



QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter 1, 2022

PROJECT TITLE: Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP) II

PROJECT NUMBER: 123236

Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and SRPD 2018-2022:

UNDP Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021: Signature Solution 2 to strengthen effective, inclusive and accountable governance; and Signature Solution 6 to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

(SRPD) (2018-2022) Output 5.3. More women and men benefit from strengthened governance systems for equitable service delivery, including access to justice: people and communities in the Pacific will contribute to and benefit from inclusive, informed and transparent decision-making processes, accountable and responsive institutions, and improved access to justice.

ATLAS Output ID: 00129624

Implementing Partner: United Nations Development Programme

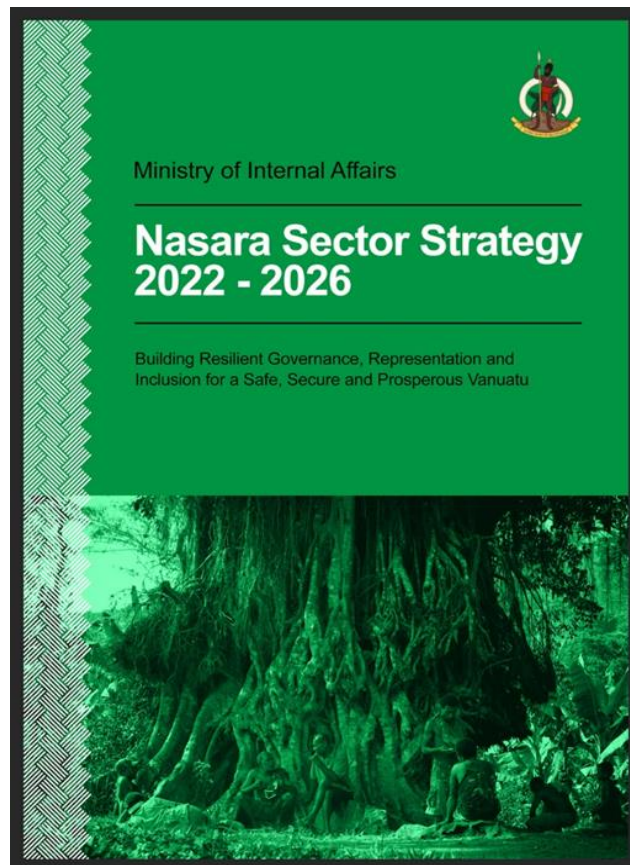




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PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Flexible, Cross Sectoral Strategies to Embed and Sustain Reform

The Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the Government of New Zealand, is focussed on strengthening electoral systems and democratic practices to conform to international standards and strengthening political stability. The 2022 Quarter 1 Progress Report demonstrates that whilst the VEEP Project continues to focus on the key mandate of electoral reform, the Project has also continued to demonstrate capacity to strengthen, pivot, consult/collaborate and innovate. These strategies have progressed not merely within the two key delivery partners of the Electoral Commission/Vanuatu Electoral Office and the Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) departments but also more broadly with sectoral stakeholders in Vanuatu, regionally and internationally, strengthening institutions to embed sustainability outcomes and driving innovation.

1. Strengthening Institutions, Frameworks and Processes

With the VEEP Project due to complete in 2024, a very strong focus for the next three years must be on strengthening institutions and processes to embed sustainability. The VEEP Project has focussed on not being a resourcing and budget prop but on being a driver of sustainability through institutional and process reform. Four restructure submissions (1- Electoral Commission (EC), 2- Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO), 3- Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) and 4- Corporate Services Unit (CSU), delayed by the COVID outbreak, will not only ensure stronger central office administration and coordination but dedicated staffing in each province to support agency services to the public, as well as outreach and awareness. A Political Party Coordinator within the Electoral Commission restructure will support processes for governance and transparency reforms.

Without a strong framework for the whole of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the EC, VEO and CRIM departments will not thrive. A strong Corporate Services Unit (CSU) able to undertake budgetary resourcing, human resources, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E)/reporting is essential. VEEP support for another restructure, the CSU restructure, will see a Project Management Unit, M&E positions, Internal Auditor, and new financial posts to strengthen on-going growth for the electoral sector and identity management issues and support for the remaining VEEP Phase II period and after project completion.

Planning, budget, and reporting have been institutional weaknesses, unrelated to national policy such as the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), Government of Vanuatu planning guidelines and budget cycle requirements. This has led to poor outcomes in securing GoV budget, technical and human resources. VEEP technical assistance has strongly supported the development of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Corporate Plan 2022-2026 which was launched on 31 January 2022 as the first Corporate Plan fully compliant with new GoV Guidelines. To embed broader private and public sector, NGO and Development Partner engagement and “buy-in,” VEEP provided strong technical support for cross sectoral consultation and development of the MoIA Sector Strategy 2022-2026, validated on 15 March 2022. The strong liaison with MOIAs Sector Analyst (Department of Policy Planning & Aid Coordination) and Expenditure Analyst (Ministry of Finance & Economic Management) in development of this strategy has meant that these are now ‘invested’ in MoIA issues.

VEEP supported planning and reporting workshops across the whole of the Ministry will institutionalise training and build GoV central agency, NGO, private sector, and development partner trust in MOIA’s ability



to transparently report and deliver planned outcomes. This institutional capacity and relationships is essential to ensure the MFAT/UNDP investment through VEEP Project is sustainable post 2024. Director General Cherol Ala Inanna has become a champion of these initiatives, recognising the long-term gains for the Ministry. This in itself is a positive outcome for EC/VEO and CRIM departments as VEEPs core focus agencies.

2. Pivot to Mitigate Risks and Maximise Opportunities

The first active COVID-19 case (Omicron strain) was confirmed on 04 March 2022 in Port Vila Central Hospital. With Efate and Offshore Islands moved to Alert Level 3 on 07 March 2022 due to the possibility of very high large-scale community transmission, this necessitated a review of delivery models for VEEP planned activities in quarter 1 2022 to respond to GoV services shut down with the potential for major disruption to critically important GoV budget cycle milestones for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In addition, a deferral was formally announced of the planned Malekula Parliamentary by-election on 12 April, Port Vila Municipal Council elections on April 22, Malampa Provincial Council by-elections on May 24, 2022 and possible delays for June's Presidential Election.

VEEP responded with support to setting up virtual platforms for partner agencies and the development of COVID safe practices, electoral reform consultation preparations were changed, planned and coordinated to be virtually undertaken, including production of a pre-recorded presentation outlining all the major innovations of the electoral bill proposed, which replaced a planned provincial 'road-trip' now hindered given Covid restrictions. In addition, delivery of technical trainings was adapted to be virtual such as key GoV budget cycle activities to improve sustainable budget practices focusing on revision of budget narratives in the Appropriations Bill; how to write a New Policy Project or a Government Investment Plan submission. Furthermore, the final validation of the high level multi agency and multi country participation in the development of the innovative MoIA Nasara Sector Strategy was completed through a "Virtual Nasara." For the initial drafting of the Sector Strategy, the VEEP Project supported bringing together more than 80 participants for a one-day (in-person) conference, divided into different focus area threads facilitated by former MoIA Directors as facilitators based on anticipatory planning and foresight methodologies. Subsequently, several countries and multiple agencies joined a virtual validation process of the draft sector strategy.

Business Continuity Plans were developed with VEEP support for EC/VEO and CRIM departments as templates that can be used by not only other MoIA agencies but more broadly across the whole of Government. Return-to-Work and Re-opening of Office Protocols for agencies such as CRIM, providing clear procedures for services classified as essential were also developed.

UNDP technical support continues to be provided for risk mitigation through an anticipatory planning approach— the first of its kind in Vanuatu. The VEEP project is supporting collaborative consideration of future risks to stay ahead in a global risk landscape characterized by complexity and uncertainty where it is necessary to approach risk not only from a historical perspective, but apply an anticipatory, forward-looking lens. MoIA Directors/Facilitators have been trained provided long term anticipatory planning tools to maximise opportunities, creating foresight briefs, embedding VEEP reforms but also to mitigate risks. Facilitators were supported in identifying entry points in each their areas of responsibility. Foresight Briefs were developed on key issues of what the Government should or could explore more into depth to be better prepared for future scenarios that each their departments could manage. Topics so far include "Coordination of Development Partners" exploring what coordination and country-driven aid and budget support might look like in the future, as part of innovative financing. Other topics include "Government's future relationships with Youth," and "Labour Mobility Workers" generally in the Pacific and more specifically in Vanuatu including issues of brain drain and seasonal work overseas, and "Decentralisation" or "Devolution" exploring the future of governance in rural and outer islands' as a key topic given the vast



disparity between central and outer island settings. Final issue is looking at “Data Privacy and Data Protection”.

Facilitators continue to explore the complexity of looking at “future informed risks” – how will they work with their partners, how do they reduce the power gaps, how do they ensure they have a closer trust-relationship and informed perspectives, how do they ensure their understanding and capturing of perspectives of risks, how do they ensure their scanning of emergent risks and signals, how do they use that to influence their decision making. These are all very complex pieces of work, and when we weave all these threads together the Ministry will have a strong foundation to better service the citizens of Vanuatu in the future, proactively rather than reactively. This innovative approach of broad consultation will assist with embedding sustainability and stronger Development Partner and Sector stakeholder partnerships nationally, regionally and internationally.

3. Consult/Collaborate – the Nasara Approach to build Cross Sectoral Collaboration and Sustainability

Over 400 years ago, Chief Roi Mata brought about cessation of archipelago wide internal warfare by calling all competing parties together around a *nasara* – a bare circle of earth under a giant banyan (fig) tree - to collaboratively reach agreements and cooperatively plan for recovery and preparation for cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions as well as marriages, death ceremonies and trade. This long established and surviving tradition was drawn upon to broaden VEEP initiatives and the thrust of both the MoIA Corporate Plan and Sector Strategy to engage a very broad range of sectoral partners – GoV Ministries, the private sector, Chiefs, Communities, Churches, youths, people living with disability, NGOs, INGOs and Development Partners as well as linked regional and international agencies. The Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs gave cultural consent to use the word “*nasara*.” as the title.

This approach is being used to develop plans, reports, and budget proposals, but also to develop legislation and policy, outreach, and awareness strategies through four VEEP supported Working Groups whose work has continued as needed through Q 1 via virtual platforms:

- 1) *the Electoral Reform Working Group* to review, harmonise and modernise all pertinent electoral legislation into one single Electoral Act and to establish an independent Electoral Commission, as originally imagined in the Constitution. The drafting instructions have been drafted and countrywide consultations underway. The proposed Bill includes many new innovations, please see below section for further details;
- 2) *the Civil Registration and Identity Management Working Group* undertaking comprehensive civil registration reforms to replace the civil registration and vital statistics framework dating back almost 42 years to pre-Independence. Two new Acts were drafted and presented in Parliament in 2021, gazetted in January 2022 - the Civil Registration and Identity Management Act (Cap 27 2022) and the National Identity Card Act (Cap 28 2022) –project support is now focused on development of related Regulations and Standard Operating Procedures to support implementation of the two new Acts, as well review of the Marriage Act and Adoption Act;
- 3) *the Data Protection and Data Privacy Working Group* developing policy and legislative protocols for protection of personal data, data privacy and harmful digital communication;
- 4) *the Voter Awareness Committee* – made up of media groups, Transparency International (Vanuatu), disability groups, Vanuatu Council of Churches and community-based NGOs working for electoral awareness and functions like a ‘sounding board’ for targeted election public outreach, and transparency.

These four groups are drawn variously from Prime Minister’s Office, State Law Office, Law Reform Commission, Electoral Commission, Electoral Office, Department of Civil Registration and Identity Management, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Department of Local Authorities, Department of Urban



Administration and Planning, Department for Immigration, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, media groups, Transparency International (Vanuatu), disability groups, Vanuatu Council of Churches. A mark of the “buy-in” and recognition of the potential impact of the significant reforms being undertaken was not only the in-person attendance and numerous zoom meetings with overseas UNDP consultants but also the successful outcomes of their work in legislative reform.

The VEEP project provided support to the former Director of the Department of Local Authorities, on-boarded as Facilitator for the development of the MOIA Nasara Sector Strategy, to present through a Global Nasara in the Maldives Parliament on 23 March 2022. “Visioning Maldives Dialogue Series” session on “Strategic Foresight” is a part of an Executive Enhancement and Enrichment Program-EEEE, which is a series of capacity building sessions for executive level government officials (political and civil service leadership). Knowledge and experience were shared from the example of Vanuatu’s work with foresight and anticipatory governance planning for future-fit Governments and followed by great interest from the Maldives.

4. Innovation to Lead Reform, Broaden Benefits and Embed Sustainability

The MoIA has become a “Super Ministry” with the demobilisation and reallocation of four more agencies from the Ministry of Justice, (refer Annex 2) but its internal capacity to manage its resources, improve its budget, engage with stakeholders, and provide compliant planning and reporting needs considerable assistance. Capacities built will only be sustainable if the Ministry has the capacity (financial, technical, human resources) to progress the innovations of the VEEP project. Opportunities have thus been pursued to embed sustainability of VEEP outcomes by strengthening legislative frameworks, supporting both institutional reform and planning and broadening range of sector stakeholders “buying in” to the innovative platforms and strategies being institutionalised through VEEP support.

Civil Registration Reform

In January 2022, two critical pieces of legislation- the Civil Registration & Identity Management Act (cap 27 2022) and the National Identity Card Act (Cap 28, 2022) were Gazetted by the President These two Acts are the result of considerable support by VEEP for a comprehensive review of the Civil Registration legal provisions and modification of the civil registration legal framework to acknowledge the technical and operational changes introduced through the past years in the registration of Ni-Vanuatu citizens, including the introduction of the national ID card in 2017.

Civil registration is the system by which the Government of Vanuatu records the vital events (births, marriages, and deaths) of its citizens and residents. The new legislation also supports the establishment of a “legal identity”, providing legal documentation to individuals and families for legal and administrative purposes, that can be used to establish and protect the rights of individuals. Legal documentation is strongly linked with a broad range of rights and activities, in particular legal identity. Additionally, to support this reform package a new integrated identity system is being developed as the foundation of the new central civil register and future population register.

Electoral Reform

In response to a request from the Electoral Reform Working Group (ERWG) which was tasked by the government with harmonizing the electoral laws, the Vanuatu Law Reform Commission (VLRC) in March 2022 prepared a research paper, “Harmonisation of Electoral Laws 2021,” examining the existing electoral laws. In summary, the VLRC research paper supports the harmonization and integration of the electoral legal framework into a new single Electoral Act. From legislative provisions to subsidiary legislations, inconsistencies and contradictions and unnecessary repetition is apparent. These all points to the dire need



of having an improved harmonized electoral legislation that will be able to produce effective and efficient elections in Vanuatu and reduce any undesired costs and impacts.

Furthermore, the electoral reform working group has in this quarter focused on development of a 'Summary of Main Issues Paper' to detail the innovations from a non-political, electoral, technical, and operational point of view from the perspectives of Electoral Authorities (Refer Annex 1).

Next step is to prepare and undertake reform consultations countrywide on the proposed electoral reform package being put forward by the Electoral Commission for review and discussion in Parliament, which will be challenging given the COVID situation and plans of consultation trips to all provinces is being revised. The ERWG in Q2 will be developing the new concept for these consultations to take place locally with provincial councillors, area councillors, chiefs, civil society including youth groups, women groups and disability groups and how to open up for virtual Q&As. Consultations will also include development of Consultation PowerPoints/Talking Points, and a pre-recording by electoral authorities will be sent to all provinces, along with targeted audiences following a stakeholder mapping exercise. The aim is to have all feedback integrated into the drafting instructions/working document and completed by June for State Law Office to draft the bill in July/Aug.

The new Act will rely on the regulations to provide for key procedural and operational details. Procedures in elections are largely operational in nature and as much as possible are not to be included in any kind of subordinate legislative provision. The new harmonised legislation focusses variously on: Strengthening of independence of the Electoral Commission; Recognition of Provincial Electoral Officers; Electoral Lists; Campaign Financing Disclosure; Electoral Campaign; Single Ballot Paper; By-Elections; Special Measures for Internally Displaced Persons; Special Voting (Remote Voting); Out of Country Voting; Electoral Petitions; Constituency Determination; Expanded Electoral Offences; Regulations for electoral procedures and Special Temporary Measures for Women's Voting.

Institutional Reform

Four restructure submissions (Electoral Commission (EC), Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO), Civil Registration & Identity Management (CRIM) and Corporate Services Unit (CSU), delayed by the COVID outbreak, will not only ensure stronger central office administration and coordination and decentralisation of services but improved management. The provision of a Project Management Unit within CSU will assist not only with project delivery compliance and M&E for existing projects such as VEEP but also for Development Partner and GoV funding across all agencies (18 Departments, the Cabinet, Commissions, Tribunals and Units) across the whole of MoIA. The position of an Internal Auditor will also assist with transparency of financial usage and reporting for GoV and Development Partner investments. It will also address most of the key recommendations of the HACT Micro assessment of MOIA financial capacities and cash advance reporting compliance.

A strong planning framework has now been provided for the whole of the Ministry but in particular for EC/VEO and CRIM. After very considerable liaison with DSPPAC, the MoIA is the first of 13 Ministries to have its Corporate Plan 2022-2026 fully compliant with the new GoV Planning and Reporting Guidelines. Directors, planners and senior administrators from all agencies and Provincial Governments were involved in developing the Corporate Plan as a capacity building exercise and in particular, CSU's recently appointed Manager (M&E). This was then followed by training and support in writing business plans. The new MoIA Sector Strategy developed in Q1, followed the same consultative and capacity building approach strengthening "buy-in" from sector stakeholders and capacity building within the Ministry.



Without improving budget ceilings, sustainability for VEEP support is at risk. Accordingly, in Q1, several zoom-based sessions were delivered to a wide audience including provincial units, on how to revise budget narratives annually and how to prepare a NPP targeting GoV funding and how to prepare and submit a GIP proposal for Development Partner consideration.

Conclusion

2022 is a critical year for “step-up for sustainability” approaches, already commenced in 2021 but continuing as a strong focus throughout 2022. The biggest priorities in the next quarter will be to migrate data and ensure interoperability of the new integrated central civil register, in essence the population register, and to push electoral reforms ahead of 2024 General Election in Vanuatu.



PART 2: KEY ACTIVITY RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THIS QUARTER: Results Framework Progress



Caption: Minister for Ministry of Internal Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister Hon Ishmael Kalsakau Maau'koro opens the Virtual Nasara organised to draft the MoIA Sector Strategy from quarantine.



Caption (Left to Right): Anne-Sofie Gerhard, Chief Technical Advisor & Project Manager UNDP/VEEP; Hon Minister Willie Ben Kalo; Cheroi Ala ianna, Director General Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Her Excellency New Zealand High Commissioner, Nicola Simmonds at the launching event of the Ministry's Corporate Plan 2022-26.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA EVIDENCE	KEY ACTIVITY RESULTS ACHIEVED	
			Key Activities	Output Results/Impact
<p>Output 1 <i>Institutional Capacities of the Electoral Authorities Strengthened</i></p> <p>Gender marker: 2</p>	<p>1.1 <i>Number of provincial electoral and civil registration offices with recruited and trained staff, sufficient physical and technical infrastructure to accommodate their mandate</i></p>	<p><i>Renovated and equipped VEO Bldg.</i></p> <p><i>PSC contracts</i></p> <p><i>Job Descriptions</i></p> <p><i>Lease Agreements</i></p> <p><i>6 provincial CRIM offices</i></p> <p><i>3 VEO provincial offices</i></p>	<p><i>HQ Port Vila Level:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Submission to Office of Public Service Commission (OPSC) for restructure of VEO delayed by COVID closure of all GoV offices but provides for 6 provincial officers with 3 now employed.</i> <i>Additional Data Entry students contracted for processing of validated field work data, and data cleaning but work delayed due to COVID closure. Updated and cleaned data will be used 2022 elections as well as migrated to the new central civil register.</i> <i>The project previously assisted in preparing and deploying 250 tablets with tailored offline registration applications for field data registration and verification)</i> <i>Training for VEO officers on planning</i> <p><i>Provincial Level:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Procurement of a 'provincial package' is on-going for each electoral provincial office (consisting of desk, chair, laptop, printer, phone, scanner, zoom equipment (speaker and webcam) poster material, manuals, and in some cases, a satellite disc where GoV network is not available. Preparations for central procurement is ongoing. Lists prepared in collaboration with VEO office;</i> <i>Provincial package support is on-going for CRIM to upgrade printers and support infrastructure and network connections. Lists prepared in collaboration with CRIM office;</i> <i>Satellite imageries for all provinces developed incl. drawing of area councils. All multi-layered Atlas maps completed, with layers of health clinics, schools, walking distance to polling stations etc. with support from UNITAR/UNOSAT;</i> 	<p>The Electoral Authorities and the Civil Registration & Identity Management Department will extend their mandate into each of the provinces in line with the GoV decentralization strategy with establishment of strong Local Government Regions and Local Government Councils – bringing services closer to the people.</p> <p>This will be supported by a robust and well-functioning HQ office and training/informed provincial staff.</p>



			8. Continuing efforts to consolidate thousands of village-listings with VNSO data, excel sheets and shapefiles.	
	<p>1.2 Number of new increased and trained permanent staff at HQs and provincial offices, including joint training activities with the CRIM Department</p>	<p>2022 EC Restructure Submission</p> <p>2022 VEO Restructure Submission</p> <p>2022 CRIM Restructure Submission</p> <p>VEO JDs</p> <p>CRIM JDs</p> <p>VEO NPP</p> <p>CRIM NPP</p> <p>VEO PMR Forms</p> <p>EC/VEO Budget Book 3 Revision</p> <p>CRIM Budget Book 3 Revision</p> <p>Zoom Training: List of Participants available</p>	<p>1. EC Restructure Submission updated with revised Job Description for Political Party Coordinator, submitted by Chair to Hon. Minister and DG for approval;</p> <p>2. New Policy Project (NPP) created for 2 new EC staff in restructure to be submitted for April Parliament Supplementary Budget consideration</p> <p>3. VEO Restructure Submission is on Agenda of PSC, but PSC has not met due to COVID Community Transmission;</p> <p>4. New Policy Project (NPP) created for new VEO staff in restructure to be submitted for April Parliament Supplementary Budget consideration</p> <p>5. New legislation gazetted in January 2022 - the Civil Registration & Identity Management Act (Cap 27 2022) and the National Identity Card Act (Cap 28, 2022) - creating the new Department Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) replacing former Civil Registry & Vital Statistics (CRVS)</p> <p>6. CRIM Restructure Submission drafted to provide staff for activities and mandate defined by these two new Acts is with OPSC for approval but delayed by COVID shutdown;</p> <p>7. EC/VEO Business Plan produced in compliance with new GoV Guidelines for planning & reporting.</p> <p>8. EC/VEO Q1 Report prepared on new GoV template produced on time;</p> <p>9. Budget Book 3 redrafted to align with both MoIA Corporate Plan 2022-2026 & MoIA Sector Strategy 2022-2026</p>	<p>The Vanuatu Electoral Office currently seeks approval interrupted by closure of all GoV agencies following community transmission of COVID (5 March 2022) of a Restructure Submission to better position this critically important electoral authority to deliver the Government's prioritised policy, planning and legislation directions for the electoral system in Vanuatu. Furthermore, to continuously implement regular, credible, transparent, genuine elections in Vanuatu, truly reflecting "the will of the people" and "universal and equal suffrage" reflecting well-functioning fundamental human rights.</p> <p>Pending to be completed: Submission of 2022 VEO Restructure Submission submitted by PEO, countersigned by MoIA DG. Awaiting PSC Sitting for approval</p> <p>VEOs & CRIMs new Business Plan in line with new PSC format New Corporate Plan 2022- 2026 EC/VEO & CRIM budget and activities will then "cascade" compliantly</p>



			10. Zoom based training provided for Book 3 Revision, NPPs & GIP proposals for EC/VEO & CRIM and across MoA agencies – including provincial staff.	
	<p>1.3 Number of formalised EC internal regulations and VEO operational procedures drafted and endorsed.</p>	<p>State Law Office Official Gazette</p> <p>EC Minutes</p> <p>Drafting Instructions for a Harmonised Electoral Bill drafted for November 2022 Parliament</p>	<p><i>Acknowledging the Policy authority in accordance with the Representation of the People Act, Part 17 Section 69, the Electoral Commission may regulate the electoral processes by orders consistent with the electoral law provisions, therefore:</i></p> <p><i>1. Two Bills Gazetted as Acts in January 2022 through strong technical support from VEEP TAs and Working Groups supported by VEEP - the Civil Registration & Identity Management Act (Cap 27 2022) and the National Identity Card Act (Cap 28, 2022)</i></p> <p><i>2.Regulations drafted & provided to SLO</i></p> <p><i>i) Civil Registration and Identity Management Regulation;</i> <i>ii) Vanuatu National Identity Regulation; and</i> <i>iii) Fees Regulation for the Civil Registration and Identity Management Act, and the Vanuatu National Identity Act.</i></p> <p><i>3. Draft Drafting Instructions prepared for a new single electoral act harmonising, repealing and replacing the current legislative framework. The new proposed bill include major innovation, including:</i></p> <p><i>i) Strengthening of independence of the Electoral Commission;</i> <i>ii) Recognition of Provincial Electoral Officers;</i> <i>iii) Electoral Lists;</i> <i>iv) Campaign Financing Disclosure;</i> <i>v) Electoral Campaign & Code of Conduct;</i> <i>vi) Single Ballot Paper;</i> <i>vii) By-Elections;</i> <i>viii) Special Measures for Internally Displaced Persons;</i> <i>ix) Special Voting (Remote Voting);</i> <i>x) Out of Country Voting;</i> <i>xi) Electoral Petitions;</i></p>	<p>EC internal regulations are essential for the consolidation of the electoral processes in Vanuatu, which will greatly improve its integrity and transparency, paving the way for elections that are increasingly more credible and whose results are increasingly more legitimate.</p> <p>It is good international practice for the electoral authorities to complement the electoral legal provisions with internal regulations. Throughout the world, electoral authorities also establish “codes of conduct” for different stakeholders and participants in the electoral process to ensure their transparency and fairness.</p> <p><i>The new harmonised Electoral Bill, if passed, will set a benchmark for the Pacific</i></p>

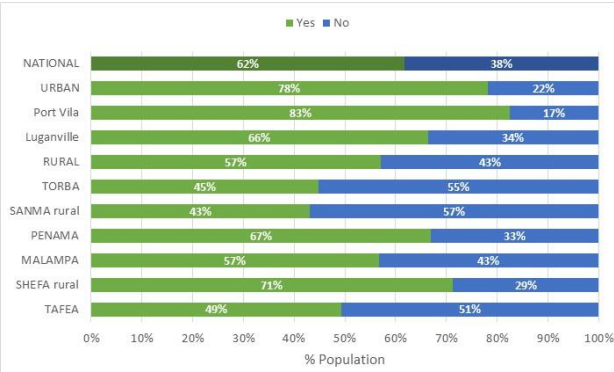


			<p>xii) <i>Constituency Determination;</i> xiii) <i>Expanded Electoral Offences;</i> xiv) <i>Regulations for electoral procedures;</i> xv) <i>Special Temporary Measures for Women's Voting.</i></p> <p>4, <i>Outline for a National Data Protection and Privacy Policy for Vanuatu has been drafted.</i></p>	
	<p>1.4 <i>The percentage of progress in codifying and digitizing institutional memory of EC/VEO systems and procedures, including congregating files to the Government Document Management System (Saperion);</i></p>	<p>Digitization Manual Data Declaration of Confidentiality TORs Scanning and document handling staff.</p>	<p><i>This activity is on stand-by. Contracted data entry students trained as enumerators and data entry officers are unable to work due to COVID GV closure</i></p>	<p><i>Contracted students unable to work due to COVID GV closure</i></p>
	<p>1.5 <i>No of electoral administrative processes where gender is mainstreamed, and gender disaggregated</i></p>	<p><i>New harmonised Electoral Bill</i></p> <p><i>Restructure Submissions JDs</i></p> <p><i>New Central Civil Register Database</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>All electoral laws have been amended to be gender neutral;</i> 2. <i>All Job Descriptions has been amended to be gender neutral;</i> 3. <i>New CRIM legislation and National ID Acts are gender neutral</i> 4. <i>The New Bill – single harmonised Electoral Bill provides very specific gender positive initiatives i.e Special Temporary Measures for Women's Voting.</i> 5. <i>Gender disaggregation remains difficult as current IT system cannot differentiate due to unusual spelling of names and lack of gender specific data entry.</i> 6. <i>The new integrated central civil register/population register will facilitate registrations and statistics in gender and age aggregated manner. Migration of data has started.</i> 7. <i>On-going training on VEEP supported development of a EC/VEO PWD Action Plan to raise awareness of</i> 	<p>Female Empowerment through the politics of language, and introduction of Gender-Neutral Amendments in all related electoral laws and CRIM laws, as well as systems datasets.</p>



			<p>issues faced in electoral inclusion for People With Disability. The PWD Action Plan uploaded to VEOs website. This is in response to governments across Asia-Pacific in 2014 committed to strengthening CRIM systems and advance universal civil registration to support good governance, health and development. However, due to a lack of data, we did not know if the most vulnerable people were being registered, which could mean hard to reach marginalized people, People with Disability (PWD), including women and girls, remain invisible, compounding the inequality they face.</p>	
<p>Output 2 Integrity and Accuracy of the Voter Register Enhanced</p> <p>Gender marker: 2</p>	<p>2.1 Proportion of eligible voters who are registered to vote, disaggregated by sex, age, and location – to be done on a yearly basis</p>	<p>Data reports from National Voter Register and new Central Civil Register</p>	<p>The concept of registering voters may seem simple - a list of all persons who are eligible to vote and adequate information to uniquely identify each eligible voter, yet implementation is challenging. Challenges relate to wrong birth dates, wrong name spelling, location errors, duplication of village names, missing photo IDs, duplicates of Voting Cards, deceased 'ghost voting'. The verification and validation project following the national joint civil and voter registration campaign begun in 2019 has been extended to be a "de facto" registration process in 2021-22, with several thousands of people being registered and issued with national ID cards.</p> <p>By the time of Q1 2021, the number of citizens issued with a national ID card is (Gender disaggregated): F: 47,584 M: 51,540</p> <p>By Q2 2021 Female: 73,721 Male: 77,507</p> <p>By Q3 2021: Female: 99,161 females (29.7%) and Male: 106,341 males (35.4%).</p> <p>By Q4 2021 Females: 106,854 (35.6%) Male: 114,347 (38.1%)</p> <p>By end 2021, the UNDP/VEEP Project had thus supported 222,646 citizens, which is 74.21% of total population of 300,019 (2020 National Census), to register and receive their National Identity card.</p>	<p>Vanuatu will ultimately have an accurate central civil register database and a linked national voter register, which is one of the most effective ways for Vanuatu to protect the integrity of their elections and increase the confidence of voters in electoral processes.</p> <p>The production of accurate electoral lists per polling station can convincingly be guided by the basic principle of universal and equal suffrage, with all the population of Vanuatu being registered as each their unique legal identity.</p>



			<p>By end Q1 2022, persons issued with national ID Cards were: Females: 107,717 Male: 115,808</p>																																					
	<p>2.2 Number of voters issued with national ID card disaggregated by gender (replacing the electoral cards)</p>	<p>Data reports from voter register (GRVS and VES) and civil register (RegVIZ4).</p>	<p><i>% Population with a National ID Card by region end 2020.</i></p>  <table border="1"> <caption>% Population with a National ID Card by region end 2020</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Region</th> <th>Yes (%)</th> <th>No (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>NATIONAL</td> <td>62%</td> <td>38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>URBAN</td> <td>78%</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Port Vila</td> <td>83%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Luganville</td> <td>66%</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RURAL</td> <td>57%</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TORBA</td> <td>45%</td> <td>55%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SANMA rural</td> <td>43%</td> <td>57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PENAMA</td> <td>67%</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MALAMPA</td> <td>57%</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SHEFA rural</td> <td>71%</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TAFEA</td> <td>49%</td> <td>51%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Throughout 2022, we will be moving progressively to a completely integrated system – a voter/ID/Civil Register (the Central Civil Register) – which is in essence a population register.</i></p> <p><i>As the legacy systems are being migrated piece by piece to the new integrated system, several cycles of data validation will be made in the process by dedicated data validation teams within the VEO and the CRIM Department. This process will allow the authorities to identify gaps in coverage or data integrity and address them in time for 2024 General Elections.</i></p> <p><i>All individuals who exist legally will be automatically included in the national voter register provided they are 18 and above.</i></p> <p>By Q1 2022 the number of active voters issued with a national ID is 157,767 meaning 53% of total population of</p>	Region	Yes (%)	No (%)	NATIONAL	62%	38%	URBAN	78%	22%	Port Vila	83%	17%	Luganville	66%	34%	RURAL	57%	43%	TORBA	45%	55%	SANMA rural	43%	57%	PENAMA	67%	33%	MALAMPA	57%	43%	SHEFA rural	71%	29%	TAFEA	49%	51%	<p>Vanuatu will ultimately run elections where national ID cards are used for voter identification in polling stations and using the new central civil register to extract data and produce the national voter register. Using an updated and validated population database as the basis to create the electoral lists per polling station will enable very accurate voter statistics and ensure equal and universal suffrage. In 2021-2022, Vanuatu is still in a transitional phase where voters can vote with both national IDs and their old coloured electoral cards to ensure no one is excluded but hopefully with the new Electoral Reform 2022 passing in November Parliament seating, and the two new civil registration and identity Acts passed, only ID Cards can legally be used as Voter ID from 2023 onwards.</p> <p>Note: VEEP Target was to register and issue national ID Cards: 200,000 VEEP has reached and surpassed Project PDD target (223,525 ID cards issued.)</p>
Region	Yes (%)	No (%)																																						
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			<p>300,019 (2020 National Census) however considering the age group of 18 and above the coverage is indicatively likely to be xx %, who is be ready to vote with their national ID card.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the total number of voters in the old system, GVRS, is 304,922 active voters.</p>	
	<p>2.3 Percentage of merge of databases/transition to new voter registration model.</p>	<p>Progress Reports as legacy systems are being migrated piece by piece to the new integrated system</p> <p>Progress Reports on cycles of data validation, data cleaning</p>	<p>All the national ID numbers of voters registered in VES have been linked to the civil register and have been inserted into GRVS. The merge is slowly ongoing, alongside data being verified, validated, and cleaned of incorrect data, duplicates, deceased and typical errors.</p> <p>Q2 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 305,009 voters registered in the GVRS - Duplicates already removed from GVRS: 20,606. - Number of cleaned data records: 54,000 <p>Q3 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 305,044 voters registered in the GVRS - Duplicates already removed from GVRS: 22,151. - Number of cleaned data records: 54,421 - By Q3: 504 female; 1,296 Male deceased voters have been removed from the Voter Register <p>Q4 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By Q4, the UNDP/VEEP Project had supported 222,646 citizens, which is 74.21% of total population of 300,019 (2020 National Census), to register and receive their national Identity card. - Females: 106,854 (35.6%) - Male: 114,347 (38.1%) <p>Q1 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By Q1, the project had supported 223,525 ID cards being issued, hereof female: 107,717 and male: 115,808 - Hereof 157,767 national ID holders are active voters <p>On-going work disrupted by GoV closure on data entry and preparations of digital electoral lists per polling</p>	<p>Vanuatu will ultimately have one 'foundational' database, a population register, which will serve the purposes of multiple ministries and gov agencies.</p> <p>The computerized automated national voter register will be based on information already available in the national civil register system (also administered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs), to which the provincial CRIM and VEO officers continuously convey relevant information about citizens, including births, the acquisition of voting rights, changes of address, and deaths. Thus, inclusion on the voter register and changes due to change of residence, etc. should take place automatically and continuously. As a result, the register will always be updated and there will no longer be requirement for costly and complicated field registrations ahead of all elections, however citizens must take the initiative and responsibility to keep their records up to date.</p> <p>Target 100% Achieved 74.21%</p>



			<p>station to be send out of verification ahead of 2022 elections and by-elections.</p> <p>The project is now supporting having the first unified database up and running by end May 2022. A first test/pilot version, which will then go through a few iterations to get it perfectly fitted for local needs, followed by multiple trainings and documentation.</p>	
<p>2.4 Expected number of duplicated and deceased citizens removed from the Civil and Voter registries.</p>	<p>Data reports from voter register (GRVS/VES) and civil register (RegVIZ4), and from Q2 2022, the new central civil register</p>	<p>1. UNDP/VEEP and MoH have liaised on the systematic collection of data of deceased people. 400 were previously reported for 2020 by MoH but field work data seem to indicate another 1,000 deceased over the last 2 years;</p> <p>2. New provincial positions (see restructure submission) for CRIM Assistant Registrars stationed in each province and in Provincial Central Hospitals will provide more sustainability in births and deaths registration.</p> <p>3. Work has commenced in collaboration with CRIM Department, OGCI0 and Bloomberg Philanthropies to start linking health data and civil registration data and ensure interoperability.</p>	<p>The integration and interoperability with Ministry of Health data (MoH) for the identification of deaths will be an important achievement in the pursue of maintaining accurate data.</p> <p>New provincial positions for CRIM for Assistant Registrars stationed in each Provincial Central Hospital will provide sustainability.</p>	
<p>2.5 New components developed and updated for Civil and Voter registration systems.</p>	<p>New Electoral Results Mngt System (ERMS)</p> <p>Conceptual Design for an Integrated System database</p> <p>System Documentation</p>	<p>1. The project continues to support on-going data entry and data consolidation based on field work updates, data cleaning and 'de-facto' new registrations through the recruitment of 25 data entry students;</p> <p>2. Throughout 2022, the project continues to support progressively moving to the completely integrated system – the new voter/Identity/Civil Register (the Central Civil Register), which is in essence a population register.</p> <p>3. By Q1, first batch of 100,000 records have been migrated to the new system, while further system development is ongoing. As the legacy systems are being migrated piece by piece to the new integrated system,</p>	<p>EC/VEO will have a new integrated results management system incorporating all key aspects from vote counting to the certified results being announced with relevant complaints having been properly adjudicated.</p> <p>The Republic of Vanuatu will have a Population Register, as first country in the Pacific, as part of the new central civil register based on the national ID.</p>	



		<p>Assessments of the new integrated system, following an agile implementation concept</p>	<p><i>several cycles of data validation will be made in the process by dedicated data validation teams within the VEO and the CRIM Department.</i></p> <p><i>4. The new system will be integrating the ISCO standard classification on Occupation localised for Vanuatu, as well integrating all newly consolidated village listings for over 2500 villages. All individuals who exist legally will be automatically included in the national voter register provided they are 18 and above.</i></p> <p><i>5. In 2022, until the new proposed Electoral Bill has passed, the project will continue to support maintenance and software development of a mobile application for Voter Identification in polling stations based on tablet scanning ability, linked with the voter register that will continue to be used;</i></p> <p><i>6. The project has supported training as requested of VEO, CRIM, MOH, OGCIO, MOYS, MOET on SQL query optimization, to strengthen skills/build capacities of GoV database developers and IT officers to address the challenge of identifying and tuning queries that are optimizing statistics, reporting, impacting performance or development of new components. The objective is to build capacities in analysing and addressing performance issues in Ministry SQL Server environment, in addition to OGCIO experts, limiting reliance on only few individuals. A technical training was undertaken over five days from 14-18 June 2021. The training was online, using a virtual platform and virtual labs provided by NextTech, an Australian company. Good feedback received so far, with wishes for additional modules to be built on in 2022;</i></p> <p><i>7. In 2022 continuing National Vaccination campaign for COVID is based on National ID. The MOH has requested CRIM support in terms of volunteers and use of tablets for verification purposes during the Vaccine roll out. The project has supported this process with mobile application development, preparation of tablets and training of volunteers for this purpose. The roll out commenced early June 2021 and required all tablets to be reset, updated, tested and ready for use;</i></p> <p><i>8. VEEP prepared a web application similar to the one that has been used by the VEO, but instead for National ID card</i></p>	
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			<p>verification. The web application is accessible from anywhere inside the VANGO network, but now to be tested in the provinces before using it in full/implementation. The information is from the RegisterVIZ production database, and the application server is for the moment in UNDP/VEEP office. Requirements include to be a Network User, a laptop/computer connected to the VANGO network and Barcode readers</p> <p>9. On-going work through the VEEP project to support the roll out of Election Results Management System, tailored to each type of elections, training of VEO staff and students on the system and data entry, where candidates are based on their National ID numbers;</p> <p>10. VEOs Action Plan for People with Disability on VEOs website continues to be rolled out. In 2014, governments across Asia-Pacific committed to strengthening CRVS systems and advance universal civil registration to support good governance, health and development. However, due to a lack of data, quite possibly the most vulnerable people were not being registered, which could mean hard to reach and marginalized people, People with Disability (PWD), including women and girls, remain invisible, compounding the inequality they face. This will be captured in the new system.</p> <p>11. Global Grants Program application and proposal (150\$) submitted to The Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative - Application decisions were shared via email by June 15, 2021. Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health initiative - The project to support Civil Registration Data and Health Systems Data Interoperability in Vanuatu is slowly commenced. The global Bloomberg grant has arrived, and a technical expert recruited on a consultancy basis with the overall focus outcome to ensure timely, reliable and accessible recording of vital events and data interoperability. The launching of activities has been delayed to Q2 given the current COVID situation in Vanuatu with work plan to be amended for revised roll out in Q2. Urgent review of all the processes on vital events is needed, aligned with the new legal framework, and CRIM</p>	
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			<p>is focused on and planning for the following division of focus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. UNDP supporting legal review (CRIM law, national ID law, electoral reform, regulations, procedures handbook etc.) II. UN ESCAP doing business process mapping of 'as is' processed, and reengineering III. Bloomberg GGP supporting integration of CRIM and health systems 	
<p>Output 3 Ability to Conduct Voter Education and Raise Public Awareness strengthened</p> <p>Gender Marker 2</p>	<p>3.1 Number of new partnerships with civil society developed (Women, PWDs, churches), as well as regional bodies, and national and international stakeholders.</p>	<p>NGO mapping</p> <p>Voter Awareness Committee TORs</p> <p>Minutes of Meetings</p> <p>List of Participants</p> <p>Number of followers on FB</p> <p>Number of FB posts</p> <p>Number of Press Releases</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued to support meetings of the Voter Awareness Committee (10 members from NGOs CSOs GoV and media), also established during the General Elections in 2020, as a mechanism to coordinate some key stakeholders, manage clear messages and disseminate information; 2. Civic Education materials - a Teacher's Manual and a Student Workbook in support of the Civic Education Booklet entitled "Vanuatu Blong Yu," has been developed for use in schools and other learning environments. The Senior Secondary materials and teachers will play a very important role in preparing the potential voters to become active, engaged citizens. In every lesson plan contained in the manual, there are topics, ideas and activities that will help stimulate students to think, ask questions and learn more about citizenship, democracy and how the State functions in Vanuatu. The course material aims to develop in students the knowledge, skills, values necessary to become responsible, active citizens and participate in their society and especially in election processes. In Q1 discussions continued for translation into French & Bislama. 3. VEO website populated with updated materials and regular updates published on VEO Facebook page 4. Press Releases on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoIA Corporate Plan 2022-2026 - MoIA Nasara Sector Strategy 2022 - 26 - 2022 Electoral Cycle 	<p>Effective and regular electoral awareness activities were planned for Quarter 1 with a capacity building and Voter awareness campaign planned for each province, but COVID 19 has seen delay for elections planned</p> <p>If Lock Down ends, the Provincial Awareness (6 provinces) program plan is for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on 2 new Acts • Consultation on new harmonised legislation i.e., Reserved Seats for women • the importance of registration. • Increased knowledge about elections, Increased number of eligible and qualified candidates. • Increased voter turnout. • Increased awareness of the benefits and use of the national ID for the population of Vanuatu. • Increased regional focus (Asia and Pacific) and attention to the national ID introduction in Vanuatu, carrying many important lessons learned for small island states. • Planning, reporting & Budgets



			<p>- <i>Deferral of Election Cycle due to COVID Lockown</i></p> <p>5. <i>Radio coverage on VBTC of VEO Press Releases, and Daily post.</i></p> <p>6. <i>Leith Veremaito, former Director of the Department of Local Authorities, on-boarded as Facilitator for the development of the MOIA Nasara Sector Strategy, to present through a Global Nasara in the Maldives Parliament on 23 March 2022. "Visioning Maldives Dialogue Series" session on "Strategic Foresight" is a part of an Executive Enhancement and Enrichment Program-EEEP, which is a series of capacity building sessions for Executive level government officials (political and civil service leadership). Knowledge and experience were shared from the example of Vanuatu's work with foresight and anticipatory governance planning for future-fit Governments.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to develop Annual Work Plans (AWPs) to achieve CRIM and EC/VEO Business Plans
	<p>3.2 <i>Percentage of matrix on gender tracking in elections developed, including gender-disaggregated data on all aspects of the electoral administration</i></p>	<p><i>New integrated system statistics</i></p>	<p><i>In progress</i></p>	
	<p>3.3 <i>Percentage of matrix on gender tracking in Civil Registry developed, including gender-disaggregated data</i></p>	<p><i>New integrated system statistics</i></p>	<p><i>In progress</i></p>	
	<p>3.4 <i>Assessment on civic understanding and access to information implemented.</i></p>	<p><i>Assessment on Access to Information and Civic Awareness in Vanuatu:</i></p> <p><i>Evidence from the NSDP Baseline Survey and the 2020 National Census</i></p>	<p>1. <i>The project is looking to inform the second phase of VEEP using data from the 2020 National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) and the 2019-2020 NSDP Baseline Survey. In Q1 2022, a data analyst was onboarded the VEEP project to develop this analysis.</i></p> <p>2. <i>The objectives of this "Access to Information and Civic Awareness Assessment" is to "assess, broken down by province, possession of National ID, civic understanding and how different communities prefer to access information and public awareness".</i></p>	<p>Informed voters and transparency of electoral processes through access to information and appropriately targeted public awareness campaigns.</p>



			<p>3. Committed to improving access to information for the purpose of informed voting and transparency of electoral processes, the VEEP project was aiming to have recommendations made based on the analysis to inform strategies for future impactful awareness campaigns.</p>	
<p>Output 4 <i>Legal Electoral Framework Improved and Capacity Building on Electoral Reform to Key Stakeholders provided</i></p> <p>Gender Marker 2</p>	<p>4.1 <i>Number of viable and practical reform proposals developed</i></p>	<p><i>Gazettal of new Civil Registration and Identity Management Reform package (CRIM Act CAP28 and NID Act CAP 27)</i></p> <p><i>Drafting Instructions for harmonised and modernised Electoral Laws into one single Electoral Bill</i></p> <p><i>Vanuatu wide electoral reform consultations</i></p>	<p>1. Two Bills passed November 2021, and gazetted as Acts in January 2022 through strong technical support from VEEP TAs and CRIM working group supported by VEEP - the Civil Registration and Identity Management Act (Cap 27 2022) and the National Identity Card Act (Cap 28, 2022)</p> <p>2. CRIM Regulations and Operational Procedures are being developed to implement the new Acts. By the end of Q1 three drafting Instructions for new CRIM regulations have been submitted to State Law Office (CRIM, NIC and Fees Regulations)</p> <p>3. The Marriage Act is currently under review by the Working Group, and the Marriage Act is being repealed, modernised, and replaced as instructed by the Minister. Regulations will also be developed to support this new Act, targeting November Parliament 2022 seating.</p> <p>4. The Electoral Reform Working Group has been working intensely on developing drafting instructions for a new single electoral act, harmonising the current fragmented legislative framework, and introducing several innovations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Strengthening the independence of the Electoral Commission; ii) Recognition of Provincial Electoral Officers; iii) Electoral Lists; iv) Campaign Financing Disclosure; v) Electoral Campaign & Code of Conduct; vi) Single Ballot Paper; vii) By-Elections; viii) Special Measures for Internally Displaced Persons; ix) Special Voting (Remote Voting); 	<p>The single harmonised Electoral Act will be ground-breaking in several ways but contains issues of considerable political and societal sensitivity. By end of Q1 draft drafting instructions have been finalised and nationwide consultations are being planned and prepared. The draft Bill needs extensive consultations which was initially planned as part of a joint VEO CRIM provincial 'awareness and advocacy' tour/road show in all provinces. Virtual consultations are now being prepared with pre-recorded messages and virtual platforms for Q&As due to COVID lockdowns and restrictions.</p> <p>With the national ID implementation, the collection and use of richly detailed personal and sensitive data about individuals, in greater volumes than ever before, necessitates good data protection legislation. The development of a Data Protection Act which will contribute to respect for and the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons, and in particular, their right to privacy with respect to the processing of their personal data;</p>



			<p>x) Out of Country Voting; xi) Electoral Petitions; xii) Constituency Determination; xiii) Expanded Electoral Offences; xiv) Regulations for electoral procedures & xv) Special Temporary Measures for Women's Voting.</p> <p>4. The project has supported the development of a 'Generic outline for a National Data Protection and Privacy Policy of the Republic of Vanuatu', which was drafted by Council of Europe Legal Experts. The purpose of this Policy is to create the foundations of a data protection and privacy law that will give effect to associated rights enshrined in the Constitution of Vanuatu, and the international obligations of Vanuatu and to express the commitment of the State to ensure respect for, and the protection of, personal data and associated rights of individuals, and in particular the right to privacy.</p>	
	4.2 Number of electoral staff (gender disaggregated) trained on new reform measures	Number of Trainings and meetings on Reform Measures	<p>GoV national lockdown has delayed trainings through a planned 'Provincial Awareness' (6 provinces) program plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on two new CRIM Acts • Consultation on new harmonised legislation i.e. Reserved Seats for women • the importance of continuous all year-round registration. • Increased knowledge about elections, Increased number of eligible and qualified candidates. • Increased awareness of the benefits and use of the national ID for the population of Vanuatu. • PWD Action Plan awareness • Planning, reporting & budgets • How to develop Annual Work Plans (AWPs) to achieve CRIM and EC/VEO Business Plans 	
	4.3 Number of key stakeholders trained on new reform measures		<p>GoV national lockdown has delayed trainings planned through a 'Provincial Awareness' program (6 provinces), including:</p>	



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information on two new CRIM Acts</i> • <i>Consultation on new harmonised legislation i.e., Reserved Seats for women, campaign finance etc.</i> • <i>the importance of continuous all year-round registration, and updated citizens records.</i> • <i>Increased knowledge about elections, Increased number of eligible and qualified candidates.</i> • <i>Increased awareness of the benefits and use of the national ID for the population of Vanuatu.</i> • <i>PWD Action Plan awareness</i> 	
	<p>4.4 <i>Electoral Gender mainstreaming action plan for the project developed and monitored</i></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Gender mainstreaming strategy and action plan – TORs developed for Q2/Q3</i> 2. <i>PWD mainstreaming strategy and action plan – on VEO Website.</i> 	<p>Analysis and understanding of gender issues in effective governance, particularly participation in political processes, through examination of participation and decision-making of women and men in different institutions, and introduction of some targeted measures to bring women up to a level playing field.</p> <p>Addressing gaps in electoral gender mainstreaming entails the adoption of reforms to stimulate different governing institutions at the various levels, and the integration of gender perspectives into all project interventions and support.</p>



PART 3: PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR SECOND QUARTER, 2022

Output 1:

- Support for deferred elections, a repercussion of Government decisions on national COVID lockdown;
- Follow up on three restructures for approval – EC, VEO and CRIM:
 - o the Restructure Submission prepared for VEO, submitted in July 2021 to the Office of the Public Service Commission (OPSC). It is still awaiting endorsement. VEEP undertakes regular inquiries on progress, and its indicatively on the agenda of next PSC meeting. A linked budget request, a New Policy Project (NPP), was prepared to provide salary budget for prioritised vacant and new staffing positions in the 2023 GoV budget cycle;
 - o the Restructure Submission drafted for the Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) Department in September 2021 with a total revision after the previous CRVS department was de-mobilised and replaced with CRIM after legislation was Gazetted. A linked budget request was prepared to provide salary budget for prioritised vacant and new staffing positions in the 2023 GoV budget cycle;
 - o the Electoral Commission Establishment Submission made to Minister MoIA / DPM, noting that the contentious post of political party registrar (later changed to coordinator) has possibly caused delays. An NPP for salaries has been prepared for April Parliament Supplementary Budget and/or 2023 Budget Cycle. The critical new post of the new 'Political Party Coordinator' to support registration, compliance and integrity of party registration and will be complementary to the new harmonised Electoral Bill endeavour;
- Follow up on MoIA Corporate Services Unit (CSU) restructure, which includes a Project Management Unit (PMU) with additional capacity for an internal auditor that will considerably assist not only EC/VEO and CRIM departments but also VEEP project management;
- Advertise VEO Finance Officer, to improve finance management of activities in EC/VEO;
- Recruitment of VEEP Finance Officer;
- Undertake two surveys: a HR Officer survey and Finance Officer survey, to determine skills gaps for capacity building training – a sustainability strategy for key MoIA stakeholders;
- Establish two new 'Network groups' - the HR Officer Network and the Finance Officer Network – with monthly half day trainings to strengthen skills, capacities, knowledge and coordination across the big Ministry;
- Undertake virtual Budget Cycle trainings on 1) Budget Narrative revision, 2) writing a good NPP, 3) writing a GIP. These VEEP activities are introduced in response to the 2021 HACT micro assessment and recommendations and part of the development of a financial officer network to improve financial capacities and services;
- Complete validation and final graphic design of the MoIA Nasara Sector Strategy, printing the Nasara Strategy (200 copies);
- Launch the MoIA Nasara Sector Strategy, and organise Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs event;
- Produce a short video documentary, telling the story;
- Complete 6 Foresight Briefs by sector strategy facilitators/Directors, with La Trobe researchers and expertise provided by UNDP;
- Support Murielle Metsan Director Labour Department as part of Foresight & Anticipatory Planning to prepare and present at a conference in June focusing on labor and migration mobility, aligned with her Foresight Brief on Labour Mobility.

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- Develop TORs for SOP VEO Logistics;
- Prepare for April Parliament Sitting;
- Follow up on budget book 3 NPPs and GIPs, and provide support for 2023 Budget Submission to embed sustainability outcomes through stronger budget base for EC/VEO, CRIM and MoIA Corporate Services;

Output 2:

- Support data consolidation including village listings, on-going data entry, occupation standardisation etc. based on field work updates, verifications and 'de-facto' new registrations;
 - Support preparations of digital electoral voter list per polling station for deferred elections;
 - Support preparation and printing of paper-based voter lists per polling station for deferred elections;
 - Support preparations of tablets with VEEP developed mobile application for voter identification based on national ID in polling stations using tablet scanning ability and pre-loaded with the voter register;
 - Continue support to COVID19 vaccination roll-out in provinces, financially and technically, The MOH requested CRIM support in terms of verification purposes during the vaccine roll out by using National ID Card;
 - Support the data validation of voter lists for Malekula constituency, Malampa province and Port Vila municipality;
 - Support data geo-location and polling station data to be matched (data entry officers)
 - Keep developing the backend of the new integrated database, and keep adding the key functionalities in line with process mapping;
 - Start migration of data from RegVIZ4 civil register to integrated new central civil register - Analysis, Specifications and preparations;
 - Related SOP development analysis;
 - Develop facial recognition as duplication analysis tool;
 - Test the potential for introducing fingerprints to the database;
 - Provide continued support and coordination to UN ESCAP for ongoing process mapping of 'as is' processes, for process re-engineering;
 - Complete draft CRIM Regulations in collaboration with State Law Office, including Explanatory Note and presented to DCO, COM;
 - Develop CRIM Operational Handbook (SOPs)
 - Develop CRIM Administrative procedures
 - Provide technical and operational support to electoral preparations and operations for:
 - o Port Vila Municipal Council election
 - o Malekula Parliamentary by-election
 - o Malampa Provincial Government Council by-election
 - o Presidential Election
 - Coordinate and align efforts with the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health initiative aiming at linking Civil Registration Data and Health Systems Data through an API to ensure data interoperability. A local facilitator has been recruited by ESCAP/CRIM on consultancy basis with the overall focus outcome to ensure timely, reliable, and accessible recording of vital events and data interoperability, and coordination between Bloomberg, UN ESCAP and UNDP/VEEP
 - Support UN ESCAP Webinars on principles, concepts and methods of CRIM and legal identity, as well as on AS-IS analysis, KPI's and processes redesign as necessary;
- Provide technical support to development of applications and platforms for MoH and CRIM integration of data, development of API for inter-operability,



Output 3:

- Complete analysis of assessment undertaken on 'Access to Information' by Jamie Tanguay (and print and share this assessment) and population coverage of national ID;
- Complete Population analysis by Nik Soni with interesting findings for future perspectives;
- Revive the Voter Awareness Committee as a mechanism to coordinate key stakeholders, manage clear messages and disseminate information (on both electoral reform innovations and upcoming elections);
- Continue efforts of Public Outreach and Voter Awareness through radio, tv, Facebook messages, Website, VBTC, billboards, small videos, as well as efforts through the Voter Awareness Committee partners in the islands;
- Support the implementation of a helpdesk/call centre component for voter services for deferred elections;
- Support publication of election updates, election logistics, candidate lists etc. on Facebook, VEO website, VEO and provincial offices
- Develop concept paper and support activities on national ID awareness campaign, the benefits of having/using national ID Concept Note;
- Prepare Electoral Reform consultations for all provinces including Provincial Councillors, all 73 Area Councils, Chiefs, Churches, community leaders, women groups, youth groups, disability groups – and MPs;
- Prepare PowerPoint presentations, speaking points, meetings timetables;
- Develop a virtual electoral reform consultation package for 6 provincial government council sittings early May 2022, including pre-recorded summary presentations, short summary of drafting instruction to a new single harmonised electoral law; legislative timeline;
- Prepare a short script/storyboard for Nasara Sector Strategy documentary;
- Develop concept note on 'Covid19 and elections', and a short Covid19 instruction/guidance for polling officers and voters on E-day introducing safe practices for safe elections;

Output 4:

- Continue legal drafting in collaboration with State Law Office on revision of electoral legislation and harmonisation of law to capture current disparate legislation and regulations;
- Support the Electoral reform working group meetings on the completion of drafting instructions for a draft harmonized single electoral bill for all direct elections in Vanuatu;
- Integrate Law reform commission report analysis into drafting instructions;
- Complete drafting of CRIM regulations, NID regulations, and Fee regulations to support implementation of the two new Acts passed end 2021 and gazetted in Jan 2022;
- Start drafting the CRIM Operational Handbook and CRIM Administrative procedures – and provide training on identity management, process management, risk management, change management, to complete the Conceptual design guidance for the new Integrated Identity Management Database, in collaboration with UNESCAP to support business process mapping,
- Provide support to review the CRIM Policy,
- Review of related Acts: Marriage Act, Adoption Act,
- Review of Data Protection & Privacy draft Bill.



- Continue to support and keep momentum going in the three Legal Reform Working Groups established to focus on:
 - 1) civil registration and identity management (CRIM) Discussion papers 1-7 and policies and new drafting instructions for SLO;
 - 2) electoral legal reform group, and virtual nationwide presentations;
 - 3) data protection and data privacy policy
- Legal Review and Analysis of the Marriage Act and policy
- Level Review and analysis of Adoption Act

PART 4: PARTNERSHIPS

- National partnerships: EC/VEO, CRIM, CSU, VNSO, DLA, DOL, MOH, MoET, DoWA, DSSPAC, OGCIO, VBTC, Chamber of Commerce,
- *Sector Stakeholder Map Refer Annex 3*
- The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) with focus on digital economy work.
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) with focus on improvement of civil registration processes.
- Bloomberg Philanthropies, Data for Health Initiative (CRIM, Global Grants Program) with focus on integrating Public Health Systems with CRIM data.
- The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) with focus on birth registration
- UN's World Health Organisation (WHO) with focus on death registration and COVID19 vaccination in Vanuatu.
- Private Sector - Pacific Advisors, Asian Development Bank eKYC



PART 5: RISK and ASSUMPTIONS

(Refer also to Risk Mitigation Strategy in new MoIA “Nasara” Sector Strategy)

Risk Category	Risk Sub-category	Event	Causes	Impact	Action needed	Treatment activity description	Expected effect from treatment
POLITICAL	Political will	Limited scope for strengthening institutional and operational capacities of EC and VEO, particularly during the non-electoral periods	Limited or inconsistent political will and commitment to provide the necessary support to the electoral authorities and legal reforms	Delays in project output implementation; Reduced impact of project on EC and VEO	Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VEEP II will continue supporting the lobbying work of the EC/VEO within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other government agencies to push for compliance with government commitments towards support for the whole electoral cycle. • Prospective legal reforms require a wide and inclusive consultation process to raise awareness on legal changes. VEEP II envisages key activities to enhance engagement of relevant stakeholders (public, government ministries, donors and CSOs) to continue building collaboration mechanisms with governmental and civil society with a view to have ample participation and awareness on key electoral reform aspects. • There has been resistance to Political Party Reform Bill that will provide a stronger compliance framework for establishing new parties and for transparency of operations for existing parties • Work closely with other electoral stakeholders and institutions. 	STRENGTHENED OWNERSHIP BY VEC/VEO



						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise relationships of Working Groups and Sector Strategy to build understanding and “buy-in.” 	
POLITICAL	Political will	Poor perceptions of the independence or efficiency of the EC/VEO create obstacles to the implementation of the project activities.	Insufficient capacity within EC / VEO to provide independent accurate legal advice on electoral matters	No confidence in EC/VEO advisory services	Acclaim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The technical advisory roles within the EC/VEO include provision for high level advice on and recommendations for the EC’s consideration and adoption related to perceptions management; strategies to address poor perceptions and to build the integrity of the institution Provide technical support to re-draft key legislation Coordinate high-level advocacy by development partners and civil society 	CONFIDENCE IN CAPACITY OF EC/VEO BY STAKEHOLDERS AND VOTERS
OPERATIONAL	Capacity development of national partners	The voter register is not adequately corrected through the next updates during the transition period.	<p>Disconnect between Voter Registry and civil registration systems.</p> <p>CRIM and VEO have each their mandate and collect different information.</p> <p>With new Act, Currently, the national ID registration is mandatory over 18 yrs of age.</p>	<p>Lack of confidence in work of VEO; Low confidence in project impact</p> <p>National ID registration will have implications on accuracy and inclusiveness</p>	Acclaim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close collaboration between the VEO and the CRIM will be maintained, supported by VEEP’s technical assistance, to support successful efforts of duplication analysis, data validation in the field for improved quality of the register. VEEP Phase II will endeavour to support the VEO in its awareness and outreach efforts targeting key segments of the population to encourage new entries in the registration process with a view to ensure an inclusive and reliable voter register A restructure of both offices has been undertaken to provide stronger capacity in operations, policy, analysis & planning In 2021, unsubstantiated rumours of ID Cards being printed by Agents selling Citizenship 	VOTER REGISTRY IS UPDATED SYSTEMATICALLY



						<p>was a grave concern. Once the National ID Cards Act was gazetted in January 2022, ID are recognised by law and have a financial value. This will need careful scrutiny and Regulations to ensure only Dep't of CRIM can legally issue the National ID Cards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations will need to be developed urgently to prevent legal identities being sold by private companies 	
OPERATIONAL	Leadership & management	Non-availability of VEO staff capacity	Delayed recruitment	Late appointment of the VEO staff can have an impact on it properly carrying out its mandate.	Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Service Commission terminated all Director contracts seeing loss of Principal Electoral Officer and Director of CRIM as well as very important Directors of Dep'ts of Local Authorities, Immigration, Labour. • This threatened continuity of initiatives, loss of strategic vision and lowering of morale. • However, it has given rise to opportunities for junior staff to assume leadership roles – a good Succession Planning strategy. • In addition, VEEP seized the opportunity and offered short term advisor contracts to the outgoing Directors to work on Sector strategy, Anticipatory Planning & Foresight briefs. • The project will continue to support the EC/VEO efforts to ensure that the expected additional permanent staff (including the provincial officers) are appointed as promised. 	VEO CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT THEIR MANDATE



						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Restructure Submission is being presented to the Public Service Commission that will build capacity of the offices of VEO, CRIM and MoIAs CSU (manages and reports on finances) • Launch in January 2022 of Ministry of Internal Affairs Corporate Plan will institutionalise stronger capacity building & institutional planning. • VEO & CRIM Business Plans in new GoV format provides for implementation of priority position staffing • In addition, GoV has locked down in-coming flights due to COVID19 causing issues with timely mobilization of TA to Vanuatu with limited flights and access to quarantine – potentially 8 additional TAs 	
POLITICAL	Political instability	Increased snap elections in Vanuatu	Political instability during the project duration might increase the chances of emergency (“snap”) elections, which could alter the project’s work plan and priorities.	Delayed project implementation; unclear direction on electoral reforms given by political leadership	Acclaim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VEEP technical assistance will be provided to the EC/VEO to ensure there are plans in place to respond efficiently and in a timely manner to emergency elections, including in terms of regulations, operational plans, template legal timelines and procedures. • Delay in planned elections caused by national Lock Down from 5th March in response to Vanuatu’s first community transmission. This has caused considerable delays in project planned work but VEEP has responded innovatively using Zoom for virtual meetings. 	EFFICIENT AND TIMELY RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY ELECTIONS
POLITICAL	Political instability	Public disillusioned with the	Regular vote of no	Delay in project implementation	Acclaim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EC/VEO will be supported to strengthen its public outreach. Improvement in the provision of electoral services (such as a more 	PUBLIC CONFIDENCE EC/VEO &



		democratic processes	confidence/snap elections			accurate and trusted voter register) will help improve public perceptions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing public disaffection and disengagement caused by frequent by-elections as well as the high costs of unbudgeted elections draining funds and staff focus from other high priority activities. 	ELECTORAL PROCESSES ERODED FURTHER
ENVIRONMENTAL	Health and Safety	Natural disasters and pandemics including COVID-19 in Vanuatu change stakeholder priorities and ability to implement and participate in activities under the project.	Natural disasters and pandemics including COVID-19 in Vanuatu	Delayed project implementation	Acclaim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the Sector Strategy, UNDP Office Fiji and New York have supported Anticipatory Planning training to assist VEEP's sector partners in mitigating risks This will be a valuable, sustainable strategy for risks to the sector. Closure nationally will require VEEP team to review and revise planned Work Plan for 2022- particularly with delays to Malekula election & Presidential Election. Ensure flexible schedule for activity implementation to minimise potential impact on outputs and ensure sequenced and timely implementation of project activities, with adjustments made where necessary. COVID responses supported by VEEP with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business continuity plans for VEO & CRIM CRIM reopening of essential services offices' protocols 	FLEXIBLE WORKPLAN INORPORATING 'EMERGENCY' SHOCKS



PART 6: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Media articles in the Daily Post are utilised by GoVs national radio & television and independent FM radio stations

A Fast Facts brochure was developed, professionally formatted and printed as well as uploaded to UNDP regional website. Link to the VEEP II Fast Facts:

<https://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/library/eg/veep-fast-facts.html>

PART 7: KEY LESSONS LEARNT AND CHALLENGES

In Quarter 1 2022 the key challenge has been the Nationwide Lockdown as Vanuatu experienced its first community transmission of COVID19 with the Omicron variant spreading rapidly. On 5th March, the Council of Ministers (COM) and Public Service Commission, closed all government offices, all private sector businesses not deemed “essential” and all Development Partner agencies, iNGOs and NGOs were required to have staff work from home. This has had a considerable effect on ability to deliver core activities in the VEEP Project. COM has instructed that all currently planned elections be deferred (Malekula and Malampa by-elections, Port Vila municipal election and the presidential elections.

In this uncertain operational environment, the VEEP Office has remained open every day to maintain project momentum. Innovative approaches were undertaken to continue progress through support through virtual platforms for partner agencies, and the VEEP Project furthermore supported development of COVID safe practices, delivery of technical trainings through zoom such as key GoV Budget Cycle activities to improve sustainable budget practices. Business Continuity Plans were developed with VEEP support for EC/VEO and CRIM departments as templates that can be used by not only other MoIA agencies but more broadly across the whole of Government. The Return-to-Work and Re-opening of Office Protocols for agencies such as CRIM, providing clear procedures for services classified as essential were also developed.

In addition, high level multi agency and multi country participation was facilitated in the development of the innovative MoIA Nasara Sector Strategy, which validated through a “Virtual Nasara” although for the initial drafting of the Sector Strategy, the VEEP Project supported bringing together more than 80 participants for a 1-day (in-person) conference, divided into different focus area threads facilitated by former MoIA Directors as facilitators based on Anticipatory Planning and Foresight Methodologies. Subsequently, using a virtual platform, several countries and multiple agencies joined a validation process of the draft sector strategy.

Anticipatory Governance and planning, and Foresight Brief training with facilitators for the Sector Strategy development, commenced to inform Risk Mitigation, has transmogrified into a more general training program across all agencies of MoIA and sector stakeholders.

In Vanuatu with its historical modalities of custom culture and reciprocal obligation, these relationships will strongly support sustainability outcomes for the VEEP Project’s key designed outcomes.

PART 8: SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALING UP

2022 is a critical year for “Step-Up for Sustainability” approaches, already commenced in 2021 but continuing as a strong focus throughout 2022. Scaling up activities proposed and/or underway are part of the sustainability initiatives.

The VEEP Project is currently scheduled to complete in 2024. The considerable investment in the national authorities and processes will only be sustainable if the Ministry has the capacity (financial, technical, human resources) to progress the innovations of the VEEP project and maximise the potential of the investments made in electoral reform by the Government of Vanuatu Development Partners and Sector Stakeholders. In Activity Completion Reports of Development Partner Programs over the years, this lack of sustainability strategies has been identified in Lessons Learned Reporting. Therefore, the internal capacity of MoIA to manage its resources, improve its budget, engage with stakeholders and provide compliant



planning and reporting needs considerable assistance if the investment and gains of the VEEP Project Phase I and Phase II are to be sustained in all its aspects.

Accordingly, a strong lens on support for sustainability strategies has been provided in 2021, in Q1 2022 and will continue to be provided through the year as essential and comprehensive reforms are being presented, and corporate plans and sector strategies are being developed. Some of these strategies are providing operational and delivery benchmarks for GoV and regionally.

- a) Legislation – Bills, Acts & Implementation
- b) Manuals & Standard Operating Procedures
- c) Planning
- d) Budget Processes
- e) Reporting
- f) Restructures
- g) Risk Mitigation & Foresight Planning (includes Business Continuity Strategies)

a) Legislation: Opportunities have been pursued to embed sustainability of VEEP outcomes by strengthening the legislative framework, supporting both institutional reform and planning and broadening range of sector stakeholders “buying in” to the innovative platforms and strategies being institutionalised through VEEP support. VEEP is supporting very comprehensive institutional and legislative electoral and civil registration reforms.

The lack of implementation plans for the new legislation and of Standard Operating Procedures (or Procedures Manuals) were identified by Director General Cheroi Ala Ianna as a significant gap for the wider Ministry. Quarter 2 and subsequent quarters VEEP will explore if further support can be provided to rectify this issue.

b) Manuals & Standard Operating Procedures: The VEO now has a holistic electoral operational plan, developed through VEEP technical support to codify and institutionalise the VEO operational procedures. Procedures and Manuals were developed during VEEP phase I, however will need to be updated to accord to new legislation proposed.

i) To be updated through a short term locally based TA Contract:

- Procedures for party / candidate agent’s accreditation
- Procedures for observer’s accreditation
- Procedures for candidates’ nomination
- Procedures for voter registration (new methodology)
- Procedures for polling and counting, including operational forms (Polling Station (PS) reconciliation form, PS results form, Record of the Seals form, material transfer forms)
- Registration manual

ii) New SOPs/Manuals

- VEO electoral logistics SOP
- CRIM Manuals to operationalise 2 new Acts
- Operational forms to be used in the joint CVR process have been developed, along with checklists, guide for the registration supervisors with their roles and responsibilities.

iii) Training in drafting SOPs should be a part of the contract deliverables for sustainability & capacity building purposes

c) Planning: It transpired in 2022 that the overall planning framework, not only but of the Ministry of Internal Affairs but also of EC/VEO and CRIM were very poor with scant linkages to Vanuatu’s National Planning Framework, Vanuatu National Aid Management Policy, the National Sustainable Development Plan and very critically to GOVs annual budget planning and Appropriations Act cycle. This was evident to the highest levels of management and administration across all units of MoIA. If EC/VEO and CRIM institutional reforms are to survive after VEEP completes, it can only do so on a strong budget basis. Accordingly, training has been provided in Q1 and more will be delivered in Q2 on Budget Cycle. Already inquiries are being received by other Ministries and agencies across the sector for similar training, but the focus will remain on MoIA.

The new MoIA Corporate Plan 2022-2026 was the first in any GoV Ministry to fully comply with new Guidelines launched by Hon PM. The broad, collaborative development of the Corporate Plan within the Ministry has provided an invaluable



capacity building opportunity. New Business Plans being operationalised in Q2, Q3 and Q4 will require on-going support, especially in demonstrations of how the Corporate Plan relates to Appropriations Act, Book 3 and Budget Narratives.

The same collaborative approach was utilised in development of MoIA's new Sector Strategy 2022-2026 to be launched in Q2 (due to delays necessitated by COVID 19 Lockdowns). Only 4 of GoV's 13 Ministries have a Sector Strategy, despite it being a recommended "plank" in the Vanuatu Aid Management Policy and National Planning Framework. Initiatives to support on-going reforms and activities introduced by VEEP were able to be integrated into the Corporate Plan and Sector Strategy.

EC/VEO and CRIM Business Plans were developed with training provided by VEEP to produce Business Plans not only compliant with the new GOV Planning & Reporting Framework but also as templates for easier reporting to DSPPAC and OPSC. This same training was offered to all MoIA agencies.

d) Budget Planning Whilst MoIA plans were assessed as being seriously deficient, it was very low levels of understanding of GoV budget processes that could be identified as "the weakest link in the chain." Poor understanding of the Budget Cycle processes have meant missed opportunities for improved budget allocations from GoV through improving MoIA's Budget Ceiling and allocations but also through the GIP process of engaging with Development Partners on activities now clearly prioritised in the new Corporate Plan Sector Strategy and of course linked to the annual GPP – Government Policy Priorities.

Extremely poor levels of training and capacity have been identified amongst MoIA financial officers. This has been highlighted by concerning results of the HACT Audit of the VEEP Program. However, issues raised are endemic across all of MoIA. A survey to be administered in Q2 will clearly ascertain Skills Gaps for Finance Staff and training provided to build capacity in those areas not just by the VEEP team but by MFEM and other delivery partners.

e) Reporting: Templates for Reporting were provided to EC/VEO and CRIM. In Q2, Q3 and Q4, training support will be provided so that by the end of 2022, a full reporting (and planning) cycle on the new GoV guidelines will have been delivered – providing a very strong basis for on-going reporting and planning into the future. It must be noted that success in providing high quality plans & reports, then feeds into improved opportunities to request additional resourcing though the annual MBC Cycle – and of course with development Partners.

It should be noted that with VEEP training & support, that the EC/VEO and CRIM were the first MoIA agencies able to complete and submit their Q1 2022 Reports on the new templates.

f) Restructures: The Corporate Services Unit restructure to be finalised and submitted in Q2 provides for an Internal Auditor, a Projects Management Unit, stronger financial administration posts and M&E positions. All of this should assist with sustainability good governance and transparency outcomes for GoV and Development Partners. Restructures of EC, VEO and CRIM need to be followed through Approvals have been delayed by the COVID Lockdowns and should now occur in Q2.

g) Anticipatory Planning: A window of opportunity was provided as part of the Sector Strategy development to undertake Anticipatory and Foresight Planning to appraise and mitigate risks. This in itself will provide skills for EC/VEO CRIM and MoIA Directors and Managers to assess issues that may have a negative impact on MoIA CRIM and EC/VEO capacity to successfully operate and meet challenges in the years ahead. Some of this training was made available to other Sector stakeholders further embedding strategic reform and planning across multiple sector beneficiaries.

In Q2, VEEP will support Murielle Metsan Director Labour Department as part of Foresight & Anticipatory Planning to prepare and present at a conference in June focusing on labour and migration mobility, aligned with her Foresight Brief on Labour Mobility.

Upscaling assistance outside of the VEEP Project design was provided to develop Business Continuity Plans for the Civil Registration and Identity Management Department and EC/VEO. This is a generic plan for all types of emergencies from natural disasters to civil Insurrection but of significant value was the Annex 5: Office Protocols for COVID19. The Office Protocols were prepared with the GoV direction of re-opening essential services with COVID Safe practices. Both the Business Continuity Plans and Office Protocols Annex provide possible templates for other MoIA agencies.



PART 9: QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Report as at 31st March 2022									
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Project Name: Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP) II UNDP reference number: 00123236 MFAT Activity Code: ACT-0102062 Project Period: - 01/01/2021 - 30/06/24 Reporting Period: 01/01/2022 - 31/03/2022 Donor: MFAT (NZ), TRAC FUNDS Currency of Reporting: USD									
INCOME:									
Fund received - Dec 2020							358,448.28		
Fund received - Jun 2021							214,927.42		
Fund received - Jul 2021							1,295,055.00		
							1,868,430.70		
EXPENSES:									
EXPECTED OUTPUTS	ATLAS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Budget 2022	Budget Description	Total Amount	Actual Expended (Jan 2022- 31 March 2022)	Total Expenses	Balance	
Output 1: Institutional Capacities of the Electoral Authorities Strengthened Gender marker: 2	1.1	1.1 Support the EC/VEO in sustaining their staffing structure, incl. technical, financial and logistics support, capacity-building activities, and establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs, including planning and evaluation workshops.	21,600	Workshops, training, south/south cooperation	81,600	15,506.55	15,506.55	6,093.45	
	1.2	1.2 Support the EC/VEO in continuous development/updating of regulations, operational procedures, manuals, forms etc.	21,600	International Consultant, Travel and DSA	61,600	514.36	514.36	21,085.64	
	1.3	1.3 Support the VEO in building its decentralized framework (provincial electoral administrators) and put in place administrative arrangements to support this structure incl. alignment with VEO/CRVS/DLA resources etc.	21,600	Workshops, training,	61,600	6,652.99	6,652.99	14,947.01	
	1.4	1.4 Support National ID enhancement project as a tool to help the Government respond better to pandemics and natural disasters, including legal identity issues and strategy for linking of governments and development partners in harmonisation on use of unique IDs.	10,800	Workshops, ICT equipment	30,800	665.29	665.29	10,134.71	
	1.5	1.5 Support digitization, digital archiving and knowledge base – including digital files into the Government Document Management System (Saperion).	10,800	Procurement ICT, software	40,800	-	-	10,800.00	
	1.6	1.6 Sustain the modernization of the VEO with procurement support to a new voter identification model, incl. scanners/tablets for all polling stations, electoral material etc.	10,800	ICT Procurements, professional services	40,800	(167.12)	(167.12)	10,967.12	
	1.7	1.7 Development and roll-out of cascade training, training of trainers (ToT) on electoral processes (polling & counting etc. for provincial, municipal and general elections)	10,800	Workshops venue, travel, per diems	40,800	11,450.53	11,450.53	650.53	
	1.8	1.8 Assist the VEO in mainstreaming gender-sensitive policies and procedures, and ensure gender-sensitivity in all outreach activities in the electoral process	21,600	Professional services, workshop venue, travel per diems	81,600	1,369.67	1,369.67	20,230.33	
	1.9	1.9 Examine and support VEO in the identification of people with disabilities, in collaboration with GRVS department.	10,800	Field missions, travel, per diems, workshops	30,800	-	-	10,800.00	
	1.10B	1.10 Support the VEO in demarcation and alignment of electoral boundaries, villages/new settlements/area councils/constituencies/polling stations. Support to satellite imagery development, services and production in conjunction with UNSTAR and UNDP Crisis Unit, to support the establishment of a common locations dataset to be used by VEO, CRVS, Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) and other Government offices.		ICT equipment procurements, filed missions, travel,	30,000	-	-	0.00	
	1.11	1.11 Post-election Review: Support a Multi-stakeholder Post-election Review (EC/VEO, Gov authorities, CSOs, FBOs, PPs etc.);	10,800	Workshop venues, travel,	30,800	11,899.68	11,899.68	1,099.68	
	1.12	1.12 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation	108,000	International and national professional services	393,000	20,914.78	20,914.78	87,085.22	
	1.13	1.13 Direct Project Costs Programme management costs (rent, equipment, DPC, etc.)		Programme management costs (rent, equipment, DPC, comms, etc.)	20,000	-	-	0.00	
Sub-Total for Output 1			259,200	0	944,200	68,807	68,807	190,393	
Output 2: Integrity and Accuracy of the Voter Register Enhanced Gender	2.1	2.1 Support transitioning to the new 'voter registration model' and capacity building support in ICT related components to ensure its sustainability and cost-effectiveness, as well as improve technical resources, systems sustainability and stimulating local ownership.	16,200	ICT procurements, professional services,	61,200	-	-	16,200.00	
	2.2	2.2 Support implementation of strategy and operations for the transitional period to ensure a smooth transfer from the current GRVS and VES databases – to the use of the National ID Card database for the production and establishment of a unique electoral roll.	10,800	Training workshops, ICT and software procurements, technical assistance	40,800	-	-	10,800.00	
	2.3	2.3 Provide procurement support to the VEO in the data verification/validation of joint civil & voter data in all provinces, - procurement of equipment, material and services.		Technical advisory support, ICT procurements	0	-	-	0.00	
	2.4	2.4 Provide training support to the VEO in the data verification/validation of joint civil & voter data in all provinces – help desk functions, area secretaries, ward secretaries, field technicians, and operators in each province.	10,800	Technical support, consultancy services, workshop venues, travel, per diems	40,800	-	-	10,800.00	
	2.5	2.5 Support the development of a component to link the VEO website with the voter register for active voter response service.	5,400	Technical support	10,400	-	-	5,400.00	
	2.6	2.6 Support the development of a SMS service for Voter verification based on the National Id Number.	21,600	Technical support, procurement of telecommunication service provider	71,600	-	-	21,600.00	
	2.7	2.7 Provide technical support to the CRVS systems and databases, revise the actual identity management system with the objective to guarantee the accuracy to the existent citizen information and the quality of related services.	10,800	Professional services, training workshops, travel, per diem	40,800	13,712.30	13,712.30	2,912.30	
	2.8	2.8 Develop a centralized a CRVS/VEO citizen image database.		Professional/technical services	0	1,432.84	1,432.84	1,432.84	
	2.9	2.9 Develop and implement a facial recognition system with the objective to identify possible matches in CRVS/VEO databases.	10,800	Professional/technical services	20,800	20,044.92	20,044.92	9,244.92	
	2.10B	2.10 Support the implementation of a helpdesk and call center component providing services for electoral activities - hr, training and equipment.	0	Procurement of equipment, telecommunications service provider	0	-	-	0.00	
	2.11	2.11 Develop a study/prototype for database verification and results transmission auditing processes.	16,200	Professional/technical support	31,200	617.49	617.49	15,582.51	
	2.13	2.12 Develop a study/prototype for database verification & results transmission auditing processes.	16,200	Professional /technical support	31,200	-	-	16,200.00	
	2.12	2.13 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation	108,000	National and international professional staff	393,000	20,558.93	20,558.93	87,441.07	
2.14	2.14 Direct Project Costs		Programme management costs (rent, equipment, comms, etc.)	15,000	-	-	0.00		
Sub-Total for Output 2			226,800	0	756,800	56,366	56,366	170,434	

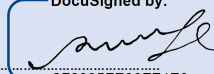


NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



Output 3: Ability to Conduct Voter Education and Raise Public Awareness strengthened Gender marker: 2	3.1	3.1 Continuously support maintenance of the website as an online archive and actively use of VEO Facebook page to reach particularly the Youth segment of the electorate.		Social media/ Website professional services /support	10,000	-	-	0.00
	3.2	3.2 In collaboration with Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO), analyse the Census 2020-2021 data and assess, broken down by province, possession of National ID, civic understanding and how different communities prefer to access information and public	10,800	Technical support, workshops venue	20,800	9,144.92	9,144.92	1,655.08
	3.3	3.3 Support the development of a concept paper and support activities for voter education, voter awareness and public outreach, and the implications and use of National ID.	10,800	Technical/professional support	20,800	-	-	10,800.00
	3.4	3.4 Continue to support establishment of a Voter Awareness Committee as a mechanism to coordinate all stakeholders and manage clear messages		Workshops/meetings venue	10,000	-	-	0.00
	3.5	3.5 Support targeted awareness campaigns (media, material etc) on potential referendum, National ID registration, Municipal elections, Provincial elections, General National Election.	10,800	Multi-media services procurement, printing, production of IEC materials	40,800	-	-	10,800.00
	3.6	3.6 Assist the VEO in training field staff (provincial administrators/ area secretaries/ward secretaries etc.) on voter information and awareness on any election, including face-to-face trainings.	10,800	Workshop/meeting venues, travel, per diem	50,800	-	-	10,800.00
	3.7	3.7 Support the VEO in further deepening of partnerships between various stakeholders and the electoral authorities, including focus on inclusion of women through grassroots outreach and activities.	10,800	Workshop/meeting venues, travel, per diem	50,800	-	-	10,800.00
	3.8	3.8 Support a youth induction training in Municipal Local Council (MLC) functioning and elections/Provincial Local Council (PLC) functioning and elections, in collaboration with PPEI, SLIP, Parliament	16,200	Workshop/meeting venues, travel, per diem	46,200	-	-	16,200.00
	3.9	3.9 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation	108,000	National and international professional staff	393,000	20,612.70	20,612.70	87,387.30
		3.10 Direct Project Costs		Programme management costs (rent, equipment, DPC, comms,	15,000	-	-	0.00
Sub-Total for Output 3				0	658,200	29,758	29,758	148,442
Output 4: Legal Electoral Framework Improved and Capacity Building on Electoral Reform to Key Stakeholders provided Gender marker: 2	4.1	4.1 Develop legislative option papers/concept notes and provide technical advice as input to discussions on legal reforms, in collaboration with Law Commission and State Law Office.	10,800	Technical support/consultancy, workshop venue	20,800	-	-	10,800.00
	4.2	4.2 Provide support to reforms of the electoral legal framework, including the integration of all direct elections in a single act.	10,800	Technical support/consultancy, workshop venue	30,800	-	-	10,800.00
	4.3	4.3 Provide support to national consultations regarding impact of legal framework changes	10,800	Technical support/consultancy, workshop venues, travel, per diems	40,800	9,750.00	9,750.00	1,050.00
	4.4	4.4 Support operationalizing the positive outcome of the legal reform process with review of all regulations, procedures, operational manuals, forms etc.	10,800	Technical support/consultancy, workshop venues, production of procedures, printing	40,800	-	-	10,800.00
	4.5	4.5 Support operationalizing the positive outcome of the possible political reform process for political parties. Development of procedures and forms for the Office of political party registrar embedded in VEO structure.	10,800	Technical support/consultancy, meetings and workshop venues	40,800	16,622.30	16,622.30	5,822.30
	4.6	4.6 Support political parties to understand and adhere to the legal framework	21,600	Technical support/consultancy, meetings and workshop venues	81,600	-	-	21,600.00
	4.7	4.7 Support development and implementation of data protection/data security policy and related legislation.	10,800	Technical support/consultancy,	20,800	10,017.38	10,017.38	782.62
	4.8	4.8 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation	110,160	National and international professional staff	395,160	20,558.93	20,558.93	89,601.07
		Project Monitoring, communication and visibility		Monitoring visits and report writing	6,000	-	0.00	0.00
Sub-Total for Output 4				0	677,560	56,949	56,949	139,611
Total All Outputs				0	3,036,760	211,879.44	211,879.44	648,880.56
5 General Management Support @ 8%					242,941	16,969.88	16,969.88	51,891.12
Total Expenditure					3,279,701	228,849.32	228,849.32	700,772
Total Expenses @2021 and @2022							1,425,570.14	
Balance as at 31st March 2022							442,860.56	
Fund Utilization Rate at at 31st March 2022 compared to Funds received so far							76%	
Fund Utilization Rate at at 31st March 2022 compared to 2022 Budget							27%	
MFAT Funds expensed under VEEP							\$ 228,849.32	
TRAC funds expensed under VEEP							\$ 15,139.33	
DFAT Funds activities for VEEP Project							\$ 23,791.42	

I declare that this financial acquittal is a true and accurate record of monies received and expended for this project.

DocuSigned by:

 C72335FE30FF4E0...
 Levan Bouadze
 Resident Representative
 UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

Date:
19/04/2022 16-May-2022

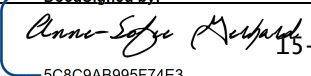
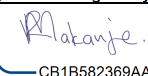


Financial Report for TRAC Funds allocated to VEEP Project as at 31st March 2022

Activity	Description	Budget	Expenses	Total	Balance
2.2	Support implementation of strategy and operations for the transitional period to ensure a smooth transfer from the current GRVS and VES databases – to the use of the National ID Card database for the production and establishment of a unique electoral roll.	10,000.00	5,298.77	5,298.77	4,701.23
2.3	Provide procurement support to the VEO in the data verification/validation of joint civil & voter data in all provinces, - procurement of equipment, material and services.	10,000.00	9,840.56	9,840.56	159.44
		20,000.00	15,139.33	15,139.33	4,860.67



PART 10: QUALITY ASSUARANCE

PROJECT MANAGER	PROGRAMME CLEARANCE
Name: Anne-Sofie Gerhard	Name: Revai Makanje Aalbaek
Title: Chief Technical Adviser & Project Manager UNDP/VEEP	Title: Team Leader – Effective Governance UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji
Signature:  15-May-2022 <small>DocuSigned by: 5C8C9AB995E74E3</small>	Signature:  15-May-2022 <small>DocuSigned by: CB1B582369AA4A2...</small>



ANNEX 1: ELECTORAL SECTOR LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Main Initiatives proposed for new Electoral Act

Introduction: The Electoral Commission (EC) has embarked on a process of strengthening the legal framework underpinning the elections in the country. For that purpose, it has created the Electoral Reform Working Group, which has proposed to replace existing electoral laws with a single electoral Act, which will regulate parliamentary, provincial government council and municipal council elections in a single harmonised law. Additionally, innovations in the electoral process have been proposed, in order to modernize the institutions and practices in Vanuatu. The purpose of this paper is to outline the main innovations proposed, in no particular order.

- 1. Strengthening independence of the Electoral Commission:** One of the guiding principles for an efficient electoral authority is “independence”. This principle relates to “independence of action”, that is, the possibility of doing the job without any undue influence from whatever source, including government, political parties, or any other source, including the international community. International practice shows that “independent” electoral bodies are more likely to generate confidence in the institutions and practices in regards to elections. While the current EC tries to conduct itself in an independent manner, the current legal provisions do not mention the “independence” of the EC. The EC/VEO is under the administrative tutelage of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and does not have its own budget that can be managed independently; in short, legally the EC does not have an administrative nor financial independence, which has often impacted negatively on the preparation and conduct of the elections. Additional issues regarding the independence of the EC are the modalities for appointment and dismissal of the electoral commissioners. The new electoral Act will try to introduce those measures that consolidate the independence of the EC.
- 2. Recognition of Provincial Electoral Officers.** Currently, there is no permanent presence in all of the Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) in the provinces. Despite the fact that presence in the provinces is not a feature present in the legal framework, lessons-learned have shown the importance of having a permanent presence of the electoral authorities in the provinces, particularly with the introduction of the new model of continuous voter registration (open all year around). There have been efforts to increase the number of permanent provincial electoral officers to all provinces, so far without success for a number of reasons (including Covid 19). But it has been recommended that this feature be included in the legal framework to guarantee its implementation.
- 3. Voter Registration:** Voter registration is one of the most important functions given to the EC, which in turn has relied on the work of the VEO to register voters. The traditional model for voter registration was to have a stand-alone voter registration conducted by the VEO. The voter register was established exclusively from the data collected by the VEO. In Vanuatu, efforts have been made targeting the efficiency, as well as the integrity, of the voter registration process. In 2017 the government decided to introduce a “national ID card” to all its citizens. At the same time, the government also decided to link the civil and voter registration database, in order to improve the quality of the voter register and build trust around it, as well as creating synergies among various government agencies. The result has been a change in concept and conduct of voter registration model in the country. The (VEO) is no longer be responsible for collecting the information for “registration of electors in the field”. Instead, the VEO is now responsible for the “establishment and maintenance of the Voter Register” relying on information (“secondary information”) originating from the Central Civil Register. Additionally, the EC/VEO are no longer issuing “electoral cards” and the “national ID card” will fulfil the necessary proof of identity and eligibility at



polling. In order to ensure the legislation is in line with the current practices, it is necessary to revise the electoral provisions.

4. Electoral lists: The current legislation provide for “electoral rolls” for each polling district. In fact, “electoral rolls” will no longer be necessary. As mentioned, a national Voter Register will be established and updated as necessary from the Civil Registry information; the VEO will allocate voters to polling stations based on the address information in the Voter Register and “electoral lists” will be prepared, for each specific polling station and will be available for public inspection before being finalised. Electoral data can be updated all year round through provincial offices or CRIM Department in Port Vila.

5. Campaign financing disclosure: Around the world, the issue of campaign financing constitutes an important element legitimizing the electoral process and its results. Vanuatu is one of only two countries in the world that have no specific regulations for political parties. It is certainly one without any kind of requirements for political party registration measures. One of the provisions widely used around the world is financial disclosure for parties and candidates, particularly during the campaign period. Once again, at the moment Vanuatu is one of the very few countries in the world without any provisions to regulate campaign financing. Monitoring and control of money in elections has become a major feature around the world to maintain the integrity and credibility of the electoral process. Despite the lack of political party regulations, and to ensure transparency, accountability and a level playing field, the new Act proposes to introduce basic campaign financing disclosure provisions to improve oversight of campaign contributions and donations, and expenditures. This is a “light” measure, as it doesn’t regulate campaign finances, but deals only with reporting of the campaign finances.

6. Electoral campaign and code of conduct. At the moment, there is no clear indication of the electoral campaign period in any of the laws. It is therefore recommended to make explicit the length of the electoral campaign period. Obligatory codes of conduct for political parties and candidates have already been approved by the EC and gazetted in 2021. Additionally, it is international good practice to have compulsory codes of conduct for political parties and candidates to comply with during the electoral campaign periods. The current EC regulation in regard to codes of conduct for parties and candidates can be relied upon until the codes of conduct are updated under the new Act.

7. Single ballot paper: The design and structure of the ballot paper used in an election has multiple impacts. Ballot paper design has an impact on two important aspects of the election process: (a) the ability of voters to understand the choices of candidates or parties running in the election and select their choice in a valid manner and (b) the accuracy of counting of votes. With the current ballot structure in Vanuatu, voters are faced with a selection of different ballot papers, each representing a different party or candidate; in this case, voters have to choose which ballot they prefer, usually sealing their choice of ballot in a ballot envelope before placing it in the ballot box. While this is a legitimate model, the ballot structures most used around the world is that of a “single ballot paper”, containing all the parties or candidates in the election, and where the voters have to indicate on the ballot paper which of these is preferred before placing the ballot in the ballot box. This modality is considered more user-friendly and much more cost-effective. The new Act proposes the use of a single ballot paper with all candidates on it for each constituency. This is a cost saving measure to move away from the current, and more cumbersome, ballot paper structure: printing of a single ballot paper will certainly result in savings to the electoral budget, among them to do away with the procurement of envelopes (one for each voter). The current “waste” of ballot papers would also be avoided as would issues in regards to different ballots being glued together, which effectively invalidates the vote. The adoption of a single ballot paper, which would do away with the need to produce a booklet of ballots per voter, would also significantly facilitate the electoral logistics, simplifying the production, distribution and retrieval of ballots. A single ballot paper would also enhance the secrecy of the vote: as there would be no ballots left over in the polling booth, the open bin next to the



ballot box or outside polling station, the secrecy of the vote would be better preserved. Transparency in the counting of the votes would also be improved. A single ballot paper will also facilitate expanded out of country and out of constituency voting.

8. By-elections: The RPA says that should there be a vacancy for a seat in the national Parliament, a by-election is required to replace that seat. The electoral authorities have long tried to have this legal provision modified, as by-elections are costly, take up a lot of time and resources that could be used more efficiently. There was a proposal in a COM paper in 2016 to allow for the runner-up of an election to take the seat of an elected member of Parliament that has passed away. The acting attorney general at the time said this was not possible, as the “electoral system includes an element of proportional representation”, (where it clearly doesn’t). Problematically, the COM paper proposed a change not only to the RPA, but also to the Constitution, which would of course require a national referendum. Many would argue that there is no need to change the Constitution, only the law, to abandon the system of by-elections, which from an administrative and financial perspective would make a lot of sense. Therefore, it is proposed that serious consideration should be given to doing away with by-elections. In their place, the EC could be given a power to declare the candidate who obtained the second highest number of votes at the last election (from same party where possible) as the candidate to fill a vacancy. This has been used in municipal council elections in the past.

9. Special measure for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Currently, there are no special measures allowed by law to facilitate the electoral participation of IDPs resulting from natural disasters (a common occurrence in Vanuatu). It is therefore proposed to introduce special measures, in terms of voter registration and polling, for IDPs resulting from natural disasters and civil disturbances within flexible, pre-determined timeframes set by the Electoral Commission.

10. Special voting (remote voting): The electoral system currently in use in Vanuatu is that of First Past the Post (FPTP) and Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) in 18 single and multiple-member constituencies. The current arrangements are adapted to the demographics of the country. These 18 constituencies are the basic “electoral unit” for the general elections and the legal framework is clear in requiring voters (and candidates) to be residents in their constituency in order to register to vote and to be nominated as candidate. Any measures significantly affecting this system in a major way could create operational and logistical issues, but limited measures could be introduced that would be beneficial and easier to control. In that context, the request to explore out-of-voting constituency involves introducing “limited”, feasible and effective measures to allow voters to vote outside their place of residence (“absentee” or “remote voting”) instead of the one assigned to them through the voter registration process. Already Vanuatu uses a modality of “absentee” voting, which is the proxy vote. But proxy is a sensitive modality, often accused of being easily manipulated and therefore it is always accompanied but various restrictions and forms of control (as is the case in Vanuatu). In that sense, it is an “exceptional” voting modality. Another common modality for out-of-constituency voting is the postal vote (as is done in Fiji). For this modality to work, there needs to be a highly efficient and trusted postal system in the country, which is not currently the case. It is also often discouraged because of its extremely high costs (born by the electoral authorities) and its often very cumbersome procedures for verification of voters. Out-of-constituency registration is already allowed within the current legal framework, but in order to increase electoral participation, it could be beneficial to examine the possibility of introducing out-of-constituency voting. As mentioned, this could be done in a limited manner, such as establishing out-of-constituency polling stations in Port Vila and Luganville; again, this arrangement could be facilitated only by the adoption of a single ballot-paper per constituency. In that context, the new Act proposes to provide limited voting measures for certain voters to cover polling outside their allocated polling stations. These are voters who are working for the election during polling day and limited out of constituency voting, including out-of-constituency polling stations in Port Vila and Luganville.



11. Out of country voting: Out-of-country voting (also called external voting, absentee voting or voting from abroad) is a modality that allows citizens of a country residing abroad to implement their right to vote. Yet many issues arise from the idea of citizens living abroad being allowed to vote. International IDEA has identified four “basic building blocks” for OCV, including: a) eligibility requirements; b) voter registration requirements; c) types of elections; and d) polling procedures. There are NO international standards for OCV. Many countries implement it (under various modalities) and many others do not. It is acknowledged that OCV enhances the citizens’ right to vote, but it is also recognized that OCV presents many procedural and operational challenges. Not least, it should be noted that many OCV modalities include only national elections, only sometimes provincial elections and almost never municipal elections. The Representation of the People Act, in its Part 4, allows for the Electoral Commission (EC) “acting on the advice of the Principal Electoral Officer given after consultation with both the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for foreign affairs, and subject to the agreement of the foreign Government concerned”, to designate one or more polling stations in a foreign country. In fact, to this day the only polling station overseas is the one in Noumea, whose votes go to a seat in the Port Vila Constituency. In the last couple of years, there have been serious discussions to add supplementary polling stations in Fiji, Australia and New Zealand (which is allowed by the current legal provisions). Given the heavy cost of OCV and the great operational challenges, it is recommended that additional OCV be implemented through an in-person voting modality only, with polling stations being set up in the corresponding consulates. However, it would be problematic to add any additional polling stations to the Port Vila constituency, without noting that such practice does contradict Part 6 of the Act (CAP 146). Regulations can be made under the new Act to expand out-of-country voting to include countries other than New Caledonia. Out-of-country votes should go to the constituencies where the out-of-country voters have been registered, for national parliamentary elections only. Finally, as in the case of out-of-constituency voting, expansion of out-of-country voting would be feasible only if a single ballot paper per constituency is adopted.

12. Electoral petitions: The current system whereby the Supreme Court determines electoral petitions for parliamentary elections will be retained. However, it is proposed that electoral petitions for provincial and municipal council elections be determined by the Magistrates Court rather than relying on election committees which is the current situation.

13. Constituencies: There are to be national constituencies, provincial constituencies and municipal constituencies (wards) as is the current situation. However, it is proposed that the Electoral Commission be given the power to determine the provincial and municipal constituencies. Currently, the Minister has this power. The President will continue to determine national constituencies on the advice of the Electoral Commission.

14. Expanded electoral offences: The new Act plans to provide for the expansion of electoral offences and higher penalties for electoral offences. A major vacuum in the RPA is that no penalties are established for committing electoral offences leaving little “teeth” to the authorities to enforce their mandate in that regard. It is therefore proposed that the new Act introduce increased penalties for an expanded range of electoral offences.

15. Regulations to provide for electoral procedural and operational details: An attribution of the EC is to come up with its own regulations. Despite the adoption in 2021 of 16 EC regulations, in the past these regulations have been few and far between, not least because of the overly detailed nature of the legal texts, which define operational procedures that normally can (and should be) determined by regulations, allowing more flexibility and suppleness to the electoral administration. Pertinent examples of issues that can be solved through EC regulations are the 3-month residency requirements for registration and the development of specific, separate procedures for the nomination of political party nominees and



independent candidates. Regulations under existing electoral laws will be revoked following a transitional period and replaced by new regulations under the new electoral Act. The new regulations will provide for electoral procedural and operational details rather than overloading the new Act with such details.

16. Special temporary measures for women's voting: It is a known fact that the Pacific region is an area of the world with the lowest representation of women in elected posts. Thus, the discussion regarding the introduction of temporary special measures (TSM) for women for different types of elections is appropriate. Given that social and political contexts around the world do not favor the election of women and therefore hamper women's representation in elected bodies, many states have adopted the use of TSM. TSM are a set of positive or proactive affirmative action measures to narrow gender disparities and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender quotas represent one type of TSM related to a country's electoral system that is intended to promote women's representation in elected bodies.

Despite the fact that Vanuatu ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1995, the idea of enforcing legal measures that are meant to benefit women's representation is still controversial in the country. Critics argue that the preferential treatment that measures such as quotas given to women is undemocratic and unfair towards men. Ni-Vanuatu lawmakers and politicians, who often want to uphold the status quo, feel that such treatment gives women a free pass, regardless of their qualifications. Nevertheless, the introduction of TSM has proven successful in many places. In Vanuatu, when discussions were held regarding the political reform process in 2016, the possibility of introducing TSM was quickly abandoned, as there was clearly no political support.

Nevertheless, TSMs have been introduced for the municipal elections, with a 30% quota for women in Port Vila and Luganville municipal councils, with good results. It seems the political mood might be changing regarding TSM and it is therefore worthwhile to put the issue at the discussion table. While majoritarian systems (such as FPTP and SNTV) are not ideal for the introduction of TSM, it is still possible, particularly in multiple member constituencies, with the use of reserved seats. It is recommended that, in the new electoral Act, reserved seats for women that apply in municipal council elections be expanded so as to apply in parliamentary and provincial elections in certain multiple member constituencies e.g., multiple member constituencies with 3 or more members. Some provinces may not benefit from such a measure e.g., Torba and further consideration will be required for such provinces.

Port Vila, March 2022



ANNEX 2 – MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS (SUPER MINISTRY)

Ministry of Internal Affairs Departments, Units, Commissions & Agencies





ANNEX 3: STAKEHOLDER MAP

GoV Bodies & Agencies	GoV Ministries	Private Sector	UN Agencies	Development Partners	
Parliament	Ministry of Prime Minister	Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce & Industry	UNDP	MFAT	
Council of Ministers & DCO	Ministry of Finance & Economic Management		UNICEF	DFAT - GfG - APTC	
Courts & Judicial Services Commission			UN Women	European Union - GIZ - Council of Europe	
DSPPAC - Sector Analysts - ACU - M&E Unit - RTI	Ministry of Education		UNFPA	British Embassy	
OPSC & PSC	Ministry of Health		IOM	Embassy of France	
GRT	Ministry of Lands		WHO	Embassy of Japan - JICA	
Vanuatu National Statistics Office	Ministry of Agriculture		FAO	Peoples Republic of China	
DoWA	Ministry of Trade - VFIPA		NGO/CSO Sector	UNOSAT/UNITAR	SPC
VFSC	Ministry of Climate Change - NDMO			UNCDF	Asian Development Bank
Stale Law Office	Ministry of Foreign Affairs			ILO	World Bank
LRC	Ministry of Youth & Sport				PIANZEA
TRBR	Ministry of Trade	Vanuatu Christian Council		MSG	
OGCIO	Ministry of Fisheries & Maritime Affairs	Vanuatu Skills Partnership		A-WEB	
RBV - FIU					