



BETTER BALANCE STRATEGY

Working for a better balance in female and male roles, relations and opportunities for an inclusive and prosperous Vanuatu



CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	1
	1.1 The Vanuatu Skills Partnership – Aims	1
	1.2 Operational Structure	1
	1.3 Way of Working – Fasin blong Wok	2
2.	Gender Equality Context	4
3.	Guiding Policy Framework	5
4.	Applying Lessons From Evidence-Based Research	7
5.	Strategy Framework	9
	5.1 Activity Focus Areas	10
	Women’s Economic Empowerment	10
	Women in Leadership	10
	Ending Violence Against Women	10
	5.2 Intersectionality	11
	Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion	11
	Gender Equality and Climate Change Management	11
	5.3 Conceptual Framework	12
6.	Operating Principles	13
7.	Focus Area Strategies	15
	Annex 1: Balance of Power – Briefing Note	20
	Annex 2: References	22

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Vanuatu Skills Partnership – Aims

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership (the Partnership) is a locally-led, politically-aware initiative to achieve **decentralised service delivery and governance reform** through the vector of the national skills training system. The initiative supports *Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030*¹ and the *Australia-Vanuatu Aid Partnership Arrangement 2016–2019*² and operates **at two complementary levels**.

At the programmatic level, it aims to demonstrate, through small-scale models, how inclusive and quality-based skills training delivery can lead to locally relevant **inclusive growth outcomes**. Demonstrating such results enables the Partnership, in turn, to advocate and build demand for wholesale skills system improvement informed by these models. Simultaneously, the Partnership operates in a broader political sphere. Recognising that **domestic factors of power and politics** are central to any social change process, it supports the emergence and influence of a cohort of **developmental leaders** committed and equipped to drive **broad-based governance** reform.

Gender equality is intrinsically linked to the Partnership's understanding of developmental leadership and the shifts in power, governance, access and resource allocation that are required if Vanuatu is to achieve its national development goals of an inclusive and prosperous society. This **Better Balance Strategy** articulates how the Partnership will build on its work to date in achieving **greater equality in women's and men's roles, relations and opportunities** – in contextually effective ways, in line with national policy drivers, and drawing from evidence-based research, as well as its own lessons from implementation.

1.2 Operational Structure

The Partnership currently supports Skills Centres in four provinces. Now integrated under the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), these Centres have become the primary mechanism for **decentralised service delivery coordination**. Operating as a broker between demand and supply, they facilitate the delivery of training and business development support in the sectors of Tourism, Creative Industries, Agribusiness and Construction. In collaboration with the Department of Tourism/Vanuatu Tourism Office, the Department of Industry and the Department of Agriculture, the Centres contract local training providers and industry coaches to deliver targeted programs that will **maximise employment and business growth** in each province. Costs of training are funded through a co-financing mechanism, the **National Skills Development Fund**. Concurrently, through its head office in Port Vila, the Partnership works with its key national partners, the Tertiary Education Directorate (TED), the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA), the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MoJCS) and the Ministry of Climate Change, to **influence the policy and resourcing environment** for greater equity, quality, transparency, and mainstreaming of social inclusion and environmental sustainability within the skills training system. The Partnership has an explicit commitment to mainstream efforts in gender equality, disability inclusion and climate change management throughout all its activity.

¹ *Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030* (DSSPAC, 2016).

² *Australia-Vanuatu Aid Partnership Arrangement 2016–2019* (DFAT, 2016).

1.3 Way of Working – Fasin blong Wok

Supporting local leadership and **‘working with the grain’** of deeply-held cultural and religious drivers of the local context is core to the Partnership’s way of working. However, the conceptualisation of leadership within the Partnership does not correlate to traditional notions of the out-in-front, charismatic commander-in-chief. Rather, the developmental leadership of the Partnership is a **network of leaders** who are able to influence, broker coalitions, and create space for others for new ways of doing things and new levels of accountability³. In order to achieve this, the qualities prioritised and fostered in, and by, the women and men who drive the Partnership’s reformist work are not those reflected by conventional leadership models; **humility, sensitivity, altruism and emotional intelligence** are paramount, with leadership legitimacy built on a foundation of **trust and collaboration** rather than the exercise of power mandated through a formal position⁴.

Similarly, the Partnership’s perspective of ‘working with the grain’ **does not mean accepting the status quo** and reinforcing structural inequalities and harmful social norms. As highlighted in recent research⁵, there are, in all societies, multiple ‘grains’; being politically savvy and fostering collective local leadership is about finding which ones are developmentally inclined, and change processes that have local resonance and impetus. In this way, the Partnership seeks to effect structural change by drawing upon its networks, personal relationships and nuanced understanding of the operating context to identify entry points and opportunities, continuously balancing pragmatism with ambition – **‘playing the game to change the rules’**⁶. Framing concepts and strategies in ways that take into account sensitivities, trigger positive responses in terms of values, incentives and interests, and promote buy-in is a critical aspect of the Partnership’s approach.

The Partnership’s focus on influencing power dynamics and structural governance means that the Partnership is shifting understanding of **‘working politically’** in Vanuatu. ‘Politics’ is no longer seen as something outside of the development sphere of action, conducted by an elite, and often compromised, group of men. Rather, there is now a growing recognition that lasting change is only possible through engagement with state-building issues, including the relationship between government and society, leadership, and accountable representation. This has significant implications for broadening understanding of the roles of women and men in progressing social and political change.

3 *Effective support for Women’s Leadership in the Pacific: Lessons from the Evidence* (Howard, 2019).

4 This reflects the growing body of evidence on what constitutes effective leadership in the sphere of organisational psychology and business performance. See, for example, *Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders? (And How to Fix It)* (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019).

5 *Thinking and Working Politically to Support Developmental Leadership and Coalitions: The Pacific Leadership Program* (Denny & McLaren, 2016).

6 *The Bigger Picture: Gender and Politics in Practice* (Roche et al, 2018).



Supporting local leadership and working with the grain of deeply-held cultural and religious drivers of the local context is core to the Partnership's way of working

2. GENDER EQUALITY CONTEXT⁷

Over the past 20 years, there has been progress for women in Vanuatu. The gender gap in literacy and education has narrowed, and in some provinces, girls outperform boys in school attendance. In terms of labour participation, the proportion of women in waged employment has substantially increased. At a policy level, a significant achievement has been the introduction of the Family Protection Act approved in 2008, which provides legal protection for victims of violence. Various government ministries, including agriculture, public works, environment, health, education and lands have developed gender strategies and are taking proactive steps to integrate gender perspectives into their respective sectors.

However, despite these achievements, **much more progress is required to achieve a 'better balance'** between women and men's roles and status in society. A summary of the current situation is provided below:

- Women represent 40% of the labour force in both public and private sectors compared to 60% for men. More women than men are economically inactive, most being full-time homemakers caring for children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other family members.
- More women than men are involved in the informal economy making them more vulnerable to exploitation, unsafe working conditions and limited protection from labour laws.
- More women than men are involved in the subsistence economy which makes them more susceptible to poverty, climate change, disasters and other livelihood stresses.
- Despite gender parity being closely reached in school enrolment rates, women remain underrepresented in tertiary education and are less likely to be awarded government scholarships.
- Since independence in 1980, only 5 women have been elected into national parliament. Women represent just 3% of total senior/executive government positions. More often than not, within key institutions women are excluded from decision making processes.
- The opportunity to set up businesses is more limited for women than for men due to lesser access to capital and financial services. This is particularly the case for rural women.
- Gender based violence is a serious issue affecting women and girls. Approximately 60% of women in Vanuatu have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in their lives.
- The term 'gender equality' is perceived by a significant proportion of the population to be an externally imposed concept that is inconsistent with cultural and religious values and traditions. It also widely viewed as a concept and domain pertaining only to women.

⁷ The content in this section is primarily drawn from the *National Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019* (MoJCS, 2014).

3. GUIDING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The *Better Balance Strategy* is informed by the guiding policy framework of the Government of Vanuatu (GoV).

1. **Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 –2030** is the '*stamba*' road map for all Partnership activity, aligned with its opening statement:
2. The **National Gender Equality Policy of Vanuatu**, under the Department of Women's Affairs, through the Ministry of Justice and Community Services, provides complementary strategic guidance.

*Together we strive for a nation that is stable, sustainable and prosperous, so that all **people have a just and equal opportunity** to be well educated, healthy and wealthy.*

Inclusion is at the heart of the People's Plan, with the aim of *an inclusive society which upholds human dignity and **where the rights of all Ni-Vanuatu are supported, protected and promoted** in our legislation and institutions* (Society Goal 4).

This also includes **ensuring that everyone has access to** *the social and physical infrastructure they need to grow and prosper, including access to quality education and skills training* (Society Goal 2).

The *People's Plan* also reinforces the foundational importance of **Melanesian values** and recognises **the culture, traditional knowledge and Christian principles** of Vanuatu. This includes striving for peace and harmony at home and in communities by **ending all forms of violence against women and children** (Society Goal 4.2).

Strong and effective institutions are similarly emphasised, with a call for **political reforms** to ensure that these promote **representation of all ni-Vanuatu** (Society Goal 6).

This prioritises the four strategic areas of:
 a) Reducing Domestic and Gender Based Violence;
 b) Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment;
 c) Promoting Women's Leadership and Equal Political Participation; and
 d) Building a Foundation for Gender Mainstreaming.

Vanuatu has also committed to monitoring progress and reporting against the global **Sustainable Development Goals**. Implementation of this *Better Balance Strategy* will directly contribute to Goal 5: Gender Equality; Goal 11: Reducing Inequalities; and Goal 16: Inclusive Institutions.



Together we strive for a nation that is stable, sustainable and prosperous, so that all people have a just and equal opportunity to be well educated, healthy and wealthy

4. APPLYING LESSONS FROM EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

The *Better Balance Strategy* draws on the practical experiences and lessons learned of the Vanuatu Skills Partnership to date in achieving greater equality between the roles and status of women and men. In addition, the Partnership keeps itself abreast of leading relevant research in this field, drawing heavily on the evidence-based findings produced by the Australian Government-funded Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative (Pacific Women), the Pacific Research Program under the Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University, the Gender and Politics Practice Research Project under the Developmental Leadership Program through the University of Birmingham and La Trobe University, and the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA).

The following key lessons have been synthesised from this body of research and inform the Partnership's approach and strategy development:

- Deeply entrenched **norms, attitudes and perceptions** around concepts of gender equality, and the roles and legitimacy of men and women across social, economic and political spheres are the primary barrier to women's participation and voice. Without a shift in these norms – among both women and men – and the engagement of norm-influencing agents, women in Vanuatu will struggle to achieve agency and equality in all areas⁸.
- Like many social norms, conceptualisation of gender equality and the roles of women and men in society is a **profoundly sensitive issue**, intimately connected with culture, religion and tradition. This sensitivity means that **local actors must be the drivers** of any social norm change, actors who are part of the social fabric and can progress change from a place of shared identity and legitimacy⁹.
- Promoting gender equality through **focusing on women only is problematic**; approaches need to facilitate change for men and involve men and community leaders as an integral part in driving social norm change. Approaches that reinforce perceptions of gender equality as a 'zero sum' game – women win, men lose – do not gain traction or foster broad-based buy-in¹⁰.
- Mainstream definitions of political leadership limit understanding and acceptance of women's involvement in the political sphere; **broadening understanding of the notion and function of leadership** is critical to expanding women's participation¹¹.
- Supporting women to be effective leaders requires more than facilitating women to obtain a leadership position; it requires **ongoing support**, with a focus on the fostering of **conducive environments**¹².
- Attempts in addressing women's agency and leadership have largely been piecemeal, uncoordinated and, at times, divisive. There is a need to **align, coordinate, consolidate and build cohesion of effort** across agencies and actors, taking into account comparative strengths and experience. This also means involving more than the 'usual suspects' in initiatives around gender equality and supporting approaches which focus on **collective action**, rather than individual/organisational agendas.

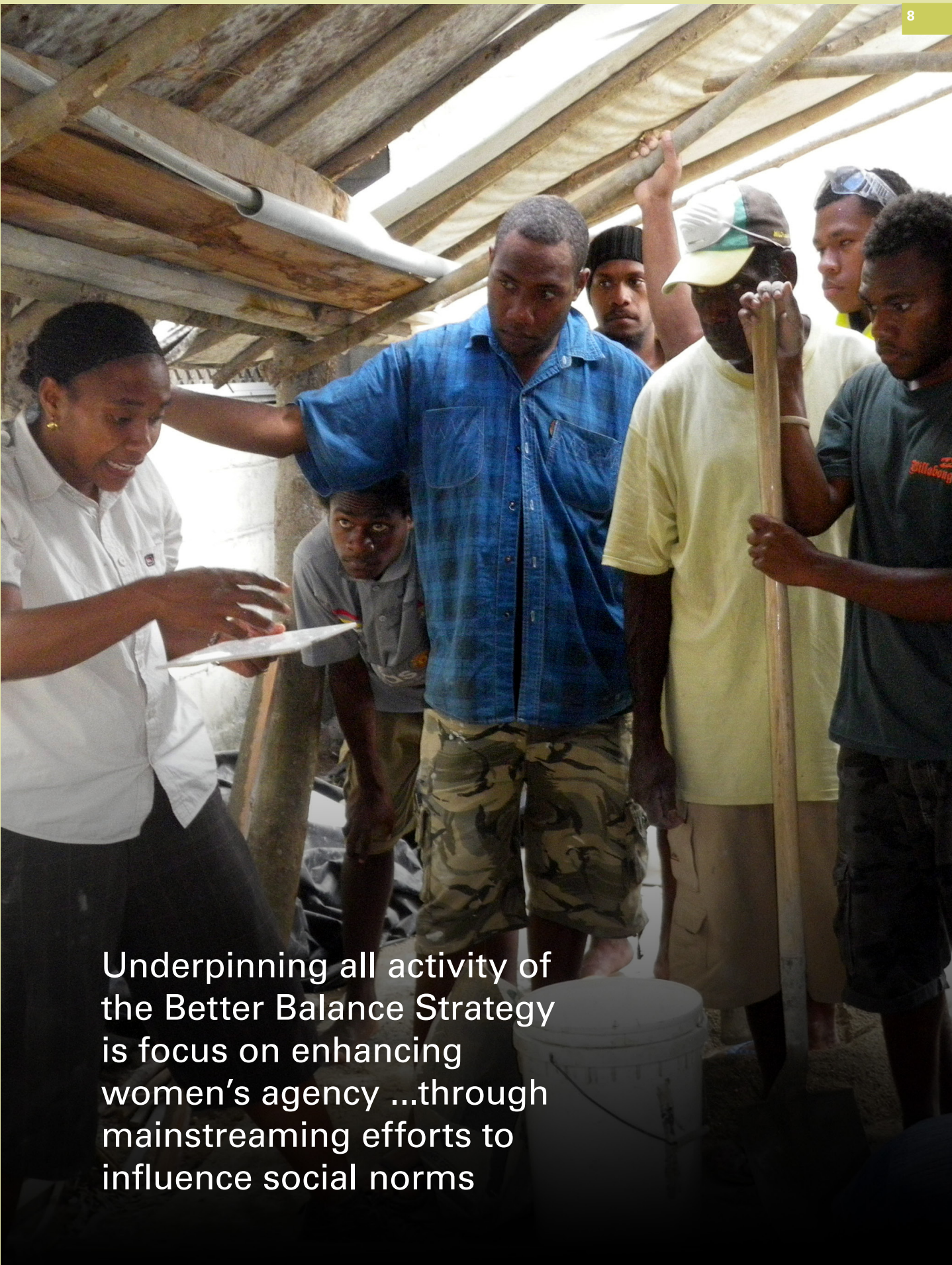
⁸ *Balance of Power – Investment Design Document* (DFAT, 2019).

⁹ *Politically Informed, Gender Aware Programming* (Derbyshire et al, 2018).

¹⁰ Howard, 2019.

¹¹ DFAT, 2019.

¹² Howard, 2019.



Underpinning all activity of the Better Balance Strategy is focus on enhancing women's agency ...through mainstreaming efforts to influence social norms

5. STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Partnership is supported in the implementation of its *Better Balance Strategy* through a tripartite, **co-investment partnership** between the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MoJCS) and the regional Pacific Women initiative. Pacific Women supports countries to meet the commitments made in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration.

The MoJCS is a core member of the Partnership's Steering Committee. Through the Governance Projects Officer and the Director General, the MoJCS ensures that all work of the Partnership conducted under the *Better Balance Strategy* remains aligned with GoV priorities and that all outcomes and lessons learned are incorporated into GoV national and international reporting.

The relationship with Pacific Women not only provides the Partnership with critical additional funding but it enables the Partnership and its stakeholders to be connected with regional networks, initiatives and learning opportunities.

Consistent with the national policy framework of Vanuatu outlined above, the Partnership has designed its Focus Areas to reflect the intended outcomes of the Pacific Women Road Map¹³ which are as follows:

- Women have **expanded economic opportunities** to earn income and accumulate economic assets.
- Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through **leadership at all levels of decision-making**.
- **Violence against women is reduced** and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.

A specific collaboration between the Partnership and Pacific Women, involving targeted co-investment and joint action through the Pacific Women **Balance of Power** initiative, has been established in relation to Focus Area 2, Women in Leadership. A Briefing Note on this initiative is found at Annex 1.

Underpinning all activity of the *Better Balance Strategy* is a focus on **enhancing women's agency** – the capability to exercise choice and voice – through **mainstreaming efforts to influence social norms**. In this way, support provided to individual women through the Partnership will be complemented by strategies that seek to influence broader structural barriers. There is also an acknowledgement that all Focus Areas are **inter-related and inter-dependent** and cannot be viewed or acted upon in isolation.

Reporting against the three Focus Areas will be undertaken every six-months (see the Partnership's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan for more detail). Reports will comprise quantitative and qualitative data, including in-depth case stories, and are to be presented at the Partnership Steering Committee meetings and also provided to Pacific Women. Analysis of the results achieved through implementation of the Strategy, as well as a '**Better Balance Political Economy Analysis**', will be conducted annually as part of the Partnership's annual Reflection and Strategic Planning Retreat. This Analysis will be particularly focused on enablers and blockers of social norm change, and successful approaches and entry points that can be maximised.

¹³ *Pacific Women Road Map* (Pacific Women, 2017).

5.1 Activity Focus Areas

Women's Economic Empowerment

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership will continue to support women's access to economic opportunities and decision-making over economic resources through the service delivery of the provincial Skills Centres – under the work-streams of 'Skills for Tourism', 'Skills for Creative Industries', and 'Skills for Agribusiness'. Work-stream activity is purposely selected to **maximise business growth and employment prospects for women**, with specific interventions to promote women's participation in non-traditional trades. A **holistic value chain approach** will continue whereby **inter-related and cross-reinforcing factors** in economic prosperity are considered, including: a) access to appropriate skills for product/service development as well as business and marketing; b) access to capital, equipment and markets; c) confidence and self-belief; d) family and community support and involvement; e) integrated Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) training; and f) awareness of women's multiple responsibilities, ensuring access to economic opportunity leads to improved well-being and not increased burden¹⁴.

Women in Leadership

The evolution of the Partnership's work in supporting women in leadership reflects the deeper engagement of the Partnership as a whole with the centrality of developmental and collective leadership in driving positive social change. The Partnership will continue to promote women's participation as leaders in the skills system – including within training providers, sector management structures and as entrepreneurial role models in business – and ensure their interests and voices are represented in system policy and practice. However, through the *Better Balance Strategy*, the Partnership will take its work in this area to a new level with an **enhanced focus on achieving a better balance in key governance and decision-making roles**, both within institutions and in the political sphere. This aims to ensure that the structural governance and decision-making underpinning the continued development of inclusive national service delivery, including through the Skills Centres, is **representative** of all ni-Vanuatu. Importantly, this will ensure that the country is able to draw upon the full **strength and complementarity** of women and men leading and managing together. The Partnership will also double down on its **ongoing support to women who are already in leadership positions to bolster their effectiveness and legitimacy**, including facilitating their access to networks and professional upskilling opportunities.

This enhanced approach aligns with the commencement of Pacific Women's Balance of Power (BOP) initiative in Vanuatu, which similarly seeks to improve representation of women in institutional and political leadership positions. The Partnership has a formalised collaboration with BOP, in large part due to the shared values-based operating principles (see Section 6) of both parties.

Ending Violence Against Women

The Partnership asserts its position that the **prevalence of violence against women in Vanuatu is in direct opposition to Melanesian values and Christian principles and undermines the country's productivity and prosperity**. For these reasons, and due to the Partnership's unique influence in terms of national coverage, networks and local leadership reputation, the *Better Balance Strategy* will increase efforts in gender-based violence prevention and response. Work in this area will adopt a **'twin-track' approach** whereby a) all Partnership team members will purposively identify opportunities to mainstream gender-based violence (GBV) prevention into activity – at planning and implementation phases – focused on addressing attitudes and social norms; and b) specific response interventions will be conducted, particularly in terms of targeting GBV survivors with skills training aimed at building economic and social resilience.

The Partnership recognises that the equation between women's economic empowerment and GBV is complex. While women can experience increased vulnerability to violence linked to their increased access to economic assets, many other factors can also lead to conflict¹⁵. The Partnership's approach will be to ensure that consideration of the family and community context is taken into account in all its work, with a specific focus on safeguards to reduce conflict, jealousy and violence.

Specific strategies against each of these Focus Areas are detailed in Section 7.

¹⁴ *The Double Burden – The Impact of Economic Empowerment Initiatives on Women's Workload* (IWDA, 2016).

¹⁵ *Do No Harm Research* (Eves et al, 2018).

5.2 Intersectionality

The Partnership recognises that different forms of disadvantage and discrimination can combine, overlap and intersect. Targeted efforts are made to address barriers where **gender-based discrimination is compounded** by other factors.

Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion

Barriers to equality and agency are **doubly restrictive for women with disabilities**, with multiple disadvantages resulting from the interplay between poverty and discrimination on the basis of gender and disability. Women and girls with disabilities are at greater risk from all forms of violence than are those without disabilities. Girls with disabilities are less likely than boys to be enrolled in any form of education, which results in very low rates of literacy among women with disabilities and, consequently, low rates of participation in civic life and the workforce. Women and girls are commonly the primary carers for household members with disabilities, which limits their opportunities for education and employment.

In supporting the implementation of the *National Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025*¹⁶, the Partnership ensures that disability inclusion is mainstreamed through all Partnership activity, and does so with approaches that take into account the specific needs and constraints of women with disabilities. The *Better Balance Strategy* will, through its interventions and disability-disaggregated measurement processes, reinforce these approaches, with the aim of improving the participation, agency and leadership of women with disabilities within ni-Vanuatu society.

Gender Equality and Climate Change Management

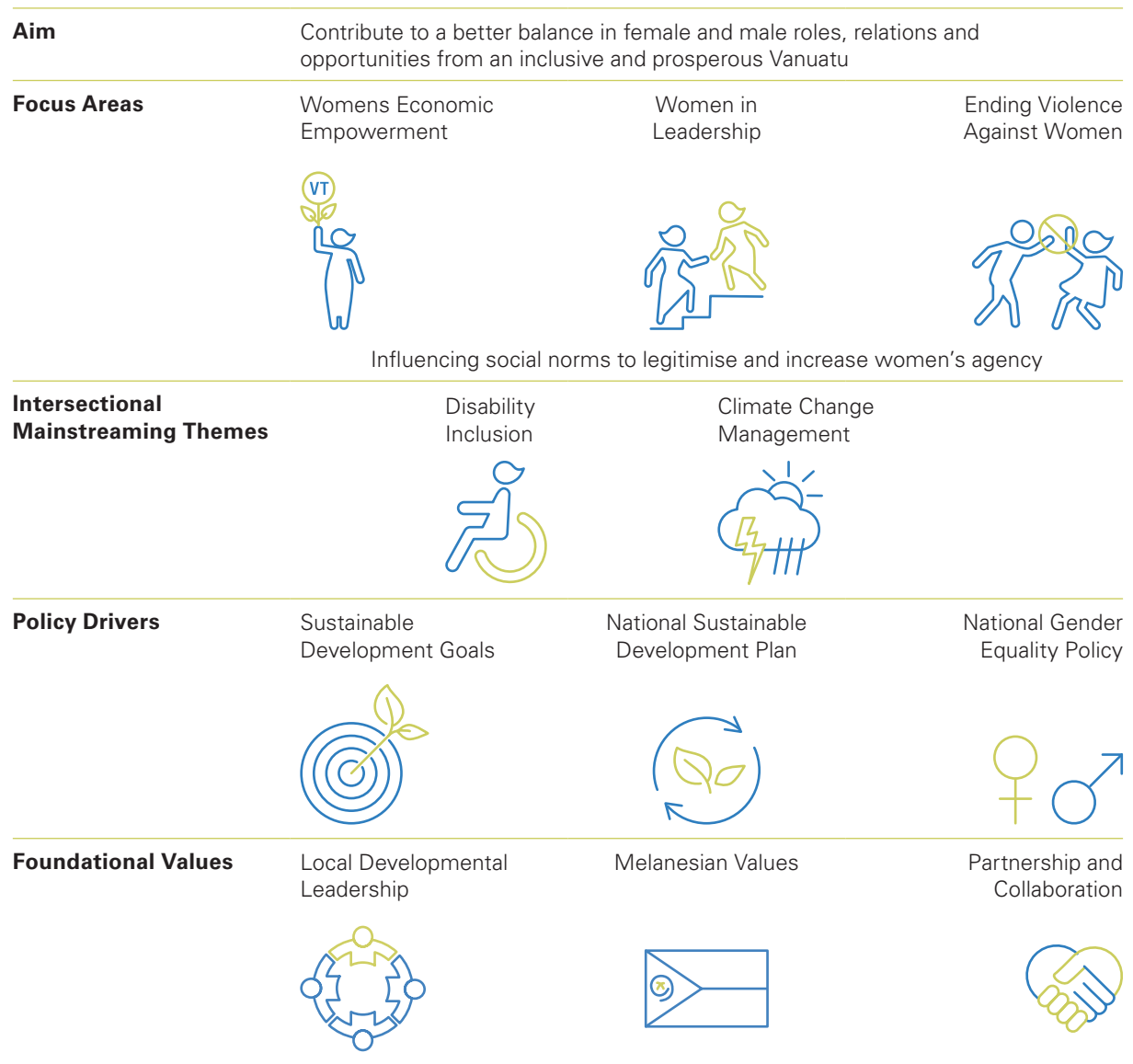
The 2015 Paris Agreement on global climate change action specifically identified the **disproportionate impact of climate change on women**, and the fact that climate change exacerbates existing inequalities between men and women. When women are unable to access education, skills and decent employment opportunities, they are far less likely to be able to access information and support that could help them to better manage the impact of climate change. Increased economic vulnerability caused by the impact of climate change on livelihoods and food production more severely affects those who are already economically disadvantaged. Moreover, 80% of people displaced by climate change globally, particularly by natural disasters, during which time cases of gender-based violence rise dramatically, are women.

In supporting the implementation of the *Climate Change Strategy for the MoET Skills Centres*¹⁷, the Partnership will ensure that women have access to skills training to improve their ability to prevent and mitigate against the effects of climate change. The Partnership will also build upon the roles of women in communities to foster their leadership capability in this regard.

¹⁶ *National Inclusive Development Policy* (MoJCS, 2018).

¹⁷ *Climate Change Strategy for the MoET Skills Centres* (MoET, pending).

5.3 Conceptual Framework



6. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Reflecting, and in addition to, the broader Values Statement and Code of Conduct of the Partnership, implementation of the *Better Balance Strategy* will be guided by the following seven core principles:

1. **Achieving the objectives** of the *Better Balance Strategy* and the broader Partnership goals is the focus of all implementation. There is no place for individual ego and self-promotion, and an attitude of **humility and mission** should drive all Partnership personnel.
2. Implementation of the *Better Balance Strategy* is **locally-led**, with staff encouraged to **experiment and adapt approaches**, in line with emerging opportunities and entry points for reform within the political economy.
3. **Prioritisation of positive and respectful relationships** which build up and empower others underpins the implementation of the *Better Balance Strategy*.
4. The Partnership **works through broad-based coalitions and collaboration** and will seek out allies to support the achievement of the aims of the *Better Balance Strategy* **wherever they may be found**, regardless of differences, as long as the reputation and values of the Partnership are protected.
5. The Partnership is **sensitive at all times to the power of language and actions in building support** for the achievement of the aims of the *Better Balance Strategy*. Communications and interactions with stakeholders will ensure framing and approaches are politically, culturally and emotionally sensitive to maximise buy-in and engagement, and minimise opposition and alienation.
6. Consideration of the Partnership's **cross-cutting commitments to disability inclusion and climate change management** is mainstreamed wherever possible in the implementation of the *Better Balance Strategy*.
7. Implementation of the *Better Balance Strategy* will demonstrate at all times **respect for the Constitution of Vanuatu, the Government of Vanuatu, as well as the support of the Government of Australia**, as the core donor.

...disability inclusion and climate change management is mainstreamed wherever possible in the implementation of the Better Balance Strategy



7. FOCUS AREA STRATEGIES

Focus Area 1 – Women’s Economic Empowerment

Key Indicator

Increase in prosperity levels by female Skills Centre clients.



Strategy 1.1

Targeted selection and planning of Skills Centre work-streams to maximise women’s participation.

Actions

- Provincial ‘road show’ planning and national sector planning activities to involve women who are able to represent women’s perspectives into the planning process.
- Meetings of the Provincial Government Training Board to include women who are able to represent women’s perspectives in planning and prioritisation of skills training.
- Where sector work-streams do not traditionally lend themselves to engagement by women, Partnership personnel and partners to identify sub-sectors and entry points to encourage women’s involvement.

Responsibility

Skills Centre team,
Productive Sector Manager
and Coordinators, Partner
productive sector officers

Strategy 1.2

Purposeful client selection to maximise women’s participation.

Actions

- Provincial Training Coordinators and productive sector partners to build awareness of Skills Centre opportunities, specifically targeting messaging to women, including women with disabilities, liaising with DPOs.
- Provincial Training Coordinators to endeavour to reach gender parity when finalising participant lists.
- Trainers/coaches to proactively identify women for further training opportunities, with a particular focus on accredited training pathways.

Responsibility

Skills Centre team,
Productive Sector Manager
and Coordinators, Disability
Inclusion Coordinator

Provincial Training
Coordinators

Trainers/coaches

Strategy 1.3

Delivery modalities and accommodations that maximise women’s successful participation in Skills Centre work-streams.

Actions

- Skills Centre personnel to ensure that the timing, location and phasing of skills training activity takes into account women’s workloads and constraints on travel.
- Skills Centre to provide reasonable accommodations for female participants to enable participation, including child-minders, breast-feeding areas.
- Ensure coaches provide mentoring to female clients, with a specific focus on sharing of strategies and lessons learned to enable women to manage successful businesses, within their community/cultural context.
- Facilitation of access to financial services such as banks, small grants and savings schemes.
- Provision of spaces for female clients to meet together to practice their skills after and between training sessions.

Responsibility

Provincial Training
Coordinators, Centre
Managers

Provincial Training
Coordinators, Centre
Managers, FAOs

Sector Coordinators, Centre
Managers, trainers/coaches

Centre Managers

Centre Managers, Provincial
Training Coordinators, FAOs

Strategy 1.4

Involvement of male partners alongside female Skills Centre work-stream clients to reduce sources of conflict (see also Strategy 3.3).

Actions

- Skills Centre personnel to actively encourage the involvement of husbands/brothers in skills training activity alongside female family members to increase support and understanding.
- Purposeful promotion of case stories showing how supportive husbands/male family members leads to increased family prosperity and well-being.

Responsibility

Provincial Training Coordinators
MEL Team, Communications Team

Strategy 1.5

Promotion of success stories and role models.

Actions

- Case stories of women who have achieved economic/social benefits through Skills Centre activity, with a particular focus on emphasising broader benefits to families and the wider community.
- Promotion of women working in non-traditional trade areas, including purposeful engagement by the Skills Centres as trainers and coaches.
- Organisation of community events and award ceremonies coinciding with national events to showcase the success of different women as role models in the community.

Responsibility

MEL Team, Communications Team
MEL Team, Communications Team, Centre Managers, Sector Coordinators
Centre Managers

Strategy 1.6

Promotion of flexible delivery modalities and gender equality strategies within institutional training providers.

Actions

- Targeted support through the Training Provider Improvement Agreements to ensure providers have a formalised gender equality/inclusion policy, including a sexual harassment policy.
- Promotion of training providers that actively prioritise and implement their gender equality strategy.

Responsibility

Training Provider Support Coordinator
Training Provider Support Coordinator/Adviser, MEL Team, Communications Team

Focus Area 2 – Women in Leadership

Key indicator

Increased leadership role/status of female staff and stakeholders supported by the Partnership.



Strategy 2.1

Support to, and promotion of, women leaders and trainers within the national skills system.

Actions

- Targeted professional development for female coaches and trainers, including formal internationally recognised qualifications.
- Proactive advocacy for female representation of skills system governance bodies – e.g.: the Provincial Government Training Boards and the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority Board.
- Targeted communications around the contributions of women leaders in the skills system to the broader public good, in ways that will resonate with male leaders within the system and other norm-influencers.

Responsibility

Training Provider
Support Coordinator,
Sector Coordinators,
Deputy Director
Centre Managers, Director
Communications Team

Strategy 2.2

Promotion of women as leaders within the Vanuatu Skills Partnership.

Actions

- Provision of leadership and management professional development courses, including internationally recognised qualifications, for female staff members.
- Dedicated leadership mentoring for female staff members.
- Facilitation of female staff participation at regional conferences to develop confidence, learn from other female leaders in the region, and develop networking skills.
- Facilitation of 'under the radar' working lunches where female leaders within the Partnership come together informally with other like-minded female developmental leaders to discuss challenges, strategies and opportunities for action.
- Purposeful promotion and endorsement of leadership capability of female staff by male staff/leaders and other like-minded developmental leaders (e.g.: provincial Secretaries General).
- Continuation of 'Homework Club' and 'Pikinini Kona' at Partnership/Skills Centre offices to enable women to have assistance with child-rearing responsibilities while taking on increasing professional responsibilities.

Responsibility

Deputy Director,
Strategic Adviser,
Support Coordinator
Deputy Director
Deputy Director,
Strategic Adviser,
Support Coordinator
Director, Deputy Director
Director, Productive Sector
Manager, Training Provider
Support Manager,
Centre Managers
Deputy Director,
Chief Finance and
Operations Manager

Strategy 2.3

Advocacy and support for female developmental leaders across partner institutions, private sector and governance bodies.

Actions

- Facilitation of promotional and networking opportunities for key developmental women in leadership, including regional conferences and media promotion.
- Integration of key female leaders within the Partnership's 'under the radar' working lunches to provide morale support and cross-learning.
- Support of key female stakeholders at national and provincial level in professional development activities.

Responsibility

Strategic Adviser, Support Coordinator, Disability Inclusion Adviser, Training Provider Support Adviser
 Director, Deputy Director
 Director, Deputy Director

Strategy 2.4

Fostering of male advocates for women in leadership.

Actions

- Facilitation of male advocates/leaders in regional gender equality-focused conferences and learning events.
- Engagement of Partnership male leaders and allied male stakeholder leaders in regular 'Better Balance' strategic planning events.

Responsibility

Director
 Director, Productive Sector Manager, Provincial Service Delivery Manager

Strategy 2.5

Partnering with the Balance of Power initiative to strengthen women in developmental leadership coalitions and pathways to political engagement.

Actions

- Partnership Director to explore opportunities to formalise a partnering arrangement with the BOP initiative, including office sharing, collaborative planning and networking and resource sharing.
- Partnership Director, senior male managers and allied developmental leaders (e.g.: provincial Secretaries General) to play a key role in publicly supporting the initiative.

Responsibility

Director, Strategic Adviser
 Director, male managers

Focus Area 3 – Ending Violence Against Women



Key indicator

Reporting of conflict reduction through Partnership/Skills Centre interventions and approaches.

Strategy 3.1

Promoting a zero tolerance approach towards gender-based violence among Partnership staff and Skills Centre clients.

Actions

- All contracts to clearly specify that employment/client engagement will be terminated in the event of perpetration of gender-based violence, with clear inductions and awareness-raising before contracts are entered into.
- Messaging around damage caused by gender-based violence integrated into trainings by trainers/coaches at the community level.
- Referrals to support organisations.

Responsibilities

Support Coordinator,
Deputy Director

Training Provider Support
Coordinator, Centre
Managers, Director,
trainers/coaches
Centre Managers

Strategy 3.2

Formalised arrangements with male norm-influencers, particularly from the Churches, to participate in targeted work-stream activity through the Skills Centres.

Actions

- Integration of 'motivational messages' through Skills Centre activity by Church leaders/Chiefs with the explicit intent of condemning gender-based violence.
- Formalised partnerships/MoUs with faith based organisations to jointly develop approaches to mainstream actions against gender-based violence.

Responsibility

Centre Managers

Director, Deputy Director

Strategy 3.3

Involvement of male partners alongside female Skills Centre work-stream participants to reduce sources of conflict (see also Strategy 1.4).

Actions

- Skills Centre personnel to actively encourage the involvement of husbands/brothers in skills training activity alongside female family members, as well as 'household business' models to increase support and reduce feelings of jealousy and alienation.
- Purposeful promotion of case stories showing how supportive husbands/male family members, and 'household business' models lead to increased family prosperity and well-being.

Responsibility

Provincial Training
Coordinators

MEL Team,
Communications Team

Strategy 3.4

Targeted skills development activities delivered to survivors of gender-based violence and other marginalised women.

Actions

- Skills Centre staff to use networks with churches, referral agencies and the Vanuatu Women's Centre to design and deliver customised skills programs for GBV survivors.

Responsibility

Skills Centre team

Balance of Power – Investment Brief

Introduction

The *Balance of Power* (BOP) investment is a **new and innovative** approach to address the complex issue of **women in leadership in the Pacific**, with a specific focus on increasing women's participation and voice in **political processes**. It is an initiative of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*), a 10 year commitment by the Australian Government aiming to enable women and men in the Pacific to improve the political, social and economic opportunities for women and girls. The BOP design is based on the significant research, advocacy and development practice that has occurred over recent decades in the area of women's leadership in the Pacific, building on lessons learned and analysis of **what works and what doesn't** in achieving greater representation by women. Targeted consultation across the Pacific has also been conducted to further inform the design. The initiative is intended to be delivered intensively in three countries in the Pacific – starting with **Vanuatu and Tonga** – with some elements implemented regionally. The time-frame for this initial phase is 2019 to 2024.

BOP Conceptual Approach

BOP recognises that it is the deeply entrenched **norms, attitudes and perceptions** around concepts of leadership and politics that are the primary barrier to women's participation and voice. However, changing these will only be possible if **driven by local actors** who can sensitively navigate the local socio-political economy. Central to the approach of BOP will therefore be its intent to 'work with the grain' of the local context, and function as a **convener** of multiple and diverse stakeholders, able to facilitate a broad-based, locally-led coalition for positive social change. This will include ensuring all activities are **framed to respond to the values and drivers** of the culture and context, and maximising engagement that goes beyond the 'usual suspects' of conventional donor-supported efforts in this area. This includes recognising the **critical role of men** and involving important norm influencing agents in the community, including leaders of faith-based organisations and of traditional governance structures (e.g. chiefs, nobles). BOP will also ensure that it **builds upon existing strengths** and entry points in shifting attitudes and practice around the roles of women and men in leadership, particularly in the political sphere.

BOP Aims

The long-term goal of BOP is that *'women are increasingly culturally, socially and politically accepted, and act, as legitimate political leaders and decision makers across the Pacific region'*.

BOP acknowledges that Pacific women already lead in a range of spaces, including as leaders of their communities and social organisations, and in the private sector, but there remains strong resistance to the idea that women are legitimate political leaders.

In contributing to this shift in social norms, there are three higher level intended outcomes of BOP:

- There is a shifting balance of power towards women and men sharing decision-making at all levels;
- Women's right to participate in the public sphere, including their right to vote independently, is increasingly understood and accepted by women and men; and
- Traditional, church, and democratic governance institutions demonstrate action consistent with their commitments on women in leadership and role model gender sensitive practices.

All BOP objectives will align with the respective national policy frameworks of the implementing countries to ensure that the initiative is positioned within **locally-defined development priorities**.

BOP Technical Approach

Given the centrality of a contextually attuned and locally led approach, BOP will be implemented as a **multi-country initiative**. While an overarching 'Theory of Change' for the investment has been designed to support the achievement of the outcomes outlined above, this will be **adapted to respond to the unique realities and opportunities** of each country's operating environment. In each country BOP will engage a **local Country Manager**, who will be responsible for identifying and bringing together a core group of stakeholders who will become the BOP 'Strategy Testing Group' (STG) for that country. Both the Country Manager and the STG members will be carefully selected through **values-based** criteria, including a commitment to **supporting collective action**, rather than individual or organisational agendas. This group will be supported by the BOP Team Leader and other resources to develop strategies and partnerships to strengthen existing momentum, optimise entry points to achieve BOP aims, and improve harmonisation of effort. For this reason, an extended inception phase will take place from June – December 2019 to enable the development of these country-level designs.

The BOP Team Leader will be based in Suva, Fiji, within the Pacific Women head office, with a dedicated support unit. The Team Leader will be **an influential Pacific Islander woman**, able both to support the Country Managers in country-level implementation, as well as ensure that **regional networks and activities** promote shared learning, coalition-building and accountability around women's leadership. She will be assisted in her role by a Regional Manager.

BOP Resourcing

The Australian Government, through Pacific Women, has committed an initial budget of **AUD 8.6 million** for the first phase of BOP. In addition to funding key management positions in line with DFAT's Adviser Remuneration Framework and operational support (including M&E), this budget will enable strategic financing of activity at both country and regional levels. Resourcing will also include a strong research component. This will provide the STG in each country with access to targeted and contextualised socio-political analysis that will inform iterative and flexible approaches to activity design and implementation.

Importantly, the size of the BOP budget reflects the evidence that success in shifting norms and practices for positive social change is much less dependent on the amount of money spent, but **rather on the quality of the personnel engaged and a values-based commitment to building coalitions for locally-led reform.**

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