



# Mid-Line Study II

## Organisational Case Studies

Operational and Management Staff

Public Works Department



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## ACRONYMS

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<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CBC	Community Based Contractor
CDP	Capacity Development Plan
CTB	Central Tenders Board
DM	Divisional Manager
GoV	Government of Vanuatu
IBC	Island Based Contractor
IR	Interim Review
JD	Job Description
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoF	Ministry of Finance
PDD	Project Design Document
PWD	Public Works Department
R4D	Roads for Development

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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The main goal of the approach to the organisational case study is to provide a framework for the assessment of capacity development interventions and support from the Roads for Development (R4D) program within the Public Works Department (PWD). The mixed-method study sought to gain perspectives and insight into the functioning of the department to collect overall perceptions of R4D's capacity development support through a focused quantitative survey combined with a series of "individual stories" both aimed to identify and analyse:

- what support has been received to date;
- how that support has influenced and contributed to shared R4D and PWD work; and
- what capacity development priorities were evident for the future and to highlight areas of priority where the R4D could support in the future.

To date the assessment has included the following stages:

1. *Baseline component of the study was completed in November 2014 with the interviewing of 9 PWD staff including senior management and operational staff.*
2. *Follow-up midline study was completed in May 2016 involving the same PWD staff.*
3. *Current study (September 2017), which is an extension of the May 2016 study and collects additional data from the same individuals to identify possible trends and issues.*

A final end-line study is proposed for May 2018 prior to the end of R4D.

A series of findings and four specific case studies are presented in this report. The longitudinal nature of the study means that information and data generated through this second midline study is included and compared with the existing baseline and previous midline information. The benefit of this approach is that existing information and data can be compared and additional findings added. The initial case studies also remain and have had additional information added to provide further analysis of progress and perceptions of capacity and R4D support.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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R4D is an AUD \$37 million, five-year commitment by the Government of Australia to assist the people of Vanuatu to gain increased access to a well-maintained and affordable rural road network. It supports the Government of Vanuatu to effectively plan, build, and maintain its rural road transport infrastructure. The program aims to streamline public works administration and to provide social and economic benefits to communities. R4D provides institutional, technical, and financial support to MIPU and PWD to support management of the road network. During the early stages of program implementation, R4D was delivering support in strict accordance with the PDD. R4D has struggled to define and implement capacity development support without an appropriate capacity development framework. A basic framework was developed in 2014 however this was primarily centered on basic ad hoc training in line with the PDD.

A HR/Performance Management Specialist was engaged in late 2015 to undertake an initial review and stocktake of performance management approaches. An initial assessment and report were completed but the mobilization of a full-time HR/Performance Specialist into the program did not occur until late August 2017. The reason for the gap was to allow time for PWD to clearly define what type of performance management support was required. The lack of a continuous capacity development plan has led to limited progress in this area. However there have been some positive examples of capacity support and engagement.

Collecting and analysing organisational information for the baseline and midline study was a challenging activity. The R4D team decided during the design of the M&E plan and framework to develop a more personalised approach to assess change factors and perceptions of the capacity develop program. It was on this basis that a case study approach was proposed, as a means of collecting initial data from a range of PWD staff and to attempt to aggregate some findings while maintaining the individual components of the study. The results of the study are intended to demonstrate not only progress in the way in which R4D engages with management and operational staff but also to provide guidance on the type and level of capacity support required moving forward.

The study involved a range of PWD stakeholders from senior management (DG and Director) to middle management (DM's) and respective operational and administrative staff (engineering, and finance and procurement).

### 3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

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The case study approach applied to this review is a mixed methods approach<sup>1</sup> with a series of semi-structured interview questions covering both quantitative and qualitative metrics. For case study participants further in-depth question were asked. An attempt was made to quantify some questions around set criteria to provide some statistical underpinning to the qualitative responses. A copy of the survey instrument is included as Annex 1.

The study adopted a purposeful sampling approach whereby key staff members who work alongside R4D staff both at the head office and divisional level were invited to participate in the study. The study sought to include a broad representation of staff from all levels of management and across functional groups within HQ. Results were noted, documented and encoded to identify emergent and consistent themes. Four specific cases were written up and have been included as part of the report. For the midline data collection process, the same nine staff that participated in the baseline study were surveyed again utilising the same baseline survey tool.

Qualitative baseline and evaluation studies of this nature tend to have a range of consistent limitations. Limitations for this baseline study included:

- The qualitative nature of the study meant that definite judgements of changes in capacity could not be easily assessed. However, the study did attempt to quantify some questions so as to remove subjective and opinionated responses.
- The timeframe for data collection was short meaning that follow-up and re-questioning could not be considered at this time. The timeframe also meant that only a select number of people could participate. In addition, some key staff who engage with R4D team members were not included in the study as they have not participated in earlier rounds.
- Some of the questions proposed have less relevance to the current focus of work but for consistency purposes need to be asked to maintain the longitudinal approach.
- Given the shift in R4D's support to divisions, a greater focus should be placed upon the opinions and viewpoints of divisional managers however given the longitudinal nature of the study it is hard to implement a new set of variables and individuals into the current study but their opinions were sought around key qualitative questions to complement existing data.
- The findings are generally based on subjective views and opinions. Viewpoints can change significantly without clear attribution to the work of R4D. In other works, it is hard to attribute positive and/or negative changes to R4D interventions alone.

The longitudinal nature of the study does limit somewhat the negative perceptions of utilising such a methodology. The consistent application of the same questions across a defined period of time increases the level of confidence in the findings and also recognises and discusses the operating context in which the data was collected.

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<sup>1</sup> The mixed method approach was a quasi-parallel convergent design. The convergent parallel design (convergent/triangulation design) occurs when the researchers use concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative studies during the same phase of the research process. The two methods in this design have an equal priority so that both play an equally important role in addressing the research problem. This design keeps the studies independent during the data collection and analysis and then mixes or merges the results during the overall interpretation. *Petrosyan Y, 2013 Assessing Research Protocols: Mixed Methods Research*

## 4 KEY FINDINGS

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### 4.1 General Background

As indicated in the previous baseline and midline studies, most study participants came to work in PWD either directly from university or through other forms of employment (i.e. the private sector). Surprisingly, many staff did not work for other government agencies and PWD is their first experience in working for the Government of Vanuatu (GoV). Most respondents applied for the jobs after seeing vacancies advertised in the local media with one respondent being recruited from another government department. At the midline point all staff had remained with PWD.

All respondents have a job description (JD) but all indicated that it is not truly representative of all the responsibilities they currently undertake. All survey participants requested that JD's are reviewed annually, updated and approved to better reflect their working situation and environment. Some JD's had been reviewed since the baseline study, and most people perceived their JD's were still relevant. Exceptions were senior managers who perceived they had far more work responsibility than was originally stipulated in individual JD's. The PWD Director (now acting Director General MIPU) appeared to have the greatest pressure in terms of additional roles, expectations and responsibilities against his job description.

### 4.2 Working in PWD

The overall working culture in PWD in the past 12-months has stagnated somewhat. This has been the result of the number and scale of unfilled or temporarily filled positions, particularly senior management positions. There are significant gaps in the management structure and many roles are filled in an “acting” capacity. This situation provides little confidence to staff and also stifles the efforts to continue implementation of relevant policy and strategy (e.g. Rural Roads Access Framework).

At the first midline point, all respondents believed that the overall PWD work environment had improved since the baseline, however this has dropped away in the past 18 months. The continued involvement of R4D in operational areas was viewed as relevant. However, there is a stronger demand for R4D to respond to PWD's intention to shift towards a “manager of the road network” which necessitates a slight change in priority and re-focus of R4D work.

The following list of priorities was prepared following interviews during the baseline. These issues were identified and discussed with case study participants:

- Focus on *managing the entire system* - improve the level of reporting and better communication of PWD plans, policies and strategies at the central and district levels.
- Managers need to be more engaged in the decision-making processes.
- Look to strengthen technical skills (particularly in engineering). More support is required to increase skills and capacities of staff, particularly at the district level.
- Procurement is critical and PWD needs an integrated database where records can be stored and are accessible.
- More regular management meetings and consultations are required so that issues can be raised, discussed and addressed promptly. Regular meetings will also assist with increasing the level and detail of reporting.

In reviewing progress at the midline (May 2016), these statements were tested with participants in light of contributions made by R4D:

- A focus on the entire system does remain and considerable effort has been made to strengthen policy frameworks and renew focus on budgeting and planning for all roadwork activities. Reporting remains a priority but has not advanced at a level consistent with the expectations of senior management, however it is priority focus for the remainder of 2016.
- There is a recognition amongst PWD staff that technical skills have improved (procurement, finance and engineering) however there is now a shift away from this type of support towards more strategic level planning and support with regards to budgeting, planning and reporting.
- Procurement systems have improved and there is a level of comfort within PWD with existing systems however a management system and database is still required.
- Management meetings have unfortunately dropped off in the last six-months, primarily due to external pressures and the influence of political individuals.

In September 2017, participants were asked about the priorities at baseline and the last midline study. The following observations were made:

- A policy and strategy framework is now in place within PWD and this is a significant achievement over the past 18-months.
- There is stronger recognition of the importance of divisional managers and the need to have them involved in decisions. R4D has supported the introduction of Quarterly Performance Assessments which have proven instrumental in having DM's share experience and make decisions.
- A reporting framework has been initiated and this supports implementation and also assists DM's to better reflect what is happening in respective divisions.
- Human resource issues and lack of filled full-time positions is beginning to have a major influence on strategic direction and management decision-making.
- Procurement and finance systems require continued support, particularly in timeliness of action.

There is a recognition that R4D has played a significant role in supporting institutional change and development in PWD since the baseline period. R4D's support is recognised by survey participants as relevant and appropriate. There is also a recognition by participants that PWD needs to do more to set the policy and strategy agenda, and to work with R4D and provide a higher level of feedback and guidance for capacity building and institutional support priorities moving forward. Further analysis and detail is provided in the following sections.

### 4.3 R4D Institutional Support in PWD

Since the organisational case studies were initiated in 2014 there has been a growing emphasis placed upon the support provided to PWD by R4D to focus more on the strategic direction of PWD. At the baseline stage there was limited policy and strategy engagement, primarily because PWD hadn't updated key strategic documents in a while.

Since 2015, R4D has invested considerable effort in supporting PWD to develop key policy and strategy documents and associated approaches. Through a series of consultations and engagements, PWD now has the RRAF.

Interviews at the current midline phase has seen on-going requests from PWD to provide more detailed guidance around how to best operationalise, manage and support the RRAF. Specific requests are being received from divisions to have further clarity around the meaning and intention of the RRAF and how that influences work in divisions. From one DM, *"there is a need to undertake more analysis to identify the resources we require – human resources, plant and equipment and overall funding. There is an on-going role for R4D to get more involved in these areas and provide more guidance and management support."*



In analysing the findings, there is a clear message from PWD. The policy and strategy are in place, the next step is to operationalise the strategy and to ensure all members of PWD are aware of their role and place in the implementation and management of this and for senior management to clearly articulate the strategic direction of PWD. R4D acknowledge this and are looking to undertake a review on the policy and strategy by mid-2018.

In addition, there is a strong need to ensure effective information and capacity flow, particularly around the recently established reporting structures and tools. As noted by a senior manager: *“Another issue is that all templates developed by R4D particularly the reporting and planning tools, there is currently no knowledge and skills transfer to PWD counterparts.”*

#### 4.4 R4D Capacity Development in PWD

There has been a general acknowledgement amongst the survey group since the first baseline study, that capacity development efforts would struggle without the involvement of R4D. Government budgets have been limited for training and much of the focus within PWD has been on implementation of the existing work program. Funding to date has been primarily for road maintenance and rehabilitation and capacity development is not a focus

The lack of a formalised capacity development plan through R4D has hampered overall capacity building efforts. Expectations were high in R4D inception that this document would provide an opportunity for greater strategic engagement and assist PWD to better understand the training and mentoring approach. Unfortunately, the capacity development plan was never formally utilised and a subsequent performance management specialist prepared a detailed report, which also has not been fully utilised.

As a result, capacity development tends to be more informal than it should be. In 2013-2014, R4D provided support through on-the job training, coaching and mentoring. This support was well regarded but based on the feedback and views of survey participants there is a need to evolve and progress this formal capacity support. In recent years (2016-2017), capacity support has become more ad hoc and informal and focused more at supporting systems rather than individuals. Figure 1, shows graphically a steady assessment of the relevance of capacity support from R4D from baseline (2015) through until September 2017.

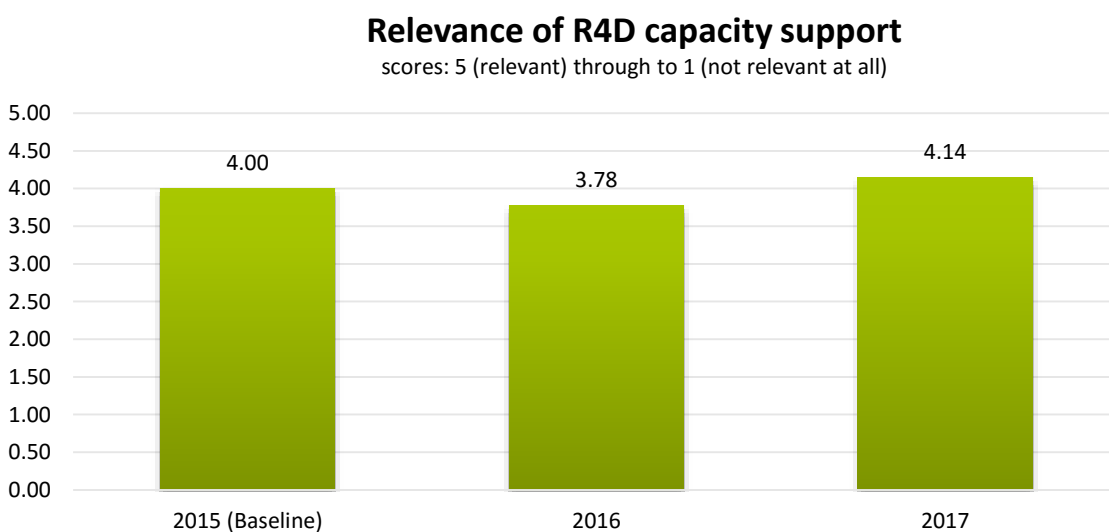


Figure 1 - Relevance of R4D Capacity Support

The figures above indicate that R4D capacity support does remain relevant. There has been a slight increase this year particularly related to the involvement of R4D specialists in ongoing planning and reporting with regards to work planning and budgeting.

Despite strong engagement, the lack of formalised work programs has meant PWD staff report less opportunities over the past three years to apply new skills. The decline cannot be entirely attributable to R4D’s engagement (or perceived lack thereof), but rather interviewees have mentioned a lack of formalised structure means that that they often have to accept what is provided as opposed to what is really required. Figure 2 graphically summarises the quantitative results relating to PWD staff applying new skills to the workplace.

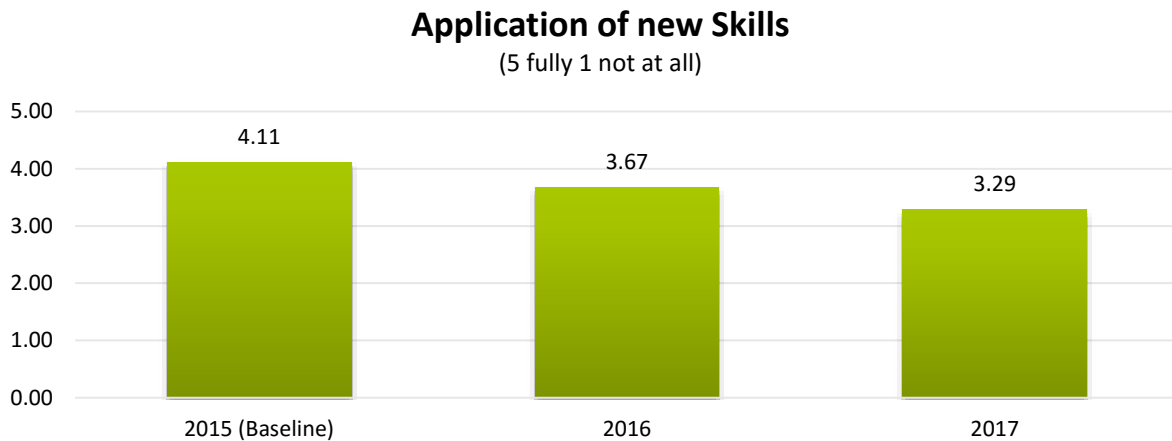


Figure 2 - Application of new skills

One-on-one mentoring is seen as a greater priority and generally better contributor to capacity development overall. Initial baseline results indicated a possible disconnect with some staff indicating at the time that technical training and support was limited and R4D placed a greater focus on operational matters. The quality of the support received (at baseline) was satisfactory at 67%. At the first mid-line point this had increased to 73% and it currently sits at 74% (September 2017). Since the baseline, capacity support has again changed with strong recognition and support for more planning and budgeting support as opposed to technical support both in engineering and finance.

PWD operational staff were generally more critical of R4D capacity development than management staff. Project management is seen as a key area for technical support and some staff (at first midline) requested the Project Management Manual (PMM) be developed, as it would provide a basis for future training. At the first midline stage, the PMM was still in draft form and limited steps have been taken to develop such a manual. At the baseline stage, operational staff tended to "feel left out" of training events and engineers in particular would prefer to see more training around technical issues where they can work and discuss issues in a common setting. At the first mid-line stage, viewpoints have changed again with stronger demand for more strategic planning, budgeting and reporting.

Since the first midline (May 2016) there has been a significant shift in the focus of support. R4D has responded to the findings and shifted the focus of capacity development from an adviser-counterpart type model towards supporting PWD achieve an overall mandate. This has resulted in a focus on planning, budgeting and reporting with divisional leaders and managers.

From a technical engineering point of view, there is still strong demand at the divisional level for on-going on-site demonstrations and guidance. The work of the R4D Road Maintenance Engineers (RMEs) (now known as Road Operations Specialists) is well regarded and highly appreciated. Interviews with divisional staff reveal a desire for more guidance, particularly also in the support of growth of IBC's and CBC's and how best to manage these.

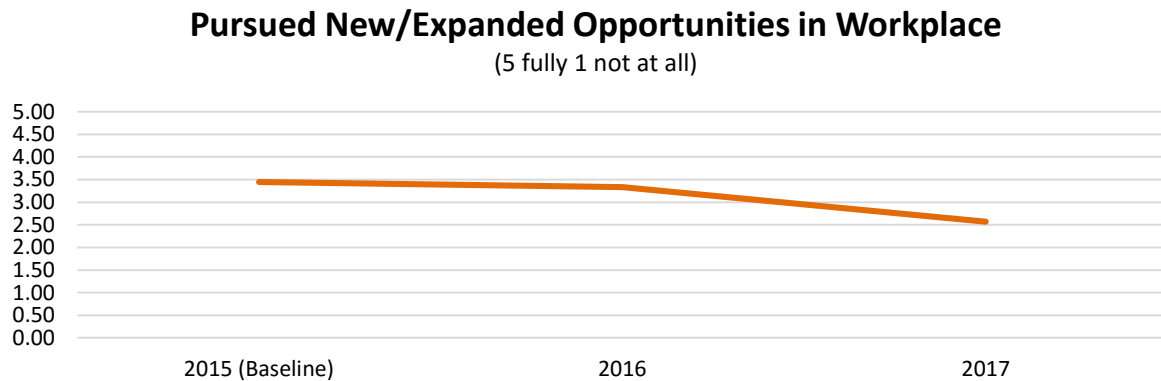


Figure 3 - Pursued new/expanded opportunities in workplace

Survey participants also acknowledged that PWD has a high responsibility to articulate strategic priorities and articulate what training is actually required. The current human resource situation has resulted in a more cautious approach to work. Staff are happy to maintain current work programs and there has been a slight decline in the pursuing of new work opportunities. Job security is a high priority and in an uncertain environment, PWD staff are unwilling to expand their portfolio of work. Figure 3, highlights the slight decrease in the pursuing of new work opportunities. Since baseline pursuing new or expanded opportunities in the workplace means staff seeking to expand responsibility and capacity in their current roles.

#### 4.5 Maintenance, Planning and Budgeting

At the baseline stage, PWD reported its preference that training support be provided primarily in the core areas of maintenance planning and budgeting. Survey participants were asked at the time, their perceptions of support in this area and if R4D has been effective. The support provided by R4D is acknowledged, but in a majority of cases participants felt that training tended to focus on lower level administrative issues rather than high-end strategic thinking, planning and budgeting.

At the first midline stage, the same issues remained from the baseline. There is a very strong request to receive on-going support in planning, budgeting and management and also to focus efforts at the divisions. *"R4D input in planning and budgeting has helped PWD provide better and realistic budgets. Creating systems and process that make things better to manage."* At the current midline stage there has been a stronger recognition of the importance of R4D's work at the divisional level.

At the senior management level during the baseline, it was acknowledged that R4D does work closely with PWD for planning and budgeting, primarily between the R4D team leader and PWD director. Management indicated at the baseline stage that there was a greater need to focus on budget consolidation, particularly looking at PWD's recurrent budget and the alignment of R4D funds in supporting PWD. The general perception from a management perspective at that time was that PWD has its own plans and R4D has its own plans under the contract and that a "parallel system" is emerging which needs to be addressed. As a result, there is a greater need for closer cooperation and engagement around budgets.

The overall perceived impact of R4D support has fallen slightly, as shown in Figure 4. This is primarily due to a number of factors but highlights a need for R4D and PWD to work together to plan and strategise key next steps in terms of on-going support and work areas. Work in 2016 pushed the figures up with the development of the RRAF, however there is a slight decrease as the next steps are prioritised. This area will be of interest moving forward.

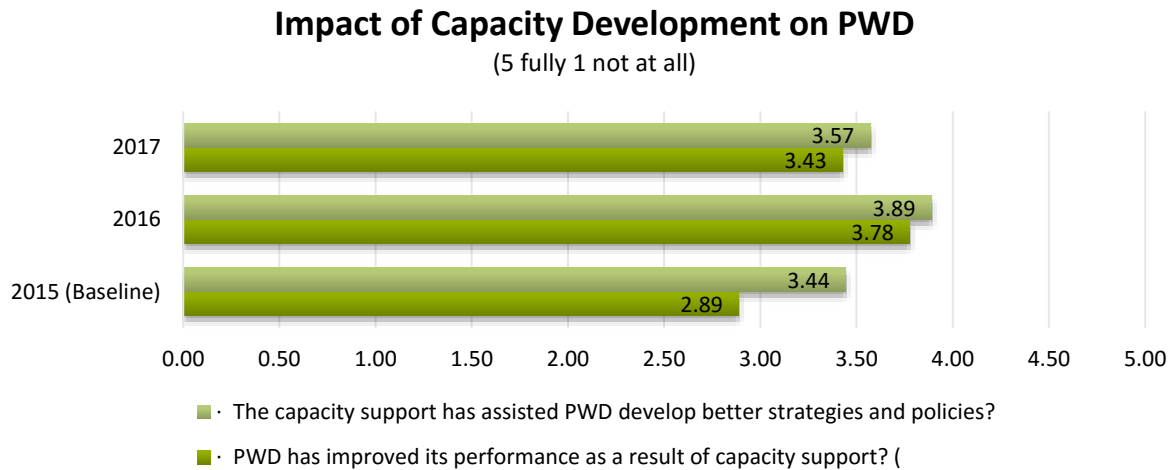


Figure 4 - Impact of Capacity Development on PWD

Advisory support within PWD for finance has been well received in establishing key budget support. However, there is a perception that budgeting and planning hasn't progressed to operations. In confirming the finding with R4D, it is clear that *"each province clearly has a budget which, they need to work within."* Each province plans and budgets by individual project/job and are responsible for managing within their budget. Further analysis is required to assess the on-going support provided to divisionals for finance. At the latest midline study, recognition from one senior manager that: *"The lack of performance of the procurement section and categorisation of roads (including declaration and gazetting of roads by the Minister) are still issues to deal with"* suggests that additional work and support is required to ensure effective communication between work units, particularly with divisional managers.

In terms of maintenance, R4D continues to provide tangible assistance (primarily through ad hoc meetings and discussions). At the time of the baseline, there was a request to integrate the planning and budgeting of roads to ensure that priorities are aligned. There was a perception that R4D had "its own roads to maintain" and PWD complete the rest. The view was that a parallel system has started to develop. At the time of midline reporting, this perception had changed significantly. Systems were better aligned and joint programming was occurring. This remains consistent in September 2017 with a completely unified approach to planning and budgeting for roads.

### Assessment of Work Effectiveness and Efficiency

(5 fully 1 not at all)

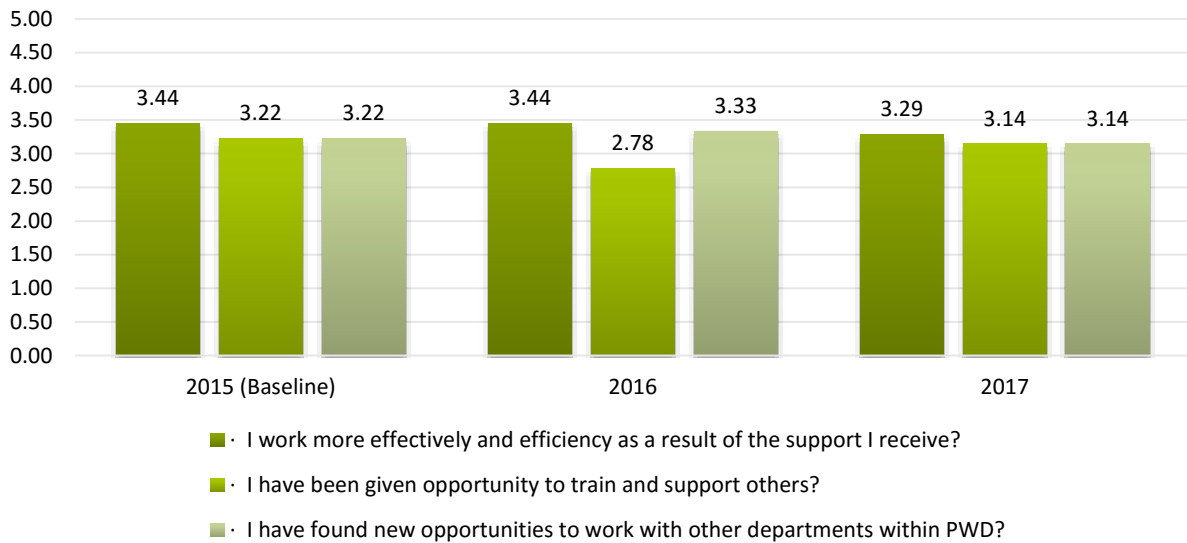


Figure 5 - Assessment of Work Effectiveness and Efficiency

The result of integrating support has meant that PWD staff perceive they work consistently more effectively and efficiently. As shown in Figure 5, there has been a slight decrease in opportunities to train and support others (64% at baseline to 62% at the current midline). This is primarily due to many positions in central HQ being already set. If the survey was extended to more divisions, there would be a relatively high increase in this score.

One important finding from the midline study for R4D to consider was that different sections within PWD require different levels of support. In effect, there is not a single clear strategy for R4D to follow. For example, finance and procurement requested more structured and formalised training (with divisions) while operations have requested more mentoring and on the job training. The development of individual capacity development plans would assist in facilitating this process.

## 4.6 Assessment of capacity development in PWD

Staff were surveyed on a series of key questions to obtain quantitative insight into their perceptions of training (and capacity development more broadly). The data presented is not an attempt at promoting statistical significance (given the small sample size) but rather to provide a broad overview of current perceptions of capacity development to date.

Question	Ranking	Average Score		
		Baseline	First Midline	Second Midline
<b>R4D Involvement in Capacity Development</b>				
Is the capacity support relevant?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	4	3.77	<b>4.14</b>
How would you rate the quality of the support to date?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.33	3.66	<b>3.71</b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>				
The training increased my knowledge of the issue?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.44	3.33	<b>3.29</b>
I better understand issues and concepts in my work area?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.67	3.78	<b>3.43</b>
The knowledge gained through capacity support enables me to do my work better?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.67	3.67	<b>3.86</b>
<b>Confidence</b>				
The capacity support has given me confidence in my work and role?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.89	3.67	<b>3.43</b>
I am now more motivated to apply new skills?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	4.11	3.67	<b>3.29</b>
<b>Technical Skills</b>				
I have increased my capacity to do my work better.	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.22	3.34	<b>3.43</b>
I have acquired new skills	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.33	2.67	<b>3</b>
<b>Management Skills</b>				
I have acquired new ways to approach work problems?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.78	4.11	<b>3.29</b>
I have acquired new skills.	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.44	4	<b>3.43</b>
I have learned new techniques and skills for managing and organising people and projects?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.67	3.89	<b>3.14</b>
I have learned new or improved ways to communicate with other staff and other stakeholders?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.67	4	<b>3.57</b>
<b>Relevance</b>				
I continue to apply the knowledge/skills from the capacity support.	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.89	4	<b>3.57</b>
I have pursued additional opportunities (new responsibilities, external studies)	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.44	3.34	<b>2.57</b>
<b>Efficiency and Effectiveness</b>				

I work more effectively and efficiently as a result of the support I receive?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.44	3.44	<b>3.29</b>
I have been given opportunity to train and support others?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.22	2.78	<b>3.14</b>
I have found new opportunities to work with other units within PWD?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.22	3.34	<b>3.14</b>
<b>Impact</b>				
The capacity support has had a direct impact on my work situation?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	4.11	3.67	<b>3.71</b>
I have been able to increase responsibilities or I have been promoted?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.11	3.12	<b>2.86</b>
I have changed my work situation as a result of the capacity support?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.11	3.34	<b>2.86</b>
The capacity support has had an impact on my work unit (i.e. finance, operational)	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.33	3.56	<b>3.71</b>
PWD has improved its performance as a result of capacity support?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	2.89	3.78	<b>3.43</b>
The capacity support has assisted PWD develop better strategies and policies?	(5 fully 1 not at all)	3.44	3.89	<b>3.57</b>

Key findings from the inclusion of second midline analysis and data above include:

- A slight increase in the relevance of current capacity development approaches and a slight improvement in the quality of support provided through R4D.
- Consistent technical understanding of roles and responsibilities - *'there is not much more I can learn as an engineer. Where I see support in the future is with more planning, budgeting and reporting and a greater focus on divisions.'* However, there has been a slight decrease at the current midline in knowledge and understanding as capacity development continues to focus on work unit support rather than individual technical skills.
- Continued decrease in confidence and motivation of staff generally to complete work tasks. Essentially, HQ staff are not learning anything new so have less opportunity to implement new skills.
- As capacity development evolves there is a need to provide opportunities for PWD managers to assume responsibility for the delivery of training and support, and for R4D advisers to assume a more structured supporting role.
- The focus of support has shifted to divisions as that is where most work is occurring and therefore provides an opportunity for greater gains in performance and contribution from R4D. However, there is a need to consider support at HQ to ensure a balanced approach to ensure the whole system functions effectively
- Since the baseline there has been an improving perception that PWD is starting to improve its performance as a result of R4D's capacity development approach (increase from 58% to 76%). Importantly this has engaged work unit managers, particularly in divisions, to report a steady increase in the influence of capacity building on better planning, budgeting and reporting.

## 4.7 Discussion and Analysis of key Results from Current Mid-line

In drawing out information from the analysis and key findings outlined above there are a number of key points to highlight for further consideration, action and planning by R4D. The analysis presented below also draws upon the qualitative information derived from the interviews as well.

A universal finding at the current midline point is the shift away from *"the old culture of PWD, towards a new PWD culture of running its business"*. The concurrent approaches applied by R4D (planning, budgeting and reporting) and the addition of implementation models using CBC's and IBC's has transformed the way in which PWD implements its works. There is general enthusiasm within PWD, particularly at districts for further improvements to work practices and support.

An overarching request has been a set of strategies and work priorities placed around how PWD can operationalise and implement its respective policies and strategies. Considerable effort has already been placed in developing key policies and strategies and effort needs to focus on strengthening the systems required to implement these.

There is strong demand for further management support and hands-on-training, particularly at the divisional level. There have also been requests for further opportunities to apply key skills, including management. As indicated in Figure 6 below, the opportunities for the application of management skills has slightly decreased since the last mid-line study. This is primarily due to the fact that the interviews were initially at the HQ level. Anecdotal evidence suggests divisions would radically increase overall scores if they were to be included.

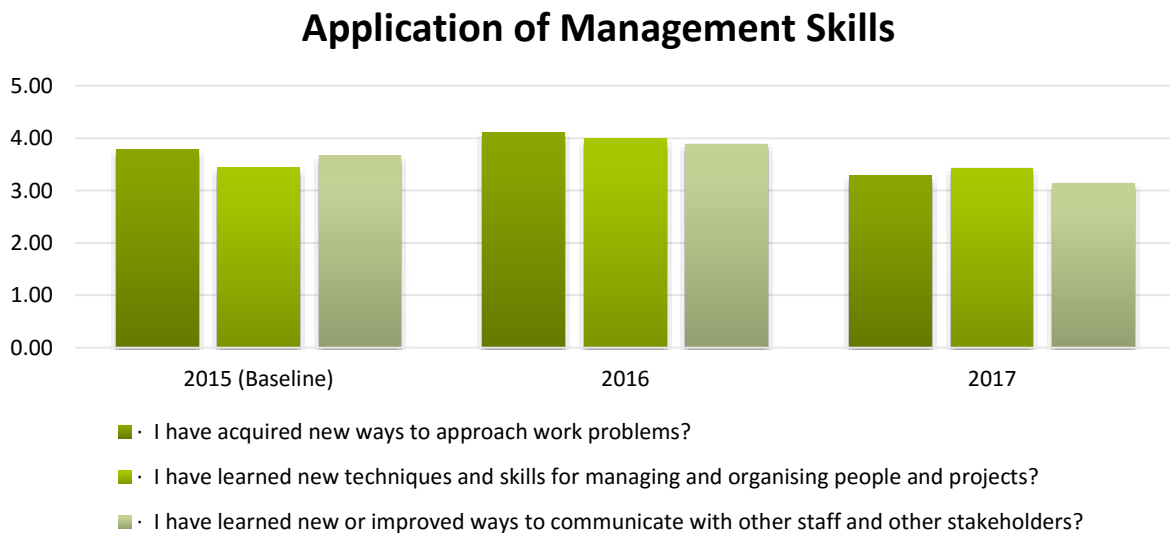


Figure 6 - Application of Management Skills

In addition to a formalised capacity development framework and plan, PWD have requested assistance to formalise and document appropriate systems, approaches and guidelines to guide future work at both HQ and at the divisional level. However, for this work PWD need to make a concerted effort to fill key positions and look to increase the number of operational staff with a commitment from both PWD HQ and R4D engineers to support capacity development and work in the divisions.

A key finding from the qualitative surveys has been the need to focus key training and capacity events at the divisional level, not only with divisional teams but also with engineers and site inspectors and



also working more with local contractors. This is seen as a critical next steps in operationalising important support through PWD to improve the overall road network.

Capacity development also needs to focus on the eventual transition of R4D advisers and staff and work in handing over responsibility. There is still a perception that R4D advisers in some cases “substitute capacity” in the event where capacity is weak. This requires a strong commitment from PWD and R4D moving forward and a recognition that partnership arrangements are necessary to effectively transition work and overall responsibility.

Based on the analysis and consideration of key themes, the most important capacity development priorities moving forward include:

- Development of a formalised capacity development framework and plan aimed at guiding future capacity building efforts at both HQ and divisions.
- Strong emphasis to be placed on capacity building efforts that complement existing policies and strategies (i.e. RRAF)
- A key capacity development area that has been prioritised is a focus on strategic planning, budgeting and reporting and hands-on-practical training at both HQ and divisions
- Efforts to support decentralisation to the divisions are seen as critical. Training and support should be provided on-site (technical engineering) and more effort to involve divisions in planning and budgeting.
- Continue to strengthen reporting functions and to develop a stronger culture of evidence-based planning – i.e. using data across the program to support PWD management to make better decisions.

## 4.8 Case Studies

Case studies are an important qualitative tool used to describe particular situations or events. Case studies are used for in-depth consideration of the results of a project, intervention or event to illustrate given points. The World Bank<sup>2</sup> define a case study as *a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained through extensive description and analysis of that instance taken in its context.*

The semi structured interviews were completed in November 2014 and followed up again in May 2016. A third data collection round was completed in July-August 2017 and provided rich and valuable data about staff of PWD and their individual experiences. A selection of four case studies is provided below<sup>3</sup>. Information from the baseline has remained and has been populated with additional findings from the previous midline and current midline. The stories will be completed with the final collection round in May 2018.

### **Ms Betty Harry - Manager - Procurement and Administration, PWD**

Prior to joining PWD in 2013, Betty was working with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for the past 13 years. Betty worked in several roles within the MoF culminating in her final role as Secretary to the Central Tenders Board (CTB). Betty was instrumental in establishing improved human resource systems; particularly in the preparation of job descriptions to ensure the CTB was well structured and resourced to handle important procurement processes. Betty saw an internal advertisement for a Procurement Manager in PWD and decided to apply primarily to provide her with new challenges and to test her skills in a new department while maintaining a focus on procurement and contracting.

<sup>2</sup> Friedlander, A & Morra 2000 *Case Study Evaluations*, World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, Washington DC.

<sup>3</sup> Ms Betty Harry left PWD in 2016. However, her story remains relevant and has been kept in this report as part of the overall contribution by R4D to capacity development and institutional strengthening.

Betty's role is really on the "front line" for procurement. She is responsible for the administration of contracts and processing payments for goods and services. Her role encompasses supporting and approving Request for Quotes (RFQ) and contracts and providing technical advice on procurement (for contracts over VT\$5million). *"Procurement is a relatively new field in Vanuatu and not many Ni Vanuatu have procurement experience. It is a real opportunity and privilege to follow this line of work and promote better procurement processes for the government as a whole and also to develop my own skills and experience."* Interestingly Betty's old role at the CTB is still vacant so Betty provides services (voluntarily) to support the CTB and also the ports and harbours department.

Betty is continually looking at ways to streamline procurement processes while maintaining a robust and accountable system. *"PWD is very interesting to work for. It is a bigger department with many units. PWD is also taking steps to provide more opportunities, particularly for training. PWD is also looking to create opportunities to do work more effectively. It is moving in the right direction."*

Being a woman has not been a barrier for Betty, although she is conscious that some stereotypes remain which she has had to deal with on occasion. However, in Betty's words *"It is about individual motivation and attitude to make jobs interesting and effective"*. Betty has a solid relationship with R4D and works closely with all the advisers, particularly the finance and procurement advisers. Betty has received support through R4D to complete a Diploma in Management and participated in a study tour to the Solomon Islands.

Where Betty would like to see more support is technical advice and support to all her team members. R4D staff tend to work directly with individuals in key positions however Betty sees a need to align mentoring and training to lower level staff to ensure they are motivated, develop skills and have more opportunity to work together. More work is required in divisions as they are doing their own procurement, which can be problematic. Divisions require more training and support but ultimately; PWD needs to *"have confidence in the procurement system first and foremost"*.

Betty has noted during the mid-line phase that PWD has become a better place to work. *"The work environment has improved in the last 12-months. We were able to work as a team and whatever instructions were received were carried out."* Betty has also noted that the refinement of processes and procedures has been a key standout and the priority for the future is to roll these systems out to districts. In responding to this, Betty is actively seeking opportunities to delegate financial procedures and responsibilities to her team. PWD at the central level has restructured itself so that individuals are assignment responsibility for respective provinces. Betty would like to see R4D better support the decentralisation process and have clear roles and responsibilities. *"R4D's assistance needs to evolve and remain flexible to provide both technical formalised training and backstopping support if required. R4D needs to differentiate more its technical advisory roles and the level of support required."*

#### **Sam Namuri - Director – PWD**

Sam arrived at PWD in 2010 where he was a program coordinator under the VTSSP Phase I program. The position of PWD Director became available during that time and he applied. As Director, Sam has many roles and responsibilities to fulfil. The main responsibility is to ensure PWD is following procedures and complying with laws and regulations, especially for financial management and disbursement of public funding. More recently, Sam has taken a greater interest in strategic management and policy setting. This is where Sam has greatest engagement with R4D.

In his role as Director, Sam sees his role to *"make people's lives a little easier"* and that *"by having good roads, it goes a long way to reducing the difficulties that people face."* The rural road network is of critical importance to Vanuatu and Sam is aware that PWD hasn't delivered on all expectations in the past in terms of delivery of a quality road network. As Sam states *"this is what drives me, at the end of the day, we need to have 1,200km of road established and properly maintained."*

In Sam's own words PWD *"has come a long way and things are getting better"* as people are starting to engage and work with the systems that have been set up. Sam's perception is that the working culture is getting better as evidenced by - (i) PWD is getting more attentive to staff needs both professionally and personally and (ii) we are creating new social activities so people can engage outside of work.

For Sam, PWD need two things for it to succeed (i) good people with adequate capacity and (ii) secure funding to maintain roads. *"If we have this then we can progress."* Unfortunately, PWD has not focused enough on capacity development according to Sam. The funding available to PWD is for roads and not training. Therefore, R4D plays an important role in filling the gap.

In reference to R4D training and mentoring, Sam has a positive perception of the support received to date. He speaks well of R4D's support to discuss strategic issues and outlining and articulating appropriate operational strategies. For training, leadership training has been particularly important and has been very important for PWD. From a personal perspective, the training has supported Sam to *"help management be fully aware of what responsibilities are necessary within the department and what is needed to fulfil those."*

Importantly Sam views the capacity building support to date as an opportunity to look at how PWD does its work traditionally and how PWD can do it more effectively. As Sam comments *"it gives us the opportunity to think outside the box a little bit and realise there is more than one way to do things. The capacity building support has given us those options."*

Moving forward Sam is planning to implement more "building blocks" within PWD and have the management systems work for him rather than himself working for the system. Sam also wants to shift training and mentoring support away from managers and direct counterparts towards people who are actually doing the work. The divisions are seen as critical and are priorities moving forward from a capacity building perspective.

At the time of reporting at the mid-line Sam and his senior management counterparts were seeking to hand over more responsibility and delegate authority to other senior managers to enable them to operate their various functions. *"Unfortunately this hasn't translated into the divisions,"* Sam stated. Sam has requested a renewed capacity development focus on divisions particularly on their roles and responsibilities and what is required to carry out those functions.

In relation to institutional development Sam is very pleased with the support provided by R4D and is keen to focus on elements of *"sustainability"*. In Sam's words *"we need to think about how the program will be sustained - we need to look less at physical activities and look at strengthening individual capacity (districts) and institutional elements - these are far more important than roads."*

#### **Mr Fred Siba - Divisional Manager – Malampa**

Fred commenced work with PWD in 2005 in Malampa as a divisional engineer. By 2008, Fred was acting Divisional Manager (DM) in Penama after the incumbent DM was removed. In 2010, Fred was appointed as DM and in 2013 he returned to Malampa, remaining a DM. The DM's is responsible to plan annual activities and to locate resources and ensure there is adequate supervision overall. The DM acts as a communication point between PWD and key stakeholders (communities, consultants etc.) and also provides technical assistance to stakeholders related to PWD's core functions. Fred joined PWD, as he wanted to *"really help somebody's needs." I wanted to do something positive and something that can contribute."*

Fred really enjoys working with PWD as it is contributing something positive to communities but he recognises that the goal is not always simple. Working with PWD is positive because *"you can see how people are impacted by the work of PWD"*. Fred speaks highly of R4D's work in community contracting and sees it as a very positive way to engage with communities and in maintaining existing roads and having people involved in the maintenance of those roads.

While Fred has a positive perception of PWD and its work he recognises the need for more technical mentoring support and training in technical aspects of his work. *"Engineering and road works are core functions of PWD, therefore we need to bring the skills of engineers up to a high standard, particularly in the divisions."* Fred also talks of the need for more equipment in the divisions to help support work.

For Fred, PWD traditionally has had a strong focus on implementation rather than training. Fred is pleased with support from R4D but feels the shift from contractors to community based contracts and IBC's. *There is increasing interest and potential from communities all over Malekula to become IBC however the number is limited to 10.* Fred has noted that CBC's have increased significantly since baseline and this is an approach he would like to see continue into the future. In his role as DM and with the support of R4D, Fred says, *"I have a better view of things and I am able to look at alternatives and not just stick to the traditional ways of doing*

*business. I have been able to face difficult situations and before I wasn't confident but now I am able to address challenges and issues."*

At the mid-line point Fred states that working at the division does remain a challenge, as you do not always have the necessary resources to address immediate concerns and priorities. Fred spoke of the need for greater supervision of works at the district level and also enhanced procurement process, primarily quicker procedures and processes. In progressing towards the future, Fred has highlighted a need to *"help young engineers remain motivated to continue working, servicing and improving infrastructure for communities."* Fred also wants to see external influences minimised and sees PWD work in policy and institutional strengthening as a key feature in supporting this outcome.

Since 2016, Fred has noted that R4D's assistance to work planning and budgeting has had significant impacts on the quality of work and performance of PWD overall. The workplan development process has continued to improve and is more structured using evidenced based proposals and a better informed prioritization model. Fred also noted that progress reporting has been simplified and is more uniform across all provinces thus forming a clearer basis for analysis and comparison.

Despite the gains, there are still challenges in the procurement process of larger contracts; the process is too slow thus larger contracts are not implemented on the planned dates. R4D assistance maybe needed in this area. In addition to procurement and contracting, human resources remains a major issue as key PWD staff have continued to leave (or retire). This is starting to have a large influence on both HQ and divisional capacities. He suggests that the packages be made more attractive to keep key personnel. In looking forward, Fred sees a need for more upskilling in engineering practices and contract management and administration. This will be a priority for PWD through 2018.

#### **Eunice Tari –Senior Finance Officer– PWD**

Eunice has worked in PWD since 1989. Initially Eunice applied for a job as an office secretary in PWD Shaeffa. Eunice was employed there as a secretary until 1995 when she was then made a finance office. Eunice worked in that position until 2012 when she moved to PWD head office as a finance officer. From October 2014, Eunice has worked as the senior finance officer.

The key role Eunice fulfilled as finance officer was to undertake responsibility for key contractual payments across a number of different contracts (IBC, CBCs and RFT contracts). Her role as a senior finance officer has seen Eunice take on more responsibility for the team in PWD head office but also assuming greater supervision and management of provincial finance managers in line with PWD's overall devolution strategy.

In interviewing Eunice in 2014, she stated *"Since I moved to PWD and through R4D, I have learned a lot. I have gained a lot of experience and that motivates me to do more. I am keen to learn more. It makes me motivated to do more and continue learning."*

Eunice also indicated that her initial job in Shefa was not that fulfilling *"The management were not available and they didn't delegate well. Working in the head office is much more interesting and offers new challenges"*

Back in 2014, Eunice identified the importance of R4D advisers in playing a key role in supporting institutional reform and change. More importantly, the support was not just ad hoc training and support but rather mentoring and handing over of responsibility. In Eunice's case this involved handling key account entries and in the supervision of payments. At the time, Eunice also identified the need to adopt and apply the advisory support, particularly given the sheer number of activities contracts and the number of associated payments.

In identifying future trends in 2014, Eunice spoke of the need to work closer with the Divisional Managers (DM's) to advise and support around budgetary issues and on how to effectively utilise and account for finances being spent. Eunice mentioned at the time the team had a very strong sense of responsibility around the use, application and effective reporting and accounting of funds.

In speaking with Eunice in 2017 around the changes Eunice indicated that *"the past 12 months have been tremendously successful as we've been delegating financial responsibilities to the provincial level. The Vanuatu government has obligations to decentralize financial responsibilities to the Provincial Levels and PWD is the first to take a lead in devolving financial responsibilities across the government."*

A key achievement to date is the completion of PWD's Financial Guidelines which provide a streamlined yet rigorous approach to financial management and accounting. Importantly, the guidelines enable better communication with provinces and DM's as everyone is required to follow the same system and all divisional offices have received the same training. The main focus of work at present is to continue supporting provinces and DM's to undertake better financial reporting. Eunice has also acknowledged R4D's support in providing her with on-going support, mentoring and coaching which has provided a high level of confidence and technical understanding to handle most tasks independently. In moving forward, Eunice is hoping to take more a supervisory and monitoring role in terms of travelling to divisional officers to work alongside provincial finance officers.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Capacity development has been a central component of R4D's engagement with PWD since the commencement of the program. The inclusion of a second mid-line study provides an opportunity to undertake further analysis prior to a scheduled end-line study prior to June 2018. The results indicate that capacity support has been well received to date but there is a need for R4D to continue evolving itself to support immediate and emerging priorities for R4D.

Capacity development through R4D has faced some headwinds with the number of vacant positions currently in place within PWD. Compounding the situation is the number of people in “acting roles” as well. The lack of a formal R4D capacity development plan has also meant there is no planned or strategic approach to capacity development. Therefore, results have been somewhat mixed in this data collection round.

The evidence suggests a clear priority by PWD to focus capacity development efforts on areas aligned to current and newly emerging policies and strategies. The development of the RRAF has helped shape PWD's overall strategy in shifting away from its traditional form of implementation and management to centre on a network manager role. As a result, nature of advisory support has changed and R4D needs to consider the implications of this shift in demand. The focus now is on institutional support, particularly with budgeting and planning and associated reporting primarily at the divisional level.

A key consideration for the future is the structure of the evaluation as a whole. The perspectives presented in the report are primarily from central HQ. Although there has been inclusion of views from divisional staff, they have not been reflected in the quantitative data. The evaluation approach is consistent given the longitudinal nature of the study. This will be discussed with the AHC and senior management of PWD in the coming months.

In looking forward PWD needs to focus on in-house matters such as filling vacant positions, restructuring and also in setting clear policy and strategy directions. R4D continues to play a significant role. However, with the growth of other development financed road projects, there is a need for R4D to further enhance its niche as an embedded stakeholder with ready access to core functions across the department. Capacity development and support is integral to PWDs overall mandate, particularly in light of its preference to shift towards a network manager role.

Key recommendations for consideration based on the findings and analysis include:

- **Recommendation 1:** R4D to finalise a formalised capacity development plan. The plan would be a valued asset in supporting the overall RRAF and providing structure and guidance to proposed capacity development initiatives moving forward.
- **Recommendation 2:** R4D to consider adjusting the methodology and approach for the final data collection round to include the perception and “voices” of divisional staff where much of the R4D work is occurring. This may result in the skewing of results but better aligns analysis to the priority areas where R4D is providing capacity support.
- **Recommendation 3:** R4D to focus future capacity support on divisions, particularly with divisional managers. This will support PWD through the provision of structured advice and support that is tangible and which can be measured, particularly progress towards targets outlined in the RRAF.
- **Recommendation 4:** R4D to continue supporting PWD to identify skill gaps and to support the promotion of merit-based recruitment aligned to the strategic intent of the network manager role.

## ANNEX 1: ORGANISATIONAL CASE STUDY – DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

General Details	
Name	
Position within PWD	
Years with PWD	
Contact details (email)	

Topic Area and Question	Response
<b>Working in PWD</b>	
How would you describe the working culture in PWD in the past 12 –months (particularly as it relates to capacity development and support from R4D)? Any issues, challenges, barriers? What has worked well also?	
What would you say are the two key things PWD needs to focus on (not including any donor support) to improve overall performance in the next 12-months?	
What does R4D need to do to make capacity building stronger and more relevant for your position?	
<b>Involvement of R4D</b>	
With R4D support, what capacity development support have you received to date? (Mentoring, training etc.) Please explain the support you have received.	
Is the capacity support from R4D still relevant? (5 very relevant - 1 not at all relevant)?	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
How would you rate the quality of the support in the past 12-months? (5 excellent - 1 Not helpful)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
Rural Roads maintenance, planning and budgeting are three significant areas of R4D support. Can you make observations on the impact (positive and negative) of R4D's Capacity Development Program on these focal areas? In other words, please provide some examples of what has worked well and why	
What support do you think is a priority moving forward for PWD in the next 12-months which R4D can support?	
<b>In reviewing the capacity support you have received in the past 12-months, please answer the following questions outlined below., there is no right or wrong answer and please provide examples and context to support your answer.</b>	
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	
• The training and support I have recieved has increased my knowledge of work issues? (5 - fully 1 not at all).	5 4 3 2 1 N/A

• I better understand issues and concepts in my work area as a result of R4D support? (5 - fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• The knowledge gained through capacity support enables me to do my work better? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
<b>Confidence</b>	
• The capacity support received in the last 12-months has given me confidence in my work and role? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I am now more motivated to apply new skills to my work? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
<b>Technical Skills</b>	
• I have increased my technical understanding and capacity to do my work better. (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have acquired new skills. (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
<b>Management Skills</b>	
• I have acquired new ways to approach work problems? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have learned new techniques and skills for managing and organising people and projects? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have learned new or improved ways to communicate with other staff and other stakeholders? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
<b>Relevance</b>	
• I continue to apply the knowledge/skills from the capacity support. (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have pursued additional opportunities (new responsibilities, external studies) (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
<b>Efficiency and Effectiveness</b>	
• I work more effectively and efficiency as a result of the support I receive from R4D? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have been given opportunity to train and support others in my work unit? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have found new opportunities to work with other departments within PWD? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
<b>Impact</b>	
• The capacity support has had a direct impact on my work situation? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have been able to increase responsibilities or I have been promoted? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• I have changed my work situation as a result of the capacity support? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• The capacity support has had an impact on my work unit as a whole (i.e. finance, technical) (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• PWD has improved its performance as a result of capacity support from R4D ? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
• The capacity support has assisted PWD develop better strategies and policies? (5 fully 1 not at all)	5 4 3 2 1 N/A



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your role as a supervisor what has been the impact (positive and negative) of the capacity support to date?</li> </ul>	
In your opinion, in what ways have R4D capacity building interventions influenced the performance of PWD?	
Can you identify areas of good practice, which could be replicated or improved?	
<b>Future Plans</b>	
In your current role, what improvements are you looking to implement in the next 12-months?	
Thinking more broadly, what are the immediate priorities for PWD to continue to improve and strengthen its reform process in the next 12-months? What does PWD need to do better? What role does R4D need to play?	