



University of Venda
Creating Future Leaders

UNIVEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS BOOKLET

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FOREWORD

As Vice-Chancellor of the University of Venda, I am honoured to present this Infrastructure Publication—a reflection of our bold vision and unwavering commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and community empowerment.

The University of Venda stands at a transformative juncture. Our campus is evolving into a modern, vibrant environment that embodies our aspiration to be a leading African university rooted in rural development and global relevance. These infrastructure projects are not merely physical structures—they are catalysts for knowledge creation, collaboration, and socio-economic progress.

Over the past five years, we have invested over R600 million in infrastructure development, including Punda Maria Road and bridge, the Faculty of Health Sciences Building, the Advanced Nursing Science Simulation Laboratory, and the revamped Main Administration Building. These facilities are designed to enhance teaching and learning, foster cutting-edge research, and create spaces where ideas flourish.

Our financial strategy reflects sustainability and growth. State subsidies account for 52% of our revenue, while tuition fees and research grants complement this base. Personnel costs represent 51% of total expenditure, underscoring our commitment to attracting and retaining top academic talent. Despite rising costs, we have maintained prudent financial management, ensuring that every rand invested in infrastructure delivers long-term value for our students and stakeholders. Our infrastructure journey is guided by a bold ambition: to provide an enabling environment where students, staff, and partners can thrive. Each project aligns with our strategic goals of sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation.

Beyond numbers, these investments symbolise hope and opportunity for the communities we serve. They align with our strategic goals of inclusivity, innovation, and environmental stewardship. Each project is a stepping stone toward a future where the University of Venda continues to shape leaders, advance knowledge, and drive transformation across South Africa and beyond.

Infrastructure is more than bricks and mortar—it is the foundation upon which dreams are built, knowledge is created, and futures are shaped. At the University of Venda, every structure we raise is a promise to our students, our community, and our nation.

As you explore this publication, I invite you to see these milestones not as endpoints but as stepping stones toward a future where the University of Venda continues to shape leaders, advance knowledge, and drive transformation across South Africa and beyond.

Together, we are building more than infrastructure—we are building a legacy.

Prof Bernard Nthambeleni
Vice-Chancellor and Principal





1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Venda (UNIVEN), nestled in the scenic Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, has embarked on a transformative journey to redefine its academic and social landscape through strategic infrastructure development. Since its establishment in 1982, UNIVEN has grown into a beacon of knowledge and innovation, producing over 70,000 graduates who make meaningful contributions across South Africa and beyond.

In line with its vision of academic excellence and institutional sustainability, the University has recently completed a series of landmark projects representing an investment of more than R600 million. These include the Faculty of Health Sciences Building, the Advanced Nursing Science Simulation Laboratory, the revamped Main Administration Building, and the Punda Maria Road and Bridge Project. Each development is a testament to UNIVEN's commitment to creating modern, inclusive spaces that foster learning, research, and community engagement.

This publication celebrates these milestones, showcasing how infrastructure serves as a catalyst for student success, operational efficiency, and regional development. It reflects the University's unwavering dedication to quality education and its role as a driver of socio-economic progress in rural South Africa.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The strategic impact of infrastructure projects at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) is multi-dimensional and closely aligned with its Vision 2040 and national higher education priorities. These developments position UNIVEN as a leading rural university, driving socio-economic growth and academic innovation in Limpopo and beyond.

3. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AT UNIVEN

3.1. Academic Enabler

Infrastructure serves as a critical enabler for teaching, research, and community engagement. Modern facilities, including advanced laboratories, simulation centres, and upgraded lecture spaces, enhance the quality of education and research outputs.

3.2. Student Success and Experience

Projects are designed to improve student-centeredness, providing safe, comfortable residences and state-of-the-art learning environments. This supports retention, academic performance, and overall well-being.

3.3. Strategic Alignment

Infrastructure development is integrated with UNIVEN's Spatial Development Framework and the Department of Higher Education and Training Macro-Infrastructure Framework (MIF), ensuring compliance and coherence with national standards. This alignment strengthens institutional credibility and funding opportunities.

3.4. Innovation and Partnerships

New facilities foster entrepreneurship, innovation, and industry collaboration, creating spaces for applied research and commercialisation. They also enable internationalisation, attracting global partnerships and research networks.

3.5. Economic and Social Impact

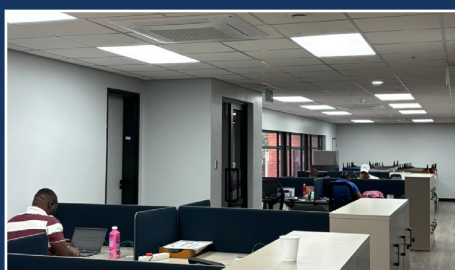
Infrastructure investments—estimated at R1.95 billion over phased implementation—stimulate local economic activity, create jobs, and contribute to rural development. The infrastructure projects also advance UNIVEN's role in addressing Sustainable Development Goals such as Quality Education, Industry and Innovation, and Partnerships for Development.



4. LANDMARK INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AT UNIVEN

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) proudly announces the official opening of four landmark infrastructure projects, marking a significant milestone in its journey toward academic excellence and sustainable development. These projects, valued at over R600 million, reflect UNIVEN's commitment to creating world-class facilities that support teaching, research, and student success. These developments are more than buildings; they are catalysts for innovation, student success, and community engagement. They position UNIVEN as a leading rural university contributing to national priorities and global partnerships.





4.1 MAIN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

The Main Administration Building represents the institutional core of the University of Venda—a centre of governance, leadership, and strategic direction. Originally constructed during the University's formative years, the building has been transformed through a comprehensive redevelopment initiative undertaken between 2022 and 2025, to meet administrative demands that goes with a fast growing semi urban HEI. This R168 million project embodies UNIVEN's strategic commitment to modernisation and operational excellence. The entire Main Administration Building underwent a complete refurbishment and systems integration, featuring an extensive scope of works that encompassed fully integrated electrical, electronic, and mechanical (EEM) systems. This holistic renovation strategy included structural remediation works, notably the re-plastering of all vertical surfaces and re-screeding of horizontal floor planes. Beyond these primary structural and foundational upgrades, the facility

now incorporates, a re engineered roof, re-engineered executive and senior management workspaces, a fully integrated Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure with advanced digital conferencing suites, and the implementation of high-efficiency lighting systems, optimised natural daylight harvesting, advanced fresh air ventilation, and state-of-the-art Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. These comprehensive interventions collectively position the facility to exceed contemporary benchmarks for operational efficiency, accessibility, and environmental sustainability. The alterations have also improved accessibility and circulation, ensuring that the building meets contemporary standards of inclusivity and sustainability. More than a physical structure, the renewed Administration Building symbolises UNIVEN's vision of accountable leadership, transparent governance, and a future-ready institution positioned at the forefront of higher education transformation in South Africa.

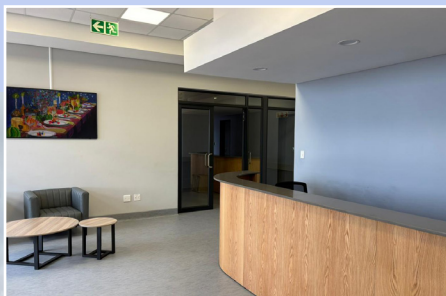
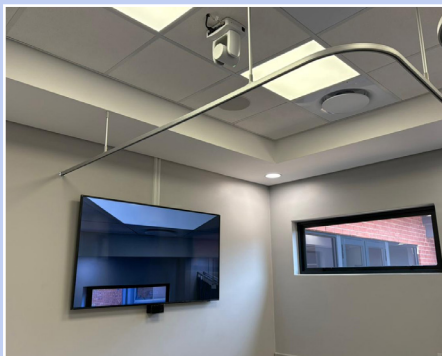
4.2 ADVANCED NURSING SCIENCE SIMULATION BUILDING

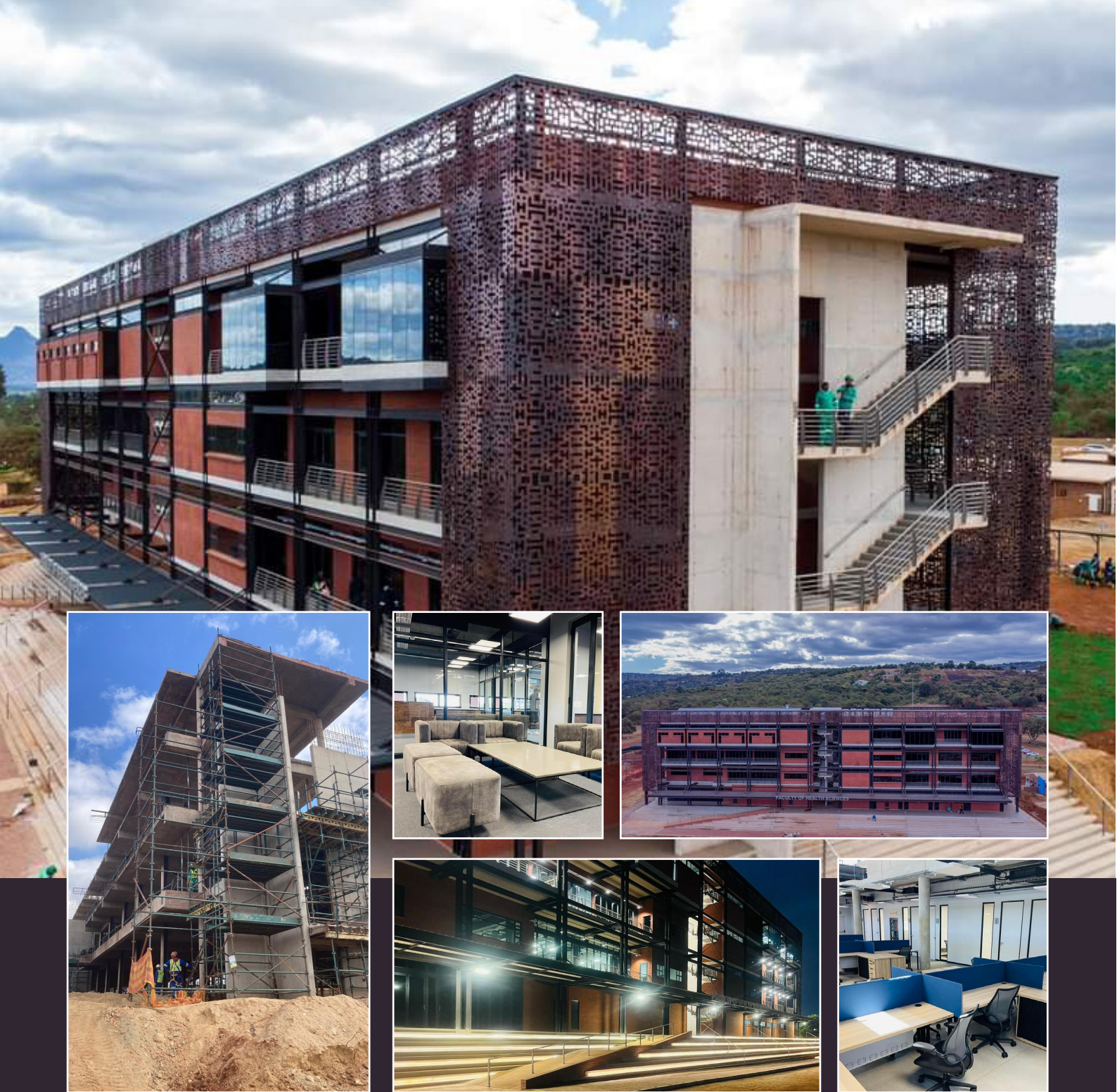
The Advanced Nursing Science Simulation Building is a flagship R71 million investment in the professional development of healthcare practitioners. This facility features advanced simulation laboratories that mirror real clinical environments, immersive digital classrooms, and high-fidelity training equipment.

By integrating simulation-based learning into the nursing curriculum, the building empowers students to develop clinical competencies in a safe and controlled

environment. The facility bridges the gap between theoretical instruction and hands-on experience, preparing graduates to respond effectively to the complexities of modern healthcare delivery.

This project strengthens UNIVEN's standing as a leader in health education and innovation, serving both the University community and the broader public health needs of the Vhembe District and beyond.





4.3 FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES BUILDING

The R220 million Faculty of Health Sciences Building marks a significant milestone in the University's academic and infrastructural expansion. Designed as an integrated teaching and research hub, the facility brings together disciplines such as Public Health, Nutrition, Biokinetics, and Environmental Health under one roof.

The building houses cutting-edge laboratories, research spaces, and student learning areas designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and

innovation. Sustainability features such as natural ventilation, daylight optimisation, and water-saving systems ensuring that the facility contributes to environmental stewardship.

As one of the largest investments in UNIVEN's academic infrastructure, this building enhances the University's ability to deliver high-quality health sciences education, expand postgraduate research, and strengthen partnerships with the Department of Health and other stakeholders.

4.4 PUNDA MARIA ROAD AND BRIDGE

The Punda Maria Road and Bridge Project, valued at R174 million, redefines access and mobility for the University of Venda. The newly constructed dual carriageway and bridge provide a safe, efficient connection between the Thohoyandou town centre and the UNIVEN campus. The Punda Maria Road, Bridge and Gatehouse Project forms part of the University of Venda's strategic infrastructure modernisation programme aimed at improving campus access, safety, and visual identity. The project upgrades approximately 1.4 km of gravel road between the southern boundary of the University and the R524 Punda Maria Road to a surfaced single and dual carriageway standard. It includes the construction of a 32 m cable-stayed bridge, a major

reinforced-concrete culvert, and an architecturally designed gatehouse that serves as a symbolic and functional gateway to the campus.

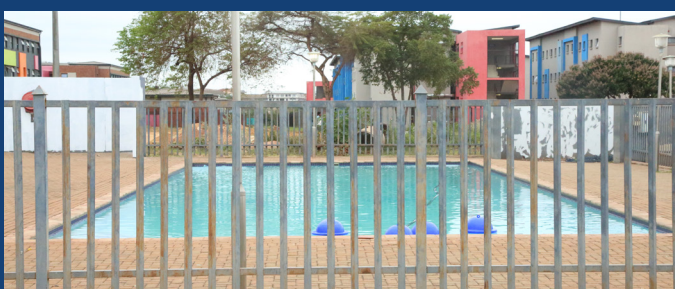
The new infrastructure integrates high-quality pavement design, stormwater systems, pedestrian sidewalks, traffic circles, bus bays, and energy-efficient lighting, reflecting a sustainable and contextually responsive engineering solution. Collectively, these interventions enhance mobility, safety, and flood resilience while expressing the University's commitment to design excellence and environmental stewardship. The bridge and gatehouse stand as architectural landmarks, reinforcing UNIVEN's vision of a smart, accessible, and future-ready campus.



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5. CLOSING STATEMENT

As we look ahead, these developments remind us that progress is a continuous journey. The University of Venda remains steadfast in its mission to create spaces that inspire learning, foster innovation, and empower communities. Together, we will continue to build a future where education transforms lives and infrastructure becomes the cornerstone of opportunity.





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