

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project: Phase II

Background

Vanuatu gained independence on 30 July 1980 and adopted a Westminster style parliamentary political system. Since then, the country has organized parliamentary elections regularly using a mixture of Single Non-Transferable Vote system in multi-member constituencies and First-Past-the-Post system in single-member districts.

In response to an official request in 2016 from the Government of Vanuatu to the United Nations (UN) for assistance, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) launched the Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP) with the project document signed in 2017. Phase I of VEEP ran from 2017 to 2020 with assistance primarily focused on preparations for the 2020 General Elections. Phase II was signed in December 2020 and runs from 2021 to 2024.

The project includes substantial assistance to the Voter Register, reinforcing its integrity through the link between the Voter Register and the Civil Register; and undertaking joint civil and voter registration on all the islands of Vanuatu. This led to VEEP providing critical support to broaden the reach of the National Identity Card, establishing access to legal identity for citizens of Vanuatu for the first time. With VEEP assistance, the voter registration model was modified from direct registration by the electoral authorities, to establishment of the Register by the Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) based on secondary information received from Civil Registry. Additionally, the electoral card previously issued by VEO is now being phased out, and national ID cards will be the document required for electoral purposes.

The National ID Card is proving to be an essential tool for authorities, which has significantly increased the number of the project's beneficiaries, including several government agencies as they respond to crises like the



Project Overview

- **Project duration:** 2021-2024
- **Project location:** Vanuatu nation-wide
- **Total Budget:** US\$3,815,640
- **Funds:** Government of New Zealand and UNDP
- **Partnership:** Government of the Republic of Vanuatu; Electoral Commission; Vanuatu Electoral Office; Civil Registry and Identity Management Department; Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO); Ministry of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Education & Training; Ministry of Health, Ministry of Youth & Sport; local civil society organizations; Pacific Island Forum; the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG); PIANZEA; UNESCAP; UNOSAT/UNITAR; UNICEF; UNDESA; WHO; and IOM.

COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters such as cyclones. The Civil Registry now has the most accurate data on population including global positioning system (GPS) coordinates of all villages, reconciled village datasets and linked data. Ministries, non-government organisations, private sectors, and donor agencies now benefit from this innovation by UNDP and Civil Registry.

Benefits include making use of citizen data and their unique identification numbers, a central civil register with high level of data accuracy resulting in aligned systems and professional operations, ensuring all citizens have equitable access to critical services and benefits such as stimulus packages, education, health care and electoral participation. This data is also helping Government use technology to quickly onboard people to digital services. Ultimately, the most important beneficiary is the people of Vanuatu who can now benefit in several ways from the use of a reliable national ID card system to improve their quality of living.

What we do

VEEP Phase II aims to continue contributing to democratic development in Vanuatu. Furthering the objective to strengthen the capacity of Vanuatu electoral authorities and consolidate the independence of the Electoral Commission, VEEP II continues its support of far-reaching electoral reform plans. This includes the harmonization of the electoral legal framework and introducing modern measures that will help strengthen the credibility of the electoral processes. VEEP supports broad public outreach efforts to build citizen and voter awareness, as well as provide tools and products for longer-term civic education and school curriculum material. In addition, VEEP II is also supporting a raft of additional, related, fundamental and comprehensive reforms: the restructuring of the Civil Registry, introducing identity management and legal reforms; the

introduction and dissemination of the National ID Card; the development of a new integrated identity system database and data protection reforms; building Vanuatu's population register and encouragement of equitable access to electoral inclusion through a People with Disability (PWD) Action Plan.

In addition, the project is supporting the Ministry of Internal Affairs with its 2022-2026 restructuring and Corporate Plan to enhance sustainability, capacity building, reporting and resourcing outcomes, as well as development of the Ministry's Sector Strategy 2022-2026.

The Project Outputs

Output 1: Institutional capacities of the Electoral Authorities strengthened

Output 2: Integrity and accuracy of the Voter Register enhanced

Output 3: Ability to conduct Voter Education and raise public awareness strengthened

Output 4: Legal Electoral Framework improved and capacity building on Electoral Reform to key stakeholders provided



SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels

Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.

Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.

Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.

Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

VEEP in the broader picture

The project falls directly under the UN Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018-2022:

Outcome 5: Governance and Community Engagement - By 2022, people and communities in the Pacific will contribute to and benefit from inclusive, informed, and transparent decision-making processes; support to accountable and responsive institutions; and assistance to improving access to justice.

Outcome 2: Gender Equality: By 2022, gender equality is advanced in the Pacific, where more women and girls

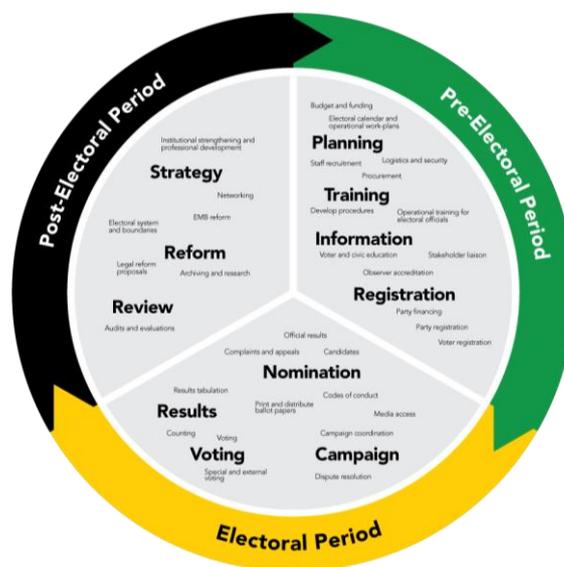
are empowered and enjoy equal opportunities and treatment in social, economic, and political spheres, contribute to and benefit from national development and live a life free from violence and discrimination.

The Project falls directly under the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025 and responds to 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. VEEP also responds to the UNPS 2018-2022 and pays specific attention to Output 3.3: More women and men benefit from strengthened governance systems for equitable service delivery including access to justice.

Despite some progress to gender mainstreaming, the Pacific remains one of the regions in the world with challenging conditions to promote women's participation and equality. VEEP maintains a clear and explicit gender mainstreaming approach in all activities.

Project Implementation Strategy

The project follows the electoral cycle approach as its overall strategy. The project is delivered through a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), which is the standard of United Nations electoral assistance. This approach looks at the electoral process over time and seeks to engage with different actors and entry points throughout the cycle, rather than channelling substantial resources and technical support uniquely towards the delivery of a given electoral event.



Who we are

The project is implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji through a small project team based in the Vanuatu Electoral Office in Port Vila, headed by a Chief Technical Advisor/Project Manager, supported by a couple of assistants and punctual international expertise as required.

Contact information:

Anne-Sofie Gerhard
Chief Technical Advisor and Project Manager

Tel: (+678) 7387268
Email: anne-sofie.gerhard@undp.org

