



IUR - SIDS INTEGRATED URBAN RESILIENCE IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND COASTAL CITIES

NATIONAL AND CITY 'STATE OF PLAY'
PORT VILA, VANUATU



ABOUT IUR - SIDS

The Integrated Urban Resilience in Small Island Developing States and Coastal Cities (IUR-SIDS) is a Joint global Programme by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) processed through a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for urban risk reduction and resilience building action. The Joint global Programme will unfold during a 2023-2025 first phase reaching 10 countries/cities, which will lay the foundation for potential scaling-up and scaling-out of the approach to support more cities and countries in a second phase from 2026 to 2030. The overall goal of the IUR-SIDS programme is that, by 2030, at least 100 small and medium-sized cities are supported to develop risk-informed urban development plans and implement urban resilience building interventions addressing all resilience dimensions viz. physical, environmental and socio-economic -- while strengthening urban governance informed by a systems' thinking to secure resilient development outcomes. Through delivering as One, the two UN agencies will maximize synergies of action, opens opportunities and provide coherent results in SIDS and coastal cities.

About UNDP

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat supports national and local governments, academia, civil society and the private sector, with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDG11, which aims for sustainable cities and communities. We support processes of institutional capacity-building regarding sustainable urbanization and knowledge-transfer between regional counterparts, in particular through key initiatives like National Urban Policies, the City Prosperity Initiatives, Urban Integrated Solutions and others.

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01.

CONTEXT FOR RISK-INFORMED URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING

I. National / City policies and strategies – Priorities for action (sustainable development, climate action, urban/town planning, DRR, NAPs, etc.)

Vanuatu 2030 | The People's Plan - the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) serves as the country's highest-level policy framework. It is founded on culture, traditional knowledge, and Christian principles, and builds on Vanuatu's development journey since independence. The NSDP sets 15 goals under three pillars: Society Pillar, Environment Pillar, and Economy Pillar. The society pillar seeks to ensure we maintain a vibrant cultural identity underpinning a peaceful, just, and inclusive society that is supported by responsive and capable institutions, delivering quality services to all citizens. The environment pillar seeks to ensure a pristine natural environment on land and at sea that continues to serve our food, cultural, economic, and ecological needs, and enhance resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and natural disasters. The economy pillar seeks to ensure we have a stable economy based on equitable, sustainable growth that creates jobs and income earning opportunities accessible to all people in rural and urban areas.

The Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030 was designed to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into urban planning and development. The policy recognizes the importance of planning for future urban growth while minimizing risk to climate change and natural disasters. It promotes the use of sustainable and resilient urban design, including green infrastructure, low-carbon transportation, and sustainable building practices. The policy also emphasizes the need for community participation and engagement in the planning and decision-making processes, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, children, and people with disabilities. The ultimate goal of the policy is to create safe, sustainable, and climate-resilient urban environments for all Vanuatu residents.

The Vanuatu Recovery Strategy 2020 – 2023 aims to support communities impacted by TC Harold and COVID-19, by providing a framework to recover, rebuild and emerge stronger and more resilient. The compound disaster has so far caused substantial suffering. It has also delayed development progress planned under Vanuatu 2030 | The People's Plan - the National Sustainable Development



UNDP/ Pacific - Port Vila Vanuatu

Plan (NSDP). The immediate focus now is to restore essential services and infrastructure, learn from our shared experiences, adapt to new circumstances and create new opportunities. This strategy responds to the social, economic and environmental impacts of the compound disaster to set out the core priorities for the next three years. It provides a bridge to the NSDP, continuing to advance our national development aspirations and not just revert back to how it was before.

The Republic of Vanuatu's National Disaster Act 1000 constitutes the country's framework for disaster response. It represents the legal basis for the provision of emergency funds and allocates power to the National Disaster Committee (NDC) and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to manage and coordinate disaster response in Vanuatu. In addition, the National Advisory Board (NAB) was found as part of the countries to Meteorology, Geological Hazards and Climate Change Act of 2016, which established the framework for forecasting and hazards.

II. Administrative / Political structure, electoral cycle and next elections (National government; city nodal authority)

Vanuatu has a Parliamentary democracy political system headed by the President who has primarily ceremonial powers and who is elected for a 5-year term by a two-third majority of an electoral college, the latest taking place in July 2022. A Prime Minister, who is head of government, is elected by a majority vote of three-fourths quorum of the Parliament. The Prime Minister in turn, appoints the Council of Ministers. The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers constitute the executive Government. Vanuatu's electoral cycle consists of general elections every four years, the latest taking place in October 2022.

The National Council of Chiefs, called the Malvatumauri are composed of custom chiefs elected by their peers. The Malvatumauri advises the Parliament on all matters relating to custom and tradition. Vanuatu also has high-placed people at the local level as chiefs continue to be the leading figures in villages and communities. By tradition, Custom chiefs exercise customary authority within local communities and the Malvatumauri have a constitutional role at village, island and provincial levels. The Republic of Vanuatu is composed of six provinces: Malampa, Penama, Sanma, Shefa, Tafea and Torba. Each province is administered by a provincial council in addition to which there are three Municipal councils for the cities of Port Vila (Shefa), Luganville (Sanma), and Lenakal (Tafea). The Department of Local Authorities within the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for overseeing local government.

The National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB) in Vanuatu is responsible for providing advice and recommendations to the government on climate change and disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and plans. The Board is made up of representatives from various sectors, including government agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector, and serves as a platform for coordination and collaboration among stakeholders.

The main stakeholders in charge of disaster reduction management in Vanuatu includes the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), which is responsible for coordinating disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts at the national level, and the Offices Provincial Disaster Management Offices (PDMO), which are responsible for coordinating disaster management activities at the provincial level.

Formally established in 1980, Port Vila Municipal Council holds jurisdiction over the formal Municipal area of the city, as legislated under the Municipalities Act, Cap. 126. The Municipality is governed by 17 representatives spread across five wards. Councils are elected through an open constituency system for a term of four years, each ward elects two representatives who in turn will elect the mayor. The senior management group comprises of the Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk, the Treasurer and 3 division heads and 13 supervisors.

III. Local competencies and jurisdictions (relevant to interventions; key sectors and stakeholders)

The PVMC is responsible for the control, management and administration of the municipality. Specific competencies include developing, controlling and managing land taken on lease from any statutory land authority including any housing estates thereon, managing refuse collection and disposal, overseeing cemeteries, maintenance of local roads, parks and open spaces, and the promotion of tourism. PVMC has primary responsibility for planning and enforcing development regulations in Port Vila; the Shefa Provincial Government has responsibility for the Greater Port Vila area.

Total officially announced stimulus, at about RMB 5 trillion, is modest in size compared to the package of 2009. That package would be worth RMB 5.3 trillion in today's money, but was spent on an economy half the current size (Figure 2). The current package is also less strongly oriented on construction projects that boost use of cement and steel and thus spur emissions. The provincial bonds, railway funds, and an assumed half of the bank loans, add up to about RMB 2.25 trillion, whilst about RMB 4.4 trillion (in today's value), or about 85% of the 2009 package was for construction projects.

IV. Revenue and financing streams – national budgeting for city level planning, development and implementation, etc.

Revenue streams for Port Vila Municipal Council (PVMC) include property taxes, which account for 55% of the Council's revenue, building permits, fines for breach of bylaws, public vehicle permit, traffic fines, and garbage collection (sale of yellow bags), berth fees, market house and burial fees. These other revenue sources make up the remaining 45%. A portion of the PVMC budget (20%) comes from the contribution of the National Government.



UNDP/ Pacific - Port Vila market, Vanuatu

V. Regional and international partners' engagement and investments – development investments by IFIs, regional or other entities, etc.

Vanuatu has a long history of engagement with IFIs, with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank as two of the most active. The World Bank has financed several projects in the country, with recent projects such as the Vanuatu Climate Resilient Transport Project, the Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project and the Vanuatu Disaster Risk Management Development Policy Grant. The Asian Development Bank likewise has a large and active portfolio in Vanuatu, which to date includes 97 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance totaling \$204.4 million. Recent financing include the Port Vila Urban Development Project, Greater Port Vila Urban Resilience Project and the Pacific Disaster Resilience Program. Other financing institutions focused on climate resilience and other environmental risks, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility also have a growing portfolio in Vanuatu.

Vanuatu also have strong bilateral partnerships with other countries active in the subregion. The Australian Government and Vanuatu have been diplomatic relations for over 42 years. Australia is Vanuatu's largest bilateral donor, and their development partnership aligns with Vanuatu's National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030 and Recovery Strategy 2020-2023. In 2021-22, Australia's investments in Vanuatu focused on addressing the impacts of COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold. The partnership between New Zealand Government and Vanuatu has grown steadily over the past 40 years since establishment of relations in 1980. The partnership between the two countries covers a wide range of areas including economic and trade relations, the Labour Mobility Program, Health, Climate Change, Defence, Education, people to people connections as well as on regional and global issues of mutual interest. New Zealand is the second-largest contributor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Vanuatu, after Australia. Australia and New Zealand, together with France, also comprise the FRANZ Arrangement. Under the arrangement, the three countries agree to coordinate disaster reconnaissance and relief assistance in the Pacific when requested by partner countries, including Vanuatu.

Vanuatu has also engaged in partnerships with other countries such as the French Development Agency, an active involvement in risk assessment and preparedness in Vanuatu; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has conducted several projects focused on risk resilience in Vanuatu such as Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risks (SCORE) Project, the Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM) which provided grants to support climate change adaptation and mitigation projects in Vanuatu; the European Union (EU), through projects such as Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific Project, funded by the EU through its Pacific Regional Program, aimed to improve the safety and resilience of buildings and infrastructure in Vanuatu and other Pacific Island countries vulnerable to natural disasters.

The UN system has also played an active role to improve risk resilience in Vanuatu. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has conducted projects including the Strengthening Rural Resilience in Vanuatu Project, which ran from 2018 to 2022, the Disaster Risk Management for Sustainable Development Project, which ran from 2013 to 2018, and the Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project, which began in 2017, aimed to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities to climate change impacts through ecosystem-based adaptation measures. UN-Habitat conducted a Greater Port Vila Climate Vulnerability Assessment in 2015 and implemented the Making Cities Resilient and Sustainable Project in Port Vila in 2018-2020.



UNDP/ Silke von Brockhausen - UNDP's Response to Cyclone Pam, Vanuatu

VI. Development challenges and gaps

Located within the Pacific Ring of Fire and the South Pacific Convergence Zone, Vanuatu is ranked first among the world's most exposed nations to natural hazards, such as cyclones, earthquakes, wave action (including storm surge and tsunamis), extreme rainfall and flooding. Just recently, in March 2023, two destructive Category 4 cyclones and a 6.5 magnitude earthquake occurred in Vanuatu over a 48-hour period and impacted over 80% of its population, placing these issues at the forefront. With the frequency, severity and scope of natural hazards increasing due to the impacts of climate change, Vanuatu is projected to lose 20% of GDP annually due to disasters in worst-case climate warming scenarios. Vanuatu is highly dependent on fishing and tourism, which is also under threat from climate change, cascading disaster impacts, and other disruptions in global supply chains.



UNDP/ Silke von Brockhausen - UNDP's Response to Cyclone Pam, Vanuatu

Furthermore, informal settlements, limited and inadequate infrastructures, high cost of goods and services, limited economic opportunities and high external dependencies, exacerbates these challenges. These are exceeding evident in Port Vila, Vanuatu's capital and economic gateway. It has been experiencing rapid urbanization with over 40% of the population reportedly residing in the Greater Port Vila area. This rapid growth has led to the formation of informal settlements (reportedly over 30% of the population) often located in hazardous areas and has put pressure on already limited public infrastructures and services, such as inefficient drainage systems, poor solid waste and sanitation management, and limited transport. There are significant efforts to address these challenges but there is still a lack of institutional capacities and financial resources particularly in the local level, which can be linked to poor land management and absence of a comprehensive plan for Port Vila.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT 02.

I. Global policy frameworks and positioning

As the world's most exposed to natural hazards, Vanuatu is at the forefront of international conversation on disaster risk reduction, climate change and resilience. Vanuatu had ratified the UNFCCC in 1993 and committed to the Hyogo Framework of Action in 2005, and since then have committed to the COP21 Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). In the most recent COP27, Vanuatu's president spoke of a resolution, supported by 85 other countries, for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the obligations of states under international law to protect the rights of present and future generations against the adverse effects of climate change.

Vanuatu's commitment to Agenda 2030 has been translated to their National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), Vanuatu 2030 The People's Plan, which has been guided by the United Nations Pacific Strategy that supports Pacific Island countries to localize Agenda 2030.



Flickr/ Geordie Guy - Vanuatu

II. Agenda 2030

VNR: Vanuatu conducted its Voluntary National Review in 2019

NDC: Vanuatu has submitted its INDC to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 29 September 2015 and the same document was endorsed and submitted as the first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) on 21 September 2016. It has since released a NDC Implementation Roadmap in March 2019, and a NDC Revised and Enhanced 2021-2030 in August 2022.

NAP: Not available. A National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) was released in 2007.

NUA national report: Not available.

III. National / local engagement (networks, MCR2030, inter-regional forums, etc.)

Vanuatu is a member state of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the region's premier political and economic policy organisation. Founded in 1971, it comprises 18 members: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. It is also a member of the Pacific Community (SPC), which is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, proudly supporting development since 1947. They are an international development organisation owned and governed by 26 country and territory members. They work for the well-being of Pacific people through the effective and innovative application of science and knowledge, guided by a deep understanding of Pacific Island contexts and cultures.

Port Vila is a member of international networks ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability as well as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), through the Local Authorities Association of Vanuatu (LAAV). It is also a signatory of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign.

03. ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES IN DRR, CC-CCA, RESILIENCE

As the capital city, Port Vila is a significant focus of urban development and resilience projects. The Port Vila Urban Development Project, in partnership with the Australian Government and Asian Development Bank (ADB), is one of the major investments in the nation's capital. It contributes to sustainable urban development in Port Vila through improved road, drainage, sanitation infrastructure and services. The Project duration was from 13 February 2013 to 31st December 2017.

The UN-Habitat City Resilience Profiling in Port Vila, Vanuatu, funded by European Union as part of the Making Cities Resilient and Sustainable Project, has an overall objective to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient Port Vila, by strengthening the capacity of key public, private and civil society stakeholders to measure, make decisions, and plan actions for building resilience. This ensures that public and private investments are risk-informed and that early interventions in crisis-prone cities are linked to longer-term development goals in line with the NSDP and the Sendai Framework.

The project Greater Port Vila Urban Resilience Project (GPVURP), in partnership with ADB, aims to improve urban resilience in Greater Port Vila (GPV) through capacity building, institutional strengthening, and the construction of two multipurpose emergency shelters. The project is guided by the Greater Port Vila Resilient Urban Development Strategy and Action Plan (GPV RUDSAP) which envisions, that by 2030, Greater Port Vila is safe, inclusive, resilient, and a vibrant economic hub

based on sustainable development. In 2022, additional financing worth \$2.9 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and ADB's Ireland Trust Fund expand the project to include the construction of a third emergency center.

Most recently, in 2022, the World Bank approved \$25 million for a new project to improve the resilience, services and infrastructure of new settlements and several existing informal settlements around Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila. The Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project (VARs) aims to establish a new, exemplary urban expansion area and improve infrastructure in several existing settlements in Port Vila. The work will ensure urban settlements are safer and better equipped to provide residents with access to critical services such as schools, sanitation, and roads.



FlickrR/ Thomas Ballandras - Mount Yasur, Vanuatu

On the regional scale, the Pacific Resilience Program (PREP) focuses on improving disaster early warning systems as a partnership between Tonga, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the World Bank, preparing tools to help Pacific Island economies become more financially resilient, and rolling out the PCRAFI disaster risk insurance initiative. The program also conducts studies to identify the best way to retrofit schools to make them more climate and disaster resilient and using them as evacuation centers to protect lives during emergencies. PREP is funded by a total of US\$32.29 million in grants and credits from the International Development Association, the Global Environment Facility Special Climate Change Fund, the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

In the national level, the National Advisory Board (NAB) on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction has recently approved two projects, that will be implemented by the Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation through the Department of Climate Change with Accredited Entities (AE).

- The Climate Change in the Coastal Zone in Vanuatu (VCAP 2) will be implemented from 2022 to 2028 with an overall aim to improve the resilience of the coastal zone in Vanuatu to the impacts of climate change in order to sustain livelihoods, food production and preserve /improve the quality of life in targeted vulnerable areas. The project accredited entity is the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that facilitated two funding sources from Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF). The estimated funding is USD\$12,544,037 which is the equivalent to around VT1.4 billion.
- Vanuatu Climate Change Resilience Project (VCCRP), from 2022 to 2030, targets the growing threat of climate change affecting community livelihoods is another significant support to Vanuatu communities. The project is funded by Green Climate Fund (GCF) program with the support of the Accredited Entity, Save the Children, sets to be implemented over the next six years in 282 villages through provincial governments in the six provinces. The VCCRP Project is worth USD\$32.7 million, which is equivalent to VT3.6 billion.

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS TO CONSIDER FOR ENGAGEMENT

04.

The Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT) is a network of agencies committed to effective humanitarian coordination, disaster preparedness and humanitarian response. The VHT is convened by Oxfam; its members include the Vanuatu Red Cross, French Red Cross, Vanuatu Association of NGOs (VANGO), UNICEF, Oxfam, CARE International, Save the Children Australia (SCA), the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the World Health Organization (WHO), PeaceCorps, World Vision and Act for Peace, IOM and OCHA.

The Vanuatu Association of NGOs (VANGO) is the national umbrella association of non-governmental organisations in Vanuatu. It is a member of Pacific Islands Associations of NGOs (PIANGO).

The Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN) is a network of non-governmental organizations, community groups, and individuals in Vanuatu working together to address climate change and its impacts. It aims to empower and support communities to act on climate change and advocate for policy change at the national and international levels.

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