «Rural Access to New Opportunities of Water-Sanitation and Hygiene», is a USAID-funded project implemented by a Consortium led by CARE, with CRS, WaterAid, BushProof, and Sandandrano.

It is a six-year project (June 2017 - June 2023) and its mission is to increase equitable and sustainable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services for human health, nutrition, and environmental conservation in 250 rural communes in 7 high priority regions:

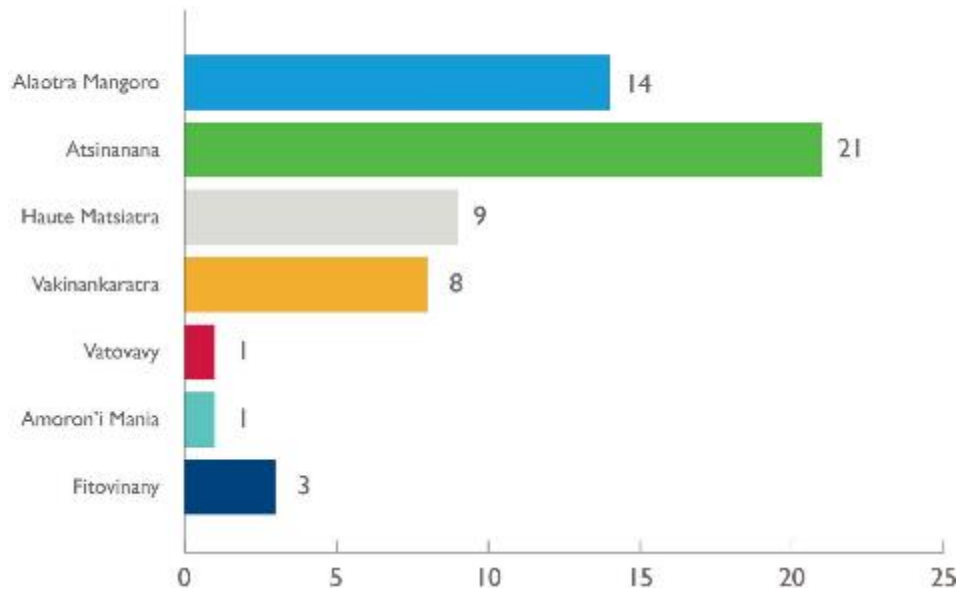
Alaotra Mangoro, Amoron'i Mania, Atsinanana, Haute Matsiatra Vakinankaratra, Vatovavy and Fitovinany.

ODF Communes year obtention



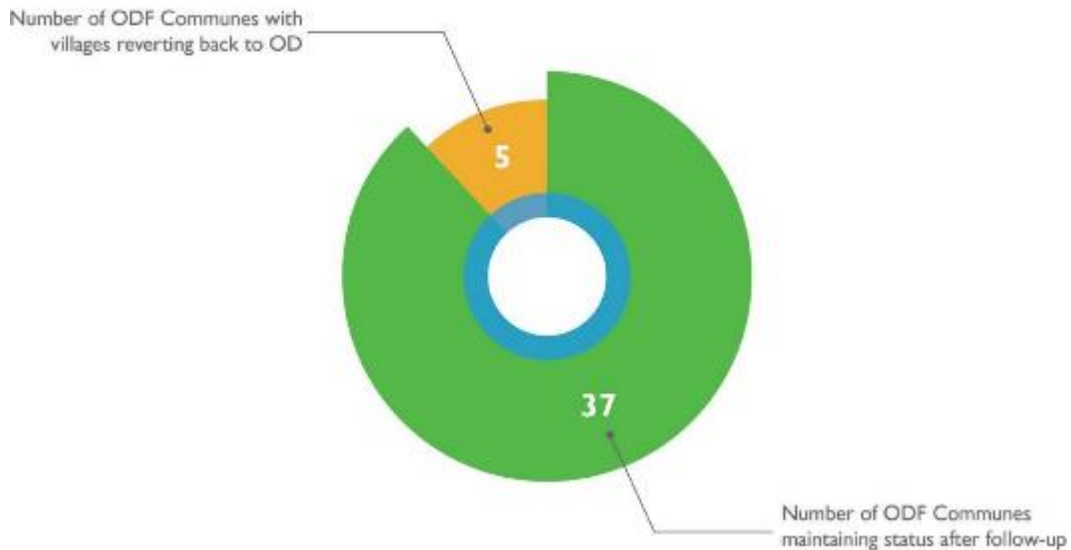
Situations vary by region; some regions may have had better results than others. The approaches implemented and tested are also different from one region to another, but this has allowed for a better understanding of what works and what does not. The following infographic shows the results of the ODF Communes by region.

Distribution of ODF Communes by Region



Maintenance of ODF status was also examined. The ODF Communes obtained under RANO WASH support are relatively new; the majority are less than two years old. Nevertheless, the majority have also managed to maintain their status to date, as shown in the graph below. Maintenance of ODF status remains a work in progress, but what the project has managed to do so far is worth documenting and reviewing.

ODF Communes maintenance situation



Lessons learned from RANO WASH intervention in sanitation and ODF Commune promotion.

The achievement of 57 ODF communes led the project team to conduct a series of internal learning sessions through sharing and exchange workshops, document reviews of practices and success stories, and interviews with various actors to identify key elements that facilitate the acquisition of ODF status and its sustainability. From these key elements, the team drew tips for actors wishing to actively contribute to creating an environment that respects ODF criteria in rural communes. This document is intended for Mayors of rural communes, local and regional public actors, and non-governmental partners, such as NGOs and economic operators.

It should be noted that the rural communes in which the tips were drawn from include approximately 3 to 19 fokontany. This means that the tips could be applied in most of the rural communes in Madagascar.

ODF criteria per the National ODF Verification and Certification

Protocol:

- **(Criterion 1: Open Defecation Areas)** All open defecation areas are cleaned and transformed, and no new OD areas are observed
- **(Criterion 2: Toilet Use)** All households and community members effectively use family or shared toilets¹², and families properly manage children's excreta.
- **(Criterion 3: Toilet Quality)** All toilets (family, household) and institutional toilets (schools, health centers, public buildings, etc.) - are clean - do not allow contamination and recontamination («Flyproof» toilets: do not allow flies to come and go), - covered pits, - floor/slab without holes that do not allow flies to pass, - the absence of soiled papers/objects in and around the toilets and presence of a waste paper bin with a lid), - effective use of ashes in the pit
- **(Criterion 4: Handwashing Facility)** Presence a handwashing station near the toilet with available soap, water, and ash.

¹² In villages where significant land problems prevent households from building a toilet, the village must request the mayor's agreement to waive this rule. In this case, the mayor must sign the Fokontany's minutes with the monitoring committee indicating the land problems. (See ODF Verification and Certification Protocol p.7)

SEVEN TIPS PROPOSED BY RANO WASH

Tip #1: Think big...but not too big! Encourage all the communes of a district or a region to fight against open defecation!

Addressed to: DREAH - District - non-governmental partners NGOs - project - economic operators

DOs

- Ensure quality of institutional triggering² that leads to a realistic action plan which reconciles the needs of the population with ODF objectives and engages everyone
- Take into consideration traditional leaders and organizations
- Ensure that facilitation is adapted to the educational level of communal authorities and actors to accelerate their decision-making and thus overcome taboos
- Encourage and maintain the sense of ownership of the Commune in the fight against open defecation and support its leadership to involve all heads of institutions without distinction to become ODF institutions.
- Diversify the approaches to maximize the impacts and address the different determinants that influence open defecation (e.g. Market-based approach³ - VSLA⁴ approach – Grow Up Sticker⁵ approach, etc.)
- Promote the commitment of all the stakeholders in charge of the territory (Governor - DREAH - DREN - DRSP etc.) for a MADIO District and Region sustainably.

DON'Ts

- Substitute the Commune in its role as the first responsible entity for its locality
- Letting political differences interfere with the implementation of the action plan instead of making the actors responsible for managing these differences
- Use a single approach and not address all the behavioral determinants related to sanitation
- Make Communes believe that their ODF status is a duty they owe to projects/donors or to the government to obtain further support

¹ Approach to improving access to sanitation by considering sanitation as a market of goods and services for which the client makes a monetary contribution

² A Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) is a group of 15 to 25 people who save together and make small

loans from these savings. VSLA promotion allows the project to address financial determinant that prevents communities to purchase WASH services and products

The Grow-Up Sticker or Leading Household approach is a reward concept that taps into positive motivators of pride, status, and self-esteem among women and households. Households earn a sticker when they practice and sustain one of the five key behaviors, and they are encouraged to seek to earn all five stickers and complete the Leading Household «flower» displayed outside their home

👍 DOs

- Collaborate with other ministries to acquire and maintain ODF status (e.g., MEN and MSP for ODF institutions, MT for ODF tourist sites, etc.)
- Strengthen the capacity of ATEAH⁶ to carry out implementation activities - monitoring and reporting on the evolution of the WASH situation at the commune level

👎 DON'Ts



Technical agent in charge of WASH at communal level

Tip #2: Take the lead in the fight against open defecation in your community!

Addressed to: Mayors of Communes and all communal actors

DOs

- Be the lead in the implementation of action plans for the acquisition and maintenance of ODF status
- Combine different approaches to acquire and maintain ODF status (Market-based approach - VSLA approach - GUS approach etc.)
- Organize intra-communal contests (e.g.: Fokontany MADIO, VSLA MADIO)

DON'Ts

- Letting political conflicts of interest interfere with the process instead of managing them by finding a common agreement in favor of the Commune's development
- Assign too many roles and responsibilities on a few people
- Use a single approach and not address all the behavioral determinants related to sanitation
- (Regarding contests) Promising impossible prizes or providing prizes that are



Tip #3: Support all institutions to become ODF!

Addressed to: Mayors of Communes and all communal actors

DOs

- Involve all heads of institutions without distinction to become ODF institutions (e.g., Health centers - Schools - Gendarmerie – Church, etc.)
- Support the institutions in the implementation and realization of an action plan to facilitate the end of open defecation specific to each

DON'Ts

- Limit support to institutions specifically supported by donor-funded projects (e.g., WASH-friendly institutions)



Tip #4: Encourage sharing and exchanging know-how between municipalities or actors in the same district or region and encourage friendly competition!

Addressed to: DREAH⁷ - District - Mayor - Non-governmental partners NGO - Project

DOs

- Foster an enabling environment for exchange and sharing by organizing or participating in sharing sessions between communal/district/ regional actors, such as workshops or exchange visits.
- Use WASH regional platforms to facilitate sharing at the regional level
- Organize inter-communal - inter-district - or inter-regional competitions on the theme of sanitation
- Depending on local resources available, celebrate your ODF status and invite other communes, especially those that are not yet ODF, to share experiences - demonstrate pride and generate competition among communes

DON'Ts

- Letting political conflicts of interest undermine the process instead of empowering the supported actors to manage these conflicts
- (Concerning the competitions) Promising inadequate prizes or providing prizes that are incompatible with the efforts required of participants
- Waiting for project funding before starting activities instead of starting with available resources



Tip #5: Support Communities to Increase their WASH Budget!

Addressed to: DREAH - District - NGO - Projects

DOs

- Support the Commune in tax revenue mobilization and tax awareness
- Support the Commune in the planning and budgeting process and consider WASH in priority activities in these plans (PCDEAH)
- Support the Commune in leadership and ownership of the WASH system strengthening approach⁸

DON'Ts

- Cultivate the commune's financial dependence
- on projects



RANO WASH / Photos : Dahery Razaka Rafenomanana

8. The systems approach is a systems analysis methodology. It provides a global vision of the interaction and interdependence of the factors and actors essential for the WASH sector's development.

Tip #6: Promote the development of the sanitation market by professionalizing small private operators and collaborating with savings groups!

Addressed to: Non-governmental partners NGOs - project - economic operators

DOs

- Support local masons with entrepreneurial skills to improve their businesses
- Encourage/facilitate the integration of local masons into savings groups to enable them to access loans to improve their business
- Support local masons in entrepreneurship for small business management and new technologies.
- Encourage local masons to design attractive but useful latrine products (color, shine, shape, ...)
- Support/engage private operators in the provision of sanitation services by identifying and supporting the most appropriate service model for the context
- Support private operators in producing toilets that meet users' needs and aspirations and are adapted to the localities according to their economic, geological, climatic, and cultural context.
- Support VSLAs in the implementation of WASH funds to improve the quality of their toilets
- Develop solutions for securing the funds of savings groups to encourage local masons and households to join them
- Mobilize savings groups for activities to adopt healthy WASH behaviors

DON'Ts

- Keep sanitation market actors and stakeholders out of the action plans for maintaining ODF status
- Establish multiple local masons in a single location: rapid market saturation
- Minimize the value of strict internal regulation at the savings group level
- Not address issues related to supply chains and the market systems environment, including financing mechanisms

Tip #7: Keep up the good work: achieving ODF status is not the end game!

Addressed to: Mayor and community stakeholders

DOs

- Support and encourage the Communes in the implementation of concerted and jointly decided measures to avoid the practice of open defecation
- Publish the list and the efforts made by the fokontany and Communes ODF to encourage them to maintain their status and influence the neighboring localities
- Develop former open defecation areas into places of public interest if they are public property (sports field - public toilet - reforestation area, etc.), and mobilize owners to use them or restrict access to them if they are private property
- Identify the risk factors for a return to open defecation and the measures to be taken (e.g., Workshop - Town Hall Meeting)
- Strengthen the capacity of ATEAH to carry out hygiene promotion activities (implementation and monitoring) and to mobilize other key stakeholders such as VSLA, civil society organizations...
- Always integrate WASH issues into Commune meetings

DON'Ts

- Cultivate a sense of fear and limited cooperation.
- Support the creation of laws and measures that generate discrimination and exclusion, especially against women and minorities
- Make Communes believe that their ODF status is a duty they owe to projects/donors or to the government to obtain further support

Challenges

In communes, a higher number of fokontany and a higher number of people are often major challenges for acquiring ODF status. RANO WASH adopted the following initiatives to address these challenges:

- **Prioritize influential stakeholders.** Conduct an institutional triggering targeting key individuals that were identified before the triggering event. These key persons were, among others, communal and fokontany authorities, heads of institutions, leaders of traditional structures, and influential groups (e.g. Ampanjaka, Tangalamena, etc.). These stakeholders can then mobilize their communities or respective institutions to pilot actions that can end open defecation. These actions can include regular clean-ups, construction of toilets, establishment, and materialization of social rules.
- **Prioritize and sequence.** If the commune has several fokontany, **concentrate the beginning of the actions on one fokontany** so that it can act as a pilot fokontany. Once ODF status is reached, carry out the celebration and invite the chiefs of neighboring fokontany and local authorities, thus encouraging exchanges and triggering a spirit of competition.
- **Plan for support and monitoring.** Carry out an **intensive follow-up** in a commune, involving all commune staff and deploying several project staff (support technicians from the commune in question and other communes), such as the Follow-Up Mandona⁹ Faobe example in communes to end open defecation for Alaotra Mangoro and Vakinakaratra - named differently in other regions. Also support WASH and monitoring committees in strengthening local measures (Dina) for households without a toilet.
- **Link efforts with government plans and objectives.** Some regions reinforced the understanding of the Region's performance contract and objectives on sanitation as well as the «Madagascar Madio» thorough explanations provided by the DREAH team during a workshop for Mayors and the training of ATEAH. These objectives have been disaggregated by Commune and are the basis of the action plan of each commune.
- **Contextualize interventions.** RANO WASH has always emphasized the leadership of the commune and the efforts of local actors and organizations (Local Consultation Structure, Civil Society Organization, EAH Committee, heads of institutions, traditional leaders, etc.) in terms of setting up and carrying out action plans as well as monitoring to achieve and maintain ODF status. Before and during the support to the communes, the team made sure to master the different contexts of the region (customs, social structures, etc.) and to gain the trust of the different leaders to promote advocacy actions.

9. Follow-up MANDONA (FUM) is an action-oriented approach to accelerate the end of open defecation after the initial CLTS triggering session. Based on CLTS principles, FUM involves a series of facilitated sessions with the entire FOLLOW-UP MANDONA HANDBOOK 7 community to reinforce behavior change and collectively undertake small, immediate and doable actions to become ODF in the shortest time possible – In Follow-Up Mandona, Guidelines for practitioners, Fonds d'Appui pour l'Assainissement, Global Sanitation Fund

For future actions

The RANO WASH team collected some additional solutions and reflections for challenges in reaching

ODF communes:

How to fight against open defecation in the main towns of communes (chef lieu de commune) with a high population density and quasi-urban characteristics?

- o Promote the exchange of experiences and inter-communal collaboration at the regional level to help communes that are facing difficulties
- o Support market-based approaches in sanitation

How to fight against open defecation of public transport passengers for the Communes along national roads?

- o Build rest areas with public toilets along the national roads. This requires collaboration with the private sector to offer these services to the passengers
- o Advocate at the national level, including the Ministry of Transport and Meteorology, for a commitment to ODF national roads
- o Collaborate with transport cooperatives and the “Agence de Transport Terrestre” (ATT) to implement an initiative for open defecation-free roads and organize information and sensitization sessions for travelers before each departure.
- o How do we keep open defecation out of open fields?
- o Build improved public toilets near the fields, the communities, and the owners of the fields concerned.

How to promote access to quality toilets adapted to the community and its geological, climatic, and financial conditions?

- o Promote a market-based approach by considering the key factors and actors to be strengthened for sustainable and equitable access to quality toilets in rural communities.
- o Encourage private providers to offer toilet models that correspond to users' needs and the physical context

What if the WASH budget of communes is insufficient to support institutions to access quality toilets that support ODF maintenance?

- Strengthen tax collection
- Support communes in their search for partners (public and private)

How can we utilize WASH-friendly school and CSB approaches to maintain ODF status?

- Support relevant Ministries to monitor WASH-friendly institutions
- Encourage communes to take responsibility to ensure the sustainability of WASH services in public institutions

How to promote access to water in all ODF Communes and maintain hygiene behaviors?

- Promote the ODF status of the communes by including it as a criterion to facilitate access to opportunities for their development, such as projects, programs, etc.
- Organize events such as Water Fairs to share with potential private partners the opportunities that exist in the communes

Finally, the last action that could be interesting to test:

Mobilization of the water service providers, such as the Manager - Investor - Builder enterprises promoted by RANO WASH and the Village Savings and Loans Association, in the construction and management of public toilets to contribute to the maintenance of the ODF status of the communes

« ODF one day, ODF forever. »