



Ministry of Education & Training  
Government of Vanuatu

# WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) IN SCHOOLS POLICY



**WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)  
IN SCHOOLS POLICY  
2024-2030**

**Effective and Review Date**

The WASH in School (WinS) policy will be implemented starting 2024.

Responsible Division	Responsible Officer	Date of review
Education Services Directorate	Director of Education Services	2027
Stakeholders	MoET, MoIA, MoH, MoLNR, UNICEF, WHO, NGOs, and donor partners	



**Ministry of Education & Training**  
**Government of Vanuatu**

## Table of Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>2</b>
ACRONYMS .....	3
POLICY SUMMARY .....	4
<b>1. BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1.1 POLICY CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND.....	5
1.2 RATIONALE FOR POLICY .....	5
1.2.1 Disease Prevention .....	5
1.2.2 Education Attainment .....	6
1.2.3 Gender and Disability Inclusion .....	6
1.2.4 Impact on the Wider Community .....	6
1.2.5 Life-long Skills.....	6
1.3 SITUATION ANALYSIS .....	6
1.4 CURRENT POLICY AND LEGAL ENVIRONMENT .....	7
1.4.1 International Commitments .....	7
1.4.2 National Commitment.....	7
1.5 POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.....	7
<b>2. POLICY FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 POLICY VISION .....	8
2.2 POLICY GOAL.....	8
2.3 MISSION .....	8
2.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES .....	8
2.5 THEORY OF CHANGE .....	9
<b>3. POLICY PRIORITIES</b> .....	<b>10</b>
3.1 WATER.....	10
3.1.1 Introduction .....	10
3.1.2 Minimum Standards for Water Supplies .....	10
3.1.2.1 Water Quantity.....	10
3.1.2.2 Water Quality.....	10
3.1.2.3 Location and Accessibility.....	11
3.1.2.4. Water accessibility in the classroom .....	11
3.1.2.5. Water for Menstrual Hygiene Facility .....	11
3.2 Sanitation .....	11
3.2.1 Introduction .....	11
3.2.2 Minimum Standards for Sanitation .....	11
3.2.2.1 Prevent contact with toilet content.....	11
3.2.2.2 Toilet Access and Use.....	12
3.2.2.3 Availability: Quantity.....	12
3.3 HYGIENE SERVICES.....	12
3.3.1 Introduction .....	12
3.3.2 Minimum Standard for Hygiene Services .....	12
3.3.2.1 Hand-Washing Facilities.....	13
3.4 HYGIENE AND EDUCATION PROMOTION.....	13
3.4.1 Introduction .....	13
3.4.2 Minimum Standards for Hygiene Education.....	13
3.5 MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT .....	14
3.5.1 Introduction .....	14
3.5.2 Minimum Standards for Menstrual Hygiene Management .....	14
3.6 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE .....	14
3.6.1 Introduction .....	14
3.6.2 Minimum Standards for Operation and Maintenance .....	15

<b>4. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY .....	17
4.1.1 National Framework.....	17
4.1.2 Provinces have the capacity for WinS implementation .....	17
4.1.3 Schools have the capacity to Assess, Plan, and Improve WASH services.....	17
4.1.4 Development of School WASH Infrastructure aligned with National Standards .....	17
4.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	18
<b>5. MONITORING, EVALUATION, LEARNING AND REPORTING .....</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1 MONITORING INDICATORS.....	20
5.2 LEARNING AND REPORTING .....	20
5.3 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS .....	20
1. WATER.....	22
2. SANITATION .....	22
3. HYGIENE SERVICES .....	23
4. HYGIENE AND EDUCATION.....	23
5. MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT .....	23
6. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE .....	23
<b>ANNEX 1. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>ANNEX 2. WINS INDICATORS.....</b>	<b>24</b>

#### List of tables

Table 1: Water user-ratio in Vanuatu.....	10
Table 2: JMP water ladder.....	11
Table 3: JMP sanitation ladder.....	11
Table 4: Sanitation standard user ratio.....	12
Table 5: JMP Hygiene ladder.....	12

#### List of figures

Figure 1: WinS Theory of Change.....	9
Figure 1: Theory of Change.....	16

#### List of graphs

Graph 3: Water Access in schools .....	22
Graph 4: Sanitation Access in Vanuatu .....	22

## Foreword

Schools are the most important places of learning for children; they occupy a central place in the community. Schools are a stimulating learning environment for children and stimulate or initiate change. Children spend almost a third of their entire day at school and inculcate values that WASH remain with them for most of their lives. Schools should be places where children feel safe and secure and have the basic amenities and facilities that allow them to learn and play for their growth and development.

To contribute to achieving the overall aims of the National Government, the Ministry of Education and Training has developed its Policy and Standards for all schools in the country to follow and comply with. This Policy & Standards for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools represents the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Training to sustainably improve the student's overall health and well-being towards achieving a quality education within a child-friendly school environment.

All schools operating in the National Education System including privately operated schools will implement this WASH in Schools Policy and Standards. This Policy and Standards are to be used by all WASH stakeholders who are involved in planning, managing, financing, implementing, and monitoring water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in schools' programs and activities in the country. The successful implementation of this Policy and Standards for WASH in Schools will have a considerable impact on raising the health and lifestyles of our children's future.

This policy for School WASH is meant to assist the stakeholders of School WASH in facilitating efforts to implement the school WASH activities. It provides them with tools and ideas on how to design School WASH facilities sustainably. By focusing on school-going children and turning schools into centres of health and cleanliness, future generations will be better prepared to care for their families, the health of their communities and a clean environment.

The development of this National policy involved various stakeholders including sectoral Ministries at national and provincial levels, International, National and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other actors. Their tireless efforts and time during the development of this School WASH policy have contributed to its finalization.

The Government of Vanuatu would like to thank UNICEF for their immense support in financing the development of this document. The support process has been coordinated and managed by the WASH in Schools Unit of the Education Services Directorate and UNICEF. Finally, but not least in importance, special thanks go to the WASH consultant who worked with the MoET and UNICEF team to produce this policy.



**Bergmans Lati**

Director General of the Ministry of Education and Training

## Acronyms

DoWR	Department of Water Resources
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme of UNICEF and WHO
HPS	Health Promoting School
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MQS	Minimum Quality Standard
NSDG	National Sustainable Development Goal
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PEO	Principal Education Officer
SSP	School Strategic Plan
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VEMIS	Vanuatu Education Management and Information System
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WinS	WASH in Schools
WIP	WinS Improvement Plan
WRI	Water Resources Inventory

## Policy Summary

The WinS Policy provides a national framework to guide the improvement of WASH services in schools across Vanuatu, ensuring inclusive access for all children, including those living with disabilities. The policy aims to improve children's health, learning outcomes, and overall well-being.

It sets out minimum standards for water, sanitation, hygiene services, hygiene education, menstrual hygiene management (MHM), and the operation and maintenance (O&M) of WASH infrastructure. These standards serve as a roadmap for schools to progressively meet national benchmarks.

The policy outlines five strategic priorities, including the establishment of a strong institutional framework and improved monitoring systems. A key feature is the integration of a dedicated WASH monitoring and evaluation module within the Ministry of Education and Training's (MoET) VEMIS system. This enables a more focused and strategic approach to service delivery, hygiene promotion, and MHM, and provides a mechanism for performance tracking.

Implementation will occur across national, provincial, and school levels. Provinces and schools are expected to lead implementation, while the national level provides technical guidance, oversight, and monitoring.

Provinces are responsible for ensuring that all schools within their jurisdiction comply with national WASH standards. This includes developing a provincial WinS plan and implementing it within the government's annual planning cycle. They are also tasked with supporting schools through capacity-building initiatives, including training.

Schools hold the primary responsibility for achieving and maintaining national standards. While many infrastructure improvements can be managed through school grants and community contributions, some investments exceed school-level capacity. Therefore, roles are shared among schools, provinces, and the national level to ensure all infrastructure meets required standards.

Where systematic WASH gap analyses identify needs beyond a school's capacity, these may be included in the WinS capital investment plan. WASH investments may be standalone or integrated into broader MoET capital investment plans.

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Policy Context and Background

The Government of Vanuatu fully recognises WinS and the role of stakeholders to ensure children in schools enjoy good health and better education.

WASH is important in its own right and is also necessary for the attainment of better health, education, nutrition, and other indices of human development. WASH also contributes to other development goals, particularly those relating to poverty and economic growth, urban services, gender equality, resilience, and climate change. Access to water and sanitation is interlinked with several other key issues and has a significant impact on children's lives and their ability to develop and thrive.

Inadequate and inequitable access to water and sanitation services, along with inappropriate hygiene practices, in households and schools largely deters efforts to realise the rights of every child, especially the most deprived, to live in a safe and clean environment. The sub-standard situation of WASH services in schools results in obstacles that mostly affect adolescent girls as they go through puberty. For adolescent girls, the absence of privacy and dignity owing to the lack of improved sanitation facilities has especially negative impacts on health and safety, dignity, self-esteem, school, learning/ education, and well-being.

Providing children with safe, dignified, inclusive and reliable school WASH services helps to make the learning environment pleasant and healthy, boosts education achievement and promotes gender equity. It largely contributes to overcoming exclusion from, and discrimination within, education, particularly for girls and children from disadvantaged communities. On the other hand, offering children high-quality hygiene education provides them with the basis for healthy and productive lives, and creates future demand for safe water and sanitation services. When integrated with a community programme, it can turn children into agents of change for the whole community.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 Rationale for Policy

The Vanuatu Government is firmly committed to SDGs 4 and 6, which relate to quality education and access to clean water and sanitation. This commitment is reflected in the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), which has strong links to WinS through three of its pillars: Society, Environment, and Economy. The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) recognises the importance of WASH in promoting health and education outcomes, and this is reflected in its Education Sector Strategic Plan 2021–2030. The WinS programme is central to advancing the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) approach, ensuring that all children have equitable access to WASH facilities and related health and hygiene education.

WinS is further embedded in several key national laws and policies, including:

- Public Health Act, Act 22 of 1994 (Consolidated Edition 2006)
- Education Act No. 9 of 2014
- National Sanitation Policy, 2016–2030
- Health Promoting School Policy
- Healthy Island Policy
- National Water Policy, 2017–2030
- National Drinking Water Quality Standards Order No. 51 of 2019
- National Building Code – 2000

Given the presence of WASH-related provisions across multiple documents, MoET requires a dedicated national WinS Policy to consolidate standards and guidance into a single, coherent policy framework. The provision of WASH in schools delivers significant health, educational, and equity-related benefits. Investments in WinS result in measurable economic and social gains, which can be summarised under five key categories:

### 1.2.1 Disease Prevention

WinS plays a vital role in preventing disease transmission and improving child health. Its objectives align with the NSDP's vision of a nation where "all citizens are healthy and live long, productive lives." Exposure to diarrhoeal diseases is often linked to contaminated water, unhygienic food handling, and poor sanitation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Children's Fund, Child friendly school's manual, UNICEF, New York, 2009

According to the *Vanuatu Demographic and Health Survey 2023*, children under five experienced an average of 5.8 episodes of diarrhoea in the two weeks preceding the survey. In 2016, the Ministry of Health recorded 14,829 diarrhoea cases in children under five at health facilities across the country.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 829,000 deaths in low- and middle-income countries each year are linked to inadequate WASH, accounting for 60% of diarrhoeal deaths. Of these, 432,000 deaths are attributed specifically to poor sanitation, which also contributes to neglected tropical diseases, malnutrition, and respiratory infections. Handwashing with soap can reduce diarrhoeal episodes by approximately 30% and respiratory infections by 20%.

### 1.2.2 Education Attainment

There is strong global evidence that poor WASH conditions in schools negatively affect children's ability to learn. Helminth (worm) infections, diarrhoea, and malaria, common among Vanuatu schoolchildren, can hinder physical and cognitive development through pain, nutrient competition, anaemia, and tissue damage.

Unhygienic school environments can also impact teacher performance and increase absenteeism, further disrupting learning. Dehydration, especially in children walking long distances to school, also reduces concentration and learning capacity.

### 1.2.3 Gender and Disability Inclusion

WASH access affects girls and boys differently, and inadequate facilities can exacerbate inequalities. A lack of private, secure, and gender-segregated toilets may discourage parents from sending girls to school. Moreover, poor menstrual hygiene facilities contribute to absenteeism and dropout among adolescent girls.

Children with disabilities are particularly affected by inadequate school environments, especially inaccessible or poorly designed toilets. A 2020 MoET study identified toilet access as a key barrier preventing children with disabilities from attending school. Inclusive WASH infrastructure can create critical opportunities for these children to participate in education without further marginalisation.

### 1.2.4 Impact on the Wider Community

Children who access safe WASH services at school are more likely to practice hygiene at home and become agents of change in their communities. Conversely, inadequate WASH in schools exposes children and families to disease risks and places a burden on families who must care for sick children.

### 1.2.5 Life-long Skills

Hygiene behaviours instilled during school years tend to persist into adulthood and are passed on to future generations. Schools play a foundational role in shaping lifelong habits. What children learn today becomes tomorrow's norm, contributing to healthier households and communities.

## 1.3 Situation Analysis

A situational analysis of WinS was conducted to assess the prevailing conditions prior to developing the national policy. The exercise involved a desk review of relevant legislation, policies, strategies, and reports related to WASH, along with consultations with key education stakeholders at both national and provincial levels. Provincial-level consultations were held across the five provinces of Sanma, Malampa, Torba, Tafea, and Shefa to capture diverse regional perspectives.

Key findings from the analysis include:

- WinS is well integrated into Vanuatu's national development commitments.
- Existing WinS standards are dispersed across multiple documents and require consolidation and enhancement into a single, unified policy.
- The VEMIS database contains outdated and limited WinS data, highlighting the need for improved data collection and monitoring.
- While school grants are available and can be used to improve WinS, effective planning and budgeting at the school level are essential to ensure that MoET funding is utilised efficiently for WASH improvements.

A detailed summary of the WinS situational analysis is provided in Annex 1 of this document.

The National Implementation Framework will address the critical gaps in WinS services identified through this analysis.

## 1.4 Current Policy and Legal Environment

### 1.4.1 International Commitments

The following two SDGs directly support the implementation of WinS.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- **Target 4. a:** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability-, and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.
  
- **Indicator 4.a.1:** Increase the proportion of schools with access to:
  - o Adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities
  - o Basic drinking water
  - o Single-sex basic sanitation facilities
  - o Basic handwashing facilities (as defined by WASH indicators)

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- o **Target 6.1:** By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.
- o **Target 6.2:** By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, with special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

### 1.4.2 National Commitment

The Government of Vanuatu has demonstrated a strong national commitment to WinS, as reflected in the NSDP and other key legislation and policies. The NSDP integrates WinS-related goals across three main pillars of Society, Environment, and Economy:

- **SOC 2.1:** Ensure every child, regardless of gender, location, educational needs, or circumstances, has access to the education system
- **SOC 3.2:** Reduce the incidence of communicable and non-communicable diseases
- **SOC 3.3:** Promote healthy lifestyle choices and health-seeking behaviours to improve population health and well-being
- **ENV 2.4:** Reduce waste and pollution through effective waste management and pollution control
- **ECO 2.2:** Ensure all people have reliable access to safe drinking water and sanitation infrastructure
- **ECO 2.3:** Ensure that all public infrastructure, including health, education, and sports facilities, is safe, accessible, secure, and maintained in compliance with building codes and standards

MoET reinforces this national commitment through its Education Sector Strategic Plan 2021–2030, specifically under Strategy 5, which promotes the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) approach. This strategy aims to ensure equitable access to HPS activities and WASH facilities for all children.

Several national laws and policies further support this commitment:

- The Public Health Act outlines provisions for safe water supply, proper waste disposal, and sanitation facility maintenance.
- The Building Code Act specifies technical standards for water systems, including rainwater harvesting, latrines, septic tanks, soak-away systems, and desludging requirements.
- WASH is also featured prominently in the Ministry of Health's Sanitation Guidelines and the Healthy Island Policy.

### 1.5 Policy Development Process

MoET led the development of this WinS Policy, taking full ownership of the process. A WASH consultant was engaged to support MoET and UNICEF in developing the policy through a three-stage process:

1. **Policy Inception Phase:** Outlined the approach and scope for policy development.
2. **Situational Analysis:** Assessed the status of WASH and health promotion in schools and identified service and practice gaps.
3. **Policy Formulation:** Drafting of the WinS policy based on analysis and consultations.

Findings from the situational analysis were presented to and endorsed by the MoET WinS Steering Committee. Upon endorsement, the policy was drafted using the MoET-approved policy format. The draft was reviewed and validated through an iterative process involving the Steering Committee and national stakeholder consultations. Following approval at the national consultation, the policy was officially endorsed by the MoET Senior Management Team.

## 2. Policy Framework

### 2.1 Policy Vision

Healthy, enlightened, and productive learners in the community contribute to a peaceful, A just and inclusive society.

### 2.2 Policy Goal

The overarching goal of this policy is to provide a healthy, safe, inclusive, and friendly environment for all schools and students in Vanuatu.

### 2.3 Mission

To enhance coordination in the planning, designing, and implementation of sustainable quality WinS interventions across all schools in Vanuatu.

### 2.4 Guiding Principles

The principles described below are aligned with the national strategies and guidelines on WASH. The National Standards for WinS captured in various national policies and laws serve as inspiration and guidance for this WASH policy. The guiding principles of the policy are:

#### **Child and Gender–friendly, Equitable and Inclusive**

WASH facilities encourage hygienic behaviour, age-appropriate dimensions and adjustments, and stimulate students' learning and development.

#### **School infrastructure and associated assets meet relevant standards to support student access**

Plan and implement quality school-based infrastructure based on identified needs and priorities by reviewing, updating, and implementing school MQS, School Plumbing and Maintenance Manual, and Asset Master Plan, promote and mainstream Inclusive Education so that all children have equitable access to HPS activities and quality WASH facilities in schools.

#### **Enhanced community engagement to support schools' access and disaster mitigation**

Strengthen partnerships and communications between schools and communities to improve learning and access. Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) to mitigate the impact of climate change and natural disasters.

#### **Applying Sound Planning, Management, and Monitoring Processes**

Achieving the desired performance targets and maximising learning opportunities requires adherence to the full programme cycle of planning, implementation, management, monitoring, and evaluation. This integrated approach enables continuous improvement and strengthens institutional and operational learning across all levels.

#### **Striving for Universal Coverage and Sustainability**

The National WinS Standards apply to all schools across Vanuatu. Ensuring that every student in every school has access to sustainable WASH services must remain the overarching goal. All activities should be designed to achieve equitable and lasting coverage.

#### **Providing Climate-Resilient and Durable Infrastructure**

WASH infrastructure must be designed and built to withstand the frequent natural disasters and evolving climate risks that Vanuatu faces. The goal is to ensure functionality over an extended period without the need for costly and frequent maintenance.

#### **Promoting Alignment, Strengthening Partnerships, and Upholding Leadership**

Synergies among stakeholders (including government agencies, development partners, NGOs, and local communities) should be actively fostered. All partners should align their interventions with the National Standards, with alignment progressively becoming a requirement. The leadership role of MoET in coordinating relevant sectors and different levels of government must be strengthened and respected to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

## 2.5 Theory of Change

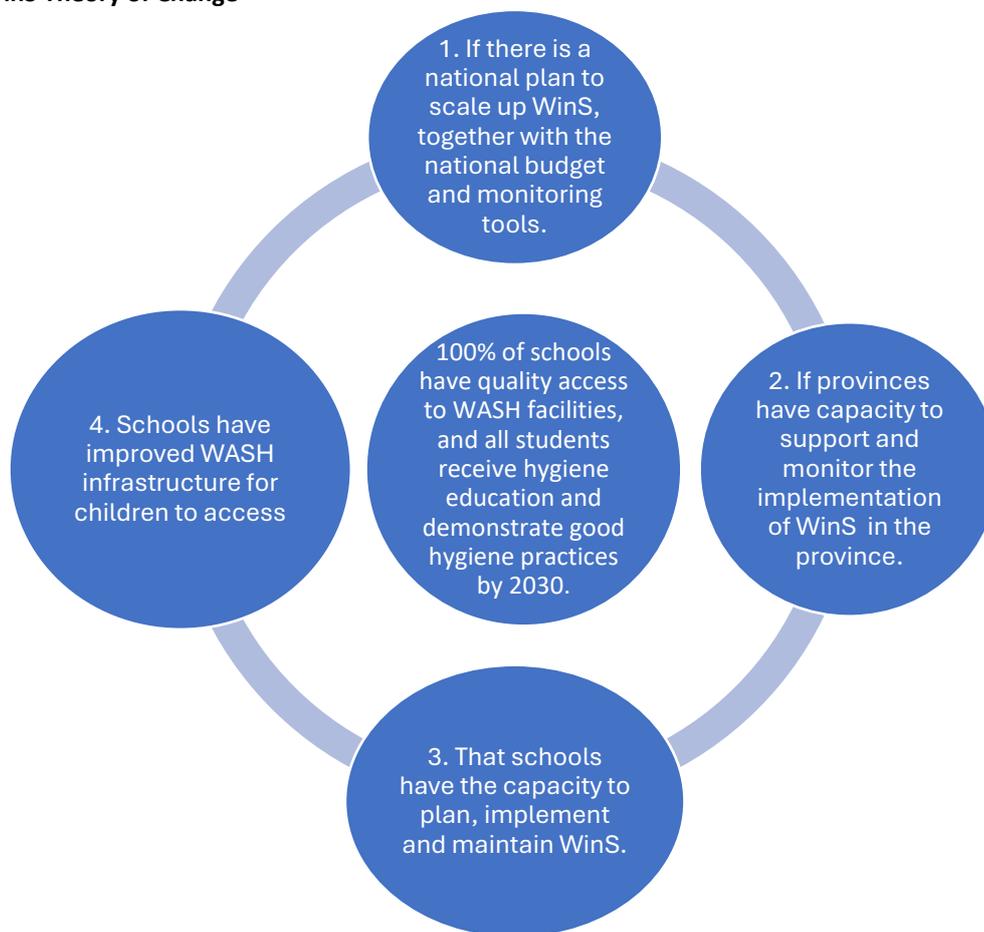
Achieving sustainable access to WASH services in all schools across Vanuatu requires a fundamental shift in the current approach. MoET and its stakeholders must move away from a predominantly infrastructure-focused model to one that prioritises sustainable service delivery and system-wide sector development.

The envisioned change under the WinS programme is that by 2030, 100% of schools in Vanuatu will have access to functional WASH facilities, and all students will have received hygiene education and demonstrate appropriate hygiene practices.

To realise this vision, a coordinated and costed national workplan, accompanied by adequate budgeting and robust monitoring mechanisms, will be developed and implemented at the national, provincial, and school levels.

The achievement of these outcomes relies on meeting four key conditions, which are summarised in the Theory of Change diagram below.

**Figure 2: WinS Theory of Change**



## 3. Policy Priorities

The policy focuses on WASH interventions and improvements in schools towards reaching the WASH 3-star approach targets by 2030. The UNICEF/WHO joint monitoring programme (JMP) from WASH and the 3-star WinS approach define the minimum standards for WinS in the WASH ladder below in tables 1 and 2.

### 3.1 Water

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

A sufficient, reliable, and safe water supply that is always available in schools is essential to prevent the spread of infectious and waterborne diseases among students. Safe drinking water can be ensured by using an improved water source or treating water before consumption.

#### 3.1.2 Minimum Standards for Water Supplies

##### 3.1.2.1 Water Quantity

- All schools should have access to a protected water source within the school premises.
- Water sources (e.g. shallow wells) must be 30 meters away from toilets, wastewater outlets, or drainage systems<sup>2</sup>.
- Water must always be available, including during the dry season and devoid of damaged/non-functional water taps or pipes and be sufficient for handwashing and cleaning.
- Safe drinking water must be available throughout the school year.
- If drinking water is stored in school, containers must be clean, covered, and include an elbow tap to prevent contamination while dispensing.
- The water point design must be appropriate and accessible for younger pupils and pupils with disabilities.
- A functional drainage/soak pit must be installed at water points to avoid stagnant water and associated health risks.

The table below shows the water requirements in the school<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1: Water user-ratio in Vanuatu**

	User ratio	Detail requirement
<b>Day school</b>	5 l/pupil/day	For schools with pit toilets
	15 l /pupil/day	For schools with pour-flush toilets (using a bucket)
	45 l/ pupil/day	For schools with flush toilets
<b>Boarding Schools</b>	50 l/p/day	Boarding school with pit toilets
	85 l/p/day	Boarding school with pour flush toilets (50+35 for flushing)
	130 l/p/day	Boarding school with flush toilets (50+80 for flushing)

##### 3.1.2.2 Water Quality

- Water supplied to schools must be free from pathogens and protected from contamination during storage and use.
- The Department of Water Resources (DoWR) must test water quality before the construction of any new water supply system for schools.
- Regular water quality monitoring is encouraged. During outbreaks of waterborne diseases, bacteriological testing must be conducted by the DoWR.
- If contamination is detected, schools must follow guidance from DoWR and treat water before use by:
  - Boiling
  - Using Aqua tablets, particularly in emergencies
  - Chlorinating tanks (recommended for surface water)
  - Promoting Solar Disinfection (SODIS)
  - Promoting filtration methods
- Schools must routinely clean water intake systems and storage tanks.
- Rainwater catchment systems must include properly functioning guttering, a first flush diverter, and wash-out mechanisms for tanks, all of which must be regularly maintained and cleaned.

<sup>2</sup> Vanuatu Sanitation Guideline, MoH 2016-230

[https://mol.gov.vu/images/News-Photo/water/DoWR\\_File/Monitoring\\_Evaluation/Vanuatu\\_Building\\_Code\\_-\\_2001.pdf](https://mol.gov.vu/images/News-Photo/water/DoWR_File/Monitoring_Evaluation/Vanuatu_Building_Code_-_2001.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://mol.gov.vu/images/Newsphoto/water/DoWR\\_File/Monitoring\\_Evaluation/Vanuatu\\_Building\\_Code\\_-\\_2001.pdf](https://mol.gov.vu/images/Newsphoto/water/DoWR_File/Monitoring_Evaluation/Vanuatu_Building_Code_-_2001.pdf)

**Table 2: JMP water ladder**

Service Level	Drinking Water
Basic Service	Drinking water from an improved water source. Water is available at the school
Limited Service	There is an improved water source (Piped water, protected well/spring, rainwater, bottled water), but water not available at the time of survey.
No Service	Drinking water from an unimproved source or no water source at the school.

### 3.1.2.3 Location and Accessibility

- Drinking water points must always be reliably accessible to all students, including those with disabilities (e.g. students with impaired vision or those using wheelchairs).
- Drinking water must be provided at clearly marked locations, separate from those used for handwashing or other purposes.
- Drinking water may be supplied via:
  - A piped water system, or
  - A covered container with a tap, where no piped system exists.
- Students should be discouraged from drinking directly from taps to minimise disease transmission.

### 3.1.2.4. Water accessibility in the classroom

- All students are encouraged to bring drinking water bottles to school. Each student requires a minimum of two litres of potable water a day<sup>4</sup>.
- Schools should ensure clean and safe water is available in or near classrooms through tap stands with proper drainage, or soak pits, or storage containers filled with taps and used for hand washing with soap near classrooms where tap stands are unavailable.

### 3.1.2.5. Water for Menstrual Hygiene Facility

- Sufficient water should be available at the menstrual hygiene facility or female toilet for washing and cleansing.

## 3.2 Sanitation

### 3.2.1 Introduction

Access to adequate sanitation is a fundamental human right. It entails the provision of facilities and services that ensure the safe management of human excreta from toilet use, through containment and storage, to safe disposal or reuse. Improved sanitation is vital to human dignity and health and has significant gender dimensions, addressing the specific needs of girls and boys in terms of privacy, safety, and hygiene. The absence of safe sanitation facilities contributes to the spread of infectious diseases such as diarrhoea, typhoid, dysentery, intestinal worm infections, and stunting. It also negatively affects the health, dignity, and well-being of students and staff.

**Table 3: JMP Sanitation Ladder**

Service Level	Sanitation
Basic Service	Improved sanitation facilities at the school that are single-sex and usable (available, functional, and private)
Limited Service	There are improved facilities (flush/pour-flush, pit latrines with slab, composting toilets), but not single- sex or not usable
No Service	Unimproved sanitation facilities or no sanitation facilities at the school

### 3.2.2 Minimum Standards for Sanitation

#### 3.2.2.1 Prevent contact with toilet content.

Toilets must be designed and maintained to prevent contact with human excreta by both people and animals (e.g. flies, rats, cockroaches). Minimum standards include:

- No holes in the floor and pit sides.
- A lid or fly mesh on the toilet hole.
- No contamination/pollution of nearby water sources.
- A durable and cleanable floor.

<sup>4</sup> Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy 2016-2030

### 3.2.2.2 Toilet Access and Use

- Schools must provide sufficient, child-friendly, accessible, private, clean, secure, and improved toilets for all students, staff, and persons with special needs, including menstrual hygiene management (MHM) facilities.
- Separate toilets for boys and girls are required. Where possible, these should be in distinct physical locations.
- Toilet doors should have latches on the inside for privacy and should be appropriate for pupils of different ages and abilities.
- Locks on the outside of toilets are recommended to prevent misuse by the community.
- Water for self-cleansing and soap must be available within or near the toilet block.
- Dedicated teacher toilet blocks should be provided, with at least one each for male and female staff.
- Toilets and urinals must be child-friendly (e.g. not too dark, appropriately sized for children, pit holes not excessively wide).
- Toilets/urinals must be kept free of faeces, stagnant urine, and flies.
- Cleaning materials such as brooms, disinfectants, and ash must be readily available.

### 3.2.2.3 Availability: Quantity

To ensure sufficient sanitation coverage, the following student-to-toilet and staff-to-toilet ratios must be observed.

**Table 4: Sanitation standard user ratio**

Sanitation standards – User to toilet ratios		
<b>Toilet for day school</b>	1 functional toilet:25 girls <sup>5</sup> 1 functional toilet:35 boys <sup>6</sup> 1:15 ECCE students <sup>7</sup>	Current MoET standard
<b>Boarding schools’ toilets</b>	1: 35 boys <sup>8</sup> 1:25 girls <sup>9</sup>	Current MoET standard
<b>Handwashing Station</b>	1 HWS installed near toilets	

## 3.3 Hygiene Services

### 3.3.1 Introduction

Promoting hygiene in schools is essential to establishing lifelong healthy behaviours. Instilling proper hygiene practices among children, such as handwashing with soap, has long-term benefits and a greater impact than interventions targeted at adults. The effectiveness of school WASH initiatives is not measured by the number of facilities installed, but by the behaviours children adopt and practise.

Key strategies include teacher training, school WASH club formation, hygiene education, curriculum integration, and participation in global WASH days such as World Toilet Day and World Menstruation Day.

### 3.3.2 Minimum Standard for Hygiene Services

**Table 5: JMP Hygiene ladder**

Service level	Hygiene
<b>Basic service</b>	Handwashing facilities with water and soap available at the school
<b>Limited service</b>	Handwashing facilities with water but no soap available at the school
<b>No service</b>	No hand washing facilities available, or no water available at the school

<sup>5</sup> MoET WASH in Schools Improvement Plan (WIP) Technical Manual

<sup>6</sup> MoET WASH in Schools Improvement Plan (WIP) Technical Manual

<sup>7</sup> Vanuatu Early Childhood Care and Education Policy 2018

<sup>8</sup> MoET WASH in Schools Improvement Plan (WIP) Technical Manual

<sup>9</sup> MoET WASH in Schools Improvement Plan (WIP) Technical Manual

### 3.3.2.1 Hand-Washing Facilities

- All schools must provide one functional handwashing point for every 35 students.
- Hand-washing points must have adequate clean water and soap.
- These facilities should be conveniently located near eating areas, classroom entrances, canteens and other high traffic areas.
- Hand washing stations must be inclusive and accessible to all, including those with disabilities and of varying heights.
- In schools without piped water systems, tippy taps or containers fitted with taps should be used.
- Handwashing with stagnant water (e.g. from bowls or basins) is strongly discouraged.
- Schools with piped water should construct permanent handwashing stations with proper drainage.
- Promote supervised group handwashing in kindergarten and primary schools.
- Soap must always be available at all hand washing stations.

## 3.4 Hygiene and Education Promotion

### 3.4.1 Introduction

Hygiene education empowers children to take responsibility for their own health and hygiene through structured WASH activities. Consistent handwashing with soap, especially after toilet use, before eating, and after handling waste, is a cornerstone of disease prevention. This behaviour can only be sustained through a reliable water supply, appropriate use of WASH facilities, and a culture of hygiene within educational institutions.

Hygiene education must address the following seven key hygiene behaviours:

1. Safe use of toilets
2. Clean drinking water
3. Handwashing with soap
4. Menstrual hygiene management
5. Personal hygiene (e.g. face washing, tooth brushing, hair care)
6. Solid waste management
7. Food hygiene

Although WASH is not a standalone subject in the Vanuatu curriculum, it is delivered through:

- Integration of life skills and science modules, guided by the WASH Education Toolkit
- School-sponsored extracurricular activities and participation in global WASH events

Anecdotal evidence shows that integrating hygiene education into school life results in improved hygiene behaviours among students.

### 3.4.2 Minimum Standards for Hygiene Education.

- WASH topics must be actively taught through integration in core curriculum subjects.
- The Provincial Education Office must regularly monitor schools to ensure the use of the Education Toolkit.
- Schools must establish and support WASH Clubs to promote positive hygiene practices and lead WASH-related initiatives and events.
- Schools should leverage co-curricular platforms such as debates, quizzes, sports, dramas, health clubs, and community festivals to reinforce hygiene messages.
- Adequate hygiene promotion materials—such as posters, brochures, videos, games, and facilitation guides—must be available to all schools.
- Strategic display of WASH posters across school premises is encouraged to reinforce messaging.

### 3.5 Menstrual Hygiene Management

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

MHM is a critical component of the WinS Policy, essential for upholding the dignity, human rights, and gender equality of women and girls.

The policy recognises that inadequate MHM can negatively impact multiple aspects of life, particularly the rights to health, education, and participation in work, thereby reinforcing gender inequalities and undermining the full realisation of the rights of women and girls.

#### 3.5.2 Minimum Standards for Menstrual Hygiene Management

##### Menstrual Hygiene Needs

All school toilets, primary, secondary, and tertiary, must be equipped to meet the menstrual hygiene needs of girls in a safe, dignified, and private manner. The following standards must be met:

##### Hardware

- Girls' toilets must include:
  - A reliable water supply for personal cleansing and changing of menstrual pads.
  - A hygiene rack, a bench and a hook to hang personal items.
- Culturally appropriate waste disposal facilities must be provided, including a dust bin with lids inside each toilet block. Final disposal methods of soiled pads (e.g. incineration or burial) must be integrated into the toilet design and agreed upon in consultation with girls and school staff.
- Facilities must be inclusive, with sufficient space and accessibility features to accommodate girls with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs.

##### Consumables

- Schools must ensure continuous availability of essential menstrual hygiene materials, including soap, disposable sanitary pads, reusable cloth pads, and locally appropriate hygiene supplies.
- Adequate budgetary provision should be made for the regular procurement of these consumables. Where feasible, schools are encouraged to promote reusable sanitary pads to reduce waste and support environmental sustainability.

##### Software/Discreet guidance on MHM

- A trusted female staff member, such as a teacher, school nurse, or female member of the School Community Association, should be designated as the MHM focal point. This person should be approachable and trained to provide guidance and support to girls on menstrual hygiene-related issues.
- Teachers and relevant school staff should be trained on MHM to complement curriculum delivery and ensure MHM is addressed comprehensively and sensitively.
- Girls must receive age-appropriate education on biological changes, including menstruation, to reduce anxiety, fear, and stigma.
- MHM guidance posters should be visibly displayed inside girls' toilets to promote safe menstrual hygiene practices and prevent infection.
- School Boards and School WASH Clubs must regularly monitor and review MHM arrangements, ensuring continuous improvements in line with students' needs and feedback.

### 3.6 Operations and Maintenance

#### 3.6.1 Introduction

Effective operation and maintenance (O&M) of WASH facilities are critical to sustaining safe and functional services in schools. O&M includes routine inspection, cleaning, minor repairs, servicing, and replenishment of consumables. It covers maintenance of water systems, sanitation facilities, handwashing stations, water treatment devices, and septic tanks. Without regular maintenance, facilities deteriorate rapidly, undermining student health, attendance, and learning outcomes.

### 3.6.2 Minimum Standards for Operation and Maintenance

Responsibility for the daily O&M of WASH facilities rests primarily with the school. This must be institutionalised through governance, financing, and implementation mechanisms embedded in school management systems. Provincial education offices play a supportive role in identifying schools requiring additional technical or financial support.

The provincial education office is responsible for identifying and prioritising schools that require additional support, for example, the rehabilitation of WASH facilities beyond the capacity of the schools. The following are the standards for WinS operations and maintenance:

- a. WASH O&M must be integrated into the school's strategic plan, including planning for upgrades and sustained service delivery.
- b. Schools must track and monitor WASH-related budget allocations to ensure efficient and full utilisation of available funds.
- c. Each school should establish and support an active School WASH Club to lead hygiene promotion and participate in maintenance activities.
- d. A focal person (from the school or community) must be designated to oversee daily WASH operations and maintenance.
- e. Schools must implement a regular cleaning, repair, and maintenance schedule. This includes sanitation facilities, water sources, rainwater harvesting systems, storage tanks, and handwashing stations, in collaboration with the School WASH Club.
- f. All school staff and students must receive regular training and awareness on WASH operation, upkeep, and safe hygiene behaviours.
- g. Provincial and national government departments (Education, Health, Water Resources), in partnership with development partners, NGOs, and CSOs, should provide ongoing technical training, supervision, and capacity-building support, especially for designated school handypersons or maintenance staff.

## 4. Implementation Framework

Figure 3: Theory of Change



The Theory of Change figure is presented in Figure 2 above. To achieve positive changes to WASH services in schools, stakeholders at different levels should perform specific WinS responsibilities to support WASH improvements in schools.

The implementation framework presented at each level is linked to the implementation workplan presented in the separate WinS 2024 – 2030 workplan document.

## 4.1 Policy Implementation Strategy

### 4.1.1 National Framework

The national framework empowers provinces and schools to lead the implementation of WinS, while the national level provides strategic guidance, technical assistance, and oversight. The key components of the national framework include:

- a. A WinS policy and strategic framework to guide national and sub-national planning and implementation.
- b. A robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to track the status of WinS across the country.
- c. Budgeting and financing mechanisms, including standardised budget templates for schools and provinces, and a national capital investment plan for WASH infrastructure.
- d. Finalised and regularly updated tools and resources to support WinS implementation in schools.
- e. Coordination of all national-level WASH in Schools activities, in collaboration with partners, to ensure alignment and compliance with national standards.

### 4.1.2 Provinces have the capacity for WinS implementation

Provinces are responsible for ensuring that all schools under their jurisdiction meet the national WinS standards. To fulfil this role, provinces must:

- Develop and implement a provincial WinS plan aligned with the annual government planning and budgeting cycle.
- Provide capacity-building support to schools through regular training for school leaders and teachers.
- Conduct periodic school visits to assess WASH conditions, provide constructive feedback, and guide improvement efforts.
- Review and report annually on the implementation progress and WASH status in schools, using standardised monitoring tools.

### 4.1.3 Schools have the capacity to Assess, Plan, and Improve WASH services

Schools hold the primary responsibility for achieving and maintaining national WASH standards, with support from the provincial and national levels. Each school must:

- Conduct self-assessments of their current WASH status using standard WASH improvement planning tool.
- Integrate WASH improvement plans into their annual school strategic planning cycle.
- Use school grants to finance locally identified improvements in WASH services and hygiene education.
- Ensure the school principal leads the planning process, with oversight and input from the School Council.
- Involve teachers in promoting hygiene behaviours through structured hygiene education and by modelling best practices.
- Engage the broader school community in planning, implementation, and maintenance efforts.
- Empower students to be active participants and champions of improved hygiene practices within their homes and communities.

### 4.1.4 Development of School WASH Infrastructure aligned with National Standards

While schools are responsible for maintaining WASH infrastructure and utilising school grants and community support for minor upgrades, not all infrastructure needs can be met at the school level. As such, responsibilities are shared across levels:

School Level:

- Maintain existing WASH infrastructure.
- Undertake upgrades within the school's capacity using school grants and community contributions.

Provincial Level:

- Provide technical advice and support to schools in WASH infrastructure planning and maintenance
- Identify infrastructure needs beyond school capacity and develop project proposals or prioritise provincial funding to address gaps
- Coordinate with relevant provincial stakeholders to support WASH-related interventions.

National Level:

- Lead the development and implementation of a national capital investment plan for WinS, either as a stand-alone plan or a plan integrated into the broader MoET capital investment strategy.
- Conduct a national infrastructure gap analysis to assess compliance with national norms.
- Cost the infrastructure gap and mobilise financing through advocacy and resource mobilisation efforts.
- Ensure implementation and monitoring of the national capital investment plan for school WASH infrastructure.

#### 4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The table below outlines the roles and responsibilities of WinS stakeholders at different levels.

Levels	Responsibilities
<b>National Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and oversee the implementation of the WinS policy, planning and budgeting framework.</li> <li>• Operationalise integration of WASH into business plans by departments, units, and provinces.</li> <li>• Avail schools-based funding to support WinS within the School Strategic Plan using the school grant and monitor utilisation of the school grant on WASH.</li> <li>• Monitor WASH status with integration of WASH indicators into VEMIS and develop analytical reports.</li> <li>• Develop a capital investment plan and advocate for increased fund allocation to WinS.</li> <li>• Provide technical guidance and capacity building towards provinces on WinS.</li> <li>• Avail technical guidance and documents to schools to improve WASH services.</li> </ul>
<b>Provincial level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop WinS provincial plans in coordination with provincial stakeholders and regularly review the progress.</li> <li>• Plan and budget for WinS using the annual planning cycle.</li> <li>• Support schools by delivering training on WASH improvement planning, education toolkit and construction for school principals, and undertake regular monitoring visits.</li> <li>• Monitor and ensure compliance of schools in relation to standards.</li> <li>• Identify schools that need assistance and develop investment cases.</li> </ul>
<b>School level (Primary and Secondary)</b>	
<b>School Council and School Community Association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee WASH services in the school and endorse improvement plans and monitor implementation.</li> <li>• Oversee development and implementation of the school’s strategic plan and ensure integration of WinS activities.</li> <li>• Consult and mobilise community and area administrators on the WASH improvement plan and implementation.</li> <li>• Validate completion of construction works on WASH facilities.</li> <li>• School Council and school community will ensure communities and parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Act as a role model and encourage children to practice good hygienic behaviours.</li> <li>○ Contribute to the school with local materials, labour and resource mobilisation to ensure quality WASH services.</li> <li>○ Select a community representative to be a member of the school council.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>School Principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that WASH services are aligned to national standards.</li> <li>• Lead on the development of a WASH improvement plan (WIP).</li> <li>• Plan and budget the WIP into the school's strategic plan.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the school council on the school strategic plan cycle from assessment, planning and implementation.</li> <li>• Utilise the school grant for WinS as per the strategic plan.</li> <li>• Oversee implementation of activities such as WASH clubs, contracting school handyman, etc.</li> <li>• Participate in WASH training for school principals.</li> <li>• Assess WASH status using 3-star monitoring and update information into VEMIS.</li> <li>• The principal may ensure teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate in the development of the WIP and monitor the implementation.</li> <li>○ Undertake and contribute to the WIP implementation.</li> <li>○ Implement hygiene education activities such as group handwashing using the curriculum and education toolkit.</li> <li>○ Act as a role model on hygiene practices in school and in community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The principal will ensure that school students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Receive quality education services, including WASH services and hygiene education.</li> <li>○ Act as a role model in the school and wider community and encourage others to adopt improved hygiene behaviours.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Levels	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate in campaigns that contribute to improved WASH services and behaviours in schools and the community.</li> <li>○ Use school infrastructure in good faith and contribute to clean and sustainable WASH services.</li> <li>○ Contribute to the WASH services by participation in School WASH clubs planned activities.</li> </ul>
<b>NGOs and partner agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support implementation of this policy and plans at national, province and or school level.</li> <li>● Provide technical and financial support at national level to the MoET on strengthening the national framework.</li> <li>● Advocate for improved WASH services in schools at all levels.</li> <li>● Contribute funding towards the capital investment plan.</li> <li>● Support creating the knowledge base for WinS with the development of papers, research etc.</li> <li>● Support provinces with delivery of trainings at province and school level, support monitoring and review meetings level.</li> <li>● Support improvements of WASH services in schools by undertaking projects on behalf of the MoET and province.</li> <li>● Support provision of WinS services in schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support implementation of hygiene education activities.</li> <li>● Support schools during observation/celebration of relevant designated global days.</li> <li>● Conduct WASH trainings in schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Water Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support implementation of water safety and security plans for schools.</li> <li>● Conduct water quality tests on new water sources before construction and regular tests of school water supplies.</li> <li>● Advise schools on the various methods of water treatment.</li> <li>● Conduct technical trainings for school handymen, school committee members and teachers.</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Internal Affairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use the PTAC platform to support WASH initiatives.</li> <li>● Area Administrators support WASH initiatives in schools.</li> </ul>

## 5. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Reporting

Monitoring is used to evaluate progress and ensure accountability. Monitoring is far more than collecting information to ‘see how things are going’. It is meant to improve programmes and activities over the long term. Monitoring involves checking, understanding the results of checking and then acting to improve a situation. The action should, of course, be taken at the lowest possible level, with cross-checks to make sure that the situation has improved.

The purpose of monitoring WinS is to obtain information that shall be used for planning and making decisions on resource allocation for WASH improvements to ensure sustainability. The data will highlight the scale of the problem and will be useful for building evidence-based advocacy, assessing progress and evaluating interventions.

### 5.1 Monitoring indicators

Indicators are ‘signals’ that show whether the guidelines have been followed and reveal standards attained in a WASH in schools project or programme. An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor. The WinS 3-star indicator is a tool to monitor WinS.

The minimum rating that all schools must strive to achieve is a 2-star score as per the WASH in school 3-star approach. MoET developed and incorporated the 3-star WinS indicators module in the VEMIS. Schools will assess and enter WinS data on the system to be monitored against the 3-star indicators at least once a year. Details of the WinS indicators are presented in Annex 2.

### 5.2 Learning and Reporting

WASH learning can be achieved through regular WinS review meetings conducted at both the national and provincial levels to assess the implementation outputs and outcome indicators of the work plan. Strong, moderate, and slow WASH progress or improvement can be identified, and strategies be strengthened for more improvements. Schools and provinces are encouraged to develop case studies on WASH that can inform and teach others about WASH improvements as well as challenges faced during the implementation. Encourage both national and international exchange visits learning as well as sharing WASH program achievements and challenges that others can benefit from.

### 5.3 Definitions of key terms

**Improved Sanitation Facility** An “improved” sanitation facility is one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact. These include flush/pour-flush toilets, pit latrines with slap, composting toilets, single- sex toilets that are functional.

**Useable toilets:** means Toilets/latrines that are accessible to students (doors are unlocked or a key is always available), functional (the toilet is not broken, the toilet hole is not blocked, and water is available for flush/pour-flush toilets), and private (there are closable doors that lock from the inside and no large gaps in the structure). For a school setting, the superstructure of the toilet is equally important as the sub-structure.

An **improved drinking water source** is one that, by the nature of its construction, adequately protects the source from outside contamination, particularly faecal matter. “Improved water sources” in a school setting include:

- Direct and indirect piped water systems that are safe from contamination and storage tanks that are available in the schools.
- Protected wells/springs including boreholes/tube wells, protected dug wells and protected springs.
- Rainwater system.
- **Single-sex /Gender separated toilet facility** are separate toilet facilities dedicated to female use and male use at the school.

**Limited water source:** There is an improved water source (Piped water, protected well/spring, rainwater, bottled water) but water is not available at the time of the survey.

**No Water services:** Drinking water from an unimproved source or no water source at the school.

**Basic sanitation:** Improved sanitation facilities at the school that are single-sex and usable (available, functional, and private).

**Limited sanitation:** There are improved facilities (flush/pour-flush, pit latrines with slap, composting toilets) but not single-sex or not usable.

**No sanitation:** Unimproved sanitation facilities or no sanitation facilities at the school.

**No hygiene services:** No hand washing facilities available or no water available at the school.

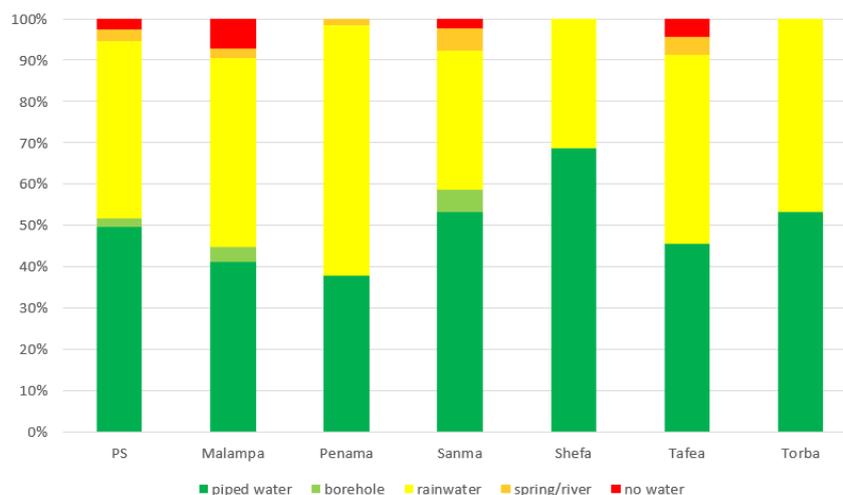
**Limited Hygiene:** Handwashing facilities with water but no soap available at the school.

# ANNEX 1. Situational Analysis

## 1. Water

The 2016 MoET asset survey co water or are accessing unsafe water<sup>10</sup>. Almost all islands in Vanuatu have water deficits during the annual dry season from May to November each year and with increasing climate change and changing weather patterns causing destructive tropical cyclones, droughts, floods, rising sea levels and landslides, the availability of safe and secure water is under increasing pressure.

**Graph 1: Water access in schools**



A Rapid assessment report of schools’ water systems following TC Judy and TC Kevin in 2023 showed that more than 43% of the 748 schools surveyed reported that water available to the school was only enough for cooking and drinking but not enough for daily hygiene use, becoming more critical during the dry season. The DoWR water sources inventory (2016) found that most rainwater storage tanks never reach their full capacity due to broken roof gutters.

An independent study by Foster in 2016 looked at hand pumps and rainwater tanks in 13 rural locations in Vanuatu and likewise found that approximately half of the water samples were contaminated with *E. coli*<sup>11</sup>. The results from these studies show the high contamination risks that schools’ water systems face.

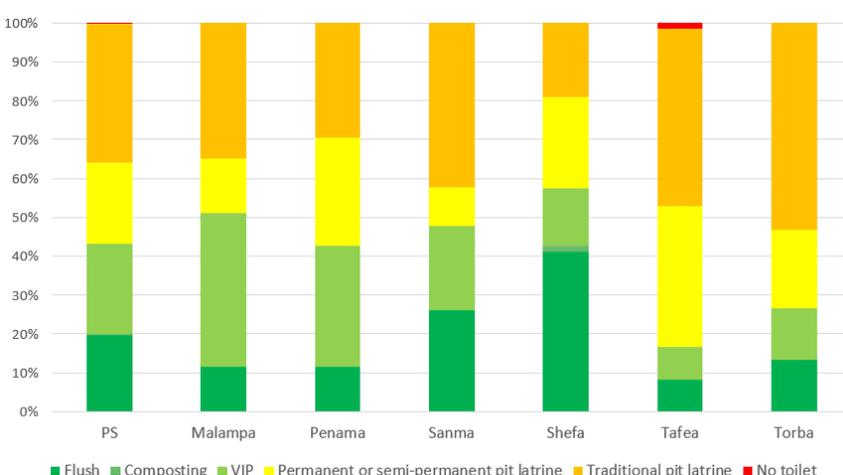
## 2. Sanitation

The graph shows the types of sanitation facilities that are common in primary schools in Vanuatu. The most common forms are.

- Traditional latrines (36%)
- Ventilated Improved latrines (23%)
- Pit latrines (21%)
- Flush toilets (20%)

Further analysis showed that only 60% of school have gender-separated toilets.

**Graph 2: Sanitation Access in Vanuatu**



<sup>10</sup> 2016 MoET asset survey, analysed by UNICEF JPM team. No estimates available for ECCE and SS.

<sup>11</sup> Foster, Ted, ‘Linking Groundwater use, rainfall and alternative water sources in rural Kenya, Cambodia and Vanuatu’, UNC Water and Health Conference, 17 October 2017

### 3. Hygiene services

The quantity of water available to schools and long dry spells without rain impact good hygiene practices. A study in Penama conducted in 2019 found that only 19% of students wash their hands with soap at two critical times each day (after using the toilet and before eating) and the highest priority for all students is the availability of water and soap for handwashing in facilities that are clean and well maintained<sup>12</sup>. The result of the Penama WASH in Schools 3-star pilot program shows it is more challenging to improve the rate of behaviour change practices in schools compared to those of sanitation and water improvement in schools.

### 4. Hygiene and Education

- a. WASH is being taught in schools as anticipated by MoET using the Education tool kit.
- b. Many schools have not yet set up WASH clubs. A 2023 health promoting school report by Sanma Province stated that all 30 selected health promoting schools in the province were yet to set up school WASH clubs. Active schools WASH clubs actively promote extra school curricular through global designated days (i.e., Global Hand Washing Day).

### 5. Menstrual Hygiene Management

Having an improved toilet is important, but having an improved toilet that takes into consideration the safety and security of the toilet users is also paramount. There are limited MHM facilities that will provide privacy, safety, and security in schools for females to manage their menses. A 2019 Student KAP survey conducted by Live and Learn found that 30.3% of survey girls from 20 schools in Penama prefer to stay home when they menstruate and avoid coming to school due to the lack of privacy, safety, and security of school toilets. Insufficient WASH services prevents them from managing their menstruation in school.<sup>1</sup>

### 6. Operations and Maintenance

WASH Operation and maintenance responsibilities for school WASH improvements are often ignored. In addition, there are limited technical human resources available at the school and provincial levels, limited funding for WASH operations and maintenance, weak coordination and collaboration between school communities, school boards/committees and school management and weak monitoring. A WASH Improvement Planning guide developed by the MoET aimed to support schools to improve their WASH facilities and practices, measured against the 3-Star Approach to WinS, WinS-related Minimum Quality Standards (MQS) and National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP).

---

<sup>12</sup> Live and Learn. Formative research on barriers to WASH habit formation & inclusive WASH in schools in Vanuatu, 2019 [https://moet.gov.vu/docs/policies/Formative%20Research%20on%20Barriers%20to%20WASH%20Habit%20Formation%20&%20Inclusive%20WASH%20in%20Schools%20in%20Vanuatu\\_2019.pdf](https://moet.gov.vu/docs/policies/Formative%20Research%20on%20Barriers%20to%20WASH%20Habit%20Formation%20&%20Inclusive%20WASH%20in%20Schools%20in%20Vanuatu_2019.pdf)

## ANNEX 2. WinS Indicators

OUTCOME INDICATORS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
<p><b>WINS MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The national WinS programme is effectively strengthened to meet national WinS standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WinS/HPS coordinator position adopted and filled in MoET structure.</li> <li>• WinS Policy is approved and disseminated across all provinces.</li> <li>• WinS status is monitored and analysed annually based on VEMIS data, including provincial scorecards.</li> <li>• WASH school packages are developed and disseminated to all provinces.</li> <li>• Schools use 10% or more of the school grant for WASH improvements.</li> <li>• All six provinces consulted on WinS and have provincial plans in place to improve WinS.</li> <li>• All six provinces have WinS reflected in the business plans.</li> <li>• All six provinces have 100% of school focal points trained on WinS.</li> <li>• All six provinces conduct school visits to verify WinS status annually.</li> <li>• All six provinces conduct regular review of the progress made vs the implementation plan and WinS status in the province.</li> <li>• Schools trained on WinS and have a WIP in place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WATER</b></p> <p>All schools have sufficient clean water available on the school premises for drinking, cooking, food preparation, bathing, sanitation, and hygiene purposes at all times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinking water from an improved source is available at school and is regularly maintained to minimise contamination.</li> <li>• School regularly treats drinking water (boil, filter, SODIS or chlorinate).</li> <li>• All students have a personal cup or water bottle to drink from.</li> <li>• Most water points are accessible to less able and smaller children.</li> <li>• Schools have stand-by water storage tanks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SANITATION</b></p> <p>School toilets used by all students and teachers are improved, functional, clean, singled -sex, private and lockable from inside.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toilets are improved (e.g., flush, compost, pit with slab, VIP) single-sex, private, accessible, and functional.</li> <li>• The student-to-functional-toilet ratio is no greater than 25:1 for girls and 35:1 for boys.</li> <li>• At least 1 boy and 1 girls’ toilet are accessible to the less able and smaller children.</li> <li>• Toilet paper is regularly supplied by the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>HYGIENE</b></p> <p>All students from all schools are practising good hygiene practices and accessing functional hand washing facilities with running water and soap at critical times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All schools have sufficient functional hand washing facilities, with running water and soap, with functional soak-away/drainage, located near toilets and in other strategic areas.</li> <li>• Hand washing with soap by at least 75% students at critical times (before meals and after toilet use)</li> <li>• Most hand washing facilities are accessible to the less able and smaller children.</li> <li>• Daily supervised group handwashing with running water and soap is practised by all students in all ECCE and primary schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WASH EDUCATION</b></p> <p>Students acquire good WASH knowledge and practice good toilet and hygiene practices in their school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are taught WASH through the integration of WASH topics into the normal school environment and science curriculum subjects.</li> <li>• All schools have active WASH clubs that promote good WASH practices in schools.</li> <li>• WASH-related IEC materials are displayed in classrooms and strategic places.</li> <li>• Globally designated days (World Toilet Day, World Water Day, Global Handwashing Day, World Menstruation Day) are organised in schools to promote WASH learning.</li> </ul>

OUTCOME INDICATORS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
<p><b>MHM</b></p> <p>Menstruating girls in Primary and secondary schools feel secure and comfortable managing their menses at school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls are taught about biological changes in their bodies and good menstruation management practices in schools.</li> <li>• Schools’ female toilets are privately secured with locks/latches from inside.</li> <li>• Female toilets have water available for cleansing purposes.</li> <li>• Schools regularly have menstrual hygiene supplies available for adolescent girls and female teachers at both primary and secondary schools.</li> <li>• Schools have sufficient MHM disposal facilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE</b></p> <p>Schools experience WASH improvements and access to better-maintained WASH facilities accessible to all students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct Gap analysis, and a capital investment plan available at the school levels.</li> <li>• Organise annual advocacy events to increase the fund allocation for WASH in schools.</li> <li>• At least 50% of the capital investment plan has received funding.</li> <li>• School handyman is trained on WASH and WASH infrastructure</li> </ul>

The policy was developed with the technical and financial support of  
UNICEF and the New Zealand Government

