

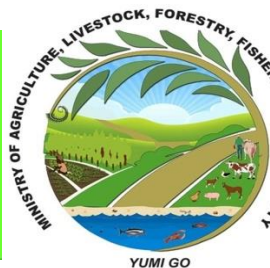


Image 1: Mrs Serel Julun and Mr Guytou Julun, owners of the Yomal Construction Company in Malekula working together on site.

SKILLS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

6-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY - JUNE 2025



INTRODUCTION

- This report provides a progress update on the Skills for Infrastructure (Sfi) workstream over the period from January – June 2025.
- The Sfi workstream provides support in 1) infrastructure workforce development, 2) construction and plumbing skills training and 3) procurement, logistics and quality checks in partnership with the Provincial Skills Centres and their local and national partners.
- Initiatives supported by Sfi under the three priority areas include:
 - Delivery of ‘on-the-job’ accredited building design/construction and plumbing training for community development projects (Penama, Sanma, Torba and Tafea).
 - Support for construction and plumbing trainees who have completed formal trades qualifications to establish new businesses.
 - Delivery of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) projects through skills transfer in rural and remote locations in partnership with the Department of Water Resources (DoWR), provincial governments and local communities.
 - Completing and launching the reconstruction of the Chiefs’ Nakamal in Port Vila in partnership with Malvatumauri and Pacific Australia Skills (formerly Australian Pacific Training Coalition- APTC).



Image 2: Accredited plumbing training in action on Tanna

CONTEXT

- Cancellation of flights by private airlines such as Air Taxi, Belair and Unity Airlines have impacted the delivery of our planned activities. For example, a quality check on the vanilla processing building on Aneityum was delayed due to the cancellation of the flight.
- Securing co-contributions from partners has been challenging in this reporting period. The lack of co-contributions is partly caused by lack of access to funding due to government processes (e.g. Local Purchase Order (LPO)). In addition, DoWR is, in some cases, 100% reliant on development partner funds (such as UNICEF) to complete a project.
- Vanuatu's construction industry has a number of skills gaps and the demand for skills fluctuates. Matching skills supply with work-ready graduates and jobs can be challenging. When demand declines this pushes many skilled ni-Vanuatu to find better-paying seasonal work abroad. As such, when trained people leave, Vanuatu struggles to build up its own skilled workforce.
- Bad weather conditions have caused schedule changes for important events such as graduation ceremonies and building launches. For example, the re-scheduling of the Melsisi plumbing graduation meant the originally-invited chief guests could no longer attend the event.



Image 3: Bad weather conditions on Pentecost island caused the rescheduling of the plumbing graduation ceremony.

PARTNERSHIP STATUS AND CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

- Through the Sfl workstream, the Partnership currently has an ongoing partnership in place with Department of Water Resources (DoWR) and Department of Local Authorities (DLA) to support provincial WASH service delivery.
- The Partnership also has an agreement with registered training provider, Pacific Vocational Training Centre (PVTTC), to deliver WASH skills training in Tanna until the 31st of December 2025.
- Additionally, as part of the construction of a vanilla processing building on Aneityum, there is a partnership in place with the Tafea Provincial Government Council and the Tafea Department of Agribusiness and Rural Development (DARD) to share costs.

PROJECT	PARTNER	DIRECT PROJECT CO-INVESTMENT
Tanna Plumbing Training	Department of Water Resources	VT 3,000,000 (as part of catering for the trainees and procurement of basic tools kits for the trainees)
Vanilla Processing Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tafea Provincial Government Council DARD Tafea 	VT 150,000 VT 250,000

WORK PLAN SUMMARY FROM JAN-JUN 2025

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Workforce Development	Good progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Good progress has been made in supporting trainees to establish new trade businesses and access additional income-generating opportunities.So far, two governance workshops have been delivered for clients in Shefa and Sanma. In Sanma, a supplementary computing workshop was also provided to support company leaders with their business operations.On Tanna, a key milestone was achieved by the female-led Youngster Bargain Company, which successfully secured the contract to construct the new Central Tanna Area Council building. An Sfl quality coach supported the Company Manager during the application process and continues to provide guidance for project implementation.

WORK PLAN SUMMARY FROM JAN-JUN 2025

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Small-scale, replicable projects	Adequate progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Renovations to the Malampa Disability and Children's Desk office were completed and officially launched in May.Small-scale WASH projects and water system upgrades in Merelava and two locations on Ambae are progressing as planned, with only minor delays caused by shipping disruptions.The water systems upgrade for West Gaua is yet to commence.

WORK PLAN SUMMARY FROM JAN-JUN 2025

WORK PLAN PRIORITY AREAS &/OR GREEN SHOOTS	STATUS UPDATE (no progress, limited progress, adequate progress, good progress, excellent progress)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects of national or provincial significance 	<p>Good progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several significant infrastructure and training projects have been completed and launched in 2025 to date. These include the Chiefs' Nakamal in Port Vila, the Vanuatu Travel Information Centre – Malekula Branch, Ureparapara and Merelava Fish Markets, the Gaua Petroleum Cooperative, and the Losalava TVET in Schools classroom. The Tanna Plumbing training, delivered in partnership with the Department of Water Resources (DoWR) and PTVc, was completed, with graduations scheduled for August. The launch of the Hokai Business Hub has been postponed to Q3 in 2025. Ongoing projects scheduled for completion by the end of October include the South East Area Council building in Santo, delivered as part of the Certificate II in Building and Construction, and the Vanilla Processing Building on Aneityum. Progress on the Vanilla Processing Building has been impacted by continued delays related to material shipments and design modifications during implementation.

QUANTITATIVE DATA (JANUARY - JUNE 2025)

SKILLS PROVIDERS ENGAGED	PARTICIPATION IN PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTED SKILLS TRAINING	BUSINESS CLIENTS SUPPORTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">4 industry skills providers engaged, all men4 trades sector training providers engaged (through 2 nationally recognised training institutions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">128 participants including 19 women and 109 men.3 participants with disabilities - all men	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3 construction companies, established by Skills Centre clients, supported to successfully win new contracts5 plumbing businesses established in Tanna after the completion of plumbing training4 plumbing businesses established on Pentecost after the Melsisi plumbing training

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Infrastructure Workforce Development

- The work of the Partnership to strengthen infrastructure sector workforce development has significantly increased in this reporting period.
- Since 2019, across five provinces (Malampa, Penama, Sanma, Tafea and Torba) 129 plumbing trainees (117 men and 12 women) have completed the nationally accredited Certificate II in Plumbing. This has resulted in a significant skills boost for the WASH sector and contributed towards the vision of the Department of Water Resources of decentralised community WASH infrastructure management.
- The Chiefs' Nakamal reconstruction in Port Vila boosted local employment and skills. Trainees who completed the construction skills training program on site graduated with work-ready skills and knowledge. For example, 19 trainees have established their own construction company, the Satomafea Construction Company.
- Since 2021 a total of 15 local construction companies have been established since completing Certificate II in Construction training to support the provincial government's desire to expand services to people in rural locations. This has resulted in over VUV18 million worth of contracts. There have been a number of positive impacts of training on productivity, employment and service delivery.



Image 4: Mary Lawilu receives a construction contract from Joe lautim, Tafea Province Secretary General, to construct Central Tanna Area Council building through her business Youngster Bargain Construction. Mary is the first women in Tafea Province to win a construction contract.

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

WASH Merelava

- The Merelava WASH project successfully reached and included approximately 300 people in all communities across the island, ensuring no household or village was left behind. By extending the project to every corner of Merelava, the initiative fostered inclusivity and equity in water access, improving the overall health and resilience of the population.
- The project facilitated workshop-based training focused on plumbing skills and system installation through support from DoWR. 22 community members participated in this skills activity including four women and 18 men. These workshops provided local community members with hands-on, practical experience, enabling them to understand how the water systems work and how to fix minor technical issues. This local training approach built in-house capacity and empowered individuals with new skills, contributing to the sustainability of the water systems.
- Through the training of local technicians, establishment of water committees, and deployment of community WASH officers, the responsibility for water management has been placed in the hands of the people, ensuring quicker response to issues, stronger community ownership, and long-term resilience of the water infrastructure across the island.

"Merelava Island is vulnerable to natural disasters... Now that the project is complete, we are filled with happiness and relief. We can access clean water from taps installed right near our homes." Merelava Community Member



Image 7: A woman with disability finally can access water from her door .

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Melsisi Plumbing skills training and graduation

- The Melsisi Plumbing Training Certificate II program was successfully delivered, with 28 trainees graduating – 26 men and 2 women. This diverse and inclusive cohort reflects a strong commitment to equality and inclusion in technical training.
- After completing the training, graduates established four plumbing businesses strategically based within the four Area Councils of Pentecost Island. These businesses serve as localised hubs for technical services, contributing to economic development and resilience at the community level.
- The trainees were actively engaged in a range of critical WASH activities even before they completed their course. This included quick fixes and emergency repairs to water supply systems damaged by tropical cyclones and construction of new water systems within their local councils.
- The training has also created new pathways for income generation. Notably, one of the trained plumbers has already secured overseas employment in the sector, highlighting the broader value and potential of the skills gained through the program.



Image 5: Trainees from the Melsisi Plumbing training during their graduation celebrations on Pentecost.

“Before the project the community and engineers were saying that it was impossible to run a water project from this water source due to the location. Three months after completion of the course, water is now accessible to 78 household with 400 people in Londar community.” Assistant Secretary General, Penama Province.

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Vanilla Processing Building, Aneityum

- This building project, coordinated by the Tafea Skills Centre, has been substantially completed by the contractor at the end of June.
- The delivery of this activity has involved Tafea Provincial Government Council, Department of Agriculture and the Port Patrick community. This Vanilla building will be used as a vanilla processing facility for local vanilla farmers on Aneityum. It will be equipped with machines such as a powder crusher, juice extractor and electric stove.
- The building has been designed to be multi-functional with dedicated spaces for vanilla processing and office and administration space.
- It will enable most Aneityum Vanilla farmers to process their vanilla in their own location, rather than having to send their product to Port Vila or Tanna.
- Final works are expected to be completed by end of July, and an official opening is planned for September.



Image 6: A front view of the vanilla storage unit on Aneityum taken during a mandatory quality check of the building.

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED: WOMENS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Women’s participation in trade-based courses over the period from January-June 2025 included:
 - 7 women participated in Certificate II Plumbing training in Tanna.
 - 2 women, graduated with Certificate II in Plumbing in Melsisi.
 - 3 women graduated with Certificate II in Building Construction at VIT and were part of the trainees who re-built the Chiefs’ Nakamal. They are now members of the newly established Satomafea Construction Company.
 - 5 women who participated in construction training in Santo in 2024 are now part of the newly established Nojovan Construction Company. This year, with support from the Sanma Skills Centre, they won a contract to build the new Tasmate Health Centre.
- These results demonstrate that, with the support of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, women are slowly moving into the trades sector, one that has been traditionally considered a masculine area of work. This is now becoming a more accepted practice amongst training providers and within communities, including in geographically remote areas, gently influencing social norms which have previously prevented women from being part of trades-based training and work.

“The participation of women in our plumbing training programs is not just a milestone—it’s a movement. It challenges outdated perceptions, opens doors to economic independence, and strengthens communities. Vanuatu Skills Partnership has been instrumental in supporting this transformation”. Lisa Toa, Training Manager, Pacific Vocational Training Centre



Image 7: Female trainees, Certificate II in Plumbing, Tanna Island

ADDITIONAL CROSSCUTTING RESULTS

- **Disability Inclusion**

- In 2025, 3 trainees with disabilities (all men) have participated in accredited training as part of Sfl projects in Tanna and Efate, representing 3% of all trainees.
- Sfl construction project designs are developed taking accessibility into consideration. So far in 2025, 5 accessible buildings have been completed and launched.

- **Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability**

- The Certificate II in Plumbing training delivered on Tanna by PVTC through the Tafea Skills Centre is equipping trainees with the skills to build resilient water infrastructure. This involves understanding how to design and install systems that can withstand extreme weather events, such as increased rainfall or prolonged droughts, ensuring communities have reliable access to clean water despite a changing climate.
- Sfl construction project designs are developed using ‘building back better’ principles.



Image 8: The newly opened, accessible Vanuatu Travel Information Centre- Malekula Branch.

LESSONS LEARNED AND ACTIONS

Lesson 1: Business registration and securing contacts are proceeding well in Tanna for construction graduates, especially females.

Action:

- Apply lessons learned from the experience in Tanna with Youngster Building Contractor that could be applied in other locations; e.g. Penama

Lesson 2: Lack of planning and appropriate scheduling of training impacts on project completion for Sfl projects; this includes Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) being missed from the process.

Action:

- Allow sufficient time to complete all planning and development of project schedules prior to any activity commencement. Including the completion of EIAs.
- The health check evaluation conducted in Tanna provides an effective mechanism to avoid confusion with planning roles and responsibilities and could be used with other projects.

Lesson 3: Trainees who have completed small engine maintenance need business development support during skills training to help them secure income-earning opportunities.

Action:

- Work with provincial training providers to deliver customised financial literacy, business start-up and digital skills training.

JUL-DEC 2025 PRIORITIES – UPDATE

Infrastructure Workforce Development:

- Ongoing trainee/ client business incubation support and pathways support to further education, including good governance workshops for construction and plumbing trainees in Malekula.

Projects of provincial or national significance including training components:

▪ **Existing Projects:**

- Completion of WASH facility for Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs' Nakamal.
- Completion and launch of Vanilla Storage Facility on Aneityum Completion.
- Completion, launch and graduation of Certificate II in Plumbing trainees and upgrade the Imaio Water system, South Tanna.
- Launching of Hokai Business House.
- Completion and launch of WASH project in Merelava (Torba) and Ambanga and Vandue (Penama) in addition to material support to DOWR's WASH systems work on Gaua.

▪ **New activities and projects:**

- Certificate II in Building Construction and construction of the Southeast Santo Council Office Building.

KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

RISKS	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The December 2024 earthquake recovery efforts are creating significant material scarcity in Port Vila, leading to frequent out of stocks where quoted building materials are often sold before we can secure them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with preferred suppliers to provide advance notice of procurement and work with them to secure the out-of-stock materials at the earliest possible time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to our significant remaining work plan, the timely completion of some activities by the end of October is at risk. This is primarily due to the ongoing challenges with our project partners' capacity to independently lead and take responsibility for their deliverables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more direct, hands-on support and close supervision to partners struggling with their assigned tasks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited construction sector vacancies in Vanuatu are driving skilled graduates overseas, causing a 'brain drain' due to a lack of local talent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with training providers to put in place pathways for graduate's transition to work in the construction industry. Provide more market access support and business development skills to trainees through our Workforce Incubation priority area.



Annex- list of current projects underway as part of Sfl priorities

1. Certificate II in Plumbing trainees and upgrade the Imaio Water system, South Tanna
2. Delivery of Certificate II in Building & Construction and construction of Southeast Santo Area Council Office Building, Santo
3. WASH Project in Merelava and Gaua, Torba Province
4. Opening of Hokai Building, Malekula
5. Construction of WASH facility, Chiefs' Nakamal, Port Vila
6. Construction of water systems for Vandue, Ambanga and Nanikama, Ambae
7. Construction of Vanilla Processing Building, Aneityum