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Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate
Fund's Approach to Indigenous Peoples

GREEN CLIMATE FUND
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION UNIT

Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Approach to Indigenous Peoples

COUNTRY CASE STUDY REPORT: VANUATU

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Accredited entity
APR	Annual performance report
CIS	Climate information services
DWSSP	Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning
EE	Executing entity
FP	Funding proposal
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GRM	Grievance redress mechanism
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
MoCC	Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management
MoFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
NAB	National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
NDA	National Designated Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TK	Traditional knowledge
VCCRP	FP184 – Vanuatu community-based climate resilience project

A. INTRODUCTION

This evaluation aims to objectively assess the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) performance in implementing its Indigenous Peoples Policy throughout its different stages.

The Indigenous Peoples Policy (hereafter referred to as “the Policy” or “IPs Policy”) aims to provide a framework that ensures GCF activities are designed and carried out with full respect for the dignity, human rights, and cultural uniqueness of IPs, ensuring that they:

- benefit from GCF activities and projects in a culturally appropriate manner.
- do not suffer harm or adverse effects from the design and implementation of GCF-financed activities.

The evaluation examines the impact of implementing the Policy in GCF-funded activities involving IPs. This case study focuses on how the Policy was applied in Vanuatu. Vanuatu was chosen due to the number, size and significance of GCF-funded projects in the country that involve IPs.

This country case study report for Vanuatu is based on a desk review of key documents, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders. These interviews and discussions were conducted during a country mission, which included site visit to GCF activities. The mission team comprised Genta Konci from the GCF IEU and Touasi Abel Kalsaria, independent consultant. The report was co-written by Sanchita Bakshi, International Institute for Environment and Development.

Appendix 1 provides a full list of interviewees.

The remainder of this section summarizes the GCF's collaboration with Vanuatu, covering the number of projects and beneficiaries, total investment, and key entities involved.

Section B outlines Vanuatu's Indigenous population and the government's recognition of IPs, including their institutional status, relevant laws and regulations, and participation in climate change efforts.

Together, these sections establish the foundation for a deeper analysis of the GCF's engagement with IPs in Vanuatu.

GCF IPS-RELATED PORTFOLIO IN VANUATU

As a small island developing state, Vanuatu's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is well documented. The United Nations preliminary Multidimensional Vulnerability Index identifies Vanuatu as one of the most climate-vulnerable states, placing it among the nations most at risk from environmental hazards (Behlert and others, 2020).

At the time of conducting the evaluation, the GCF's investment in Vanuatu amounted to USD 96.5 million. The Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management (MoCC) serves as the National Designated Authority (NDA), providing broad strategic oversight of the GCF's activities in the country. The Ministry's Director General is the primary contact, while its Strategic Manager and Project Development Officer are the two operational focal points.

There are four active GCF projects in Vanuatu: one multi-country and three exclusive to Vanuatu. All these initiatives focus on climate adaptation. Additionally, Vanuatu has had 10 readiness projects. Details of Vanuatu's NDA, projects, funding and readiness activities are provided by Green Climate Fund (n.d.).

This report examines the three country projects that are exclusive to Vanuatu. These are:

- **FP035 – Climate Information Services for Resilient Development Planning in Vanuatu (Van-CIS-RDP)** – The accredited entity (AE) for this project is the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Government of Vanuatu through the Vanuatu Meteorological and Geohazard Department.
- **FP191 – Enhancing Adaptation and Community Resilience by Improving Water Security in Vanuatu** – The Pacific Community is the AE for this project.
- **FP184 – Vanuatu community-based climate resilience project (VCCRP)** – The AE for this project is Save the Children, with two co-executing entities: Save the Children Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Ministry of Climate Change.

FP035, a category C project,¹ is the most mature activity in the GCF portfolio. It started in 2018 and, at the time of finalizing the IPs Policy evaluation, had disbursed almost 66 per cent of its funding and was expected to conclude in 2024. The project is geared to achieve a paradigm shift to standardize the use of science-based climate information, establishing a critical foundation for raising awareness and supporting long-term policy planning to address climate change.

The project expands the use of climate information services (CIS) in five targeted sectors: tourism, agriculture, infrastructure, water management and fisheries. Specific project goals include building technical capacity to harness and manage climate data, developing and fostering the use of practical CIS tools, and disseminating tailored climate information. GCF funding contributes to a greater understanding of climate patterns over time to ensure relevant and accurate data inform adaptation planning and policy implementation. Although the majority of Vanuatu's population is considered Indigenous, the project proposal does not include specific provisions for IPs. However, the project places significant emphasis on traditional knowledge (TK) to support climate resilience, including developing a TK climate database by the executing entity (EE), the Vanuatu Meteorological and Geo-hazard Department. The proposal also emphasizes enhancing TK, expanding its application and integrating it with climate information science. Additionally, it mentions the development of knowledge products and their translation into local languages.

FP191, a category B project, commenced in September 2023 and is scheduled to run for five years, concluding in September 2028. According to the latest estimate from Portfolio Performance Management System, 34 per cent of the project's finances have been disbursed. The project addresses the challenge of water sanitation services and water resource management, as well as significant damages to water infrastructure caused by increasing flooding. Its objective is to create safe, climate-resilient, and sustainable water use and improve water security in local communities. As the majority of people in Vanuatu are Indigenous, the project does explicitly reference Indigenous communities. However, it acknowledges the importance of incorporating TK in designing the Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning (DWSSP) guidelines. The DWSSP is a process that engages the community in identifying and discussing threats to safe water and developing appropriate strategies to address them effectively. These community-driven strategies inform the National Implementation Plan for safe and secure drinking water. The project further proposes the development of DWSSPs by integrating the latest climate science, local information, and TK.

¹The GCF defines the environmental and social risks of projects according to three categories: category A for significant and irreversible risks, category B for limited, site-specific, and reversible risks manageable with mitigation, and category C for minimal or no risks or impacts (Green Climate Fund, 2019).

FP184, a category C project, commenced in October 2022 and is expected to conclude in October 2028. To date, 31 per cent of the project's funding has been disbursed. FP184 aims to support highly vulnerable rural communities and increase their resilience to climate change. Specifically, FP184 focuses on improving the livelihoods of small holder farmers and fishermen through training in sustainable climate-resilient agriculture and coastal resource management. It also provides local level access to climate information and early warning systems. Other activities include establishing local disaster risk reduction committees and protecting and restoring 11,600 hectares of agricultural and fisheries sites directly benefiting over 90,000 people and indirectly supporting an additional 1,10,000 individuals.

B. IPS IN VANUATU: VANUATU AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Vanuatu is an archipelago in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, made up of 83 islands. It is a linguistically diverse country with over 100 local languages and dialects spoken. The three official languages of the island country are English, French and Bislama (an English-based Melanesian pidgin). The total population of Vanuatu is estimated to be around 300,019 (Vanuatu, Bureau of Statistics, 2020), with an overwhelming 78 per cent living in rural areas (Vanuatu, Bureau of Statistics, n.d.-a). However, the urban population is growing and is concentrated in Vanuatu's two main centres, Luganville and Port Vila (Vanuatu, National Statistics Office, 2021).

The Vanuatu IPs, known as ni-Vanuatu, are predominantly Melanesian and constitute 98 per cent of the country's population. While the majority of the country's population is Melanesian, some outlying islands have Polynesian communities. Vanuatu also has several small minority groups, including Europeans, Micronesians, Chinese, and Vietnamese (Šerić, 2023). Religiously, nearly 94 per cent of the population identifies as Christian, followed by 4.1 per cent adhering to Indigenous religions (Šerić, 2023).

Vanuatu's legal and cultural framework strongly safeguards the land rights of its Indigenous population, particularly those of ni-Vanuatu ancestry, reflecting the centrality of land to IPs' identities, traditions, and livelihoods. The highest recognition is enshrined in article 73 of the Constitution, which establishes that all land in the Republic "belongs to the indigenous custom owners and their descendants" (Vanuatu, 2006).

The Constitution further underscores the importance of customary laws as the basis for land-use and ownership in article 74. This is complemented by article 75, which ensures that only Indigenous citizens who acquire land in accordance with recognized customary tenure systems can hold perpetual ownership. While customary land can be transferred among ni-Vanuatu individuals if permitted by their traditions, transfers to non-Indigenous people and foreigners are prohibited, with leasing being the only permissible form of land-use for non-citizens (Corrin and Young, 2019).

Additionally, the Constitution authorizes the Parliament the power to legislate laws related to land. However, this must be done in consultation with the National Council of Chiefs, or "Malvatumauri", to ensure that any land-related legislation aligns with traditional customs, as outlined in article 76 (Vanuatu, 2006).

The historical context of Vanuatu reveals long-standing issues with land governance. Since independence in 1980, land leases have often been approved by authorities without the consent of customary owners, undermining Indigenous land rights (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). The 2014 constitutional amendments and subsequent legislations, including the Land Reform Act 2013 and Custom Land Management Act 2013, have aimed to address these challenges. The introduced reforms are intended to recognize customary institutions and formalize

the Malvatumauri's advisory role in parliamentary decisions on land laws (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). Crucially, these reforms have established a more transparent and democratic process for land leasing, ensuring that leases are granted over customary land only with the landowners' free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) (Allens and Linklaters, n.d.).

The importance of the Indigenous population in shaping Vanuatu's sustainable development pathway is also articulated in its National Sustainable Development Plan (Vanuatu, Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, 2016). Also known as the Vanuatu 2030 or the People's Plan, it sets the course for the country's development from 2016 to 2030. The plan recognizes the importance of TK, customs and culture in Vanuatu's sustainable development (Vanuatu, Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, 2016). Specifically, it recognizes that the country's natural assets, inherited by its people, form the foundation of its cultural identity and must be preserved.

The National Sustainable Development Plan strongly emphasizes sustainable resource management that draws on Indigenous knowledge systems, which have historically guided the use of Vanuatu's land, forests and marine ecosystems. The traditional practices are seen as essential for achieving environmental sustainability and resilience. Further, the plan promotes active community involvement in both climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction initiatives, recognizing the important role that Indigenous communities play in safeguarding Vanuatu's future (Vanuatu, Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, 2016).

Vanuatu's governance structure supports a decentralized system, promoting active citizen participation. The Decentralization Act of 2013 was designed to strengthen local governance by transferring administrative authority from the central government to local bodies. Specifically, the move aimed to improve service delivery, enhance community participation, and strengthen governance at the provincial and municipal levels, especially in rural and remote regions. The Act established provincial councils responsible for overseeing local governance and regional development. The subsequent Decentralization Policy 2017–2027 advanced these efforts, ensuring the government was more accessible to the people and empowering citizens to participate more directly in decision-making and public service delivery (United Nations, 2019).

The Decentralization Act of 2013 and the Municipalities Act of 2013 also form part of the broader framework of laws establishing provisions for decentralized governance in the context of disaster reduction and climate adaptation. These acts have enabled a more localized approach to governance by transferring administrative authority from the central government to provincial councils, area councils and municipalities. This approach also aligns with Vanuatu's broader strategy for climate resilience, as outlined in the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction 2022–2030.

The National Policy mandates the establishment of disaster committees at the area council level, which are tasked with developing community-based disaster risk management plans and ensuring that climate change adaptation efforts are tailored to local needs. These committees are integral to ensuring that climate action is not solely top-down driven but is also rooted in the realities of local communities, thus enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of resilience efforts.

Moreover, Vanuatu has institutionalized climate governance by establishing the National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB), which supervises all climate change and disaster risk reduction activities. The NAB ensures that national policies, including the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction 2022–2030, are effectively implemented and that Vanuatu's climate adaptation strategies align with local needs and international commitments.

The NAB also coordinates with various stakeholders, including government ministries, provincial councils, municipalities and area councils. Additionally, the NAB also supports Vanuatu's NDA. The NAB's capacity was significantly enhanced through previous GCF readiness support, which focused on developing a standard operating procedure for project approval and monitoring (Green Climate Fund, 2023). This initiative has bolstered the NAB's ability to review and recommend funding proposals (FPs) to the GCF Board, ensuring all projects align with Vanuatu's national climate strategies and the GCF investment criteria (Vanuatu, National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, 2017a). This process ensures that GCF funding is directed towards projects that advance Vanuatu's long-term climate resilience goals.

C. KEY FINDINGS

1. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement across the three GCF projects in Vanuatu varies. FP191 benefits from strong institutional frameworks and active community involvement, particularly through water committees. FP035 faces challenges stemming from inconsistent engagement, especially in South Santo, where continuous communication has been insufficient. FP184 has shown active participation, particularly in disaster preparedness, but could benefit from more inclusive engagement. While all projects involve diverse stakeholders, more consistent and inclusive communication is essential to successful implementation.

In Vanuatu, the Decentralization Act 230 establishes a governance framework involving the national government, provincial government and area councils. The Act facilitates the transfer of governance and administrative functions from the national government to the provincial and local levels, fostering a more participatory approach to governance. Empowering local communities to actively shape development processes ensures their voices are heard, and their needs are addressed. This framework also serves as the foundation for stakeholder engagement nationwide.

The evaluation of the IPs Policy revealed significant variations in stakeholder consultation across the three projects. In FP035, women in the South Santo Community reported that they were not consulted regarding establishing community climate centres. However, they were aware of a weather hub within the South Santo Area Council Office. They explained that frequent changes in the Area Administrator role led to inconsistent communication with the community, with the current administrator frequently away in nearby Luganville rather than engaging at the area council level. The Provincial Agriculture Officer confirmed that the previous administrator, who was more familiar with the centre, was no longer in the role, and the resulting lack of engagement has diminished access to weather information.

The men in South Santo also expressed concerns that the climate maps distributed by the project were island-specific and did not accurately reflect their local conditions. This concern was also corroborated by a local government official, who emphasized the need for more stakeholder consultation in designing the maps, noting that the maps' rainfall predictions did not always align with the extremely sunny conditions experienced by farmers.

In FP191, the governance structure for water management is clearly outlined in the Water Resources Management (Amendment) Act No. 32 of 2016, as operationalized in the Vanuatu National Water Strategy 2018–2030, which enables communities to establish local water committees. Officials in the Department of Water say these committees have submitted requests for support and capacity-building. Contractors involved in the project also acknowledged the vital role of the water

committees, not only in providing cultural and technical knowledge for the installation of drainage systems but also in resolving community disputes to ensure the project's progress.

In FP184, the community reported minimal engagement, with only one community workshop and training session held so far. On the positive side the establishing the Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees work has progressed. Women indicated that this was their first time being involved in such committees, often due to their partners' seasonal work abroad (mostly in Australia and New Zealand). Men emphasized the importance of cyclone preparedness and recounted personal experiences of food shortages following past disasters. Both women and men expressed concern over the decline of traditional food preservation methods and planting techniques, noting that the project's support had helped preserve these practices.

In summary, stakeholder engagement varies significantly across three projects. FP191 benefits from well-established institutional arrangements for water management, ensuring active community involvement. In contrast, FP035 faces challenges due to insufficient continuous engagement, particularly with vulnerable communities during the project's implementation phase. FP184 shows more promising community involvement, with both men and women actively participating in the project's activities, especially around food security and disaster preparedness. Importantly, feedback from national stakeholders indicated that regional AEs may lack a clear understanding of community needs. To address this, proper scoping should be conducted before project design, directly involving communities and ensuring the project is built around their needs.

2. RELEVANCE

The IPs Policy requires greater clarity and contextual adaptation for effective implementation in Vanuatu, where the majority of the population identifies as Indigenous. Interviewees indicated that the Policy's categorization of IPs into subgroups was artificial and inconsistent with local realities, as evidenced by discrepancies in funding proposals for FP184 and FP191. Despite being implemented in similar regions and approved within a year of each other, the two projects diverge in their recognition of IPs. FP184 does not explicitly identify IPs as project beneficiaries, whereas FP191 positions IPs as the primary beneficiaries, albeit using terms like "communities" and "beneficiaries" interchangeably with "Indigenous peoples" in its concept notes, FPs, and annual performance reports (APRs). This inconsistent terminology reflects a lack of clarity and uniformity in the interpretation and application of the Policy, potentially jeopardizing the alignment of project benefits and safeguards with IPs' rights.

Similar inconsistencies were noted regarding FPIC. In Vanuatu, where Indigenous and local communities are often regarded as synonymous, alternative mechanisms such as memorandums of understanding and consent letters are used for stakeholder engagement and community consultations. These mechanisms partially fulfil the intended purpose of FPIC. However, interviews with civil society organizations revealed that FPIC processes were conducted in some communities but not others, highlighting inconsistencies in application and the critical importance of FPIC for these communities. The NDA also highlighted FPIC's relevance for community participation as a foundational monitoring and evaluation component, as it establishes a baseline for project activities. Despite its recognized value, AEs have struggled to fully integrate FPIC and the government's role in ensuring its consistent application has been limited.

Further, the evaluation team highlighted **concerns regarding the practical application of the IPs Policy in small island developing States, which requires tailored interpretations aligned with local realities.** The Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility working group was cited as an example of good practice. The Facility developed a shared approach for managing environmental and social

risks specific to the Pacific. It recognizes the predominantly Indigenous population in the Pacific and prioritizes integrating their perspectives across project processes, avoiding the need for additional administrative layers such as stand-alone Indigenous Peoples plans or frameworks.

Instead of isolating IPs' engagement into discrete components, the shared approach incorporates these perspectives into a broader stakeholder and community engagement framework. This methodology ensures IPs' concerns are embedded throughout the project cycle – from project identification and preparation to detailed design, construction and operations – enhancing safeguards' relevance and effectiveness. Interviewees noted that the IPs Policy could benefit from a more flexible and context-sensitive interpretation that aligns with existing regional practices.

Regarding project level relevance, FP035 is the most mature project in the region. It has made substantial progress in strengthening CIS across key sectors in Vanuatu, demonstrating relevance at the national and provincial levels. However, certain gaps in stakeholder consultation and localized implementation – such as mismatched climate tools – were highlighted during interviews. In contrast, FP184 and FP191 show stronger alignment with local priorities, addressing vulnerabilities more effectively at the community level.

The FP035 project addresses the integration of CIS across five key sectors in Vanuatu: tourism, agriculture, fisheries, water and infrastructure. The project's objectives include strengthening Vanuatu's technical capacity to manage and utilize climate data, developing practical tools and resources tailored to these sectors, and enhancing the infrastructure needed to effectively deliver climate information. The project emphasizes applying real-time climate data in decision-making processes to promote resilience while supporting national, provincial and community outreach activities. These efforts are complemented by establishing climate change community centres and engaging citizen science to supplement data-collection and improve spatial mapping (Green Climate Fund, 2016).

The project has made notable progress in various sectors and is relevant to the local community. However, some concerns were noted. In the fisheries sector, five ocean buoys have been deployed to monitor ocean temperatures, with the data used to develop community management plans and public awareness sessions (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, 2024). During Public Service Day² in 2024, a Fisheries Officer raised awareness about the project at a school in Luganville. He showed students the location of the ocean buoys using a large aerial photograph that indicated where these ocean buoys were deployed around Santo. He highlighted how the information collected supports climate and disaster preparedness, showcasing the practical application of these tools in empowering local communities.

Land agreements have been finalized in the water sector, and infrastructure such as groundwater loggers and river gauges have been installed and operational. Data-collection is conducted manually and semi-automatically, with plans to integrate real-time telemetry capabilities. Work on developing a flood management plan and early warning systems is under way, alongside training events designed to benefit local stakeholders.

In agriculture, demonstration plots have been maintained, and climate data is used to adjust farming practices and produce monthly Agro-Met Bulletins. Public engagement during events like Public Service Day has demonstrated the role of these bulletins in preparing for natural disasters, including selecting crop varieties that are resilient to extreme weather conditions. The Agriculture Research

² Public Service Day showcases the services of each government department, providing an opportunity for schools, the public and communities to engage with civil servants and seek information about their work.

Training Centre has emerged as a hub for innovation, enabling farmers to adapt to climate challenges effectively.

The infrastructure sector has also seen advancements, with a consultant reviewing the Vanuatu Road Design Guide and the procurement of a drone equipped with light detection and ranging technology. The training and certification of drone pilots have improved climate risk analysis.

The project claims to integrate TK into CIS to enhance the relevance of these tools for diverse communities. However, gaps have been identified at the ground level. In South Santo, several men interviewed noted that the project's climate maps were not particularly useful for their needs. According to the community leader, these maps are typically island-specific and have failed to capture the unique conditions of the area council.

The Provincial Agriculture Officer further highlighted that the climate maps were developed with insufficient stakeholder consultation. For instance, the maps for Santo Island provided general information about seasonal rainfall, but farmers who used this data for crop planning found it inaccurate. While the maps predicted rainy conditions, the area experienced extended periods of intense sun. This discrepancy underscored the need to develop more localized and stakeholder-informed climate tools to effectively address community needs.

In FP191, the Provincial Water Officer noted that the Water Security Project has been responsive to community needs. Water committees have effectively communicated issues to the Department of Water, enabling interventions to be identified based on community concerns. However, a gap often exists between the needs raised and the available funds to address them, limiting the programme's overall impact.

FP184 focuses on food preservation, a critical priority for vulnerable communities preparing for cyclone seasons. The adaptation techniques introduced by the project have proven beneficial, especially for women on disaster committees, who stated during interviews that their training had better equipped them for future disasters. Following the twin cyclones of 2023, they expressed their determination to prevent similar consequences in the future.

This strong community engagement was especially noted in the Maliliu Community on the island of Nguna, one of 29 area councils. Disaster Committee Members discussed how they have developed an action plan following a workshop held earlier in 2023. A female committee member highlighted that their action plan included diverse activities, such as planting vetiver grass for erosion control and land stabilization, particularly in areas prone to strong winds and heavy rains. Other activities included reviving yam plantations to establish a food basket for the community, ensuring greater food security.

Across the three programmes, FP184 and FP191 stand out for their relevance to the communities, with interventions directly addressing their needs. In contrast, FP035 has shown a disconnect between national or provincial-level interventions and the expectations of vulnerable communities at the area council level. While the activities are relevant at higher levels, communities have not expressed the same confidence in their effectiveness.

3. EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

FP035, FP191 and FP184 demonstrate progress in addressing climate resilience and community needs. However, challenges in timely implementation and institutional capacity have limited their efficiency and effectiveness.

A common issue across the three projects is delays in implementation, indicating the need to strengthen institutional systems and resources to address bottlenecks and improve project delivery.

Vanuatu's experience with GCF projects has underscored the importance of increasing national ownership of project implementation processes. In response, the government has prioritized securing accreditation for a national institution, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MoFEM), through assistance from the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme. The Government of Vanuatu recognizes that securing accreditation is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery (Green Climate Fund, 2023). The Global Green Growth Institute has supported this accreditation effort by recruiting two key officers: one positioned within the NAB Secretariat as a Climate Finance Officer and another embedded in the MoFEM. These officers play important roles in advancing the accreditation process, which has required significant capacity-building and institutional strengthening.

At the same time, the evaluation of the IPs Policy noted that the Ministry of Climate Change and the MoFEM have been actively enhancing their capacity and infrastructure to support this effort. MoCC has sought support from development partners to fund their Climate Finance Adviser, who is currently supporting the development of a loss and damage policy framework. Meanwhile, the MoFEM is working to institutionalize climate finance management by creating a dedicated climate finance unit to oversee and streamline these efforts.

Despite these efforts, several challenges have hindered the efficiency and effectiveness of GCF projects in Vanuatu. Staff turnover has caused delays in implementation, as noted in FP035's APR 2022, which emphasizes the project's multidisciplinary approach and financial sustainability but also highlights the need for continuous training and capacity-building to address the high staff turnover. Furthermore, coordination with community activities remains inadequate, with FP184 and FP035 failing to build effectively on previously established community structures. Interviewed stakeholders pointed out inefficiencies in requiring separate reports on environmental and social safeguards for various climate finance institutions, including the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund and the GCF. Despite having similar requirements, this duplication underscores the need for greater alignment across these funding agencies to reduce administrative burdens.

Certain stakeholders raised concerns about effectiveness, including the GCF's investment-heavy approach, which risks implementing interventions that may not align with community needs. The evaluation team identified several discrepancies supporting these concerns, including inaccuracies in beneficiary numbers, misreporting of community centres involved in projects, improper costing of community engagement, and activities failing to address barriers to participation, particularly for women and geographically isolated communities. Additionally, project designs have often overlooked compensating communities for their time, inadvertently interrupting income-generating activities or affecting wellbeing.

Some AEs also expressed frustration with GCF's "compliance heavy processes", where up to 70 per cent of efforts have been focused on documentation rather than implementation. Despite their proven track records, AEs also perceived a lack of trust and confidence from the GCF. Encouragingly, newer projects such as FP191 have shown a clear intention to foster greater participation and empowerment of vulnerable groups, incorporating community needs more explicitly in project design following the adoption of the IPs Policy.

4. COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

Country ownership in Vanuatu is demonstrated through a multi-layered governance structure involving the NAB on climate change and disaster risk reduction and the Provincial Advisory Technical Committees, and area councils that include diverse community representatives. Projects such as FP191 and FP184 have mechanisms to engage vulnerable groups and enhance

ownership at the community level. However, challenges persist, including capacity constraints, infrastructure gaps, and the sustainability of project-driven roles. FP035 also encounters challenges, as it lacks active community-level engagement, which limits overall project ownership.

In Vanuatu, country ownership is understood as meaningful consultation, building local project support and fostering multi-stakeholder engagement. It is demonstrated through its governance framework, which operates across three levels. At the **national level**, the NAB on climate change and disaster risk reduction plays a central role in approving climate change and disaster risk reduction programmes and ensures the inclusion of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and community-based organizations. The NAB also mandates monthly reporting on project progress and endorses programmes with climate or disaster-related components. At the **provincial level**, Advisory Technical Committees provide oversight and coordination for project implementation. At the **community level**, area councils, led by chiefs, include representatives from youth, women, disability groups, church organizations and traditional governance systems. This structure provides a robust and accessible platform for local engagement and representation.

Regarding specific projects, the IPs Policy evaluation team found that reviewed projects were relying on government structures, such as provincial governments and area councils, to facilitate community engagement and activities. Projects also use government forms and templates for community engagement, including consent forms and memorandums of understanding. Additionally, current projects adhere to government policies regarding land disputes and relocation, managed exclusively by the government.

Interviewees noted that FP035 operates through a steering committee comprising the Directors General of six ministries and a technical committee made up of ministry directors. However, the absence of a formal committee at the community level limits direct engagement with vulnerable groups.

In contrast, FP19 is establishing a project steering committee to oversee implementation, while water committees at the community level provide a platform where vulnerable groups can raise concerns and contribute to decisions, fostering ownership across the different levels.

FP184 includes a steering committee of government directors and technical officials, while area council officers serve as liaisons and implementers. These officers play a significant role in empowering vulnerable groups by ensuring their voices are heard and their concerns addressed. Community disaster committees further enhance participation, laying a strong foundation for community involvement.

It is also worth noting that all three projects are embedded within the country's Climate Change Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2022-2030, which provides the policy framework for climate change and investment in Vanuatu. The APR 2022 for FP035 explicitly highlights this connection.

Interviews with stakeholders across the three projects noted the importance of effectively using existing domestic governance systems to support community-level project engagement.

However, despite these efforts and established governance frameworks, Vanuatu faces challenges related to country ownership. Interviewees observed that provincial and area councils often lack the necessary resources and skills to sustain project activities. For instance, officers recruited at the area council level, such as in FP184, are employed only for the project's duration, with their roles and activities often ceasing once the project ends. Similarly, community climate centres established under FP035 in South Santo have faced capacity issues, with officers unable to continue due to resource constraints. These instances highlight weak institutional capacity and a lack of sufficient resources, both of which can threaten the long-term ownership of these projects.

5. ACCESS

Accessing GCF resources in Vanuatu has been hindered by significant delays and inefficiencies, largely due to the absence of in-country AEs and limited understanding of GCF processes among stakeholders. Additional challenges, such as prolonged fund disbursement timelines, cumbersome communication channels have further hampered project implementation.

The NAB Secretariat, under the office of the Director General for the Ministry of Climate Change, serves as GCF's designated Secretariat and mandated to facilitate communication on behalf of the government and project with GCF.

The AE for FP035 is SPREP, based in Samoa. While SPREP has appointed and stationed a Project Manager at the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Office within the MoCC, the project's operational structure has caused inefficiencies. Interviewees pointed out that communication between the in-country project team and the GCF must pass through SPREP in Samoa, often resulting in delays. For example, discrepancies in fund requests require multiple levels of communication, creating a cumbersome and time-consuming process. Interviewees noted that these challenges were further aggravated during the COVID-19 pandemic and a cyberattack on Vanuatu's government finance system, which left the project team unable to access funds during critical periods.

FP191, approved by the GCF Board in October 2022, has also experienced implementation delays, with progress taking nearly two years. It was not until well into 2024 that the AE, Pacific Community, began establishing project accounts within Vanuatu's government finance system to reflect finances in the Department of Strategic Planning. Accessing updates and information from the NAB Secretariat or the GCF has been reported as particularly difficult during this time.

Similarly, FP184, led by Save the Children Australia as the AE, has encountered prolonged delays in fund disbursement. Now in its second year, the project has yet to receive funds, significantly hindering implementation efforts. Save the Children Vanuatu and the Department of Climate Change, which manage the Vanuatu Project Management Unit, have struggled with these delays, negatively impacting implementation partners and vulnerable groups. Training and capacity-building activities have been postponed, further disrupting project timelines.

The delays in fund disbursement are mainly attributed to the complex communication processes involving Save the Children Australia as the AE, Save the Children Vanuatu as the EE and the Government of Vanuatu as the co-EE, compounded by the cyberattack on the government system. Additionally, the two category 4 tropical cyclones that struck Vanuatu in February 2023, tropical cyclones Judy and Kevin, further disrupted the project shortly after its inception. During this period, key government departments in Vanuatu were focused on disaster response, exacerbating delays to project implementation (Green Climate Fund, 2023).

The absence of AEs based in Vanuatu has been a recurring issue for FP035 and FP184. This has resulted in delays in fund disbursement and slowed project implementation. During interviews, stakeholders expressed concerns about the NAB Secretariat's capacity to provide efficient communication for navigating GCF processes. While the NAB Secretariat claims to maintain regular communication, stakeholders at the project level noted that this has not been evident. Additionally, consultations revealed a general lack of understanding of GCF processes among stakeholders, including project teams and community members, further contributing to inefficiencies.

Finally, local NGOs working in communities have expressed interest in pursuing GCF accreditation. There appears to be a consensus that more funds must reach communities through mechanisms designed to address community needs. Interviewees also highlighted other potential mechanisms, such as small grant arrangements, to ensure funds are effectively channelled to the community level.

6. GENDER

Integrating gender considerations in GCF-funded projects in Vanuatu faces significant challenges due to deeply rooted societal norms and structural barriers. Efforts have been made, such as recruiting a Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Adviser in FP184 and developing a gender policy in FP035. However, gender inclusion remains inconsistent, with women frequently feeling excluded or undervalued in project activities and decision-making processes. Cultural dynamics, including excluding women from leadership roles and decision-making bodies, further hinder their meaningful participation.

The GCF's gender policy and IPs Policy both emphasize equal participation of women and men. In Vanuatu, the national gender policy focuses on mainstreaming gender equality, addressing violence against women and promoting economic empowerment. The country also has a dedicated Department of Women's Affairs responsible for coordinating gender actions and programmes in line with international, regional, and national regulations. Despite these frameworks, integrating gender considerations into GCF-funded projects in Vanuatu continues to face significant societal and structural challenges.

In FP035, while the project has developed a gender assessment and a gender action plan, integrating these into community-level activities remains challenging due to societal norms and resistance to change. The APR highlights the need to improve awareness and implementation of the GEDSI plan, with project staff requesting training to better understand and apply it. Furthermore, the GEDSI plans have not been aligned with existing national frameworks. Interviewees noted that, although discussions for a second phase of the project are ongoing, the GEDSI plan developed for FP035 has served as a framework for broader adoption by the NAB to enhance gender integration across programmes.

A GEDSI Adviser has been recruited for FP184 to implement gender-inclusive approaches. However, gender inclusion remains poorly understood and inconsistently applied. Women interviewed during the project highlighted feelings of tokenism, noting that their participation seemed more of a procedural formality rather than meaningful engagement. Instances of exclusion and undervaluation of women's contributions were also reported, with some women noting that training and community disaster committees predominantly catered to men.

Cultural norms further exacerbate these challenges, with decision-making bodies in communities often excluding women entirely. This societal dynamic was evident in interviews, where respondents acknowledged the absence of women in key decision-making roles, including community meetings and national parliament. These findings are consistent with other research, which illustrates how deeply ni-Vanuatu women's lives are shaped by gendered structural inequalities that restrict their access to leadership, decision-making and culturally significant spaces like *nakamals*³ (Alston, Fuller and Kwarney, 2023).

Implementation challenges were also linked to disaster preparedness training, which women predominantly attend. Interviews with women at the community level revealed that men often

³ A *nakamal* is a traditional gathering place at the heart of village life, where communities come together for important discussions and decision-making.

perceive these sessions as irrelevant or prioritize other paid activities, leaving women to take on these responsibilities. Women participants noted that the absence of financial compensation for their time and participation further limits their ability to engage equitably in community and project activities. Women, particularly those with disabilities, face additional barriers, including the financial burden of hiring caretakers to accompany them to training sessions.

7. INNOVATION

Interviewees noted that leveraging Vanuatu's rich cultural heritage and TK systems can significantly enhance project innovation and community resilience. While initiatives like the “Talking Dictionary” and FP035’s “Climate Watch App” demonstrate the potential of integrating Indigenous practices and TKs with modern tools, there are concerns about sustainability and long-term ownership of these tools to ensure the innovations continue to benefit vulnerable communities.

Interviews with key stakeholders indicated the importance of leveraging existing institutional networks, such as the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (Vanuatu Cultural Centre), to enhance GCF project implementation. The centre’s field officers and extensive cultural network ensure that programmes align with established cultural protocols. With its deep understanding of cultural values across the archipelago, the centre has developed effective protocols for integrating TK into modern initiatives. During interviews, representatives advocating Indigenous values and biodiversity management emphasized that Vanuatu's rich cultural identity is foundational and offers significant potential to address the challenges faced by the country’s Indigenous communities. They noted that weather pattern forecasting and the transmission of skills have been practised for centuries and are critical for building resilience. It was suggested that trusting and using cultural practices is key to addressing climate challenges effectively.

An example of blending TK with modern tools is the “Talking Dictionary” (Vanuatu, Department of Forestry, n.d.-b), developed through a partnership between the Department of Forestry, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the New York Botanical Garden. This initiative, which documents endangered languages and preserves TK, has strengthened community resilience while supporting biodiversity conservation. Such efforts illustrate the creative potential of integrating cultural heritage into resilience strategies.

FP035 has showcased innovation by developing a Climate Watch App (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, 2023a), the first in the Pacific. The app promotes citizen science by accelerating the collection of TK and monitoring data from across the country. The app exemplifies collaborative innovation, developed in a partnership between Earthwatch Australia, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, and the Climate and Oceans Support Programme in the Pacific. However, concerns have emerged regarding its sustainability, including secure data storage and ensuring long-term community ownership of the tools and knowledge it generates.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of GCF projects in Vanuatu relies on effectively integrating tools and resources into local governance structures and ensuring their long-term ownership by national departments. While initiatives like FP035 and FP184 have introduced valuable tools such as community climate centres and the Vanuatu Climate Future Portal, their success hinges on stronger community engagement, clearer communication and formal endorsement by the NAB.

Sustainability in GCF projects is understood as ensuring Indigenous communities continue to benefit from interventions long after their completion. This interpretation aligns with the principle of FPIC, as articulated in the IPs Policy, which empowers vulnerable communities to participate in decision-making processes, fostering ownership and ensuring that the interventions provide long-term benefits.

Regarding FP035, interviewees noted the development of several tools, such as the Vanuatu National Traditional Knowledge Indicator Booklet (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, 2023b), the Vanuatu Rural Road Design Guide (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, 2017), community climate centres (Pacific Climate Change Portal, 2021), and the Vanuatu Climate Future Portal (Vanuatu, National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, n.d.). However, community engagement during the development of these tools was limited, a shortcoming attributed to poor communication and insufficient awareness-raising. For these tools to be sustainable, interviewees recommended that they be developed by the community and integrated into its daily practices. This approach will require stronger community participation and continued support. Recognizing the importance of sustaining the developed programmes and tools, the FP035 project team has initiated discussions for a second phase. They are also partnering with Human Capacity Development International, a Vanuatu-based NGO, and other local civil society organizations to collect TK data and bolster the citizen science programme to further support the project's sustainability.

In FP184, the programme aims to use the model of community climate centres to deliver climate information, a key element in ensuring sustainability. It was noted that centres need to be better integrated into the governance structures of area councils, as occurs in Tanna and South Santo, with area administrations taking responsibility for their long-term operation. Establishing community climate disaster committees and training their members to use tools like the Climate Futures Portal are vital to the programme's continued success.

Some respondents emphasized that for tools and programmes to be sustainable, they require ownership and sustained engagement from national departments. In the long term, government departments need to assume responsibility for overseeing the implementation, monitoring and training to ensure these programmes remain active. As one interviewee noted, if tools and resources remain unused and stored without being put into practice, their development serves no purpose.

Interviewees consider the NAB's recognition of various tools and programmes essential to national climate adaptation efforts. Such recognition will facilitate smoother implementation, maximize clarity, and secure support. Furthermore, these tools require commitment from respective government departments to ensure that future projects do not bypass capacity-building efforts, leading to a fragmented and inefficient approach to climate resilience.

Some respondents noted that sustainability requires robust and continuous communication with vulnerable communities. These communities must understand the tools and programmes being implemented and recognize their value in strengthening climate change resilience. Without such engagement, these resources may be underutilized or misapplied, compromising their long-term effectiveness.

9. UNINTENDED EFFECTS

During the implementation of FP035, inadequate documentation and coordination during community consultations led to unintended conflicts among local chiefs in West Coast Santo regarding land-use for project activities. The resulting community unrest highlighted the

importance of maintaining detailed records of agreements and ensuring project teams are fully informed before initiating further consultations or activities.

As part of FP035's initial implementation phase, community consultations were held in West Coast Santo to inform local communities about the project activities. In one of these consultations, a chief from the community agreed to allow his land to be used for a project activity. However, the project team did not formally document this agreement.

When the project team returned to the community to establish an automatic weather station at Lajmoli Airport in Northwest Santo, they failed to review the initial community consultation report. As a result, they mistakenly initiated discussions with a different community chief. This oversight led to conflict when the first chief, who had originally agreed to the project, expressed his displeasure by placing a *namele* leaf (*cycas frond*) on the newly proposed site – a traditional symbol signifying a land dispute and halting any activity in the area.

The project team had to immediately pause discussions and escalate the issue to the project manager in Port Vila. Upon investigation, it was confirmed that the first chief had given initial consent for the project. As a result, the team had to mediate and reconcile the disagreement between the two chiefs. While the unrest was unintended, the incident caused temporary tensions within the community and highlighted the importance of thorough documentation and internal coordination. This experience also underscored a critical lesson for the project team, that is the need to maintain meticulous record-keeping of consultation agreements and ensure all team members are fully informed before engaging in further community consultations and project implementation.

10. GRIEVANCE REDRESS

A robust grievance redress mechanism (GRM) is essential for addressing community concerns during project implementation. While FP035 and FP184 incorporated ad hoc and culturally grounded approaches – such as traditional conflict resolution methods and grievance boxes – these methods lacked formal documentation or tracking systems.

The IPs Policy defines a GRM as a structured process that enables IPs to raise concerns related to project implementation. In FP035, the project team adopted culturally appropriate methods to address grievances. For instance, when the chief, who had previously agreed to host an automatic weather station on his land, raised a dispute by placing a *namele* leaf on the site, the team followed a customary resolution process. This involved engaging a Ministry officer from the community to mediate and presenting a traditional peace offering (a mat) to request the removal of the *namele* leaf. Additionally, the project team posted monthly bulletins on community notice boards, including contact numbers for raising concerns. However, no formal documentation or tracking system was in place to record issues raised or their resolution.

In FP184, a grievance box was used as part of community consultations. Community members were informed they could anonymously raise concerns by placing notes in the box. However, similar to FP035, there was no systematic approach to record or escalate grievances formally.

In contrast, the evaluation team observed an effective GRM in practice at the office of NGO Live and Learn Environmental Education Vanuatu. The NGO employs trained officers who systematically document and address grievances. This structured approach has fostered trust between project teams and communities, enabling timely resolution of issues and maintaining transparency.

11. REDD+ INTEGRATION

While the projects do not have extensive deforestation activities, with FP184 focusing on secondary forest clearing and FP191 not engaging in large-scale clearing, concerns persist regarding the lack of effective mechanisms for vulnerable communities to report potential environmental harm, particularly regarding the destruction of primary forests. This gap highlights the need to strengthen the capacity of area councils to gather and respond to community concerns, ensuring that local voices are heard and environmental impacts are adequately monitored and addressed.

Regarding FP035, the evaluation team noted that land clearing was needed to establish a Weather Radar system. The customary owner of the land was compensated in accordance with the Customary Land Management Act of Vanuatu. Additionally, an environmental and social safeguard plan was prepared, and an environmental impact assessment was conducted with the AE's involvement to ensure compliance and mitigate potential impacts.

For FP184 and FP191, extensive deforestation is not a component of project activities. Any large-scale clearing that may arise would require an environmental permit to proceed. Importantly, FP184 focuses on supporting communities to implement resilient agricultural practices, which may involve clearing secondary forests rather than primary ones. While this poses less environmental concern, it is crucial to ensure that vulnerable communities are properly informed and aware of these activities and their potential implications.

A notable gap in FP184 and FP191 is the lack of mechanisms for vulnerable communities to raise concerns about activities they perceive as harmful to primary forests. Establishing such mechanisms is essential for transparency and accountability. Strengthening the capacity of area councils to gather and respond to this information is a necessary step towards ensuring effective environmental governance and community engagement.

12. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Overall, all three projects in Vanuatu incorporate TK but face significant challenges in using and integrating it. Community structures and TK custodians are often underutilized, with no clear provision for the transmission or conservation of TK. Despite GCF Policy encouraging the integration of TK, AEs often abandon it due to the pressure of providing scientific validation in FPs.

Each evaluated project integrates TK into its activities, primarily through catalogues, brochures and documentation collected during community meetings (FP035 and FP191). However, key issues emerge regarding the depth of engagement with TK custodians and community structures, which appear underutilized, particularly in FP035. Concerns were also raised about whether communities are adequately consulted and informed about using their TK, indicating potential gaps in ethical considerations and participatory processes.

The absence of explicit provisions for transmitting and conserving TK within project designs highlights a missed opportunity to sustain these knowledge systems over time. Community members emphasized that numerous traditional solutions remain untapped in current adaptation efforts, revealing a disconnect between local practices and project implementation. Additionally, traditional values surrounding land, Indigenous knowledge and cultural factors are insufficiently embedded in the design of GCF-funded projects. This omission risks undermining the cultural relevance and sustainability of these initiatives.

Interviewees identified a notable gap in using TK within the climate rationale of FPs. While GCF policies encourage incorporating TK as part of the adaptation rationale, AEs reported that GCF reviewers often demanded supplementary scientific evidence to validate TK. This requirement discouraged AEs from fully integrating TK, leading some to abandon it altogether in favour of scientifically validated data. This practice contradicts the IPs Policy's intent to value TK as a critical component of climate resilience, ultimately limiting its inclusion and diminishing its potential contributions to project outcomes.

D. LESSONS LEARNED

Stakeholder engagement

Strong institutional frameworks, like those in FP191, facilitate effective stakeholder involvement, while weak or inconsistent local governance (FP035) hampers engagement and project outcomes. AEs can strengthen local governance by supporting area administrators and other local roles with capacity-building initiatives. The lack of consultation has led to misaligned project outputs, such as inaccurate climate maps in FP035 and insufficient training in FP184. AEs could consider integrating robust scoping and participatory design phases into project workflows to address this. Additionally, project tools and outputs such as maps should undergo a regular review with stakeholder input to ensure they remain relevant and accurate.

Relevance

A tailored interpretation of the IPs Policy is critical for small island developing States like Vanuatu. A flexible, context-sensitive approach is needed to align the IPs Policy with established regional practices, such as the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility's integrated framework. This approach should emphasize embedding IPs' perspectives across project stages rather than isolating them in stand-alone documents.

Given the inconsistent implementation of FPIC in the country, GCF should consider developing standardized FPIC protocols tailored to local contexts. FPIC could play a stronger role if integrated as a core component of the monitoring and evaluation frameworks for all GCF projects in Vanuatu.

Efficiency and effectiveness

Delays in project implementation, driven by capacity constraints, high staff turnover and a lack of nationally based AEs, highlight the need for ongoing technical assistance to support accreditation efforts. This support would build national ownership and reduce dependence on external entities.

AEs need to leverage existing community structures and establish clear coordination mechanisms between project teams and community representatives to ensure alignment and avoid redundancies.

Stakeholders have called on the GCF to ease administrative burdens by simplifying compliance procedures. Additionally, GCF should, where possible, advocate for harmonization of reporting requirements across climate finance institutions. Better congruence would streamline processes and reduce documentation burdens for AEs.

Country ownership

AEs need to ensure the continuity of project-specific roles by embedding them within government structures, thereby improving capacities at the subnational level across all projects.

AEs need to develop exit strategies that transfer skills and responsibilities to local governance structures, fostering the long-term sustainability of the country's projects.

Access

The GCF should consider providing targeted support to fast-track the MoFEM's accreditation process, ensuring in-country access to GCF funds.

The GCF should consider introducing mechanisms such as small grant arrangements to channel funds directly to IPs' organizations, bypassing complex accreditation layers.

Gender

AEs should ensure that gender action plans are developed and actively integrated into community-level activities. This could include more consistent gender training for staff and stronger community engagement to overcome societal resistance.

AEs should increase financial compensation for women's participation in project activities to improve equity in engagement, particularly for disabled women.

Innovation

Positive outcomes are achieved when AEs actively collaborate with local cultural institutions like the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, which deeply understands cultural values across the archipelago and has established effective protocols for integrating TK into modern initiatives.

Sustainability

AEs need to prioritize the long-term sustainability of innovative tools by prioritizing community ownership and management alongside the secure storage and protection of data.

AEs need to foster stronger collaboration with national departments to ensure that the capacity for implementing tools, monitoring, and training is sustained beyond the project phase.

Unintended effects

AEs need to ensure that all community agreements, including consent for land-use, are formally documented. This will reduce the risk of misunderstandings and conflicts.

Grievance redress

AEs should expand culturally appropriate mechanisms to include formal documentation and tracking, ensuring that grievances are addressed promptly and transparently.

REDD++ integration

The GCF should establish formal mechanisms for vulnerable communities to report environmental concerns, especially those related to the destruction of primary forests, alongside building the capacity of area councils to gather and respond to these concerns.

The GCF should ensure all project activities, including land clearing and deforestation, comply with national and international environmental standards, supported by robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Traditional knowledge

The GCF should ensure that TK custodians and community structures are actively engaged in designing and implementing projects by providing clear provisions for transmitting and conserving TK within project frameworks.

The GCF should consider revising its approach to TK to ensure it is valued on its own merits without requiring scientific validation.

The GCF should clarify its policies to encourage the integration of TK as a critical component of resilience-building efforts in Vanuatu.

Appendix 1. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

FULL NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION
Abraham Nasak	Acting Director, General of the Ministry of Climate Change Director, National Disaster Management Office	Ministry of Climate Change National Designated Authority to GCF
Antoine Ravo	Director of Agriculture	Department of Agriculture
Arian Toka	Project Team	Global Green Growth Institute
Corey Huber	Project Team	Global Green Growth Institute
Dirk Snyman	Climate Finance Coordinator	South Pacific Community
Dr. Kara Medina		South Pacific Community
Erickson Sammy	Director Water Resources	Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Florence Iautu	National Advisory Board Manager	Ministry of Climate Change
Gaston Theophile	SHEFA Provincial Water Supervisor	Department of Water Resources
Glarinda Andre	Program Team Leader	Live and Learn Environmental Education Vanuatu
Hon. Mr. Ralph Regenvanu	Member	Parliament
Jesse Benjamin	CEO	Utilities Regulatory Authority
Julia Marango	National Advisory Board Project Officer	National Designated Authority to GCF
Louise Nasak	Project Manager	Save the Children Australia/ Save the Children Vanuatu
Mohammed Ali Shaikh	Project Team	Global Green Growth Institute
Moriah Yerta	Project Coordinator	Vanuatu Climate Information Services for Resilient Development Project
Nelson Kalo	Acting Director	Department of Climate Change Ministry of Climate Change
Osborne Melenamu	Project Team	Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC)
Sarah James	Advisor to the Director	Department of Agriculture
Serge Warakar	Deputy Program Leader	Live and Learn Environmental Education Vanuatu
Sunny Seuseu	Program Manager, VANKRIP Project	The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP)
Taman Tatu	VCCRP Community Officer	Nguna Pele Area Council
Tony Kaltong Luke	Project Team	Global Green Growth Institute
Focus group 8 (6)	Members	Nguna Pele Area Council

FULL NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION
women [1 disability], 2 men)		Community of Maliliu Community Disaster Committees VCCRP project site
Focus group 9 (5 women, 4 men)	Community members	Nakere South Santo Area Council Nakere Village, VANKRIP project site

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