



# MFAT Management Response to Vanuatu Strategic Evaluation 2015-2023

**Please note:**

- The recommendations made in this evaluation report were finalised prior to the December 2024 earthquake in Port Vila. MFAT's response to the recommendations will need to reflect Vanuatu's new post-disaster recovery needs.
- This strategic evaluation had a focus on the governance environment in Vanuatu and MFAT's activities related to governance. It did not cover all of New Zealand's development assistance to Vanuatu from 2015-2023.

**Evaluation Report Recommendation****MFAT Response and Action  
(Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)****Maintain and build on partnerships with government and non-state actors to strengthen shared values for governance and development outcomes by:**

- Continue to raise awareness and reaffirming values and principles as outlined in the 2023 Mauri Statement of Partnership.
- Maintain annual High-level consultations with GoV and if feasible include other development partners
- Outline an approach for working with CSOs that specifies MFAT's principles and partnership strategies for engagement with development partners.
- Support decentralisation efforts by leveraging programming at the community level.

**Agree.** MFAT will continue to act in accordance with the Mauri Statement of Partnership and will seek to maintain a regular cadence of high-level consultations. High level consultations will continue to focus on engaging with Government of Vanuatu partners and MFAT will seek separate forums to engage with other development partners. MFAT intends to develop an MFAT- CSO engagement strategy in 2025 which will form the basis for bilateral CSO engagement plans supporting programming at the community level.

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**Evaluation Report Recommendation****MFAT Response and Action  
(Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)****Consider strategic engagement and rescoping of the NZ Inc approach to support effective partnerships:**

- Assess the objectives, quality and appropriateness of the NZ Inc approach in supporting the bilateral programme and identify areas of support.
- Strengthen coordination and communication between NZ Inc and Post to enhance shared understanding and leadership.
- Prioritise modalities that facilitate relationships and strategic alignment.
- Enhance visibility of regional programmes at the national level and connect bilateral programmes for knowledge sharing.

**Agree.** As part of its refresh of the Vanuatu Country Plan (formerly 4YP), MFAT is reviewing its modalities and bilateral vs. regional programming split for the 2024-2027 triennium. Once the direction of the country programme is confirmed for the 2024-2027 triennium, MFAT will seek ways to strengthen coordination and communication between NZ Inc and Post, and to raise awareness of regional programmes at the national level.

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**Evaluation Report Recommendation****MFAT Response and Action  
(Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)****Support donor coordination, collaboration and support to Vanuatu's donor coordination office:**

- As part of the activity and thematic selection of the new 4YP, conduct a strategic analysis of the Country Programme to understand where MFAT can partner with others.
- Support strengthening the function of the Prime Minister's Department of Strategic Planning, Policy and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) through technical assistance, frequent engagement and other initiatives for better aid coordination in Vanuatu. This was noted as key gap for enhanced donor coordination but also as easy entry point for NZ to leverage partnerships in Vanuatu.

**Partially agree.** MFAT has/will continue to undertake a strategic analysis of partners as part of activity and thematic selection. This occurs as part of the new 4YP process and as part of routine activity and thematic design and implementation processes.

MFAT will discuss with DSPPAC opportunities to strengthen our support. New initiatives are under way including invitations to DSPPAC staff to participate in available technical training, more regular engagement with DSPPAC, and NZHC taking the lead alongside the Ministry of Climate Change in donor coordination for the climate sector.

**Consolidate the Programme by strategic selection of activities and thematic areas of focus:**

- **Programmatic/Activity selection:** Through a Keep, Expand, Drop analysis, identify to retain, consolidate or finish activities:
  - **Continue to fund** activities with the potential to achieve outcomes.
  - **Fund in partnership** with other development partners, the activities with less potential - to achieve outcomes and high alignment to NZ and Vanuatu priorities.
  - **Keep or fund only if resources permit**, the activities with high potential to achieve outcomes but less alignment to NZ and Vanuatu priorities.
  - **Exit or drop** activities with less potential to achieve outcomes and that are not closely aligned to NZ and Vanuatu priorities.
- **Thematic selection/focus:** Consider strategic choices to reduce the number of sectors that NZ commits to support which include the following options for sector prioritisation:
  - Rationalise medium-term outcomes as part of the new 4YP theory of change.
  - Strengthen the focus on creating 'demand for governance'.
  - Consider establishing a flexible funding process to support ad hoc partner requests

**Agree.** MFAT is working to streamline the outcomes in the new Vanuatu Country Plan (previously 4YP) which will inform sector and activity prioritisation for the 2024-2027 triennium. The findings from the recently published ABR have already started to help inform this process.

**Prioritise MEL strengthening at Post to support performance management and monitoring of the 4YP**

- Develop a clear 4YP theory of change accompanied by a results framework with indicators to assess progress over time.
- The Programme should then align the activities to the 4YP as well as developing results frameworks for the activities too.
- In the short-term, engage services of a MEL short-term adviser (STA) or dedicated resource from MFAT MEL unit at Desk as part of the inception phase to set the system up.

**Agree.** The revised Vanuatu Country Plan (formerly 4YP) for the 2024-2027 triennium will include a new theory of change and accompanying indicators for the programme which new activities will be required to align to. A MEL short-term adviser has been contracted via MFAT's MERL List to improve the MEL system and embed reflection and learning processes within three large activities. This will inform

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**Evaluation Report Recommendation****MFAT Response and Action  
(Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)**

- Allocate resources at Post to support programme design, monitoring and completion of activities to validate results and harvest outcomes.
- Embed reflection and learning from results as part of the programme activities.

decisions around future MEL Support. MFAT is considering training options for improving NZHC staff MEL capability and future supplementary MEL support for the programme.

