



Annual Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Performance Report 2019



SUPPORTED BY



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Australian Dollar	AUD
Australian Pacific Training Coalition	APTC
Business Client	BC
Civil Society Organisations	CSO
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	DARD
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	DFAT
Department of Industry	DoI
Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination	DSPPAC
Department of Tourism	DoT
Government of Vanuatu	GoV
Intermediate Outcomes	IO
Language Literacy and Numeracy	LLN
Long Term Outcomes	LTO
Malampa Handicraft Centre	MHC
Ministry of Agriculture Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity	MALFFB
Ministry of Education and Training	MoET
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	MoFA
Ministry of Justice and Community Services	MJCS
Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Industry, Cooperative and Ni-Vanuatu Business	MTTICNVB
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	MEL
National Human Resource Development Plan	NHRDP
Non-Government Organisation	NGO
Office of the Government's Chief Information Officer	OGCIO
Pacific Vocational Training Centre	PVTC
Partnership Implementation Framework	PIF
Post School Education and Training	PSET
Prime Minister's Office	PMO
Provincial Government Training Board	PGTB
Provincial Training Coordinator	PTC
Public Private Partnership	PPP
Rural Training Centre	RTC
Skills Development Fund	SDF
Skills for Agribusiness	SfA
Skills for Creative Industries	SfCI
Skills for Tourism	SfT
Skills Partnership Steering Committee	SPSC
Tertiary Education Division	TED
Thinking and Working Politically	TWP
Torba Handicraft Cooperative	THC
Training Provider Improvement Agreements	TPIA
Training Provider Inclusion Improvement Fund	TPIIF
Training Provider Support	TPS
Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association	VDPA
Vanuatu Institute of Technology	VIT
Vanuatu Qualifications Authority	VQA
Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework	VQAF
Vanuatu Skills Partnership	The Partnership
Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities	VSPD
Vanuatu Tourism Office	VTO
Vatu	VUV
Vetimboso Handicraft Association	VHA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the second Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Performance report for Phase 4 of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership (the Partnership). It provides an assessment of the extent that activities documented in the 2019 annual plan were implemented, and during the year were adapted as needed in response to the ever evolving political and operational context and emerging opportunities and risks. The report documents the progress made during the period January – December 2019, towards achievement of the Intermediate Outcomes (IOs) and the Long-Term Outcomes (LTOs) specified in the Partnership Program Logic.

Progress towards Long Term Outcomes

Overall in 2019 there is strong evidence of positive results and progress being made in each of the Partnership's long-term outcomes. The key conclusions drawn from the analysis made on progress against the LTOs are:

- **The Government of Vanuatu's (GoV) increased interest and commitment to the skills system** – both by existing national and provincial level government partners, and through establishing new relations with other parts of national government that to date have not been directly connected with the skills system (Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination, and the Prime Minister's Office) The commitments set out in the Partnership Implementation Frameworks, and their alignment and support of the GoV partners' priorities, have been effective in moving commitment to skills training to an institutional level, whereas previously it was heavily reliant on the commitment of individuals. The recent improvements in the latter part of 2019 in the level of cooperation and coordination with Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) through the Tertiary Education Directorate (TED) and the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA) is very encouraging, and provides an important basis for more consistent reform and delivery by the supply side of the skills system.
- **The increase in 2019 of the GoV's financial contribution** (VUV10,500,000) through the Skills Development Fund (SDF) to the skills system is very positive, however it accounts for a relatively small amount of the skills development budget (36%) and even less of the total Partnership budget that includes management, administration, professional development and costs for international technical advisors. Apart from GoV contribution, the funding for the Partnership's activities in support of the skills system is fully reliant on DFAT. Although it is positive that a range of DFAT funding mechanisms are supporting system strengthening, at this point in Phase 4 the continued high dependency on the Government of Australia creates a risk in relation to medium to longer-term continuity and sustainability of the Partnership's achievements to date.
- **There is compelling evidence of the contribution that skills training makes to economic and social benefits of Skills Centre clients, their families, communities and businesses.** The preliminary analysis made during 2019 consistently shows that women and men, people with disabilities, and people with low levels of school education in each of the provinces and the productive sectors where skills training is provided, report improvements in their prosperity and quality of life. The consistency and scope of the positive results demonstrates the value of the decentralised model of provincial Skills Centres and the contribution of the model to the national development goals set out in the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP).
- **The demand for quality skills training, particularly accredited qualifications, is not currently being met by the skills system.** The challenges of resource constraints, technical capacity and regulatory requirements for accredited training create obstacles that deter training providers, particularly smaller providers in rural locations, from meeting the standards to be able to deliver accredited training in areas where there is demand. The recent improved coordination and between the TED, VQA and the Partnership, and stronger collaboration with other actors (including private sector) in the skills training sector, provide opportunities for cooperation that may deliver more resource efficient and innovative options to support training providers.

Key Activity and Output Data 2019

Three Partnership Implementation Frameworks (PIFS) implemented with GoV productive sector partners (Department of Tourism - DoT, Department of Industry- DoI, and Ministry of Agriculture Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries, and Biosecurity - MALFFB)

10,500,000 VUV contribution by GoV to Skills Development Fund – an increase of 250% compared to 2018 contribution (3,000,000 VUV)

47 skills activities delivered through provincial Skills Centres

Types of Activities	Provinces	Activities per Sector
23 Workshops	17 Sanma (including Ambae response)	31 Creative Industries
16 Individual coaching sessions	14 Torba	7 Tourism
4 Workshops integrated with coaching	9 Malampa	5 Agribusiness
4 Accredited programs	7 Tafea	4 Infrastructure

674 Total Number of Participants in skills activities

Sex of participants	Disability	Participants per Sector
423 Women (63%)	27 people with disabilities (4% of all participants)	410 Creative Industries
251 Men (37%)	18 women	106 Tourism
	9 men	92 Agribusiness
		106 Infrastructure

Training Provider (TP) support

TP Improvement	Accredited Training	Skills Coaches and Trainers
5 TP Improvement Agreements with RTCs	4 accredited trainings in rural areas	36 ni-Vanuatu
7 TP Inclusion Improvement Agreements (disability) with registered TPs	3 RTCs delivered accredited units	5 local expatriate
	0 new units / courses were designed and accredited	4 international
		19 (42%) women
		1 person with disabilities

Prosperity Data for Business Clients (using new Prosperity Assessment Tool)

Business Clients Assessed	Sectors	Provinces
237 business clients assessed	Agribusiness 32%	Malampa 16%
141 women	Creative Industries 39%	Sanma 18%
96 men	Tourism 28%	Tafea 12%
13 people with disabilities		Torba 43%

In the 6 months prior to this assessment business clients (237) reported:	All	Women	Men
• Increase in the income earned from business	56%	44%	48%
• A profit from their business	81%	88%	81%
• That the level of profit made from the business had increased	45%	59%	61%

1. INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

This is the second Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Performance report for Phase 4 of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership (the Partnership). It provides an assessment of the extent that activities documented in the 2019 annual plan were implemented, and during the year were adapted as needed in response to the ever evolving political and operational context and emerging opportunities and risks. The report documents the progress made during the period January – December 2019, towards achievement of the Intermediate Outcomes (IOs) and the Long-Term Outcomes (LTOs) specified in the Partnership Program Logic.

The MEL Adviser prepared this report working in close collaboration with the Partnership Director, the MEL Coordinator, the Strategic Adviser, and the Support Coordinator. The MEL Adviser position is part of the 'support services' that the Support Contractor, Scope Global, provides to the Partnership. The Adviser works closely with the MEL Coordinator and the core Partnership team to develop and implement MEL functions. The role is 'semi-independent' with regard to the analysis and findings presented in this report.

The Partnership is a long-standing co-investment between the Government of Australia (GoA) and the Government of Vanuatu (GoV). The current phase of the Partnership commenced in July 2017 and will operate until December 2021.

This report is being prepared around the mid-point of the current phase. The focus of the performance assessment is on the progress that has been made after two and half years of implementation in each of the Partnership's seven LTOs. The analysis presented is based on the results achieved during 2019 that have been measured against the key indicators of the IOs that contribute to progress towards the LTOs.

The findings from key output and outcome monitoring data are presented in this report, and reference is also made to findings and analysis presented in the 2019 reports for the productive sectors, training provider support, disability inclusion and gender equality (Better Balance) workstreams submitted to DFAT in the progress reporting package.

BACKGROUND

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership (the Partnership) is a locally-led, politically-aware initiative to achieve service delivery reform for human resource development, through the vector of the national Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system. The Partnership's focus is on improving access to relevant 'Skills for Prosperity' through:

- **Developing** a quality, accessible, inclusive national skills system
- **Influencing** financing of the skills system through stimulating local sustainable investment primarily by the GoV, private sources, and development partners
- **Supporting** sustainable economic outcomes for individual participant trainees (clients)
- **Contributing** to wider economic and social gains nationally and in the four provincial areas (Malampa, Sanma, Tafea and Torba) through the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) Provincial Skills Centres
- **Strengthening** the value chains of the key productive areas that are a focus of the Partnership (Tourism, Agribusiness, Creative Industries and Infrastructure)

Delivery of activities in these focus areas will contribute to progress towards the LTOs and goal of the Partnership.

Goal

A sustainable and well coordinated skills system that maximises access to relevant and quality assured qualifications and skills leading to improved economic, social and cultural development opportunities for all



Long-term outcomes

- | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>1
Government of Vanuatu manages and coordinates its skills system more effectively</p> | <p>2
The skills system provides inclusive access to relevant and quality assured qualifications</p> | <p>3
Clients follow pathways to further education and training</p> | <p>4
The status of women and people with disability is enhanced</p> | <p>5
Clients have increased income</p> | <p>6
Clients contribute to local sustainable development and management of climate change risks</p> | <p>7
Target value chains have improved productivity</p> |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|

Intermediate Outcomes

IO-1

Skills planning & coordination

PGTBs, Skills Centres and TED jointly plan and manage skills development



IO-6

Skills system compliance

Training providers are implementing in line with Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework and the National Disability Inclusion Policy for the TVET Sector



IO-2

Public & private resource allocation

Increased public & private resource allocation to implement PSET Policy



IO-7

New businesses started

Clients* start new business or self-employment



IO-3

Flexible delivery

Increased flexible delivery of accredited skills development



IO-8

Sustainable business growth

Clients improve sustainable growth of their businesses**



IO-4

Diversity of skills providers

Increased diversity of training providers operating within the skill system



IO-9

New or improved employment

Clients access new or improved employment



IO-5

Representation of women and people with disabilities

Increased representation of women, people with disabilities, and their interests in the skills system



IO-10

Improved market access

Improved market access in target value chains



* Client refers to Individual and Business Clients, and men, women, and people with disabilities

** Note this Intermediate Outcome area was modified to reflect the incorporation of Climate Change in this result area and strengthen linkage with LTO 6.

POLICY CONTEXT

Government of Vanuatu

During 2019 the GoV has demonstrated strengthened commitment and is progressing on implementation of the National Sustainable Development Plan (2016 - 2030) – Vanuatu 2030: the People’s Plan (NSDP) which is the country’s highest level national development planning framework. The GoV has also increased focus on practical delivery of its decentralisation agenda. There is very strong alignment between the strategic intent of the Partnership in support of the GoV to deliver on these two key policy priorities.

The Partnership’s activities in 2019 continue to support progress of other key GoV economic and social policy frameworks, specifically: the National Human Resource Development Plan (2020-2030) (under the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO)) that the Partnership played a pivotal role in developing during 2018, and the new 2019 Trade Policy Framework (under the Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Industry, Commerce and ni-Vanuatu Business (MTTICNVB)); and the National Gender Equality Policy (2015-2019), the National Disability Inclusion Policy (2016), and the Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (2016).

Government of Australia

There is strong alignment and influence of GoA policies on the Partnership’s strategic direction and delivery priorities. The critical policies that inform and guide the Partnership are Australia’s 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, and the Australia-Vanuatu Aid Partnership Arrangement 2016-2019. The Development for All – Disability Inclusion Strategy (2015- 2020), DFAT’s Climate Change Action Strategy (2020- 2025) and DFAT’s Effective Governance Strategy (2015) guide the delivery of these priority cross cutting issues through the Partnership.

Australia’s explicit prioritisation of supporting leadership under its ‘Strengthening Pacific Partnerships’ agenda¹ is influencing the direction of the Partnership and its increasing emphasis and investment on developmental leadership as a critical part of supporting sustainable and effective reform through the vector of the skills system.

During 2019, the GoA, as part of the 10-year commitment through the Pacific Women investment, launched a new initiative, the Balance of Power (BOP) investment, to address the complex issue of women in leadership in the Pacific, with a specific focus on increasing women’s participation and voice in political processes. The innovative approaches that BOP will apply align with the gender equality and women’s empowerment strategies employed by the Partnership, based on a similar ‘thinking and working politically’ conceptual framework. The Partnership has already formed very strong links with BOP, including sharing office space, which will be built on further at a program level as BOP scales up implementation of its activities in 2020.

¹ <https://dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/engagement/Pages/strengthening-our-pacific-partnerships.aspx?fbclid=IwAR0ITD8ZVUhgTjrRNtp4xjAMFd9LAXTb4mGlbTdsJKtz6Ja7t5u0eLjvEEs>

OPERATING CONTEXT

Factors that influence the effectiveness of the results during 2019 are summarised in this section. More detail on how they have enabled or limited delivery and the results achieved during 2019 is provided in the relevant outcome areas in Section 3 of this report.

Enablers

The key enablers in the operating context and internal factors directly related to the Partnership staff that have supported effective implementation and progress of results in 2019 are:

- **Strengthened commitment of the GoV to the implementation of the NSDP**, and increased awareness of the contribution of the Partnership in support of its implementation
- **Increased commitment of GoV to implementation of the decentralisation plan** raised the prominence of the provincial Skills Centres being one of the few effective models of decentralised service delivery in Vanuatu
- **Strengthened links with key areas of GoV at national and provincial level** including the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC), assisted broader awareness and commitment to skills development in key strategic and influential parts of government
- **Skills training being part of DFAT's support to the GoV's Ambae response** has provided additional resources for the Partnership and the Sanma Skills Centre
- **Strengthened links with other DFAT investments managed in Vanuatu, the region and by Canberra**, particularly through the work on gender equality and women's empowerment, and Thinking Working Politically (TWP), created opportunities for resource sharing, new partnerships and promoting skills development more widely in new program areas including health
- **Increased understanding in the latter part of 2019 by the new leadership of the Tertiary Education Directorate (TED) about the value of the Partnership** has supported initial stronger coordination and engagement between the TED, VQA and the Partnership on training provider registration and standards
- **Growing recognition of the success of approaches that prioritise the fostering of coalitions and developmental leadership** including in Australia's 'step-up' agenda

Challenges

The key critical challenge identified in the 2018 Performance Report of the lower than anticipated GoV commitment to implementation of the PSET policy remains the major challenge in the operational context that has continued to adversely impact progress in 2019:

- **Change of leadership at the MoET in late 2018, and proposed reorganisation of the Ministry that is yet to be finalised** weakened coordination and cooperation between the Partnership, the VQA and the TED on determining the strategy and delivery of activities by the Training Provider Support workstream for the majority of 2019
- **Uncertainty over the long term policy and funding commitment by the MoET to provincial skills training:** the expiration of the PSET policy and the passing of the Vanuatu National University Act in December 2019, as well as the reorganisation of the Ministry, have likely adverse implications on the level of investment and sustainability of provincial Skills Centres, local skills training providers and the vocational skills sector in general as a priority area for MoET vis-à-vis academic tertiary education

2. IMPLEMENTATION

ACTIVITIES PLANNED

The three priority areas of the PSET Policy: Strategic Direction, System Oversight, and Service Delivery guided the development of the 2019 Partnership activity plan, building on the progress made in these strategic areas during 2018, and emerging new priorities and opportunities. The key areas of activity planned for 2019 are summarised below. Additional detail is provided in the *2019 Annual Plan* approved by DFAT in early 2019.

Priority Area 1 - Strategic Direction

- a. Demand identification in priority sectors:** implementation of the first complete roll-out of the collaborative development of Partnership Implementation Frameworks (PIFs) with the GoV productive sector partners
- b. Promoting system resourcing efficiency and diversity:** ensuring compliance with the co-contribution agreements in place with the GoV and by building on existing arrangements and brokering new partnerships with the GoV, private sector and other donors
- c. Skills system coordination:** continuing to strengthen the operations of and linkages between, the key governance and coordination mechanisms of the national skills system: the Provincial Government Training Boards (PGTB), the VQA Board, the Skills Centres and the TED within the MoET, and ensuring key representatives of these bodies coordinate

Priority Area 2 - System Oversight

- a. Improve system management and sector financing allocations:** strengthen collaboration with the new senior management (appointed in 2019) to the TED, and strengthen coordination with the VQA to improve management and commitment of personnel and financial resources to the skills system in line with the PSET Policy Implementation Plan, and to support implementation of the first-ever National Adult LLN Strategy (2018-2023)
- b. Increase diversity of providers, courses and delivery modalities:** continue to build on the working relationship established with the TED to support selected training providers to meet registration quality standards, course accreditation requirements and deliver skills training in line with the priority areas identified in each sector PIF, and continue to grow the potential of local industry coaches with the aim of supporting sustainability and increased diversity within the training system
- c. Increase representation of women and their interests in the skills system:** continue to advocate for a stronger gender equality and disability inclusion focus within the governance and coordination agencies for the national skills system, and review the Partnership's Gender Equality Strategy for the Skills Centres

Priority Area 3 - Service Delivery

- a. Prosperity outcomes for Skills Centre trainees:** continued focus by the Skills Centres on the implementation of the PIF work plans for the target sectors in line with provincial priorities and emerging opportunities
- b. Mainstreaming gender equality, disability inclusion and climate change resilience:** continuing to promote and support the participation of women and people with disabilities in all Skills Centre activities, and mainstream climate change adaptation/mitigation wherever possible across all PIF planning and implementation
- c. Improve efficiency and sustainability of system resourcing:** continued management of the national Skills Development Fund (SDF), as the Partnership's service delivery financing mechanism, within strict governance and probity processes to ensure transparency and accountability of fund distribution

DELIVERY RATE

During 2019, activities against each of the priority areas were implemented. Based on the information available in the Partnership's operational system Smartsheet², which is used by the Partnership for planning and monitoring delivery, 80% of all of the skills development activities³ that had been approved by management for implementation were completed.

This is a strong rate of delivery. Equivalent data is not available for previous years, however this overall strong rate of delivery indicates that the enhanced planning processes introduced as part of Partnership system improvement have been effective. A key part of the 2019 planning process was ensuring that the provincial Skills Centre priorities, in line with national policy priorities and available human resource capacity, were central when determining the scope and scale of the activity plan. This was a shift in the approach used for planning, which in the past had been less collaborative between the national and provincial levels, and previously implementation was driven by national policy drivers without sufficient consideration of localisation to the provincial context.

The delivery rate of skills activities varies between the four provincial Skills Centres (refer Table 1. and 2.). Reasons for the delay or cancelling of activities relate to factors outside the Partnership's direct control including: changes in availability and commitment of departmental partners at provincial level, staff capacity of both the Partnership and of partners, and access to certain provincial locations being limited or prevented due to weather or other local factors within communities. A lower rate of delivery is also related to overambitious planning and the Skills Centre staff underestimating the time required to implement all aspects of the activity management cycle (i.e. from planning through to completion reporting). No activities in the period July to December 2019 were postponed or cancelled due to limitation of the budget.

Table 1. Delivery rate of planned and approved skills development activities for each provincial Skills Centre

Malampa	80%
Sanma	91%
Tafea	64%
Torba	86%

Table 2. Delivery rate of activities planned and approved

Training Provider Support	77%
Disability	60%

2 Smartsheet (<https://www.smartsheet.com/>) is a cloud based platform that has been introduced to the Partnership in 2019 for recording, monitoring and reporting activities, budget and expenditure

3 This includes inputs related to the planning, delivery and management of skills training (workshops, coaching accredited units), TPS, disability inclusion activities

Outputs

The Partnership's key activity level outputs in 2019 are summarised in this section of the report.

3 Partnership Implementation Frameworks (PIFS) implemented with GoV productive sector partners (Department of Tourism - DoT, Department of Industry- DoI, and Ministry of Agriculture Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries, and Biosecurity - MALFFB)

10,500,00 VUV contribution by GoV to **Skills Development Fund** – an increase of 250% compared to 2018 contribution (3,000,000 VUV)

47 skills activities delivered through provincial Skills Centres

Types of Activities	Provinces	Activities per Sector
23 Workshops 16 Individual coaching sessions 4 Workshops integrated with coaching 4 Accredited programs	17 Sanma (including Ambae response) 14 Torba 9 Malampa 7 Tafea	31 Creative Industries 7 Tourism 5 Agribusiness 4 Infrastructure

674 Participants in skills activities

Sex of participants	Participants with Disabilities	Participants per Sector
423 Women 251 Men	27 people with disabilities (4% of all participants) 18 women 9 men	410 Creative Industries 106 Tourism 92 Agribusiness 106 Infrastructure

Training Provider (TP) support

TP Improvement	Accredited Training	Skills Coaches and Trainers
5 TP Improvement Agreements with RTCs 7 TP Inclusion Improvement Agreements (disability) with registered TPs	4 accredited trainings in rural areas 3 RTCs delivered accredited units 0 new units / courses were designed and accredited	36 ni-Vanuatu 5 local expatriate 4 international 19 (42%) women 1 person with disabilities

SKILLS TRAINING OUTPUTS

In 2018, 96 skills activities were implemented and there were 826 participants. In 2019 this dropped to 47 activities and 674 participants. The overall number of activities implemented has reduced by 51% and the number of participations by a small proportion of 18%. The key reasons for the reduced number of activities and participants in 2019 compared to 2018 include:

- **The make-up of the activities delivered** – a higher number of individual coaching activities, particularly in Creative Industries, took place in 2018 than in 2019
- **Planning for 2019 was led by the provincial Skills Centres and provincial departmental partners** rather than national team, leading to more realistic activities that took into account the staff time, particularly of the Provincial Training Coordinators (PTCs) to effectively coordinate, and manage all aspects of the activities, including quality monitoring and reporting
- **The investment of Partnership staff time on establishing new systems to improve the quality and efficiency of operations** during the first three months of 2019 meant fewer skills training activities were delivered while this important enhancement of operational systems was introduced
- **Staff changes had implications on human resource capacity in the Tafea Skills Centre** that led to slower than planned implementation of activities
- **Prioritising other establishing Malampa Handicraft Centre as a community business**, meant fewer activities in Creative Industries were implemented in Malampa in 2019
- **Strong focus and investment of time on Department of Tourism priorities** articulated in the PIF related to market readiness tool design and implementation, which resulted in fewer skills training activities taking place in Skills for Tourism in 2019

Overall the reduced number of skills training activities in 2019 likely reflects a more realistic and sustainable level of localised service that the current make up of staff numbers and capacity at the provincial Skills Centres can deliver. It will be important for the Partnership team to consider this issue further as part of planning for 2020, and when considering longer term resource requirements and sustainability of the provincial model of skills training.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Ambae recovery

In May 2019 as part of the Government of Australia's commitment to the Ambae recovery program, the Partnership received additional budget allocation of VUV 41,824,561 to implement skills activities in 2019 in the sectors of agribusiness and infrastructure for people displaced from Ambae in Sanma province. Throughout 2019, the Sanma Skills Centre managed these additional activities with their existing staff capacity and the support of the relevant productive sector workstreams. A new staff person was recruited in November 2019 in the position of Ambae Recovery Project Manager who will be responsible for management of the project going forward.

Ambae recovery specific activities delivered through the Sanma Skills Centre

- 5 Skills training activities
- 3 Accredited trainings – Certificate III plumbing and Certificate II building construction
- 2 Workshops – agribusiness
- 137 Participants – 60 women, 77 men

SYSTEM STRENGTHENING

In addition to these activities, during 2019 all staff implemented the Partnership Systems Management Guidelines that were designed in 2018. Strengthening of the MEL system continued and the Partnership monitoring tools and processes that were designed in 2018 were fully implemented during 2019. The design of the Partnership Management Information System (MIS) has progressed in 2019 and the MEL team has started to use elements of the system for analysis of results. The launch of the prototype system did not take place in 2019 as planned due to changes in MEL personnel in the team, and delays in progressing the partnership with GoV on connection to the government server and in accessing additional data management technical capacity. Further details about the progress made in delivery of the MEL system are provided in Section 6.

3. PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

OVERVIEW

The analysis presented in this section considers the achievements and progress made during 2019 in the result areas that are articulated in the Partnership's long-term outcomes (LTOs). Key results achieved during 2019 have been assessed using the indicators set in the Partnership's MEL framework to monitor the IOs. The influence of critical factors in the external operating environment and internal to the Partnership on the results achieved and the progress made is included in the analysis.

The findings presented in this report draw on data collected through the Partnership's MEL system, and from additional data and analysis obtained through discussions with Partnership staff and the analysis presented in each of the Partnership workstream reports that are submitted to DFAT in the 2019 reporting package.

The MEL tools and processes introduced in 2018 have been better embedded into the Partnership's program management systems during 2019, and there have been positive gains made in progressing the aim of Phase 4 that MEL becomes 'everyone's business'⁴. Overall, the quality of monitoring data has improved, in terms of the reliability and consistency of the information collected, and improved validity of the measurement of the Partnership's outcome indicators. There are still some gaps in the data available. This is due to needing more time to collect comparative data that will take place during 2020 and 2021, and there is still a need to improve the quality of data collection processes, particularly the registration and participation data of the Skills Centre clients. The report notes when the quality of data has impacted on the analysis made and the conclusions that have been able to be drawn on progress and performance.

4 The progress made is discussed furthering Section 6 MEL.

LTO 1

The Government of Vanuatu manages and coordinates its skills system more effectively

IO-1

Skills planning & coordination

PGTBs, Skills Centres and TED jointly plan and manage skills development

IO-2

Public & private resource allocation

Increased public & private resource allocation to implement PSET Policy



Overview

Progress in IO1 and IO2 contributes to the LTO that the GoV take greater responsibility in setting the strategic direction for a quality skills system including strategies for effective management and resourcing. During 2019 the engagement and contribution overall of the GoV to the national skills system has increased. Compared to 2018, the coordination on skills planning and delivery between different parts of the GoV at the provincial and national level is much stronger, and the level of financial and human resource commitments made by GoV through the Skills Development Fund (SDF) is higher. However, the funding from the GoV is, relatively, a very modest amount, and the Partnership remains virtually entirely reliant on DFAT's financial investment in order to deliver the program of activities.

Key result

National Productive Sector Partners

During 2019 there has been increased engagement and commitment to skills development by the GoV productive sector partners. National GoV sector partners - Department of Tourism (DoT), Department of Industry (DoI) and the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries, and Biosecurity (MALFFB) – agreed new Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) and Partnership Implementation Frameworks (PIFs) that articulate joint commitments and cooperation for implementation of skills development activities in areas that align with their policy and program priorities, and address the priority skill gaps identified by the provincial Skill Centres.

This is the second year that the PIFs have been developed to guide implementation of skills development activities through the provincial Skills Centres. The presence of the PIFs has helped improve the understanding of the national government partners about the local skills development priorities, and has contributed to improved commitment and better coordination between the national and provincial levels of government in fulfilling the commitments agreed in the PIFs. This is illustrated by anecdotal examples shared by staff from the Partnership's productive sector workstream:

The PIF helped to ensure institutional commitment and continuity of activities planned when there was a change in leadership and a new Director of the DoI was appointed during 2019

MALFFB provided leadership and facilitated a coordinated approach through the PIF between the provincial officers of the three departments (Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries) in the design and management of the 'Integrated Farming System' established to help address the food security and livelihood needs of Ambae evacuees living in Santo

Implementation of the PIFs was monitored through informal discussions held between the Partnership Productive Sector Manager and his team and staff from the relevant GoV partners. However, a more robust review with each of the sector partners that had been envisioned to take place mid-year did not occur. This was due to time constraints for both the Partnership team and partners. The PIFs were shared and the progress in implementation of activities was discussed at the mid-year Strategic Partnership Steering Committee (SPSC) meeting held in July.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and Tertiary Education Directorate (TED)

Changes in the Director and the Principal Education Officer positions of the TED at the end of 2018 created challenges, and limited effective coordination and collaboration on areas of joint interest between the Partnership, the TED and the VQA in 2019. During the latter part of 2019, the working relationship and cooperation improved as is illustrated by these examples:

- **In September, the Partnership, the TED and the VQA invested considerable time and funding to jointly convene for the first time a month-long workshop for 12 training providers on VQA requirements for training provider registration** - at the conclusion of the workshop 6 training providers submitted the required registration documents to VQA
- **In October, the Partnership with the TED and the VQA convened the first meeting of the national PSET Policy Committee** which is an important step towards trying to manage the delay in establishing an implementation plan for this government policy which was launched in 2017 and expires in 2020
- **The VQA initiated and led a project to strengthen training provider (TP) quality assurance capacity** that during 2019 has supported 15 TPs (including five supported by the Partnership) in four provinces; an audit of self-assessments undertaken by the providers is due to be completed by the end December 2019 and will provide valuable information about TP capacity

The Partnership Director⁵ attributes the recent improvements that took place in late 2019 to the new Director of the TED recognising the value that the Partnership can provide in helping the TED expand and strengthen the impact of the skills system. This is through the links the Partnership has with other sectors including in health, governance, police and justice through programs that DFAT also supports. These links provide opportunities for the TED to expand accredited skills training into new areas of demand and contribute to the human resource capacity priorities articulated in the new NHRDP.

During 2019 the TED increased its support to the provincial Skills Centres. The salaries of four of the Provincial Training Coordinators (PTCs), who are civil service employees within the MoET, are now covered by the MoET budget. In 2018 only two PTC positions were funded. The PTCs have, for the first time, contributed to the TED annual planning process. This is very positive and should help to further raise awareness within the TED staff about the work of the provincial Skills Centres, and assist in further integrating the provincial level activities managed through Skills Centres activities into the national GoV system.

In November 2019, the PTCs and the Partnership MEL Coordinator prepared a specific activity report on the skills training delivered through provincial Skills Centres. The information was shared through a round table discussion held with the Principal Education Officer (PEO), and then shared with the Director of the TED. In an email following the discussion, the PEO provided feedback on the analysis presented, and conveyed his thanks to the Skills Centre staff for their efforts in implementing the activities during 2019.

5 Interview 16.1.20

Provincial Commitment

The Provincial Government Training Boards (PGTBs) provide strategic oversight for each of the provincial Skills Centres, and are the primary point of coordination for skills development within the province, and with the national level. The PGTB members come from provincial government departments and civil society organisations (CSOs) representing the interests of sectors, and of people with disabilities, women and youth. The Secretary General (SG) of the province is the Chairperson of the PGTB.

During 2019 the PGTBs' role in the coordination and management of the skills system continued to strengthen. The PGTBs in each of the four provinces meet at least every quarter, and members are increasingly fulfilling their governance responsibilities through engagement and contributions made to the strategic planning, monitoring and reporting on provincial skills activities. In 2019k the VQA provided financial contribution to support the PGTB meetings. A total of VUV 2,300,000 VUV was allocated to support PGTB meetings in each of the Skills Centres.

During 2019 two Skills Centre Managers from Torba and Tafea, with the backing of the Partnership, were promoted and appointed as the SG for Sanma and Tafea provinces respectively. This move is already helping increase the prominence and commitment by provincial government to skills development, and building the Partnership's function and status as a leadership incubator.

We had a great meeting with SG Albert Ruddley in Santo yesterday. In addition to our discussions around provincial planning support - particularly with regard to the development of the headwear industry - SG shared with us the public remarks that the Public Service Commission (PSC) Chairman and other government staff made last week during Public Service Day celebrations. They spoke strongly about the influence of the Skills Centre, and the Partnership as a whole, on improving government systems, specifically in terms of increasing professionalism, coordination and effectiveness. (email - Partnership Strategic Adviser, 3/9/19)

In Sanma province, for the first time an allocation for skills training has been approved as part of the provincial budget request. The final arrangements for transfer of the approved amount (value yet to formally announced) will take place early in 2020.

Decentralised planning

In October 2019 the Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPAC) used the NSDP framework to guide provincial planning workshops in six provinces. This is the first time this type of government led planning took place. The Skills Centre staff participated in the process which replaced the 'provincial roadshow' consultation and planning process between national and provincial stakeholders, which in previous years the Partnership had convened and funded.

Engagement on NHRD Plan

The Partnership in collaboration with the PMO and the VQA Board initiated the discussion on the implementation arrangement of the NHRD plan. There were further workshops with the VQA Board about the Board taking the lead in the implementation of the NHRD Plan and this was well taken up by the Board members.

Disability Inclusion

As part of the Partnership's strategy on disability inclusion with the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MJCS), progress has been made through modeling the contribution and value of an effective Provincial Disability Officer position that fulfills an important coordination and support role to assist people with disabilities to access services locally in the provinces, including access to the skills system. The Partnership with the MJCS, facilitated the appointment and funded the salary of the first Provincial Disability Officer 18 months ago. There are now three officers employed in Malampa, Torba and Shefa provinces. The Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD) has begun its own discussions with MJCS to gain support to recruit a similar position in Sanma Province. A positive indication of commitment by the GoV and progress towards sustainability is that the MJCS is currently funding the salaries of two of the positions through its recurrent budget, and the INGO World Vision supports the third position.

Contribution to the Skills Development Fund

In 2019, the GoV through the PIFs with the productive sector partners contributed 8,200,000 VUV to the Skills Development Fund (SDF). This is an increase of 173% on the value of the contribution made by these partners in 2018 (300,000,000 VUV). In 2019, the VQA contributed 2,300,000 VUV towards the costs for PGTB meetings. Although this is a significant increase, overall the GoV financial contribution is a relatively small but important contribution to the expenditure made through the SDF in the delivery of skills activities in 2019. The investment in total of 10,500,000VUV by GoV is 32% of the expenditure made in 2019 (33,010,858 VUV) through the SDF specifically on skills development activities, and 10% of all expenditure made through the Partnership (103,495,980 VUV) in 2019.

The proportion of GoV funding to the SDF in 2019 is more than in 2018. This is due in part to the increased value of the GoV contribution, however, overall in 2019 the expenditure from the SDF is lower than in 2018 due to fewer skills activities being delivered. In addition, as has been previously reported, due to the transition between the managing contractors in late 2017, there were difficulties in providing accurate financial figures for 2018 which impacts on the extent to which the comparative analysis is accurate. More details are presented in Section 4 Finance.

In addition to the commitments to the SDF, in 2019 partners continue to make other financial and non-financial co-contributions to support skills training activities delivered by the Partnership through the Skills Centres, including: staff time, venues, materials, payment of travel costs and allowances for workshop and provincial visits.

Participant Co-Contribution

The provincial Skills Centres have continued to implement the policy that for each skills development workshop or training event attended a participant is expected to contribute 5,000 VUV (AUD 6). This can be paid as cash or through an in-kind equivalent, which is generally food that goes towards meals provided during the workshop, and the caterer then reduces the cost of providing food. The funds contributed are accounted for through the Partnership fiscal system.

During 2019 the Skills Centres collected 119,800 VUV (AUD 1,497) from participants. When compared to 2018 the value of the amount increased by about 41%, which is positive given the number of participants in the past 12 months was less than in 2018. However, there is still scope to improve the level of contribution. The amount collected equates to only 240 of the 637 participants (38%) making a contribution. If all of the 674 participants had contributed in 2019, the value would have been 337,000 VUV. It is important that the Skills Centres continue to increase collection of co-contributions from participants to help increase cost sharing for training activities, and to reinforce ownership and commitment of the participants to locally-based skills development.

LTO 2

The skills system provides inclusive access to relevant and quality assured qualifications

IO-4

Diversity of skills providers

Increased diversity of training providers operating within the skill system



IO-3

Flexible delivery

Increased flexible delivery of accredited skills development



IO-6

Skills system compliance

Training providers are implementing in line with Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework and the National Disability Inclusion Policy for the TVET Sector



Overview

Results in IO3, IO4 and IO6 will together contribute to improved access to relevant and quality assured skills training qualifications through the skills system. In 2019, the provincial Skills Centres have continued to coordinate the delivery of locally-based quality skills training in response to demand. The Partnership has supported new ni-Vanuatu training providers (coaches and trainers) and a smaller number of international providers to be part of the skills system and deliver new and more flexible and accessible training to rural clients.

Through technical and professional development strategies, the Partnership is supporting improved standards in line with the criteria set out in the VQA framework, and those related to the National Disability Inclusive Policy. Reassessment was not completed during 2019, so improvement made against the standards during 2019 is not known. In 2019, the level of support the Partnership provided in cooperation with the TED and VQA to registered rural training providers has increased, and this is assisting to increase the number of registered providers and the number of accredited training programs delivered nationally. Overall, even though the number of registered providers and accredited training has increased nationally in Vanuatu, the supply still does not meet the demand for skills qualifications, particularly in rural areas.

Key results

Diversity of Training Providers

In 2019 the Partnership contracted 43 industry coaches and two certified trainers to deliver skills training activities across the sectors. Thirty-six of the training providers (80%) are ni-Vanuatu, which is an increase compared to 2018 (70%). Of the training providers, 43% percent are women and one is a man with disability.

Registered Training Providers

As at December 2019 the number of registered training providers nationally is 35. This is an increase of 104% from 17 in 2016. Each of the six provinces now has at least one registered training provider, however most of the providers are located in Shefa.

Training providers face numerous barriers when trying to register with the VQA. The same standards and process is applied to all providers regardless of size, and it requires from the providers a high level of financial investment and is time consuming. This discourages many smaller providers that are located outside Shefa and in rural locations from completing the registration process.

A key focus of the Partnership's training provider support (TPS) activities during 2019 was assisting providers to meet the requirements of the Vanuatu Quality Assurance Framework (VQAF) that are required for registration. The Partnership made more than 20 visits to a total of seven rural training providers in 2019. At each of these visits the TPS Coordinator addressed aspects of quality management in line with the VQAF. Working with training provider managers, trainers and, where appropriate, management committees, the TPS Coordinator assisted in identifying priority areas to improve, and technical and financial support was provided through the Partnership to support the improvement process.

In September a workshop to support the registration of training providers was co-convened by VQA with the TED and the Partnership. At the end of the workshop six of the 12 providers that participated submitted their application for registration with the VQA, and other providers should be ready to submit their applications in 2020, however anecdotally, some of the participating providers have identified they will struggle to meet the full costs. This shows the importance of the Partnership's continued support to training providers to satisfy the standards and to meet the costs associated with obtaining registration.

Two new training providers in Sanma province were registered by the VQA - Vaiduhu Rural Training Centre (RTC) and Ituani Vocational Skills Centre (VSC). The Partnership's TPS Coordinator and the Sanma Provincial Training Coordinator PTC worked with the two providers in July – December through a mix of on-site and remote support that focused on drafting the documents and materials required to meet VQA quality management systems standards

Design of New Accredited training

In 2019, no new units or courses were designed and accredited in identified areas where there is demand for skills training. The reasons for the lack of progress in developing qualification courses include the high investment of time and financial resources required to complete the design and approval process, and the lack of local capacity, particularly of rural training providers.

Examples of constraints that have slowed progress:

There is a creative industry qualification approved in 2018 pending development. There was some discussion about this course being delivered via a rural training centre but it will require considerable investment (time and resources) to reach the point of delivery.

There is continuing demand for training in the area of spa / massage to strengthen quality of service delivery. To further this initiative, discussions with APTC, which is taking lead responsibility for developing the course in collaboration with VIT, should take place during 2020. The aim is to progress some of the initial qualification design and development work completed in 2018 with the support of the Partnership.

There is demand for agriculture training in Tafea but there isn't a registered training provider to deliver accredited agriculture training. The Partnership worked with Napil RTC to further this but there were capacity constraints that hampered progress. VAC is now delivering lower level agriculture qualifications, which is addressing demand for skills training at the entry level.

(Extract email TP Advisor, January 2019)

Flexible Delivery of Accredited training

Of the 35 registered training providers in 2019, ten (29%) provided accredited training, compared to only four in 2016. Overall this remains a low rate of delivery, and it is clear that current demand for skills training qualifications in Vanuatu is not being met. It will be important for the Partnership with MoET and VQA explore ways to support training providers to design and deliver accredited training that is of high quality and relevant and meets the identified demand for certain skills required in the workforce and by businesses.

The Partnership, through the TPS Coordinator, initiated strategies that promote collaboration and cost sharing to manage some of the challenges that training providers experience, and to increase access to quality accredited training qualifications in rural areas. Two examples are:

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was agreed between Matahi RTC and Vaiduhu RTC that are both located on Malo Island, to establish pathways for trainees to move between the two providers. Through the MoU Matahi is to deliver Certificate 1 in Building Construction and Vaiduhu to deliver Certificate 2 in Building Construction. In agriculture Vaiduhu will deliver Certificate 1 and Matahi Certificate 2. The cooperation between the two providers will help ensure more efficient allocation of courses and avoid competition in delivery of skills training. This is the first example of collaboration between two small rural training providers. It provides a model that could be adopted in other parts of the country where there are limited resources to support delivery of accredited training.

The Partnership, in collaboration with a number of partners including the Rural Water Supply Department, the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) and ACOMVETS (Torgil RTC), has supported the first full cycle of delivery ever in Vanuatu of the nationally accredited plumbing course in Luganville. Sixteen participants (all male) from Malampa, Sanma, and Penama commenced the course and 14 completed and received their qualification.

Disability Inclusion

The Partnership continues to progress the disability inclusive practices of training providers to improve opportunities and access by people with disabilities to skills development activities.

During 2019, targeted technical and financial support for disability inclusion has continued with seven registered training provider partners, of which five are RTCs. This was through the implementation of priorities and commitments set out in the Disability Inclusion Action Plans that were developed as part of the Training Provider Inclusion Agreements established in 2018.

In May, a facilitated self-assessment that was designed by the Partnership to monitor progress of five training provider disability inclusive practices was completed. The improvements reported by training providers in the assessment at this time were in the areas of:

- Accessibility of premises (5)
- Capacity of trainers to work in a disability inclusive way (5)
- Community awareness raising on access to skills development for people with disabilities (4)
- Disability inclusion policies (3)
- Processes to identify trainees with disabilities (3)
- Enrolment and achievement of trainees with disabilities (3)

The training providers have made some progress in the practical inclusion of participants with disabilities to formal qualification training. The barriers that still limit progress are: the requirements of the VQA that creates challenges for people who have low numeracy and literacy levels, low take up of recognition of prior learning; and that people with disabilities often lack confidence to seek out training opportunities and don't have the financial means to cover the cost of course fees.

The Partnership is working to reduce the impact of these barriers and help make training more accessible and inclusive through adjustment of training and learning materials (including development of the LLN assessment and modules that started in September and is planned to continue in 2020), and financial contributions to cover or part cover fees. Examples of adjustments that the Partnership has facilitated that has supported participation by people with disabilities in 2019 are:

- Two registered training providers have negotiated as part of the agreement with the Partnership a 50% cost-sharing arrangement to cover the fees of 12 people with disabilities, enabling them to enrol in accredited training activities
- Lonnoc Vocational Training Centre has co-funded the cost of a Basic Construction Certificate II course and one of the participants is a man with disability

Professional Development on Disability inclusion

As part of their induction program, all coaches and trainers contracted by the Partnership receive preliminary disability awareness training. In addition, during 2019 a one-day workshop co-facilitated by the Partnership and Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD), was held for coaches and personnel from the tourism sector that considered in more detail practical strategies to effectively include Skills Centre clients with disabilities in training activities. During 2020 the impact that this training has had on inclusive practice will be monitored.

LTO3

Clients follow pathways to further education and training

IO-3

Flexible delivery

Increased flexible delivery of accredited skills development



IO-4

Diversity of skills providers

Increased diversity of training providers operating within the skill system



Overview

Overall, as access and options continue to improve, Skills Centre clients are able to take up relevant quality skills training opportunities and build modular units towards full qualifications. However, the processes to easily and reliably track progress of individual Skills Centre clients' pathways in education and training are still being established, which means currently there are limitations in the data available to assess the extent to which clients are, over time, accessing skills training and gaining qualifications. As registration and participant data continues to improve during 2020 better quality information to track progress will become available. The participant data and the anecdotal evidence that is available at the moment indicate that Skills Centre clients are committed to, and participating in, multiple skills training activities over time, and are motivated and keen to take up opportunities to build towards nationally recognised qualifications.

Data

There is limited data currently available to measure the pathways that individual Skills Centre clients follow in education and training. This is due to the unique client identity (ID) number only being introduced to the Partnership's MEL system during 2019. At the time of registration all Skills Centre clients are allocated a unique identity number. This number is recorded each time the client participates in a skills activity through a Skills Centre, which enables tracking participation and progress.

The new client registration system was established in 2019 however only 58% (374) of total number (647) of clients who participated in skills training activities during 2019 were properly registered and allocated unique identity numbers. This low number of registered clients is due to challenges staff experienced in consistently applying the new Kobo collection system. During 2020 the MEL team will work further on system strengthening to help staff to improve the consistency of collecting skills client registration and participation data.

The MoET is expanding the Vanuatu Education Management Information System (VEMIS) and once the module for PSET has been developed and introduced, the Partnership MIS will be linked and over time ideally integrated into the VEMIS. Until this happens the extent to which measurement of the pathways Skills Centre clients follow over time in the skills system including post school education and training that is delivered by providers outside of the provincial Skills Centres (for example APTC and other providers in Shefa) is very limited.

Key results

Skills Centre Clients' Commitment to Continuing Education and Skills Pathways

Based on the data available there is evidence that Skills Centre clients participate in multiple skills activities over time, and that clients who have obtained skills qualifications are keen to continue to engage in the education and training system with the aim of going on to gain further qualifications.

Anecdotal evidence that was collected from interviews with Skills Centre clients in Certificate I Building Construction, as part of the Social and Economic Assessment (SEA) that was undertaken between September - November 2019, indicates that clients, who successfully completed the accredited training were often motivated to seek further opportunities to gain additional qualifications, and found the certificate to be valued by employers.

The course helped me to gain a qualification, and I now want to go further and gain a Certificate III and ultimately I hope to study to become an architect. (Male client)

Before completing this course I had very little formal education and no formal qualifications. Now after the gaining the certificate I am working more. I am a foreman for a company and now earn more money. I want to study more in the future and am going to ask the people at TVET (provincial Skills Centre) for forms so I can get to APTC so maybe in the future I can start my own construction business. (Male client)

The transfer to business client from individual client is an indicator of commitment to continued engagement in skills development activities over time. Of the 237 (33 did not respond) active business clients assessed in 2019 using the Prosperity Tool, 90% had received coaching for one year or more, and 51% for over two years. This indicates they are committed to continuing to skills training activities.

LTO4

The status of women and people with disability is enhanced

IO-5

Representation of women and people with disabilities

Increased representation of women, people with disabilities, and their interests in the skills system



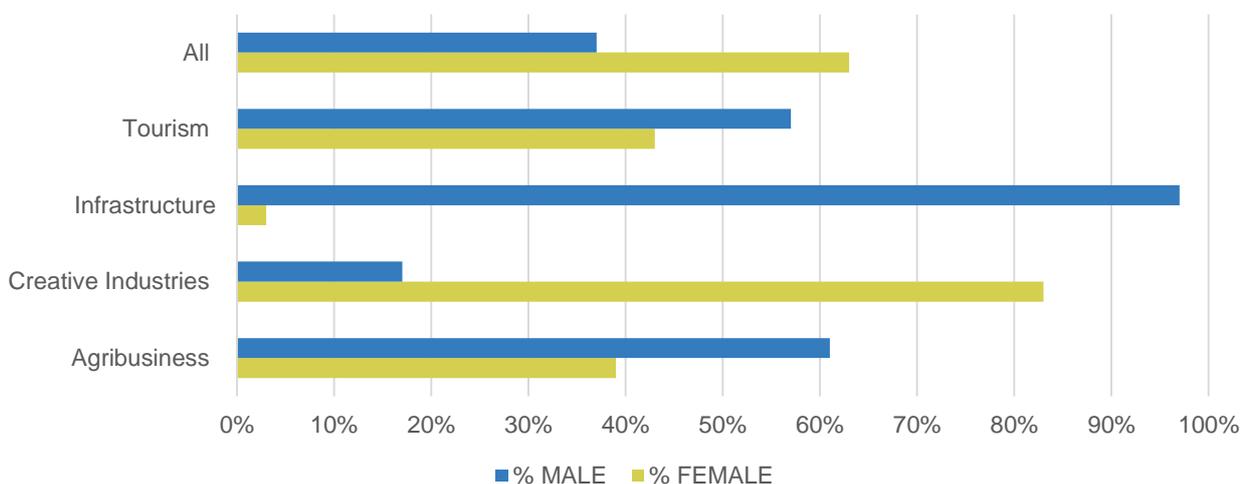
Key results - Gender equality and women's empowerment

Better Balance Strategy

The Partnership launched its new gender equality strategy – the 'Better Balance Strategy' in September 2019, in collaboration with the Department of Women's Affairs and DFAT's Pacific Women initiative. The strategy provides a clear framework to guide the Partnership's activities to progress improvement of women's status. During 2020 full implementation of the strategy that builds on the Partnership's experience and achievements in gender equality and women's empowerment to date will commence.

Skills Clients

In 2019 women make up 63% of the 674 participants of skills activities. This rate of participation is nearly the same as the rate recorded in 2018 (67%). The relatively high representation of women is due to the high number of women participants (80% of all participants) in Creative Industries, which is a sector that traditionally engages women. The Agribusiness sector, through encouraging married couples to participate together in skills development activities has increased the proportion of women participants to 39% in what is often a traditionally a male dominated area of work.



Prosperity

Baseline prosperity data was collected between April – November from 141 women business owners who are current active business clients. This is 69% of the total number of active clients (237) who were assessed in 2019. Measurement of key prosperity indicators shows that skills training contributed to improved economic prosperity for both women and men.

Table 3. Key Prosperity Data for Business Clients

In the 6 months prior to this assessment clients reported:	All	Women	Men
Increase in the income earned from business	56%	44%	48%
A profit from their business	81%	88%	81%
That the level of profit made from the business had increased	45%	59%	61%

The prosperity tool was introduced to the MEL system for the first time in April 2019, and as reassessment of clients only takes place every six months, at the time that this report was prepared, only 18 clients (16 are women) had been reassessed. Of those reassessed 11 are women headwear producers from Sanma, one is a woman with disability.

Sanma Headwear Producers

A comparison of key prosperity indicators measured first in April 2019 and at a follow up assessment 6 months later in October was made of 11 women headwear producers. The changes reported for this small group is very impressive:

Income - 10 women reported that over the 6 months the income earned from the business has increased 'a lot'. The level of monthly income ranges from a minimum of 2,000 VUV to 60,000 VUV per month.

Profit from the business (i.e. after taking into account businesses expenses) was reported by each of the 11 women.

Level of sales of 9 producers had increased in the last 6 months, and the number of market channels and agents for sales had increased for 8 of the producers

Bank Accounts

Sixty seven percent of the 141 women business clients have bank accounts compared to 35% of men. Women use their accounts more than men: 88% report making transactions in the last six months and 72% in the previous one month. This is more frequent use than men business clients, and is also more than that reported for both women and men in a national survey on access to financial services in Vanuatu that was completed in 2017⁶.

⁶ Financial Services, Demand Side Survey (2017)

Personal Change

Prior to completing skills training, 90% of the women business clients assessed had not attained any post school education, and only 52% had completed primary school⁷. This clearly indicates that skills development training through the provincial Skills Centres is creating important opportunities for women who have little formal education qualifications. An additional positive outcome for women who have participated in the training is an increase in their confidence to continue to seek out further skills training and professional opportunities in the future.

The Social and Economic Assessment (SEA) completed in 2019 found that many of the eight women participants in the Certificate I Tour Guiding, were motivated to complete further training and gain more formal qualifications.

“I now want to have the opportunity to study administration and management training and learning computer and Internet skills so I can do my job on the front desk reception and manage booking tours better.” (Female tour guide participant)

Other women participants described positive personal changes they had experienced in the workplace.

“Since completing the training I am more confident in the workplace and I now have better problem solving skills and better customer service skills. The training motivated me to provide better service to the tourists and they seem to be very happy with the service that I provide. My working relationship with other staff has also improved.”

Women consistently said that there is improvement in the quality of their life since completing the training. The improvements are mainly related to improved earnings that they now have which means they are contributing more to support their family members and household needs.

However, four of the eight women tour guides interviewed said because of the increased time spent at work, they now have less time to spend with their families.

“The work is good and there is often overtime, however because of this I only get time at home with my family on Saturday.”

“Overall the quality of life at home has improved, however there is less time for family due to the demands and hours spent working which means I only get home for holidays or family member birthdays.”

⁷ This is based on disaggregated registration data available for 374 clients of which 141 are women

Women in Leadership

The Partnership is making significant efforts to change the historically embedded perception that women don't have the requisite skills and knowledge to hold leadership and senior management positions. To change this perception, and to increase women's representation and participation in the skills system, the Partnership has prioritised seeking opportunities for female Partnership staff, trainers, and staff from GoV partners to participate in professional development opportunities, and has strategically communicated their professional skills and experiences gained through social and published media channels.

Nineteen (42%) of the 45 people engaged by the Partnership as coaches, trainers and assessors in 2019 were women, and 13 (68%) of the women are ni-Vanuatu. This is an increase on the level of women's representation reported in 2018, when women made up 39% of all the coaches employed.

At the beginning of 2019 the Partnership underwent organisational and staff restructuring that involved changes in a number of staff positions and responsibilities. This has had an impact on both women and men staff at senior and middle management and for those holding administrative positions.

Currently women are employed in 68% of the Partnership's ni-Vanuatu full – time positions. Women hold management and leadership responsibility for the Creative Industries and Tourism work-streams, and Disability Inclusion and MEL, and two of the three members of the Senior Management Team are women. A woman has recently been appointed to the position of Skills Centre Manager (Malampa). She is the only female Skills Centre Manager. She is working closely and effectively with her the other three male Skills Centre Manager colleagues, and the Provincial Service Delivery Manager who is also a male.

Another example of promotion of a ni-Vanuatu woman staff member in the Partnership is the creation of the new position of Deputy Director. At the beginning of 2019, the Operations Manager, was promoted to this role. She is now taking greater oversight responsibility for service delivery and activities implemented by the Skills Centres, and she is relieving some management responsibility from the Director, enabling him to more explicitly drive governance reform at a national and provincial level. She is highly influential in her leadership modelling, stakeholder relationship-building and her advocacy of Vanuatu's inclusive skills system through social media. Moreover, her intentional participation at senior level government and regional development partner meetings through Pacific Women and other networks help make explicit the Partnership's commitment to gender equality and women in leadership.

Professional Development

The strong representation of ni-Vanuatu women has been encouraged through the Partnership's effective professional development strategies. An example of a successful strategy employed has been affiliating female trainers with training providers to deliver accredited training. This helps to address the trainer shortfall and has helped advance the professional status of the female trainer.

Another strategy that the Partnership's management has employed has been to seek opportunities for female and male staff to increase their knowledge on gender equality. Examples of this include: in May 2019, the newly appointed Torba Skills Centre Manager (a man) accompanied the Deputy Director to a regional Pacific Women meeting in Fiji, and contributed to a joint presentation made about the Partnership's support to rural women's economic empowerment; and in June, the Partnership Director travelled to Fiji as a member of the selection panel for the recruitment of senior staff for the new DFAT initiative through Pacific Women, Balance of Power (BOP).

The Provincial Government Training Boards (PGTBs)

Overall the representation by women on the PGTBs remains very low in all provinces. Across all the PGTBs women make up only 18% (N=55) of the membership. The Partnership is strengthening awareness, understanding and commitment to gender equality of the PGTB members through gender sensitive planning and reporting processes and is continuing to influence and encourage recruitment of women into positions on the boards.

Key results – Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Overview

The Partnership has a grant to June 2020 from DFAT's Disability Inclusive Development Fund (DIDFund), to support the implementation of the National Disability Inclusion Policy for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector 2016 – 2020. The grant enables the Partnership, working with training providers to deliver a range of activities that promote awareness on disability rights and inclusion and increase opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and contribute to the skill system. In 2019 the Port Vila Post won DFAT's 2019 Secretary's Disability Inclusion Awards for Good Practice, specifically for the Partnership's efforts to progress the situation of deaf and hard of hearing people.

Participation

In 2019 people with disabilities made up 4% (27) of the 674 participants of skills activities through the Skills Centres. Eighteen of the participants are women, which is 4% of all women participants, and nine are men with disabilities, which is 3% of all men who participated in skills activities in 2019.

Anecdotally there is increased awareness, interest and commitment of training providers to include people with disabilities in skills training activities, and technical and financial resources are made available through the Partnership to support adjustments needed for inclusion. However, the rate of participation (4%) by people with disabilities in 2019 is lower than the rate (7%) reported in 2018.

The Partnership Disability Inclusion staff attributes the lower participation rate to a number of factors including the poor language, literacy and numeracy skills that many people with disabilities have due to limited access to formal education which means they may not meet the requirements set for entry to some training, and may lack confidence to apply for training opportunities. As disability inclusion is still a relatively new concept, many training providers lack experience, expertise and financial resources to initiate adjustments that will enable and support participation by people with disabilities, and they are heavily reliant on technical and financial support of the Partnership to help them make the necessary adjustments.

There are, however, positive examples that illustrate the effectiveness of the support provided by the Partnership that has enabled participants with disabilities to complete training qualifications.

Two clients, a deaf man in Torba province and a man with physical disability in Sanma, achieved formal certificate qualifications: a Certificate II in Construction and Certificate I in Agriculture (Nursery) respectively. The Partnership supported local training providers to apply reasonable accommodations including one-on-one support and modified assessment processes to overcome literacy and numeracy barriers and enable achievement of these participants.

Prosperity

Baseline prosperity data was collected from 13 people with disabilities (6 women, 7 men) who are current active business clients. This is 5% of the total number of active clients (237) who were assessed in 2019. The preliminary data indicates that the business clients with disabilities benefit from training inputs, however the extent to which their level of prosperity improved on these key business indicators is less than that reported for businesses operated by people without disabilities (refer data for all women and men assessed for the same time period in Table 3).

It is important to note that this finding is based on the assessment of a small sample size of only 13 businesses, and factors other than disability, including the productive sector, province and the number of years that business has operated may have influenced the results. Further ongoing assessment of these clients over a longer period of time is needed to substantiate and better understand this preliminary finding.

Table 4. Key Prosperity Data for Business Clients

In the 6 months prior to the assessment the business clients with disabilities reported:	People with Disabilities
Increase in the income earned from business	38%
A profit from their business	54%
That the level of profit made from the business had increased	36%

Reassessment of prosperity was limited in 2019 to only one woman with disabilities, a headwear producer from Sanma. When reassessed in October 2019, compared to her first assessment in April 2019 she reported impressive growth in her headwear business.

Over the 6 months (April to October) she reported that her monthly income had increased by 197%. She had increased her investment in the business by an estimated 967%, and had over the same period of time reported increased levels of her productivity, improved market access and growth in sales. Overall in the six- months between assessments, she calculated that the profit from her business had increased by 11%.

Leadership

People with disabilities make up a very small proportion of the number of people employed in the skills system. This is not surprising given the barriers people with disabilities typically experience in accessing education and employment. In 2019, just one man with disabilities was engaged by the Partnership as a trainer, and none of the Partnership's staff identify as people with disabilities. However, the strong and effective partnerships that have been established with the national disability organisations, Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA), and Vanuatu Society for People with Disability (VSPD), provide opportunities for people with disabilities to contribute their expertise and lived experience of disability within the skills system. One example is five people with disabilities facilitated training on disability awareness and inclusion as part of a professional development workshop the Partnership supported for Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) staff.

LTO5

Clients have increased income

IO7

New businesses started

Clients start new business or self-employment

IO9

New or improved employment

Clients access new or improved employment



Overview

Assessment of prosperity (through measuring social and economic outcomes) provides evidence that quality skills training in areas of demand, is contributing to improved income for Skills Centre clients. Data from each of the four provinces where there are Skills Centres shows that the income of Skills Centre clients (women, men and people with disabilities) from each of the productive sectors, earned from their business activities and through waged employment has increased.

Data

The progress reported in this section of the report draws on information and analysis from two new data sources that were introduced to the Partnership's MEL system during 2019.

Prosperity Data

An initial analysis of prosperity data from 237 existing business clients in each of the sectors, of which six (7%) were not currently active in their businesses, was undertaken. A very small cohort of business clients was reassessed (18), and the comparative data collected provides some preliminary evidence of improved income. During 2020, as part of routine six-monthly data collection of business client data this sample size will increase.

A Social Economic Assessment Study

The study of two cohorts of graduates of accredited skills training in units for the Certificate I Tourism (Tour Guiding), and Certificate II Construction (General Construction) was completed in November 2019. As part of the SEA, enquiry data was collected from the participants about the level of their income and earning power since completing the training.

Business Clients

Overall a fairly representative group from the different sectors and provinces were assessed using the new Prosperity Tool. Fifty three percent of the clients are operating established businesses, and 51% have received coaching through the provincial Skills Centres for more than two years.

237	business clients assessed
141	women
96	men
13	people with disabilities

Sectors	Provinces	Years Operating	Years Coaching
Agribusiness 32%	Malampa 16%	One year or less 37%	One year or less 49%
Creative Industries 39%	Sanma 18%	2 to 3 years 23%	2 to 3 years 21%
Tourism 28%	Tafea 12%	4 to 6 years 15%	4 to 5 years - 30%
	Torba 43%	More than 6 years - 20 years 25%	

Income Earned by Business Clients

Clients were asked to estimate their income and to rate whether the amount earned in the immediate past 6 months was less, same or more than what had been earned in the 6 months immediately prior. The majority (56%) of clients reported an increase in earnings from their business and 8% reported earning the same amount. The remaining 35% reported that less income had been earned.

Changes in the reported level of income earned differed between the different sectors. Overall the Agribusiness clients more often reported an increase in income earned (67%) compared to the clients from Tourism (35%) and Creative Industries (30%). The Partnership's productive sector technical team attributes the difference between the sectors in the level of income to a range of external factors including seasonal variation in production and sales, changes in market access and opportunities that influenced the reported level of the time the data was collected. The Productive Sector progress report provides details and examples of possible factors that have influenced the results reported in this period.

The positive results from the agribusiness clients demonstrates the effectiveness of the skills training that introduced the use of 'crop calendars' by farmers to help plan and diversify crops. This has helped to maintain more consistent levels of productivity throughout the year, and the focus on reliable market access through the 'farm to table initiative' that links farmers to restaurants has provided a more reliable market for their produce.

Table 5. Level of Income Earned from Businesses in the Previous Six Months

	More	Same	Less
Agribusiness	67%	11%	23%
Creative Industries	30%	8%	45%
Tourism	35%	3%	30%

Profit

The changes in reported income aligns with the data on profit that business owners reported. Overall 81% of the businesses reported that their business had made a profit in the six month period immediately prior. Of those who reported a profit 52% reported the profit was higher than in the previous six months, and for 36%, although their business was still profitable, the profit made had dropped when compared to the previous six months.

There are a range of factors that influence the level of income and profit earned from the businesses including: seasonal factors that affect productivity; sales and investments made in the business; the phase of the business (setting up, established or growing) determining the financial investment made by owners in their business; and the access to market and external economic factors. These factors are captured in the prosperity assessment the Partnership is now implementing as part of the regular six monthly monitoring of business clients. Over time, as more assessments and reassessments are completed, it will be possible to track progress of clients and have data that will help demonstrate the impact of skills training on the income and profitability of clients' businesses.

Income Earned Through Employment

The SEA completed in November 2019 provides evidence that the income earned as tour guides for 14 Tafea Skills Centre clients (8 women) who completed Certificate I in Tourism in 2016, increased by 21% following completion of the accredited training. The increase in reported income is mainly due to having more regular employment, rather than increased daily rates of pay. Some of the clients have been promoted to new positions and their daily wage has increased commensurate to the change of responsibilities.

Assessment was also made of construction workers who completed Certificate II in General Construction in 2018 through the Malampa Skills Centre. Of the ten workers assessed (2 women) six are employed by construction businesses, and four operate their own small enterprises. On average, the clients reported an increase in income of about 25% per month following the training. This is due to earning a higher daily wage and also more regular work. Since gaining the qualification, some of the clients employed by construction companies have been promoted and are now foremen on business sites.

LTO6

Clients contribute to local sustainable development and management of climate change risks

IO8

Clients improve sustainable growth of their businesses



Overview

A preliminary assessment of the contribution of Skills Centre clients to local sustainable development was completed by the Partnership for the first time in 2019. Initial findings indicate that investment in quality and relevant skills training contributes to improvements in local sustainable development through growth of the businesses that the Skills Centre clients own and operate, and of businesses that employ skills clients. The growth of the businesses stimulates increased economic activity more widely in the local community, for example through increased demand for materials and services, employment of workers, and increasing clients and customers to the area.

Due to an increase in earnings, the Skills Centre clients' own purchasing power increases and this further contributes to supporting local economic growth. Skills Centre clients with higher earnings tend to invest more in their household and families, including improving the quality of their house, purchasing solar power, improvements of other small business enterprises they with their families operate, and in covering the costs of school fees for their family members.

Data

At this stage the assessment of progress made towards sustainable business growth is limited to the initial data collected during 2019 from the Prosperity Tool and the SEA enquiry. During the remaining period of this phase of the Partnership, monitoring of these outcomes will continue, which will enable a more robust assessment of the impact that quality skills training has on sustainable business growth.

Sustainable Growth of Skills Centre Clients' Businesses

Some of the data collected through use of the new Prosperity Tool to collect baseline information from 237 active business clients has already been presented in earlier sections of this report. Additional data from this cohort specifically related to the indicators of business growth and local sustainable development is shared in this section of the report.

Investment and Expenditure

In the six months immediately prior to the assessment, 53% of the business clients reported an increase in the level of expenditure on their businesses. Expenditure had been on a range of items and services, most of which have been purchased locally, so stimulating the local economy:

- 38% **Materials** for creative industries and agricultural businesses
- 27% **Transport** for carrying goods and products
- 15% **Equipment** for agriculture and creative industry
- 15% **Wages / salaries** for workers

Employment

In the six months prior to the assessment a total of 543 workers had been employed by the 237 businesses assessed. Of the 543 workers employed, 43% (215) are women, and 60% (328) are men. Thirteen (9 men, 4 women) people were identified as people with disabilities. The workers were all paid a salary and are mix of temporary seasonal workers and permanent employees.

Accredited Training – Social and Economic Impact

The first SEA report that was completed in 2019 provides insights into the contribution of accredited training on different aspects of sustainable development. Details of the outcomes of this assessment are presented in detail in the Case Study report submitted to DFAT as part of the reporting package, and in earlier sections of this report.

Overall the SEA established that Skills Centre clients who completed the accredited training made gains that contribute to economic and social development. Key positive outcomes resulting from the training:

For the individual Skills Centre clients and their families

- More regular work
- Increased earnings
- Increased spending power for household and family
- Increased levels of confidence
- Improved quality of life for self and family
- Improved sense of optimism for the future
- Better quality of housing
- Improved health of family
- Increased investment in small family operated enterprises and businesses
- Contributing skills and knowledge gained for the benefit of others in the community – e.g. Construction of houses for other community members

For the businesses that employ the Skills Centre clients

- Improved quality of service and products
- Growth of business – more clients and winning more contracts
- Motivating and improving the skills and performance of other workers

The SEA is an ongoing assessment process that will continue to be implemented through the Partnership's MEL system for the remaining period of this phase. The data generated over time will enable more in-depth analysis of the contribution skills training makes to sustainable development outcomes for individual clients, their families, their employers and their communities.

Climate Change Management

During 2019 15 fact sheets on climate change management were developed. The information is tailored for use with Skills Centre clients in each of the productive sector and subsector work streams. During 2020 these factsheets will be incorporated into the skills training activities to inform clients about the causes of climate change, the risks and the mitigation and management strategies that are relevant to their work area. In future reports the application of this information by Skills Centre clients in their businesses or place of employment will be measured through specific outcome monitoring and as part of future SEA enquiries.

LT07

Target value chains have improved productivity

IO10

Improved market access

Improved market access in target value chains



Overview

Overall the productivity of business clients increased during 2019. The improvements can be attributed to the range of inputs provided in skills development through the Partnership. The objective for all productive workstreams is to improve the value chains for each sector so that products and services meet quality standards required for selected commercial markets and market access is facilitated. Positive progress and initial good results are being achieved with producers in target values chains.

Key results

Productivity

The majority (58%) of the 237 business clients assessed during 2019 reported higher levels of business productivity compared with the previous six months. The Agribusiness clients reported greater improvement in productivity, which is influenced by seasonal factors, other external factors in the operating environment and skills training inputs that have already been discussed in earlier sections of this report. Where lower levels of productivity are reported, this is also due to market access and seasonal demand. As data becomes available from ongoing assessments that will take place every six months, this will help allow comparisons of productivity to be made for equivalent times of the year and so take into account seasonal factors.

Table 6. Level of Business Productivity in the Previous Six Months

	More	Same	Less
Agri-Business	70%	10%	21%
Creative Industries	44%	9%	47%
All	58%	9%	33%

Provincial 'Hubs' Support Market Access

The Partnership has invested in improvement of market access through supporting the setting up of local 'hubs' or associations in each of the productive sectors of tourism, agribusiness and creative industries. These hubs facilitate link between the Skills Centre clients with markets.

Tourism

In partnership with the Vanuatu Tourism Office VTO, support has been provided to help establish Provincial Travel Centres in three provinces (Tafea, Sanma, Malampa). The results achieved to date are mixed, and the extent to which a viable and sustainable business has been established varies between each of the provinces. This is due to the different operating context, the size and quality of the tourism industry in each province, and the capacity and commitment of management, administration and quality of governance of the centres. The progress made in just two years by the Tanna Travel Centre is very positive, however Sanma is yet to establish a viable business and the centre in Malampa, due to administrative and political issues, is not currently open. In 2020 the Skills for Tourism workstream will support the VTO to identify options to redress this situation in Sanma and Malampa.

The Tanna Travel Centre (TTC) was established as part of the market access strategy within Tanna Tourism Recovery Project. It started operating in 2018. Financial data (not yet audited) for 2019 shows that the TTC is on track to attaining business sustainability in 2020.

Creative Industries

In creative industries, 'handicraft centres' have been established as 'hubs' that support producers in product design and development, and provide local and international market access. Handicraft hubs are now open in Torba and Malampa, and one will open soon in Sanma. In 2019 the total business generated through the hub model created an estimated VUV 5 million for the producers.

The Malampa Handicraft Centre (MHC) became Vanuatu's first community business in June 2019. Over two years the income generated by the MHC has grown from VUV 1.2million in 2017 to a little over VUV 3.5million in 2019. Funding of approximately VUV 23,400,000 from DFAT's Governance for Growth (GfG) initiative has, through the Partnership, supported resources, technical and business development training, governance support, materials and infrastructure inputs. When this funding ends in June 2020 the MHC will operate as a financially independent business.

International Markets

In 2019 a new international buyer (Hills Hats NZ) was identified for the Sanma headwear producers, and in 2020 the partnership between the producers and the buyer will be finalised. The headwear producers will supply their product to Hills Hats, a distributor to wider existing international markets. It is anticipated that this will stimulate production and increase further the impressive growth in business for the headwear producers, who are all women.

There are risks associated with the rapid scaling up of productivity including managing supply and retaining quality of the products, and the likelihood of introducing more producers to the group, that will need to be carefully managed. Similar challenges have been experienced and are being managed by the Torba creative industries' producers, who have also rapidly gained access to high-end domestic and international markets. In Torba, the producers determined it was better to delay expanding their markets until the production capacity of the producers is at a level to meet demand and maintain high quality of their products. It is anticipated that during 2020 incremental expansion of markets will take place as productivity increases.

Agribusiness

The Sanma Agri-Food Trade Association (SAFTA) was established in 2019, with support from the Partnership, to facilitate trade between local producers and buyers. The SAFTA grew out of the integrated market initiative 'Farm to Table' started through the Sanma Skills Centre in 2018. Farm to Table creates a local market chain that brings local farmers, restaurants and food outlet businesses together. An example of the value of the market links is:

During the Sustainable Island Tourism Conference (SITC) hosted by Vanuatu Department of Tourism in Santo in November 2019, SAFTA with a Port Vila caterer, Kandy's Kitchen, was awarded the contract to provide the catering for participants at this large international event. Local farmers who are members of SAFTA had the opportunity sell their produce to the caterer.

The Torba Skills Centre, working in cooperation with the Torba Provincial Government, Torba DARD, Farmers and Baldwin Lonsdale Memorial College (BLMC), is establishing a similar market chain whereby farmers under contract sell their produce to the BLMC that has an enrolment of about 96 students each year.

4. FINANCIAL

BUDGET

The Partnership total annual budget for January - December 2019 is VUV 153,386,490 (AUD 1,936,965). It is difficult to compare the budget allocated for the equivalent period January –December 2018 because of limitations in the financial reporting data available due to transition to the new Support Contractor⁸ in late 2017.

The sources of income for the budget and the value and % contribution is summarised in Table 6. Apart from the contribution from the GoV of VUV 10,500,000 (AUD 101,024), DFAT funded 90% of the total Partnership budget in 2019 through support to the SDF and from additional regional investments and other bilateral program funds managed in Vanuatu, as well as DID funds managed from Canberra.

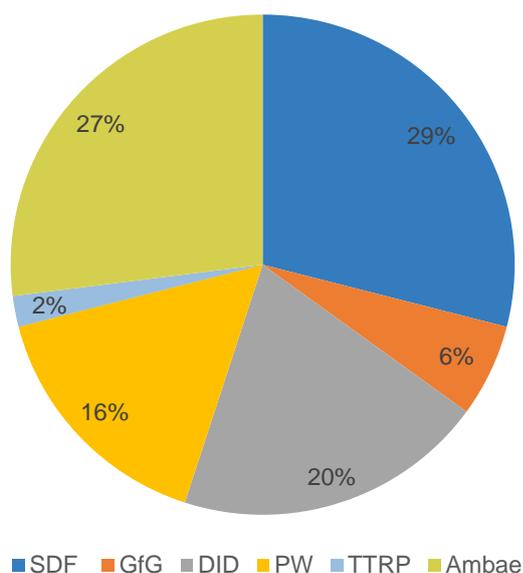


Table 7. 2019 Budget and Funding Sources

Funding Source and Date of Grant Agreement	AUD Jan - Dec 2019
SDF (including TPS) annual contribution to December 2019 GoV & DFAT to December 2021	568,358.85
Governance for Growth (GfG) to 30 June 2020	107,429.15
Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Fund - to 30 June 2020	387,123.85
Pacific Women (PW) – to December 2021	312,239.89
Tanna Tourism Recovery Program (TTRP)– ended 30 June 2019	33,652.31
Ambae Recovery Response – September 2019 to 30 June 2021	528,160.56
Total	1,936,964.60

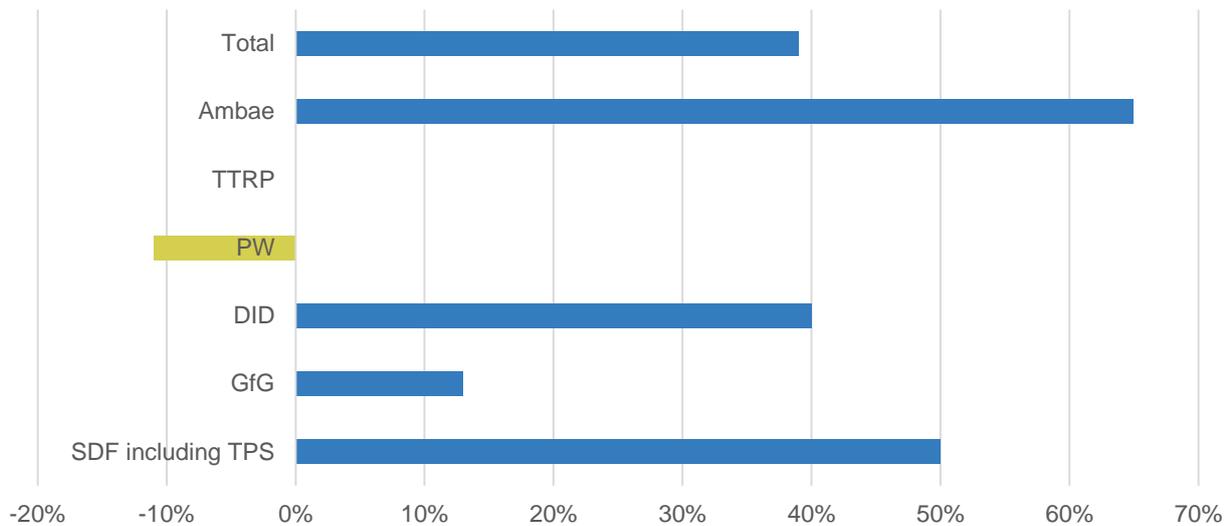
⁸ The Support Contractor report provides additional details on financial management

EXPENDITURE

In 2019 the Partnership implemented 80% of all skills development activities that had been planned and approved by management. The rate of expenditure against budget for the same period is much lower – 39%. This indicates that the Partnership still needs to further improve the planning and costing of activities.

The SDF and all other sources of funding, except TTRP that ended during 2019 and Pacific Women, were underspent. The Pacific Women spend against budget was higher than planned during 2019; the reason being payment for some activities from 2018 were carried forward. The Partnership secured the Ambae response funding in May 2019, which meant there was only seven months to program and deliver activities in 2019. This has led to underspend in 2019 and the budget not spent has been carried forward to 2020. A Project Manager for the Ambae Response was appointed in November 2019, which will help ensure the scale of activities delivered and expenditure in 2020 increases.

% expenditure



5. VALUE FOR MONEY

There are a number of features of the Phase 4 design that support DFAT's approach and principles of Value for Money (VfM)⁹. A summary of key aspects of implementation during 2019 that have supported a VfM proposition, and areas for improvement in 2020 is provided in this section.

5.1 ECONOMY

Economy in delivery is supported through the competitive selection and performance monitoring of staff and contractors. Wherever possible, locally based and suitably qualified ni-Vanuatu contractors are engaged, and where skills and expertise required is not available expatriates resident in Vanuatu are generally sought as the next option. International coaches or trainers who are engaged by the Partnership work with ni-Vanuatu nationals and as part of their contract requirements provide technical advice and mentoring with the objective of supporting the transfer of responsibilities and localising of the Partnership's training and management capacity.

The partnership agreements with GoV, civil society organisations in Vanuatu and connections with other DFAT bilateral investments provide important additional financial and human resources. This resource pooling supports economic and effective delivery, and enhances future sustainability of the skills system.

5.2 EFFICIENCY

Staff

A core team of key international and national advisers, and ni-Vanuatu staff who have worked in earlier phases provides a strong foundation of historical knowledge and experience to the Partnership. This is further reinforced by the long-term engagement of key DFAT staff who manage the investment.

The senior ni-Vanuatu staff are well connected and have strong and positive working relationships with key GoV personnel and at a political level. This assists stronger commitment by the GoV to the Partnership. During 2019 four senior ni-Vanuatu staff moved from the Partnership to senior GoV positions. These staff are already exercising influence to strengthen interest and commitment to skills system improvements by relevant parts of the national and provincial GoV.

MEL and operational / administrative systems

The new Partnership Management Guidelines and tools for operations, administration and finance, and for MEL were implemented for the first time in 2019. Overall, as indicated by the improved budgeting and planning of activities and data that is now available for accountability and reporting, the new systems are supporting improved efficiencies and effectiveness in program management. A priority for 2020 is to consolidate and further embed the more consistent use of the systems by the Partnership staff.

⁹ <https://dfat.gov.au/aid/who-we-work-with/value-for-money-principles/Pages/value-for-money-principles.aspx>

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

Inclusion and access

The Partnership is helping to introduce innovative new practices to the national skills system including new and more flexible delivery of skills development in demand areas by training providers. Adjustments and specific targeted support are provided through the Partnership to enhance access by people who typically may not easily participate in skills training because of living in rural locations, and due to other barriers that include low formal education qualifications, poor levels of LLN, their gender and disability.

Professional Development

During 2019 there was an increase in investment made in professional development of both Partnership staff and of partners. This is part of the strategic focus of creating opportunities for leadership opportunities for ni-Vanuatu women and men and is an important contributor to strengthening human resource capacity to further enhance locally led management of the Partnership, and more broadly within the skills system. In 2020 the strategic focus on human resource development will continue, and it will be important to monitor the extent to which the investment made is supporting effectiveness and local sustainability.

MEL

In 2019 the MEL system generated better quality data that measures the effectiveness of the Partnership's approach and the scale and scope of economic and social value of the innovative practices that the Partnership is introducing to the skills system.

The new prosperity assessment tool and data collection process introduced in 2019 measures economic and business indicators for individual business clients. Over time, through reassessment every 6 months, this data will provide important tracking information on the progress and effectiveness of the coaching strategies applied with business clients.

The initial SEA completed by the MEL team in 2019 provides initial, very positive, evidence of the prosperity and social benefits that qualification training has for skills clients, their families, and the enterprises they operate or work for. Further SEAs will be completed in 2020 that will strengthen evidence about the effectiveness and longer-term impacts of skills training.

During 2020 the MEL team will continue to strengthen implementation of the new monitoring systems and will work more closely with the Partnership team to help improve the reflection and learning components of the system. This will help improve adaptation of delivery strategies to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness of implementation.

Relevance

During 2019 the Partnership team, based on the experience and results of implementation during this phase, and the evolving operating context and political economy, adapted the current Program Logic to better fit the current policy context and strategic delivery approaches being used. The adapted logic, when approved by DFAT, should help planning, monitoring and communicating the impact the Partnership is seeking to achieve, and the contribution being made to support priority policies and programs of the GoV and GoA.

5.4 ETHICS

Transparency and Accountability

The Partnership works closely and openly with the GoV partners. The processes established for planning, monitoring and reporting have been designed and modified to align and support the GoV systems, and are implemented in ways that support transparency and enable active participation and contribution by GoV partners at national and provincial levels: for example the SPSC, the PGTBs, the PIFs. As new GoV systems are established – for example the provincial NSDP planning implemented for the first time in 2019 – the Partnership made adjustments to its own planning processes and instead participated in the GoV-led process.

The Partnership Management Information System (MIS) has been designed with close communication and coordination with MoET, and as the GoV system (VEMIS) for PSET is designed, all efforts will be made to ensure the interoperability of the two systems with the aim ultimately of full integration into VEMIS.

Better Balance

The Partnership revised its gender equality and women's empowerment strategy, 'Better Balance' during 2019. The approach articulated in the new strategy makes more explicit the commitment to build on the successful contextually located approaches that are already in use and align with and support national policy drivers to achieve great equality in women's and men's roles, relations and opportunities. Central to the way of working is supporting local leadership and working with (not against or trying to change) the deeply held cultural and religious drivers of the local culture. This approach of 'working with the grain, does not mean reinforcing and accepting the status quo, rather through working with established local networks and personal relationships, seek out entry points and opportunities to garner commitment to alternative options.

6. MONITORING EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

IMPLEMENTATION

During 2019 there was a change in personnel of the MEL team. In June, the MEL Manager who had held the position since November 2018, was appointed Director for Civil Registry and Vital Statistics Department (CRVSD) under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA). Although this has created some gaps in the Vanuatu based capacity within the MEL team, the promotion of the MEL Officer to the MEL Coordinator position with full responsibility for management of the MEL system has worked very well. The transition of the outgoing MEL Manager to a new GoV position provides an opportunity for links and cooperation with the Partnership in the future, particularly in relation to national identity for ni-Vanuatu citizens, which when established will assist the Partnership's client ID system and improve the reliability of tracking of individual clients in the national skills system.

The MEL Coordinator, who has long-term experience of the Partnership, in both MEL and in other administrative roles, has continued to progress the MEL work as planned in 2019. She has been supported in her role by the MEL Adviser and by two short-term contracted personnel (ni-Vanuatu and international), who have supported implementation of the Social and Economic Assessment (SEA) and the client database and Management Information System design.

The key MEL activities implemented in 2019 include:

- Competing the design and full implementation of new data collection forms using Kobo¹⁰ application through tablet / phone based technology
- Ongoing training and support provided to provincial Skills Centre staff, Port Vila Partnership staff, and partners in use of data collection tools
- Facilitating 'sense-making' and data analysis with Partnership staff and Provincial Training Coordinators for learning and reporting
- Providing management with bi-monthly output level dashboard reports on activities and client participation in skills activities
- Design and implementation of the first Social Economic Assessment enquiry into outcomes of accredited training qualifications
- Ongoing design of a prototype (beta version) technology based Management Information System (MIS), linked to e-Gov system, and initial use of the system to generate data for the December 2019 reporting period
- Contributing to MEL component in the professional development training for DARD officers
- Facilitating revision and re-articulation of the Partnership's Program Logic and measurement of intermediate outcome indicators which pending approval by DFAT will be used in 2020 for monitoring and reporting

¹⁰ www.Kobo.com

CHALLENGES

Quality of Client data

In September 2019 the MEL team made an assessment of the quality of monitoring data being collected by provincial and productive sector staff using the new Kobo tools. During 2019, since the new tools were introduced, the use of the tools has improved and the reliability of the data collected has incrementally increased. However, the quality review found significant gaps in certain records particularly related to accuracy of recording client and business identities and participation in skills training activities, and there was delay in submitting the data for review and ‘cleaning’ before it is uploaded to the new (in final stages of design) MIS.

The quality issues create challenges for effective monitoring and reporting on key performance and progress indicators, and in particular limits the extent to which participant data can be disaggregated (for example disability, province, sector and subsector, and level of education) for analysis and the participation and progress of individual clients can be assessed. The Partnership team, with MEL support, invested time in improving the quality of data uploaded in the system. Supporting improvement in data quality will be an ongoing priority for the MEL team in 2020.

Finalising the development and launch of the MIS

Progressing the design of the MIS has been slower than was anticipated and planned when the project was designed in mid 2018. The reasons for the delay include the design being more ambitious and complex than originally envisaged, and there has been limited local capacity to support the process due to the MEL Manager leaving. A partnership agreement with MoET to draw on their personnel and expertise and make connections to the VEMIS which is also in design has not yet been approved. In addition, connection to the government server (through OGCI), which will enable easier access in the provinces, and enable GoV partners also to access and use the system, has not been established. A MoU for this work was signed in December 2019 and will be progressed in 2020.

During 2019 the Partnership’s MIS consultant continued to work remotely on this project and the design is now in the final stages and will be launched as a prototype for use internally by the MEL team within the Partnership in late February 2020. Once launched and tested, and local capacity and issues related to the server are resolved, wider roll out of the system for use initially by the Partnership team and provincial Skill Centres should take place by mid-year.

7. RISKS

OVERVIEW

The Annual Plan and the workstream and Corporate reports that are submitted to DFAT with this report provide a thorough assessment of risks that relate to implementation and management of activities in each of these areas of the Partnership. Critical risks, their implications, and management advice related to the Partnership strategy, and the growth, quality and sustainability of the skills system are presented in this section.

Description of Risk	Implications	Management
<p>The evolving GoV policy environment and increased emphasis on delivery against key national priorities, including the NSDP and GoV decentralisation agenda, is not adequately reflected in the current Program Logic.</p>	<p>The current Program Logic does not consistently offer a rationale for decisions made on prioritising and investing in certain areas of the Partnership's activities and in fostering and strengthening working relations and links with new partners and in new sectors outside the immediate 'skills system'.</p> <p>The increased focus on developmental leadership and on 'Thinking Working Politically' (TWP) as key relevant strategies is not explicitly articulated in the current the Program Logic and the contribution of these strategies to progressing outcomes is therefore difficult to measure.</p>	<p>Gain approval from DFAT of the adapted Partnership Program Logic developed in 2019 and used to guide the 2020 activity plan, so it can be fully applied to support implementation and MEL in 2020.</p> <p>Communicate and make more explicit for GoV and other stakeholders the alignment and support that the Partnership brings to priority policies and programs through the approaches being applied in reform and strengthening of the skills system.</p> <p>Continue to strategically seek out links and ways of working with new areas of GoV to demonstrate the relevance and added value of the Partnership to national priority agenda.</p> <p>Ensure the adapted way of working is reflected and measured in the Partnership's MEL system.</p>
<p>Challenge of determining the level of growth of scale and scope of skills training activities that is feasible to satisfy demand while retaining and improving quality, and that the Partnership can effectively support in the short to medium term and in the longer term can be sustained locally by GoV and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Difficulty in resolving competing drivers of quantity and quality when determining skill development activity priorities and plans.</p> <p>Challenges in determining the Partnership's investment priorities between accredited training qualifications and training that is not formally recognised within the skills system.</p> <p>Overambitious planning and limited human resource capacity means activities approved and budgeted are not being delivered, and sometimes low quality of activity management.</p>	<p>Continued strengthening of operational management systems that support staff planning and budgeting.</p> <p>In 2020 ongoing enhancement of MEL system including access to real time information on delivery, through the MIS, and greater emphasis on reflection and learning to support program adaptation and improvement.</p> <p>Growth, resourcing and sustainability considerations are included as part of the Mid Term Review planned for 2020.</p>

Description of Risk	Implications	Management
<p>Growth in the localisation of skills training delivery by ni-Vanuatu coaches and trainers, while improving economy and strengthening sustainability, does create risks related to quality in certain technical areas due to the limited knowledge and expertise of some local training providers.</p>	<p>Lack of local skills and experience to design and deliver accredited skills training in new areas.</p> <p>Slower progress made by Skills Centre clients in developing their businesses.</p>	<p>Continue to apply the mentoring and professional development system whereby more experienced coaches and trainers (most often international) work with and support professional development of less experienced local training providers.</p> <p>Continue to recruit appropriately skilled and experienced national and international technical advisors and training providers to ensure there is a well-qualified pool of suitable personnel that the Partnership can draw on to support effective delivery.</p> <p>Strengthen monitoring of all training providers (local and international) by introducing more robust performance assessment and feedback processes.</p>
<p>The continued high reliance on DFAT funding and low contribution by GoV and other stakeholders to the SDF, creates risk of growth and sustainability of the Vanuatu skills system.</p>	<p>Continuing provincial skills training and national reform agenda beyond Phase 4 relies on DFAT's continued investment.</p> <p>Expansion of the model of provincial Skills Centres to all six provinces will not take place unless GoV fulfils its commitment to cover staffing costs within the existing Skills Centres, which is technically feasible but requires political will.</p>	<p>Partnership management and DFAT need to continue to advocate to partners, and other influential actors in the GoV and in private sector, on the needs, and the social and economic benefits and development contributions of demand driven quality provincial skills training.</p> <p>Sustainability of the Partnership beyond the current phase, and with consideration of the long-term commitment of DFAT to the skills sector, should be included in the MTR that is planned to take place in 2020.</p>

8. CONCLUSIONS

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Overall in 2019 there is strong evidence of positive results and progress being made in each of the Partnership's long-term outcomes. The areas of strongest performance in 2019 are:

The GoV's increased interest and commitment to the skills system - both by existing national and provincial level government partners, and through establishing new relations with other parts of national government that to date have not been directly connected with the skills system (DSPACC and PMO). The commitments set out in the PIFs, and their alignment and support of the GoV partners' priorities, have been effective in moving commitment to skills training to an institutional level, whereas previously it was heavily reliant on the commitment of individuals. The recent improvements in the latter part of 2019 in the level of cooperation and coordination with MoET (TED) and the VQA is very encouraging, and provides an important basis for more consistent reform and delivery by the supply side of the skills system.

The increase in 2019 of the GoV's financial contribution (VUV8,200,00) through the SDF to the skills system is very positive, however it accounts for a relatively small amount of the skills development budget (36%) and even less of the total Partnership budget that includes management, administration, professional development and costs for international technical advisors. Apart from GoV contribution, the funding for the Partnership's activities in support of the skills system is fully reliant on DFAT. Although it is positive that a range of DFAT funding mechanisms are supporting skill system strengthening, at this point in Phase 4 the continued high dependency on DFAT creates a risk in relation to medium to longer-term for continuity and sustainability of the Partnership's achievements to date.

There is compelling evidence of the contribution that skills training makes to economic and social benefits of Skills Centre clients, their families, communities and businesses. The preliminary analysis made during 2019 consistently shows that women and men, people with disabilities, and people with low levels of school education in each of the provinces and the productive sectors where skills training is provided, report improvements in their prosperity and quality of life. The consistency and scope of the positive results demonstrates the value of the decentralized model of provincial Skills Centres and the contribution of the model to the national development goals set out in the NSDP.

The demand for quality skills training, particularly accredited qualifications, is not currently being met by the skills system. The challenges of resource constraints, technical capacity and regulatory requirements for accredited training create obstacles that deter training providers, particularly smaller providers in rural locations, from meeting the standards to be able to deliver accredited training in areas where there is demand. The recent improved coordination and between the TED, VQA and the Partnership, and stronger collaboration with other actors (including private sector) in the skills training sector, provide opportunities for cooperation that may deliver more resource efficient and innovative options to support training providers.

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

During 2019 there have been significant benefits made from investment made during the latter part of 2018 and in early 2019 in the design and establishing new Partnership management systems. Overall, the quality of planning, management, accountability of the Partnership activities and financial systems has improved. This is assisting more effective and time efficient coordination and communication within the ni-Vanuatu team based in the provincial Skills Centres and Port Vila, and with the international advisers and the Support Contractor team. The technology-based MEL data collection system is starting to more efficiently operate and generate better quality data, and in 2020 when the MIS is launched the information will be more accessible for the team and incrementally for partners. This will help in real time monitoring and communicating progress, and provide a strong platform to strengthen the learning component of the MEL system. Ongoing training and assistance will be provided by the MEL team to the provincial Skills Centre staff to support ongoing improvements in the quality of data collection.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

As part of the adaptive approach to implementation employed by the Partnership, revisions were made to the Partnership's Program Logic. The proposed changes made to the Program Logic strengthen articulation of the alignment with the current policy context that has evolved since the design was approved in 2016, and provides greater clarity on the multifaceted strategic approach that is used by the Partnership in facilitating and supporting sustainable system reform and decentralized service delivery through the vector of skills development. A simple 'user friendly' document that describes the adapted Program Logic and the outcome indicators¹¹ has been developed to make the logic and monitoring indicators accessible. During 2020 this will support practical use of the Program Logic and indicators in the planning, monitoring, and in the reporting and communicating the Partnership's activities and achievements.

11 The revised Program Logic and indicators is shared as an annex to the Partnership's 2020 Annual Plan