

Activity Progress Report: 2022
UNDP/Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP)

Summary

Activity information

Activity Title	Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP) Phase II
Goal	<p>Meeting citizens expectations for voice, development, the rule of law and accountability through stronger systems of democratic institutions.</p> <p>Outcome 5: Governance and Community Engagement- 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.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Gender Equality: 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.</p>
Intended outcomes	<p>Output 1: Institutional Capacities of the Electoral Authorities Strengthened;</p> <p>Output 2: Integrity and Accuracy of the Voter Register Enhanced;</p> <p>Output 3: Ability to Conduct Voter Education and Raise Public Awareness strengthened;</p> <p>Output 4: Legal Electoral Framework Improved and Capacity Building on Electoral Reform to Key Stakeholders provided.</p>

Contract or grant information

Start and end dates	Start Date: 01/01/2021 – End Date: 30/06/2024
Total cost	US\$ 3,815,640 (NZ funding: 5,000,000 NZD equal to approx. 3,400,000 USD)
Reporting period	01/01/2022 – 30/12/2022

Progress report preparation

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Others involved or consulted	UNDP/VEEP team, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, Electoral Commission, Vanuatu Electoral Office, Civil Registry and Identity Management Department.
Date of report	31/01/2023



Caption: Carrying ballot boxes in heavy rain across a flooded creek in Pentecost, finally arriving at the designated isolated Polling Station to ensure equal participation in Snap parliamentary elections. Source: "The Daily Post" Vanuatu Issue 6622 Thursday 13th October 2022



Caption: A young voter makes his mark by voting at the new Beverly Hills Polling Station. Providing the specialised indelible ink was a major logistics challenge but a key integrity measure in the context of unreliable voter lists. The electoral ink was timely delivered despite very truncated timeline through strong regional cooperations between the Fiji Electoral Office, Vanuatu Electoral Office and UNDP. Back up solutions were drawn up in collaboration with Electoral Commissions in PNG and Nauru

Executive Summary (1-3 pages)

Highlight the most significant achievements (or difference made) during the period indicating this Activity's contribution to achievements.

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.

Following are most significant achievements of the project during 2022:

Output 1: Institutional capacities of the electoral authorities strengthened

- VEEP Project supported Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) and Electoral Commission (EC) to credibly and successfully conduct the snap election within an extremely truncated timeline on 13th October 2022.. The election resulted in a peaceful transition to a new government without any delays ensuring smooth functioning of the democratic process in the country. The project also supported the EC/VEO in conducting Port Vila Municipal Council elections in May and presidential elections in July 2022.
- VEEP project focussed on strengthening institutions and processes to embed sustainability. The project supported restructuring plans of the Electoral Commission, Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO), Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) Department and Corporate Services Unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. These are aimed at ensuring stronger central office administration, coordination and dedicated staffing in each province to improve services to the public. The project also supported the authorities with development of business continuity plans, communication trees and safe re-opening of offices protocols during COVID-19 crisis.

Output 2: Integrity and accuracy of the voter register enhanced

- VEEP Project supported the CRIM department in establishment and rollout of a comprehensive electronic foundational identity management system which will result in the first ever accurate and reliable voter register for Vanuatu, mitigating multiple voting and electoral fraud.
- By mid-October 2022, 301,970 of Vanuatu's UN projected population of 323,959, or 93.3% of Vanuatu's population was issued with National ID Cards. These cards are now being used regularly for opening bank accounts, RSE Labour Mobility qualification, purchasing air and sea travel, police clearances, receipt of unblocked cash for disaster response, medical records and COVID19 vaccination program, MoE registration of children, and for voting.

Output 3: Ability to conduct voter education and raise public awareness strengthened

- The project continued significant support to Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) to undertake civic and voter education across the country and specially around the election time. The VEEP Project supported VEO in establishment and functioning of the Voter Awareness Committee and supported its outreach activities. The project supported voter awareness through national radio VBTC, commercial radio (Buzz FM shows), TV, Facebook messages, website, newspaper, billboards, video productions, and efforts through the Voter Awareness Committee partners in the islands.
- VEO and provincial offices completed the production of a documentary film telling the story of civil registration and establishment of legal identities in Vanuatu.

- A large number of NGOs/CSOs regional national and international bodies were engaged in design of an inclusion strategy to promote the participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Briefings were conducted for these stakeholders on gender initiatives and on-going electoral reform.
- A comprehensive package of civic education materials for use in schools was developed which included a Teachers Manual, Student's Workbook and textbook. These will be distributed in boxed sets to 27 senior secondary schools from term 1, 2023 in English, French and Bislama.
- The project supported the Ministry of Internal Affairs with its 2022-2026 restructuring and Corporate Plan development to enhance sustainability, capacity building, reporting and resourcing outcomes, as well as development of the Ministry's Nasara Sector Strategy 2022-2026. Anticipatory governance and planning framework was used to develop the Sector Strategy. Based on the traditional Nasara approach, the strategy is essentially a proactive risk mitigation tool against climate disasters resulting in breakdown of essential citizen services.

Output 4: Legal electoral framework improved and capacity building on electoral reform to key stakeholders provided

- The Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) Act and the National Identity Act were passed and gazetted in January 2022 with the technical assistance from VEEP project. Accompanied by corresponding regulations, the two bills paved the way for the digital transformation of Vanuatu's civil registration system.
- The VEEP project has provided technical assistance to EC and VEO in drafting of two new bills to improve the electoral legal framework. These include the Single Harmonised Electoral Bill and the Political Party Integrity Bill. The bills are expected to be passed in 2023. Once passed these bills will go a long way in ensuring political sustainability and effective functioning of the electoral and democratic processes in the country.

Highlight any specific lessons learned

A key lesson learned is the importance of collaboration and consultation to build collegial relationships of trust and respect, a process deeply entrenched in the custom and culture of Vanuatu.

The reporting period saw the events of political instability (snap elections), climate vulnerability and pandemic related challenges. However, the important learning was incorporation of flexibility and adaptability in the programming, which enabled the continuous and effective functioning of the project.

Summarise key issues and challenges addressed.

Following is a summary of key issues and challenges, which had implications for the implementation of the project. These were overcome through the adaptive, flexible and anticipatory approach used by the project team.

a) Lock Down – COVID 19 Community Transmission

The Government of Vanuatu announced complete lockdown on 5th March 2022 with COVID 19 community transmission. This caused considerable operational constraints to the functioning of the VEEP Project. By responding flexibly, utilising virtual platforms, and by contracting technical expertise identified and available locally, the VEEP Project maintained momentum and achieved all its output deliverables.

VEEP also supported the development of EC/VEO and CRIM's Business Continuity Plans, as well as Protocols for the safe re-opening of offices. The CRIM Business Continuity Plan and Protocols were recognised as a GoV benchmark.

b) *Snap General Election*

On 18th August, the President of Vanuatu dissolved the Parliament and snap elections were called for 13th October 2022 – instead of the planned May 2024 GE. This caused the project to redirect technical assistance to support the Electoral Commission and Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) to fulfil their constitutional mandate within a very short span of time.

The VEEP Project demonstrated significant amount of flexibility and adaptability to respond to new political and electoral context. MFAT agreed that the allocated budget could be used and that MFAT would bring forward budget support for some of these critical expenditure items.

With the extremely tight time frame, logistical issues were a significant challenge. Vanuatu is a "Y-shaped" archipelago of over 83 islands stretching over a vast area. Printing of electoral manuals/awareness materials, procurement of critical electoral supplies, accreditation and briefing of international and domestic observers, and logistical planning support for an electoral operational plan were requested by MoIA/GoV.

c) *Hacking of GOV System*

In early November, an unknown group hacked the entire GoV system for ransom. GoV refused to pay the millions of US\$ reportedly demanded. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) moved to try to recover files and Department Databases such as the civil register and the voter register.

It had been planned that the data migration from the old CRIM RV4 database to the new RV5 database would take place in November/December 2022 and accordingly VEEP had prepared the technical transfer and training of CRIM staff and Data Validation Officers (DVOs). The hack compromised this activity so focus remained on the RV5 Database refinement and development of automated biometric duplication analysis engine.

d) *Budget Constraints:*

The schedule of payments were initially not aligned with the project budgets as per the VEEP Project Document. 2022 therefore saw financial constraints on cash flow to maintain support for upscaled data validation field work (although this was mostly funded by UNDP in support of digital transformation), national COVID19 lockdown support as of 5th March and then the unexpected snap General Election requiring a number of integrity measures.

Discussions with MFAT saw agreement to provide some support for Data Validation Officer contracts to progress validation of Electoral Lists (NZ\$25,000) and to advance the 2023 budget to support the 2022 unexpected Snap election.



<p>Caption (Left to Right): Anne–Sofie Gerhard, Chief Technical Advisor and Project Manager UNDP/VEEP; Hon Minister Willie Ben Kalo; Cherol Ala Ianna, Director General Ministry of Internal Affairs and Her Excellency New Zealand High Commissioner, Nicola Simmonds at the launching event of the Ministry’s Corporate Plan 2022-26.</p>	<p>Caption Nasara Sector strategy 2022-2026 launch with DG, then Hon Minister Ishmael Kalsakau (now PM), GoV DGs and wide representation of Development Partners.</p>
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Evidence links:

[Future-Fitting the Ministry of Internal Affairs in its new Corporate Plan | News | dailypost.vu](#)

Virtual Nasara | News | dailypost.vu

[Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Sector Strategy reflects Roi Mata’s Nasara approach | News | dailypost.vu](#)

Nasara Sector Strategy, short documentary

<https://youtu.be/snWFeEbVGFY>

1. Key Actions Planned or Underway

The following is an analysis against the Project's Outputs of key actions planned or already underway as a result of issues identified in this assessment. Issues relevant to transition/exit were provided in 2020. A further analysis will be provided early 2024.

Output 1:

- Support Electoral Commission (EC) restructuring preparation that awaits approval of the Single Harmonized Electoral Bill to establish the EC as an independent entity;
- Support full implementation of the Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) restructure with staffing and budget increases;
- Support the restructuring of the Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) Department, including the creation of Provincial Services Unit, Identity Management Unit, and Civil Registration Unit, changes to templates, development of regulations and procedures, and updating of training materials;
- Support the implementation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) Corporate Plan and Nasara Sector Strategy, with support from UNDP on anticipatory planning and graphic design of Ministerial banners and printing of Sector Strategy documents;
- Support annual revision of GoV Budget Book 3 for budget and reporting integration of EC, VEO, and CRIM;
- Continue to support VEO and CRIM in building their provincial offices with procurement of a "provincial package" aligned with GoVs decentralisation policy;
- Support training and election preparations, including development of refresher training, updating training materials, and planning and logistics for upcoming elections.
- Six foresight briefs developed for the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Output 2:

- Support the establishment of a new voter register based on unique National ID numbers
- Migration of data from three legacy systems to new integrated ID system, RV5
- Develop a mobile service for voter verification
- Create an e-ID application and e-voting features
- Mobile applications will be created to de-materialize the ID card, making it fully digital.
- Develop system to pilot e-voting for Out-of-Country voters
- Increase automatic linkages between voter registry/population registry systems
- Continue development and integration of biometric duplication analysis software
- Support the creation of a Vanuatu Population Register
- Procure new integrated mobile workstations
- Support staff training on procedures and new legal frameworks
- Continue to support data integration and data interoperability
- Support data center in data validation, verification, and cleaning
- Migrate cleaned data into the new identity management system
- Development of Citizens Portal for self-service and citizens access to GoV services based on National ID
- Produce polling station voter lists based on National ID numbers, for public scrutiny
- Prepare digital voter lists

- Develop Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) with telecommunications providers
- Support the development of SOPs for all CRIM and VEO processes
- Support development of EC/VEO and CRIM IT infrastructure and cloud server backup solution
- Create an Electoral Results Management System

Output 3:

- Continue supporting the Voter Awareness Committee to coordinate stakeholders and disseminate information;
- Develop a VEO Communications Strategy to complement MoIA Communications Strategy;
- Raise voter and electoral awareness through various channels, such as radio, TV, social media, etc;
- Provide voter and candidate education materials, including “My Election Week by Week” booklets;
- Update training materials and provide refresher training for voter identification and counting in polling stations;
- Validate and implement the Election Logistics Standard Operating Procedure;
- Conduct a six-province awareness campaign, including an “Open Democracy Day” panel activity;
- Participate in Electoral Reform Working Group and transition to using National ID cards for voting;
- Consolidate People with Disabilities Action Plan;
- Development of comprehensive Gender Action Plan to encourage women's political participation;
- Launch a comprehensive National ID and e-ID awareness campaign;
- Translate and publish Civic Education materials for secondary schools in all three official languages;
- Set up an information booth at “Open Democracy Day” at Parliament;
- Update the VEO website as a news feed and repository of information on electoral processes;
- Support CRIM branding, CRIM website development and social media presence;
- Development of Social Media guidelines;
- Submit regular media articles to local outlets to improve awareness of EC/VEO and CRIM initiatives.

Output 4:

- Arrange a 2023 rolling program (Road Show) of provincial workshops on electoral reforms, covering topics such as changes in ballot structure, out-of-country and out-of-constituency voting, campaign finance, voter registration transition to the new model, and temporary special measures/reserved seats for women;
- Provide support to legal drafting in collaboration with the Office of Attorney Generals (OAG) on revising EC regulations to align with the new legislation and the development of political party registration regulations and procedures;
- Development of Political Party & Candidates database;
- Support the completion of CRIM Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and VEO SOPs for extracting voter lists from the civil register and allocating voters to polling stations;
- Develop a CRIM Administrative Handbook and Operational Guidelines;
- Continue to support the working group on Data Protection and Data Privacy Legislation;
- Support piloting of e-KYC with the Asian Development Bank and CRIM Department, based on national ID and RV5.

2. Review of Progress to Date

Effectiveness

- 1) **Assess the progress of this Activity against the intended outputs and outcomes defined in the Results Framework by annotating the Results Measurement Table with data and explanation of any variance**

The VEEP Project Document Results Framework includes output indicators directly linked to institutional capacity, reform measures etc. and also provides for the regular collection of data and monitoring in relation to strengthened national capacity. Targets and results for 2022 as outlined in signed project document are as follows:

- 2) **Assess the effectiveness of this Activity by considering the following:**
 - a) **Progress in delivering outputs. Consider (if appropriate) quality, relevance, timeliness of outputs and whether the Activity is reaching the intended people.**

The project has been able to draw on global expertise from the UNDP global expert roster to provide timely and quality advice and assistance to progress and upscale in delivering project outputs. The project has thus under each of the outputs been able to respond in a timely and efficient manner to the needs of the EC/VEO, as well as CRIM Department as identified under the project document, as well as responding in a timely manner to the additional requests for additional support in line with the changes in electoral and political context. Being based within the Vanuatu Electoral office and fully embedded in local structures also means that the VEEP team is on hand to provide immediate technical advice to the offices when needed.

Reach of intended people through Outreach Programs and Working Groups are combined with traditional vehicles of communication such as press, radio, posters, pamphlets, community meetings and awareness workshops. Global trends in communication and outreach have included a new VEO website, supported by two newly appointed full time ICT Website Officer and VEO Voter Information and Outreach Officer. Both of these officers have been supported by VEEP project with capacity building through mentoring.

However, more innovative strategies have also been utilised to expand the VEO's reach and embed practices for sustainability such as the Voter Awareness Committee whose members include EC/VEO and CRIM Officers but also the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs, Vanuatu Council of Churches (VCC), media groups, Transparency International (Vanuatu), women rights groups, disability groups, and community-based NGOs.

Four Working Groups contribute significantly to awareness:

- I. *the Electoral Reform Working Group* to review, harmonise and modernise pertinent electoral legislation
- II. *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. Project support in 2022 has focused on development of related Regulations and Standard Operating Procedures to support implementation of the two new Acts, gazetted in January 2022 - the Civil Registration and Identity Management Act (Cap 27 2022) and the National Identity Card Act (Cap 28 2022);
- III. *the Data Protection and Data Privacy Working Group* developing policy and legislative protocols for protection of personal data, data privacy and harmful digital communication;
- IV. *the Voter Awareness Committee* – made up of media groups, Transparency International (Vanuatu), disability groups, women, youths, the 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.

b) What unintended consequences (positive or negative) might have also resulted? If negative, how are these being addressed?

Positive: The intended objective of the project is “Integrity and Accuracy of the Voter Register Enhanced”, however VEEP’s work has gone beyond the voter register to support Vanuatu’s comprehensive civil registration and identity management system. It has the potential of far-reaching impact for the citizens and government of Vanuatu as essential services requiring citizens’ identity are being linked to the ID number. It is the cornerstone of digital transformation and has potential for financial inclusion and e-governance.

The huge impact of National ID Cards continues to grow both as intended consequences and unintended outcomes.

Intended:

Unique Identity based on:

- Personal Data
- Biometric Data
- Identity Number
- Village Location (GPS village listing classification)
- Validated National Voter Register
- Verifiable voter lists, polling station level, based on address location
- Transparent, well-governed conduct of Elections based on “clean” Voter Register, and accurate turnout stats
- Decline in Electoral Disputes and fraudulent practices
- Political Party/Candidate history and strengthening
- Disaggregated data to inform future awareness efforts

Unintended Consequences:

- GPS Village IDs and classification codes for every village in Vanuatu linked with National IDs and multi-layered Geospatial satellite maps of all of Vanuatu
- Increasing use of GoV Agencies, NGOs and private sector using ID Card, such as:
- NDMO using ID Cards for disaster response, and e-ID for cash transfers
- IOM using ID Cards for displaced persons tracking i.e., volcanic eruptions, ashfall
- VNSO using ID Card for population data analysis
- Passports → Readily verifiable proof of identity
- RSE → identity for registration with Agents prior to passport issue
- Banks → Account opening, cash transfers, remittances
- Police → Drivers Licence and Police Clearances
- Money Exchange → Identity proof for remittances
- Air Travel → ID Cards required for tickets and freight pick-up
- Shipping → ID Cards required for tickets and freight pick-up
- Unblocked Cash → ID Card required for receipt and Mand E
- VNPF → pension schemes and identity management
- Labour Department is using national ID for establishing a profile on the Employment Database
- Ministry of Education → all school and university enrollment
- Parliament → new law on alcohol purchases, youth to identify themselves w. national ID and having the age of 18 or above
- NGOs → ID Cards a multipurpose tool for Mand E, project delivery and data
- International Benchmarks and Best Practice → 2023 will see field visits from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Samoa to learn from the Vanuatu experience.

Other key beneficial outcomes are significant improvement in reporting and planning practices, seeing not only the EC/VEO and CRIM being amongst the first agencies to adopt the newly mandated

GoV Planning and Reporting Guidelines but also to offer the same training support to all MoIA agencies – a move strongly supported by Director General MoIA. This has seen the development of the MoIA 2022-2026 Corporate Plan, Business Plans and Annual Reports all compliant and aligned to the National Sustainable Development Plan. The development of the Corporate Plan and Business Plans afforded the opportunity to embed the historical reforms and those envisaged to project end 2024.

Teams of data entry officers, provincial volunteers and staff trained through VEEP are using solar powered tablets for registration and ID number verification and are available not only to VEEP but also other donors, NGOs and Government agencies including MoH's roll out of the National COVID19 Program. The increase in staffing in CRIM and VEO will see staffing presence in all 6 provinces to support, implement and drive electoral reform and participation, National ID reform and outreach initiatives.

Negative:

The limited technical and electoral staff in EC, VEO, and CRIM is constraining the absorptive capacity and causing an overreliance on the pool of technical support, with mixed effects. To address this challenge, the project developed a mitigation strategy in collaboration with EC, VEO, and CRIM to enhance staffing structures with a significant increase in technical staff. This new staffing approach will improve the absorption capacity and allow for more tailored capacity building efforts.

c) Assess how achieved outputs are contributing to reaching outcomes

Intended Outcome as stated in the UNDAF/Regional Programme Results and Resource Framework:

Intended Outcome as stated in the United Nations 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; accountable and responsive institutions; and improved 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

Applicable Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and relevant targets

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.

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.

Output 1

The VEEP Project played a crucial role in advancing UNPS Outcome 5 (Governance and Community Engagement) and Outcome 2 (Gender Equality) in Vanuatu. The project supported the Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) and Electoral Commission (EC) to conduct the snap election within a very shortened timeline, resulting in a peaceful transition to a new government and strengthening the democratic process in the country. Additionally, the project focused on institutional and process reforms to enhance the sustainability of these institutions. The restructure submissions by EC, VEO, CRIM Department contributed to inclusive, informed, and transparent decision-making processes, accountable and responsive institutions, improved access to justice, and advancing gender equality in the Pacific.

In addition, the VEEP Project has contributed to SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development) and SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). Again, the project supported the authorities to conduct a successful election within a truncated timeline, contributing to a peaceful transition of government and a strengthened democratic process.

With a focus on institutional and process reform, the VEEP Project aimed to enhance the sustainability of these institutions, aligning with Target 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels) and Target 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels).

The project's efforts to conduct elections and support the EC/VEO demonstrate its commitment to promoting gender equality, in line with 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).

Output 2

The implementation of comprehensive and reliable citizen identification methods in Vanuatu has had an impact on the advancement of governance and community engagement (Outcome 5) and gender equality (Outcome 2) in the Pacific region. By mid-October 2022, 93.3% of Vanuatu's population was equipped with national ID cards with QR codes that serve as a vital tool for various purposes, including opening bank accounts, accessing medical records, and participating in the voting process. This electronic identity management system has created the first-ever accurate and reliable voter register, based on one person one vote principle, reduced the risk of electoral fraud and improved the voting process. As a result, it enables inclusive, informed, and transparent decision-making processes, ensures that institutions are accountable and responsive, and improves access to justice. Furthermore, the digital identity empowers women and girls to enjoy equal opportunities in social, economic, and political spheres, and contributes to the country's national development.

The comprehensive identity management system also supports the advancement of gender equality (SDG 5) by enabling the adoption and enforcement of policies and legislation that promote gender equality and empower women and girls (Target 5c). By providing a digital identity, this critical step towards Vanuatu's digital transformation plays a crucial role in advancing both SDG 16 and SDG 5, as it protects and ensures the rights and opportunities of all individuals, regardless of gender.

Output 3

The project aimed to support Outcome 5: Governance and Community Engagement and Outcome 2: Gender Equality: The project provided support to the VEO to conduct civic and voter education, involving the establishment and functioning of the Voter Awareness Committee. A Gender Strategy was co-designed through consultations with several NGOs/CSOs, and other organizations, resulting in increased awareness of the electoral sector and on-going electoral reform.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Internal Affairs Hon Ishmael Kalsakau Maau'koro saw a gap in Civic Education and asked VEEP to develop a civic education textbook, Teachers Guide and Student Workbook in 3 languages (English, French and Bislama) for upper secondary school. These materials will be provided to all 26 Secondary Schools nationally in Q1 2023. Deputy PMs vision is that young voters leaving school at ages 17-18 will have a fuller understanding of the rights and responsibilities of voting, human and political rights.

Target 16.9 was achieved through the production of a documentary movie about Civil Registration and legal identities in Vanuatu, and a comprehensive civic education package for schools, aimed at promoting gender equality. Target 16.10 was ensured by providing access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms through supporting the VEO in conducting civic and voter education and supporting the publication of electoral timelines and key messages. Target 5c was tackled by strengthening policies and legislation for promoting gender equality and empowering women, which was supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs' restructuring and Corporate Plan, Sector Plan and the Civic Education package for schools.

Output 4

The implementation of Outcome 5: Governance and Community Engagement and Outcome 2: Gender Equality in the Pacific is progressing towards a more inclusive, informed, and transparent society. The gazetting of the Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) Act and the Identity Management Act in January 2022 has set the foundation for the digital transformation of Vanuatu's civil registration system, providing for government ownership rather than a private sector solution. Additionally, two bills aimed at improving the electoral framework and political stability are at the advanced stage of drafting. The Single Harmonised Electoral Bill and Political Party Integrity Bill are a priority for the new government, as underlined in the 100-day plan, and, once passed, will play a crucial role in ensuring political sustainability and the effective functioning of the electoral and democratic processes in the country. The development of EC Regulations is also underway, with the final format of the Bill determining its outcome. These initiatives will contribute to a more accountable and responsive society, where people and communities can benefit from informed decision-making processes, improved access to justice, and gender equality, where women and girls are empowered to participate in national development and live free from violence and discrimination.

Similarly, the implementation of SDGs 16 and 5 are also being supported by the recent outputs in Vanuatu. The gazetting of the Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) Act and the Identity Management Act in January 2022 aligns with Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, and Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. The development of a digital transformation of the civil registration system and government ownership, instead of a private sector solution, lays the foundation for the promotion of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (Target 16.6) and responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (Target 16.7).

Additionally, the advancement of two bills aimed at improving the electoral framework and political stability, the Single Harmonized Electoral Bill and Political Party Integrity Bill, is a priority for the new government and aligns with 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. Once passed, these bills will play a crucial role in ensuring political sustainability and the effective functioning of the electoral and democratic processes in the country, contributing to the overall promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. The EC Regulations, developed in draft format, will also be impacted by the final format of the Bill. These outputs align with the SDGs and targets and will drive the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, while promoting effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.

d) If relevant for this period of Activity reporting, comment on progress against short term outcomes and medium-term outcomes

- i) What difference is the Activity making, if any?**
- ii) Which aspects are working better, for whom, why?**

i) The VEEP Project is making considerable gains in short term outcomes and medium-term outcomes, already detailed on other sections of this report.

ii) Reforms are gaining traction due to the development of collegial, professional relationships based on strong mentoring and partnership practices underpinned by Vanuatu's historical culture and beliefs network of cooperation, consultation and collaboration. The four Working Groups have been pivotal in building this broad relationship, not merely with in EC/VEO and CRIM but MOIA and sectoral stakeholders. This is a model that could easily be replicated in other Micronesian and Melanesian states in the Pacific sharing similar cultural traditions.

- 1) Electoral Reform Working Group
- 2) Civil Registration and Identity Management Working Group
- 3) Data Protection and Data Privacy Working Group for protection of personal data, data privacy and harmful digital communication;
- 4) Voter Awareness Committee

These working groups and the development of MoIAs Corporate Plan has highlighted a gap in more formal sector co-operation mechanisms as has the lack of knowledge of each other's work in the Co-Design consultations for Gender Action Plan.

e) Comment as appropriate on Cross-cutting issues:

- **Describe how Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment are being enhanced or protected and demonstrate how the principles outlined in the Gender Analysis guideline are being addressed in this Activity**

The project has so far assisted the VEO in establishing and mainstreaming gender-sensitive policies and procedures and ensure gender-sensitivity in outreach activities in the electoral processes. Gender equality is an underlying theme in all four project outputs and has been embedded in new procedures, new manuals, awareness material, and new VEO identity etc.

VEEP project support for Manuals promotes inclusion in materials and in graphics. The candidate workbook contains a section on information for women candidates. Gender disaggregated ID Card data is being tracked. Furthermore, the project embarked on development of an ambitious Gender Strategy towards the end of 2022 following the election of one female MP to Parliament. This strategy to be developed through a broad consultation schedule or "Co-Design" process. In the Co-Design process, women's' groups, NGOs active in gender issues and GoV agencies are contributing their proposed strategies to the eventual design.

f) Describe how Human Rights are being enhanced or protected and demonstrate how the principles outlined in the Human Rights Guideline are being addressed in this Activity

UNDP is guided by the UN Charter to respect and promote human rights. The Human Rights Based Approach is embedded in UNDP programming. VEEP implementation is also guided by the human rights framework. Technical assistance provided by VEEP is in line with international human rights standards and Vanuatu's international human rights obligations.

The technical assistance components of the project are intended to build the capacity of institutions such as EC, VEO, CRIM and others who are duty bearers for protecting citizens human rights. However, there is a strong component of the project which engages with diverse groups of citizens to raise their awareness of human rights, specially rights related to democratic participation.

Data on disability is being collected by CVR operators and recorded in the central civil registry database, RV5. Operators have been sensitized on the importance of recording accurate data, as this may help planning of polling operations for people with special needs. VEEP plans to work with the Vanuatu Society for Disabled People (VSDP) with the double objective of sensitizing people leaving with disabilities about their political rights and conduct outreach activities among their associates and through their structures. The ultimate goal is to promote more inclusive electoral processes, including addressing special needs of disabled citizens.

A People with Disability (PWD) Action Plan has been developed and launched. The PWD Action Plan was uploaded to the VEO Website. A sensitisation workshop was held for VEO staff to support the launch. Ramps have been installed around the VEO Office to improve accessibility. An appraisal by UN Head Office in Vila identified some accessibility issues and these are being addressed – Car Park Sign for disability parking; signage for location of VEEP Office. Other issues related to door size for wheelchair access will not be possible – widening of hallway, widening of some doors as VEEP occupies a small office in a GoV building and budget/design constraints apply to retro-fit.

g) Describe how the Environment is being enhanced or protected in keeping with the Environmental and Social Impacts Guideline and how climate change is being addressed in keeping with the [Climate Change Operational Policy](#).

In the context of extreme climate vulnerability, the VEEP project follows the approach of doing no harm. The project adapts flexible approaches to implementing activities so that the climate vulnerabilities are taken into consideration.

To the extent possible, VEEP has given preference to the use of vegetable-based ink (soy) to produce environmentally friendly campaign materials, including posters and street banners. The ongoing legal reform process also considers issues such as reducing the use of paper in production or procurement of electoral materials.

Relevance

a) Has there been any change in the Activity's relevance during the assessment period? (i.e., from design phase or previous report)

The project continues to remain relevant for Vanuatu's progress towards an effective and functioning democracy. While remaining relevant to its stated outputs, the relevance has expanded to other related areas such as demands for supporting the comprehensive civil registration and identity management processes, geospatial mapping of villages and related facilities, supporting the capacity of government (MoIA) to be able to do anticipatory strategic planning - all linked areas that are supporting the sustainability outcomes of designed outputs. The discussion about integrating new expanded areas of relevance will be taken up during the planning for next phase of the project and in discussions with MFAT and the Government.

The Multi-year workplan was reviewed and updated, which was already part of the approved project document. A formal revision was not needed as any 'new' activities align with existing Outputs / Activities of the project. Additional funding proposals have been forwarded to MFAT in Vanuatu for consideration/discussion, including two proposals – for implementation of the electoral and political party integrity bills, and the implementation of Digital ID for all.

All planned outputs remain relevant and effective.

- b) Are there any changes in the context that require adjustments to the planned outputs or risk management (e.g., timing, approach or scope) to ensure they remain relevant and effective? If yes, describe briefly what adjustments have been or will be made.**

The electoral and political context under which the project operates has significantly changed during this year, however, the four Outputs remain the same. In the year 2023, the project will need to align with the new electoral cycle and new electoral calendar as the elections which were due in 2024 were held as snap elections in 2022. The next General Election will now be held in 2026. The significant reform process which was underway before the elections is expected to regain the momentum and the project needs to allocate resources according to the new context. New activities are being added under Output 2, 3 and 4 to capture the increased work and support to identity management, voter information & public awareness, and legislative reforms. Other requests have been received to establish electoral maps based on mapping of electoral boundaries of existing 'electoral districts' and identify new villages, and possibly re-allocate or add more polling stations in line with electorate requirements. These activities are able to be integrated under existing outputs and require endorsement and additional funding by the Project Board.

Efficiency

a) Attach an annotated version of the original workplan and budget which clearly reports actual against planned expenditure and explanation of any variances (see example in Appendix B).

The VEEP project like any other governance projects uses high level of flexibility and adaptability to the ever-changing political context of Vanuatu. It has been able to efficiently provide support to the key stakeholders at one of the most important junctures of the electoral cycle, during the snap elections. The project team is physically co-located with the EC/VEO to facilitate effective communication.

All international electoral technical consultants utilised under the project were engaged through the UNDP global roster of experts. The roster is pre-vetted by the UNDP global programme and utilised for quick mobilisation of expertise to the field. It also ensures high quality expertise at “rational” costs. As such, the EC, VEO, CRIM and other relevant stakeholders received high-level and cost-efficient quality technical support and advise when requested, and as part of the workplan.

Additionally, the project supported the preparation and conduct of different elections, Municipal and General, under COVID-19 conditions, with swift and flexible measures taken to face the new challenging conditions. The new context required the need for the timely revision of the electoral procedures for their alignment with the requirements and with the health prevention/mitigation measures adopted by the Vanuatu public authorities; this was done within the necessary timeframes and without the need for additional resources. As of now, the VEO has an electoral operations plan and key electoral procedures documented and available as reference material for current and new staff. Additionally, the project has established a standing pool of youth ICT/data entry officers (Data Validation Officers), trained and ready for quick mobilization.

b) Comment on whether this Activity is being managed and delivered cost effectively with the least waste of time and effort.

All resources under the project are used in a cost-effective manner to create maximum impact. A significant cost contribution (\$50,000) from MFAT was to be advanced from VEEP 2023 budget for the snap elections which resulted in a smooth transition of Vanuatu into new electoral and government cycle. The contribution to elections was limited to what VEO could not procure or manage from its own resources as was to be later replenished by MFAT.

Despite the costly nature of elections in Vanuatu that occur with little advance notice, the EC and VEO were able to secure additional funding from the Vanuatu government and the Australian government.

All electoral technical consultants utilised under the project were engaged through the UNDP global roster of experts. The electoral roster is pre-vetted by the UNDP global programme and utilised for quick mobilisation of expertise to the field.

The project has applied significant attention on the costs of the civil and voter registration methodology, particularly in the context of use of technology and introduction of increased security features and data integrity. The strategy is based around supporting a locally-owned electronic registration system that is implementing inter-operable use with other registration systems in MoH MoE, VNPF and Police.

Sustainability

a) Is the plan for sustainability of benefits (including transition/exit plan) adequate?

The project has adapted an approach of building local capacities and imbedding institutional strengthening approaches in the systems of the key stakeholders. The approaches such as restructuring, creation of new permanent positions, supporting the development of software and ensuring appropriate hardware will ensure that the gains of the project are sustainable and long lasting.

With the current cost-effectiveness and level of IT literacy the current methodology is pursuing the strategy that will allow the electoral authorities to be self-reliant and remain in full ownership. The project has supported a methodology and practice that is financially, operationally and technically sustainable within the context of Vanuatu. Alongside the current ongoing capacity building, tailored training and handover of ownership of material, equipment and data there is no need for a transitional phase of international assistance to a nationally run Civil Registration process and elections. The electoral authorities are already leading all these processes, with support as requested from the Project.

b) What is the Activity doing to ensure benefits will continue beyond MFAT funding? (For example, building country capacity and ownership)?

Please refer above section on sustainability re buy-in and ownership.

Predictably, on-going mentoring and capacity building will assist in sustainability of outcomes. A more formal approach has been through regular training programs on how to write a Corporate Plan, how to develop a Business Plan, writing of Annual Reports and budget requests and reporting based on GoVs Cost Centres. This will improve reporting and planning with a beneficial impact on requests to GoV for higher annual budget Ceilings through the Ministerial Budget Committee Cycle and Appropriations Bill preparation. The development of a Sector Strategy (2022-2026) cements a broad range of cross sectoral agencies and sector stakeholders involved – significantly within the Aid Coordination Unit of the Department of Sectoral Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) in the Prime Minister’s Office. The endorsed Sector strategy provides possible entry points and projects for GoV and Development Partner consideration not only post completion of MFAT support but during the Projects remaining Phase II. This spreads understanding of the innovations (mostly the work of VEEP) and engagement. Spreading knowledge and participation mitigates risk and deepens possible future financial resourcing reserves.

The restructures in EC, VEO and CRIM as well as in Corporate Services Unit (CSU) of the MoIA will also provide sustainability outcomes in that people in contracted positions may migrate to full time GoV funded positions and the training and mentoring provided is not lost to these organisations. Please refer to previous sections detailing restructure processes undertaken.

c) What challenges are faced in addressing sustainability?

The challenges faced in the pursue of sustainability is the available national funding and general IT literacy in rural areas to undertake continuous registration and ongoing collection of data in the field. Another challenge is to build more specialised knowledge and capacity at central level to address continuous challenges of bug fixing, updating features in databases, to deal with duplicate registrations, under-age pre-enrolment and other technical matters. Currently there is limited advanced ICT skills in both VEO and CRIM departments, so it would be important to limit risk of dependencies and focus on building a small group of software developers and data officers to maintain the integrated identity system.

The lack of understanding of IT and electoral issues across the whole of Government has been a suitability issue that is intended to be mitigated through a sectoral approach by engaging a broad cross section of GOV Line Ministries, GoV agencies, NGOs, development partners and private sector in a Sector Strategy consultation. It is intended that this will generate not only understanding of the

intentions of the project but the already significant reforms and initiatives able to be utilised by all – National ID Card and use of unique identity numbers for all, multi-layer Geo-Spatial maps with polling station/school/health clinic mapped with GPS coordinates and consolidated village dataset, mobile Apps on tablets, trained cohort of Data Entry Officers etc. This approach of broader engagement and “buy in” is intended to address the challenge of sustainability through shared vision, partnerships and benefits.

In addition, political instability caused by frequent changes in the government and unstable government coalition resulted in reprioritisation of the project.

Relationship between Partners, Beneficiaries and Other Stakeholders

Comment on any changes, problems or important features of (a) relationships with key stakeholders, and (b) contributions by partners and sub-contractors.

The Electoral Commission, the Vanuatu Electoral Office and Civil Registration and Identity Management Department are all under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. A strong relationship with the Director General and Corporate Services Unit has evolved with VEEP up-scaling to include support for MoIA’s new Corporate Plan, budget and CSU restructure – all with important sustainability impact once VEEP technical support and funding ceases.

The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Department was initially not anticipated to be an important partner in the original project design of VEEP phase I but as endorsed through Board Meeting in April 2019 and with MFAT increased funding specifically targeting joint nationwide registration. The department since then became an essential partner for legal identity when embarking on the joint civil and voter registration (CVR) activities for Vanuatu with the Electoral Office and in the development of the legislative framework guiding the electoral environment. With a revision of the original Design Document CRIM became a significant focal point for VEEP Phase II with development of the foundational identity management database based on national ID numbers and with recent developments in IT and legislation, this focus has been vindicated and enhanced.

Contributions from Government partners continue to add to VEEP outcomes through engagement and cooperation with EC, VEO, CRIM, DoLA, DUAP, VNSO, SLO, LRC, MoH, MoET, NDMO, and OGCIO with new partnerships emerging as the potential use of the National ID more broadly realised (refer following table).

The National ID is a valuable tool for these agencies as well as National Disaster Management Office, IOM, Police, VNPF and the Private Sector i.e., banks and airlines, and lately the Chamber of Commerce for registration of businesses, are also very interested in using the National ID Cards and multi layered maps developed by VEEP in collaboration with UNISAT/UNITAR to devise geo-spatial satellite maps to include all households, community clusters and important buildings.

Implementing Partner (IP) and Focal Point Contact (Title, email, fax, phone, address)	Type of Partnerships or Role	Duration of Partnership	Progress of Deliverables from Partnership (**)
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Government agency under which the EC/VEO and CRIM operates.	2017 - 2022	Close cooperation, mentoring capacity building and innovation

Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO)	Implementation partner for VEEP.	2017 - 2022	On track with annual workplan implementation.
Department of Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM)	Joint and intensive CR process and legislation, policy, SOPs and Procedure Manuals New Integrated Identity System database RV5	2017 - 2022	A very close collegial and productive relationship delivering innovative initiatives
Department of Local Authorities (DLA)	Collaboration in the CVR process field level through decentralised structures, data validation, data verification	2017 – 2022	Joint civil and voter registration exercise in provinces. Launching of Village ID classification initiative
OGCIO	Policy, Legislation and Database development. IT infrastructure and security	2019- 2022	Office of Government Chief Information Officer is heading the data protection working group, in charge of policy and legislation development, and assisting with database development, sharing and security. Hosting VEO and CRIM data
Electoral Reform Working Group Taskforce	Political reform process.	2021-2022	Multi Agency groups bringing high level contributions from Prime Minister's Office, State Law Office, Law Reform Commission, Electoral Commission, Electoral Office, Department of Civil Registry and Vital Statistics, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Department of Local Authorities, Department of Urban Administration and Planning, MOIA corporate compliance.
Civil Registration and Identity Management Working Group	Political reform process.	2022	Multi Agency group bringing high level contributions and engagement consisting of State Law Office, Electoral Commission, Electoral Office, Department of Civil Registry and Vital Statistics, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Department of Local Authorities, Department of Urban Administration and Planning, Department for Immigration, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, MOIA corporate compliance
Data Protection and Privacy Working Group	Political reform process.	2022	Multi Agency group bringing high level contributions and engagement consisting of Prime Minister's Office, OGCIO, State Law Office, Department of Civil Registry and Vital Statistics.

Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO)	Development of multi-layered electoral maps; undertake assessment on information needs of voters, and operational and geographical needs of polling stations	2017 - 2022	Ongoing liaison and consultation on voter assessment and on electoral boundaries has upscaled to include ID Card data, apps and UNOSAT/UNITAR geo-spatial multilayer Atlas satellite maps
Ministry of Health	Cross sectoral Data sharing and Vanuatu National COVID19 Strategy	2020-2022	Data sharing with ID Card and Registers used for planning as well as using ID Card and VEEP tablet technology for COVID19 Strategy roll-out Bloomberg funding facilitated and initiated.
Ministry of Education	Cross sectoral Data sharing	2019-2022	Data sharing with ID Card and Registers used for planning as well as using ID Card. School curriculum development, Teacher Manual and Student handbook
Dept of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC), PMs Office	Policy and planning	2020-2022	Close cooperation on improved planning and reporting, as well as budget
UNICEF	Birth Registration	2019 - 2022	Working with CRIM since 2019 to improve birth data capture by funding contracts for 6 Assistant Provincial Registrars. These posts to be made permanent in new CRIM Structure
VNPF	National ID Cards as unique Identifier for VNPF Accounts	2022	MOU being developed to use ID Cards for verification of identity for VNPF accounts
VPF	Police Clearances	2022	Agreement for National ID Card as basis of identity for Police Clearances
Banks	Account Opening and access	2021-2022	National ID Card required for opening new accounts and access
TRBR	Embedded phone numbers in ID Card QR Code	2022	MOU being developed with TRBR and Telecoms (Digicel and Vodaphone) for embedded phone numbers in ID Card QR Code
NDMO	Disaster planning and response	2022	The Geo-Spatial Maps and ID Cards for planning for emergency and disaster response, distribution of relief supplies, Unblocked Cash, displaced persons etc
Labour Mobility Programs	Registration for Programs	2021 - 2022	National ID Card a requirement for registration for labour mobility Programs i.e., RSE and PALM

UN agencies	Cross Sectoral Cooperation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) with focus on digital economy work and financial inclusion • UNOSAT/UNITAR for multi-layer household mapping for joint CVR activities. • 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 (CRVS, Global Grants Program) with focus on interoperability of Public Health Systems with CRVS 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. • UNDESA on alignment and localisation of national sustainable development goals • IOM on tracking of internally displaced people following disasters based on ID data.
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3. Updates to Key Activity Management Documents

Activity Results Framework:

a) Have the Results Diagram, Measurement Table and Monitoring and Evaluation workplan been reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate? Please Refer Annex A

These are reviewed on a quarterly basis. The four main outputs have each their focus – institutional, technical, informational, legal – and the project remain overall unchanged and relevant, although additional activities have been added to Output 1 to include restructure of additional departments under MoIA, development of MoIA Corporate Plan 2022-2026 etc., Output 2 to include the support to the joint civil and voter field registration, data validation and verification, and the development of a new integrated identity system, Output 3 to include school curriculum enrichment materials and Output 4 to include three working groups on important and comprehensive legal reforms. The snap general election had impact across all four Outputs. Gender mainstreaming is integrated across all four outputs.

UNDP internally scheduled three phases of project evaluation, called ‘Quality Assurance’ that is undertaken at the design phase of each project, at mid-term (implementation phase), and at the end of the project term. The project is currently undergoing the mid-term quality assurance process where the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the project achievements to date are being assessed. Lessons and recommendations from this process are then fed back into the work of the project to ensure that Outputs are achieved and contribute towards the desired Outcomes for VEEP.

The VEEP partner, MOIA, underwent a Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Audit through UNDP contracted international performance auditors to assess the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to host and facilitate the operations of the Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project. This involved several intensive consultations and provision of GoV documentation. A report followed. This led to the establishment of the MoIA Finance Officers Network with prioritised trainings in financial issues. The Network was supported by VEEP technical assistance. A Human resource Officers Network was also established for inter-related training. VEEP provided related training on Budget processes. HACT specific training was provided through virtual means i.e., FaceForm training for CSU MoIA staff.

Quarterly Reports for Q1, Q2, and Q3 with an Annual Report provided to MFAT, UNDP, UNEAD/NY and Project Board.

Annual Board Meetings are held once-twice yearly, or as required on ad-hoc basis to track VEEP progress achievements issues challenges and emerging opportunities/needs.

b) Are there justifiable changes/updates needed due to changes in context/need and lessons learned?

The project is undergoing some changes due to shifting government priorities, change in political environment, unexpected election disruptions, and a new electoral cycle, resulting in a budget that does not align with the government's expectations to the Project and requirements of the Project.

With snap elections in 2022 (instead of planned for 2024), Vanuatu has entered into a new electoral cycle, requiring the shifting of sequencing of some activities. In addition, the Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) has received new mandates following the new legislation which requires additional responsibilities and features to be incorporated into institutional structures and technical systems. As an accurate identity management system remains crucial to development of accurate voters lists, and at the same time serves as the digital heart of the Government, this objective can't be achieved without providing wider support to the CRIM.

In this context, three proposals for additional funding have been submitted to the New Zealand High Commission for consideration with preliminary discussions on the proposals:

1. Digital Identity for All – CRIM initiative
2. Implementation of draft Single Harmonised Electoral Bill
3. Snap Election Costs refund (as per agreement)

Upscaling of the VEEP Project has occurred in response to GoV requests for additional support, consultatively agreed with NZ MFAT, UNDP, DSPPAC and MoIA over the years. The discussions are currently underway with MFAT on these proposals and possible next phase of the project.

VEEP Funds at a glance:

INCOME:	NZD	USD
Fund received - Dec 2020	358,448.28	232,758.62
Fund received - Jun 2021	214,927.42	139,563.26
Fund received - Jul 2021	1,295,055.00	840,944.81
Fund received - Jun 2022	1,470,000.00	954,545.45
Total Funds Received as at 31 December 2022	3,338,430.70	2,167,812.14

4. Costed workplan

Where relevant, attach a costed workplan for the subsequent period. Describe any implications for, or changes to, the Activity's overall costed workplan and/or budget. (Refer to revised Multi-Year Workplan in Appendices)

The overall costed workplan for 2023 is based on budget allocations in ProDoc signed in 2020. The 2023 Annual Work Plan with budget has been prepared below with originally allocated budgets, however, as emphasised in Board Meeting in June and subsequent meeting in December 2022, the evolution of time and events with changing Governments, changing requests and priorities, Covid19 and the requirement to focus on digital transformation, and the cyber-attack on central IT infrastructure has challenged the limited 2023 budget. This has led to the submission of additional funding proposals for stepping up support to implementation of very comprehensive electoral reform and the political party integrity bill in pursue of political stability (as captured in project design), as well as stepping up opportunity of digital ID for all, and sustainability of the digital transformation, to replenish intended technical and financial support to the Government of Vanuatu (as already agreed in 2022 on connection with Snap election). The AWP 2023 would thus be revised if additional funding requests are confirmed, noting that the current 2023 budget can only support a small skeleton technical team on the ground.

Atlas Project

ID: 123236

Atlas Output

ID: 129624

Project Title:

Annual Work Plan (AWP) 2023

Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP) phase II

UNSDCF **Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan:**

Outcome: **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.**

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Timeframe	Resp. Party	Planned Budget		Fund Code	Donor	Budget Code	Budget Description	Amount (USD)	
Components of the project	Activity Results are the Outputs of the Project and Actions are the activities for achieving each output	Q1	Q2	3	Q4						
Output 1:	1.1 Support the Electoral Commission (EC)/Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) and Civil Registration and Identity	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10279	MFAT	71200	International Consultants	20,000

	Mngt (CRIM) Dept 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.													
	1.2 Support the EC/VEO and CRIM Dept in review and continuous development/updating of regulations, operational procedures, manuals, forms etc. in line with new legislation	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	10,000			
Institutional Capacities of the Electoral Authorities Strengthened	1.3 Support the VEO and CRIM Dept in building their decentralized frameworks (provincial officers) and put in place administrative arrangements, physical and IT infrastructure incl. alignment within VEO/CRIM/DLA resources etc.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	10,000			
	1.4 Support digital transformation and National ID / e-ID enhancement as a tool to help the Government respond better to pandemics and natural disasters, including legal identity issues, voting rights, and strategy for linking of governments and development partners in harmonisation on use of unique IDs.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	10,000			
	1.5 Support digitization and training efforts of EC/VEO and CRIM for increased data accuracy.			x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	10,000			
	1.6 Sustain the modernization of the VEO with procurement support to the new voter identification model based on unique ID, incl. scanners/tablets for all polling stations		x			UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Procurement	10,000			
Gender marker: 2	1.7 Development and roll-out of cascade training, training of trainers (ToT) on identification, biometrics,		x			UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	10,000			

electoral processes, based on new legislation									International Consultants	
1.8 Assist the VEO and CRIM Dept in mainstreaming gender-sensitive policies and procedures, and ensure gender-sensitivity in all outreach activities in the electoral process, and registration processes. Support the increased participation of women in political processes.	x	x	x		UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer International Consultants	20,000
1.9 Support VEO and CRIM in the identification of People with Disabilities (PWD). Develop a PWD Action Plan for increased access and participation.	x	x			UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	10,000
1.10 Support the VEO and CRIM Dept in establishment of Vanuatu's first Official Geo-data Location Register to increase data accuracy, with numeric village classification codes, one agreed village spelling and definition, and review accurate allocation of polling stations. Continue updates to the UNDP-UNITAR/UNOSAT geospatial satellite imageries and reconciled villages locations dataset, to be used by VEO, CRIM, VNSO, DLA, DUAP and other Gov Ministries.			x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 28 0	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	10,000
1.12 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	VEEP team salaries	95,000
1.13 Direct Project Costs Programme management costs (rent, equipment, DPC, etc.)	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT			5,000
Sub-Total for Output 1										220,000

Output 2:

	2.1 Support transitioning to the new 'voter registration model' based on national ID, 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.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	15,000
Integrity and Accuracy of the Voter Register Enhanced	2.2 Support implementation of strategy and operations to establish the electoral register from the central civil register based on unique National ID.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	10,000
	2.4 Provide coordination and training support to the CRIM data center for the data cleaning of joint civil & voter data. Support the migration of cleaned data to new foundational identity system (RV5).	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	10,000
Gender marker: 2	2.6 Support the development of a mobile service for voter verification based on the National ID Number.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	20,000
<i>Indicators:</i>	2.7 Provide technical support to the CRIM 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. Development of a new Integrated Identity System database.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer	10,000
<i>2023 Target / Deliverables</i>	2.8 Fine tune and evolve biometric system as biometric data collection begins to increase accuracy	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	-
	2.9 Create the e-ID application as a soft mechanism to identify people and access government services online.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	

2.10 Create e-voting features to increase turnout and reduce costs related to OCV and proxy voting	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	
2.11 Create an Electoral Results Management System for quicker, higher quality and more cost effective results management during elections.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	
2.12 Support authorities on process re-engineering to leverage use of new information systems	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	International Consultants	
2.13 Increase automatic linkages between the voter registry/population registry systems and other government or private sector systems to increase data accuracy and timeliness	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 28 0	MF AT	757 01	International Consultants	
2.14 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 28 1	MF AT	757 02	VEEP team salaries	95,000
2.15 Direct Project Costs	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 28 2	MF AT	757 03		5,000
Sub-Total for Output 2										165,000

Output 3:	3.1 Continuously support maintenance of the VEO website as an online archive and actively use of VEO Facebook page as an inclusion strategy. Development of CRIM Website and CRIM Facebook page.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	Training, Workshops and Confer International Consultants	
	3.4 Continue to support establishment of a Voter Awareness Committee as a mechanism to coordinate all stakeholders and manage clear messages		x	x		UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	Training, Workshops and Confer International Consultants	-
	3.5 Support targeted awareness campaigns (media, material etc) on potential referendum, National ID registration, Municipal elections,	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	Procurement	10,000

Ability to Conduct Voter Education and Raise Public Awareness strengthened	Provincial elections, General National Election.																																				
	3.6 Support the printing and publication of Civic Education Materials (teacher manual, student handbook, textbook) and distribution to MoET/CDU				x					UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	Training, Workshops and Confer International Consultants					10,000																		
Gender marker: 2	3.7 Support the VEO and CRIM in further deepening of partnerships and knowledge exchanges between various local, regional and international stakeholders and the electoral and legal identity authorities, including focus on inclusion of women through grassroots outreach and activities.	x		x						UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	Training, Workshops and Confer					10,000																		
	3.8 Support a youth induction training on structures, functioning and electoral processes, incl gender equality, in collaboration with PPEI, SLIP, Parliament - 'Provincial Open Democracy Days'		x		x		x			UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	757 00	Training, Workshops and Confer					15,000																		
	3.9 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation		x		x		x		x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	VEEP team salaries					95,000																		
	3.10 Direct Project Costs		x		x		x		x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT							5,000																		
Sub-Total for Output 3																																					145,000
	4.1 Develop legislative option papers/concept notes and provide technical advice as input on the legal reform.		x		x		x		x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants																							

Output 4:	4.2 Provide support to implementation of electoral reform (single harmonised Electoral Act). Provide support to implementation of civil registration and identity management reform.	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants	10,000
Legal Electoral Framework Improved and Capacity Building on Electoral Reform to Key Stakeholders provided	4.3 Provide support to Consultations regarding impact of legal framework impact and changes		x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants	10,000
	4.4 Support operationalizing the positive outcome of the electoral reform, with review of all regulations, procedures, operational manuals, forms etc. - and expert advisory	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants	10,000
	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/coordinator embedded in independent EC structure. Development of Political Party Database	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants	10,000
Gender marker: 2	4.6 Support political parties to understand and adhere to the legal framework, in collaboration with PPEI, SLIP		x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants	10,000
	4.7 <i>Support development</i> and implementation of data protection, data privacy/data security policy and related legislation.					UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants	-
	4.8 Effective technical advisory services and project implementation	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	VEEP team salaries	95,000
	<i>Project Monitoring, communication and visibility</i>	x	x	x	x	UNDP VEEP	10 27 9	MF AT	712 00	International Consultants	2,000

Sub-Total for Output 4	147,000
General Management Services (GMS)	54,160
Total of Activity	677,000
Total of Activity with GMS	731,160

5. Risk Management Matrix

Review the risk management matrix and attach the updated version in the Appendix Appendices B to describe any key risks that have emerged during the reporting period and how they have been mitigated.

Please refer Annex C

6. Governance and management arrangements

Describe any necessary changes to the governance and management arrangements between NZ, partners, contractors and other donors.

No changes are foreseen in the formal governance arrangements for the project, and to the membership of the Project Board.

The project aims to hold another project board meeting in April 2023 dependent on availability of Board members to review results and merging priorities.

However, it is suggested that a Working Group or informal interim meetings face-to-face and via Virtual Platform are held more regularly for a smaller group to promote engagement and understanding for MFAT and delivery agencies.

Authorisation

I declare that the information contained in this report is true and correct and confirm:

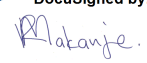
- MFAT Funds were received and used only for the agreed purpose(s); and
- All conditions attached to MFAT's Funding have been met; and
- MFAT Funds have been fully utilised for the intended purpose, OR
- There are unspent Funds and I understand that MFAT may deduct this amount from the next tranche payment of Funds OR a cheque is attached returning these Funds to MFAT.

Revai Makanje Aalbaek

Team Leader-Effective Governance

Full Name (in block capitals)

Title / Position (e.g., CEO)

DocuSigned by:

Signature
CB1B582369AA4A2...

11-Apr-2023

Date

Appendices

This report includes the following appendices:

- ANNEX A: Progress Against Results Framework
- ANNEX B: Financial Report-2022
- ANNEX C: Risks, Assumptions and Mitigation Matrix
- ANNEX D: Multi-year Workplan and Budget (table)
- ANNEX E: Snap Election Report (draft, while undergoing graphic design)
- ANNEX F: The Virtual Consultation documentary may be viewed at: https://youtu.be/m_BoY6A-iCQ