



# SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

## 6-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY - JUNE 2023

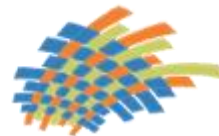


Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Commerce  
and Ni-Vanuatu Business

VANUATU  
DEPARTMENT  
OF INDUSTRY



VANUATU  
SKILLS  
PARTNERSHIP







## INTRODUCTION

- This progress report provides an update on the activities delivered and results achieved in the Skills for Creative Industries (SfCI) workstream over the six-month period from January to June 2023.
- The planning and implementation phase in early 2023 involved close collaboration with the Department of Industry (DoI), provincial sector partners, the Partnership's Skills Centres, and the Ambae Recovery Office.
- During the first six months of the year, the primary objective of the workstream was to enhance market access for provincial handicraft hubs and promote the Vanuatu Made brand both domestically and internationally. These efforts align with DoI's business plan and contribute to the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2030, across the Economic, Social and Environmental Pillars.

*Image 1: Torba Handicraft Cooperative Coordinator,  
Ms Linrose Bisiwei*

# CONTEXT

- The Creative Industries sector in Vanuatu is steadily recovering from the adverse effects of COVID-19 and recent natural disasters, including the two category four cyclones in March this year.
- There were challenges in delivering our planned activities in the first quarter of 2023 due to the impacts of dual cyclones in Tafea and Shefa provinces. As a result, work priorities for government agencies and partners, and the Partnership's support, shifted towards response and recovery efforts. Consequently, some planned activities had to be postponed and will be implemented in the next six months.
- DoI, particularly its Marketing Division, continues to prioritise the promotion and support of locally made products, encouraging the local community to embrace and purchase Vanuatu Made products.
- The resumption of international travel and trade has contributed to an increase in demand for product and generated higher sales for the handicraft hubs, leading to positive economic outcomes. However, the challenge now lies in whether the rural communities and hubs can effectively meet the increase in demand while also managing the associated social and environmental impacts.



*Image 2: Sanma Creative Industries  
Community Company (SCICC) Headwear  
Weavers*

# PARTNERSHIP STATUS AND CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

- A long-term Partnership Implementation Agreement (PIA) spanning four years is currently in effect with DoI and Vanuatu Intellectual Property Office (VanIPO). This underpins our continued collaboration and joint efforts.
- Formalisation of a Partnership Implementation Framework (PIF) with DoI and VanIPO for 2023 was postponed due to Tropical Cyclones (TC) Kevin and Judy in March 2023. Consequently, there have been no partner co-contributions into the Skills Development Fund to-date. However, planning for the second half of 2023 is underway and the PIFs are scheduled to be signed in early July 2023.
- *Indicative* co-contributions to be received by the Partnership are outlined below:

Partner	Amount to be committed for the remainder of 2023 (VUV)
DOI	2,500,000
VanIPO	300,000

# WORKSTREAM WORK PLAN STATUS

Work Plan Priority Areas &/Or Green Shoots	Mid-Year Status Update (No activity, some progress, good progress)	Additional Comments
Enhancing the Vanuatu Made brand awareness and promotion	Good progress	Vanuatu handicrafts have been successfully marketed and promoted in both domestic and international markets, resulting in increased demand for Vanuatu Made products. However, certain trading and operational issues need to be addressed to ensure that the expectations of customers from these markets are fully met.
Sustainable Business Hub Management	Some progress	The governance and business management of the handicraft hubs are gradually improving. All operating hubs have developed Business Plans to guide their operations in the coming years. However, a challenge lies in the effective engagement of board members in managing the business, and efforts should be made to enhance their involvement.



# WORKSTREAM WORK PLAN STATUS

Work Plan Priority Areas &/Or Green Shoots	Mid-Year Status Update (No activity, some progress, good progress)	Additional Comments
Creative Industries Product Development	Some progress	Progress has been made in product development and quality in the second quarter of 2023, enabling the fulfillment of international orders. However, it is crucial to prioritise additional skills development activities in the next six months to further enhance the capabilities of artisans and producers.
Copyright, Patents, Designs & Inclusive Trademark Inclusive Awareness	No activity	Discussions regarding this priority area were temporarily put on hold following the impact of the dual cyclones. It is essential to resume these discussions with partners to explore opportunities for implementing the remaining initiatives in the latter part of 2023.

## QUANTITATIVE DATA (JAN-JUN 2023)

Skills providers engaged	Participation in Partnership supported skills training	Business clients supported
2 industry coaches (1 man and 1 woman)	<p>76 participants in total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 67 women, representing 88% of all participants</li><li>• 9 men</li><li>• 4 participants with disabilities- 1 man, 3 women representing 5% of all participants</li></ul>	320 producers/ entrepreneurs are currently members of the provincial handicraft hubs (this includes 299 women)

# KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

## International recognition of the Vanuatu Made brand at the Auckland Museum exhibition

- The Vanuatu Made brand has been successfully launched on the international market following a Vanuatu Handicraft Exhibition held at Auckland Museum, New Zealand in May 2023. The event was organised in collaboration with Dol, Auckland Museum, the Vanuatu High Commission in Wellington, and Pacific Trade and Invest. Five representatives (three women and two men) from the handicraft sector in Vanuatu attended the exhibition.
- The exhibition showcased 216 products from Vanuatu, with sales generating a total revenue of VUV 752,910. Craft producers from Torba Handicraft Cooperative (THC), a producer and Business Manager from the Malampa Handicraft Centre (MHC), and a Senior Manager from Dol participated in the event. The uniqueness of the products resulted in higher prices, creating a significant financial benefit for local producers.
- The remaining products from the exhibition were transferred to the Auckland Museum Store, where they will continue to be sold. Additionally, selected items are being sold through the Museum's website, and six items were purchased for the Pacific permanent collection.



*Image 3: Vanuatu Representatives with the display in Auckland Museum*



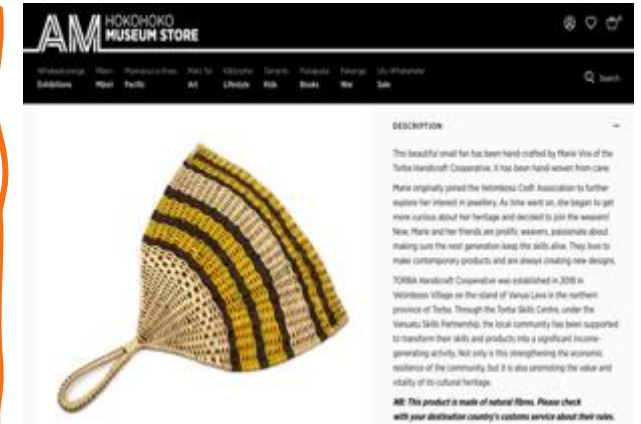
# KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

## Auckland Museum exhibition continued...

- This exhibition marked a breakthrough for the Vanuatu Made brand in the international market. The event was widely acclaimed as a major success, garnering positive publicity both in Vanuatu and within museum circles. It is expected that a long-term trading partnership will be established with the Auckland Museum Store Manager enabling the museum to order directly from Vanuatu's handicraft hubs.
- The exhibition is an important development in supporting the handicraft hubs' journey towards sustainability and transformation into thriving businesses. It has boosted sales and provided opportunities for more innovative and creative ideas within the sector.
- While in Auckland, the representatives attended a range of professional development opportunities including sales and customer service skills coaching, practical skills workshops in carving and lashing techniques from Māori artisans in addition to a tour of Vanuatu cultural assets from the Auckland Museum archives.

*“Going to Auckland Museum will be the first time the Vanuatu Made brand has been launched overseas. Creative Industries have broken the glass ceiling. This is big and we are very happy to be part of it”*

**Ian Bani, Vanuatu Department of Industry**



*Image 4: THC product on display on the Auckland Museum website*

*“This Auckland exhibition was not just about income and market access, it was about pride, dignity, environment, culture and family.”*

**Chris Delany, SfCI Technical Support**

# KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED



*Image 5: Pressing a hat for quality finishing in Santo*

## **New retail shop for Sanma Creative Industries Community Company (SCICC) Ltd at Pekoa International Airport, Santo**

- The SCICC achieved a significant milestone by opening a shopfront at the Pekoa International Airport in Luganville, Santo in April 2023. Since its establishment in 2019, the company had been operating its services at the Sanma Skills Centre only, limiting its exposure to potential customers.
- The establishment of the shop outlet represents a major accomplishment for SCICC, as it now has the opportunity to engage in formal business transactions and collaborate with other handicraft hubs, particularly MHC and THC. This development not only provides market access opportunities for craft makers and fashion designers in Sanma but also serves as a platform to promote the Vanuatu Made brand.
- During the two-month period of shop operation, SCICC generated VUV 514,700 in revenue, indicating a promising future for the company to become a fully sustainable business in the years ahead. This progress aligns with SCICC's recently reviewed business plan, which will guide SCICC's growth and success moving forward.

# KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

## Expansion of wholesale customer base for provincial handicraft hubs

- Since their establishment, the handicraft hubs in Torba, Malampa, and Sanma have aimed to build a customer base in the wholesale market, but they have faced challenges in achieving this goal. To address this, a partnership with DoI provided support to the handicraft hubs in developing effective marketing materials, including new and updated catalogues that enable confident sales to wholesale customers, considering social and environmental impacts.
- As part of the support, the hubs received updated swing tags with storytelling elements, creating a closer connection with customers. Additionally, the THC Coordinator received professional development training in basic social media skills, empowering her to effectively promote Torba Handicrafts.
- As a result of increased market exposure, THC successfully re-engaged with previous wholesale customers and secured new ones. MHC also reported an increase in its wholesale clientele from one to four, a significant achievement for the business. The growth in wholesale customers directly translates into higher income generation, contributing to the overall progress and sustainability of the handicraft hubs. From January - June 2023 VUV 3.9 million in sales was recorded between the three hubs.

*"There was only one wholesale customer when I took on the role as MHC Business Manager. I am delighted to see that MHC now has a total of 4 wholesale customers. The exposure of the business in the market has encouraged many wholesale orders to communities and also bring back some champion producers who supply quality products."*  
**Cindy Kilman, Business Manager, Malampa Handicraft Centre**

# KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED



Image 6: Margaret Alilee and other panel members at the Pacific Update Conference

## Promoting and empowering local leadership within the Department of Industry

- The Partnership facilitated the participation of two senior officers from the Department of Industry in regional events. Manager Ian Bani attended the Auckland Museum Exhibition in New Zealand, and subsequently the Fine Food Show also in NZ while Margaret Alilee represented Vanuatu at the Pacific Update Conference in Fiji.
- Providing a platform for local actors to share their experiences and transfer knowledge not only fosters motivation but also continues to support the development of the Creative Industries sector in Vanuatu. It encourages ongoing collaboration and contributes to the overall growth and success of the sector.

*“Participating in the Regional Pacific Update 2023 was a huge opportunity to share how the Vanuatu Handicraft Industry has grown over time and at the same time provide an update of how the Vanuatu Government is working together with line agencies to grow the Industry. Personally, with the passion I have for handicraft, and as a first timer to participate in such big event, it was an outstanding experience, knowing that I had the opportunity to put Vanuatu Handicraft in the spotlight and to be able to speak for the numerous diverse and unique handicraft producers throughout Vanuatu.”*

**Margaret Alilee, Department of Industry**



# KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

## Scoping of artisanal offerings from Aniwa and Futuna for the Tafea Handicraft Hub

- In partnership with Tafea DoI, the Partnership successfully completed a scoping assessment on behalf of the new Tafea Handicraft Hub (THH) in June 2023. The assessment focused on the islands of Futuna and Aniwa and provided valuable information on available craft assets, stock supply levels, and areas requiring support to ensure the participation of producers from these islands in THH.
- During the assessment, nine unique product designs were identified. Additionally, community profiling information was collected, laying the groundwork for future skills development initiatives. The recommendations include enhancing product quality, establishing stronger market access links for producers, and revitalising traditional skills.
- These results not only contribute to the expansion and diversification of the THH's product offerings but also preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Futuna and Aniwa. By supporting skills development and facilitating market access, the initiatives will empower local producers, improve product quality, and create economic opportunities for the communities in these islands.



*Image 7: SfCI producer weaving in Santo*

## ADDITIONAL RESULTS (CROSS CUTTING)



*Image 8: Janet Sine receiving her award from the Australian High Commissioner and the Lynch family*

### **Better Balance – supporting women in leadership**

- Mrs. Janet Sine, the Acting Business Manager of SCICC, was honoured with the prestigious 2023 International Women's Day Andy Lynch Award for Excellence in the Community Sector. Her unwavering dedication to empowering rural women throughout Sanma Province has resulted in nearly one hundred women, including those with disabilities, developing their skills and achieving economic empowerment.
- Margaret Alilee, Senior Creative Industries Officer at the Department of Industry, received support from the Partnership to present the progress, achievements, and context of the handicraft sector in Vanuatu at the Pacific Update Conference in Fiji. Hosted by the Australian National University and the University of the South Pacific in June 2023, this platform allowed for sharing insights and fostering collaboration in the Pacific region.



*Image 9: Mr & Mrs Manar from THC*

## ADDITIONAL RESULTS (CROSS CUTTING)

### **Better Balance – promoting couples in business together**

- Mr. and Mrs. Manar, a couple from Torba, have experienced significant improvement in their livelihoods through ongoing skills support since 2018. As a testament to their achievements, they were chosen by their community to attend the Auckland Museum Exhibition in New Zealand in May 2023.

The curators specifically selected Mr Manar’s brown shopping basket for display, recognising its contemporary design, which responded to the banning of single-use plastic shopping bags in Vanuatu in 2019. The Partnership has actively promoted Mr Manar’s support for his wife in their joint success as a positive role model of gender relations. Together they have established a successful village homestay as a secondary business.



## ADDITIONAL RESULTS (CROSS CUTTING)

### Disability Inclusion – products showcased at Auckland Museum exhibition

- ‘Moon’ baskets, crafted by Victoria, a producer with a disability from Torba province, were showcased and sold at the Auckland Museum in New Zealand, highlighting the skills and creativity of individuals with disabilities.

### Disability Inclusion – participation in skills activities

- Four producers with disabilities (three women and one man) actively participated in skills activities supported by the Partnership over the past six months, enabling them to develop their abilities and income generation activities while contributing to the handicraft sector's diversity and inclusivity.



*Image 10: Victoria, with her moon baskets (right)*



# LESSONS LEARNED AND ACTIONS

**Lesson 1:** The Auckland Museum Exhibition has proven that museums are a perfect high-end niche market that suits the uniqueness, value and scale of Vanuatu crafts.

## Actions

- Emphasise the significance of securing funding early and allowing sufficient lead time for planning international events and visits. This will ensure successful execution of such engagements, maximising the impact and benefits for all involved stakeholders.
- Provide ongoing support to the Hubs in maintaining strong relationships with both retail and wholesale customers. Focus on ensuring consistent quality and supply while prioritising considerations for social and environmental impacts. This approach fosters sustainability, customer satisfaction, and the reputation of the Vanuatu Made brand.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta to enhance their involvement in the creative industries sector. By leveraging the strengths and expertise of both entities, a mutually beneficial partnership can be established.
- Actively engage in other similar events to further promote the Vanuatu Made brand. By participating in a variety of platforms and activities, increased visibility and exposure can be achieved, leading to broader market reach, enhanced brand recognition, and greater economic opportunities for local artisans and producers.

# LESSONS LEARNED AND ACTIONS

**Lesson 2:** Product development and quality standards for Vanuatu handicraft are still inconsistent.

## **Actions**

- Enhance the support system by increasing the number of coaches in the area to effectively facilitate the implementation of skills activities. By expanding the pool of skilled coaches, the creative industry producers can receive more personalised guidance and mentorship, leading to improved outcomes.
- Prioritise an increase in the number of skills activities focused on product development and adherence to quality standards for creative industry producers. These activities will equip producers with the necessary knowledge, techniques, and standards to enhance the quality and marketability of their products. By investing in their skills and expertise, the creative industry sector can meet and exceed customer expectations, leading to increased demand and economic growth.

# LESSONS LEARNED AND ACTIONS

**Lesson 3:** Governance and Business Management practices of Handicraft Hubs is improving but needs further strengthening.

## Actions

- Promote the nomination of hub board members who possess a genuine passion for driving the business forward. By selecting individuals who are truly dedicated to the success of the hubs, it ensures strong leadership and commitment to achieving the business objectives, fostering growth, and empowering the creative industry sector.
- Collaborate with industry and business experts to develop comprehensive operating procedures for the hubs. By drawing on the expertise and insights of these professionals, the hubs can establish standardised processes, guidelines, and best practices. This promotes efficiency, consistency, and effective management, leading to improved operations and overall success.
- Provide continuous support for the implementation of governance activities within the hubs. By offering guidance, resources, and training, it ensures that governance structures and processes are robust and well-executed. This support strengthens accountability, transparency, and decision-making within the hubs, enabling them to operate efficiently and effectively.

# PRIORITIES FOR THE SECOND HALF OF 2023



*Image 11: Malampa basket on display as part of Auckland Exhibition*

- Enhance product quality to meet market demand and empower producers to value add product including packaging and labelling for both domestic and international market.
- Increase the number of skills activities focused on product development and adherence to quality standards for creative industry producers. This will include increasing the number of coaches to effectively facilitate implementation.
- Support Dol Tafea with the setting up the governance and business management of THH.
- Organise an AGM for SCICC stakeholders and elect new Board of Directors, appointment of new Business Manager, provide ongoing coaching for Manager and board members as needed.
- Strengthen producer group governance and conduct financial literacy skills activities to producers.
- Support Handicraft Hubs with developing contracts with domestic and international wholesale customers.
- Support Copyright, Patent, Design Inclusive awareness and registration of products in partnership with VanIPO.