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Annual Monitoring Report

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DOF	Department of Forestry
DOI	Department of Industry
DOT	Department of Tourism
DOWA	Department of Women’s Affairs
DOWR	Department of Water Resources
DSPPAC	Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
F2S	Farm-to-School
GfG	Governance for Growth
GOA	Government of Australia
GOV	Government of Vanuatu
LTO	Long Term Outcome
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOJCS	Ministry of Justice and Community Services
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
ORCBDS	Office of the Registrar of Cooperatives & Business Development Services
PEO	Provincial Education Office
OPSC	Office of the Public Service Commission
PSET	Post School Education and Training
PVTC	Pacific Vocational Training Centre
SDF	Skills Development Fund
SG	Secretary General
TC	Tropical Cyclone

TED	Tertiary Education Division
The Partnership	Vanuatu Skills Partnership
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
VCNE	Vanuatu College of Nursing Education
VDPA	Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association
VIPAM	Vanuatu Institute of Public Administration and Management
VIT	Vanuatu Institute of Technology
VQA	Vanuatu Qualifications Authority
VSPD	Vanuatu Society for People with a Disability
VTO	Vanuatu Tourism Office
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership (the Partnership) is a locally driven initiative focused on enhancing human resource development to improve service delivery and foster greater prosperity. The Partnership represents a dynamic co-investment between the governments of Australia and Vanuatu. Since 2005, it has worked to expand access to skills and market opportunities that drive economic and social growth for ni-Vanuatu, with a strong emphasis on supporting those facing disadvantages due to geography, gender, disability, or language, literacy, and numeracy barriers.

The Partnership has established provincial Skills Centres in five provinces, which now function as decentralised service delivery units under the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). These Centres act as brokers, aligning skill development with market demands by contracting local training providers and industry experts to deliver relevant training. This approach supports provincial entrepreneurship and employment in key sectors with a specific focus on supporting women, people with disabilities and people in remote areas.

Beyond training, the Partnership serves as a catalyst for leadership development and collective action. By fostering networks of motivated change-makers, it actively builds coalitions for governance and service delivery reforms. Internally, the Partnership strengthens its staff's ability to influence Government of Vanuatu (GOV) systems and take on leadership roles while also empowering key figures at community, provincial, and national levels.

Through the vector of skills development, the activities being implemented by the Partnership are supporting economic recovery in line with the policy settings of the Government of Australia (GOA) – *Australia's International Development Policy: For a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous Indo-Pacific* – and the Government of Vanuatu – *National Skills Development Policy 2024-2030* and the *National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2030*.

OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

The Partnership's 2024 Annual Progress Report provides an overview of progress toward its Long-Term Outcomes (LTOs), as outlined in the Partnership's Program Logic (see Annex 4). By highlighting key achievements from 2024, the report demonstrates how the Partnership is contributing to its overarching goal: *an effective, decentralised, and inclusive skills system that fosters a stable, prosperous, and sustainable Vanuatu*.

This report presents an in-depth analysis of the Partnership's accomplishments over the past year, drawing on insights from individual workstream reports covering July–December 2024 (see Annex 3) and January–June 2024 (submitted in July 2024). These workstreams span multiple sectors, including:

- Skills for Agribusiness
- Skills for Creative Industries
- Skills for Tourism
- Skills for Infrastructure
- Training Provider Support
- Better Balance (Gender Equality)
- Disability Inclusion

The 2024 Annual Progress Report package is designed to be read alongside the Partnership's 2024 Annual Plan, the 2024 Corporate Support Plan, and the 2024 Corporate Support Report.

2. CONTEXT

Shortage of domestic flights (Air Vanuatu)

The unreliability of Air Vanuatu has been an ongoing challenge for the Partnership for a long time, with regular flight delays and cancellations making planning for the delivery of activities in affected areas difficult. The suspension of Air Vanuatu's international and domestic flights for several months in 2024 disrupted travel and logistics, with domestic operations resuming only to a limited number of islands. This significantly impacted access to markets and the implementation of planned activities, with the Partnership's national staff, trainers and industry coaches unable to travel.

Political instability and government budget constraints

On May 29, 2024, GOV conducted a referendum aimed at amending the constitution to ensure that Members of Parliament maintain their political party affiliations throughout their tenure. While the referendum's results were positive, the preparations in the month prior diverted key partners' focus, along with financial and material resources, which subsequently affected the execution of several planned initiatives.

Political instability, stemming from changes in Secretary General roles and shifts in provincial leadership, resulted in the redistribution of funds and resources, influenced by shifting political agendas. This significantly disrupted service delivery and delayed the implementation of the decentralisation policy, particularly in rural regions. One clear example of this disruption was the postponement of the procurement of materials needed to upgrade the Lingarak water supply system.

Additionally, in August, GOV ministries received an advisory instructing them to suspend expenditure on travel and activities. The resulting budget constraints led to the postponement or cancellation of several scheduled programs. For instance, due to insufficient government funding, MOET had to cancel the Skills Development Campaign planned for the second half of the year in Tafea and Penama.

Rising costs of living and competition for scarce human resources

The current economic situation in Vanuatu, particularly the rising cost of living, is causing recent graduates to look for employment overseas. While labour mobility provides valuable income to support families, it is also a cause of skills drain, particularly in rural areas, and is hindering local economic growth. Recruitment and retention of human resources continues to be a major challenge for the Partnership. Local staff, coaches and trainers with the required level of technical skills and an ability to meet the Partnership's high expectations for performance are in short supply, which has led to recruitment challenges. For example, the position of Skills for Infrastructure officer was vacant for the entirety of the reporting period.

Interest from local partners for further collaboration and pressure to support 'green shoots'

The Partnership strives to maintain a balance between responding to partners' requests for new collaborative opportunities and fulfilling its existing project commitments while maximising the impact of past initiatives. Throughout 2024, numerous emerging project ideas have been explored with partners across nearly all workstreams which have occasionally diverted staff attention from executing the agreed-upon project pipeline. Several activities initially planned in early 2024 were paused while new initiatives took precedent. For example, several agribusiness coaching activities were not conducted in Malampa while Skills Centre staff were engaged in plumbing initiatives.

Port Vila Earthquake

The extremely damaging Port Vila earthquake on 17 December resulted in cancellation of final activities for 2024, such as support for the delivery of the Vanuatu Australia Health Partnership's Inclusive Health Retreat (scheduled for 18 – 19 December). In addition, the earthquake adversely impacted national workstream, operational and management personnel in addition to GOV partners based in Port Vila which has delayed end of year reporting and planning discussions for 2025.

3. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AGAINST QUALITY CRITERIA

Effectiveness (progress towards Long-Term Outcomes)

In 2024, the Partnership contributed to key outcomes that, collectively, provide a critical framework for the development of a stronger and more inclusive national skills system. This included the finalisation of the National Skills Development Policy, which was released by the MOET in September 2024, and the Inclusive Education and Training Policy, also released by the MOET in November 2024. These policies are foundational to building a stronger and more inclusive national skills system, as they set clear priorities and strategies for access, quality training, and the inclusion of vulnerable groups in skills development opportunities. In addition, the Partnership supported the establishment of the Penama Skills Centre, the fifth MOET Provincial Skills Centre, which will be the primary coordination mechanism between demand and supply for skills development in Penama. This represents significant - and sustainable - progress in the development of a national, decentralised skills system, serving all ni-Vanuatu.

Building on the learning and achievements from previous years, the Partnership continued to support local training providers with the flexible delivery of accredited training courses in remote locations of Vanuatu. These courses are designed with the practical component of the training embedded in community infrastructure projects. In 2024, this included upgrades to the water system at Lingarak, Malekula (Certificate II in Plumbing delivered by Pacific Vocational Training Centre (PVTVC)), the construction of the West Coast Area Council building at Wusi, Santo (Certificate II in Building and Construction delivered by the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC)) and the rebuilding of the Chiefs' Nakamal in Port Vila (Certificate I and Certificate II in Building and Construction delivered by Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT), and a tiling short course delivered by APTC). Women and people with disabilities were included in these training courses.

Importantly, the Partnership was able to support several graduates, including women, to establish small businesses, with new plumbing and construction companies registered on Santo and Malekula. The establishment of these new companies is an important achievement as it enhances the capacity of local communities to develop infrastructure while also building their resilience to future disasters. Results from a Graduate Tracer Survey completed by the Partnership show that a high proportion of graduates are finding full-time employment once they complete accredited training courses.

The Partnership continued its efforts to build the quality of local training providers to meet the requirements of the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA). In 2024, important outcomes were achieved by local providers such as the Vanuatu College of Nursing Education (VCNE), which successfully renewed its registration with the VQA after having been de-registered in 2021. VCNE was able to achieve this through technical support from the Partnership, including on governance and strategic management.

The Partnership supported the professional development of local trainers and coaches. This included support for 8 leaders (1 woman, 7 men) from national and provincial government and training providers to undertake a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management qualification through APTC.

The Partnership responded to several requests from national GOV partners such as Vanuatu Institute of Public Administration and Management (VIPAM) under the Office of the Public Service Commission (OPSC), Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) and the department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) to provide technical support in areas such as strategic planning, reporting and digital systems. This demonstrates the wider influence the Partnership is having in shaping and strengthening government systems in Vanuatu drawing from the proven effectiveness of its own management systems.

In total, the Partnership supported the delivery of 60 skills development activities across 6 provinces on 17 islands to 986 participants including 523 women (53%) and 43 individuals with disabilities (4%). Effort was focused on improving product quality through skills training, such as with handicraft

producers on Malekula and Tanna, vanilla farmers on Tanna and Aneityum, and pepper farmers on Malo and Ambrym, as well as improving access to domestic and international markets for these producers. For handicraft producers, this meant support for members of the provincial Handicraft Hubs and the hub managers to attend high profile events such as ‘Vanuatu Made’ in Port Vila and the Melanesian Arts Festival in Auckland, New Zealand, while an Island Basket Festival was held in Penama for the first time.

Furthermore, the Partnership has equipped entrepreneurs and cooperative groups with essential financial and business management skills to help them establish resilient enterprises and associations. This includes financial literacy workshops delivered in Mota Lava, Tanna, Santo, and Malekula.

Efficiency

As reported in the 2024 Corporate Support Report, the 2024 calendar year saw an increase (43 per cent) in overall Partnership spending when compared with the previous calendar year. A Deed of Amendment was signed in early 2024 with an increased bilateral budget allocation. This was primarily due to an increase in program activity expenditure as a result of additional funding received to support recovery efforts following Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lola, which was expensed between April and June 2024, as well as additional funding from Governance for Growth (GfG) to support the Tafea Handicraft Hub.

Building on the successful implementation of a revised approach to program activity budget allocation in 2023, in 2024 program activity budget continued to be allocated to Skills Centres on a proportionate basis. Allocations continued to take into consideration the Partnership’s bilateral budget allocation, as well as Government of Vanuatu co-contributions and Direct Funding Agreements. The Partnership’s ability, through its Support Hub, to manage multiple funding sources, including attracting GoV co-investment, is a strong indicator of its operational efficiency.

The Partnership’s ability to flexibly mobilise additional funding resources (i.e. TC Lola funding or GOV contributions) at short notice does mean that budget allocations at a Skills Centre level can be fluid, as they are often adjusted mid-planning cycle to account for these new revenue sources. However, even with the challenges of managing these changing allocations, Skills Centres continued to refine their spending versus planning in 2024, with Skills Centres spending 103 % of their budget allocation. The minor overspend was balanced across other areas of the program activity budget, to ensure the Partnership hit its overall forecast.

This closeness to forecast demonstrates a further improvement on 2023 spending, when 87% of the budget was expensed. It reflects an improved alignment between activity planning, approvals and resource allocation and is a testament to the revised approval processes implemented in 2023, which continued to be refined in 2024. The Deputy Director – Programs worked closely with the Quality Systems team and Support Hub to closely manage overall program activity expenditure, ensuring activity approvals and implementation were balanced with budget allocations and spending patterns, ensuring funding could be reallocated across Centres as necessary to ensure overall spending remained on track. The complexity of the Partnership’s budget management - coordinating spending not only across different funding sources, but also across the Australian Government’s financial year and the GOV calendar budget cycle - allows the Partnership flexibility to maximise spending in line with emerging priorities.

Monthly spot checks by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as internal spot-checking processes ensure the Partnership is regularly identifying opportunities for continuous improvement to internal control mechanisms. Further, an external audit was conducted in 2024, concluding that “appropriate controls are in place to ensure adherence to legislative requirements and contractual obligations.” Recognising the Partnership operates in remote and rural areas, cash and paper-based systems remain a big part of the Partnership’s systems, however, the Support Hub continued to work with the Senior Management Team throughout 2024 to review and refine Partnership financial and operational workflows to maximise internal efficiencies as much as

possible. Please refer to the Corporate Support Report 2024 for more detailed information regarding improvements made to financial management processes in 2024 as well as detailed budget expenditure.

The Partnership maximised opportunities to support efficiencies across other DFAT funded investments in Vanuatu, with the attendance of 4 other DFAT programs at the Partnership's annual planning meeting in November. This provided personnel the chance to share lessons and identify areas for collaboration, as well as providing an opportunity for other investments to see the Partnership's ways of working modelled. It also gave other DFAT investments the opportunity to engage with GOV stakeholders with both national and provincial partners also in attendance.

Further to this, to support DFAT's bilateral public diplomacy aims, and in recognition of the Partnership's provincial reach, the Partnership facilitated the attendance of DFAT at a range of provincial launches and coordination events including the graduation ceremonies and building launches in Lingarak, Malekula and Wusi, West Santo in addition to the Penama Skills Centre Launch. These activities, funded through the Partnership's bilateral budget allocation, provided opportunities to strengthen GOA and GOV relations and maximise DFAT resourcing.

Gender equality

In 2024, the Partnership's ongoing efforts to promote inclusive participation in training programs yielded positive outcomes. Women's participation in skills training increased to 53%, up from 50% in 2023 and 40% in 2022. This growth reflects ongoing efforts to promote women's participation in accredited training and business development, including in traditionally male-dominated fields such as construction and plumbing. In Santo, the Partnership recruited a nanny to ensure one of the female trainees could attend Certificate II in Building and Construction training in West Coast Santo, while in Malampa, the Partnership facilitated transport so that women could safely attend Certificate II in Plumbing training. In Tanna, male partners took on cooking and childcare responsibilities at home to enable their wives to participate in a Teri Dye workshop. Since the completion of accredited trades training courses, several women have been employed in new companies established on Santo and Malekula.

The Partnership also supported national and provincial Department of Women's Affairs (DOWA) staff to carry out key activities within their work plans to support women's economic empowerment across Vanuatu. This including supporting a Tongoa/Epi skills exchange for craft producers in Shefa province and the facilitation of combined livelihoods/financial literacy workshops for women on Tanna and Mota Lava.

The Partnership also demonstrated success in supporting and promoting women in positions of leadership. This includes facilitating arrangements for all Hub Managers (4 women) to attend the 'Vanuatu Made' event in Port Vila in October, while two female Hub Managers from Torba and Tafea were supported to attend the 3rd Melanesian Festival Aotearoa and an Auckland Museum side exhibition in New Zealand.

Refer to the Annex 3- Workstream Progress Report 6 -Better Balance, for more information on the Partnership's work to support gender equality.

Disability Inclusion

The Partnership made important gains in promoting inclusion at the policy and institutional levels. This included supporting MOET to finalise the Inclusive Education and Training Policy, which mainstreams the rights and requirements of learners with disabilities across all levels of education, from early childhood care and education, through to skills development offered by training providers.

The Partnership was invited to co-facilitate the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MOJCS) 2025 planning workshop, while it also transitioned responsibility for provincial Disability Officer staffing salaries to MOJCS, ensuring sustainable support for disability inclusion in provincial governments in the future.

The Partnership supported International Disability Day celebrations across all provinces in Vanuatu. International Disability Day is an important event because it shines a spotlight on the rights, needs, and contributions of people with disabilities. It also provides a platform to challenge discriminatory misconceptions and reduce stigma around their abilities and their potential to make positive contributions to their local communities.

At the activity level, the Partnership continued to mainstream inclusion into skills trainings, while also developing new ways to support inclusion through specific interventions with key partners. Notable achievements include the Disability Inclusion Sensitisation Workshop conducted for 57 Ministry of Health staff (40 women, 17 men) at Northern Provincial Hospital, in partnership with the Sanma Provincial Disability Officer, VSPD, and the VDP.

In total, participation by people with disabilities increased to 4% in 2024, compared to 3% in 2023. This improvement is, in part, attributed to the implementation of two dedicated skills activities targeting individuals with disabilities in Santo and Tanna.

Refer to the Annex 3- Workstream Progress Report 7 -Disability Inclusion, for more information about the Partnership's work in disability inclusion.

Climate Resilience

The Partnership made good progress mainstreaming climate resilience and environmental considerations into skills training, supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. This includes providing tour guides in Port Vila and Tanna with a deeper understanding of sustainability principles including environmental conservation and cultural preservation and working with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to promote climate resilient farming practices such as alley cropping, mulching and composting in Torba and Tafea.

There were also good results achieved in terms of embedding climate resilience and disaster preparedness in the systems and processes of the Skills Centres and partner agencies. Disaster Preparedness Plans are now in place for all five Skills Centres, while the Partnership ensured environmental considerations featured in the planning stage of new infrastructure projects, with Environmental Impact Assessments completed for infrastructure projects completed in Torba, Santo, Ambae, Tanna and Malekula. Additionally, the Partnership was able to influence the development of the Department of Tourism's (DOT) new 'Product Ready' Checklists to ensure that climate mitigation, adaption pathways and environmental impacts are considered by tourism business clients as part of their product development journeys.

The Partnership provided specific support to clients to enable them to access information and equipment to become more climate resilient. On Ambae, the Partnership facilitated the procurement of three water tanks for entrepreneurs with disabilities to make their small businesses more resilient to the impacts of drought. On Malekula, the Partnership supported agribusiness and creative industries clients to attend the Malampa Climate Change Symposium where they gained a deeper understanding of methods to make their businesses and communities more resilient to the impacts of future disasters.

4. KEY RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

LTO 1- A more inclusive, quality assured and increasingly decentralised skills system

OBJECTIVES

The Partnership seeks to drive systemic improvements in the quality, relevance, and accessibility of skills training in Vanuatu. It focuses on supporting reform within policies and institutions critical to the skills sector, such as the MOET and the VQA while enhancing the capacity of local training providers to respond effectively to local skills demand. This effort aims to improve coordination and management of the skills system at both national and provincial levels. By empowering local providers and influencing the broader policy environment, the Partnership strives to foster a resilient and adaptable skills sector that supports Vanuatu's long-term sustainable development.

KEY RESULTS IN 2024

The Partnership played an important role in influencing the design of key national policies that underpin a more effective and inclusive skills system in Vanuatu. For example:

- **The National Skills Development Policy 2024-2030** was officially launched on 16 September 2024 by the Minister of Education and Training, Hon. Samsen Samson. The Partnership supported the development of the policy through the engagement of a technical specialist who collaborated with the Tertiary Education Directorate (TED) on drafting the policy. The Partnership was also responsible for coordinating consultation workshops and meetings with government, private sector, training providers and civil society stakeholders – across national and provincial levels - during the development of the policy draft.



Image 1: The Minister of Education and Training, Hon. Samsen Samson, and Tertiary Education Directorate Director, John Kaltau, at the National Skills Development Policy 2024 - 2030 launch

- **MOET’s Inclusive Education and Training Policy and Implementation Plan** was launched on 27 November 2024. This follows three years of consultations at national and provincial levels, undertaken with Partnership support. This policy mainstreams the rights and requirements of learners with disabilities across all levels of education, from early childhood care and education, through to skills development offered by training providers.

The Partnership has continued to strengthen access to skills development activities for ni-Vanuatu in rural and remote locations, including in Penama, and this work is increasingly being recognised by the Provincial Secretaries General (SGs).

- **The new MOET Penama Skills Centre was officially opened in October in Saratamata, Ambae.** The Penama Skills Centre is the fifth MOET Provincial Skills Centre in Vanuatu, a journey that started back in 2009 with the establishment of the first Skills Centre in Sanma. It is supported by the Governments of Vanuatu and Australia through the Partnership and will be the primary coordination mechanism between demand and supply for skills development in Penama province¹.
- **Four of the five SGs from provinces with Skills Centres accepted an invitation to participate in the Partnership’s Annual Planning and Reflection workshop** held in November 2024. This highlights the value provincial government leadership places on the Partnership and its wider influence beyond the skills system.

The Partnership made a series of important contributions to TED and key sector partners to support better coordination within the national skills system. For example:

- The Partnership has been instrumental in the establishment of a **Post School Education and Training (PSET) Sector Support Committee**, which is facilitating enhanced coordination in the skills sector. The Partnership is a sitting member and plays a secretariat role for the Committee, which meets quarterly. Through the committee, and with support from the Partnership, an inaugural National Skills Conference was held in November 2024, which was a platform for key stakeholders from the skills sector to share knowledge and identify solutions to common challenges.
- **Eight TED staff (4 men and 4 women) completed a customised project management training program** facilitated by the Partnership, which aimed to build coordination and management skills within the directorate. Feedback from these sessions has been positive, with staff requesting further coaching support to enable effective project management within TED.

“We’re thrilled with the overwhelmingly positive feedback from our workshop participants. The knowledge and skills gained will be invaluable.”

John Kaltau, Director, TED

The Partnership promoted stronger coordination and collaboration between national and provincial stakeholders for skills training delivery. For example:

- In Malekula, the Partnership worked with the Pacific Vocational Training Centre (PVTC), Department of Water Resources (DOWR) and the local community to deliver a Certificate II in Plumbing at Lingarak.
- In Santo, the Partnership worked with the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) and the local community to deliver Certificate II in Building and Construction at Wusi and then build the West Coast Area Council building.

¹ See the Story of Change attached in Annex 5 for more information

- In Port Vila, the Partnership played a key role liaising with the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs and Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT) to support the delivery of Certificate I and Certificate II in Building and Construction and the rebuild of the Chiefs' Nakamal.
- In Malekula, VIT's Malampa Campus was launched in Rensarie in April 2024. The campus is now running bridging courses ahead of the delivery of 'TVET in Schools'.



Image 2: Boa Aliu, a single mother of three and new graduate of Certificate II in Building and Construction delivered at Wusi, receives her tools from the Vanuatu Skills Partnership Chief Financial Officer, Ruth Seketa

The Partnership continued to support local training providers to improve the quality of the training they deliver and to meet the requirements of the VQA. Key results in 2024 include:

- **The Vanuatu College of Nursing Education (VCNE) successfully renewed its registration with the VQA.** VCNE had been unregistered since 2021. VCNE was able to accomplish this through technical support from the Partnership on governance and strategic management. A key achievement was the development and approval of the VCNE Strategic Plan in February 2024. This strategic plan outlines VCNE's vision, mission, and goals for the future, providing a roadmap for its development and ensuring its continued contribution to the healthcare sector in Vanuatu.
- **Technical support for three local providers including Betina Bible College (Santo), Napil Agriculture College (Tanna) and Vetimboso Vocational Training Centre (Torba).**
- **PVTC successfully delivered Certificate II in Plumbing outside of Port Vila for the first time (Lingarak, Malekula).** PVTC has demonstrated its capability to deliver trades training in rural locations, a result which contributes towards the NSDP objective of increased skills delivery from private training providers.

The Partnership has continued to facilitate the delivery of quality assured, flexible skills training through the MOET provincial Skills Centres, to meet local demand for skills in rural and remote areas of Vanuatu.

- **A total of 60 skills development activities were delivered in 2024 across 6 provinces on 17 islands, including:**
 - Eight accredited trainings delivered by five registered training providers to a total of 144 trainees (17% women and 2% trainees with disabilities).
 - 51 targeted workshops and coaching sessions, led by 27 industry coaches (including 15 women). These workshop and coaching initiatives focused on enhancing production and product quality, financial literacy, governance, and pricing.

Additionally, tailored professional development opportunities were provided for key GOV staff in areas such as computing, project management and leadership.

- **The number of skills development activities in 2024 was lower compared to previous years, with 82 activities facilitated in 2023 and 112 in 2022.** This decline is largely due to Air Vanuatu becoming insolvent in May, which led to the suspension of all scheduled domestic flights from May to August, followed by limited flight routes for the rest of the year. Additionally, the shift toward delivering full Certificate I and II qualifications in remote locations, which demands considerable time and resources, also contributed to the reduction in skills activity numbers.

The Partnership continued to seek co-contributions (financial and human resources) for its work to ensure buy-in from key stakeholders, including GOV partners at the national level, provincial partners and the local community. Co-contributions are a key objective for the Partnership because they provide tangible evidence of commitment to and ownership of activities, underpinning long-term sustainability. **In 2024, there was evidence of increased co-contributions from GOV at national and subnational levels to support the skills system:**

- Co-investment into the Partnership’s Skills Development Fund (SDF) from government partners at national and sub-national levels increased from VUV 15.8M in 2023 to VUV 18.2M in 2024, in addition to direct and in-kind contributions from Skill Centre clients, Provincial Government Partners and communities. This included VUV 1.0M from the Mere Lava Area Council, the highest co-contribution the Partnership has received from an Area Council.
- In addition to direct SDF investment, there were additional co-contributions from partners directly towards the costs of joint projects, while the Sanma Provincial Government contributed VUV 4.7M towards the Area Council Building construction project in West Santo through funding from the Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project Phase 2 with financial support from UNDP.

Quantitative Results Snapshot – LTO 1

- National Skills Development Policy launched by MOET to guide the strategic direction of the skills/ PSET sector.
- MOET provincial Skills Centre established in Penama in October.
- PSET Sector Support Committee established to strengthen coordination in the skills sector.
- Inaugural National Skills Development Conference facilitated by the PSET Sector Support Committee.
- 60 skills development activities, including 8 accredited trainings, on 17 islands across 6 provinces facilitated through the provincial Skills Centres, including in remote locations such as West Santo, Aneityum and Mere Lava.
- 51 flexible, demand-driven workshops and coaching sessions, led by 27 coaches (15 women) facilitated for Skills Centre clients.
- Eight accredited trainings delivered by five registered training providers to 144 trainees (17% women and 2% trainees with disabilities).
- 6 training providers supported to meet quality requirements for registration by the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority.
- Increased co-investment into the Partnership’s Skills Development Fund from government partners at national and sub-national levels from VUV 15.8M in 2023 to VUV 18.2M in 2024, in addition to direct and in-kind contributions from Skills Centre clients, Provincial Government partners and communities.

LTO 2 – Developmental leadership drives collective action for improved service delivery

OBJECTIVES

The Partnership is dedicated to fostering and empowering local leaders. It facilitates coalition-building between key actors from the national level to local communities and equips local leaders with the tools needed to drive systemic reform. Through these efforts, the Partnership aims to cultivate new collaborations and alliances, enhance coordination and planning, and strengthen service delivery for Vanuatu’s most vulnerable populations including women, individuals with disabilities, and those in rural and remote areas.

KEY RESULTS

The Partnership continued to support coordination and collaboration between national and provincial stakeholders to strengthen the delivery of services in local communities. This includes:

- **A collaboration between the Partnership, Sanma Provincial Government, the local community in Wusi, and APTC led to the construction of the West Coast Area Council building.** The building was constructed by a local trades company, established by Sanma Skills Centre clients, in partnership with trainees completing their ‘on-the-job’ training as part of the Certificate II in Building and Construction delivered by APTC. Since the opening of the building, several government departments have expressed interest in establishing new offices in West Santo to strengthen service delivery in this remote area.



Image 3: Director General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Leith Veremaito, and the Hon. President of Sanma Province, Bradley Livo, unveiling the signage of the new Area Council Building Wusi, West Santo.

- **The new Penama Skills Centre was officially opened in October 2024 through a collaboration between the Penama Provincial Government, the Partnership and MOET.** The Penama Provincial government made a significant contribution to the building renovations and agreed to provide the office space rent free, demonstrating strong support for local skills development and service delivery. Construction was overseen by the Partnership, which also made significant contributions to the construction costs. The building is accessible to people with disabilities and is also ‘off-grid’, being fully powered by solar energy generated from solar panels installed on the roof.

- **The Partnership played a key role to support reconstruction of the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs' Nakamal in Port Vila in partnership with the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, VIT, and APTC.** The reconstruction of the building, which was destroyed by fire in January 2023, was completed as part of the delivery of accredited training courses including Certificate I and Certificate II in Building and Construction delivered by VIT, and a short course in tiling delivered by APTC. The Chiefs' Nakamal is expected to be officially opened in March 2025 on Chiefs' Day.



Image 4: Trainees working on the construction of the Chiefs' Nakamal in Port Vila.

- **Collaboration between the provincial Skills Centres, the Department of Water Resources (DOWR), Provincial Governments, Area Councils, local tradespeople and community stakeholders has led to more than 6,700 people in Ambae, Pentecost and Mere Lava having improved access to safe, clean water and sanitation facilities.** Local Area Councils and communities contributed to these initiatives in-kind through the provision of labour and raw materials. The Mere Lava Area Council notably contributed VUV 1,000,000 to the water systems upgrade on the island, the largest co-investment received by the Partnership to date from an Area Council.

The Partnership developed and implemented new processes to improve service delivery by government partners. For example:

- **The Partnership worked with the Department of Tourism (DOT) to roll out an accommodation audit in Sanma, Tanna, Malekula and Efate,** generating data and information that will be used to support evidence-based decision-making, particularly in relation to skills training and support for local businesses. The audit was conducted from October to December using product readiness tools and resources developed earlier in the year. 243 accommodation providers were assessed by nine auditors engaged through the Partnership (eight women and one man). The findings of this audit are vital for sector partners (including Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO), DOT and the Partnership) to ensure that future tourism development is demand driven and that skills training addresses key issues and concerns.

- **In collaboration with the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation and relevant provincial partners, seven Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)** were developed as part of the delivery of infrastructure projects in Torba, Santo, Ambae, Tanna and Malekula. EIAs have been embedded in the safeguarding processes of community-led infrastructure projects facilities through the Skills Centres. Several partners took on coordination efforts and funding of these EIAs as part of their co-contributions to the larger initiatives.

The Partnership continued to promote new approaches to formalising agreements with partners for the delivery of joint priorities. For example:

- **New partnering arrangements were introduced with Provincial Governments in Penama, Sanma and Malampa.** Partnering Commitments were signed, and ‘Ways of Working’ meetings are planned for Q1 2025. The Partnering Commitments outline a range of possible areas of collaboration between the Partnership, Provincial Governments and Area Councils, which will be formalised through further discussions in early 2025.
- **Similar partnering arrangements were formalised with other partners including Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and civil society organisations such as the Vanuatu Society for People with Disability (VSPD).** The partnering approach fosters a more equitable dynamic between the parties and creates a space for planning and allocation of resources to be done jointly (rather than being the responsibility of one partner only).

The Partnership continued to prioritise leadership incubation and professional development support for leaders across the skills system and wider GOV to drive improved service delivery and coordination. In 2024, this included:

- 8 leaders (1 woman, 7 men) from national and provincial government and training providers, were supported by the Partnership to undertake a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management qualification through APTC as well as 9 Partnership staff (2 women and 7 men).
- 6 Partnership staff (2 women and 4 men) completed Level 1 Partnership training courses delivered by the Partnership Brokers Association.
- 48 Ministry of Health (MOH) staff (20 women, 28 men) from all six provinces graduated with a Certificate I in Computing, the result of a collaboration between the MOH, the Partnership and Ituani Vocational Skills Centre.

“I’m now creating a stock take of provincial vaccines in Excel. No more hard copy records.”

Malampa Health Officer

The Partnership worked with local partners to develop new approaches to ensure that service delivery is inclusive, specifically for women, people with disabilities and people in remote locations. For example:

- **The Partnership provided coordination support to the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MOJCS) to hold several National Disability Committee meetings.** At the request of the MOJCS, the Partnership co-funded and co-facilitated the MOJCS 2025 planning workshop which was held on Pele Island in November. For the first time, the activity brought together national and provincial disability officers, and three new provincial compliance officers.

- **The provincial Skills Centres supported the MOJCS Provincial Disability Officers to coordinate and implement their work plans in 2024.** This included supporting a disability rights awareness campaign and scoping opportunities for the development of agribusiness skills amongst people with disabilities on Paama, supporting the completion of new homes for community members with disabilities affected by Cyclones Judy and Kevin on Futuna, and constructing a ramp and accessible toilet at the Area Council building in West Tanna.
- **The Partnership also supported national and provincial Department of Women’s Affairs (DOWA) staff to carry out key activities within their work plans to support women’s economic empowerment across Vanuatu.** This includes supporting a Tonga/Epi skills exchange for craft producers in Shefa province and the facilitation of combined livelihoods/financial literacy workshops for women on Tanna and Mota Lava.



Image 5: Group discussions during the MOJCS 2025 Planning Workshop – identifying strengths and gaps.

- **Through the Sanma Skills Centre, the Partnership supported the delivery of two disability awareness training courses for Northern Provincial Hospital (NPH) personnel in Santo.** A total of 57 NPH staff (40 women, 17 men), including doctors and support staff, attended. The course was facilitated by Partnership personnel alongside staff from VSPD, Vanuatu Disability Promotions and Advocacy Association (VDPA) and the Sanma Provincial Disability Officer.

The Partnership has responded to several opportunities to strengthen GOV systems. The continued requests for collaboration from key GOV partners highlight the influence the Partnership has in shaping and promoting effective government systems. In 2024, six Government departments were supported to enhance strategic planning, reporting and digital systems with good results. For example:

- **The Vanuatu Institute of Public Administration and Management (VIPAM) under OPSC was supported to develop new digital systems to receive and store applications.** These systems were launched on Public Service Commission (PSC) Day by the PSC Chairman and have resulted in improved efficiency for VIPAM.

“The online platform is a life saver, and its impact is really improving our service delivery”

Acting Manager VIPAM, Pierrick Lesines.

- **The Partnership provided technical support to Department of Strategic Policy and Coordination (DSPPAC) Recovery Unit and implementing partners for TC Harold Recovery** to review and amend the TC Harold Recovery Theory of Change, and to revise the individual partner reporting templates as well as DSPPAC’s overarching report template to DFAT.
- **The Partnership’s Communications Manager provided technical support to the Penama Government Communications Officer,** which has resulted in the development of a newsletter, issued monthly, that provides an update on progress for development projects and activities in Penama.

- **The Partnership collaborated with the VTO to address challenges in their data management systems as part of VTO’s new ‘Markey Ready’ surveys.** After digitalising existing surveys and piloting data collection in Shefa in early 2024, MS Power BI digital dashboards were developed in November. These integrate with VTO’s existing software, enabling real-time reporting and data sharing with VTO staff and partners for the first time.

Quantitative Results Snapshot – LTO 2

- 3 new partnering agreements signed with the Malampa, Sanma and Penama provincial governments to drive effective collaboration in 2025 and beyond.
- 6 government departments supported to enhance strategic planning, reporting and digital systems.
- 96% provincial Ministry of Health staff who completed a Certificate I in Computing Training in 2023-24 ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that the training has improved their report writing skills.
- 6 Partnership staff (2 women and 4 men) completed a Level 1 in Partnership Brokering course.
- 8 leaders (7 men, 1 woman) from national and provincial government and training providers, attended a Certificate IV Leadership and Management course through APTC as well as 9 Partnership staff (2 women and 7 men).
- 8 MOET TED staff (4 men and 4 women) completed a customised project management training program to strengthen coordination within the skills system.
- 1 new Area Council building constructed in West Coast Santo by a local construction company in partnership with local trainees completing their 'on-the-job' training practicum.
- Over 6,700 community members in Ambae, Pentecost and Mere Lava now have improved access to safe, clean water and sanitation facilities through collaboration brokered with the Department of Water Resources, provincial governments, Area Councils, local tradespeople and community stakeholders.

LTO 3 – Sustainable benefits (economic, environmental, and cultural) for Partnership clients and their communities

OBJECTIVES

Aligned with the NSDP, the Partnership is dedicated to fostering enduring social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits for entrepreneurs, employees, and communities. This commitment is realised through strong collaboration with government sector partners at both national and provincial levels, through the Skills Centres and sector workstreams. Focusing on the productive sectors of agribusiness, creative industries, construction and tourism, the Partnership supports clients to improve economic resilience, employment and entrepreneurial pathways and to strengthen access to markets through the vector of skills training. Additional support is provided to ensure the effective participation of women, individuals with disabilities, and those in rural and remote areas of Vanuatu within these key productive sectors.

KEY RESULTS

Skills training, employment pathways and entrepreneurship

The Partnership, through the Skills Centres, continues to facilitate inclusive and demand-driven skills training opportunities for ni-Vanuatu, particularly for women, people with disabilities, and those in remote areas.

- **In 2024, 986 participants completed skills trainings.** Among them were 523 women (53%) and 43 individuals with disabilities (4% including 25 women and 18 men). This represents a 23% decline from the 1,278 participants recorded in 2023, largely due to the reduction of skills activities caused by domestic air travel disruptions.
- **Despite the reduced participation numbers, the proportion of women in skills training continued to grow in 2024, reaching 53%.** This follows an upward trend from 50% in 2023 and 40% in 2022, reflecting ongoing efforts by Partnership staff to promote women's inclusion in training and business development opportunities. This achievement is especially notable given the significant number of training activities conducted in traditionally male-dominated fields such as construction and plumbing over the past year.
- **Participation by people with disabilities accounted for 4% in 2024, marking a slight increase from 3% in 2023, though still below the 5% recorded in 2022.** The slight increase from 2023 can be attributed in part to the implementation of two skills activities in 2024 which specifically targeting clients with disabilities; one designed for farmers on Tanna and another for entrepreneurs on Santo.

There is evidence that trades sector skills training provided through the Partnership is driving positive changes in the business practices and behaviours of Skills Centre clients:

- **94% of graduates, from a recent tracer survey of 74 trades trainees from 2022-23, stated that they 'always' or 'often' used the skills learnt at training in their work.** Graduates from all trainings also noted that they have intentionally tried to pass on skills and knowledge to their families and other community members, demonstrating the powerful flow-on impact of skills training.
- **Additionally, over 95% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that training facilitated through the Skills Centres improved their motivation, punctuality, reliability, and self-confidence.** Half of the respondents said the training improved their understanding

of gender equality, and 47% believed it enhanced their understanding of disability inclusion highlighting additional positive social outcomes from the training.

The Partnership is continuing to strengthen pathways to higher education, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities after the completion of accredited training. For example:

- **89% of the 74 trade graduates from 2022-23 stated that they have been employed or self-employed since completing their course**, an increase of 42% compared to pre-course commencement. All 4 trainees with disabilities who were surveyed stated that they have been working since the training compared with only 2 working prior to the training. Of the 9 female respondents there was no change in the number of those working post training highlighting additional support efforts required to maximise access to employment for women in the trades sector.



Image 6: Nasi Tuan Café on Tanna was built by two graduates after completion of their qualification, James Niko who is deaf and Johnson Natuman.

- **18 graduates (3 women and 15 men) from Certificate I and II Building and Construction courses on Tanna, Malekula, Pentecost and Torba** were supported by the Partnership to successfully apply to study Certificate III in Carpentry at APTC highlighting the vital role of the Skills Centres in supporting client pathways to further education.

There is evidence that trade graduates are establishing small businesses or joint collectives with the support of the Skills Centres to create income generating opportunities and to contribute to infrastructure developments in their communities.

- **Three businesses established by Skills Centre clients in 2023 are now operational** and have been working to complete a series of contracts in Santo and Malekula in 2024. These include: Nok Construction and Meljo Clandine Junior Benny (MCJB) Plumbing Services in Santo and Malekula North Central and South (M.N.C.S.) in Malekula.
- **With assistance from the Partnership, five individual contractors (all men) are now registered with the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission (VFSC)** and have successfully applied for and secured contracts under the National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV) 'Isi Haos' initiative in Santo and Tanna. These trainees hope to grow their businesses and income generating opportunities given the increasing demand for building construction services.

- **Nojavan Construction Company was established in 2024 by 25 graduates** (including 5 women) from the Certificate II in Building and Construction training delivered this year in remote West Santo. The company has successfully won their first contract to support the construction of Tasmate Health Facility in West Santo in 2025.
- **Five small plumbing businesses have been established across five different Area Councils on Malekula** by trainees who completed the Certificate II in Plumbing training in Lingarak, Malekula this year. These businesses will continue to maintain Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in their communities and provide ongoing support to their Area Councils for future WASH development projects.

Economic resilience

Skills Centre clients in the creative industries and agribusiness sectors continue to improve the quality of their products through ongoing product coaching and skills training:

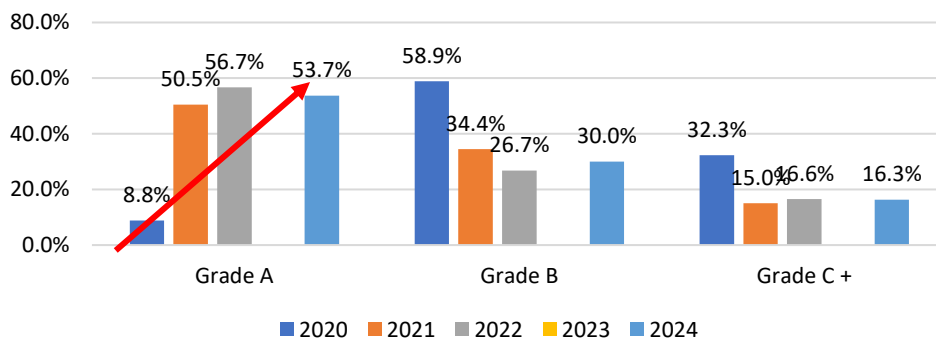
- **New handicraft clients on Malekula and Tanna have increased the quality of their pandanus products since the introduction of Teri Dyes through a series of workshops in 2023-2024.** As a result of new skills and knowledge on Tanna, producers have been able to successfully negotiate increased prices with the Tafea Handicraft Hub while in Malekula large orders of fans and other woven products have been placed by the Malampa Handicraft Centre now that producers have upgraded their dyeing techniques.



Image 7: A Maskelyne handicraft producer weaving a mat using well prepared pandanus

- **Farmers on Tanna and Aneityum are continuing to strengthen quality production of vanilla.** When comparing results for Tanna farmers from 2022 and 2024² results show a considerable improvement. In 2022, almost all vanilla produced on Tanna was ‘Grade C’, whereas the results for 2024 show that 28.5% of the crop was ‘Grade A’ for the first time. Results for vanilla farmers from Aneityum are comparable to previous years, with 53.7% of the crop considered to be ‘Grade A’ compared to 56.7% in 2022.

Grade of vanilla produced by Aneityum vanilla farmers since 2020



² In 2023 vanilla crops in Tafea was destroyed due to the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Judy and Tropical Cyclone Kevin in March that year.

- **Despite a comparable quality, the total volume of production on Aneityum was well below 2022 levels (169.6 kg in 2024 compared to 314 kg in 2022).** The Partnership anticipates that the opening of the new vanilla processing facility in 2025 will support an increase in volume and quality as farmers will have a secure place to store and cure their beans, ensuring their quality is maintained prior to grading and maximising sales at the highest possible prices.
- **On Malo, the Naviova and Ambosake pepper farmer associations continue to refine their pepper processing to improve quality of whole and ground products.** During a coaching visit in October, the lack of proper storage and processing facilities was identified as a key issue preventing the associations from expanding their enterprise. The Partnership will work with the associations and key government partners to find solutions in 2025.
- **In Torba province, farmers on remote Mere Lava and Vanua Lava reported higher production and higher quality of root crops and vegetable produce through the successful implementation of alley cropping techniques, a climate resilient farming practice.** Alley cropping allows farmers to grow multiple crops on the same plot of land. As a result of increased income from the sale of their produce, several clients have diversified their income streams into small livestock farms. One farming couple in East Vanua Lava is currently using earnings to construct a bungalow for tourists. Additional clients are using their income to strengthen resilience of their businesses and livelihoods through the procurement of water tanks.

The Partnership is equipping entrepreneurs and cooperative groups with essential financial and business management skills to help them establish resilient enterprises and associations.

- **A total of 81 participants (72 women and 9 men, including 6 men and 6 women with disabilities) were engaged in a series of financial literacy workshops** conducted in Mota Lava, Tanna, Santo, and Malekula. On Malekula, post-workshop feedback revealed high levels of satisfaction among participants, who expressed confidence that the knowledge gained would contribute to their financial independence and business growth.
- **Representatives from 11 cooperatives including farmers and handicraft producers, on Ambae have gained new business management skills** through a series of workshops delivered in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar of Cooperatives & Business Development Services (ORCBDS). These workshops were designed to enhance participants' understanding of the legal and procedural aspects of cooperative management and governance. As a direct outcome, two cooperatives successfully completed their registration and received official certification.

The Partnership is supporting sustainable resource management within key market systems to ensure sustainable benefits for provincial clients and to mitigate the risks of adverse impacts on the environment as production increases.

- **Working alongside Department of Industry (DOI), Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), and Department of Forestry (DOF), the provincial Skills Centres are implementing a 'market systems' approach to strengthen Vanuatu's pandanus value chain,** recognising its cultural and economic importance. In partnership with DOF and the Malampa and Sanma provincial governments, the Partnership conducted assessments on Paama and Malo to document pandanus species and local usage, promote conservation efforts, and identify nursery and replanting sites. Five species were recorded on Paama and eight on Malo, including both native and introduced varieties. Additionally, the assessment identified specific communities in each location that could supply planting materials for nurseries or replanting efforts in the future.

There is evidence that the Partnership is mainstreaming climate resilience and environmental considerations into skills training, supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

- **Climate resilient farming practices have been incorporated into farming skills trainings** in Torba and Tafea. Delivered by DARD and industry coaches, these sessions included the introduction of techniques such as alley cropping, as well as mulching and composting.
- **Tour guiding skills training delivered to 32 tour guides in Port Vila and Tanna (12 women and 19 men) included an emphasis on sustainability principles.** This included environmental conservation and cultural preservation to ensure that tourism development aligns with long-term environmental and community interests.

Market Access

The Partnership continued to support Skills Centre clients expand into new markets and strengthen supply chains, particularly in the creative industries and agribusiness workstreams. Practical support, including trade event coordination, marketing assistance, and packaging solutions, is proving effective to help provincial entrepreneurs access local, domestic, and international markets:



Image 8: New packaging and labelling from pepper produced by farmers on Malo

- **After support revising the packaging and labelling of their products, pepper farmers from two associations on Malo reported sales of approximately VUV 120,000 from two events at Luganville market.** The good sales results can be partially attributed to the positive impacts of a local marketing awareness campaign promoting the health benefits of pepper in Luganville that was run by clients with support from the Partnership.
- **The Farm to School (F2S) concept is growing in Penama and is strengthening market access opportunities for local farmers.** F2S offers farmers a consistent market within their local area while concurrently providing schools with access to fresh produce to enhance student diets and an opportunity to reduce the high costs of store-bought rations. Building on long-term support for the F2S initiative at Ambaebulu Junior Secondary School and a strong working relationship with the Penama Provincial Education Officer (PEO), the Partnership supported two senior officers from the ORCBDS in Penama to facilitate consultations with five schools and their local communities on Maewo and Pentecost who would like to start a F2S initiative at their school.

- Provincial Handicraft Hubs and producers were supported to attend several trade networking and sales events.** The four provincial hubs reported strong sales, totalling VUV 854,000, during the sixth annual ‘Vanuatu Made’ Trade Show, organised by DOI in September. Each hub manager noted that sales exceeded figures for previous events. In November, in collaboration with DOI, the Partnership supported two female Handicraft Hub Managers from Torba and Tafea to attend the 3rd Melanesian Festival Aotearoa and an Auckland Museum side exhibition both in New Zealand. Over 250 products were displayed, generating VUV 388,935 in sales, directly benefiting local producers. A first ever mini ‘Vanuatu Made’ tradeshow event was held in Torba and a Penama Island Basket Festival was also held on Ambae in October, coinciding with the opening of the new Penama Skills Centre. Producers from 18 associations across the province sold their products during the festival, which, due to its success, will now be an annual event.

“It is my first time to visit the Auckland Museum. I am proud and happy to see Tafea products being displayed in the store.” Lina Numake, Tafea Handicraft Manager

Quantitative Results Snapshot – LTO 3

Skills and employment pathways

- 986 participants, including 523 women (53%) and 43 people with disabilities (4%), accessed vocational courses or work-related training facilitated by provincial Skills Centres.
- 81 entrepreneurs (72 women and 9 men, including 6 men and 6 women with disabilities) attended financial literacy workshops conducted in Mota Lava, Tanna, Santo, and Malekula.
- 18 graduates (3 women and 15 men) from Certificate I and II in Building and Construction courses on Tanna, Malekula, Pentecost and Torba supported to study Certificate III in Carpentry at APTC.
- 94% of surveyed trade graduates from 2022-23 stated that they always or often used the skills learnt at training in their work.
- 95% of surveyed trade graduates ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that recent training has improved their motivation, punctuality, reliability, and self-confidence.

Economic Resilience

- 28.5% of Tanna vanilla crop rated ‘Grade A’ (up from almost all Grade C in 2022).
- 2 pepper farming associations from Malo sold approximately VUV 120,000 worth of stock in two sales events at Luganville market.
- 5 new construction and plumbing businesses established in Santo and Malekula.
- 5 male infrastructure graduates have won contracts under the National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV) ‘Isi Haos’ initiative in Santo and Tanna.
- Newly established Nojavan Construction Company won its first contract, to support the construction of Tasmate Health Facility in West Santo in 2025.

Market Access

- 4 provincial Handicraft Hubs supporting market access for craft producers.

- Over 250 handicraft products from Tafea and Torba sold during two sales events in New Zealand at a value of VUV 388,935.
- 854,005 VUV generated by the 4 provincial Handicraft Hubs through the ‘Vanuatu Made’ trade event in Port Vila.
- Tafea Handicraft Hub secured its first international buyer, Auckland Museum.

Cross-cutting – Inclusion

KEY RESULTS

Inclusion is an important priority for the Partnership, with all activities expected to integrate measures to support the participation of women, individuals with disabilities, and those from remote locations. Progress on inclusion-related achievements is embedded within the broader summary of progress for LTOs 1-3, while further detail is available in the Better Balance and Disability Inclusion workstream reports (Annex 3). This section highlights specific advancements made at both strategic and activity levels in 2024.

In 2024, the Partnership made important gains in promoting inclusion at the policy and institutional levels. This including supporting MOET to finalise the Inclusive Education and Training Policy and its implementation plan, co-facilitating the MOJCS 2025 planning workshop, and transitioning responsibility for provincial Disability Officer staffing salaries to MOJCS, ensuring sustainable support for disability inclusion in the provincial governments in the future.

At the activity level, the Partnership continued to mainstream inclusion into skills trainings, while also developing new ways to supporting inclusion through specific interventions with key partners.

Notable achievements include the Disability Inclusion Sensitisation Workshop conducted for 57 Ministry of Health staff (40 women, 17 men) at NPH, in partnership with the Sanma Provincial Disability Officer, VSPD, and the VDPA. This initiative was a significant step forward for disability inclusion in the health sector. Practical support was also provided to DOWA to deliver 3 key workshops enhancing women’s economic empowerment in Epi, Tanna and Mota Lava.

The Partnership’s ongoing efforts to promote inclusive participation in training programs yielded positive outcomes in 2024. Women’s participation in skills training increased to 53% in 2024, up from 50% in 2023 and 40% in 2022. This growth reflects ongoing efforts to promote women’s participation in accredited training and business development, even in traditionally male-dominated fields such as construction and plumbing. Participation by people with disabilities increased to 4% in 2024, compared to 3% in 2023. This improvement is, in part, attributed to the implementation of two dedicated skills activities targeting individuals with disabilities in Santo and Tanna.



Image 9: Female plumbing trainees onsite during practical sessions at Lingarak community

Strong outcomes for clients with disabilities and female entrepreneurs in the trades sector were observed. One of the most significant individual achievements was that of Mary Iaulia, a tradeswoman who completed a Certificate II in Building and Construction at the Tafea Skills Centre in 2022. With support from the Partnership, she successfully applied for the Certificate III in Carpentry at APTC. In 2024, Mary was identified by the VIT as a potential trainer and is currently undergoing the affiliation process to deliver future training on Tanna.

Quantitative Results Snapshot – Inclusion

Better Balance

- 72 women (including 6 women with disabilities) attended financial literacy workshops conducted in Mota Lava, Tanna, Santo, and Malekula.
- 523 women, including 25 women with disabilities, accessed vocational courses or work-related training facilitated by provincial Skills Centres.
- 11 men, including one man with a disability, supported in the creative industries sector, a non-traditional area for men.
- DOWA support to deliver 3 key workshops enhancing women’s economic empowerment in Epi, Tanna and Mota Lava.

Disability Inclusion

- MOET’s Inclusive Education and Training Policy launched in November 2024.
- 43 people with disabilities (58% women) participated in skills activities, representing 4% of all participants.
- 57 staff (40 women and 17 men) from NPH provided with disability inclusion sensitisation skills in partnership with the Sanma Provincial Disability Officer, VSPD and VDPA.
- Vanuatu Agriculture College opened an inclusive resource room to better support trainees with disabilities.
- Celebrations for International Day of People with Disabilities were supported by the Partnership in all 6 provinces.

Cross-cutting – Climate Resilience

KEY RESULTS

Given the significance of climate change for Vanuatu, the Partnership has prioritised climate resilience as an essential cross-cutting issue, meaning that climate resilience must be considered within all the Partnership’s activities. Progress on climate resilience is reflected within the broader summary of achievements for LTOs 1-3. Notable results at both the work plan and partnering levels are outlined below.

The Partnership continues to strengthen relationships with key government partners at both national and subnational levels. A partnership with the Department of Climate Change was not progressed in 2024 due to changes in leadership and a high volume of competing priorities within the Department. Instead, efforts have been directed toward joint action and co-investment in key provincial priorities. A notable achievement was a collaboration with Department of Climate Change

staff to successfully host the Malampa Climate Symposium and International Disaster Risk Reduction Day celebrations in Malekula.

Two pandanus stock count and species identification trips on Malo and Paama were successfully completed with Department of Forestry and key provincial partners. These assessments were based on a Pandanus Action Plan developed as part of a market systems analysis undertaken in 2023. The findings and recommendations from the assessment will be used to guide priorities in 2025, including replanting efforts and the establishment of nurseries to ensure sustainable management of this critical resource.



Image 10: Chief Iau Kimelu, with his people at the North-West Tanna Drought Mitigation Demonstration Plot, amazed at how well the vegetables are growing despite the drought.

The Partnership is ensuring that climate resilient content is incorporated into skills training to support small businesses and entrepreneurs become more climate resilient. This includes providing tour guides in Port Vila and Tanna with a deeper understanding of sustainability principles including environmental conservation and cultural preservation and working with DARD to promote climate resilient farming practices such as alley cropping, mulching and composting in Torba and Tafea.

There have been good results embedding climate resilience and disaster preparedness in the systems and processes of the Skills Centres and partner agencies. Disaster Preparedness Plans are now in place for all five Skills Centres and seven EIAs were conducted prior to the development of new infrastructure projects in Torba, West Santo, Ambae, Tanna and Malekula. The majority of these were implemented by partners at their own cost as part of their co-contributions. Additionally, the Partnership was able to influence the development of the DOT's new 'Product Ready' Checklists to ensure that climate mitigation, adaption pathways and environmental impacts are considered by tourism business clients as part of their product development journeys.

The Partnership provided specific support to clients to enable them to access information and equipment to become more climate resilient. On Ambae, the Partnership facilitated the procurement of three water tanks for entrepreneurs with disabilities to make their small businesses more resilient to the impacts of drought. On Malekula, the Partnership supported agribusiness and creative industries clients to attend the Malampa Climate Change Symposium where they gained a deeper understanding of methods to make their businesses and communities more resilient to the impacts of future disasters.

Quantitative Results Snapshot – Climate Resilience

- 61 farmers (32 women, 1 woman with a disability) from 2 islands in remote Torba Province increasing local food security using climate resilient farming techniques.
- 7 Environmental Impact Assessments facilitated with partners for infrastructure projects in Torba, West Santo, Ambae, Tanna and Malekula.
- 2 pandanus stock count and species identification trips completed on Malo and Paama in collaboration with the Department of Forestry.
- Malampa based seed farmers and craft producers supported to participate in the Malekula-based Climate Change Symposium organised by the Department of Climate Change.

Broader outcomes – Influencing development effectiveness (in Vanuatu and beyond)

OBJECTIVES

The Partnership has a strong track record of driving reform in Vanuatu’s skills sector and enhancing service delivery in rural and remote areas. Its proven results and expertise are valuable not only to stakeholders in Vanuatu but also to those in the wider region, specifically in the development cooperation sector. Drawing on its effective approaches such as locally led development, ‘thinking and working politically’ approaches, adaptive management, and a support-contractor model, the team pro-actively participates in development discussions through international conferences, podcasts, and online blogs, with the aim of positively influencing the wider development ecosystem.

KEY RESULTS

The Partnership continues to be widely recognised within DFAT, and the international development community, as a model for locally led development and good practice. For example:

- In the last 12 months, the Partnership has been referenced as a case study in several key strategic and policy documents released by DFAT including *Australia’s International Development Policy (2023)*, *DFAT’s Guidance Note on Locally Led Development (2024)* and *DFAT’s Multisectoral Nutrition Programming Guidance Note (2024)*.
- During an episode of the popular and influential Development Intelligence Lab’s Podcast: ‘The Read Out.’ Development practitioners and researchers, Aidan Craney and Yeshe Smith, described the Partnership as “...*the best example of a genuinely locally-led program.*”
- During his opening remarks at the Partnership’s 2025 planning meeting attended by government partners and four other DFAT programs, the Australian High Commissioner stated that the Partnership was widely known as one of Australia’s most effective development investments in the Pacific and that it has influence outside of Vanuatu.

Partnership staff presented in several international forums, with its experience as a locally led initiative and the Farm to School concept of particular interest to development practitioners and policy makers. This included:

- The Partnership’s Director, Deputy Director- Programs and the Penama PEO, John Wilkins Tari, showcased the achievements of the Ambaebulu F2S model at the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society conference in Melbourne in November.
- The Partnership’s Director and Deputy Director- Programs took part in panel discussions on locally led development coordinated by DT Global as a side event for the Australasian Aid Conference in Canberra in December.
- The Skills for Agribusiness Manager was invited to give a presentation on the F2S model during the Vanuatu Health Research Symposium in October.

The Partnership continues to be recognised within GOV as an influencer and driver of change at both national and provincial levels. The Provincial Governments continue to seek collaboration with the Skills Centres to support provincial developments. Three Provinces have now signed partnering agreements to guide collaboration in 2025. In addition, four of the five SGs from provinces with Skills Centres attended and actively participated in Partnership’s annual planning and reflection workshop in November. At the national level, key partners including DARD and MOJCS have invited Partnership staff to present and co-facilitate sessions in their own annual planning meetings, demonstrating the value partners place on the Partnership’s approach.



Image 11: Signing of the partnering agreement between the Penama Provincial Government and the Partnership. Left – Right: Penama SG, Mr Moses Tirio Bani; Penama President, Mr Hilson Boe; Vanuatu Skills Partnership Director, Mr Fremden Yanhambath; and His Excellency, Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu, H.E Max Willis

The Partnership has been able to leverage this reputation and opportunity to influence broader policy and practice within Vanuatu. For example:

- The Partnership’s Director commenced his second term as Chair of VIT Council and is having a considerable influence over the direction of the institute. Notably through recent reforms to VIT’s learning management system, the institute is being held up as a regional example of good practice with strong interest from the Fiji Ministry of Education’s Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) Unit to implement a similar system across their institutions.
- The Partnership’s Director and Deputy Director- Program were invited to advise MOET directly on a range of critical sector reforms including offering final, closed door, amendments to the Education Act and implementation arrangements of the Asian Development Bank’s skills sector investment.
- Partnership staff continue to be represented in ongoing DSPPAC planning meetings, national trade committees, and have been invited to participate in selection panels for recruitments to the Public Service Commission, underscoring the Partnership’s strategic influence supporting development leaders within government at national and subnational levels.

The Partnership continues to support and drive collaboration with other DFAT investments. This included, for the first time, the attendance of representatives from four other DFAT programs at the

Annual Planning meeting in November. This was an opportunity to expose other investments to Partnerships' way of working, share lessons and identify areas for complementarity. Additionally, the Partnership's Director provided technical support to the Vanuatu Australia Health Partnership by co-facilitating a Theory of Change workshop in early 2024 while also sitting as a member of the Strategic Advisory Committee for Balance of Power. In late 2024, the Partnership was also approached by the Governance for Growth initiative for support and guidance on strategic planning and implementing locally led programming systems including the 'Support Hub' model.

Broader outcomes – Strengthening GOV-GOA relations

OBJECTIVES

The Partnership's focus on strategic influence aligns with the Australian Government's diplomatic priorities, reinforcing the Australia-Vanuatu bilateral relationship through shared values and common objectives for regional prosperity, peace, and national sovereignty.

KEY RESULTS

The successful implementation of the Partnership's work plan, particularly through the provincial Skills Centres, has enabled ongoing opportunities for the Australian High Commission in Vanuatu to deepen connections with key partners and communities.

- **The Partnership facilitated the attendance of DFAT representation at a range of provincial events** including a graduation and launch at Lingarak, Malekula, and the launch of the Penama Skills Centre on Ambae. Additionally, there was an opportunity for the Australia High Commissioner to speak in November at the Partnership's Annual Planning meeting alongside four of the six Provincial SGs as well as key national government partners.



Image 12: Australian High Commissioner, His Excellency, Max Willis, joining Minister of Health, Hon. John Still Quetu, President of the Penama Provincial Government Council, Hon. Hilson Boe, MoET TED Director, John Kaltau and the Partnership's Director Mr Fremden Yanhambath, at the opening of the new Penama Skills Centre.

- **The Partnership provided logistical and management support for several high-level visits to the outer islands**, including a high-level delegation from Australia to Santo and Malekula in July, and several events on Tanna. Notably these included a visit of the Australian High Commissioner and several GOV Ministers for the launching of the Wasisi Road.

5. LESSONS LEARNED TO INFORM 2025 PRIORITIES

Through the November 2024-January 2025 period, the Partnership completed a comprehensive reflection and learning process to produce the Annual Monitoring Report for 2024. This includes consideration of progress made against what was expected/planned for each workstream in 2024, while a similar process was completed by the Partnership's provincial Skills Centres to complete their Quarter 4 reports for 2024.

Through this process, **the Partnership identified a number of lessons learned that has informed the development of our priorities for 2025, including:**

- With most of the Partnership's work being delivered in the provinces, the problems with Air Vanuatu and regular flight delays and cancellations continue to have an impact on the delivery of our priorities. **The Partnership has previously identified the need to identify and train a cohort of local coaches across the different sectors** in which it is working. This needs to be prioritised in 2025 to ensure that skills activities can be delivered even when lead coaches and/or Partnership staff are unable travel from other islands.
- The Partnership spends considerable time and effort on the delivery of complex activities and projects that involve multiple stakeholders, including national and provincial government partners and local communities. **The team identified several examples of projects where roles and responsibilities were not clear and where partners did not contribute the resources they had initially committed (including human resources), leading to delays.** Building on partnership training completed in 2024, the Partnership will endeavour to complete 'ways of working' discussions with partners as part of the planning stage before work begins on complex initiatives, including the delivery of infrastructure projects, to ensure roles, responsibilities and contributions are clear.
- **Results from the Graduate Tracer Survey show that a high proportion of male graduates from accredited training are gaining employment or undertaking further study,** demonstrating the value of the training, particularly for ni-Vanuatu from rural and remote locations. **However, the results also show that the proportion of female graduates gaining employment is less than for male graduates,** likely because of social norms regarding women's roles and assumptions about their ability to work in traditionally male-dominated industries.
- The Partnership supports the delivery of skills development activities across all provinces, and our human resources are thinly stretched. **The team has identified the need to ensure we are consistently 'following up' with our clients after the delivery of skills training,** to ensure new knowledge and skills are being applied and to maximise the impact of our work.
- **More intensive governance and business management support is required for Hub Managers and Board Members across all provincial Handicraft Hubs.** The Partnership has not published annual sales records from across the provincial hubs in 2024 due to concerns about the accuracy of the data. A key priority for the Partnership in 2025 is to ensure that the Hub managers strengthen their knowledge and expertise in financial management and recordkeeping to ensure stakeholders have confidence in the data that is reported.
- In recent years, the Partnership has overhauled its planning cycle and the process it uses for approvals of skills development activities. While this has worked well, **there was some uncertainty from staff early in 2024 about which activities had been 'approved' by the Senior Management Team, and in particular what it meant for some activities to be 'parked'.** The Partnership will introduce a series of follow-up meetings between Skills Centre Managers, Workstream Leads, and the Senior Management Team in early 2025 to ensure there is clarity about what has been 'approved' for delivery for the year ahead.