



Image 1: Noella Rory (right), the Sanma Creative Industry Community Company (SCICC) Manager with Bronia Dick (left) a client with a disability and her carer proudly showcasing their products during the 2025 'Vanuatu Made' Event.

SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

6-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

JULY - DECEMBER 2025



Image 2: SCICC products on display during the 2025 'National Arts Festival' in Tanna.

INTRODUCTION

This progress report provides an update on the Skills for Creative Industries (SfCI) workstream over the six-month period from July to December 2025. The activities were planned with the collaboration of the Department of Industry (DoI), Vanuatu Intellectual Property (VanIPO), and Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)'s provincial Skills Centre. The primary focus areas for the second half of 2025 included:

Product Development:

- Delivering skills training to key craft clients, including financial literacy skills activities and product quality activities in Santo, Malo and Tanna.
- Supporting copyright and registration of products through continued collaboration with VanIPO.

Sustainable Hub Development:

- Facilitating coaching for Managers and members of Handicraft Hub Boards to enable them to take more responsibility in supporting the hubs to thrive.
- Supporting the Handicraft Hubs to establish new links with domestic and international wholesale customers.

Brand and Market Access:

- Supporting client and hub attendance at major trade shows including National Art & Culture Festival, Torba Mini Vanuatu Made, National Vanuatu Made Event, Penama Island Basket Festival as well as the Darwin Aboriginal Arts Fair and the Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts Centre.

CONTEXT

Over the past six months, the delivery and progress of SfCI activities has been affected by several contextual changes.

- **Economic:** The Vanuatu Made brand continues to strengthen, supported by a growing middle class and increased local awareness, demand, and willingness to pay for high-quality, locally produced goods with social and cultural value. Improvements in product quality, presentation, and access to higher-value local and international markets are enabling producers to earn higher incomes and positioning Vanuatu handicrafts as premium products.
- **Political:** Relationships with the DOI have been strained due to frequent leadership changes; however, the Director's reinstatement has had a positive stabilising effect on the sector. This has contributed to renewed public confidence, evidenced during the Vanuatu Made event where the Director publicly promoted community participation, highlighted the sector's contribution to national economic growth, and encouraged inclusive participation of both women and men.
- **Social:** Growing local demand for high-quality products is revitalising traditional craft and weaving skills, alongside a renewed appreciation of traditional designs. Interest among young people in weaving is emerging, demonstrated by the inclusion and popularity of weaving in the recent National Skills Competition. In addition, producers and community leaders are showing increased awareness of intellectual property protection and cultural obligations associated with handicraft production.



Image 3: Tafea Creative Hub has added a new product from Erromango to their collection, a tapa bag.

PARTNERSHIP STATUS AND CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

Department of Industry

- The Partnership Implementation Framework (PIF) between SfCI and the DoI, signed in March 2024, concluded in March 2025. Due to leadership changes within the DoI in March 2025 and the anticipated completion of the current VSP phase in January 2026, no further discussions on additional co-investment for 2025 have taken place and a new PIF has not been developed.
- Instead, collaboration throughout 2025 has continued through regular joint activity planning. A key example is DoI staff participating in the Skills Exchange Trip to Australia as well as the successful delivery of the Vanuatu Made trade event. For both events, costs were shared between VSP and DoI with each partner covering their own costs directly.

Vanuatu Intellectual Property Office

- No formal PIF is currently in place with VanIPO, however, VSP and VanIPO continue to collaborate on shared activities on a case-by-case basis, supported through indirect co-contributions. An example of this is the recent handover of registration certificates to Futuna community leaders. The potential to formalise this collaboration through a PIF will be revisited in the next program phase.



Image 4: Members of SCICC, VAP and DoI in Darwin together with creative artisans during the 2025 Darwin Aboriginal Arts Fair.

QUANTITATIVE DATA (JULY-DEC 2025)

Skills providers engaged	Participation in Partnership supported skills training	Business clients supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none">11 skills providers were engaged – 10 women and one manThis includes eight ni-Vanuatu coaches, one expatriate coach and two international specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 participants, all women, one with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4 provincial handicraft hubs supported in Torba, Sanma, Malampa and Tafea35 craft associations supported across Vanuatu including 220 members:<ul style="list-style-type: none">18 men and 202 women, including 8 clients with disabilities (7 women and 1 man)

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Hub representation at the Vanuatu National Art Festival

- The National Arts Festival was held on Tanna in August showcasing products from across the islands of Vanuatu. This event provides an important platform for new market opportunities for the four provincial handicraft hubs.
- Through a partnership between the Tafea Skills Centre and the Kaljerol Senta on Tanna, products from all four provincial hubs were available for sale every day throughout the event, with each hub responsible for freighting their products to Tanna. The Partnership covered flights, accommodation, and per diems for hub Managers as well as one SCICC client to support the Tafea team.
- During the festival, products from clients in Torba, Sanma, Malampa, and Tafea were displayed, and many items sold out. By the end of the third day of the festival, close to VUV 1.1 million worth of products had been sold, the vast majority from the hubs.
- The event also featured traditional dances from various provinces and islands. This festival holds significant cultural value as it offers a rare opportunity for the public to witness traditional customs. Many customary dances and performances are sacred and normally cannot be shown publicly. Visitors were able to observe traditional dances, weaving practices, and the preparation of traditional foods. This was a significant occasion because these practices represent the identity of each island/community group and reinforce the importance of our culture.



Image 5: Provincial handicraft hub products on display during the 2025 National Arts Festival.

"I am happy to be part of the event, to see the need of producing quality products and to see different ways of doing things, the Vanuatu way is to show that our culture is our identity."

Meriam Lekie, Yumitu Craft producer.

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Registration certificates for Futuna producers

- At the closing of the National Art Festival in Tanna, the audience witnessed a significant moment as VanIPO officially handed over 12 registration certificates of Futuna style island baskets to the Futuna Island Chiefs. These certificates recognise the registration of their traditional products—items the community firmly believes are part of their cultural identity and must be protected for future generations.
- VSP partnered closely with VanIPO to ensure the certificates were presented directly to the Futuna chiefs, honoring customary leadership and acknowledging their guardianship over these cultural assets.
- This milestone holds great meaning for the people of Futuna. Opportunities to reach the island and engage directly with its communities are rare, making this recognition even more special. It also highlights the importance of safeguarding the unique traditional products that define Futuna’s heritage.
- This achievement directly supports the Government of Vanuatu’s priority to protect Vanuatu Made products and reinforces national efforts to preserve and promote traditional knowledge and cultural innovation.
- Our ongoing collaboration with VanIPO over the past years has led to the successful registration of 43 traditional products from across Vanuatu, including 26 from Torba, 3 from Malampa, 2 from Penama, and 12 from Tafea. This achievement strengthens the protection of indigenous knowledge and designs, increases producer awareness of intellectual property rights, and supports the long-term recognition and value of Vanuatu’s cultural products.



Image 6: Futuna Island Chiefs posing with their IP certificate with staff from VanIPO.

“This was been a priority for us for so many years, and today we are holding this certificate to protect the products passed on to us by our ancestors.” Nihmei Iiso, Futuna Area Administrator

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED



Image 7: The three Gapuwiyak participants with Australia – Northern Territory Senator, Malamdirri McCarthy.

Skills Exchange Trip to Darwin and Gapuwiyak in the Northern Territory, Australia

- A team of five female provincial hub artisans from SCICC, as well as a DOI officer and two VSP staff participated in an exchange visit to the Darwin Aboriginal Arts Fair and Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts Centre in Arnhem Land, Australia in August/September. The trip included hands-on learning sessions, cultural exchange activities, and practical workshops focused on product development, natural dyeing and weaving techniques.
- The skills exchange highlighted the unique Pacific and First Nations experiences, and progressed dialogue on cultural preservation and messaging. The objective of the trip was to share cross-cultural knowledge and learning to build understanding, trust and new friendships, as well as foster self-reflection.
- The skills exchange built the confidence of the Santo-based clients to collaborate and pursue innovation. Additionally, new techniques in pandanus processing and weaving were learned and can be integrated into traditional practices.
- The exchange provided opportunities to explore weaving in new forms; in making art pieces that tell stories about ni-Vanuatu culture that can elevate the value of works in the Vanuatu creative industries.

“The Gapuwiyak exchange visit opened my eyes to see firsthand how pandanus leaves can be used, and it gave me ideas that I can apply practically in our own context while being more creative. It has also inspired me to try to revive our natural dyes, which have been extinct for a long time.”— Noellyn Bwibwi

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Vanuatu Made Event 2025

- The 'Vanuatu Made' Trade Show was held over four days in September 2025, organised by DOI. The event brought together craft entrepreneurs from across the country to promote locally made products to both domestic and international buyers.
- Now in its seventh year, the event has grown considerably since its launch in 2019, becoming a major platform for showcasing the diversity, quality, and creativity of Vanuatu's provincial craft producers while opening pathways to new markets.
- The Partnership played an active role in the planning, coordination, and delivery of activities for the "Vanuatu Made" event. Through this support, the Partnership enabled the participation of 11 provincial artisans (all women including three clients with disabilities), three carers, four hub managers and one industry coach. Key contributions included arranging travel and accommodation for hub managers and clients with disability coming into Port Vila, as well as supporting on-the-ground logistics throughout the event.
- Across the event, the provincial hubs recorded strong sales compared to last year and high customer interest. Combined sales from the four hubs reached VUV 1,399,970 with all hub managers reporting improved performance compared to previous year when sales totaled VUV 854,005.



Image 8: A happy customer posing with her Torba product in her left hand during the trade show.

HUB	SALES (VUV)
Torba Handicraft Cooperative	405,830
Sanma Creative Industry Community Company	603,950
Malampa Handicraft Centre	149,200
Tafea Creative Hub	240,990

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Vanuatu Made – Vodafone Runway – Fashion Show

- SCICC clients participated for the first time in the Vanuatu Made – Vodafone Runway – Fashion Show. The fashion show is significant as it provides a national platform to showcase locally made textile products, increasing visibility for new market opportunities for designers and tailors.
- The entry from SCICC clients was unique as it was a collaboration between clients from Yumi Craft Association (textile and garment) and SCICC's pandanus weavers. Their Vanuatu Made creation, shirt and dress, was a stunning blend of garment, textile, and handicraft design.
- It was also strongly motivated by the experience gained from both DoI and the weavers after attending the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Fashion Show runway, which inspired the team to elevate local product presentation and embrace creative industry opportunities.
- The costume captivated the audience and stood out as the only piece designed by participants from outside Port Vila. During the fashion show there were comments from members of the public about the dress design being used for future wedding dresses.

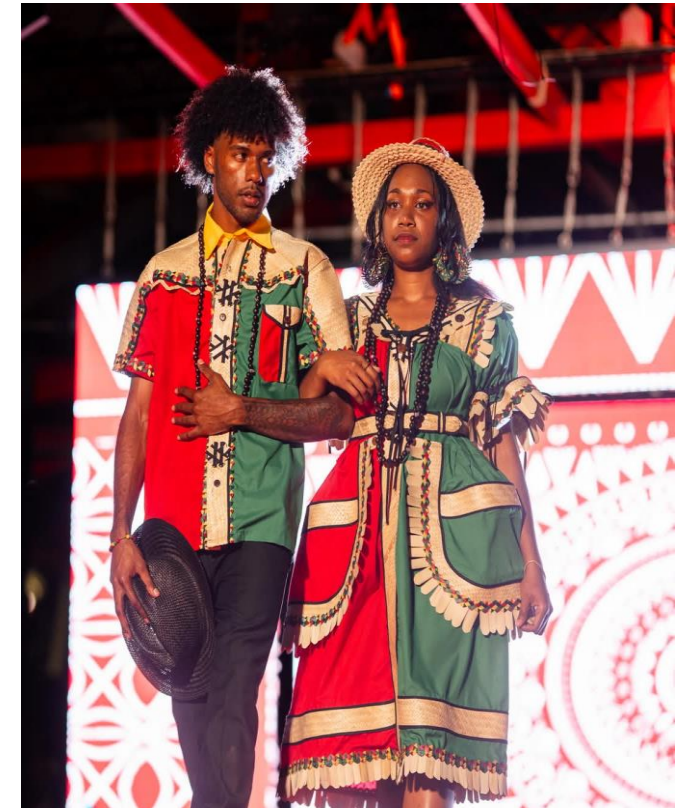


Image 9: The two models showcasing SCICC products during the Vodafone Runway – Fashion Show.

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

SfCI client monitoring results

Client monitoring was conducted with 49 craft producers—all women—including three women with disabilities, representing Malampa, Sanma, and Tafea. Major findings and lessons from this monitoring included:

- 1. Strong income growth across most producer groups.** Monitoring data shows 73% of SfCI-supported producers reported higher incomes compared to previous years, with particularly strong results among Santo/Malo clients (75%-100%). Income gains were also reported by two of three women with disabilities, indicating inclusive economic benefits.
- 2. High relevance of VSP skills and market access support.** Almost all producers rated VSP support as highly relevant to their livelihoods, with 94% identifying skills training and 97% identifying market access as important or very important to their income and business activities. All women with disabilities confirmed both forms of support were very important for income generation.
- 3. Strong association membership supports inclusion and resilience.** Association membership among clients is high, with 88% of producers belonging to associations. All Tafea producers, Sanma hatmakers and textile producers, and women with disabilities are association members. These collective structures strengthen inclusion, peer learning, market access, and resilience to economic and climate-related shocks.
- 4. Uneven outcomes highlight need for targeted Malampa support.** Results vary significantly by location, with Malampa-based handicraft producers experiencing weaker outcomes. 83% of these clients (5 of 6 clients) reported lower incomes, alongside lower association membership and limited recent skills participation. Targeted re-engagement directly with clients in Malampa is needed to strengthen skills, market access, and collective participation.

ADDITIONAL RESULTS (CROSS CUTTING)



Clients with disabilities attending Vanuatu Made 2025

- VSP supported three craft clients with disabilities from Torba, Sanma and Tafea to attend Vanuatu Made in Port Vila with their carers. This has resulted in several positive outcomes:
 - By showcasing the skills, talent, and high-quality products made by clients with disabilities, VSP is helping shift public perceptions and strengthening recognition of weavers with disabilities as valuable contributors to the local creative economy. Additionally, by ensuring people with disabilities are represented in national events, VSP is demonstrating the government's commitment to inclusion, equal opportunity, and sustainable livelihoods for all producers across provinces.
 - Participating in a national platform has helped to boost client self-esteem and motivation and reinforces a sense of inclusion and belonging within the broader artisan community.
 - Participation in the event has increased our clients chances of connecting with new customers, gaining orders, and building stronger networks with designers, buyers, and other producers. For example, Victoria from Torba received new direct orders for her moon baskets from several government workers.

Image 10: Victoria Doran, a client with disability (left), standing with fellow client Christina Sirig and Torba Handicraft Manager, Linrose Bisiwei, attending 2025 Vanuatu Made Event in Port Vila.

"The clients with disability deserve a chance like this to experience and witness how the products are valued by the customers." Linrose Bisiwei, Torba Handicraft Manager

ANNUAL QUANTITATIVE DATA (JAN-DEC 2025)

Skills providers engaged	Participation in Partnership supported skills training	Business clients supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none">13 skills providers were engaged including 12 women and one man. This includes nine ni-Vanuatu coaches, two expatriate coaches and two international specialists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">152 participants (2 men, 150 women including 7 women with disabilities).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Four provincial handicraft hubs supported in Torba, Sanma, Malampa and Tafea.35 craft associations supported across Vanuatu including 220 members:<ul style="list-style-type: none">18 men, 202 women including 8 clients with disabilities (7 women and 1 man).

SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES WORK PLAN SUMMARY FOR 2025

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	END OF YEAR STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Product Development	Adequate progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Due to budget constraints, the Partnership was able to deliver only two product development skills activities between July-December. A follow-up coaching workshop was conducted with clients from the Yumitu Craft Association and headwear weavers to build their confidence and creativity in producing high-quality contemporary baskets for sale at the National Arts Festival and Vanuatu Made event. ▪ The Gapuwiyak skills exchange visit, attended by five clients from the Sanma Creative Industry Community Company, provided tremendous exposure, enhancing their understanding of product quality and brand presentation. ▪ The solar dryer pilot in Malo/Santo continues to produce high-quality pandanus, with most of the dried pandanus used by headwear weavers to complete orders for both the National Arts Festival and Vanuatu Made event, supporting consistent product supply and market readiness. ▪ SfCI continues to work with VanIPO to support identification and registration of quality products with 43 traditional products from across Vanuatu now registered.

SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES WORK PLAN SUMMARY FOR 2025

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	END OF YEAR STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Sustainable Hub Development	Limited progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Despite ongoing budget constraints, a number of important activities have been undertaken in this space. The Malampa Handicraft Centre (MHC) experienced several operational challenges and was without a manager for some months. Following a thorough recruitment and selection process, a new manager was appointed and commenced duties in September. ▪ With the appointment of the new manager, the MHC Board identified the need to clarify and strengthen ways of working with the Partnership. A dedicated discussion was therefore held, which supported Board members to better understand key roles and responsibilities, particularly the lines of communication between the Partnership and the business. An induction was also conducted for the new Malampa Handicraft Centre Manager. ▪ The Provincial Handicraft Forum, held for the second time, proved to be a valuable learning initiative. The forum brought together the four provincial hub managers (THC, SCICC, MHC and TCH), one expatriate coach, a local coach, and SfCI staff to share information, experiences, challenges and best practices. While collaboration and peer learning were strong, ongoing issues related to sustainability and weak governance continue to affect operations, client relationships and income generation in all hubs. The forum highlighted several important lessons for SfCI in its efforts to continuously adapt support to strengthen hub and client performance.

SKILLS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES WORK PLAN SUMMARY FOR 2025

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	END OF YEAR STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Enhancing the Vanuatu Made Brand Awareness and Promotion	Adequate progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuous collaboration with DOI in promoting Vanuatu made products both locally and overseas has emerge to be a success with Tafea Creative Hub to continue to supply to Auckland Museum for their Christmas sale. Their latest shipment to Auckland consisted of fans, salusalu, and purses. ▪ SCICC has also recently sent their first ever orders to Fiji (Rise beyond the Reef and Sequitur Resorts) which is a breakthrough to sending their product after so many years of interest from Fiji market. ▪ Cruise Ship Management (Royal Caribbean has expressed keen interest in SCICC hand-woven hats through “Vanuatu Made” outlet Organic Paradise in Port Vila. ▪ The National Arts and Culture Festival held on Tanna in August, followed by the Vanuatu Made Event in September, once again provided powerful exposure for our handicraft hubs. ▪ Participation in these events not only increased visibility for the hubs but also strengthened producer confidence, market readiness, and understanding of buyer expectations.

LESSONS LEARNED AND ACTIONS

Lesson 1: There is confusion about the roles of hub managers and coaches, with some managers feeling that certain coaches are overlapping or taking on responsibilities intended for them. This lack of clarity affects teamwork, workflow, and the overall coordination of activities within the hubs.

Actions:

- A flow chart was developed for Tafea Creative Hub outlining responsibilities, boundaries, and reporting lines for hub managers, coaches, and other SfCI team members. We will do the same for other hubs.
- Facilitate regular check-ins and coordination meetings between managers, coaches, and the central SfCI team to strengthen collaboration and avoid duplication.

Lesson 2: Climate resilience and diversification require further strengthening for all SfCI clients. Only 55% of producers are taking steps to improve climate resilience compared to 70% of farmer clients, and just 53% have diversified income streams compared to 90% of farmers.

Actions:

- Future product development skills training should include climate adaptation and diversification, particularly in high-vulnerability locations.
- Solar dryers could be rolled out in other locations (Tanna/Malekula) once pilot on Santo/Malo is completed.

Lesson 3: Despite adaptive learning and programming efforts from SfCI, it is unclear whether the current provincial hub models are the most appropriate approach for each local context. Despite ongoing support from the Partnership, sustainability and local ownership continue to be at risk, indicating that the model may not be fit for purpose in strengthening market access for local craft producers

Actions:

- Review the hubs' sustainability report (received in December 2025) and discuss findings with key national and provincial partners.
- Create space for partners to take a stronger leadership role in supporting Hub Boards of Directors.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS IN 2025



- Over 2025, the SfCI workstream has continued to strengthen women’s participation, incomes, and visibility of Vanuatu’s creative industries. Skills training, product development, and market access support have translated into tangible results, with 75% of producers surveyed reporting increased income and high satisfaction with VSP support. Inclusion outcomes have been good, with women with disabilities actively participating in national trade events for the first time.
- However, due to an ambitious work plan for the year, only adequate progress has been made. This was due in part to end of phase arrangements impacting on work planning with several skills activities postponed due to time and budget constraints.
- The provincial handicraft hubs strengthened their national and international presence through major trade events, cultural festivals, and cross-cultural exchanges, while collaboration with government partners supported intellectual property protection and promotion of Vanuatu Made products. However, overall performance of the hubs demonstrates the ongoing issue of hub sustainability needs to be addressed as a priority in the coming year with a review of the viability of the respective business models.
- While progress has been stronger in Santo and Tanna, there is an opportunity to strengthen producer and hub climate resilience in all provinces.

2026 PRIORITIES

In October 2025, the SfCI team completed a 'stret toktok' with the Partnership's Quality Systems team. This provided an opportunity to reflect on results achieved during the phase, consider changes in the operating context and the extent to which these create opportunities or challenges, and to discuss priority areas for the next phase.

The SfCI team plans to work across the following priority and long-term goals for the future, though these cannot be confirmed until the contractual arrangements, including budget, are finalised for the period from 1 February 2026 onwards.

- Authentic, respectful partnerships with DOI and other actors, with partners demonstrating autonomy and leadership in the handicrafts sector
- Increased sustainable and innovative quality production by existing and new craft producers that meets local and export demand
- Sustainable market access models operating without VSP budget support or oversight
- More young people with handicraft skills and interest in the sector through stronger, effective community craft associations

The specific activities to be delivered within these priority areas also need to be discussed with key partners including DoI and ORCBDS once the contractual arrangements for the extension have been finalised.

KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

RISKS	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
<p>Provincial handicraft hubs continue to rely on VSP for financial assistance and support. For example the Tafea Hub Manager resigned towards the end of 2025 and the Board has not been proactive to replace her.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the hubs’ sustainability report (received in December 2025) and discuss findings with key national and provincial partners. ▪ Create space for partners to take a stronger leadership role in supporting Hub Boards of Directors and for the Board to take a more proactive approach to resolving emerging issues.
<p>Provincial handicraft hub models are currently not sustainable, and, despite continued adaptive assistance, the Boards of Directors are not proactively driving the hubs to strength market channels. If they fail, this may reduce access to market and income generating opportunities for SfCI clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refocus SfCI efforts on strengthening market access for producer associations, including—but not limited to—engagement with the provincial hubs, to reduce dependency and diversify market access for better income-generation outcomes.
<p>There is still a lack of young people interested in creative industries as a form of cultural heritage and income generation. These is a a risk that some traditional patterns and designs will die out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work more closely with existing 32 client craft associations to encourage new members from local youth groups. ▪ Consider opportunities to support craft skills in schools through Training Provider Support ‘TVET in Schools’ priorities. ▪ Work with partners to promote craft as a viable and inclusive form of income generation.