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# Water+ Innovation in Sanitation Award 2025

## Market-based sanitation in Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, and Zambia

### Introduction and context

Sanitation access remains a major global challenge: **3.4 billion people lack safely managed sanitation services**, and **1.5 billion have only basic sanitation**. Rural and peri-urban households often rely on self-built latrines that are unsafe, unhygienic, and uncomfortable, discouraging their use and contributing to preventable disease and social inequities. In some contexts, approaches such as Community-Led Total Sanitation have successfully increased demand and encouraged community members to construct their own latrines. However, these are often low-quality toilets that do not meet user needs and expectations, leading to families reverting to defecating in the open. **Market-based Sanitation (MBS)** addresses these gaps by combining demand creation, strengthening supply chains, and providing household financing options with links to the private sector and local supply chains. It ensures that sanitation products are affordable, aspirational, and accessible. **In recognition of World Toilet Day 2025, we extend our Innovation in Sanitation Award to CARE Rwanda, CARE Côte d'Ivoire, and CARE Zambia for their pioneering work in Market-Based Sanitation.**

## Approaches to Market-Based Sanitation



Local ownership ensures communities, authorities and entrepreneurs co-create and monitor services.



Inclusive demand creation through human-centered design and tailored social and behavior change strategies.



Private sector engagement to strengthen supply chains, product innovation, and service delivery.



Accessible financing for households and suppliers through mobile money, flexible payment schemes and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs).

## CARE Rwanda

Access to sanitation is key to healthy, dignified, and productive lives. That's why the Government of Rwanda is on an ambitious path to achieve universal sanitation coverage by 2030. Yet many rural families still face barriers to accessing affordable, durable, and aspirational sanitation solutions. The **Isoko y'Ubuzima Project** (2021-2026), funded by USAID, addresses these challenges by **combining social behavior change (SBC) strategies with MBS** to build resilient, people-centered systems that balance behavioral insights and market intelligence. The project designed an MBS strategy that embeds SBC into sales through an approach where agents guide families through informed choices based on needs, aspirations, and affordability.

Recognizing that community mobilization alone does not build sustainable markets, selected hygiene focal points were trained as professional sales agents that link households to entrepreneurs and financing mechanisms while ensuring that sanitation sales remain both impactful and profitable.

To complement the work of these sales agents, the project developed an enabling environment for market growth. VSLAs and community leaders stimulated demand and facilitated access to credit, while the supply chain was strengthened through MBS demonstration villages, each serving as a practical learning hub where communities, entrepreneurs, and local governments co-design and scale sanitation solutions. Results show how systems thinking can drive scale:

- **In FY25 alone, 27,399 people gained access to basic sanitation**, bringing the cumulative total to **101,211, surpassing the project's five-year goal.**
- The initiative **mobilized 225,000 residents and trained 331 entrepreneurs** who now sustain growing rural markets.
- **150 professional sales agents** were trained in decision intelligence selling, driving sales of **54,878 products**, including 18,600 SATO pans, **improving sanitation access for over 80,000 people.**

These achievements reflect how professionalized sales, market facilitation, and local governance can reinforce each other to deliver inclusive, lasting change.

### What gaps still remain?

**Liliane Uwineza, SBC technical advisor:** The main gap is on the supply side. Prices of sanitation products, such as SATO pans, have been rising. After demand creation, some households make sanitation plans based on the amount committed by SBC agents. However, when they are ready to fulfill that demand a few months later, prices have increased significantly. This creates a challenge for both buyers and sellers.

## CARE Côte d'Ivoire

Across Côte d'Ivoire's rapidly urbanizing cities, sanitation has long operated in fragmented, informal markets. Households struggle to find reliable services, private waste service providers face barriers to reach clients, and municipalities lack tools to regulate or plan. To address these gaps, CARE, in collaboration with a local technology company, developed “**Gnamangnaman**”, a digital platform that connects households, sanitation providers, and municipal authorities through mobile and SMS technology.

The platform enables users to request sanitation services such as toilet construction, fecal-sludge emptying, or solid-waste collection, while municipalities can register providers, validate prices, monitor performance, and respond to citizen complaints. The app simplifies access to trusted and affordable services for households and offers visibility and oversight tools for local authorities to plan and regulate effectively. For private sanitation operators, it facilitates daily work, expanding their customer base, securing digital payments, and enhancing professional credibility.

Since its launch in 2021, Gnamangnaman has **connected more than 4,000 households to regular sanitation services**, onboarded **30 private enterprises**, and been adopted by **two municipalities** for local regulation. A study done in 2024 recommended possible future improvements, such as expanding access for basic phones, introducing micro-payment mechanisms, and developing municipal dashboards, to make the system even more inclusive and adaptive. Gnamangnaman demonstrates how digital innovation can strengthen Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) systems by linking people, markets, and municipalities.

### How do you think CARE's role as a facilitator has been influential?

**Stanislas Toure:** In Côte d'Ivoire, CARE influenced MBS starting in the 2000s by organizing the sector, which led to the creation of sanitation sector incubator centers that established sanitation committees and service providers in the sector for household waste collection and gutter cleaning, leading to the development of Gnamangnaman to improve access to sanitation services and the establishment of a social enterprise to promote sanitation marketing.

**Losseni Coulibaly:** CARE has mainly enabled households to express their needs based on their purchasing power and to work with suppliers who design products based on these identified needs.

## CARE Zambia

**The challenge of providing safe, durable sanitation for all isn't rooted in a lack of technology.** It's fundamentally a finance and market issue. Weak supply chains, limited access to capital for both households and entrepreneurs, low affordability, and inadequate public investment all contribute to the problem. MBS models have shown promise over the past decade as a sustainable solution. Yet, scaling these models, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, has been challenging.

In Southern Zambia, CARE is implementing a MBS program that asks, “what if we could better leverage past and ongoing investments, **embedding sanitation into market-based initiatives, financial inclusion efforts, and systems-strengthening programs** to achieve sanitation goals through and across other complementary initiatives?” Given the strong link between WASH and broader development outcomes, integrating MBS into existing platforms and complementary development programs offers one of the most sustainable pathways to achieving sanitation at scale.

Partnering with market leader iDE, whose MBS solutions are evidence-backed and widely recognized as best-in-class, CARE is currently in the first phase of piloting an MBS approach with the aim of **substantially and sustainably increasing sanitation coverage in Zambia**, with the potential to scale those outcomes across lower- and middle-income countries. This lean model will leverage CARE's robust VSLA network for demand creation, access to finance, and potentially as a source of the entrepreneurs a robust market requires.

If successful and initial results show promise in reducing costs and implementation timelines, the program will be scaled more widely across Zambia and then adapted to other Sub-Saharan Africa contexts.

**Thank you to our teams in Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Zambia, and all across CARE for your work towards the goal of safe, reliable, and sustainable water and sanitation for all.**