

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2024

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TOP NEWS

Handing over of 50% Payment of Interchange Holdings Ltd (IHL) Share in Interchange Limited (ICL)



ICL being the first international submarine cable that connects Vanuatu rest of the world landed in Port Vila in 2013. Later in 2014, it was commissioned and ready for use in March of 2014.

The ownership of ICL is through shares are as follows:

- Vanuatu National Provident Fund: 37.5% representing 300 shares
- Interchange Holdings Ltd: 25% representing 200 Shares
- Fidelity Pacific Life Insurance Co. Ltd: 12.5% representing 100 shares
- Vanuatu Post Ltd: 12.5% representing 100 Shares
- Vanuatu Government: 12.5% representing 100 Shares

With the major reforms in the Telecom Sector, and landing of the submarine cable, it has a positive impact on the GDP of Vanuatu in 2014 and continues on in 2015 where Vanuatu was recognized by the United Nations with the ICTs in Sustainable Development Award for its outstanding leadership and ambitious, effective and sustainable initiatives to ensuring full ownership of connectivity.

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The handing over of 50% payment for the acquisition of 200 shares of Interchange Holdings Ltd in Interchange Cable Ltd, with the presence of

- ICL Shareholders:
- ICL Board and Management:
- Minister, Director General and Staff of the Ministry of Finance & Economic Management:
- Director General of Prime Minister's Office
- ICL Shareholders - Interchange Holdings Ltd (IHL)

200+ New Citizenship awards - 15 November 2024



The Vanuatu Citizenship Office & Commission today held its official Handing over ceremony at Iririki resort. Today was the first time for the Prime Minister Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmass to be present and hand over Citizenship certificates.

The ceremony saw over 200+ certificates handed over by Citizenship Commission members in the order of:

- Naturalisation (NC)
- Marriage (MM)
- Entitlement (EC)
- Regain (RG)



This event highlighted the country's commitment to attracting foreign investment and enhancing its international presence. The ceremony underscored Vanuatu's ongoing efforts to promote its citizenship program while fostering relationships with global investors.

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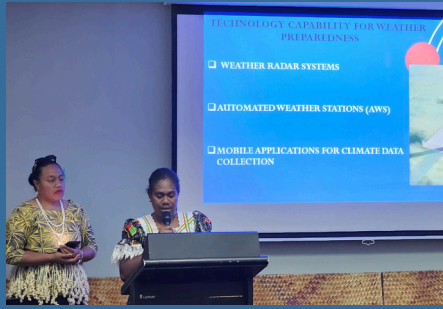
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Analyst Workshop



The Analyst Workshop organized by SPID (Strategic Policy and Intelligence Division) featured participants from other Pacific island countries, hosted by Vanuatu national security council.

The closing presentations from each participant groups. Also included the Director General of the Prime Minister's Office and the National Security Advisor. This workshop aimed to enhance analytical capabilities within government agencies by fostering collaboration and sharing best practices in intelligence analysis.



Participants engaged in discussions on current security challenges, strategic planning, and the importance of evidence-based policy-making to inform national security and governance strategies. The event emphasized the critical role of data analysis in addressing complex geopolitical issues and promoting informed decision-making at the highest levels of government.

2025 Planning Workshop with the theme "Empowering an Inclusive Digital Transformation"



2025 Planning Workshop with the theme "Empowering an Inclusive Digital Transformation" starts today until Thursday, 21 November 2024. Digital Transformation is a journey and it should be inclusive to ensure equitable access.

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) hosted a planning workshop for 2025 focusing on the theme "Empowering an Inclusive Digital Transformation."

The event was inaugurated by the Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, who emphasized the importance of collaboration and innovative strategies to ensure that digital advancements benefit all segments of society.

Discussions centered around fostering inclusivity in technology adoption, enhancing accessibility, and ensuring that digital services meet the diverse needs of citizens, ultimately aiming to create a more equitable and connected digital landscape.

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PSC Chairman Mahe heads Regional Governance Board



The Chairman of the Vanuatu Public Service Commission (PSC), Martin Raoul Mahe, has been unanimously voted as the Chairman of the Pacific Public Service Regional Governance Board (RGB).

This is a first for Vanuatu to hold such position in the region. During a welcome ceremony at the VIP Lounge Bauerfield airport, on Friday afternoon, the PSC Chairman's arrival to the country was met with the support of Directors, Directors General (DGs) and Managers of the Public service departments.

PSC Chairman Mahe said there were five candidates who have contested over the position of Chairman of the Pacific Public Service Regional Governance Board. During the conference, 16 member countries in the Pacific gave their support and unanimously voted Mr. Mahe as the Chairman of the Regional Governance Board, taking over from member country New Zealand on November 18th 2024.

In addition, the Acting Secretary of the PSC, Mr. Jonathan Iavere was also voted in as a member of the Regional Governance Board representing the Melanesian Sub-Regional Public Service Caucus alongside another member from Fiji's PSC.

Mr. Mahe conveyed he is very humbled in receiving such position knowing the expectations would be very high in terms of looking after the affairs of Public Service logistics in the country.

"The Vanuatu Public Service is progressing slowly despite challenges over the years," Mr. Mahe said

"I have faith in the leadership of respective ministries, led by DGs and Directors who are in command of all Departments and are carrying out service to the Government on a daily basis."

The PSC Chairman assured that Fiji's PSC and PNG's PSC, especially the Chairmen, have given their assurance and notable support for his new leadership role, which gave him more confidence.

"Meetings are held every three months so we will commence work on February," he said.

The Pacific Public Service RGB is the governing body of the Regional Public Service, which is made up of Public Service members from the Pacific Island countries including New Zealand and Australia.

The Board's goals are to: Address the Government Succession plan, provide technical advice on specific skills, and focus on areas for improvement and upskill the PSC in the Pacific region.

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Vanuatu Establishes Department of Communication and Digital Transformation



The Government of Vanuatu has officially launched the Department of Communication and Digital Transformation (DCDT), marking a milestone that reflects the nation's commitment to using communication and digital technology as drivers of progress, inclusion, and resilience.

Mrs. Cherol Ala, Director General (DG) of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), commented on the importance of this development: "The creation of this department reflects a recognition of the profound role that communication and digital technology play in shaping our societies.

In today's interconnected world, these fields are no longer optional tools but essential drivers and enablers of economic growth, social equity, and public good."

The department is founded on three guiding principles: connectivity, inclusivity, and innovation, with the overarching goal of empowering the people of Vanuatu.

DG Ala emphasised the department's commitment to building robust digital infrastructure across the nation, ensuring that every citizen, from urban centres to remote villages, has access to reliable, affordable, high-speed communication networks. This connectivity will form the foundation for Vanuatu's digital economy, enabling advancements in education, healthcare, and economic empowerment.

The department places people at the heart of its mission, focusing on ensuring no one is left behind in the digital age. Initiatives will include digital literacy programmes and support for marginalised communities, women, youth, and vulnerable groups to enable them to thrive in a connected world.



The DCDT aims to serve as a hub for innovation by collaborating with public agencies, private sector stakeholders, and academic institutions. These partnerships will drive the development of solutions to societal challenges, from bridging poverty gaps to promoting technological breakthroughs. The department also commits to upholding ethical governance, ensuring data privacy, cybersecurity, and responsible use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and cloud infrastructure.

"This department is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of ethical governance while valuing the criticality of state sovereign data and citizens' privacy," DG Ala assured.

The establishment of DCDT builds upon decades of progress. The ICT unit was first established in 2000 within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management to manage financial systems.

Subsequent milestones include the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector in 2007, the formation of the Office of Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator in 2009, and the establishment of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) in 2011. In 2021, the Council of Ministers approved the transformation of OGCIO into the Department of Communication and Digital Transformation under Decision No. 146 of 2021.

This evolution reflects the growing importance of digital transformation in national development.

Since 2012, the OGCIO has received over VT300 million to fund policy development and manage the Government Broadband Network. DG Ala described digital transformation as a "strategic necessity for enhancing productivity and resilience."

DG Ala called upon all stakeholders to support the department's vision. She emphasised the roles of the government in creating enabling policies, the private sector in driving investment and innovation, and civil society in amplifying community voices.

She conveyed her gratitude to all those who contributed to making the department a reality, stating, "Your efforts are laying the foundation for a brighter future."