

Vanuatu Strategic Evaluation 2015-2023 Evaluation Report

December 2024



Table of content

Table of content	i
List of Tables and Figures	ii
Abbreviations	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Executive Summary	v
1 Vanuatu Development Context	1
1.1 Overview of Vanuatu	1
1.2 New Zealand development cooperation in Vanuatu	2
2 Evaluation Methodology	5
2.1 Evaluation objective	5
2.2 Evaluation approach	5
2.3 The evaluation scope	5
2.4 Limitations	6
3 Partnerships and relationships	6
4 Effectiveness	9
5 Governance	15
6 Future directions and priorities	21
6.1 Enhancing relationships and partnerships with government and non-state actors	21
6.2 Programmatic focus and engagement strategies across the 4YP	22
6.3 Partnerships and collaborations with other development partners	24
Annex 1. Stakeholders consulted	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Annex 2. Evaluation scoped activities	26
Annex 3. Detailed methodology and approach	27
Annex 4. New Zealand's contributions to Vanuatu's sectors 2015-2023	30
Annex 5. Bilateral and multilateral donor's contributions to Vanuatu	32
Annex 6. Progress towards achievements of STOs	35

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1. Vanuatu Economic indicators	2
Table 2. Development partner funding by Sector (2023) (USD millions)	2
Table 3. Development partners funding in Vanuatu (2020-2022, value is in USD).....	2
Table 4. Evaluation selected activities 2015-2023	4
Table 5. Evaluation limitations	6
Table 6. MFAT modalities for development support in Vanuatu	13
Figure 1. Summary of Vanuatu Population (2020)	1
Figure 2. Theory of change diagram for the Vanuatu 4 Year Plan October 2021	3
Figure 3. Expenditure (NZD) spent over time	4
Figure 4. Evaluation approach and methods	5
Figure 5. Word cloud describing New Zealand as a partner	7
Figure 6. Scoped activities AMA/ACA rating for progress towards outputs and STOs	11
Figure 7. Scoped activities AMA/ACA rating (average) across key areas towards outputs and STOs	12
Figure 8. New Zealand support reflects a holistic framework for supporting good governance	17
Figure 9. Governance context and implications for New Zealand programming	19
Figure 10. Vanuatu governance context and its impact to New Zealand programming.....	20
Figure 11. Activity selection criteria	22
Figure 12. Detailed analytical approach	28
Figure 13. Detailed Evidence Strength Matrix	29
Figure 14. Expenditure (NZD) spent over time (2015-2023)	30

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Abbreviations

4YP	Four Year Plan
ACA	Activity Completion Assessment
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMA	Activity Monitoring Assessment
CSO	Civil society organisations
DBKS	Dipatmen Blong Koreksonal Sevis
DoWR	Department of Water Resources
DSPPAC	Department of Strategic Planning, Policy and Aid Coordination
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FIFO	Fly-in-fly-out
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoV	Government of Vanuatu
HLC	High-level consultation
KII	Key informant interviews
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MTO	Medium-term outcome
NGO	Non-government organisations
NZ	New Zealand
NZ Inc	New Zealand Public Agencies
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODF	Official Development Finance
PASAI	Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
REACH	The Relationship Education and Choices Healing
SOGIE	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and (Gender) Expression
STA	Short-term adviser
STO	Short-term outcome
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VANGO	Vanuatu Association of Non-government organisations
VEEP	Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project
VPF	Vanuatu Police Force
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WSB	Wan Smolbag
WSP	Water Sector Partnership

Acknowledgements

This evaluation commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) was undertaken by Tetra Tech International Development. This was a strategic evaluation that assessed MFAT's Vanuatu Country Programme's (2015-2023) overall alignment, coherence, effectiveness and relevance.

The evaluation team consisted of Grace Nicholas as Evaluation Director, Monica Wabuke as Evaluation Team Leader, Mereana Mills as the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning specialist, Elizabeth Faerua as the Vanuatu Local Specialist, Derek Brien as the Governance Specialist and Paul Lee as the Evaluation Analyst. The evaluation was undertaken from March to December 2024.

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge the support received from both MFAT Desk in Wellington and MFAT Post in Port Vila. We thank MFAT's contributions for their valuable insights during the scoping and sensemaking phases of this evaluation as well as their input and feedback on the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) conducted as part of this evaluation.

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge the inputs from Government of Vanuatu (GoV) officials, other prominent leaders, implementing partners in-country, representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) and community members in Santo who gave up their valuable time to provide insights during this evaluation. Their contributions enabled the evaluation team to gather insights, verify and triangulate the evaluation findings about MFAT's Vanuatu Country Programme and provide MFAT with considerations for the future phase of the Programme. The stakeholder consultation list is attached in Annex 1.

How to read this Report

Below is the structure of the report:

Executive Summary: a summary of the findings and future considerations and priorities.

Context and Background (Chapter 1): an overview of the Vanuatu context, level of Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding and Vanuatu's political governance.

Evaluation Methodology (Chapter 2): an overview of the evaluation, including its key approach and methods, and limitations.

Evaluation Findings (Chapters 3, 4 and 5): These sections present findings against each of the evaluation objectives.

Future considerations (Chapter 6): conclusions of the evaluation analysis with overarching observations and recommendations for future consideration.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) commissioned Tetra Tech International Development to undertake a strategic evaluation (the evaluation) of the Vanuatu Country Programme (the Programme). The evaluation focused on the Programme's coherence and relevance rather than activity level results and impact. The evaluation was conducted from March to December 2024. This Report presents the evaluation findings and considerations for future phases of the Programme.

Background and Context

About Vanuatu

Vanuatu is a Melanesian country comprising of over 80 islands, 65 of which are inhabited by a population of approximately 300,000 people. This population is young and largely lives in rural areas, although there is a trend of urban drift. At the end of 2020, Vanuatu celebrated its graduation from Least Developed Country Status to Developing Country Status. Nonetheless, significant development challenges remain. Limited public sector capacity affects attempts to improve and expand service delivery, particularly to the outer islands. Despite a strong democratic tradition since independence, the strength of political and electoral systems is a self-identified challenge. The economy also remains vulnerable to external shocks. Cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and flooding are all relatively common occurrences. Climate change is a significant threat to Vanuatu's ongoing development over the next 10 years and has social, health, economic, environmental and security implications. In short, Vanuatu's resilience to pressures and shocks are directly threatened by a range of issues.

New Zealand's partnership with Vanuatu

New Zealand (NZ) established a High Commission in Vanuatu in 1987, while the Government of Vanuatu (GoV) is represented in NZ through a High Commission in Wellington (opened in 2018) and a Consulate-General in Auckland. NZ's relationship with Vanuatu has global, regional and bilateral elements. At the broadest level, the two countries maintain a shared commitment to the rules-based international order and principles of democracy and open government. Recently, for the first time, NZ and Vanuatu signed a new Mauri Statement of Partnership that outlines principles and ways of working and reaffirms NZ and GoV's mutually reinforcing values. To operationalise its development programme in Vanuatu and ensure agreed outcomes are achieved, NZ developed the latest Vanuatu Four Year Plan (4YP) in 2021. The 4YP outlines the strategy to achieve development and foreign policy

outcomes through the bilateral relationship and other development assistance, including multilateral support, foreign policy, and trade. NZ works closely with the GoV to ensure that the bilateral development cooperation aligns with Vanuatu's development priorities. The 4YP's key strategic goals fit well within the three pillars of Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan.

About the Evaluation

Objective and Scope

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess NZ's overall state of relationships and partnerships in Vanuatu, the effectiveness and coherence of the Programme and in relation to Vanuatu's governance and democratic context.

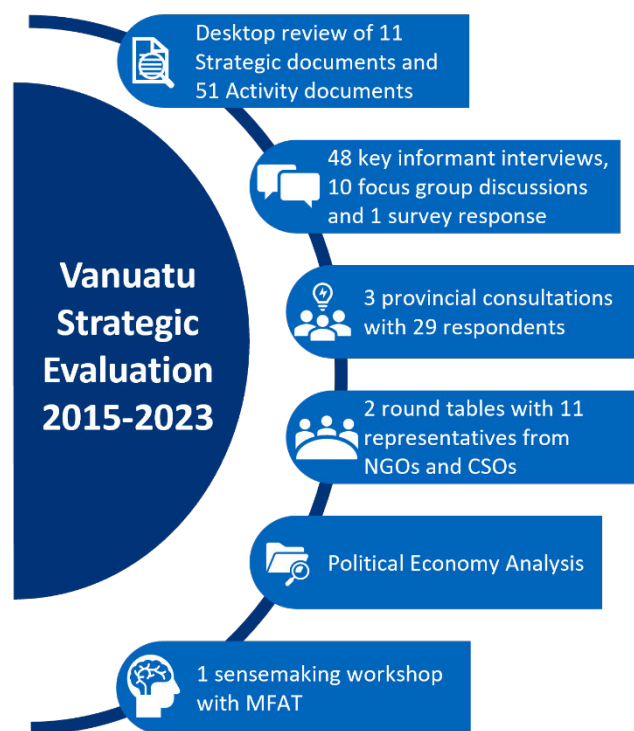
The key evaluation objectives were:

- To understand how NZ is perceived as a partner and what is NZ's advantage compared with other development partners
- To investigate the Programme's effectiveness and the extent to which it has or is expected to achieve its intended outcomes outlined in the Vanuatu 4YP
- To understand the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu and understand how this impacts NZ's programming, including effectiveness and mainstreaming
- To consider how the future phase of the Programme can best support Vanuatu's development priorities and NZ's strategic interests.

The evaluation covered the Programme over the period from 2015 to 2023 and focused on a selection of bilateral and regional activities related to efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and norms.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation utilised a mixed-methods approach combining different forms of data collection (primary and secondary) in a phased manner and combining both qualitative and quantitative data sources. The evaluation also conducted a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) to inform a nuanced understanding of the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu. The figure on the following page summarises the key methods utilised in this evaluation.



The evaluation analysis applied a two-stage process with the first stage focused on producing a clean, consolidated and organised dataset and the second on identifying and prioritising emerging findings based on the strength of evidence. Evidence from multiple data sources was then triangulated to inform the evaluation's findings and future considerations.

Summary of key evaluation findings

Partnerships and relationships: How do the GoV, non-state actors and other donor partners perceive NZ as a partner?

There is an overall positive perception of NZ as a development partner across GoV and non-state actors, driven by NZ's high levels of flexibility, partner-led approach, openness and the willingness to listen to the needs and priorities of the partners.

Among senior GoV officials, positive partnerships are also seen to be enhanced by NZ's openness to discussion. This space is seen as important for enabling a two-way dialogue in which partners can rationalise and advocate for their priorities while gaining a deeper understanding of NZ's priorities and concerns. The high trust places NZ in a strong position to pursue strategic and meaningful engagement with the GoV. Additionally, senior GoV officials noted that, because of the trust in NZ, there are opportunities and increased willingness to discuss and engage NZ in politically sensitive areas such as governance, public sector reforms and transparency.

Delivery of technical assistance through NZ Inc (NZ Public Agencies) has mixed results, with correlation between in-country presence and developed relationships, greater relevance and stronger partnerships. Opportunities exist to further scope the approach to facilitate relationship-building, define contextually relevant roles and support partnerships and collaboration.

MFAT provides technical assistance at national and regional levels in collaboration with NZ agencies, which, in turn, support partners through in-country support or other learning opportunities, such as conferences. In-country support is mostly provided through a fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) approach.

From a strategic and development perspective, the use of NZ Inc gives MFAT a national and regional footprint in locations and sectors where they have minimal programming presence, as well as providing the opportunity for NZ agencies to demonstrate their technical expertise. However, national partners indicated that the approach is appreciated but not designed or delivered for effectiveness. The FIFO model can make it difficult for NZ officials to build and sustain relationships. Nonetheless, advisers with an interest in or commitment to Vanuatu's context can be very effective, as in the Community Policing programme, where NZ officials work side-by-side with Vanuatu communities to solve problems. This highlights the need to select advisers and define the scope of work carefully, as well as to provide opportunities for ongoing relationship-building.

Convening or training activities outside Vanuatu, such as the Public Sector Strengthening or Parliamentary Strengthening activities, provide networking and the opportunity to learn from peers or leaders from similar contexts. Vanuatu rarely engages with these opportunities, and the evaluation found little reference to Vanuatu in regional reports. These activities were also not raised in consultations with Vanuatu-based stakeholders. Again, this may be the result of the limited opportunities for NZ-based or regional projects to connect with officials in Vanuatu to build understanding or interest in the activities.

Given that the NZ Inc approach's intention is to build local partners' capacity and capability, and noting Vanuatu's relational nature, the future phase should scope an approach that invests in relationship building and contextually specific responses to ensure support is tailored appropriately and to maximise NZ Inc contribution to Vanuatu. This requires NZ High Commission to play a more active role in facilitating introductions and brokering relationships and contextual understanding between NZ-based stakeholders and those in Vanuatu in order to strengthen strategic alignment, quality, and sustainability of results. If engagement or interest from Vanuatu is low, activities should not be initiated.

Slow approval and mobilisation processes, high staff turnover and a perception of a shift towards security are risks to the partnerships and relationships.

Although perceptions of NZ as a development partner are largely positive, stakeholders identified some areas that pose a risk to the relationship including:

- Slow systems, processes, approval and mobilisation processes sometimes impact engagement, motivation and momentum of partners. For instance, delayed partnership agreements were noted by the Department of Tourism while the Ministry of Trade and development partners such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also noted the lengthy NZ procurement rules that can delay implementation or sometimes be in conflict with partners rules leading to prolonged delays.
- High seconded staff turnover at Post as well as the GoV continues to hinder sustained and genuine partnerships by creating a stop-start approach to building relationships which is not effective. Even though this is a widespread challenge in the development sector and is not unique to NZ, it is particularly challenging in contexts like Vanuatu where relationships are important. This demands relationship continuity as a key focus of the Programme across the range of partners.
- s6(a)

s6(a)

Effectiveness: To what extent has NZ achieved the intended outcomes as outlined in the Vanuatu 4YP?

Overall, NZ's flexibility and their trusted partnership remains a key driver of effectiveness in Vanuatu.

Long-term support in Vanuatu in key sectors and NZ's flexibility, responsiveness, and openness to dialogue are key drivers of effectiveness. This flexibility and openness to change are highly valued, particularly by local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as they create an opportunity for local partners to implement activities that are of value to affected communities. Flexibility is also important for downward accountability mechanisms as opportunities for change signal that the partners are listening and responding to community needs and priorities. From a partnership perspective, flexibility can create efficiency in the long run because it creates spaces and processes where programming bottlenecks are addressed, and new ways of working are trialled and implemented. To this end, flexibility remains NZ's strength that should be acknowledged, celebrated and maintained while recognising the ever-present tension between flexibility and the risk of spreading the Programme too thin which seems to be the case as of this evaluation.

Despite the absence of the 4YP results framework to measure performance, there is evidence of achievement of outputs and some short-term outcomes (STOs).

Key results were observed in supporting safer communities with better access to essential services through community programmes, institutional strengthening, support in the women's sector and targeted governance programmes. Evidence also shows results from in-country technical assistance and capacity and capability training. Good progress in achieving outputs and STOs is confirmed by the positive Activity Monitoring Assessment (AMA) and Activity Completion Assessment (ACA) effectiveness ratings. For instance, analysis of the effectiveness rating for the scoped activities shows an average of 4 (progress towards outputs) and 3.8 (progress towards STOs). Though self-reported the ratings corroborate some of the stakeholder's feedback on some of the results supported as a result of NZ support in Vanuatu.

Overall resourcing constraints and portfolio diversity pose challenges for the Programme's strategic and thematic focus.

The evaluation assessed the Programme as a whole to understand whether NZ was doing too much and the extent to which the Programme's work was too broad to deliver. Evidence shows that the scale and size of the Programme presents a risk if resources and capacity for engaging and monitoring are too low to be effective. The scale and diversity of activities under the Programme creates challenges in measuring, monitoring and managing for results without a clear monitoring system. Current resourcing does not allow for sufficient oversight, monitoring or support, which leaves NZ at risk of financial mismanagement and poor results. Since NZ has relatively limited funding, efforts to coordinate with and leverage the efforts of other donor partners should be a priority for the Programme in Vanuatu.

Lack of strategic and operational 4YP monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems hinders understanding effective programming and reporting.

The 4YP theory of change clearly shows NZ intentions in supporting development programming in Vanuatu but has no results framework with targets or indicators to measure performance of the 4YP. It is worth noting that the lack of a MEL framework also means that pathways between outputs and outcomes are assumed rather than clearly defined.

Furthermore, the absence of a well-defined Programme monitoring system and lack of a dedicated MEL staff at Post or Desk makes it difficult to understand activities' contribution to the overall 4YP outcomes. Future considerations should explore MEL resourcing at Post and the role that Desk can play to support the performance management of the 4YP.

Governance: What is the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu and how does it impact on NZ's wider development programme and the outcomes it is trying to achieve?

The governance and democratic context in Vanuatu is complex but with strong foundations for democracy and good governance.

The PEA undertaken for this evaluation confirmed that Vanuatu retains strong foundations for democracy and good governance, but that it is struggling to build and maintain institutions to operationalise these principles fully, or to reach or represent the majority of the population. These institutions are predated by strong kastomary governance and patronage systems that continue to have significant influence on Vanuatu's local political system. The strength of Vanuatu's governance is evidenced through its history of free and fair elections, independent judiciary and respect for the rule of law. However, political instability is a major problem, with frequent leadership changes, politicisation of the public service and low administrative capacity undermining the government's limited ability to deliver services and meet needs. Corruption is known to undermine good governance worldwide, to divert funds from services and undermine stability. s6(a)

Anti-

corruption initiatives have attracted little support or funding and have made little progress. One example is the anti-corruption commission previously promoted through Transparency International, which has never been operationalised.

NZ supports governance in Vanuatu through investments in electoral reforms, public sector and judicial strengthening, audit support, and the rule of law, noting there are gaps in supporting demand for good governance.

NZ invests directly in governance in Vanuatu at multiple levels and through a range of different programmes, modalities and funding streams. Analysis of the range of governance-focused programs sees MFAT investing in the electoral system at the broadest level through Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP), in key functions through parliamentary, public sector and judicial strengthening and audit support, and in public services related to rule of law. MFAT has also supported civil society through support to Wan Smolbag (WSB), which provides services for at-risk youth and other vulnerable groups and raises public awareness of social justice issues through drama. NZ also supports the Vanuatu Women's Centre. Complementary activities include the economic governance programme and support to Transparency International in Vanuatu; however, the evaluation did not hear much about this activity.

The main gap in governance programming is around support for the demand for good governance, by connecting communities to knowledge and platforms to advocate for effective representation, policies and services, through civil society, awareness and education. MFAT support for CSOs has focused on services rather than on policy dialogue or advocacy. Greater understanding of governance in communities could include agreeing on a definition of corruption and raising awareness of its impacts on services and communities. s6(a)

There is strong evidence to support NZ continuing to invest in democracy and good governance because of the presence and strong foundations for the institutions of government, renewed interest in advancing political reforms following the referendum, and the principles of good governance across Vanuatu society. However, a range of manageable risks need to be acknowledged and considered. The risks and challenges include:

- Frequent changes in government that undermines the effectiveness and uptake of activities.
- Low morale among officials due to politicisation of the public service at all levels presents the risk that the commitment to reform and hard work required to make changes and build a better state will stall.
- The low level of representation of women in government, and entrenched attitudes among some groups in Vanuatu underscore the ongoing need to support efforts in this field. Although there is pushback from some stakeholders, the

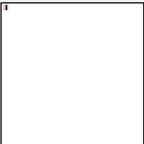
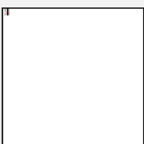
evaluation found strong support for NZ to continue supporting women's rights and gender equality among other groups. Since NZ's commitment to gender equality and inclusion is already well recognised, NZ is well-placed to work through these issues, though sensitive nuanced support is required to draw on lessons to ensure balance between respect for kastom and rights. Efforts should be made to find ways to continue supporting women parliamentarians and the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA), within or outside of existing activities


- Civil society remains under-resourced and local organisations are only beginning to become active in Vanuatu. The Vanuatu Association of Non-

government organisations (VANGO) does not currently offer a strong platform for coordination or advocacy, though in the 1990s VANGO had a higher profile and strong membership which later declined. NZ support for civil society has been through individual agencies or activities, rather than to civil society overall. This is a low-risk strategy but is also low ambition in terms of strengthening the demand side for governance, despite good development and inclusion outcomes. Should NZ move to strengthen civil society as a democratic entity, it would be essential to consult with civil society actors and government to identify the opportunities and limitations to support civil society safely.

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Future considerations and priorities

Objective	Recommendation	Benefit
Enhancing relationships and partnerships with government and non-state actors 	<p>Maintain and build on partnerships with government and non-state actors to strengthen shared values for governance and development outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to raise awareness and reaffirming values and principles as outlined in the 2023 Mauri Statement of Partnership since there has been change of governments both in Vanuatu and NZ. This could be maintained through ongoing discussions between senior Post staff and the GoV counterparts, during the annual High-Level Consultations (HLCs) and at political level engagements. Maintain annual HLCs with GoV and if feasible include other key development partners to ensure open communication and visibility. Outline an approach for working with CSOs that specifies MFAT's principles and partnership strategies for engagement with VANGO, local non-government organisations (NGOs) and CSOs, in collaboration with MFAT's Partnerships team. Support decentralisation efforts by leveraging programming at the community level and strengthening partnerships at provincial and community levels. <p>Consider strategic engagement and rescoping of the NZ Inc approach to support effective partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 and implement a shared vision as well as Post taking a leading role in brokering and maintaining relationships in Vanuatu between NZ Inc and local partners. Prioritise modalities that facilitate relationships and strategic alignment e.g. a mix of in-person and remote Technical Assistance. Enhance visibility of regional programmes at the national level and connect bilateral and regional programmes for knowledge sharing. 	<p>Reaffirm mutually shared values, principles and ways of working</p> <p>Enhance coherence, efficiency and results</p>
Effectiveness, programmatic focus and engagement strategies across 4YP (including governance) 	<p>Considering resource constraints and the dynamic operating context, consolidate the Programme by strategic selection of activities and thematic areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmatic/Activity selection: Approach the prioritisation process by considering activities based on their potential to achieve outcomes (both developmental and partnerships) and their strategic alignment to both NZ and Vanuatu priorities. Through a Keep, Expand, Drop analysis, identify to retain, consolidate or finish activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to fund activities with potential to achieve outcomes and high alignment to NZ and Vanuatu priorities 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. For these activities, there should be clear exit strategies to avoid backsliding and potential loss of key gains made. Thematic selection/ focus: Another way to prioritise activities is to make strategic choices to reduce the number of sectors and outcome areas that NZ commits to support. Options for sectoral prioritisation include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationalise medium-term outcomes (MTOs) as part of the new 4YP theory of change, based on an assessment of the most urgent current needs. This would result in more consolidated programming that would be simpler to manage and monitor. Keep a range of STOs that contribute to broad outcomes areas, to enable NZ to work at all levels and support different types of partners. Consider governance as an overarching theme connecting MTOs linked to the 'supply' and 'demand' sides of governance, still with a broad range of STOs. 	<p>Support sectors where MFAT has comparative advantage and elevate governance as a key driver of overall development effectiveness</p>

Objective	Recommendation	Benefit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In developing a programme centred around governance, NZ should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need and value in continuing to stand beside like-minded officials to continue progressing reform in the public service, judiciary and other areas of governance to maintain morale and momentum. A governance lens allows for NZ to continue working in areas the evaluation identified as key opportunities: civil society (demand for governance, community engagement, social justice); community-based activities (extending services/strengthening demand), gender equality (representation); economic governance, institutional strengthening. Strengthen the focus on creating 'demand' for governance, through education and support for civil society to develop capacity for influencing services and policy. This could be done through adjustments to existing activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to use VEEP with a multilateral partner (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) to drive political and electoral reform, to maintain a distance between NZ government and sensitive political issues. There is potential to strengthen the focus on community engagement, which is already part of VEEP. Noting the value of flexible funding to achievement of partnership outcomes and to balance coherence and responsiveness, consider establishing a process or fund for flexible funding requests as part of the Programme. The flexible funding will be used to support ad hoc partner requests without compromising the strategic focus and delivery of the Programme. This could include disaster response. 	
	<p>Prioritise MEL strengthening at Post to support performance management and monitoring of the 4YP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. The MEL STA should also build MEL capacity of the Post staff to adequately monitor, collect evidence and support the use of evidence for adaptive management. Allocate resources at Post to support programme design, monitoring and completion of activities to validate results and harvest outcomes. Resources should also be allocated for activity and thematic evaluations to understand what is working and what is not. Continue to embed structured reflection and learning from results as part of the programme monitoring and reporting activities. 	Strengthen MEL that will support performance management and adaptive management
<p>Partnerships and collaboration with other development partners</p> 	<p>Support donor coordination, collaboration and support to Vanuatu's donor coordination office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Enhance donor coordination and harmonisation for effectiveness and provide visibility for NZ at the highest office in Vanuatu

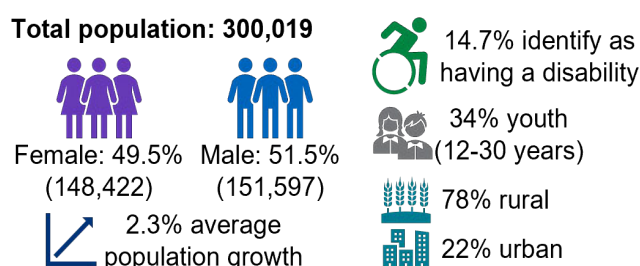
1 Vanuatu Development Context

This chapter provides an overview of Vanuatu's economic and social context, Vanuatu's Official Development Assistance (ODA) from both bilateral and multilateral development partners as well as New Zealand's (NZ) bilateral and regional development support to Vanuatu.

1.1 Overview of Vanuatu

Vanuatu is an archipelago of 83 islands, with six provinces, Torba, Sanma, Malampa, Penama, Shefa and Tafea.

Figure 1. Summary of Vanuatu Population (2020)¹



The majority of households in Vanuatu, 72.7%, reside on customary land: 10.6% on rural land lease, 5.6% on urban land lease and the remaining 11.1% on land occupied without payment or in informal arrangements.²

The poverty headcount ratio was 9.96% in 2019. This is the percentage of the population living on less than \$2.15 a day as of 2017 purchasing power adjusted prices.³ Life expectancy at birth in Vanuatu is 71.6 years for males and 74.2 years for females.⁴

1.1.1 Political context

According to the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) conducted as part of this evaluation, governance in Vanuatu reflects a complex interplay of democratic processes, traditional authority, Christian influence, and cultural values of respect, harmony, unity, and forgiveness. Since achieving independence in 1980, the country has remained steadfastly committed to its status as 'a sovereign democratic state'. Overall, the democratic framework has held up well, evidenced by regular free and fair elections, peaceful transitions of power, a judiciary renowned for its impartiality, and respect for the rule of law.

Further the PEA and the seminal political economy study by Marcus Cox and team (2007) notes, despite the solid foundations, Vanuatu is still described as an unfinished state.⁵ This remains a fair assessment of a young democracy, transitioning from colonial-era administration, and working to strengthen political agencies and its institutions of government. The main barriers to state-building that Cox and team identified continue to ring true today: the enduring dysfunction and divisions of colonialism; reliance on a small human resource base; the limited outreach of the state beyond the capital; and a fragmented political system based on patronage rather than competing policy ideas.

Most notably, Vanuatu continues to grapple with persistent political instability. In addition to the 11 changes of prime minister over the 12 general elections held to date, there have been 15 further changes executed through parliamentary motions of no-confidence. Frequent leadership changes, politicisation of the public service, and limited administrative capacity have been identified by interlocutors for this study as the main contemporary issues. Together these three factors diminish the state's already limited ability to deliver services and meet the needs of the people.

1.1.2 Socio-economic context

Against the backdrop of ever-present political uncertainty, the country experienced a period of catastrophic disasters and shocks between 2015-23, causing considerable social and economic upheaval. Cyclone Pam hit in March 2015 as the most severe storm in living memory, leaving years of rebuilding and piecing together shattered lives. It was followed by a succession of further life-changing events, including the eruption of the Manaro Voui volcano on Ambae island, which led to the compulsory evacuation of the entire population and their subsequent repatriation in 2017-18. Cyclone Harold hit in April 2020, just days after the international borders closed, and would stay shut for two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Cyclone Judy struck at the end of February 2023, followed just 48 hours later by 'twin' Cyclone Kevin, and seven months later, out-of-season Cyclone Lola made landfall in October 2023. Ever looming is the prospect of future shocks and disasters.

The compounding trauma associated with the human toll and the social and economic costs of deadly, destructive disasters cannot be underestimated. In a very small country, made up of close-knit communities, first responders and their families are

¹ 2020 National Population census accessed https://vbos.gov.vu/sites/default/files/2020NPHC_Volume_1.pdf 1 October 2024

² Land Tenure Infographics accessed on source <https://vbos.gov.vu/land-tenure-infographics>

³ World Bank, Poverty and inequality Platform <https://data.worldbank.org/country/vanuatu>

⁴ 20 National Population census accessed <https://vbos.gov.vu/population-infographics> Accessed 1 October 2024

⁵ Political economy study by Marcus Cox and team (2007)

most directly impacted, as are the people charged with directing response and recovery efforts.

After the destruction of Cyclone Pam, the government revived its long-dormant citizenship-for-sale programme to offset declining tourism receipts and pay for recovery and rebuilding. By 2019, citizenship (passport) sales were delivering strong revenue returns, which, together with substantial cash balances and enhanced levels of grant support, helped weather the pandemic and finance Cyclone Harold relief and recovery packages without increasing sovereign debt. Recurrent and capital development budgets ballooned between 2019-23, on the back of the revenues generated by passport sales, but so too did regulatory concerns. Revenues collapsed largely due to the suspension in February 2023 of visa-free access to the European Union (EU).

Furthermore, Table 1, drawn from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates, provides a brief overview of Vanuatu's forecasted economic growth.

Table 1. Vanuatu Economic indicators

Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	4.2%
Inflation	2.3%	4.8%	4.0%	3.0%

1.1.3 ODA funding to Vanuatu

Vanuatu has the eighth-highest ODA to Gross National Income ratio in the Pacific region Islands, with aid accounting for 15% of national income. Between 2008 and 2021, annual Official Development Finance (ODF) disbursements to Vanuatu — including grants, loans, and other forms of assistance — averaged \$175 million (in constant 2021 USD). Almost a quarter (19%) of ODF received by Vanuatu between 2008 and 2021 was in the form of loans.⁶ The highest amount of ODA contributions has been to the infrastructure sector, followed by the Government and civil society sector as in Table 2.

Table 2. Development partner funding by Sector (2023) (USD millions)⁷

Sector	Aid committed	Aid spent	Projects
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	122.76m	96.75m	214
Education	390.25m	322.10m	333
Government & Civil society	587.53m	581.90m	843

⁶ Lowy Institute – Vanuatu [Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map - 2023 Key Findings Report](#)

⁷ Lowy Institute – Vanuatu - [PACIFIC AID MAP | DASHBOARD \(lowyinstitute.org\)](#)

⁸ These figures reflect all Official Development Finance, including grants, loans, and other forms of assistance. New Zealand is the second largest donor of grants – see Table 3.

Sector	Aid committed	Aid spent	Projects
Health	213.05m	184.64m	430
Humanitarian Aid	272.25m	227.48m	208
Industry, mining & construction	20.51m	20.54m	133
Multisector/ cross-cutting	192.62m	171.20m	360
Other/unspecified	17.56m	19.59m	83
Infrastructure	977.20m	771.37m	296

Over the last three years (2020-2022), the vast majority of ODA support to Vanuatu has come from five development partners, led by Australia (56%), China (16%), the ADB (11%), NZ (9%) and the World Bank (8%)⁸. Key development partners are summarised in Table 3 and detailed summaries of each partner contributed to Vanuatu is shown in Annex 5.

Table 3. Development partners funding in Vanuatu (2020-2022, value is in USD)⁹

Key partner	ODA Grants	ODA Loans
Bilateral Development Partners		
1. Australia	\$219M	0
2. China	\$37M	\$71.3M
3. New Zealand	\$60.8M	0
4. Japan	\$19M	0
5. France	\$13.7M	0
6. United States	\$5.2M	0
7. United Kingdom	\$1.2 M	0
Multilateral Development Partners		
1. World Bank	\$30.3M	\$22.3M
2. ADB	\$42.5M	\$11.7M
3. United Nation Agencies¹⁰	\$1.3M	0
4. Green Climate Fund (EU)	\$11.7M	0
5. EU Institutions	\$30.7M	0
6. International Fund for Agricultural	0	0
7. Global Green Growth Institute	\$49.8K	0
8. Climate Investment Fund	\$6.6M	0

1.2 New Zealand development cooperation in Vanuatu

As detailed in Vanuatu's Four Year Plan (4YP), NZ established a High Commission in Vanuatu in 1987

⁹ Lowy Institute – Pacific Map - [Database - Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map](#)

¹⁰ UN Agencies includes the following: UN Women, UNIDO, UN Capital Development Fund, UN Environment Programme

The Government of Vanuatu (GoV) is represented in NZ through a High Commission in Wellington (opened in 2018) and a Consulate-General in Auckland.

1.2.1 New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) strategic objectives and priorities

NZ's relationship with Vanuatu has global, regional, and bilateral elements. At the broadest level, the two countries maintain a shared commitment to the rules-based international order and principles of democracy and open government. Recently, for the first time, NZ and Vanuatu signed a Statement of Partnership that outlines principles and ways of working and reaffirms NZ and GoV's mutually reinforcing values. NZ's Foreign Minister stated that the "Mauri Statement of Partnership" is a joint expression of the values, priorities, and principles that will guide the future Aotearoa New Zealand–Vanuatu relationship. 'Mauri' is a word that means "living" or "growing" in a number of Ni-Vanuatu languages. This is an apt reflection of the positive and enduring partnership between NZ and Vanuatu".¹¹

1.2.2 Overview of the 4YP

To operationalise its development programme in Vanuatu and ensure agreed outcomes are achieved,

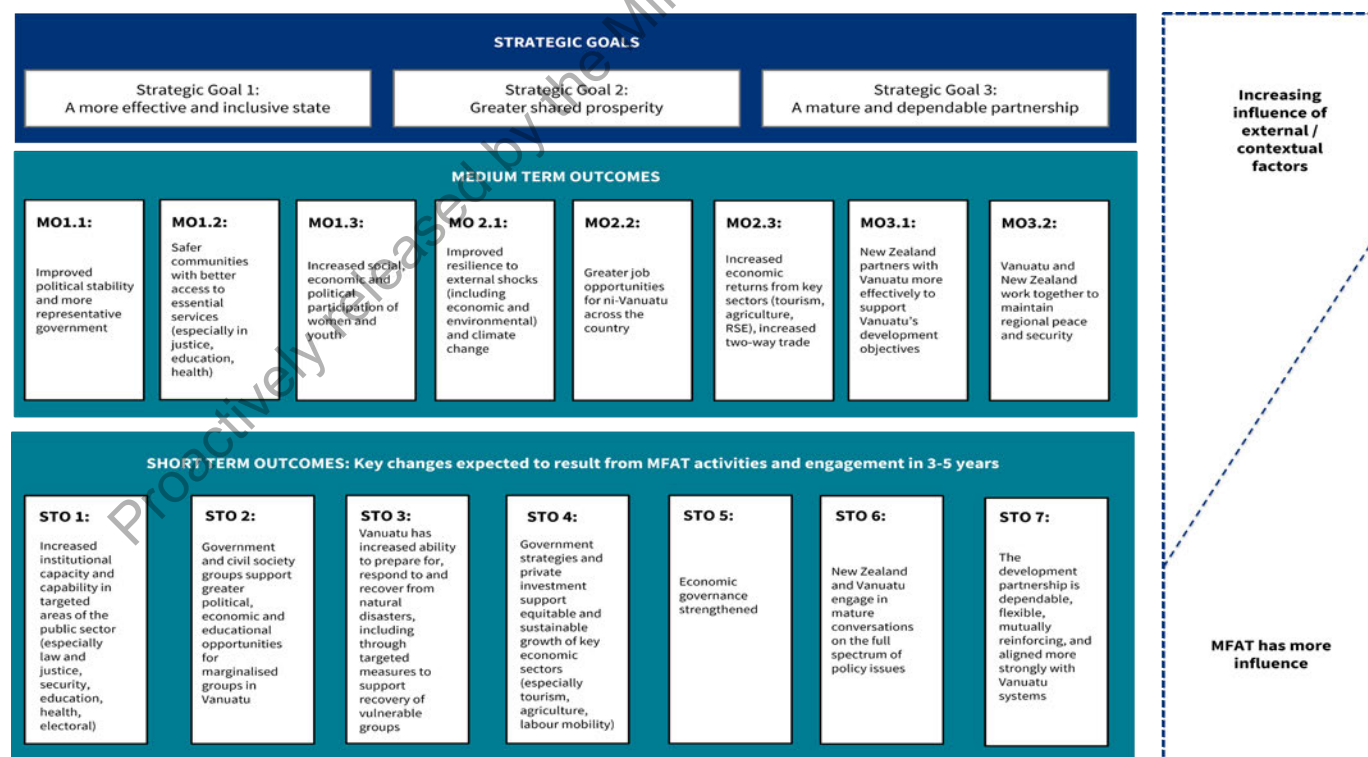
NZ developed the Vanuatu 4YP in 2021. The 4YP provides a platform for dialogue to achieve development and foreign policy outcomes through the bilateral relationship and development assistance including multilateral support, foreign policy and trade. NZ works closely with the GoV to ensure that the bilateral development cooperation aligns with Vanuatu's development priorities. The 4YP's key strategic goals fit well within the three pillars of Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan.

Figure 2 outlines the 4YP's theory of change with goals, medium-term outcomes (MTOs) and the short-term outcomes (STOs)

To operationalise its development programme in Vanuatu and ensure agreed outcomes are achieved, NZ uses a mix of modalities and implementing partners. Across all of its work, NZ aims to:

- Engage closely with the GoV to ensure the Programme continues to meet Vanuatu's development priorities and fits changing circumstances
- Draw on expertise from within and across NZ Government agencies to operationalise the development programme, and
- Continue and grow the partnership between Vanuatu, NZ, and other key bilateral partners, donors, and the wider region.

Figure 2. Theory of change diagram for the Vanuatu 4 Year Plan October 2021



Thematic areas of focus in Vanuatu

¹¹ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/aotearoa-new-zealand-committed-enduring-partnership-vanuatu>

NZ's development programme aims to foster more effective services delivered by the state, and greater shared prosperity for Ni-Vanuatu.¹² Accordingly, the 4YP identifies priorities as:

- **Governance and institutions** - to strengthen government systems and improve service delivery
- **The economy** - through improving the management of tourism and agriculture, recognising the importance of labour mobility
- **Climate and environment** - applying a climate change lens to all activities given climate change impacts all/most engagement modalities
- **Equity and inclusion** - promote gender equality and inclusion.

1.2.3 New Zealand's total aid flow to Vanuatu

From 2015-2023, according to DevData, NZ's International Development Cooperation Data,¹³ the total ODA expenditure was approximately \$263 million NZD. Figure 3 highlights the overall expenditure (a full table of the detailed expenditure per sector is detailed in Annex 4).

1.2.4 Scoped activities for this evaluation

NZ delivers a range of activities to meet its development and partnership outcomes in Vanuatu. However, to help meet the evaluation objectives, a number of activities were selected as a focus by MFAT. Table 4 provides a summary of the activities including their status, focus and value. These activities are a sub-set of the broader Programme that were selected specifically for this evaluation in order to explore efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and norms. Additional activities details are provided in Annex 2.

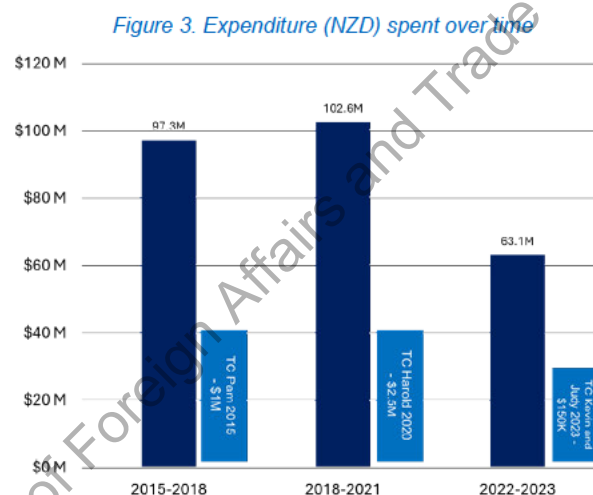


Table 4. Evaluation selected activities 2015-2023¹⁴

Activity (20 in total)	Status	Focus	Year	Value (NZD)
Bilateral Programmes (12)				
Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP)	Closed	Governance	2018 to 2022	\$5,102,299.74
VEEP Phase II	Active	Governance	2020 to 2022	\$6,000,000
Vanuatu Police Support Phase I	Active	Governance (Justice)	2021 to 2024	\$7,000,000
Gender Based Violence Prevention	Active	Non-governance	2019 to 2024	\$5,406,218.87
Support to the Judiciary	Active	Governance	2003 to 2026	\$9,128,712.98
Wan Smolbag 2020-2025	Active	Non-governance	2003 to 2026	\$4,508,113.28
Economic Governance	Active	Economic	2022 to 2025	\$3,530,923.29
Correction Services Partnership	Closed	Governance (Justice)	2017 to 2025	\$6,175,070.93
Corrections Support 2021-2025	Active	Governance (Justice)	2014 to 2023	\$234,257.94
Vanuatu Tourism Assistance Programme	Closed	Economic	2021 to 2025	\$11,063,491.47
Vanuatu Tourism Infrastructure	Closed	Economic	2012 to 2024	\$17,624,395.64
Water Sector Partnership Phase I	Closed	Non-governance	2017 to 2021	\$12,992,620.08
Regional Programmes (6)				
Pacific Justice Sector 2021-2026 (this is the latest phase of the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative)	Active	Governance	2021 to 2026	\$9,019,757.50
Pacific Parliamentary Strengthening – Tai a Kiwa	Active	Governance	2019 to 2024	\$9,059,521.41
Pacific Public Services Fale	Active	Governance	2019 to 2025	\$13,642,932.93
Transparency International Indo-Pacific Programme	Active	Governance	2024 to 2024	\$3,400,000
Pacific Regional Audit Support 2019-24	Closed	Governance	2019 to 2024	\$8,440,812.54
Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative	Closed	Governance	2016 to 2023	\$9,964,802.96
Partnership Fund (1)				
World Vision Negotiated Partnership	Active	Non-governance	2020 to 2025	\$13,697,190.10
Short-term training (1)				
Short term-training scholarships–Public Sector Leadership	Active	Governance	2022 to 2023	\$45,562.07

¹² MFAT - [Vanuatu pptx.pdf \(mfat.govt.nz\)](#)

¹³ MFAT - [Activities | DevData \(mfat.govt.nz\)](#)

2 Evaluation Methodology

This participatory strategic evaluation (the evaluation) was commissioned by MFAT. The evaluation was undertaken from March to December 2024, and was conducted in four phases:

- Evaluation planning, scoping and desktop review
- Primary data collection
- Analysis, sensemaking and draft reporting
- Final reporting.

During the primary data collection phase, in-country travel to Vanuatu was undertaken in August 2024 for stakeholder interviews and remote stakeholder interviews were conducted up until September 2024. Sensemaking workshop with MFAT Post and Desk was held in October 2024 before finalising the drafting this Evaluation Report. A summary of the evaluation approach is presented below, with a more complete overview of methods in Annex 3.

2.1 Evaluation objective

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess NZ's state of relationships and partnerships in Vanuatu and the effectiveness of the Programme. The evaluation also assessed the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu and how it impacts on NZ's wider development programme and the outcomes it is trying to achieve. The evaluation objectives were carefully selected in collaboration with MFAT through scoping workshops held in Port Vila in June 2024. The key evaluation objectives were:

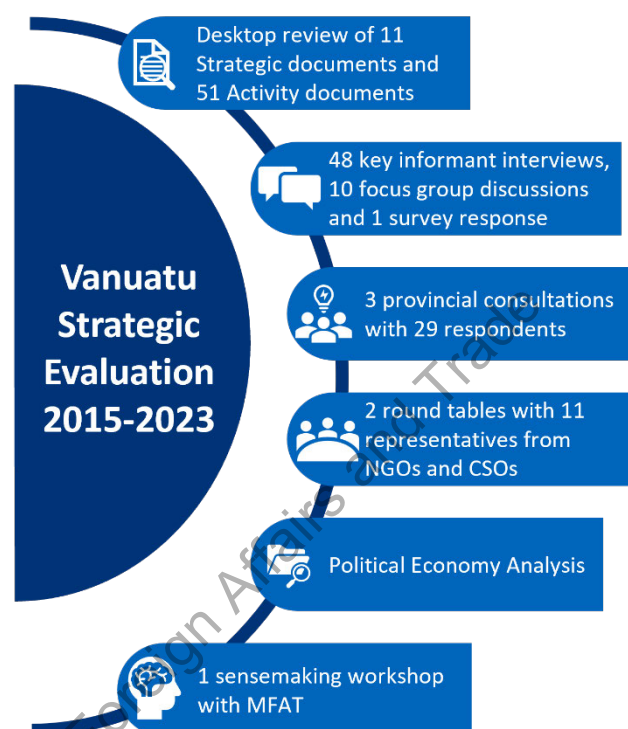
- To understand how NZ is perceived as a partner and what is NZ's advantage compared with other development partners
- To investigate the Programme's effectiveness and the extent to which it has or is expected to achieve its intended outcomes outlined in the Vanuatu 4YP
- To understand the governance and democratic context and understand how this impacts NZ's programming, including effectiveness and mainstreaming
- To consider how the future phase of the Programme can best support Vanuatu's development priorities and NZ's strategic interests.

2.2 Evaluation approach

The evaluation utilised a mixed-methods approach combining different forms of data collection (primary and secondary) in a phased manner and combining both qualitative and quantitative data sources. The evaluation also conducted a PEA to inform a nuanced understanding of the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu and recommend some

entry points for NZ. Figure 4 summarises the key methods utilised in this evaluation.

Figure 4. Evaluation approach and methods



The evaluation analysis applied a two-stage process with the first stage focused on producing a clean, consolidated and organised dataset and the second on identifying and prioritising emerging findings based on the strength of evidence. Evidence from multiple data sources was then triangulated to inform the evaluation's findings and future considerations.

2.3 The evaluation scope

The evaluation covered the Programme over the period from 2015 to 2023 and focused on the scoped bilateral and regional activities (Table 4). The evaluation considered the overall Programme, its coherence, relevance and effectiveness rather than activity level results and impact.

The Programme interacts with development partners at several levels, who in turn interact with various development partners. These development partners share priorities with the NZ bilateral or regional Programme. The evaluation consulted various stakeholders across national and provincial government, non-state actors including Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organisations, NZ Inc (NZ Public Agencies), community members, and other development partners. The diversity and range of the stakeholders enabled the evaluation team to gather insights, verify and triangulate the evaluation findings about the Programme, and provide MFAT with considerations for the future phase of the Programme.

2.4 Limitations

This evaluation is subject to some limitations given its scope, type and the design and delivery of the Programme. Some of the limitations are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Evaluation limitations

Limitation	Detail
Contribution vs attribution in understanding effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NZ Programme is one of many actors supporting development in Vanuatu. Therefore, the Programme's effectiveness and impact should be understood in the context that the Programme activities and outputs can contribute to outcomes, but outcomes (especially higher-level outcomes) cannot be solely attributed to MFAT.
Strategic vs activity evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This being a strategic evaluation, there was more focus on the Programme's alignment, coherence and delivery and less focus on individual activities implementation and impact.
Consistent and up to date programme and activity data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessing and verifying the authenticity of some of the evaluation data was a challenge. Some data sources (Activity Monitoring Assessments (AMAs) and Activity Completion Assessments (ACAs)) did not provide up-to-date data in the effectiveness ratings and some data points were missing limiting the ability to assess trends. In some cases, there was no baseline data inhibiting ability to assess targets achieved.
In-scope activities sample could not cover all relevant activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation reviewed a sample of activities in line with the evaluation focus. In some cases, activities that may have provided useful insights were not assessed, so MFAT will need to nuance evaluation findings with own knowledge.

3 Partnerships and relationships

This chapter presents key findings on how NZ is perceived by the GoV and other non-state actors and responds to the evaluation objective one. The

chapter further explores key elements that set NZ apart as a development partner, whether NZ's support has been impactful, and areas where NZ support is deemed relevant and useful. The chapter concludes by looking at the potential risks to the partnerships and what NZ can do to remain relevant and a trusted partner in Vanuatu.

Key evaluation questions:

1. How do the Government of Vanuatu, non-state actors and other donor partners perceive New Zealand as a partner?

- What elements of the partnerships and ways of working set New Zealand apart from other development partners? (comparative advantage)
- Where do the partners see New Zealand support as most useful and relevant?
- What could be improved? (activities, engagement strategies etc)

3.1.1 Overall positive perceptions of New Zealand as a development partner

NZ's partnership approach in Vanuatu.

The partnership between NZ and Vanuatu is outlined in the Mauri Partnership (signed in Vanuatu on 30 March 2023 by the then respective Foreign Ministers),¹⁵ with mutually shared values and operational principles. The partnership's priority areas include custom and indigenous culture; resilience; trade; health; education; security; and an expectation of mutual accountability and focus on results. The partnership is further cemented in NZ's 2021 4YP goal of a *mature and dependable partnership* underpinned by the principles of whanaungatanga, painga kotahi and friendship, illustrated through the 4YP's STOs and MTOs.^{16 17}

Positive perception of NZ as a development partner.

There is positive perception of NZ as a development partner across government and non-state actors. When asked to describe NZ as a development partner in one word, stakeholders interviewed used words such as 'approachable', 'helpful', or 'true Pacific partner'. Figure 5 presents a word-cloud of key words used to describe NZ by the consulted stakeholders.

¹⁵ Mauri Partnership - [Vanuatu-New Zealand leaders Joint Statement - 01.08.24](#)

¹⁶ **Short-term outcomes:** New Zealand and Vanuatu engage in mature conversations on the full spectrum of policy issues and the development partnership is dependable, flexible, mutually reinforcing, and aligned more strongly with Vanuatu systems.
Medium-term outcomes: New Zealand Partners with Vanuatu to

more effectively to support Vanuatu's development objectives and Vanuatu and New Zealand work together to maintain regional peace and security

¹⁷ Indicators: Increased number of high-level engagements between Aotearoa New Zealand and Vanuatu and Greater proportion of New Zealand development funding delivered through Vanuatu Government systems.

[illegible]

This trust places NZ in a strong position to pursue strategic and meaningful engagement with the GoV. Additionally, senior GoV officials noted that, because of the trust in NZ, there are opportunities and increased willingness to discuss and engage NZ in politically sensitive areas such as governance, public

3.1.3 Positive relationships and partnerships driven by the partner-led approach, high levels of flexibility, openness and the willingness to listen to the needs and priorities of the partners sets NZ apart.

The evaluation findings are corroborated by the 2023 OECD peer review which noted that NZ has strong partnerships in Vanuatu and the wider Pacific.¹⁸ The review noted that NZ's strength lies in its flexibility and agility with partner-led approaches to development, utilisations of budget support and other high trust modalities, and integration of development programmes and foreign policy – all of which contributes to NZ standing as a trusted, reliable and flexible partner.

3.1.4 Delivery of technical assistance through NZ Inc has mixed results, with correlation between in-country presence and developed relationships, greater relevance and stronger partnerships. Opportunities exist to further scope the approach to facilitate relationship-building, define contextually relevant roles and support closer collaboration.

From a strategic and development perspective, the use of NZ Inc. gives MFAT a national and regional footprint in locations and sectors where they have minimal programming presence. It also provides the

opportunity for NZ to demonstrate strong democratic institutions through the example of NZ.

NZ agency stakeholders reported that NZ's strong institutions provide a model for Vanuatu to build on. They considered that specialised technical assistance from these institutions was an important benefit.

However, national partners' perceptions indicated that the approach is appreciated but is yet to be designed and delivered for effectiveness. The FIFO model can make it difficult for NZ officials to build and sustain relationships. Nonetheless, advisers interested in or committed to Vanuatu's context can be very effective, as in the Community Policing programme, where NZ officials work side-by-side with Vanuatu communities to solve problems. Where NZ Inc provided in-person support, the evaluation found positive feedback from the Vanuatu partners, who noted enhanced capacity and capability in the key sectors. This highlights the need to select advisers, define the scope of work carefully, and provide opportunities for ongoing face-to-face engagement and relationship-building. For instance, NZ's support to the judiciary allows judges to be seconded to the Vanuatu Supreme Court. The in-person presence has been significant, as has the Police Support Programme, which seconds NZ police to work with the Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) at the national and provincial levels to build their capacity. The regional Pacific Judicial Strengthening Programme has been described as very successful in terms of engagement and activity implementation, and there are now more requests for support from across the Pacific than the available budget can cover.

Convening or training activities outside Vanuatu, such as the Public Sector Strengthening, Parliamentary Strengthening activities or the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) initiatives, provide networking and the opportunity to learn from peers or leaders from similar contexts. Interviews showed that Vanuatu only rarely engages with these opportunities and the evaluation found little reference to Vanuatu in regional reports. These activities were also not raised in consultations with Vanuatu-based stakeholders. Again, this may be the result of the limited opportunities for NZ-based or regional projects to connect with officials in Vanuatu to build understanding or interest in the activities.

However, where there was limited in-country presence, such as for PASAI and the Parliamentary Strengthening activities, the evaluation found little evidence that the approach is working. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that they were either unfamiliar with the approach or that the FIFO model can be ineffective as it inhibits relationship-building and sustainability. This is not surprising given that Vanuatu is a relational country where deeper and

more meaningful engagement is enhanced when delivered in person.

Given that the NZ Inc approach intends to build local partners' capacity and capability, and noting Vanuatu's relational nature, the future phase should scope an approach that invests in relationship building and contextually specific responses, to ensure support is tailored appropriately, and to maximise NZ Inc contribution to Vanuatu. This requires NZ High Commission to play a more active role in facilitating introductions and brokering relationships and contextual understanding between NZ-based stakeholders and those in Vanuatu to strengthen strategic alignment, quality, and sustainability of results. If engagement or interest from Vanuatu is low, activities should not be initiated.

3.1.5 Slow approval and mobilisation processes, high staff turnover and a perception of a shift towards security are risks to the partnerships and relationships.

Although perceptions of NZ as a development partner are largely positive, stakeholders identified some areas that pose a risk to the relationship including:

- Slow systems, approval and mobilisation processes impact engagement, motivation and momentum of partners. For instance, through key informant interviews (KIIs), GoV reported situations where delayed processes and mobilisations have delayed progress of some approved activities. For instance, delayed partnership agreements were noted by the Department of Tourism while the Ministry of Trade and development partners such as the ADB also noted the lengthy NZ procurement rules that can delay implementation or sometimes be in conflict with partners rules leading to prolonged delays. They noted that in such cases, the delay goes against the spirit of flexibility. They also noted that processes are slowed by Post's need for approval from Wellington. They suggested that NZ adopt the Australian approach whereby Port Vila is granted some delegation authority. High seconded staff turnover both at Post as well as and the GoV continues to hinder sustained and genuine partnerships which by creating es a stop-start approach to building relationships which is not effective. Even though this is a widespread challenge in the development sector and is not unique to NZ, it is particularly challenging in contexts like Vanuatu where relationships are important. This demands relationship continuity as a key focus of the programme across the range of partners
- s6(a)

s6(a)

2.2 What partnership outcomes have been achieved alongside development outcomes?

2.3 What factors have facilitated and/or hindered the achievement of the outcomes?

In assessing the effectiveness of the Programme, the following should be considered:

- Self-reporting and positive bias. The evaluation relied on MFAT's AMAs and ACAs for the initial assessment of effectiveness. Noting that most of the reporting data is developed by the activity managers, there is potential for positive bias in progress reporting and overall effectiveness ratings (see Figure 6 and Figure 7). To mitigate this limitation, the evaluation corroborated the reported results with stakeholder interviews where feasible to provide a nuanced picture of key results achieved.
- The 4YP theory of change outcomes were used as the basis for assessing effectiveness. The absence of a 4YP results framework with indicators has limited the evaluation's ability to make judgement on the extent to which outcomes have been achieved or not. In response, the evaluation reviewed documents and leveraged stakeholder interviews to assess results and then mapped activities against the 4YP outcomes to understand progress. To this end, the results reported are mostly positive, capturing progress at input, output, and, where possible, at the STO level.

4.1.1 Evidence of achievement of outputs and some short-term outcomes

The Programme's 4YP theory of change has seven STOs, eight MTOs, and three strategic goals. The outcome areas are broad and ambitious and cover support for institutional capacity and capability, support to government and CSOs, disaster preparedness and response, private sector investment, economic governance, and partnerships and collaborations between the NZ government and the GoV. The high ambition of the theory of change and the outcome areas does not account for the time required for some of the outcomes to occur in a dynamic context like in Vanuatu. Though the STOs are pitched to be achieved in three to five years, this is still not enough if the time required for internal processes, activities design, and the time required to build relationships and trust is considered. Future efforts should investigate how the outcome statements could be narrowed to reflect what is achievable within the life of a 4YP and what success could look like in the short to medium term. This would require a results framework to accompany the 4YP theory of change to operationalise how the outcomes will be measured.

4 Effectiveness

This chapter presents the analysis and findings relating to the extent to which the Programme has achieved or is expected to achieve outcomes as outlined in the Vanuatu 4YP theory of change and responds to objective two of the evaluation. It does so by examining the results observed in each of the scoped activities (see Annex 6) and assesses their contribution to the overall 4YP outcomes. It also explores performance across sectors and modalities and provides commentary on whether the current Programme size and thematic focus is right to support overall achievement of these outcomes.

Key evaluation questions:

2.1 To what extent has New Zealand achieved the intended outcomes as outlined in the Vanuatu 4YP theory of change, with a focus on economic development? What insights can we draw from comparisons between performance across sectors and modalities? What sectors and modalities are performing well and what sectors are not?

Enhancing institutional capacity and capability in Vanuatu through targeted support.

NZ supports capacity and capability in Vanuatu through a range of activities. These include but are not limited to support to the judiciary, correction services, the Department of Water Resources (DoWR), and the community policing support programme. Evidence from the Programme monitoring reports shows key results in enhancing capacity and capability across partners and sectors. For instance, support for the judiciary and correction services has enhanced the GoV officials' capacity to deliver services. This has included reducing the backlog of cases for the judiciary and strengthening the operational capacity of the corrections services. These results were corroborated by the interviews held with Senior GoV officials from these departments. For instance, the senior judiciary official applauded NZ's long-term support of the judiciary. Because of the long-term support to the judiciary, the GoV official noted that NZ has gained the trust of the judiciary. They confirmed that the seconded judges have been instrumental in enhancing the efficiency and delivery of justice in the courts. Also, interviews with the Department of Corrections Services corroborated the achievements due to NZ support. The GoV official noted that through technical assistance, NZ has supported legislation and improved internal processes and procedures.

"The engagement with NZ in Vanuatu is something I am thankful. It really helps build the culture that corrections is part of the governance and how we go about supervising the detainees." – Dipatmen Blong Koreksonal Sevis (DBKS) official

Supporting Vanuatu's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters through targeted measures.

NZ supports disaster preparedness and response in Vanuatu through various measures. These include community preparedness training under the Water Sector Partnership (WSP), support for disaster response through joint police operations immediately after disasters and supporting the safety of women and other vulnerable groups after disasters through Gender Protection Clusters at the national and provincial levels. Support to enhance community resilience is delivered through initiatives delivered by the Wan Smolbag (WSB) programme. Reporting shows key results achieved across these initiatives, which were corroborated by stakeholder interviews held at the national and community level. For instance, the Vanuatu police Force (VPF) reported enhanced capacity for operational support to Joint Police Operations Centre in response to COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold. Through NZ support the VPF capacity for disaster response was enhanced through capability for situational reporting and Standard Operating Procedures. Further, interviews with community members in Santo reported enhanced resilience as a result of the community training packages delivered under the

WSP. Provincial and community leaders noted that through disaster packages and community training delivered, there is evidence of resilience in the community as a result of the water safety plans and enhanced resilience of water systems, thus providing safely managed drinking water and sanitation to the communities in Santo. In addition, interviews with senior GoV officials at the Ministry of Climate Change noted that NZ sector budget support to the ministry is instrumental in enhancing resilience at a system and community level because of the huge potential in improving capacity at the ministry also supporting the ministry delivery of programmes that enhance resilience for ni-Vanuatu.

4.1.2 The diversity of NZ partners and activities enables NZ to extend its influence and priorities, at the country and community level.

Supporting safer communities with better access to essential services through community programmes.

There was consensus among stakeholders interviewed that NZ support is relevant and useful in the key service delivery sectors and is supporting safer communities by improving access to essential services through community programmes. For instance, there was consensus among stakeholders interviewed in the government and community as to the impact of the WSP. For instance, in the first year of WSP implementation, safe and secure water projects were completed in eight communities in Pentecost, 100 Drinking Water Safety and Security Plans were completed at selected sites across every province, 30 direct gravity feed systems, and 30 rainwater harvest system designs were completed and readied for commencement of works. Also, an accredited plumbing course was completed by 62 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) technicians from across Santo and Pentecost. Four WASH cluster meetings were held for the emergency response following Tropical Cyclone Lola, which allowed the DoWR to coordinate a more effective and timely overall response. Furthermore, focus group discussions (FGDs) with community members in Santo reported enhanced access to safe drinking water and the ability of the WSP to support not just delivery but also to enhance water governance in the community. Similar community sentiments were reported, and discussions were held on the impact of the Community Safety Teams delivered as part of the Police Support Programme. Supporting disaster preparedness and response and addressing the impacts of climate change were also noted as areas where NZ was relevant. GoV officials mentioned NZ sectoral budget support to the Ministry of Climate Change as a proactive measure to build resilience in Vanuatu.

Investment in targeted governance and public sector reforms has achieved results.

NZ was also deemed relevant in funding targeted governance programmes with evidence that some

have been effective. NZ supports targeted governance programming (see more in 5.1.2) through support for electoral reforms (VEEP), economic governance (Economic Governance), law and order (Police Support and Corrections Programme), civic engagement (WSB) and support to the judiciary (see section 5 on governance), which was described as transformative by GoV. Through VEEP, most stakeholders noted that NZ has been able to engage in a politically sensitive sector through strategic partnerships and has advanced reforms in Vanuatu. Stakeholders noted that through VEEP, NZ has developed a blueprint for engaging in sensitive governance issues without compromising relationships and partnerships with the GoV.

Senior government officials also reported that the Economic Governance Programme has had an impact on supporting economic stability. This resulted from reform-linked budget support and appropriately targeted technical assistance focusing on policy reforms at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management. The government noted that these activities have supported the dual benefits of macroeconomic stability but also supported reforms and enhanced government processes and systems.

Supporting local partners institutional capacity towards locally-led development.

The evaluation found evidence of institutional strengthening across the Programme with support provided to partners (both state and non-state actors) to develop their systems and process as well as build their human resource capacity and capability to deliver on their mandates.

Spotlight: Supporting local institutions through core funding

Established by World Vision Vanuatu in 2021, the Relationship Education and Choices Healing (REACH) Famili Senta is a local organisation working to end violence against women and children. Currently, MFAT provides bilateral grants to support the delivery of key programmes - Men Be the Change and Lefemap Mama – and finances operational costs to strengthen the REACH's localisation agenda to successfully transition into a local entity by 2025. One of the key examples established by the evaluation is the multiple benefits of the REACH Programme. Through the Programme, NZ is achieving not only results in capacity building but all supporting institutional strengthening of the local partners to implement gender-based programmes and enhance inclusion of the marginalised communities through core funding. Interviewed CSOs noted this example as a way NZ can support local partners to build their systems and processes. Given the lack of systems and processes by most of the local CSOs and CBOs, targeted core funding can build the organisations up to a level where they can attract funding from other development partners.

4.1.3 Good progress in achieving outputs and STOs is confirmed by the positive AMAs and ACAs effectiveness ratings, however positive bias should be considered.

Activities progress reports include an effectiveness rating from a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 is no rating, 1 is poor and 5 is very good. Analysis of the effectiveness rating for the scoped activities shows an average of 4 (progress towards outputs) and 3.8 (progress towards STOs) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Scoped activities AMA/ACA rating for progress towards outputs and STOs

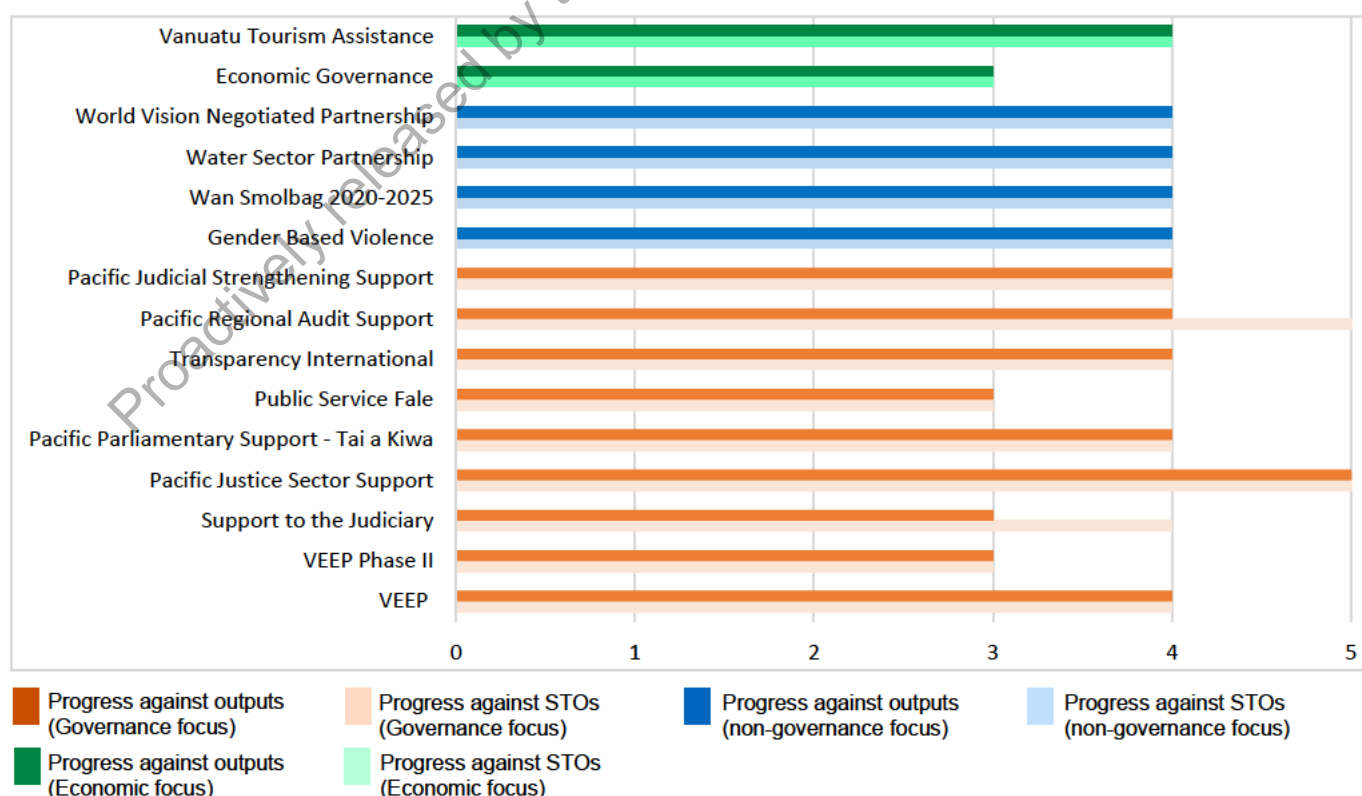
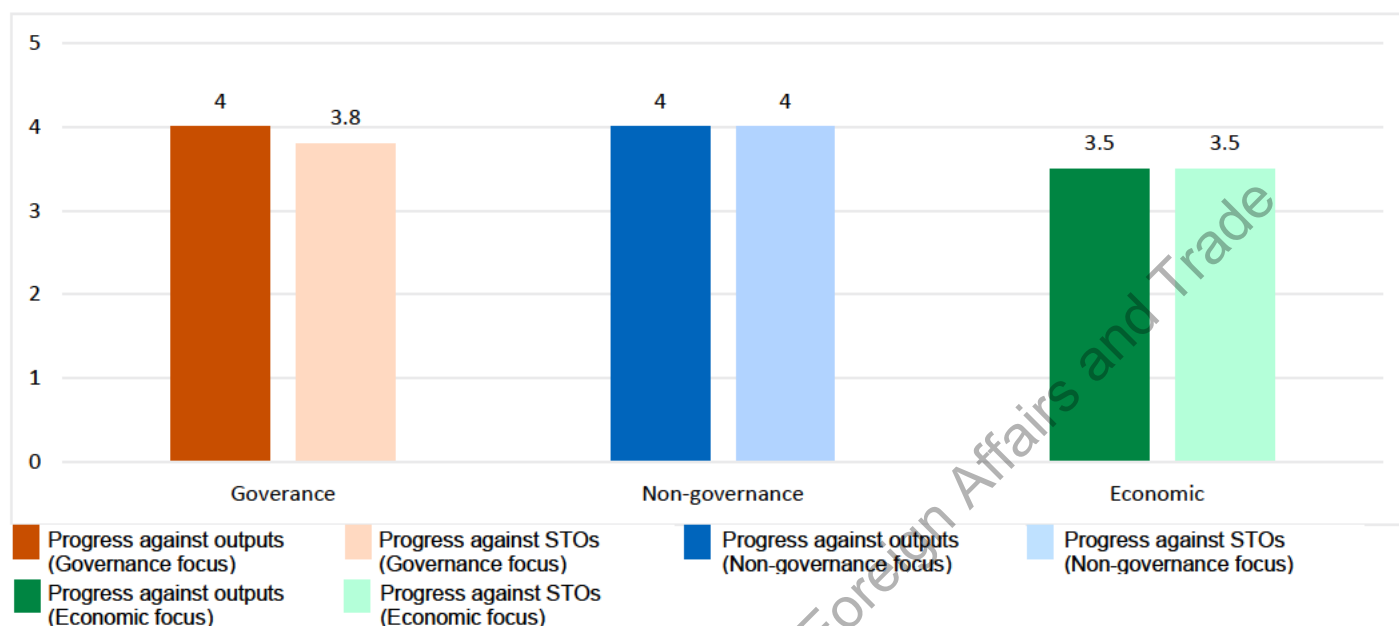


Figure 7 shows the average rating for activities across key focus areas. Governance and non-governance activities have the equal highest average rating (4) for progress towards outputs. Non-governance activities have the highest average rating (4) for progress against outcomes, with economic

activities having the lowest average rating (3.5). Though self-reported the ratings corroborate some of the stakeholder's feedback on some of the results supported as a result of NZ support in Vanuatu (see Annex 6).

Figure 7. Scoped activities AMA/ACA rating (average) across key areas towards outputs and STOs



4.1.4 Overall resourcing constraints and portfolio diversity pose challenges for the Programme's strategic and thematic focus.

The evaluation assessed the Programme as a whole to understand whether NZ was doing too much and the extent to which the Programme's work was too broad to deliver. Overall, the evaluation found that the Programme is too broad for NZ to manage effectively with the available resources. In order to consolidate the programme, NZ will need to review how context and needs have changed in key sectors, such as Corrections.

Government and CSO stakeholders felt that all NZ support was relevant and appropriate. GoV officials and members of the CSOs interviewed all reported that NZ's programme seems relevant and in the right sectors in Vanuatu. This is understandable given the context of delivering programming in a country like Vanuatu, which is experiencing pressing development challenges both at the national and community levels and has urgent needs for support across almost every sector.

However, interviews with key MFAT Programme staff reported a resource-constrained Post with each Programme Manager managing a portfolio of more than two programmes. Post staff reported heavy workloads across a range of activities which limits not only their ability to monitor their programmes but also to maintain relationships with key partners.

When asked if the Country Programme was doing too much, most of the Post staff responded in the

positive and questioned if there is value in reducing the size of the Programme.

"I think of the big challenges that we have is that we have a broad programme that is too broad. MFAT doesn't have good communications and good reporting tools to enable the bilateral programme team in understanding the broader country focus." – MFAT Post

Similarly, in terms of thematic focus, the evaluation found no evidence that the Programme delivers in sectors that are irrelevant to the Vanuatu context. Interviews with stakeholders noted that NZ addresses pressing needs in the right sectors. In fact, NZ is known for delivering in sectors and levels where very few development partners want to invest, such as community policing.

However, some stakeholders suggested it may be possible to review support for some sectors where there has been progress or change. For instance, some noted that the Corrections Programme was a critical need when designed, as prison reform was the pressing challenge. It would be timely to reassess support for Corrections, including whether there would be value in delivering support in partnership with other donors.

As with all programming, NZ's management of governance activities presents a risk if resources and capacity for engaging and monitoring are too low to be effective. The scale and diversity of activities under the Programme create challenges in measuring, monitoring, and managing results without a clear monitoring system. The current resourcing does not allow for sufficient oversight, monitoring, or

support, which leaves NZ at risk of financial mismanagement and poor results. Since NZ has relatively limited funding, efforts to coordinate with and leverage the efforts of other donor partners should be a priority for the development programme in Vanuatu.

4.1.5 Multiple modalities will be required to support partners in Vanuatu, with the choice of modality informed by development partner, strategic priorities and intended outcomes.

NZ uses a range of modalities to support development programming in Vanuatu which seem appropriately selected to support the range of partners and to meet NZ strategic priorities. The modalities range from general budget support, sector budget support, grants and technical assistance. The analysis of the benefits and trade-offs of each modality is summarised in Table 6 below.

Table 6. MFAT modalities for development support in Vanuatu

Modality Description	Benefits	Trade-offs	Current Programmes
General Budget Support. Funds are transferred directly to Vanuatu's national treasury for use in line with national budgetary procedures and priorities. This funding is not earmarked or directed by MFAT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of flexibility allows responsiveness to national priorities, supporting national development plans • Reduced transaction costs with minimised administrative burden and costs to manage individual projects • Strengthens local systems and accountability for distribution of funds • Enhanced ownership by GoV • Strengthened partnerships between MFAT and GoV • Incentivises policy and institutional reforms possible through policy-based loans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less transparency over use of funds, leading to lower accountability to MFAT • Capacity constraints in Vanuatu's administrative and financial systems may be overwhelmed with an influx of funds meaning funds are not allocated effectively • Large inflows of funds can contribute to economic instability such as inflation or exchange rate fluctuations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Governance
Sector Budget Support. Funds are provided into Vanuatu's national budget targeting specific sectors. Sector Budget Support is often twinned with strong policy dialogue on sector issues and priorities and capacity building for institutional strengthening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with Vanuatu's sector strategies creating ownership and responsiveness to national priorities • Reduced transaction costs with minimised administrative burden and costs to manage individual projects • Strengthens systems in Vanuatu and accountability for distribution of funds • Strengthened partnerships through policy dialogue • Incentivises policy and institutional reforms possible through policy-based loans • Ability to target funding to critical areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity constraints in Vanuatu's administrative and financial systems may be overwhelmed with an influx of funds, meaning funds are not allocated effectively • Sustainability challenges for supported activities and institutions unless local ownership is intentionally fostered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Budget Support funding to the Ministry of Climate Change • Vanuatu Tourism Assistance Programme
Grants. Funds provided to Vanuatu for specific projects or initiatives without expectation of repayment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted funding to support areas of shared interest • Capacity building by providing essential resources to support local organisations and institutions • Flexible and adaptive modality to support a range of needs in changing contexts • Strengthened partnerships that encourage collaboration and shared goals • Can support innovative approaches and piloting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some instances, there could be sustainability concerns with grant financing • Administrative burden from complying with grant financing reporting and financial management requirements, particularly if there are multiple active grants simultaneously • Capacity constraints to effectively manage and implement grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VEEP • VEEP Phase II • Gender Based Violence Prevention • Water Sector Partnership • Wan Smolbag • Pacific Parliamentary Strengthening • Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative • Vanuatu Tourism Infrastructure Project

Modality Description	Benefits	Trade-offs	Current Programmes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bias and inequities can be implicit in grant application and selection processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparency International Indo-Pacific Anti-Corruption Programme Pacific Regional Audit Support 2019-24
Loans. Funds provided for specific projects, policy reforms or sector development needs that require repayment, usually at a lower interest rate and longer-term than commercial loans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables large scale projects to be funded that may not be possible with grants Incentivises policy and institutional reforms possible through policy-based loans Can have long-term benefits by longer-term, more sustainable funding for large scale projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loans may contribute to unsustainable debt in recipient countries Conditions placed on loans can be difficult for recipient countries to meet making it difficult to access loan funds Effective loan management and implementation requires strong administrative and technical capacity which is not always present. 	NZ doesn't have loans as part of the development programme
Technical Assistance – provides expertise, skills and knowledge to support sustainable development in Vanuatu. May include activities such as training, skills development, knowledge transfer, expert support, knowledge sharing and policy support activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building is often a core focus through technical assistance with results in strengthened capacity, knowledge and understanding Institutional and structural change is possible through the embedded nature of technical assistance Increased efficiency compared with other development funding models through streamlined processes Facilitates sharing of innovation and best practice across regions or sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for technical experts to deliver technical assistance can be expensive There can be resource and capacity constraints to continuing the activities delivered by technical assistance or experts without ongoing support, limiting the sustainability of support Effective technical assistance requires experts to be able to work in a culturally and contextually appropriate manner. Without such skills, there are risks of misunderstanding and misaligned goals Integrating technical assistance with existing programs can be complex. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the Judiciary Corrections Support Support to the Vanuatu Police Force Pacific Justice Sector Pacific Public Sector Strengthening

There were mixed views by interview stakeholders on which modality is best suited in Vanuatu. For instance, senior GoV officials preferred general budget support as the appropriate modality. They noted that general budget support uses and inadvertently strengthens national government systems and processes. They clearly stated that they would prefer NZ to deliver their support through such a modality whilst noting that instability and capacity are still a challenge for direct budget support. However, interviews with middle-level GoV officials showed a preference towards sector budget support and funding ministries to deliver. This is not surprising given that middle-level officials who work at the ministry level would prefer funding directly to their sector or ministry for easier implementation. When the modality question was posed to development partners and some GoV officials, some noted that due to the slow national government systems and processes, some government officials now prefer the use of the development partner systems for efficiency. Taken together, the varied perceptions point to a multiple-modality approach with a clear understanding of partner capacity and resourcing considerations. Interviews with senior

Post officials indicated that NZ is likely to continue using different modalities in Vanuatu to help meet varying partner needs but also for strategic and efficiency reasons.

4.1.6 Lack of strategic and operational 4YP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems hinders understanding effective programming and reporting.

The 4YP theory of change, without a results framework, makes it difficult to produce the evidence needed to fully assess the performance of the 4YP.

Though the 4YP theory of change clearly shows NZ's intentions in supporting development programming in Vanuatu, it has no results framework with targets or indicators to measure the 4YP's performance. It is worth noting that the lack of a MEL framework also means that pathways between outputs and outcomes are assumed rather than clearly defined.

Furthermore, the evaluation found no evidence of how activities are mapped and then aligned to the 4YP theory of change, which makes it difficult to

understand how activities contribute to the overall 4YP outcomes. This is also made challenging because most of the scoped activities have no results frameworks of their own, with only 25% of the activities having a completed results table that shows outcomes and indicators.

The roles and processes for programme monitoring are not well-defined. This limit understanding of the overall effectiveness of the Programme.

The evaluation found no clear ways Post conducts programme monitoring of activities. Discussions with Post staff noted that some monitoring is done as part of programme-level monitoring reflection and reporting, but it is not well-defined, resourced, or adequately planned. Heavy staff workloads and a limited travel budget at Post exacerbated this challenge. The impact of this on effectiveness is a significant risk for NZ. The failure to understand the impact might not mean the activities are ineffective. Still, it means that NZ needs more resources or frameworks to validate whether the outcomes have occurred.

MEL capacity and capability appears under resourced at Post.

The evaluation found no dedicated MEL staff at Post or at Desk in Wellington to support the performance management of the 4YP. It can be argued that the absence of MEL resources has had an effect on the overall MEL design and performance management of the 4YP. Though this challenge is common among most development partners and is not unique to NZ, future considerations should explore MEL resourcing options at Post and what role the MEL unit in Wellington can offer to support the performance management of the 4YP.

4.1.7 Overall, New Zealand's flexibility and their trusted partnership remains a key driver of effectiveness in Vanuatu.

Long-term support in Vanuatu in key sectors and NZ's flexibility, responsiveness, and openness to dialogue are key drivers of effectiveness. This flexibility and openness to change are highly valued, particularly by CSOs, as they create an opportunity for local partners to implement activities that are of value to affected communities. Flexibility is also important for downward accountability mechanisms as opportunities for change signal that the partners are listening and responding to community needs and priorities. From a partnership perspective, flexibility can create efficiency in the long run because it creates spaces and processes where programming bottlenecks are addressed, and new ways of working are trialled and implemented. To this end, flexibility remains NZ's strength that should be acknowledged, celebrated and maintained while recognising the ever-present tension between flexibility and the risk of spreading too thin.

5 Governance

Building on the PEA conducted as part of this evaluation; this chapter presents key findings in response to evaluation objective three. The Chapter starts by exploring the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu and how governance affects NZ programming. The chapter further elaborates on how NZ implements governance programmes and the extent to which these programmes are effective. The chapter concludes by outlining potential risks to relationships as NZ explores supporting governance programmes in Vanuatu.

Key evaluation questions:

3.1 What is the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu?

3.2 How does the current governance and democratic context impact on New Zealand's wider development programme and the outcomes it is trying to achieve?

3.3 How is New Zealand implementing and mainstreaming governance in its programming?

3.4 To what extent is New Zealand funding in the governance and democracy space effective and achieving results?

3.5 What are the risks and overall implications for relationships between New Zealand, GoV and civil society associated with governance programmes in Vanuatu?

5.1.1 The governance and democratic context in Vanuatu is complex but with strong foundations for democracy and good governance.

"Governance in Vanuatu reflects a complex interplay of democratic processes, traditional authority, Christian influence, and cultural values of respect, harmony, unity, and forgiveness." Vanuatu Strategic Evaluation PEA, 2024.

The PEA undertaken for this evaluation confirmed that Vanuatu retains strong foundations for democracy and good governance but is struggling to build and maintain its institutions. In this, little has changed since 2007, when barriers to state-building were identified as the legacy of colonialism, the country's small human resource base, the limited reach of government outside the capital, s6(a)

The strength of Vanuatu's governance is evidenced through its history of free and fair elections, independent judiciary and respect for the rule of law. However, political instability is a major problem, with frequent leadership changes, politicisation of the public service and low administrative capacity undermining the government's limited ability to deliver services and meet needs. Corruption is 'considered to be systemic,'¹⁹ and yet most Ni-Vanuatu do not perceive it as directly affecting their personal interests. These challenges have been compounded by ongoing social and economic upheaval since 2015, with major cyclones in 2015, 2020, and three cyclones in 2023, the evacuation of the island of Ambae due to a volcanic eruption, and the impact of COVID-19. Vanuatu is currently facing a challenging fiscal and economic outlook, with the International Monetary Fund²⁰ projecting a deterioration of the fiscal deficit to about 6.5% of GDP in 2024, and a path of gradual improvement through the medium term. As a result of this path, the IMF has assessed Vanuatu as being at high risk of debt distress.

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While widespread recognition of challenges, frustration, and low morale at the pace of change exists, there remains a positive mood for reform among government and the public. Advocacy champions are emerging within civil society, alongside a growing determination that development, particularly on sensitive issues, is led by Ni-Vanuatu.

5.1.2 New Zealand supports governance in Vanuatu through investments in electoral reforms, public sector and judicial strengthening, audit support, and in the rule of law. Gaps remain in supporting demand for good governance.

NZ invests directly in governance in Vanuatu at multiple levels and through a range of different

programmes, modalities and funding streams. While the new Vanuatu 4YP strategy is under revision at time of writing, governance is the top priority, with current 4YP Strategic Goal 1: A more effective and inclusive State. MFAT's Development Economy and Prosperity Division (DEVECO) guidance on governance shared with the evaluation team states:

"Good governance cannot be imposed by one country on another, it has to be locally owned and supported. But we can – and do – provide support to the key institutions, processes and organisations that help underpin good governance outcomes. Importantly, this includes support for civil society groups that are calling for increased accountability – the demand side." (Good Governance – A definition, April 2024)

Figure 8 maps activities against a framework for supporting governance across different levels of society and government. It shows that NZ support is spread across a broad spectrum, consistently strengthening supply and demand for good governance. As the diagram shows, NZ supports civil society in delivering services that uphold rights and inclusion, and it supports the police and judiciary in strengthening the reach and effectiveness of the legal system. NZ activities aim to build the capacity of key institutions essential for maintaining democratic processes, such as the parliament and audit functions. NZ supports VEEP in improving the electoral environment, which is the foundation of democracy. Finally, economic governance initiatives and support through Transparency International seek to strengthen Vanuatu's defences against corruption to mitigate its corrosive impacts on good government. Analysis of the range of governance-focused programs sees MFAT investing in the electoral system at the broadest level through VEEP, in key functions through parliamentary, public sector, and judicial strengthening and audit support, and in public services related to the rule of law through support to the and corrective services. MFAT has also supported civil society through support to Wan WSB, the World Vision Negotiated Partnership, and other activities not directly assessed through this strategic evaluation (e.g., REACH and Vanuatu Women's Centre). Complementary activities include the Economic Governance Programme.

¹⁹ According to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer – Pacific 2021, 73% of respondents thought corruption in government is 'a big problem' and 25% thought most or all MPs are involved in corruption - <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/pacific/pacific-2021/results/vut>

²⁰ International Monetary Fund (Vanuatu) - <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/CR/2024/English/1vutea2024001-print-pdf.ashx>

Figure 8. New Zealand support reflects a holistic framework for supporting good governance



The main gap in governance programming is around supporting the demand for good governance by connecting communities to knowledge and platforms to advocate for effective representation, policies, and services through civil society, awareness, and education.

The evaluation found no explicit references to governance concepts for programmes where governance was not a specific focus. Nevertheless, principles of good governance are 'mainstreamed' across development activities through NZ's policies and practices upholding transparency and accountability. This plays out in the make-up and role played by Steering Committees and measures such as compliance with progress and financial reporting requirements.

5.1.3 New Zealand governance programming is highly relevant with variable effectiveness.

NZ support for governance has targeted highly relevant areas across different and complementary areas of government, civil society, and the private sector. However, effectiveness has varied. Without a strategy or resources to connect programmes and to an overarching vision for change, the potential for coordination and collective impact is reduced. There are also challenges related to the different implementing agencies (some NZ Inc agencies and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), which have various ways of working and lines of communication.

Judiciary and VEEP.

Support to the Judiciary and VEEP represent NZ's highest investment in governance and are bilateral programmes targeting critical issues. The NZ judge supporting Vanuatu in reducing its significant case backlog and hearing political cases plays an important role, and this is highly valued. Nevertheless, questions about outcomes related to long-term capacity development, as opposed to capacity substitution, remain.

Despite management issues and concerns around over-claiming or poor reporting in other outcome areas, VEEP's work to strengthen the electoral

system is viewed as a significant contribution to Vanuatu. In interviews, senior government figures credited VEEP with delivering a successful referendum process in 2024. VEEP's contributions over the most recent reporting period (2022-2023) included strengthening the voter registration system and the development of materials for civic education in schools. The evaluation found that low public awareness of governance issues is a significant area of need across Vanuatu, and more evidence of effectiveness towards this outcome in VEEP is needed. In the 2022-2023 AMA, VEEP scored only 3s in Effectiveness ratings for both outputs and STOs.

Both these programmes work in politically sensitive areas, but NZ Post retains a level of distance from political issues arising through the independence of the judiciary and by working through UNDP as a multilateral agency. This is an important and valuable strategy for managing this risk, but it also has implications for the management and oversight of the programme. Over the past 12 months, NZ has been working with UNDP to clarify expectations with regard to management and reporting and hopes to see improvements. A further phase of VEEP is likely to be approved soon.

***"Look at what we did with VEEP. That was a massive reform."* – Prominent Government Official**

Parliamentary strengthening and public sector support.

NZ's regional programmes delivered through NZ Inc partners to strengthen capacity within the public sector and parliament are relatively low cost. They offer opportunities for public servants to build skills and networks with NZ and other Pacific Island Countries through mentoring and convening. They support some of the less high-profile but nevertheless essential roles in supporting governance, such as parliamentary clerks. However, the programmes are not tailored to Vanuatu, and there has been limited engagement and uptake of opportunities offered by Vanuatu. The programmes are particularly affected by the frequent changes in roles within government

and the public service, as this makes it very difficult for the programme staff to form relationships or promote awareness of the programmes' activities and potential benefits. Although there have been efforts to strengthen communication across NZ Inc partners on regional and bilateral programmes, the evaluation heard that the activities are not well coordinated across the Programme. These activities score only 4s and 3s for effectiveness in AMAs, as reviewed by the evaluation team, with little detail provided on activities in Vanuatu.

Nevertheless, the networking opportunities provided through activities such as Tai a Kiwa (Parliamentary Strengthening) are valuable, particularly in the difficult area of supporting women leaders. A highlight of the Parliamentary Services activity was convening women parliamentarians, but even this was disrupted by a sudden change in the Vanuatu government. Gloria King MP was among 30 women who participated in the Tuakana-Teina Wānanga (Women MPs mentoring and discussion hui) in Wellington and was elected to the Commonwealth Women's Parliamentary Group. However, the reach of this activity is limited (only one leader attended), and it would be possible to integrate networking opportunities with other activities.

Services to uphold the rule of law.

NZ has invested in services essential to upholding the rule of law in Vanuatu by supporting corrective services and the police. No other donor currently works with corrective services, and NZ is credited with providing Vanuatu with foundations to build on from a very low base. Although this support has largely ended, NZ continues to offer advisory services to Corrections, which will continue until 2025 and is highly valued by Corrections staff. NZ support for policing is seen and valued as being "different" from other policing programs because it is a community policing programme that works in remote communities, assisting chiefs and the community in managing their security. Although significantly smaller than Australia's sector-wide investment in policing and justice, the programme clearly demonstrates NZ's commitment to the people of Vanuatu, who are doing the hard work of taking services to difficult areas. It was also seen as necessary to provide evidence to these communities that decentralisation is taking place. The evaluation team did not have access to AMAs rating the corrections support activity.

"When the envelope (of funding) is bigger, the bigger the amount that goes to bureaucracy. Size is important, but how you translate that to impact on people's lives is important. Understanding needs and culture, is important." Senior Government Official.

Economic governance.

NZ-supported efforts to strengthen state-owned enterprises through the ADB have delivered some recent success, and efforts to promote economic reforms and general budget support alongside

Australia and the ADB were reportedly making early-stage progress in 2023. This was attributed to the flexibility and aligned approach between the development donor partners, which is appreciated by the GoV. Regional support to audit institutions (PASAI) was a complementary activity, but Vanuatu was not mentioned in AMAs reviewed by the evaluation team.

Civil society – promoting inclusion and ending violence against women and children.

NZ activities reviewed by the evaluation that support civil society in Vanuatu have included ongoing support to WSB and the partnership with World Vision to engage men in efforts to end violence against women (Men Be the Change). These activities support social justice and inclusion and indirectly support improved governance by actively engaging the broader community and marginalised communities and raising awareness and support for the inclusion and rights of women, the SOGIE diverse community, at-risk youth, and people with disabilities. In the January – December 2021 AMA, WSB scored 4s for the effectiveness of STOs and Outputs. The World Vision Negotiated Partnership activity scored 4s in the AMA covering 1 July 2021-30 September 2022.

The evaluation did not encounter data on activities supporting the media during the evaluation period, and there were no activities explicitly designed to strengthen civil society's capacity to engage in policy dialogue. As noted above, there is a gap in activities to enhance the 'demand side' of good governance.

5.1.4 Governance issues identified through the PEA have clear strategic and operational implications for NZ's overall development programme.

Governance issues identified through the PEA have clear strategic and operational implications for NZ's overall development programme, directly impacting the effectiveness and results that NZ activities can be expected to achieve.

As summarised in Figure 9, there is strong evidence to support NZ continuing to invest in democracy and good governance because there are strong foundations for the institutions of government in place, mood for reform and the principles of good governance across Vanuatu society (as well as detractors) and, in particular, a strong and independent judiciary where NZ support is making an important contribution. However, targets and results need to be pegged appropriately and realistically for the pace of reform.

Despite the many challenges and frustrations, the judiciary remains independent, and many within Vanuatu's communities and government share NZ values of transparency, social justice, and inclusion. They are also experiencing low morale and need continued support and investment to keep working

towards reform. VEEP, support to the judiciary, and economic governance activities are most relevant here. However, the weakness of the civil service has played out in challenges progressing reforms.

Vanuatu's instability and frequent changes of ministers, their political advisors, and staff make it extremely difficult for those implementing activities to plan, deliver, or achieve results, as counterparts and priorities constantly shift. This impacts NZ Inc activities coordinated from outside Vanuatu, which cannot connect with relevant stakeholders to engage them with the opportunities they seek to offer. Even when opportunities are accepted, the disruptions mean that those supported may move on, or activities can be cut short.

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Vanuatu's dispersed geography and population are affected by these governance issues in several ways, which affect NZ programming. The PEA highlighted that communities remain disconnected from national government, and that decentralisation is not yet delivering services widely outside the capital. There is limited awareness of the language of governance at the community level. Still, communities nevertheless expect the national government to uphold principles and standards of good governance and are disappointed with instability, which may be stretched out to include politicians bringing endless legal challenges against decisions and constitutional interpretations. For NZ, these challenges are reflected in the positive response to community policing and the WSP at the community level, which extends the reach of government and meets community needs. These issues also highlight the

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value of awareness raising at the community level to provide community members with greater knowledge and agency to demand change and accountability from their elected and appointed leaders.

This context has further implications for the language and communication used to raise awareness about governance. These must be fit for purpose for the Vanuatu context and accessible to people living in remote communities, which comprise the bulk of the population. Convolutional technical language and Acts that assume resources and skills not available in Vanuatu have the potential to alienate communities further from these instruments of democracy.

5.1.5 Governance programmes in Vanuatu present a range of manageable risks in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency with broad and implications for relationships with civil society and government.

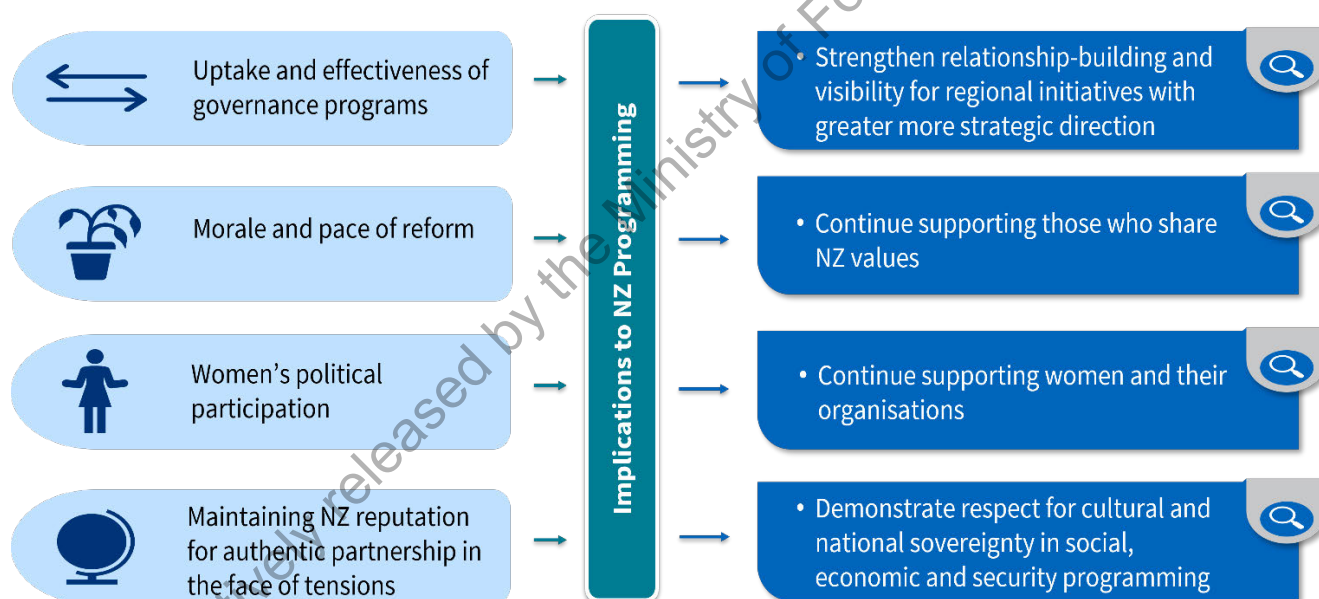
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NZ remains in a strong position to continue work alongside Vanuatu in strengthening its institutions and practice to become an effective sovereign democracy. Despite widespread frustration at Vanuatu's ongoing governance challenges, there is evidence that NZ support for key areas continues to be highly relevant and to be making significant, if slow, change (see 5.1.3).

Key risks identified related to governance programming through the evaluation at a high level are outlined below in Figure 10.

As indicated in the previous section, frequent changes in government undermine the effectiveness and uptake of activities, especially those managed remotely by NZ Inc partners who cannot connect and build relationships. Low morale among officials at all

Figure 10. Vanuatu governance context and its impact to New Zealand programming



NZ support for civil society has been through individual agencies or activities rather than through civil society overall. This is a low-risk strategy but could be more ambitious in terms of strengthening the demand side for governance despite good development and inclusion outcomes. As noted earlier, civil society remains under-resourced and is at an early stage of development in Vanuatu. The Vanuatu Association of Non-government organisations (VANGO) does not yet offer a strong platform for coordination or advocacy. s6(a)

levels presents the risk that the commitment to reform and hard work required to make change and create a better state will stall. NZ's ongoing commitment to VEEP and the judiciary remains critical in this context. Improvements to operational issues that add to the frustration, such as slow approvals processes and low delegations of authority at Post, should also be addressed.

The low level of women's political representation in government and entrenched attitudes among some elements of society underscores the ongoing need to support efforts in this field. Though there has been increasingly visible pushback against gender equality as a "foreign" issue, NZ's commitment to gender equality and inclusion is already well recognized. NZ is well-placed to manage the risks. This will require balancing respect for kastom with non-negotiable support for gender equality and rights, drawing on the lessons and relationships established through NZ's ongoing engagement with Vanuatu. Efforts should be made to find ways to continue supporting women parliamentarians and engaging wives of MPs as they are politically aware and connected and, therefore, have influence and agency and the DWA, within or outside of existing activities.

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Should NZ move to strengthen civil society as a democratic entity, it would be essential to consult with civil society actors and the government to identify the opportunities and limitations to support civil society safely.

6 Future directions and priorities

Emerging areas for consideration by and for the Programme are summarised below. They cover key areas of partnerships and relationships, programmatic focus (size and thematic), governance, MEL and collaboration with other development partners.

6.1 Enhancing relationships and partnerships with government and non-state actors

The evaluation found that NZ is deemed a trusted, reliable, credible, and flexible partner for government and non-state actors. The strength of the partnership is a key strategic asset for NZ in Vanuatu. On the one hand, the high level of trust places NZ in a strong position to pursue strategic and meaningful engagement with the GoV in areas of mutual benefit. On the other hand, positive relationships with (local) CSOs provide opportunities for NZ to scope an engagement approach that supports the organisations in advancing governance and development outcomes in Vanuatu.

Maintain and build on partnerships with government and non-state actors to strengthen shared values for governance and development outcomes by:

- Continuing to raise awareness and reaffirming values and principles as outlined in 2023 Mauri Statement of Partnership since there has been change of governments both in Vanuatu and NZ. This could be maintained through ongoing discussions between senior Post staff and the GoV counterparts as well as during the annual HLCs. Through these channels, NZ will continue to reaffirm its position as a trusted and reliable partner to the GoV. The ongoing reaffirming of values would also be beneficial to the partnership due to high turnover of GoV officials.
- Maintain annual HLCs with GoV and if feasible include other key development partners to ensure open communication and visibility.
- Outlining an approach for working with CSOs that specifies MFAT's principles and partnership strategies for engagement with VANGO, local NGOs and CSOs, in collaboration with MFAT's Partnerships team. The evaluation did not find a clear policy position or strategy on how MFAT works with CSOs in Vanuatu. Future support should leverage existing Negotiated Partnerships relationships in Vanuatu with International NGOs and

explore how NZ will support local NGOs and CBOs.

- Supporting decentralisation efforts by leveraging programming at the community level and strengthening partnerships at provincial and community levels. How this can work can be scoped via discussions with Ministry of Internal Affairs and provincial officials and could be implemented through a pilot phase. For example, consider engaging on programming in Santo which is being touted and earmarked by GoV as the emerging economic hub of Vanuatu. Piloting in Santo could be a testing place on how NZ works within the decentralised system in Vanuatu.

Benefit: To reaffirm mutually shared values, principles and ways of working

Consider strategic engagement and rescoping of the NZ Inc approach to support effective partnerships

The evaluation found that the NZ Inc support is valued and has potential to support capacity and capability development if Vanuatu stakeholders are engaged and active. There is a need to reimagine the approach to take account of the relational nature of Vanuatu and the specific needs of the local partners. It could even consider whether to end this type of regional programming, and if so, how to take positive elements of activities forward. The rescoping should:

- 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 and implement a shared vision.
- Strengthen Post's role in brokering and maintaining relationships in Vanuatu between NZ Inc and local partners. In doing so, Post would be an intermediary and support genuine collaboration.
- Prioritise modalities that facilitate relationships and strategic alignment e.g. a mix of in-person and remote Technical Assistance.
- Enhance visibility of regional programmes at the national level and connect bilateral and regional programmes for knowledge sharing.
- Consider whether a more radical shift is needed, and whether positive elements could be delivered through other activities, such as VEEP.

Benefit: To enhance coherence, efficiency and results

6.2 Programmatic focus and engagement strategies across the 4YP

Considering resource constraints and the dynamic operating context, the evaluation recognises that MFAT must prioritise and consolidate its Programme for the next phase of the 4YP. Furthermore, MFAT needs more resources to monitor and manage programmes spread over a range of sectoral and geographic areas, undermining confidence in reported results or ability to respond to change. However, the evaluation found it challenging to identify future sectors and Programme size based only on assessing need or reported effectiveness of current activities.

A strategic approach to prioritising investment is required, so activities will continue to generate and strengthen results in the face of reduced resourcing. This approach would need to build on NZ's strengths as a trusted partner and 'bridge' able to advocate for Vanuatu's interests with other donor partners. In making decisions as to what and who to support, NZ will benefit from a transparent narrative that will provide Vanuatu stakeholders with clarity. Regardless of how NZ focuses support, in terms of sector or approach, NZ should retain the potential to respond flexibly to requests that arise, potentially through a dedicated fund governed by a well-defined set of processes.

In prioritising activities, MFAT will need to consider programmes and sectors based on the potential to achieve results (both developmental and partnership outcomes), maturity of relationships, alignment to both NZ and Vanuatu priorities, and available resourcing.

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

Programmatic/Activity selection

One way to approach the prioritisation process is to consider activities based on their potential to achieve outcomes (both developmental and partnerships) and their strategic alignment to both NZ and Vanuatu priorities. This will provide a foundation for a Keep, Expand, Drop analysis which will assist in identifying activities or even sub-activities to retain, consolidate or finish.

To this end activities can be grouped as follows:

Figure 11. Activity selection criteria

	High alignment to priorities and demand	Less alignment to priorities and demand
Potential to achieve future outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly aligned to NZ and Vanuatu's strategic priorities Long history of programming with mature partnerships Impactful Supports service delivery and reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New and emerging relationships, New sectors Impactful Less aligned to NZ and Vanuatu priorities
Less potential to achieve future outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly aligned to NZ and Vanuatu's strategic priorities Mature relationships and partnerships Outcomes not easy to achieve Advocates for reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less aligned to NZ and Vanuatu priorities Outcomes not easy to achieve

Based on the criteria grouping above, MFAT could consider the following:

- **Continue to fund** activities with potential to achieve outcomes and high alignment to NZ and Vanuatu priorities e.g. the WSP.
- **Fund in partnership** with other development partners, the activities with less potential to achieve outcomes and high alignment to NZ and Vanuatu priorities e.g. the Economic Governance Programme.
- **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 not closely aligned to NZ and Vanuatu priorities. For these activities, there should be clear exit strategies to avoid backsliding and potential loss of key gains made.

The evaluation notes that effectiveness and relevance vary within activities in some cases, and efforts should be made to identify and maintain these sub-activities even if the overarching activity closes. For example, if MFAT in Vanuatu withdraws from regional parliamentary strengthening activities, there would be value in continuing support for Vanuatu's women parliamentarians through another channel.

Ultimately, the activities to include for funding will be determined by resources available as part of the country allocation for the new 4YP.

Thematic selection/ focus

Another way to prioritise activities is to make strategic choices to reduce the number of sectors and outcome areas that NZ commits to support. Options for sectoral prioritisation include:

- Rationalise MTOs as part of the new 4YP theory of change, based on an assessment of the most urgent current needs. This would result in more consolidated programming that would be simpler to manage and monitor. Then

keep a range of STOs that contribute to broad outcomes areas, as this would enable NZ to work at all levels and support different types of partners.

- Consider governance as an overarching theme connecting MTOs linked to the 'supply' and 'demand' sides of governance, still with a broad range of STOs. Note that this would need to be developed and communicated with GoV in a way that underscores respect for Vanuatu's sovereignty and sensitivity to traditions and context. This would build on NZ's comparative advantage as trusted Pacific partner and connect the range of NZ 'offerings' and modalities more closely.
- In developing a Programme centred around governance, NZ should consider:
 - There is need and value in continuing to stand beside like-minded officials to continue progressing reform in the public service, judiciary and other areas of governance. Support is needed to maintain morale and momentum, which is at risk.
 - A Vanuatu-specific strategic framework for governance in Vanuatu would help identify and connect activities and partners against a shared vision for success across MFAT, NZ Inc and GoV. This would increase efficiency and monitoring for results.
 - A governance lens allows for NZ to continue working in areas the evaluation identified as key strengths: civil society (demand for governance, community engagement, social justice); community-based activities (extending services/ strengthening demand), gender equality (representation); economic governance, institutional strengthening.
 - Strengthen the focus on creating 'demand' for governance, through education and support for civil society to develop capacity for influencing services and policy. This could be done through adjustments to existing activities, including VEEP, and support to CSOs. A Do No Harm lens is needed when working with civil society.
 - Connect 'economic governance' activities strengthening public financial management into the broader governance framework.
 - Strengthen language clarifying the connection between good project management, due diligence and good governance, so that NZ commitment to governance is visible and mainstreamed across all activities.
 - Continue to use VEEP with a multilateral partner (UNDP) to drive

political and electoral reform, to maintain a distance between NZ government and sensitive political issues. There is potential to strengthen the focus on community engagement, which is already part of VEEP.

- As above, noting the value of flexible funding to achievement of partnership outcomes and to balance coherence and responsiveness, consider establishing a process or fund for flexible funding requests as part of the Country Programme. The flexible funding will be used to support ad hoc partner requests without compromising the strategic focus and delivery of the Country Programme. This could include disaster response.

Benefit: To support sectors where MFAT has comparative advantage and elevate governance as a key driver of overall development effectiveness

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

Opportunities exist as part of the development of the next 4YP to resource and plan for improved performance management of the 4YP. The new 4YP should consider:

- Developing 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 framework for the activities too.
- This might seem like a lot of effort for a resource-constrained Post, however 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. The MEL STA should also build MEL capacity of the Post staff to adequately monitor, collect evidence and support the use of evidence for adaptive management, course correction and support partner learning.
- Allocate resources at Post to support programme monitoring of activities to validate results and harvest outcomes. Resources should also be allocated for activity and thematic evaluations to understand what is working and what is not.
- Continue to embed structured reflection and learning from results as part of the programme monitoring and reporting activities.

Benefit: To strengthen MEL that will support performance and adaptive management

6.3 Partnerships and collaborations with other development partners

Support donor coordination, collaboration and support to Vanuatu's donor coordination office

To enhance donor coordination, NZ will need to continue to work with other development partners in supporting key areas while also supporting donor coordination within the GoV. Things to consider include:

- As part of the activity and thematic selection of the new 4YP, conduct a strategic analysis of the Programme to understand where MFAT can partner with others. For instance, Australia, in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, has just established the Pacific Policing Initiative. This programme is designed to strengthen policing capacity and coordination in the Pacific region. NZ could consider whether to progress with its Police Support Programme or deliver the programme in Vanuatu in partnership with Australia.
- Support strengthening the function of the Prime Minister's Department of Strategic Planning, Policy and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) through technical assistance for better aid coordination in Vanuatu. DSPPAC supports the Prime Minister to develop, implement and monitor the vision of the government and to provide strategic leadership for cross-sectoral policies or programmes, for both the government and donors. Supporting the unit will enhance better donor coordination and also provide visibility for NZ at the highest office in Vanuatu.

Benefit: To enhance donor coordination and harmonisation for effectiveness

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Annex 1. Evaluation scoped activities

Activity (20 in total)	Status	Focus	Year	Value (NZD)
Bilateral Programmes (12)				
Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP)	Closed	Governance	2018 to 2022	\$5,102,299.74
VEEP Phase II	Active	Governance	2020 to 2022	\$6,000,000
Vanuatu Police Support Phase I	Active	Governance (Justice)	2021 to 2024	\$7,000,000
Gender Based Violence Prevention	Active	Non-governance	2019 to 2024	\$5,406,218.87
Support to the Judiciary	Active	Governance	2003 to 2026	\$9,128,712.98
Wan Smolbag 2020-2025	Active	Non-governance	2003 to 2026	\$4,508,113.28
Economic Governance (NB this activity has only recently moved into implementation).	Active	Economic	2022 to 2025	\$3,530,923.29
Correction Services Partnership	Closed	Governance (Justice)	2017 to 2025	\$6,175,070.93
Corrections Support 2021-2025	Active	Governance (Justice)	2014 to 2023	\$234,257.94
Vanuatu Tourism Assistance Programme	Closed	Economic	2021 to 2025	\$11,063,491.47
Vanuatu Tourism Infrastructure	Closed	Economic	2012 to 2024	\$17,624,395.64
Water Sector Partnership Phase I	Closed	Non-governance	2017-2021	\$12,992,620.08
Regional Programmes (6)				
Pacific Justice Sector 2021-2026 (this is the latest phase of the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative)	Active	Governance	2021 to 2026	\$9,019,757.50
Pacific Parliamentary Strengthening – Tai a Kiwa	Active	Governance	2019 to 2024	\$9,059,521.41
Pacific Public Sector Fale	Active	Governance	2019 to 2025	\$13,642,932.93
Transparency International Indo-Pacific Programme	Active	Governance	2024 to 2024	\$3,400,000
Pacific Regional Audit Support 2019-24	Closed	Governance	2019 to 2024	\$8,440,812.54
Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative	Closed	Governance	2016 to 2023	\$9,964,802.96
Partnership Fund (1)				
World Vision Negotiated Partnership	Active	Non-governance	2020 to 2025	\$13,697,190.10
Short-term training (1)				
Short term-training scholarships – Public Sector Leadership	Active	Governance	2022 to 2023	\$45,562.07

Annex 2. Detailed methodology and approach

The methodological approach underpinning the evaluation is outlined below with the evaluation objectives, and questions, data collection methods and the data analysis process.

Objectives and purpose

The key evaluation objectives were:

- To understand how NZ is perceived as a partner and what is NZ's advantage compared with other development partners.
- To investigate the Programme's effectiveness and the extent to which it has or is expected to achieve its intended outcomes outlined in the Vanuatu 4YP.
- To understand the governance and democratic context and understand how this impacts NZ's programming, including effectiveness and mainstreaming.
- To consider how the future phase of the Programme can best support Vanuatu's development priorities and NZ's strategic interests.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions, developed and tested during scoping workshops with MFAT, are shown below.

Criteria	Key evaluation questions
Partnerships and relationships	<p>1.1 How do the GoV, non-state actors and other donor partners perceive NZ as a partner?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What elements of the partnerships and ways of working set NZ apart from other development partners? • Where do the partners see NZ support as most useful and relevant? • What could be improved? (activities, engagement strategies etc)
Effectiveness	<p>2.1 To what extent has NZ achieved the intended outcomes as outlined in the Vanuatu 4YP theory of change, with a focus on economic development?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What insights can we draw from comparisons between performance across sectors and modalities? • What sectors and modalities are performing well and what sectors are not? <p>2.2 What partnership outcomes have been achieved alongside development outcomes?</p> <p>2.3 What factors have facilitated and/or hindered the achievement of the outcomes?</p>
Governance	<p>3.1 What is the governance and democratic context in Vanuatu?</p> <p>3.2 How does the current governance and democratic context impact on NZ's wider development programme and the outcomes it is trying to achieve?</p> <p>3.3 How is NZ implementing and mainstreaming governance in its programming?</p> <p>3.4 To what extent is NZ funding in the governance and democracy space effective and achieving results?</p> <p>3.5 What are the risks and overall implications for relationships between NZ, GoV and civil society associated with governance programmes in Vanuatu?</p>
Future directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing relationships and partnerships with government and non-state actors • Engagement strategies for programming across the 4YP • Programmatic focus (size and thematic focus) • Partnerships and collaborations with other development partners.

Data analysis

Figure 12 presents an overview of the evaluation methodology. The first stage of analysis utilised thematic coding, activity scoping, PEA and influence mapping analysis techniques, focusing on producing a clean, consolidated and organised dataset. The second stage worked on the clean and consolidated dataset, resulting from the first stage to triangulate and cross-check data collected from different sources and stakeholder groups to identify emerging themes and key differences. Once findings began to emerge from this analysis process, an evidence strength matrix (Figure 13) was applied to identify the strongest and most pertinent findings to include in this report and to inform future considerations.

Figure 12. Detailed analytical approach

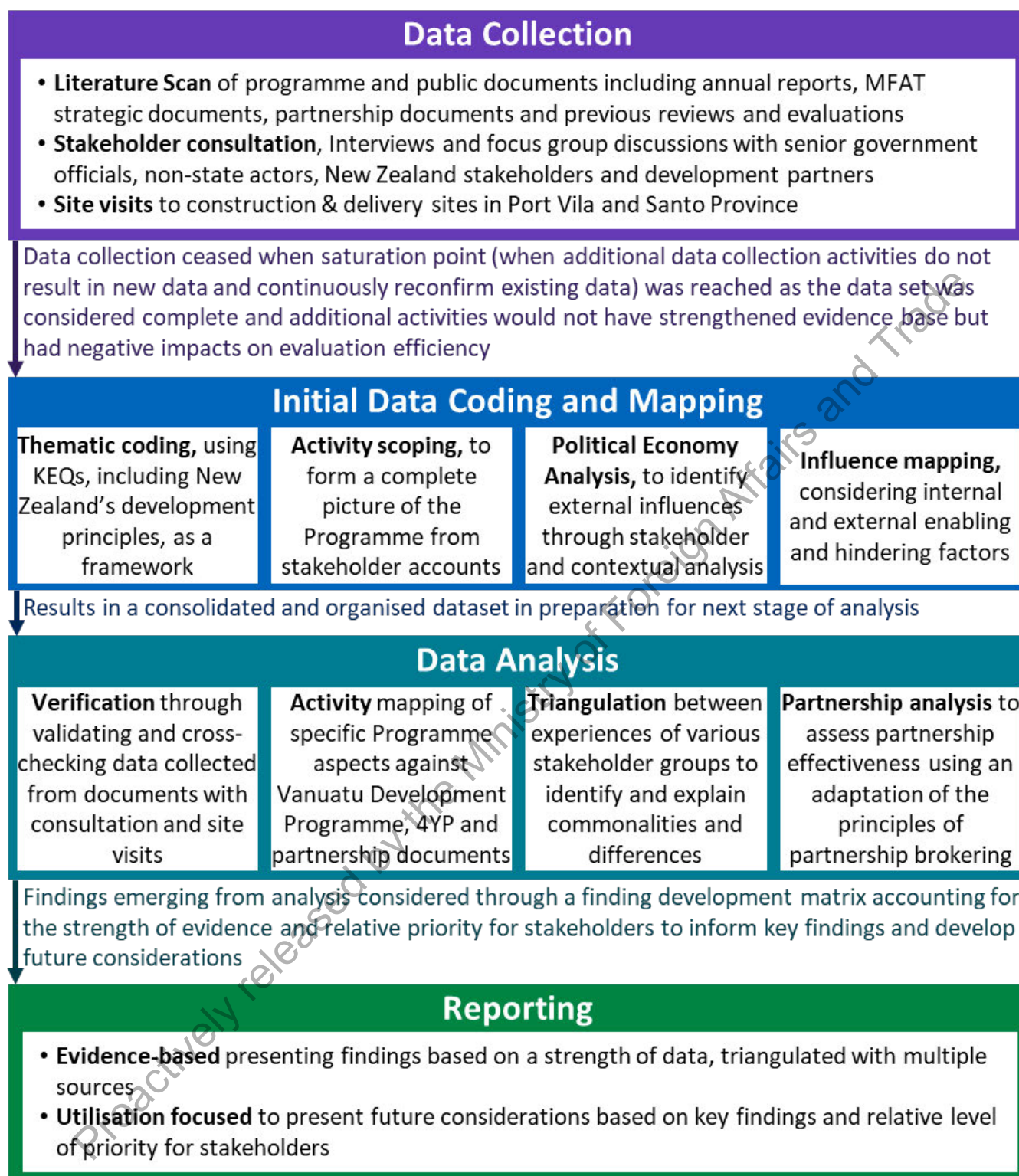
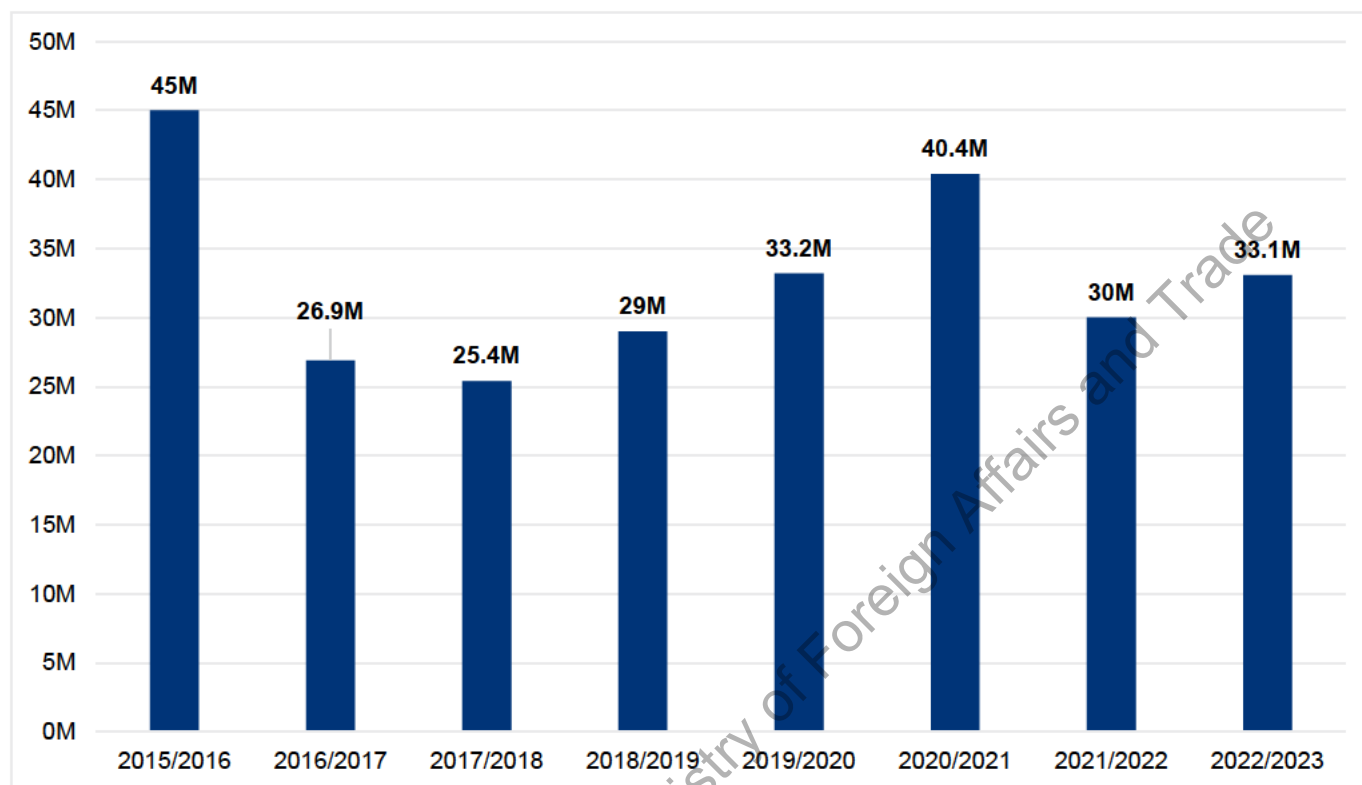


Figure 13. Detailed Evidence Strength Matrix

		MFAT and Stakeholder Priority		
		Low	Medium	High
Strength of Evidence	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear, illogical or contradictory data and/or significant data gaps Supporting evidence is self-reported, e.g. internal monitoring data Priority groups, with in-depth knowledge of the Programme do not provide evidence <p>Not a focus within reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear, illogical or contradictory data and/or significant data gaps Supporting evidence is self-reported, e.g. internal monitoring data Mentioned frequently by MFAT or Stakeholders <p>Mentioned in reporting but not a focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear, illogical or contradictory data and/or significant data gaps Supporting evidence is self-reported, e.g. internal monitoring data Identified as key priority for MFAT or Stakeholders <p>Data gaps reported as a future consideration</p>
	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some outliers in data collected that challenge an overall trend Data is collected by an external party with unknown motivations and biases Priority groups, with in-depth knowledge of the Programme do not provide evidence <p>Mentioned in reporting but not a focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some outliers in data collected that challenge an overall trend Data is collected by an external party with unknown motivations and biases Mentioned frequently by MFAT or Stakeholders <p>Reported as a finding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some outliers in data collected that challenge an overall trend Data is collected by an external party with unknown motivations and biases Identified as key priority for MFAT or Stakeholders <p>Key finding, may inform a future consideration</p>
	Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus among stakeholders that is aligned with evidence from other sources Independent evidence is available with clearly stated biases and motivations Priority groups, with in-depth knowledge of the Programme do not provide evidence <p>Reported as a finding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus among stakeholders that is aligned with evidence from other sources Independent evidence is available with clearly stated biases and motivations Mentioned frequently by MFAT or Stakeholders <p>Key finding, may inform a future consideration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus among stakeholders that is aligned with evidence from other sources Independent evidence is available with clearly stated biases and motivations Identified as key priority for MFAT or Stakeholders <p>Reported as a key finding, informs future consideration</p>

Annex 3. New Zealand's contributions to Vanuatu's sectors 2015-2023

Figure 14. Expenditure (NZD) spent over time (2015-2023)



Sectors	Value (NZD)	Share
Government & Civil society-general	\$42,226,625.15	16.05%
Post-Secondary education	\$29,645,070.41	11.27%
Water supply & Sanitation	\$27,784,518.79	10.56%
Tourism	\$22,503,689.54	8.56%
Agriculture	\$17,068,982.44	6.49%
Basic Health	\$16,228,419.58	6.17%
Transport & storage	\$13,900,730.92	5.29%
General budget support	\$11,850,172.98	4.51%
Other multisector	\$10,624,845.40	4.04%
Energy generation, renewable sources	\$8,564,161.61	3.26%
Secondary education	\$8,505,433.24	3.23%
Basic education	\$8,202,400.99	3.12%
Emergency response	\$6,867,383.99	2.61%
Business & Other services	\$6,672,664.54	2.54%
Reconstruction Relief & Rehabilitation	\$5,806,026.40	2.21%
Other social infrastructure & services	\$5,488,013.73	2.09%
General Environment protection	\$4,673,271.25	1.78%
Health, General	\$3,669,978.51	1.40%
Education, level unspecified	\$3,016,574.61	1.15%

Sectors	Value (NZD)	Share
Population polices/ programmes & Reproductive Health	\$2,318,338.45	0.88%
Banking & Financial services	\$1,471,284.62	0.56%
Disaster prevention & Preparedness	\$1,373,920.22	0.52%
Fishing	\$1,170,554.81	0.45%
Forestry	\$1,122,045.07	0.43%
Conflict, Peace & Security	\$537,574.44	0.20%
Communications	\$386,974.51	0.15%
Energy Policy	\$351,775.53	0.13%
Non-communicable diseases	\$264,871.55	0.10%
Trade Policies & regulation	\$257,109.45	0.10%
Construction	\$212,772.15	0.08%
Administrative costs of donors	\$152,284.11	0.06%
Industry	\$91,332.27	0.03%
Unallocated/unspecified	\$5,350.00	0%

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Annex 4. Bilateral and multilateral donor's contributions to Vanuatu

Development partner	Key contribution to Vanuatu	Key sector contributions in Vanuatu (2015-2022) ²¹
Bilateral donors		
Australia	Australia and Vanuatu are close partners, with Australia being the largest provider of development and humanitarian assistance to Vanuatu. Australia's investments in economic growth, health, education and skills, policing, justice and security, as well as key infrastructure projects are helping drive Vanuatu's recovery. Australia's continued investment in women's economic empowerment and leadership, eliminating violence against women and promoting disability inclusion is provided to ensure support is delivered to help the most vulnerable ²² .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Communications • Education • Energy • Government & Civil Society • Health • Humanitarian Aid • Industry, mining & c construction • Multi-sector/cross-cutting • Transport & Storage • Water & Sanitation
China	Over the last five years, China has made significant contributions to Vanuatu in various sectors in supporting infrastructure development, economic cooperation, education and training, health and pandemic support and climate change collaboration ²³ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Education • Government & Civil Society • Health • Humanitarian Aid • Transport & Storage
Japan	The Government of Japan provides support to the Republic of Vanuatu focusing predominantly on the field of economic infrastructure, particularly port facilities to strengthen import and export industries for the accomplishment of sustainable economic growth. In addition, the Government of Japan provides support towards the diversification of industries, such as the vitalisation of rural industries centred on primary industries ²⁴ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Communications • Education • Energy • Government & Civil Society • Health • Humanitarian Aid • Industry, mining & c construction • Multi-sector/cross-cutting • Transport & Storage • Water & Sanitation
France	A former Franco-British condominium that has been independent since 1980 and has close cultural ties with New Caledonia, Vanuatu enjoys a special relationship with France. France (AFD, Fonds Pacifique, the post's cooperation envelope) supports projects in the fields of universities and the French-speaking world. One of the flagship projects is the development of the National University of Vanuatu, which today offers three master's degrees and a bachelor's degree (300 students in 2018). Other projects are underway in the scientific and commercial fields ²⁵ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Communications • Education • Government & Civil Society • Health • Humanitarian Aid • Multi-sector/cross-cutting • Transport & Storage • Water & Sanitation
Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu share a close relationship, with Papua New Guinea providing various forms of support to Vanuatu. Contributing to the stability and development within the Pacific Region, the bilateral relationship between Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu is strengthened through disaster relief and humanitarian aid, regional cooperation and economic and trade relations ²⁶ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Industry, mining & c construction

²¹ Lowy Institute - [Database - Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map](#)

²² DFAT - [Australia's partnership with Vanuatu | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(dfat.gov.au\)](#)

²³ Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Vanuatu - [Bilateral Contacts \(china-embassy.gov.cn\)](#)

²⁴ Embassy of Japan in Vanuatu - [Country Assistance Policy for the Republic of Vanuatu.pdf \(emb-japan.go.jp\)](#)

²⁵ France in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands [Historic and presentation - La France au Vanuatu et aux îles Salomon \(ambafrance.org\)](#)

²⁶ US Embassy to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu - [United States Government Announces USD \\$3.2 million \(VUV 384 million\) in Support to Vanuatu to Respond to Tropical Cyclones - U.S. Embassy to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu \(usembassy.gov\)](#)

Development partner	Key contribution to Vanuatu	Key sector contributions in Vanuatu (2015-2022) ²¹
United States	Since 1986, the United States have cooperated with Vanuatu in strengthening democracy, enhancing security, and promoting development. Through various initiatives, including climate resilience projects funded by USAID, disaster relief efforts in collaboration with local organisations, and economic development are implemented to support infrastructure investments by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Additionally, the United States contributes to health and education via Peace Corps volunteers and enhances maritime security through a law enforcement accord. These efforts aim to promote sustainable development and resilience in Vanuatu. ²⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Education • Health • Humanitarian Aid
United Kingdom	The United Kingdom supports Vanuatu through various initiatives, focusing on climate change, anti-corruption efforts, and development aid. The United Kingdom collaborates with Vanuatu on climate resilience projects and gender issues. Additionally, the United Kingdom government, in partnership with the UNDP, conducts workshops to combat corruption and strengthen democratic governance; providing overall development aid aimed in contributing to Vanuatu's economic growth and stability. ²⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Government & Civil Society • Humanitarian Aid • Multi-sector/cross-cutting
Multilateral Donors		
World Bank	In building a more resilient and sustainable future, the World Bank has actively supported Vanuatu's development and resilience efforts in climate change, health and infrastructure development. The primary focus is centred on strengthening climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, health management and debt transparency. ²⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Energy • Government & Civil Society • Health • Humanitarian Aid • Multi-sector/cross-cutting • Transport & Storage
EU Institutions	The EU also cooperates closely with Vanuatu to ensure our shared commitment to universal values and human rights principles are upheld at the international level. The EU and Vanuatu hold High-Level Political Dialogues to address common interests and challenges, such as climate change, oceans, human rights, development cooperation, economic and trade cooperation. ³⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Education • Energy • Government & Civil Society • Humanitarian Aid • Multi-sector/cross-cutting
Green Climate Fund	The Green Climate Fund plays a crucial role in supporting Vanuatu's efforts in building community resilience to adapt to climate change. Along with partners such as Save the Children, the Green Climate Fund provide financial support, technical assistance and equipment, climate information services and development projects aimed in improving water security and protecting agricultural and fisheries sites. ³¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Government & Civil Society • Health • Water & Sanitation
ADB (Asian Development Bank)	The ADB continues to scale up its programme in Vanuatu through increased Asian Development Fund allocation and leveraging regional and thematic ADF grant resources to respond to the country's increasing demands for grant resources for disaster response. To date, ADB has committed 100 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance totalling \$213 million to Vanuatu. ³²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing • Education • Energy • Government & Civil Society • Health • Multi-sector/cross-cutting • Transport & Storage • Water & Sanitation

²⁷ U.S. Department of State - [Vanuatu - United States Department of State](#)

²⁸ GOV. United Kingdom - [Vanuatu and the UK - GOV.UK](#)

²⁹ World Bank - [Building Back Better: Boost for Health, Disaster and Debt Management in Vanuatu \(worldbank.org\)](#)

³⁰ Delegation of the European Union to the Pacific - [The European Union and the Republic of Vanuatu | EEAS \(europa.eu\)](#)

³¹ Green Climate Fund - [Vanuatu | Green Climate Fund](#)

³² ADB - [Asian Development Bank and Vanuatu: Fact Sheet \(adb.org\)](#)

Development partner	Key contribution to Vanuatu	Key sector contributions in Vanuatu (2015-2022) ²¹
International Fund for Agricultural Development	The International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Government of New Zealand signed a NZD 5.75 million (USD 3.57 million) agreement to support Pacific communities to ensure sustainable access to water and healthy diets. The International Fund for Agricultural Development are committed to supporting agricultural development and enhancing resilience in Vanuatu ³³ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-sector/cross-cutting
Climate Investment Fund	A key significant contribution of the Climate Investment Fund in Vanuatu is to support the nation in transitioning to sustainable energy solutions and enhance their resilience to climate change. One of the Climate Investment Fund's key projects is the 'Scaling up Renewable Energy Program' which is targeted at implementing renewable energy interventions to overcome barriers to rural electrification ³⁴ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Multi-sector/cross-cutting
Green Global Growth Institute	Green Global Growth Institute's objective in Vanuatu is to support the government's operationalisation of the National Green Energy Fund and to mobilise financing for green energy projects ³⁵ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Government & Civil Society
International Finance Cooperation	The International Finance Cooperation is a member of the World Bank and assisted the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu in September 2023 to launch a national payment system – the VANKILA system. This new digital platform will enhance Vanuatu's financial stability and efficiency, bringing new capabilities which will make transactions quicker and safer. It will also enable new innovative financial services to be added into the future ³⁶ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other/unspecified
United Nations Development Programme	Currently, the UNDP is supporting the Civil Registration and Identity Management Department to bridge the data gap by providing technical assistance for a new foundational identity database, RV5. This central register database has the potential to provide real time data on registered citizens with capacity to provide demographically disaggregated data for different age groups with gender breakdown as well as information on persons with disability. To date, over 95% of the citizens are registered with the Civil registration & identity management department ³⁷ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government & Civil Society Humanitarian Aid

³³ IFAD - [IFAD: New Zealand contributes US\\$3.57 million to IFAD to enhance resilience of Pacific island communities through climate smart agriculture | United Nations in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu](#)

³⁴ CIF - [CIF Countries | Climate Investment Funds](#)

³⁵ GGGI - [Vanuatu — Countries — Global Green Growth Institute \(gggi.org\)](#)

³⁶ IFC - [Vanuatu's New Payment System to Support Digital Economy and Boost Financial Inclusion \(ifc.org\)](#)

³⁷ UNDP - [Vanuatu Country Implementation Plan 2023-2024 \(Online\).pdf](#)

Annex 5. Progress towards achievements of STOs

Outcome	Key results observed
STO 1: Increased institutional capacity and capability in targeted areas of the public sector (especially law and justice, security, education, health, electoral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judges seconded from NZ over the last 20 years have assisted with reducing the backlog of cases and hearing cases involving current and former political figures³⁸ Technical advisory support to Vanuatu DBKS has enhanced staff satisfaction, reporting and planning, supporting the independent operational capacity of the DBKS in the corrections space³⁹ Capacity building for DoWR has strengthened water security partnerships with international stakeholders and enhanced DoWR's ability to seek funding from other partners, including a USD28.3million Green Climate Fund Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Project⁴⁰ Support to improve electoral operational procedures, for legislation preparation, and for the new integrated Civil Register System has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased the population registered to vote from 70% in 2020⁴¹ to 74% by the end of 2021 Facilitated the Passage of bills for Civil Registration and Identity Management and National Identity in November 2021⁴² Ensured that 95% of the Vanuatu citizen have a National ID⁴³ Regional capacity building and knowledge sharing activities enhanced regional networks for parliamentary processes, including with Fiji Hansard staff⁴⁴ Development and delivery of community policing training packages and support to VPF for community policing integration to planning and strategic processes demonstrates decentralisation⁴⁵
STO 2: Government and civil society groups support greater political, economic and educational opportunities for marginalised groups in Vanuatu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a unique and safe space for diverse people to explore and create, to express and challenge themselves and their views, and to learn to live together enhancing confidence of vulnerable 'at risk' youth⁴⁶ Support for DWA to finalise the National Gender Equality Policy has given DWA the authority to lead and coordinate as the national machinery for protection and inclusion Technical support and training to DWA has strengthened partnerships with national bodies such as the National Disaster Management Office, demonstrated through joint events and activities, and enabled DWA to deliver training on gender in Humanitarian Action⁴⁷
STO 3: Vanuatu has increased ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters, including through targeted measures to support recovery of vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster packages and community training delivered to help develop the water safety plans which considered climate change, resilience risks and maintenance enhanced public health outcomes and resilience of water systems - providing 'safely managed drinking water and sanitation' and improved maintenance⁴⁰ Operational support to Joint Police Operations Centre in response to COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold enhanced capability for situational reporting and Standard Operating Procedures⁴⁵ Support to Gender Protection Clusters at the provincial level, including through COVID-19 and cyclone Harold improved information availability during emergencies⁴⁷ Environment and Resilience programmes by WSB engaged audience of 2,997⁴⁶ Provided sector budget support to the Ministry of Climate Change to further enhance the Ministries ability to respond to natural disasters and ensure resources are appropriately allocated to support the recovery of communities
STO 4: Government strategies and private investment support equitable and sustainable growth of key economic sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vanuatu Market Recovery Plan, the Vanuatu Tourism Marketing Plan 2030 and the Handicrafts Business Development Programme have enhanced connection of local suppliers with tourism markets⁴⁸
STO 5: Economic governance strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform-linked budget support and technical assistance focused on policy reforms, including support for a national payments system, a national risk assessment and a data privacy and security policy and roadmap as well as memberships on the Joint Policy

³⁸ Support to the Judiciary Programme, AMA 2022-2023

³⁹ Corrections Support AMA 2021-2025

⁴⁰ Water Sector Partnership AMA

⁴¹ VEEP Phase II Single Stage Business Case

⁴² VEEP Phase II AMA

⁴³ Stakeholder interviews

⁴⁴ Pacific Parliamentary Strengthening AMA 2021-2022

⁴⁵ Support to Vanuatu Police Force AMA 2021-2022

⁴⁶ Wan Smolbag AMA 2021

⁴⁷ Gender-based Violence Protection Programme AMA 2021-2022

⁴⁸ Tourism Assistance Programme Activity Completion Assessment

Outcome	Key results observed
STO 6: New Zealand and Vanuatu engage in mature conversations on the full spectrum of policy issues	<p>Reform Group created a conducive environment for data sharing, digital interbank payments and enhanced GoV confidence and engagement⁴⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HLC, partner-led approaches and community awareness and consultation activities (see section 3.1.3) have increased the profile of key economic issues, opened opportunities for collaboration with other development partners and established relationships to improve collaboration at all levels, national, provincial and community^{45 49}
STO 7: The development partnership is dependable, flexible, mutually reinforcing, and aligned more strongly with Vanuatu systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term support and deployments together with community engagement and reform-based support has deepened relationships between NZ advisers and local partners, positioning NZ well as a nimble development partner, enabled joint identification of areas of need and reinforced NZ as a dependable partner, while simultaneously strengthening GoV systems^{40 45 49}

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⁴⁹ Economic Governance Programme AMA 2022-2023