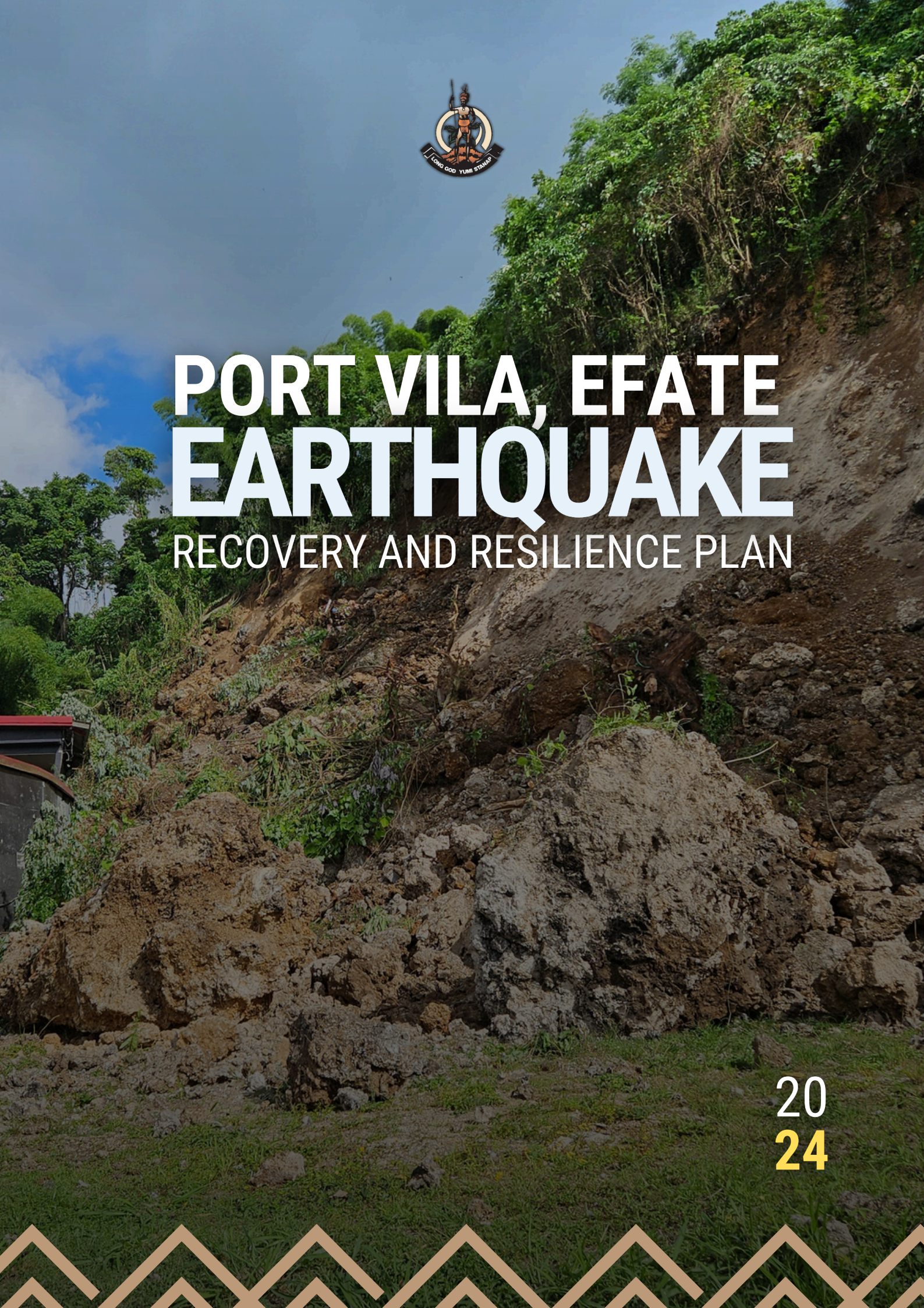


PORT VILA, EFATE EARTHQUAKE

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN

2024

Produced by:

Recovery Operations Centre
Office of the Prime Minister
Rue Mercet
Private Mail Bag 9053
Port Vila, Vanuatu
Telephone: +678 22413

Contents

1.1 Foreword

The Government and people of Vanuatu stand in solidarity with the families and communities who have been deeply affected by the recent earthquake, and we extend our sincerest thoughts and support during this challenging time.

On behalf of the of the Government and people of Vanuatu, I extend my heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to all families and communities impacted by the recent earthquake.

This devastating event has brought immense loss and hardship, tested our resilience and resolve at a time when we are already contending with compounded challenges from previous cyclones, prolonged rainfall events, and the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These back-to-back hardships underscore our nation's vulnerabilities while reaffirming our collective determination to rebuild and recover.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, my government declared a seven-day state of emergency, during which the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) worked tirelessly to provide emergency relief and assistance to those most in need. To further strengthen our response, we established a dedicated Recovery Operations Centre (ROC) to guide the nation through the complex task of moving from emergency relief to long-term recovery. Building on the relentless efforts, dedication, and professionalism shown by both the NDMO and the ROC, we have swiftly developed this comprehensive recovery and resilience plan.

This Plan serves as a roadmap for restoring essential infrastructure, supporting affected communities, and reviving livelihoods. More importantly, it takes a forward-looking perspective by emphasizing resilience, risk reduction, and preparedness, recognizing that Vanuatu's unique position in the Pacific Ring of Fire demands that we constantly adapt and fortify our capacities against future hazards.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all individuals, sectors, and ministries who contributed to this recovery planning process. I also acknowledge and thank our development partners for their rapid and generous response to this crisis. Your solidarity, expertise, and support have been invaluable and will remain essential as we move forward together.
As we now turn our efforts toward implementation, let us remain guided by the principles and goals set out in Vanuatu 2030 – The People's Plan. Through unwavering cooperation, shared responsibility, and enduring commitment, we will rebuild stronger, more resilient communities and ensure a brighter future for all Ni-Vanuatu.

As we now turn our efforts toward implementation, let us remain guided by the principles and goals set out in Vanuatu 2030 – The People's Plan. Through unwavering cooperation, shared responsibility, and enduring commitment, we will rebuild stronger, more resilient communities and ensure a brighter future for all Ni-Vanuatu.

God bless.

Hon. Charlot Salwai
Prime Minister

2.0 Acronymns

ACNU	Aid Coordination and Negotiation Unit
AUSMAT	Australian Medical Assistance Teams
BoP	Balance of Payment
CBD	Central Business District
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DOE	Department of Energy
DOL	Department of Labour
DOT	Department of Tourism
DOL	Department of Lands
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster-Risk Reduction
DRCU	Disaster Recovery Coordination Unit
DSPPAC	Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination of the Prime Minister's Office
DUAP	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
DEPC	Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GIP	Government Investment Projects
GoV	Government of Vanuatu
GEDSI	Gender Quality, Disability and Social Inclusion
HH	Household
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MALFFB	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MJCS	Ministry of Justice and Community Services
MoCCA	Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MIPU	Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJCS	Ministry of Justice and Community Services MLNR Ministry of Land and Natural Resources
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MTTCNVB	Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu Business
NBV	National Bank of Vanuatu
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NDMO	Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office
NDRF	National Disaster Recovery Framework
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
NFI	Non Food Items
NFA	Net Foreign Assets
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	National Recovery Committee
NSDP	Vanuatu's National Sustainable Development Plan
NPF	National Planning Framework
NZMAT	New Zealand Medical Assistance Teams
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OGCIO	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PPA	Principal Policy Analyst
PVMC	Port Vila Municipal Council
PWD	Public Works Department
ROC	Recovery Operations Centre
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprises
TC	Tropical Cyclone
VCCI	Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce & Industry
VMF	Vanuatu Mobile Force
VMGD	Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department
VNSO	Vanuatu National Statistics Office
VSTS	Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy
VUVO	Vanuatu Tourism Office
VWC	Vanuatu Women's Centre
UNICEF	United Nation International Children Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

3.0 Purpose of the Recovery and Resilience Plan

The main purpose of the recovery and resilience plan is to guide Vanuatu's efforts after the earthquake so that we can move from emergency relief to rebuilding in a smart and organized way. It outlines how we will identify urgent needs, restore vital services like water and electricity, and help communities get back on their feet. The Plan also sets out how to coordinate the work of different government offices, development partners, and community groups so that everyone works together efficiently.

In addition to meeting immediate needs, the recovery and resilience plan looks to the future. It shows us how to rebuild schools, hospitals, roads, and other infrastructure so that they are more resistant to future disasters. It explains how we can learn from what we have faced, become better prepared, and reduce the risks that come with living in an area prone to earthquakes and other hazards.

Most importantly, the recovery and resilience plan aims to support families and communities as they rebuild their homes and livelihoods. It provides a clear path forward for helping people recover financially, improve skills, and find work. By doing all of this, we are not just restoring what was lost—we are creating a stronger, safer, and more resilient Vanuatu for the future.

3.1 Objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Plan

The Earthquake Recovery and Resilience Plan for Vanuatu aims to address the immediate needs of affected populations while building long-term resilience across all sectors of society and the economy. The plan is guided by the following objectives:

Restore Essential Services and Infrastructure

The primary objective is to rapidly restore disrupted services and rebuild damaged infrastructure to meet the immediate needs of communities. This includes re-establishing healthcare, education, WASH facilities, housing, transportation, and energy systems, ensuring communities regain access to critical services and resources.

Enhance Resilience and Mitigate Future Risks

A key focus of the recovery and resilience plan is to integrate disaster-resilient designs and climate-adaptive measures into reconstruction efforts. By embedding disaster risk reduction and resilience-building strategies across all sectors, the plan aims to reduce vulnerabilities to future disasters and promote sustainable development.

Promote Inclusive and Equitable Recovery

The recovery and resilience Pplan prioritises inclusivity by mainstreaming Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles into all initiatives. Special attention is given to supporting vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and low-income households, to ensure they are not left behind in the recovery process.

Support Livelihoods and Economic Recovery

Restoring livelihoods and stimulating economic activity are critical components of the recovery and resilience plan. Efforts focus on rebuilding key economic sectors such as agriculture, trade, and commerce, while providing financial and technical support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and creating employment opportunities for affected populations.

Strengthen Institutional Capacity and Coordination

The Recovery and Resilience Plan aims to enhance the capacity of government institutions and stakeholders to manage and implement recovery initiatives effectively. This includes strengthening public finance management, fostering partnerships with development partners, and aligning efforts with national and global development frameworks.

Address Public Health and Food Security Risks

Immediate interventions focus on mitigating public health risks, including preventing disease outbreaks linked to damaged WASH infrastructure. Efforts also aim to restore food security by rehabilitating agricultural systems, distributing seeds and tools, and supporting local markets to ensure access to nutritious food for affected communities.

Foster Sustainable Development

The recovery process is aligned with the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2016–2030 and global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This ensures that recovery efforts contribute to long-term development goals and the overall well-being of the nation.

Strategic Approach

The Earthquake Recovery and Resilience Plan adopts a phased approach, addressing immediate priorities in the short term while laying the groundwork for medium- and long-term recovery. By aligning recovery efforts with national policies and leveraging partnerships with stakeholders, the plan aims to build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for Vanuatu.
Through these objectives, the Recovery and Resilience Plan not only seeks to rebuild what was lost but also to create stronger foundations for a safer and more prosperous Vanuatu.

4.0 Executive Summary

On December 17, 2024, a devastating 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Vanuatu, with its epicentre located 34 km west of Efate and 150 km west of Erromango. The earthquake caused significant destruction, claiming 14 lives as of the 22nd of December, injuring over 210 people, and displacing thousands. Port Vila, Efate, and nearby areas suffered severe structural damage, including collapsed bridges, public buildings, and critical infrastructure such as the Tagabe, Teouma, and Blacksand bridges. Two major water reserves in the Ohlen area were destroyed, cutting off vital water supplies to Port Vila. The disaster also disrupted power, telecommunications, and access to essential services, leaving communities vulnerable and in urgent need of support. A seven-day state of emergency was declared to mobilize resources and initiate coordinated response efforts.

The Recovery and Resilience Plan outlines a comprehensive framework to address the immediate, medium-term, and long-term needs of affected populations. It builds on the rapid response and assessments conducted by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and the newly established Recovery Operations Centre (ROC). These efforts have highlighted critical priorities across several sectors:

Infrastructure: The earthquake caused extensive damage to roads, bridges, and public buildings. Immediate repairs are required to restore connectivity and ensure access to essential services, particularly for emergency response operations. Long-term recovery will involve rebuilding resilient infrastructure that adheres to disaster-resistant design standards.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): Widespread damage to water systems and contamination of water supplies pose significant health risks. Emergency water trucking and repairs to damaged reservoirs and pipelines are underway, with additional investments needed to restore and secure water supplies for communities.

Health: The health sector has faced immense strain, with hospitals managing injuries and preparing for potential disease outbreaks due to compromised water and sanitation systems. Medical supplies, emergency medical teams, and temporary health facilities are critical to sustaining healthcare delivery during the recovery phase.

Housing: Thousands of homes were destroyed or damaged, leaving many families displaced and in need of shelter. Recovery efforts will focus on providing temporary shelter, supporting reconstruction with resilient building practices, and ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to adequate housing.

Education: Schools in affected areas sustained significant damage, disrupting learning for many children. Immediate priorities include the repair of facilities, replacement of learning materials, and the integration of Build Back Better principles to ensure safer learning environments.

Telecommunications: The earthquake disrupted communication networks, including damage to government broadband infrastructure. Restoring these systems is essential for coordination among government agencies and emergency response teams, as well as for reconnecting affected communities.

The **Recovery and Resilience Plan** provides a roadmap to mobilize resources, coordinate efforts across sectors, and engage development partners in supporting the nation’s recovery. It identifies key recovery projects and highlights the importance of building resilience against future hazards. This plan will serve as a guiding document for ministries, stakeholders, and international partners to align recovery initiatives with the principles of sustainability and disaster preparedness.

While the estimated recovery cost is substantial, the government remains committed to ensuring a timely and inclusive recovery. By prioritizing the needs of affected communities and strengthening resilience, this Recovery and Resilience Plan aims to rebuild a stronger, safer, and more sustainable Vanuatu for the future. The collective efforts of the government, development partners, and communities will be critical in achieving this vision.

4.1 Summary of Recovery and Reconstruction Needs

The earthquake that struck Vanuatu on December 17, 2024, caused extensive damage across critical sectors, impacting lives, services, and livelihoods. Recovery and reconstruction efforts are designed to address immediate needs while embedding long-term resilience. This recovery and resilience plan prioritizes **Health, Agriculture and Food Security, WASH, Housing, Infrastructure, Trade, Commerce, and Industry, Livelihood, Social Protection, and Employment, Education, Cross-Cutting Issues,** and **Macroeconomic Stability.**

Health Sector

The earthquake that struck Vanuatu on December 17, 2024, caused extensive damage across critical sectors, impacting lives, services, and livelihoods. Recovery and reconstruction efforts are designed to address immediate needs while embedding long-term resilience. This recovery and resilience plan prioritizes **Health, Agriculture and Food Security, WASH, Housing, Infrastructure, Trade, Commerce, and Industry, Livelihood, Social Protection, and Employment, Education, Cross-Cutting Issues,** and **Macroeconomic Stability.**

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6-12 months):

1. Scale up psychosocial support for affected populations and healthcare workers to address trauma and mental health challenges.
2. Rebuild damaged health centres with earthquake- and cyclone-resilient designs, prioritising facilities serving large catchment populations.
3. Improve WASH infrastructure in healthcare settings to prevent future disease outbreaks.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years):

1. Construct disaster-resilient healthcare facilities that can withstand future natural disasters.
2. Strengthen training for healthcare workers in emergency response and disaster management.
3. Integrate lessons learned into national health policies to improve preparedness for future crises.

Agriculture & Food Productive Sector

Immediate Recovery Priorities

1.Seed and Seedling Distribution:

- Distribute emergency vegetable seeds and planting materials, including high-yield varieties such as cassava, taro, yam, pineapple, and Tahitian lime. This effort addresses immediate food security challenges and promotes the re-establishment of household food gardens.
- Restore damaged seed banks and nurseries in Tagabe and Tanvasoko, ensuring access to improved cultivars for urban and rural farmers. Estimated cost: VUV 30 million.

2.Infrastructure Repairs:

- Initiate repairs to damaged Tagabe farm facilities, including fencing, cold storage units, and tractor implements essential for food production and agricultural operations.
- Rehabilitate DARD office spaces and equipment (e.g., filing systems, computers, and printers) to restore administrative functionality and support operational efficiency.

3.Tools and Equipment Support:

- Provide essential farming tools and resources, such as digging hoes, watering cans, and nursery trays, to empower smallholder farmers to resume cultivation. This includes replacing two-wheel rotavators to expedite land preparation.

4.Soil Quality and Erosion Mitigation:

- assess post-earthquake soil quality to determine suitability for replanting and mitigate potential erosion risks. Priority areas include Mataso and offshore islands where landslides have affected arable land.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs

1.Market Access and Trade Support:

- Rehabilitate key market houses in Port Vila and rural locations such as Tanvasoko, addressing structural issues and enabling the resumption of local trade. Market repairs are essential to reducing post-harvest losses and stabilising rural economies.

2.Community-Level Food Storage:

- Establish disaster-resilient storage systems to minimise post-harvest losses and maintain food quality during recovery periods.

3.Livelihood Restoration:

- Provide financial assistance and capacity-building initiatives for farmers, particularly women and youth, to ensure equitable recovery and sustainable agricultural development.

Long-Term Resilience

1.Climate-Adaptive Practices:

- Promote the use of drought- and flood-tolerant crops and integrate sustainable soil management techniques to enhance resilience to climate-related disruptions.

2.Disaster-Resilient Agricultural Systems:

- Rebuild nurseries, seed banks, and market infrastructure to meet earthquake-resistant standards, reducing future vulnerabilities.

3.Capacity Building:

- Train farmers and DARD staff on disaster preparedness and adaptive farming methods to improve the sector's ability to withstand future shocks.

4.Institutional Modernisation:

- Upgrade DARD’s communication and IT systems to strengthen coordination between government agencies and rural communities.

5.Tagabe Farm and Staff Housing Reconstruction:

- Replace or rehabilitate severely damaged staff houses and office blocks to provide safe and functional facilities for personnel. Estimated cost: VUV 255 million.

WASH Sector

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0-6 months)

1.Emergency Water Supply Restoration:

- Repair damaged pipelines and water supply systems to restore clean water access to affected communities, particularly in displacement camps and evacuation centres housing over 2,000 displaced individuals.
- Distribute water purification tablets and establish safe water distribution points in the most affected areas.
- Deploy mobile water tanks and ensure rapid access to potable water in rural and peri-urban areas.

2.Sanitation and Hygiene Measures:

- Install mobile toilets and handwashing stations in all displacement camps and evacuation centres.
- Conduct hygiene promotion campaigns targeting vulnerable groups, such as children, women, and people with disabilities, to mitigate the risk of disease outbreaks.
- Distribute emergency WASH kits, including soap, buckets, and sanitary supplies, to displaced families.

3.Public Health Surveillance:

- Activate disease monitoring systems in areas with compromised WASH infrastructure to identify and respond to potential waterborne illnesses, such as diarrhoea, typhoid, and cholera.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6-12 months):

1.Infrastructure Repairs:

- Rehabilitate damaged water infrastructure, including boreholes, pipelines, and communal water points, in both rural and urban areas.
- Repair sanitation facilities in schools, healthcare centres, and public buildings to ensure the safe continuation of services.
- Upgrade damaged wastewater systems to prevent contamination of water sources.

2.Sustainable WASH Services:

- Begin reconstruction of WASH facilities in schools and health centres, incorporating resilient designs to withstand future disasters.
- Establish semi-permanent sanitation solutions for displacement camps and host households to improve living conditions over the medium term.
- Build capacity within local governments and water management committees to manage and maintain restored WASH infrastructure effectively.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years):

1.Disaster-Resilient Upgrades:

- Redesign and rebuild water supply systems and sanitation facilities to meet earthquake- and climate-resilient standards.
- Expand rainwater harvesting systems and install larger water storage tanks in vulnerable communities to enhance water security during crises.
- Construct flood- and earthquake-resistant wastewater treatment facilities to safeguard water quality.

2.Community Capacity Building:

- Provide training to local technicians and water management committees on maintaining resilient WASH infrastructure.

- Promote community-led initiatives to adopt sustainable hygiene practices, supported by awareness campaigns and resources.

3.Policy Integration:

- Incorporate lessons from the earthquake into national WASH policies and planning frameworks, ensuring the inclusion of disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies.
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms between government agencies, NGOs, and international partners for improved disaster preparedness in the WASH sector.

Housing Sector

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0-6 months)

1. Provide temporary shelters, including prefabricated housing units and tents, to accommodate over 2,000 displaced individuals currently residing in evacuation centres and host households.
2. Assess and repair damaged public sector housing, prioritising accommodations for essential service workers such as healthcare staff and teachers.
3. Launch financial assistance programs to help low-income families secure safe temporary housing.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6-12 months)

1. Begin reconstruction of public sector housing for critical staff, such as the 10 staff houses at Tagabe, and prioritise rebuilding of heavily damaged homes in low-income neighbourhoods.
2. Provide grants or low-interest loans to private homeowners to facilitate the rebuilding of safe, earthquake-resistant housing.
3. Address sanitation issues in temporary accommodations by integrating WASH facilities into shelter solutions.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years)

1. Promote the adoption of disaster-resilient housing designs and materials across private and public housing projects.
2. Develop a national framework for sustainable housing, incorporating energy efficiency and climate adaptation.
3. Conduct training for local builders on earthquake-resistant construction techniques to improve building standards nationwide.

Infrastructure Sector

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0-6 months)

1. Repair critical transport routes, such as Wharf Road and the Efate Ring Road, to restore supply chains and ensure the movement of goods and services.
2. Restore power supply to affected areas, including repairs to critical transmission lines and substations.
3. Address urgent telecommunications disruptions by expanding satellite-based solutions like Starlink while repairing the submarine cable landing site.

Medium-Term Actions (6-12 months)

1. Rebuild public buildings, such as government offices and community centres, with disaster-resilient designs to restore essential services.
2. Strengthen the capacity of smaller ports, such as Sinovan and Emua, to alleviate logistical bottlenecks caused by damage to the Main Wharf in Port Vila.
3. Enhance urban and rural infrastructure to improve disaster preparedness and response capabilities.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years)

1. Upgrade transportation networks to include climate- and disaster-resilient designs, reducing vulnerability to future seismic events.
2. Invest in smart grid technologies to enhance the resilience and efficiency of the energy sector.
3. Modernise telecommunications infrastructure to improve redundancy and reduce reliance on single points of failure, such as the submarine cable.

Trade, Commerce and Industry Sector

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0–6 months)

1.Market Repairs and Reopening:

- Conduct urgent repairs to urban markets, including the Port Vila Main Market House, to enable vendors to resume operations and provide fresh produce to affected populations.
- Reconstruct rural market houses in areas such as Tanvasoko to facilitate trade and support rural livelihoods.
- Implement temporary market solutions, such as mobile or pop-up stalls, in areas where markets are non-operational.

***2.*Financial Assistance to SMEs:**

- Establish grant and loan programmes to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) recover from losses and rebuild their operations.
- Prioritise support for businesses in the most affected areas, such as Port Vila's CBD, to restore commercial activity quickly.
- Provide financial relief measures, such as tax deferrals and reduced interest rates, to ease the burden on struggling businesses.

3.Supply Chain Recovery:

- Reopen key trade routes, including the Wharf Road and Efate Ring Road, to facilitate the movement of goods and raw materials.
- Address logistical bottlenecks at the Main Wharf in Port Vila and smaller ports like Sinovan and Emua, which have experienced operational challenges.
- Expedite customs clearance processes for essential goods to ensure timely delivery of supplies.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6–12 months):

1.Rehabilitation of Commercial Infrastructure:

- Repair damaged retail spaces, warehouses, and industrial facilities in urban and peri-urban areas to restore normal business operations.
- Focus on restoring hospitality and tourism-related businesses, which are significant contributors to Vanuatu's economy.
- Establish semi-permanent commercial hubs in areas where rebuilding will take longer.

2.Strengthening Supply Chain Resilience:

- *Diversify supply chain routes to reduce dependence on single transportation or storage facilities, such as the damaged Port Vila Main Wharf.*
- *Develop local storage facilities for essential goods to ensure availability during crises.*
- *Expand the use of digital inventory and tracking systems to enhance supply chain management.*

3.Business Training and Capacity Building:

- Provide training to business owners and operators on disaster preparedness and risk management.
- Support SMEs in adopting digital tools for e-commerce and remote operations to ensure continuity during disruptions.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years)

1.Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure Development:

- Rebuild markets, warehouses, and other trade-related infrastructure to meet earthquake- and cyclone-resistant standards.
- Expand infrastructure projects to include sustainable energy solutions, such as solar-powered refrigeration for market vendors.

2.Policy and Regulatory Support:

- Update national trade and industry policies to include disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures and promote business continuity planning.
- Strengthen coordination between government agencies and private sector stakeholders to enhance the sector's disaster preparedness.

3.Digital Transformation:

- Promote the adoption of e-commerce platforms and mobile payment systems to expand market access and support remote trade activities.
- Provide incentives for businesses to invest in digital solutions that enhance resilience and efficiency.

4.Promoting Inclusive Growth:

- Ensure recovery efforts prioritise vulnerable groups, such as women-owned businesses and informal sector workers, by providing targeted support and resources.
- Facilitate access to financial services for rural entrepreneurs to enable their participation in the economic recovery.

Livelihood, Social Protection, Employment Sector

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0–6 months)

1.Job Creation Through Reconstruction Activities:

- Launch large-scale reconstruction projects in key sectors such as housing, infrastructure, and agriculture to generate employment opportunities.
- Establish short-term employment schemes targeting displaced individuals and vulnerable groups, ensuring equitable participation by women and youth.
- Mobilise local contractors and artisans to support rebuilding efforts, stimulating income generation at the community level.

2.Cash Assistance and Social Safety Nets:

- Strengthen and create long term stable social protection mechanisms, such as pensions and disability benefits, to ensure coverage for vulnerable populations.
- Partner with local governments and NGOs to identify and support households most in need of assistance.

2.Support for Small Enterprises and Informal Workers:

- Provide immediate financial grants and microloans to small enterprises and informal workers to help them recover lost income and rebuild their operations.
- Facilitate access to essential resources such as tools, equipment, and raw materials for small-scale businesses in urban and rural areas.
- Establish temporary marketplaces for vendors whose regular trading spaces have been damaged.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6–12 months):

1.Livelihood Restoration Programmes:

- Launch targeted programmes to rehabilitate the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, fishermen, and other affected groups.
- Develop community-based income-generating projects, such as cooperative farming and food processing initiatives, to diversify income streams.
- Support the recovery of value chains for key agricultural and industrial products, ensuring the participation of small producers and traders.

2.Vocational Training and Skill Development:

- Provide vocational training programmes to equip affected populations with skills in construction, carpentry, masonry, and other trades critical to the recovery process.
- Establish partnerships with training institutions to offer certifications that enhance employability in sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and technology.
- Introduce entrepreneurship training to help individuals establish new businesses and adapt to post-disaster economic opportunities.

3.Community Engagement and Capacity Building:

- Engage local communities in designing and implementing livelihood recovery projects to ensure alignment with their needs and priorities.
- Strengthen the capacity of local governments and community organisations to deliver social protection and employment support services.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years):

1.Building Resilient Livelihoods:

- Promote climate-resilient and sustainable livelihood options, such as agroforestry, eco-tourism, and renewable energy projects, to reduce vulnerability to future disasters.
- Establish savings and credit groups in rural and peri-urban areas to improve access to financial services and enhance economic resilience.
- Encourage investment in infrastructure that supports livelihoods, such as market facilities, transportation networks, and cold storage systems.

2.Social Protection System Strengthening:

- Develop a comprehensive social protection strategy that integrates disaster response measures, ensuring timely assistance during future crises.
- Digitise social protection systems to improve efficiency, transparency, and accessibility for beneficiaries.

3.Policy Reforms and Employment Opportunities:

o Advocate for policy reforms that support job creation, labour market access, and equal opportunities for marginalised groups, including people with disabilities.

- Expand public-private partnerships to attract investment in high-growth sectors such as renewable energy, technology, and value-added agriculture.
- Leverage international partnerships to create pathways for seasonal employment and skills transfer, benefiting affected populations.

Education Sector

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0–6 months):

1.Reopening Schools and Temporary Learning Spaces:

- Provide temporary classrooms and learning spaces, such as tents and prefabricated structures, to ensure continuity of education for affected students.
- Prioritise the reopening of schools catering to exam classes and critical grade levels to minimise disruptions to academic progression.
- Mobilise resources to repair minor damages in schools that can be made functional in the short term.

2.Restoration of Learning Materials and Resources:

- Distribute emergency learning kits, textbooks, stationery, and other essential materials to affected schools.
- Replenish digital resources and restore IT systems critical for teaching and administrative purposes in urban schools.
- Partner with international agencies to provide supplemental educational materials where local supplies are insufficient.

3.Provision of WASH Facilities:

- Establish temporary WASH facilities, including mobile toilets and handwashing stations, in schools to safeguard students' health and well-being.
- Provide water purification systems and hygiene supplies to schools in areas facing water shortages or contamination risks.
- Launch health awareness campaigns to promote good hygiene practices among students and teachers.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6–12 months)

1.Reconstruction of Damaged Schools:

- Prioritise the reconstruction of schools with major structural damage, ensuring compliance with disaster-resilient building standards.
- Focus on schools in low-income and rural areas, which often have limited access to alternative learning spaces.
- Collaborate with local contractors and engineering experts to ensure the quality and safety of reconstructed school facilities.

2.Support for Teachers and School Staff:

- Provide psychosocial support and stress management training for teachers and school staff affected by the earthquake.
- Offer professional development opportunities to enhance teaching quality and adapt to the challenges posed by the disaster.
- Restore staff accommodations in damaged schools to ensure continuity in education delivery.

3.Inclusive Education Initiatives:

- Ensure that recovery efforts address the needs of children with disabilities, providing them with accessible facilities and tailored learning resources.
- Implement targeted support programmes for vulnerable students, including those from displaced families or low-income households.
- Encourage community participation in education recovery efforts to foster local ownership and sustainability.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years)

1.Building Disaster-Resilient Schools:

- Invest in earthquake-resistant infrastructure and retrofitting existing buildings to withstand future disasters.
- Incorporate climate-adaptive features, such as rainwater harvesting systems and solar panels, into school designs.
- Develop school safety plans and conduct regular drills to enhance preparedness among students and staff.

2.Strengthening Curriculum and Digital Learning:

- Integrate disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change education into the national curriculum to raise awareness and build resilience from a young age.
- Expand access to digital learning platforms and e-learning tools to ensure continuity of education during future disruptions.
- Provide training for teachers on leveraging technology in classrooms to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

3.Policy Reforms and Capacity Building:

- Advocate for policy reforms that prioritise investments in disaster-resilient education infrastructure and equitable access to quality education.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to implement recovery and resilience-building programmes.
- Establish partnerships with international organisations to mobilise technical expertise and financial resources for education recovery.

Cross-Cutting Issues	**Gender, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Reduction**

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0–6 months)

1.Addressing Vulnerabilities and Protection Needs:

- Conduct rapid gender-sensitive assessments to identify and address the unique needs of vulnerable populations, including women, children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.
- Establish safe spaces and support services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and displaced individuals, particularly in evacuation centres.
- Distribute emergency supplies tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups, such as menstrual hygiene kits, maternal health supplies, and assistive devices for people with disabilities.

2. Climate-Resilient Emergency Responses:

- Integrate climate-resilient measures into emergency shelters and WASH facilities, such as solar lighting and water purification systems.
- Stabilise affected ecosystems, including immediate reforestation or erosion control efforts, to minimise environmental degradation caused by the earthquake.

3. **Disaster Risk Monitoring and Awareness:**

- Deploy rapid risk assessments to identify high-risk areas prone to aftershocks, landslides, or flooding.
- Strengthen early warning systems and ensure consistent communication with affected communities regarding safety measures and aftershock risks.
- Launch community awareness campaigns on disaster preparedness and risk reduction, particularly in high-risk urban and rural areas.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6–12 months)

1.Integrating GEDSI Across Recovery Efforts:

- Mainstream GEDSI principles into sectoral recovery and resilience plans to ensure equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities for all affected populations.
- Promote women's participation in decision-making processes related to recovery, including leadership roles in community recovery committees.
- Support livelihood initiatives for marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, through targeted training and small business support programmes.

2.Strengthening Resilience in Infrastructure and Ecosystems:

- Begin reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, such as schools and health centres, with climate-adaptive designs that incorporate renewable energy solutions and water conservation systems.
- Implement sustainable land management practices, such as mangrove restoration and reforestation, to strengthen natural defences against climate risks.

3. Expanding DRR Capacity and Preparedness:

- Establish community-based disaster preparedness programmes, including regular drills, evacuation simulations, and first aid training.
- Incorporate disaster risk reduction measures into urban planning and zoning regulations to minimise vulnerabilities in high-risk areas.
- Build institutional capacity for DRR by training government staff and local leaders in risk management and resilience planning.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years)

1.Building Inclusive and Resilient Systems:

- Institutionalise gender-responsive policies across all sectors to ensure sustained equity and inclusion in development and recovery planning.
- Expand social protection systems and welfare programmes, to reduce vulnerabilities among marginalised populations.
- Develop long-term strategies to support the education and training of women, youth, and underrepresented groups in disaster resilience and leadership roles.

2.Investing in Climate Resilience:

- Promote large-scale ecosystem restoration projects, such as forest conservation and coastal protection, to reduce the impact of future disasters.
- Integrate renewable energy and climate-resilient designs into all major infrastructure reconstruction projects.
- Develop a comprehensive national climate resilience strategy, aligned with global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement.

3.Embedding DRR Across Policies and Practices:

- Institutionalise DRR principles in all national development strategies and sectoral policies, ensuring consistent integration across recovery initiatives.
- Develop a centralised disaster risk information system to support evidence-based decision-making and resource allocation.
- Foster a culture of resilience by integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change education into school curriculums and community programmes.

Macroeconomic Stability

Immediate Recovery Priorities (0–6 months)

1.Inflation Management:

- Implement price monitoring systems to prevent profiteering and stabilise prices of essential goods, including food, fuel, and construction materials.
- Introduce targeted sterilisation of aid flows especially for critical items to mitigate the immediate impact of inflation on low-income households.
- Ensure the availability of essential goods through streamlined import processes and expedited clearance at ports and borders to address supply chain bottlenecks.

2. Emergency Economic Stimulus:

- Mobilise immediate financial support, including international aid and domestic resources, to fund critical recovery projects in housing, infrastructure, and essential services.
- Provide grants or low-interest loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to help businesses resume operations and retain employees.

3. Public Finance Management:

- Establish transparent mechanisms for managing donor contributions, ensuring accountability and efficient allocation of funds to priority recovery areas.
- Reprioritise government budgets to allocate resources to high-impact recovery programmes while maintaining fiscal discipline.
- Strengthen coordination between the Ministry of Finance and donor agencies to align recovery financing with national development objectives.

Medium-Term Recovery Needs (6–12 months)

1.Revitalising Economic Growth:

- Launch targeted economic stimulus packages focusing on sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and trade to boost employment and GDP growth.
- Invest in labour-intensive reconstruction projects, such as housing and infrastructure repair, to generate jobs and inject liquidity into local economies.
- Promote public-private partnerships (PPPs) to leverage private sector expertise and resources in recovery initiatives.

2.Strengthening Revenue Generation:

- Accelerate efforts to modernise tax administration, including the rollout of VAT systems, to increase domestic revenue mobilisation.
- Expand economic diversification initiatives to reduce reliance on vulnerable sectors, such as tourism, by promoting manufacturing, renewable energy, and digital services.
- Enhance compliance measures in customs and taxation to optimise revenue collection from imports and domestic activities.

3.Mitigating Fiscal Risks:

- Monitor public debt levels closely to ensure that recovery financing does not compromise long-term fiscal sustainability.
- Establish a fiscal contingency fund to cushion against potential economic shocks, such as aftershocks or secondary disasters.
- Strengthen financial oversight systems to minimise risks of inefficiency or corruption in recovery spending.

Long-Term Resilience (1+ years)

1. **Promoting Sustainable Economic Growth:**

- Develop a national economic resilience strategy to integrate disaster risk reduction (DRR) into macroeconomic planning and resource allocation.
- Diversify export markets and enhance trade partnerships to reduce vulnerability to external shocks and support long-term economic growth.
- Invest in human capital development through education and vocational training programmes to build a skilled workforce capable of driving post-recovery development.

2. **Improving Financial Systems and Stability:**

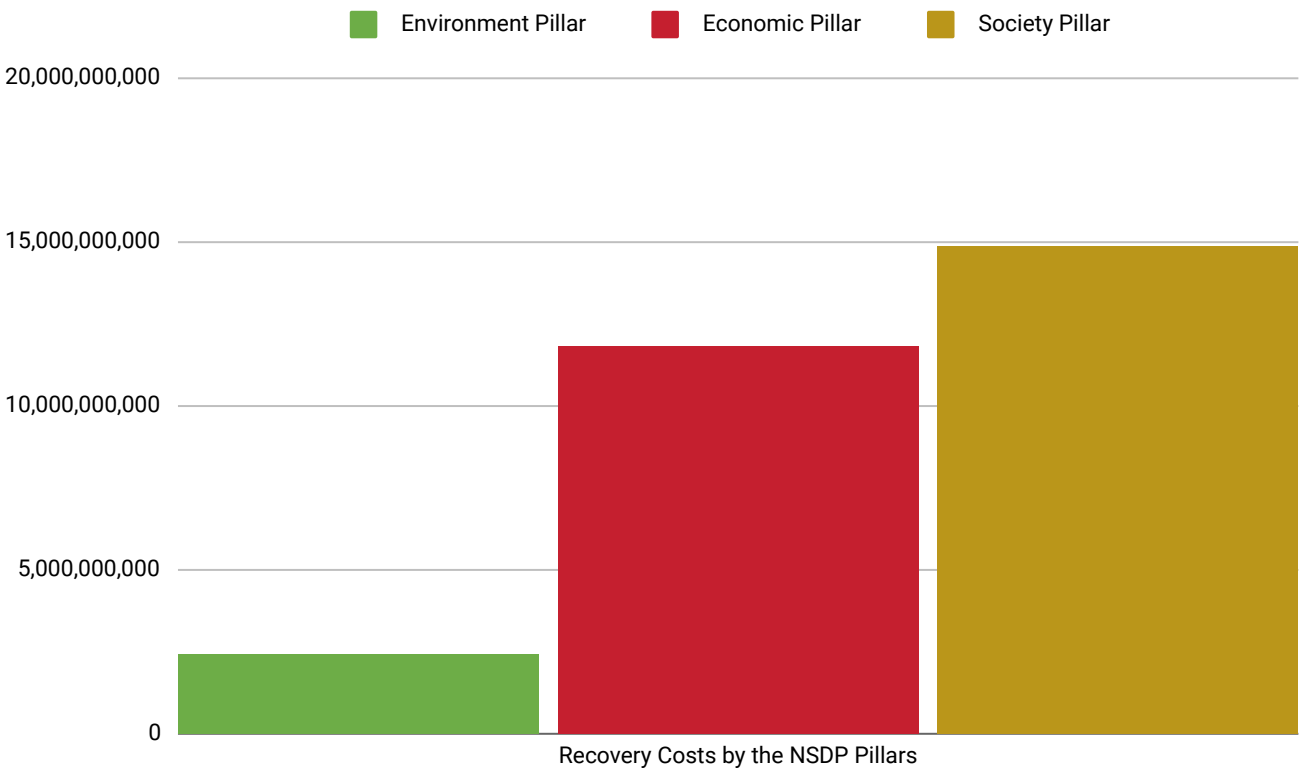
- Strengthen financial inclusion initiatives, such as expanding access to banking and microfinance services, to empower individuals and businesses in rural areas.
- Implement reforms in public financial management (PFM) systems to ensure greater efficiency, transparency, and resilience in government spending.
- Expand disaster insurance schemes for households, businesses, and public assets to reduce fiscal exposure to future disasters.

3. **Aligning with Global and National Goals:**

- Integrate recovery and economic resilience strategies with the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) and global frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Foster international collaboration to secure long-term financing and technical support for economic recovery and resilience-building efforts.
- Institutionalise lessons learned from this earthquake to enhance macroeconomic planning and disaster preparedness across all levels of government.

Total recovery needs were estimated to be VUV 29,349,694,516

Figure 1: Recovery Costs by the NSDP Pillars



Strategic Goals

1. **Restore Essential Services:** Swiftly re-establish healthcare, education, housing, and WASH services to reduce hardships.
2. **Enhance Resilience:** Build back better with disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems.
3. **Support Livelihoods and Inclusion:** Ensure that recovery efforts are inclusive, prioritising vulnerable groups and marginalised populations.
4. **Promote Economic Recovery:** Revive key sectors such as agriculture, trade, and commerce to restore stability and growth.
5. **Align with National Plans:** Integrate recovery efforts with the NSDP and align with global frameworks for sustainable development.

Table 1: Summary of Total Recovery Needs

Sectors	Recovery Needs			
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Total (VUV)
Environment Pillar				**2,425,590,504**
Agriculture	-	-	-	**589,300,000**
Livestock	-	-	-	**105,300,168**
Fisheries	-	-	-	**1,520,990,000**
Forestry	-	-	-	**95,000,168**
Biosecurity	-	-	-	**115,000,168**
WASH	-	-	-	**235,000,000**
Economic Pillar				**11,819,357,212**
Telecommunications	-	-	-	**2,211,557,212**
Trades & Industry	-	-	-	**4,607,800,000**
Infrastructure	-	-	-	**5,000,000,000**
Society Pillar				**14,869,746,800**
Education	-	-	-	**11,060,500,000**
Health	-	-	-	**704,000,000**
Youth & Sport	-	-	-	**702,000,000**
Housing	-	-	-	**900,000,000**
Justice	-	-	-	**1,503,246,800**
Total Recovery Needs				**29,349,694,516**

5.0 Context

On December 17, 2024, at 12.51 pm local Vanuatu time, a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck at latitude 17.7 degrees south, and Longitude 167.8 degree south, placing its epicentre 34 kilometres west of Efate and 150 km west of Erromango earthquake at Mw 7.3 with a depth of 57.1 kilometres (35.5 mi). The focal mechanism indicated oblique-normal faulting. Shaking was estimated to have lasted for around 30 seconds. Over the past three days after the earthquake, VMGD have reported more than 300 aftershocks with the strongest measuring Mw 5.5 on the 20th of December 2024.

The earthquake was measured using the Modified Mercalli intensity scale (MM, MMI, or MCS) as “Violent” with key features of this classification causing considerable in specially designed structures, with many well-designed frame structures thrown off kilter. damage is great in substantial buildings, with many experiencing partial collapse and shifting off foundations. Liquefaction occurs, as well as underground pipes being destroyed.

Impact

There have been 14 confirmed deaths as of 22 December with around 210 people injured. Many of the deaths were caused by a landslide and others were killed during a building collapse. Six deaths were caused by a landslide and four more were killed by a building collapse. The capital city, Port Vila has sustained severe damage with at least 10 buildings collapsed. Major infrastructural and transport routes have been severely damaged, or blocked due to falling rock and debris pile up. All major utilities such as power and water supply were badly damaged on the 17th with many areas only having basic power and water restored by the 20th and 21st of December. Many peri-urban areas are still without secure utilities and authorities continue to activate WASH water tracking and NFIs supplies to ensure water is made available to affected communities, villages, and suburbs.

Picture 1: First Responders and Rescue Workers search for survivors

14 CONFIRMED DEATHS WITH AROUND 210 PEOPLE INJURED

***As of 22 December**

Landslides

A landslide struck the international shipping terminal of Port Vila, while the runway and control tower of Bauerfield International Airport was damaged, leading to the cancellation of multiple flights and its closure to non-humanitarian flights for 72 hours. Another landslide buried a bus, resulting in several deaths. Two reservoirs and the Port Vila Central Hospital were also damaged, forcing the transfer of patients to a military camp. Landslides were also reported in outlying villages and islands, while three bridges were damaged to a point that they were at high risk of collapsing in case of heavy rain. Two power lines were also damaged. The earthquake also triggered landslides that blocked airfields in surrounding islands and damaged water supplies. A 25 cm (9.8 in) tsunami was also observed.

Picture 2: Landslide next to the Stade Correctional Facility

Infrastructure, Utilities, and ICT Damage

The submarine cable providing internet service to Vanuatu was damaged, causing outages. National government websites went offline, while communication lines for police and related authorities were rendered unserviceable. The Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation went off air due to damage to Broadcasting House. Despite connectivity issues, people were able to go online through Starlink. Power and water outages occurred in the city, with the main utilities' provider, UNELCO, said it could take two weeks to fully restore water supplies to all aeras. SHEFA Provincial rapid assessment teams reported extensive crop damage was recorded in Mataso island due to landslides that buried gardens, sparking concerns over food shortages for many off shore islands and communities on mainland Efate, and around peri-urban areas of Port Vila.

The USGS estimated that the earthquake could cause economic losses measuring between 1–10% of Vanuatu's GDP. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that 116,000 people had been directly affected by the earthquake, equivalent to a third of Vanuatu's population. Among them were 14,000 children. Around 1,000 people were displaced, while 20,000 were without water.

The public infrastructure authorities have reported bridge collapses. Severe landslides occurring in the aftermath have also made it difficult for restoration of utilities and transport routes to be cleared. Substantial damage to the access road and infrastructure at the main wharf have also caused difficulties with supply of goods including fuel, food supplies, and aid. The earthquake struck at a time when the centre of Port Vila was busy with lunchtime shoppers.

Response

A tsunami warning was issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre covering Vanuatu, Fiji, the Kermadec Islands, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna, with waves expected to reach 1 m (3 ft 3 in). This was lifted at 14h 14 local Vanuatu time. The Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office told residents of coastal areas to flee to higher ground. Authorities in the country were placed on high as the Vanuatu Mobile Forces (VMF) and government emergency workers were immediately mobilised to assist those affected, as officials were dealing with multiple victims. A mass casualty triage centre was set up outside the emergency ward of Port Vila Central Hospital.

State of Emergency and Relief efforts to date

A seven-day state of emergency and a nighttime curfew from 6pm-6am was declared by the Prime Minister Charlot Salwai on the 17th of December. The Prime Minister also appealed for international assistance. Australia, France, New Zealand, and the United States deployed humanitarian equipment and personnel to Vanuatu. Australia said it was assisting efforts to reopen Port Vila's airport. Fiji also offered support. A total of 148 Australian citizens in Vanuatu were repatriated by the Royal Australian Air Force, while 81 New Zealanders and 12 other nationals were evacuated by the New Zealand Defence Force. On 18 December, a Lockheed C-130 Hercules of the Royal New Zealand Air Force carrying an urban search and rescue team to Vanuatu was diverted to Nouméa in New Caledonia due to an engine fire warning. On 20 December, over seven tonnes of aid were delivered by New Zealand. This alongside the deployment of an urban search and rescue team, Ministry of Health staff, as well as New Zealand Red Cross personnel, with the latter providing satellite phones and Starlink devices.

Picture 3: Closed - Road to the International Wharf

The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) assessment categorized the relief and emergency operations within the seven days stating that their first priority was to assist with lifesaving and immediate rescue operations. In areas of the city where buildings collapsed and landslides occurred, search and rescue operations have been in effect since the afternoon that the earthquake struck. Specialist relief agencies made available through development partners assistance have since been deployed to the worst affected areas to assess, plan, and execute search and rescue activities. The second critical area of relief is to assess public building and transport infrastructure damage and initiate access for clearing these networks, and thirdly to ensure affected populations have health, food, and shelter assistance through the national cluster system which became activated once the SOE was declared. It is expected that some of these priority areas will phase into the Recovery stages of the event, and such, are captured in this Plan.

The earthquake has caused widespread damage and displacement within the island of Efate, and other damage to infrastructure, homes, public service buildings such as schools, banks, and government buildings. There has been widespread loss of local food and water sources for surrounding offshore islands in the SHEFA province. The NEOC estimates around 80,000 people have been affected caused widespread damage and displacement of over 947 people (at the time of drafting this plan) in wards around Port Vila, and surrounding areas to the city. Crops and water sources were also damaged or destroyed in many areas, causing authorities to focus on providing immediate shelter, water, and food supplies, as well as medical and evacuation support. An impending tropical low scheduled for the next few days before Christmas is also a cause for concerns with flash floods, continuous erosion, and possible further landslides of already vulnerable low lying and hill side areas.

Picture 4: Building damaged

6.0 National Sustainable Development Plan

The Recovery and Resilience Plan for the earthquake is closely aligned with Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan (The Plan), which serves as the country's main framework for achieving long-term development goals. Covering the years 2016 to 2030, the Plan is rooted in Vanuatu's culture, traditional knowledge, and Christian principles, reflecting the nation's identity and values. It outlines specific priorities to guide the country toward a future that is stable, sustainable, and prosperous, while also providing a framework to measure progress along the way. By integrating the recovery and resilience plan within this overarching policy framework, the government ensures that efforts to rebuild after the earthquake are not just about addressing immediate needs but also about contributing to the country's long-term vision for growth and development.

The Government's new Acceleration Priorities aims to fast-track key actions under the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) over the next five years. This Plan is designed to prioritize efforts that can have the greatest impact on improving the lives of Vanuatu's people and advancing national goals. The recovery and resilience Plan is a key part of this initiative, ensuring that earthquake recovery efforts are directly tied to these high-priority actions. This integration allows for a more strategic approach to recovery, where rebuilding efforts strengthen the economy, improve infrastructure, and enhance community resilience. By aligning the Recovery and Resilience Plan with the Acceleration Plan, the government is working to rebuild not just what was lost, but to create stronger, safer, and more sustainable systems for the future.

In addition to aligning with national policies, the recovery and resilience plan is closely tied to Vanuatu's decentralization framework, which emphasizes empowering provincial and local governments to play a larger role in service delivery and development. This framework ensures that recovery efforts are shaped by those who understand the needs of their communities best—local leaders, traditional authorities, and grassroots organizations. By embedding recovery activities within this framework, the government promotes local ownership and participation, making recovery efforts more effective and better suited to the unique challenges faced by different regions. This approach helps build trust and cooperation between communities and the government, ensuring that recovery not only addresses immediate needs but also lays the groundwork for long-term development at both the local and national levels. Together, these efforts ensure that the recovery and resilience plan supports a more resilient and equitable future for all Ni-Vanuatu.

Vanuatu 2030 charts the country's vision and overarching policy framework for achieving a Stable, Sustainable and Prosperous Vanuatu by 2030 and in doing so sets out the national priorities & context for the implementation of global sustainable development goals.

The Government's disaster response phase focuses on addressing the immediate humanitarian needs of affected communities, ensuring safety, relief, and essential services during the critical aftermath of the event. Once this phase stabilizes the situation, the government's recovery intervention shifts toward assessing the broader needs for long-term rebuilding. This involves conducting detailed recovery needs assessments or developing a comprehensive Recovery and Resilience Plan that identifies priorities for sustainable reconstruction and rehabilitation.

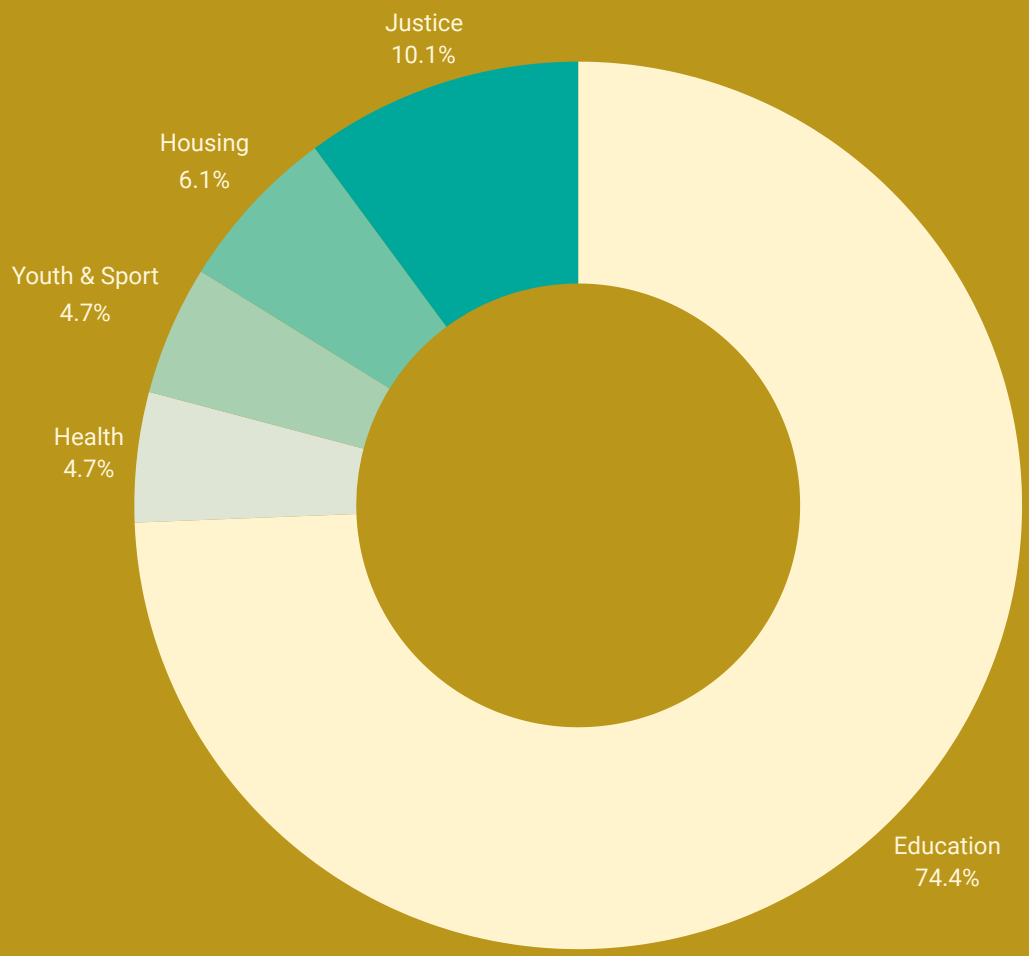
Long-term recovery is carefully aligned with the government's standard planning processes and the broader goals outlined in the National Development Plan or The People's Plan. By integrating recovery efforts into these frameworks, the government ensures that rebuilding is not just about restoring what was lost but also about advancing Vanuatu's long-term development goals. This approach strengthens resilience, promotes sustainability, and keeps the nation on track toward its vision for a stable, prosperous, and inclusive future.

7.0

Society Pillar

The society pillar seeks to ensure we maintain a vibrant cultural identity underpinning a peaceful, just and inclusive society that is support by responsive and capable institutions, delivering quality services to all citizens.

Society Pillar: Sectoral Recovery Costs **VUV 14,869,746,800**



7.1 Education

Sector Lead: Ministry of Education and Training
Contact information: Hendricks Tari (thendricks@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) serves over 98,000 students across Vanuatu in more than 1,200 schools, including Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary, and Secondary schools. The recent earthquake has caused extensive damage to educational infrastructure, severely disrupting access to quality education and endangering the safety of students and staff. Preliminary assessments indicate that 53 out of 202 schools have sustained various levels of damage, with some structures deemed unsafe and requiring major repairs or complete rebuilding.

Initial Assessments and Impact

Among the schools assessed, multiple institutions, such as Victory School of Hope, Suango Primary and Secondary Schools, and Freswota Primary and ECCE, have been classified as severely damaged and unsafe to use. Urban centres like Port Vila and surrounding rural areas in SHEFA Province have been the worst affected, with major structural damage to classrooms, administrative buildings, and WASH facilities. Many schools that are deemed "damaged but safe to use" require urgent temporary reinforcement to allow classes to resume. Without immediate interventions, education services for thousands of students, particularly those in exam years, will remain disrupted.

In addition to physical damage, the earthquake has caused significant losses of learning materials, including textbooks, stationery, and digital resources. These losses, combined with the destruction of WASH infrastructure, increase vulnerabilities among students, especially young children and adolescent girls, who depend on safe and hygienic school environments. For instance, the lack of functional sanitation facilities could force schools to remain closed, prolonging the disruption of education and negatively affecting attendance rates.

Recovery Needs

Immediate recovery priorities include the establishment of temporary learning spaces to ensure that education can continue while damaged buildings are repaired. These temporary solutions, such as tented classrooms or repurposed community spaces, will minimise disruptions, especially for students in critical examination years. The restoration of damaged WASH facilities, including toilets and handwashing stations, is essential to maintaining hygiene standards and preventing disease outbreaks among the school population.

Long-term recovery strategies will focus on rebuilding schools using disaster-resilient designs to ensure infrastructure can withstand future natural disasters. This includes the incorporation of earthquake-resistant materials and construction practices. For instance, schools such as Malapoa College and the Suango school cluster, which have been identified as severely damaged and unsafe, will require comprehensive rebuilding efforts. The replacement of lost learning materials and the provision of emergency school kits will also play a vital role in restoring the quality of education. Additionally, targeted support should be provided to the most affected schools to ensure equitable recovery and minimise disparities between urban and rural areas.

Broader Implications and Strategic Goals

The damage to the education sector has far-reaching consequences beyond immediate access to schooling. Prolonged closures and disrupted learning environments could lead to long-term declines in literacy and numeracy outcomes, affecting the human capital required for Vanuatu's sustainable development. The earthquake has underscored the vulnerability of the education system to natural disasters, highlighting the need to integrate disaster preparedness and resilience into MoET's strategic planning.

By prioritising the restoration of schools and adopting resilient infrastructure practices, Vanuatu can ensure that its education sector emerges stronger and more capable of withstanding future disasters. These efforts are essential not only for safeguarding the well-being and education of Vanuatu's children but also for supporting the country's broader development goals under the National Sustainable Development Plan (2016–2030).

7.2 Health

Sector Lead: Ministry of Health
Contact information: Director General Shirley Tokon (stokon@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The recent earthquake has caused significant disruption to Vanuatu's health sector, particularly on Efate, with 12 confirmed fatalities and 210 injuries reported at Vila Central Hospital (VCH) as of 20 December 2024. Search and rescue operations are ongoing, and the number of casualties may increase as assessments continue. Fortunately, no injuries or fatalities have been reported outside Efate Island. The National Health Emergency Operations Center, Vila Central Hospital Emergency Operation Center and the SHEFA Health Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) has been activated to lead the response, while surveillance sentinel sites in Port Vila and across Efate have been established to track health trends and monitor potential disease outbreaks. Enhanced sentinel surveillance at additional sites is set to begin in the coming days, strengthening the ability to detect and respond to emerging health risks.

Of the 30 health facilities assessed so far, 10 have sustained medium-level damage, requiring renovation and refurbishment, and 5 have suffered major damage, necessitating complete demolition and rebuilding. Key facilities, including Vanuatu's main referral Hospital, The Vila Central Hospital, National Vaccine Storage and the Shefa Provincial Health Office and the Ministry of Health officers have limited operations, jeopardizing the distribution of vaccines and other critical supplies. Marowuia (Emau) and Silimauri Health Center (Tongoa) are among the most severely impacted, with both slated for relocation under a build-back-better approach. The Teouma Aid post is being considered as key sit requiring the construction of a completely upgraded dispensary and new facility. Smaller health centres, such as Pele, Epau, and Eton, also need reconstruction to restore services. Other key health facilities with closer proximity to Port Vila namely, Pango, Erasa, NCD Hub Clinic, Mele, NTM, Anamburu and Holen require immediate innovations and being operational to ease pressure at VCH. Collectively, these facilities serve over 65,000 people, many of whom are now reliant on limited health services. Over 1,000 displaced individuals are living in temporary accommodations near operational centres, further straining the already stretched capacity of health facilities.

The earthquake's impact extends beyond physical damage, posing significant indirect risks to public health. Water shortages and contamination are expected to increase cases of waterborne diseases, such as diarrhoea, while environmental changes may exacerbate respiratory conditions, including asthma. Although influenza-like illnesses and watery diarrhoea had been declining prior to the earthquake, these conditions are now under close observation. Pre-existing health challenges, including scabies, chickenpox, sexually transmitted infections, and ciguatera fish poisoning, remain under active surveillance to detect any escalation.

International support has been critical in bolstering the response. Emergency medical teams from AUSMAT (Australia) and NZMAT (New Zealand) are providing medical, logistical, and coordination support. AUSMAT personnel stationed at VCH include nurses, medical officers, and logistics experts, while NZMAT focuses on supporting emergency management and coordination. The Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) clinic has also enhanced its surveillance capabilities to track emerging health trends. These combined efforts are essential to addressing immediate gaps in emergency care, maternal health services, and vaccination distribution.

The Ministry of Health (MoH), supported by its partners, is prioritising the restoration of healthcare services and the integration of disaster-resilient designs into rebuilding efforts. This includes strengthening WASH infrastructure to mitigate the risk of disease outbreaks and ensuring that critical services, such as vaccination and maternal care, are restored as quickly as possible. These coordinated efforts aim not only to recover from the immediate impacts of the earthquake but also to build a more resilient health system capable of withstanding future crises and safeguarding the well-being of Vanuatu's communities.

Recovery Needs

Recovery efforts in the health sector are prioritising the immediate restoration of essential services, with a focus on stabilising facilities that serve the largest and most vulnerable populations. Key health centres, such as the NCD Hub (Freshwota) and Kam Pusum Health Centre, are slated for immediate renovations to restore critical operations. Facilities with major damage, such as the National Vaccine Storage and Teouma Health Facility, will require complete rebuilding, incorporating disaster-resilient designs to ensure long-term sustainability. Relocation and rebuild efforts for

facilities like Silimauri Health Facility will follow a build-back-better approach to enhance resilience and mitigate future risks.

Addressing the indirect health impacts of the earthquake is also a priority. Psychosocial support services are being expanded to address the mental health challenges faced by displaced populations and healthcare workers. Surveillance and monitoring efforts, including enhanced sentinel sites, are essential to track potential outbreaks of waterborne diseases, respiratory conditions, and other health issues exacerbated by disrupted WASH infrastructure. Strengthening WASH systems will be critical to reducing the risk of disease outbreaks and ensuring a safe environment for patients and staff.

The earthquake has further strained a health sector already impacted by previous disasters such as Cyclones Judy, Kevin, and Harold. Recovery efforts must go beyond addressing immediate needs to build a health system capable of withstanding future crises. This includes integrating disaster risk reduction measures into all reconstruction activities, ensuring facilities are resilient to both natural disasters and the evolving healthcare needs of Vanuatu's population. A coordinated and inclusive approach involving the Ministry of Health, international partners, and local communities will be crucial to restoring healthcare services, supporting affected populations, and building a stronger and more sustainable health system for the future. These efforts aim to ensure not only recovery but also long-term resilience and improved health outcomes

Nutrition and Healthy Eating Guidance for Earthquake Recovery and Resilience

In the aftermath of the 7.4 magnitude earthquake on 17 December 2024, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with UNICEF, WHO, and FAO, and the FSAC and Nutrition Clusters have emphasised the critical importance of promoting healthy and nutritious diets, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant and lactating women, people with disabilities, and individuals living with non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Ensuring access to nutritious food during this crisis is essential to prevent the deterioration of the population's health and mitigate the risk of malnutrition and related complications.

All stakeholders, including donors, community leaders, and organisations involved in the response, are urged to adhere to the National Vanuatu Healthy Living Guidelines when providing food aid. This includes avoiding highly processed foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats, such as sweetened beverages and ultra-processed snacks. Instead, food donations should focus on culturally appropriate, nutrient-dense items such as locally grown root crops (e.g., yams, taro, and sweet potatoes), fresh fruits and vegetables, dried legumes, nuts, seeds, canned fish, and other protein-rich foods. These items meet the nutritional needs of affected populations and help reduce long-term risks associated with NCDs.

Pregnant and lactating women and young children are particularly vulnerable during emergencies due to their increased nutrient needs and limited access to nutrient-dense foods. Maternal undernutrition poses risks to both mothers and their unborn children, while young children require high-quality diets to support their development. Special provisions, such as fortified foods and local nutrient-rich options, are essential to safeguard their health. For the general population, maintaining a healthy diet, adequate hydration (at least 2 litres of clean water daily), safe food preparation practices, and physical activity (e.g., walking or cleaning) are recommended to support overall well-being during recovery. Awareness campaigns and food distribution programmes will focus on these principles to ensure the affected population receives the support needed for a healthy recovery.

7.3 Cross-Cutting Issues: GEDSI and Protection in Earthquake Recovery

Sector Lead: Department of Women's Affairs
Contact information: Rothina Ilo Noka (rinoka@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The Gender and Protection Cluster, led by the Department of Women's Affairs in partnership with civil society and non-governmental organisations, is actively working to ensure that the needs of vulnerable and marginalised populations are addressed throughout the earthquake recovery process. Collaborating closely with other sectors, the cluster is focused on mitigating the disproportionate impacts of the disaster on women, children, persons with disabilities, and other at-risk groups, ensuring their voices and needs are included in recovery planning and implementation.

The Gender and Protection Cluster has played a vital role in strengthening knowledge and awareness of gender and protection issues in Vanuatu. During and after disasters, the cluster provides critical technical support to mainstream gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) principles into response and recovery efforts. Its recovery strategy is focused on bridging gaps in livelihoods, safety, and well-being for marginalised populations, while promoting gender and climate resilience. By embedding GEDSI principles in sectoral plans and programmes, the cluster ensures that recovery initiatives are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of affected communities. Additionally, these principles are being incorporated into decision-making processes and monitoring and evaluation frameworks to promote transparency and accountability.

The Department of Women's Affairs will continue to serve as the lead agency coordinating stakeholders in the recovery efforts for vulnerable groups affected by the earthquake. Through its leadership, the cluster will prioritise sectoral initiatives that restore livelihoods, strengthen protections, and build resilience for marginalised populations. By mainstreaming gender and protection principles across all recovery strategies, Vanuatu aims to deliver an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable recovery process, ensuring that no one is left behind.

7.6 Housing

Sector Lead: Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
Contact information: Director Jeffery Kaitip (jkaitip@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The recent earthquake has caused extensive damage to housing across Vanuatu, significantly impacting both public and private sector housing. In SHEFA Province, where the earthquake's effects were most pronounced, over 2,054 individuals have been displaced, with many seeking temporary shelter in seven evacuation centres or 47 host households, according to recent assessments. The disruption to housing has displaced thousands of residents, forcing them to seek refuge in evacuation centres, community buildings, or with relatives. The total estimated cost of recovery for the housing sector exceeds VUV 500 million, reflecting the scale of the damage and the need for urgent interventions to address the housing crisis.

Public Sector Housing

Public sector housing has suffered significant damage, particularly in Port Vila and surrounding areas. Preliminary assessments indicate that government-owned staff housing for critical sectors, such as health and forestry, has sustained varying levels of damage. For example, five forestry staff houses located at the Tagabe MALFFB compound have been identified as requiring immediate repairs, with an estimated cost of VUV 15 million. Similarly, several health sector staff accommodations, such as those near the SHEFA Provincial Health Office, have been classified as damaged but repairable, highlighting the need for targeted investment to restore housing for essential workers.

The loss of public sector housing has had a cascading effect on service delivery, as displaced public servants, including teachers, health workers, and emergency responders, struggle to maintain their roles while facing housing instability. Addressing this issue is critical for ensuring the continuity of essential services during the recovery process. Additionally, the temporary displacement of public sector workers due to unsafe accommodations has impacted the capacity of these sectors to deliver services effectively in this critical time.

Private Housing

Private housing has borne the brunt of the earthquake's impact, with widespread destruction reported across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. Many homes, particularly those built with less durable materials, have collapsed or sustained structural damage, leaving thousands of families without safe shelter. The worst-affected areas include low-income neighbourhoods in Port Vila and rural villages in SHEFA Province, where many residents lack the financial means to rebuild or repair their homes.

Displaced families, now numbering over 2,054 individuals, have sought refuge in makeshift shelters, evacuation centres, or with extended family. These temporary accommodations often lack adequate sanitation, clean water, and basic facilities, increasing the vulnerability of affected populations to health risks such as respiratory infections and waterborne diseases. The earthquake has highlighted the urgent need for disaster-resilient housing[5] solutions, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, children, and people with disabilities.

Damage Assessment and Recovery Needs

Out of the assessed housing infrastructure, a significant proportion has been classified as requiring major repairs or complete reconstruction. In urban areas, such as Port Vila, mid-rise residential buildings and informal settlements have been particularly vulnerable to collapse. Rural areas, where traditional thatched homes are common, have also suffered extensive damage. Reconstruction efforts must address the unique challenges faced by both urban and rural communities, ensuring equitable recovery across all affected populations.

Immediate recovery priorities include providing temporary shelters, such as tents or prefabricated housing units, to displaced families. Financial assistance, in the form of grants or low-interest loans, will be essential to help homeowners rebuild or repair their properties. For public sector housing, targeted investments are needed to restore accommodations for essential workers, ensuring they can return to their roles in health, education, and emergency services.

Long-Term Resilience

The recovery process offers an opportunity to rebuild housing with disaster-resilient designs and materials, reducing vulnerability to future earthquakes and other natural disasters. This includes promoting the use of earthquake-resistant construction techniques and materials, particularly in private housing, where many structures were previously built without adherence to safety standards. Training programmes for local builders and contractors can help ensure the widespread adoption of these practices.

In addition, recovery efforts should prioritise the integration of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities into housing designs to improve living conditions and public health outcomes. Expanding access to affordable housing loans and subsidies will also support low-income families in rebuilding their homes.

Strategic Goals

The recovery of the housing sector is critical for ensuring the well-being and safety of affected populations, as well as supporting the broader recovery of Vanuatu's economy and public services. Collaborative efforts between government agencies, development partners, and the private sector will be essential to mobilising the resources and expertise needed for effective recovery. By prioritising both immediate needs and long-term resilience, Vanuatu can rebuild its housing sector in a way that safeguards against future disasters and supports sustainable development.

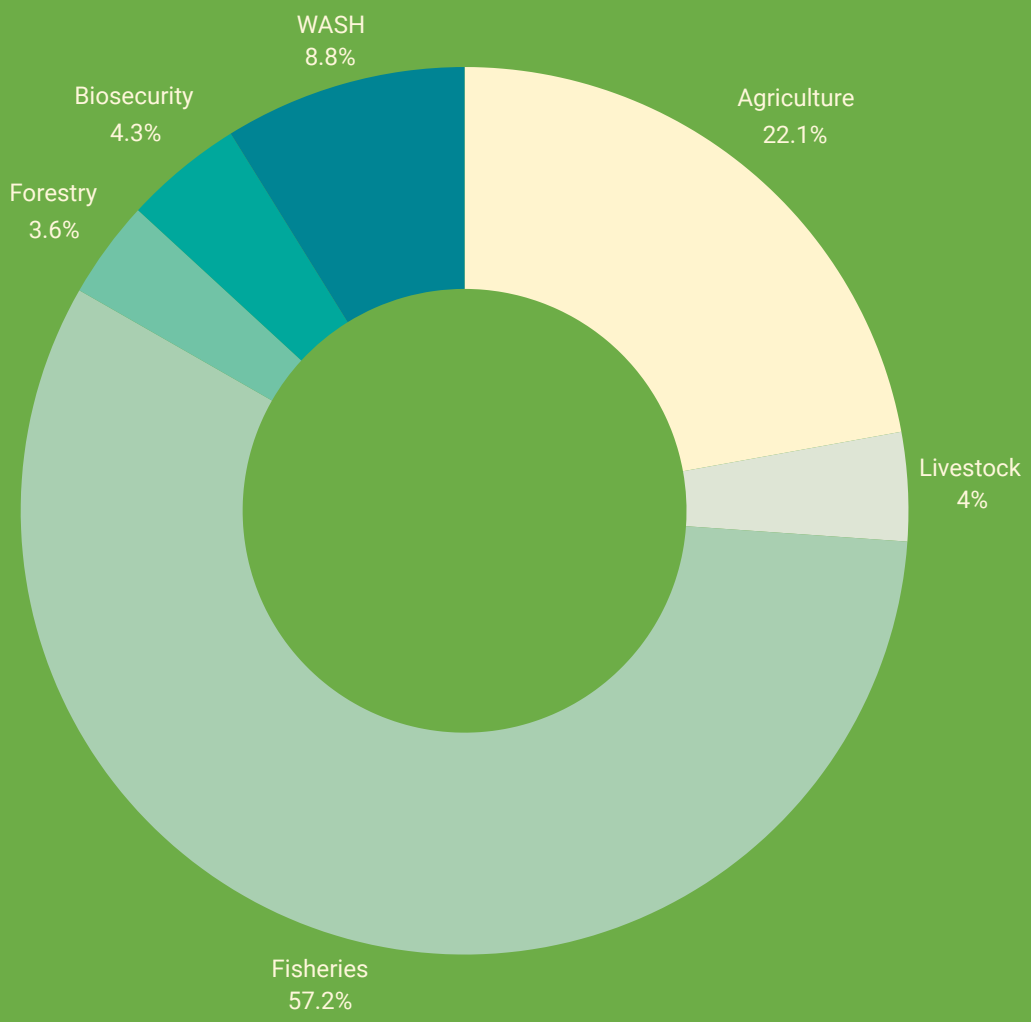
Investments in disaster-resilient housing will not only protect lives but also enhance the country's overall resilience to climate change and seismic risks. By integrating lessons learned from this earthquake into housing policies and planning, Vanuatu can ensure that its communities are better prepared to face future challenges.

8.0

Environment Pillar

The environment pillar seeks to ensure a pristine natural environment on land and at sea, that continues to serve our food, cultural, economic and ecological needs, and enhance resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and natural disasters.

Environment Pillar: Sectoral Recovery Costs **VUV 2,425,590,504**



8.1 Agriculture

Sector Lead: Department of Agriculture and Rural development (DARD)
Contact information: Director, Mr Antoine Ravo (aravo@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The recent earthquake has caused extensive damage to Vanuatu's agricultural sector, severely impacting both infrastructure and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly in SHEFA Province. The total estimated cost of recovery for the sector exceeds VUV 450 million, reflecting the significant challenges in restoring operations and addressing food security risks. Key damages include the destruction of critical resources such as the Tagabe food crops multiplication plots, seed bank, fruit and vegetable nurseries, cold storage facilities, warehouse, root crop house, and essential agricultural equipment.

At the **Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)** office in Port Vila, damage to office infrastructure and essential equipment has hindered operational capacity. Five office blocks sustained structural damage, including compromised water systems, electrical wiring, and the destruction of office furniture and technology such as filing cabinets, printers, and desktop computers. The HR Office reported significant damage to filing systems, raising concerns about the integrity of personnel records. Similarly, the Senior Finance Office and other administrative spaces require urgent assessments to determine the extent of damage and the safety of continued operations. Staff accommodations at Tagabe have also been heavily affected, with structural issues such as roof linkages, electrical faults, and damaged water systems. The estimated cost of rebuilding DARD offices and 10 staff houses is VUV 255 million, underscoring the scale of the required intervention.

Damage to Agricultural Infrastructure and Equipment

In Tanvasoko, critical facilities such as the DARD tractors, fruit and vegetable nursery, and seed bank sustained major damage, severely disrupting the supply of high-quality seeds, seedlings, and planting materials to farmers. These resources previously supported local food production and market supply chains. Tools and equipment critical for agricultural rehabilitation, such as digging hoes, nursery trays, 2-wheel rotavators, and watering cans, were also destroyed, further limiting farmers' ability to restart food production. Replacing these resources is estimated to cost VUV 30 million.

Market infrastructure, essential for the distribution of agricultural produce, has been significantly affected. The Port Vila main market house requires medium-level repairs, while rural market houses in areas such as Tanvasoko sustained major damage requiring complete reconstruction. Market houses are central to farmers' incomes and community food security, with the cost of repairs and rebuilding estimated at VUV 80 million.

Recovery Needs

Immediate recovery needs include re-establishing essential agricultural operations and supporting farmers in restoring their gardens. Emergency measures must prioritise the provision of vegetable seeds, seedlings, and planting materials to restart food production. Key crops such as Tahitian lime, sugarcane, pineapples, cassava, taro, sweet potato, and yam should be included in the replanting efforts to ensure quick recovery of household food baskets. Additionally, farmers require tools and equipment such as rotavators, wheelbarrows, and organic fertilisers to expedite recovery efforts.

The disruption to the Tagabe farm facilities, including the destruction of cold storage and tractor implements, must be addressed urgently. Repairs to the farm's production infrastructure, including fencing, will ensure that breeding and research activities can resume. Recovery efforts should also prioritise soil quality assessments, as tremors and potential aftershocks may have affected soil stability and suitability for replanting.

Long-Term Resilience

Long-term recovery strategies will focus on enhancing the resilience of the agricultural sector to future disasters. Investments in disaster-resilient infrastructure, such as earthquake-resistant seed banks, nurseries, and market houses, are critical. Modernising DARD facilities, including integrating advanced communication systems and IT capabilities, will improve the department's ability to coordinate disaster responses and support farmers effectively.

Promoting climate-resilient crops and improved soil management practices will ensure sustainable agricultural recovery. Establishing community-level food storage systems will help reduce post-harvest losses, while training programmes for farmers on disaster preparedness and resilient agricultural practices will strengthen the sector's adaptive capacity. Expanding access to affordable agricultural loans and subsidies will also support smallholder farmers in rebuilding their operations.

The recovery of the agricultural sector is vital for ensuring food security and supporting livelihoods in Vanuatu. Collaborative efforts among government agencies, development partners, and local communities will be crucial in mobilising the resources and expertise required for effective recovery. By addressing both immediate needs and long-term strategies, the sector can emerge stronger and more resilient, ensuring sustainable development and food security for the country.

8.2 Forestry

Sector Lead: Department of Forestry
Contact information: Director, Mr Rexton Vira (rvira@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The forestry sector in Vanuatu has sustained significant damage as a result of the recent earthquake, particularly in the SHEFA Province, disrupting critical ecosystems, livelihoods, and services. The estimated cost for restoring key forestry infrastructure and resources exceeds VUV 100 million, with damage spanning from carbon stock rehabilitation to essential facilities like staff housing and research infrastructure. This damage has far-reaching implications for environmental sustainability, income generation, and community resilience.

Key forestry resources, including carbon stock and environmental services, have suffered extensive losses, with reforestation and forest rehabilitation identified as immediate priorities. The replacement of lost forest resources, essential for maintaining environmental services such as water regulation and soil stabilisation, is expected to cost approximately VUV 50 million. The rehabilitation process will involve large-scale seedling production, transportation, and planting, requiring coordinated efforts to ensure the re-establishment of critical forestry resources in affected areas.

Infrastructure vital to the sector's functioning has also been severely impacted. Five staff houses in the Tagabe MALFFB compound require extensive repairs, estimated at VUV 15 million, to restore accommodation for forestry personnel. Additionally, the National Forest Herbarium Building in Tanvasoko, an essential facility for biodiversity research and conservation, sustained major damage and requires reconstruction. The cost of rebuilding the herbarium is estimated at VUV 30 million, covering building materials, construction, and ongoing maintenance. These facilities are crucial for the forestry sector’s operational efficiency and its ability to support national environmental and climate objectives.

Recovery Needs

Forestry-related livelihoods have also been disrupted, with many communities reliant on forest resources for subsistence, fuel, and income. The loss of accessible forestry resources poses immediate challenges for rural communities already facing economic instability. In response, short-term recovery efforts will focus on replanting programmes to rehabilitate degraded forests and replace lost resources. The establishment of community-managed nurseries and seed banks will be critical to ensure a sustainable supply of seedlings for reforestation initiatives.

Long-term recovery strategies for the forestry sector will emphasise resilience-building measures. This includes the integration of disaster risk reduction into forestry planning and operations, such as designing infrastructure that can withstand future earthquakes and cyclones. Additionally, capacity-building programmes will train communities and forestry staff on sustainable forest management practices, enhancing the sector’s ability to adapt to future risks. Strengthening partnerships with local communities and stakeholders will also play a key role in fostering a more inclusive and sustainable forestry recovery process.

By addressing immediate infrastructure and resource needs while incorporating long-term resilience strategies, the recovery of Vanuatu’s forestry sector aims to rebuild not just ecosystems but also the livelihoods and communities that depend on them. These efforts are essential for ensuring environmental sustainability, economic stability, and resilience to future disasters.

8.3 Fisheries

Sector Lead: Department of Fisheries
Contact information: Director, Mr Sompert Geneva (sgereva@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The fisheries sector in Vanuatu has been significantly impacted by the recent earthquake, particularly in SHEFA Province, with substantial damage to critical infrastructure, equipment, and livelihoods. The estimated cost of restoring the fisheries sector, including rebuilding infrastructure and replacing lost assets, exceeds VUV 286 million. This sector, which supports thousands of livelihoods and is crucial for food security and income generation, now faces severe disruptions in its operations.

Key fisheries infrastructure, including office buildings and storage facilities in Tanvasoko, sustained major damage, requiring reconstruction to restore functionality. The estimated cost of rebuilding these facilities, designed to withstand future disasters, is VUV 286.5 million. These buildings are essential for the sector's operational efficiency, as they house critical equipment and serve as coordination hubs for fisheries management and development programmes. Their restoration is a priority to ensure the continuity of services and support for small-scale and commercial fishers.

Livelihoods have been significantly disrupted, with many fishers losing equipment and access to safe fishing grounds. The procurement and distribution of essential equipment, such as fishing nets, boats, and storage facilities, will be critical for restoring the operational capacity of small-scale fisheries. Immediate recovery efforts will include the shipment of food and essential supplies from unaffected areas to support fishers and their families. This logistical operation is estimated to cost VUV 60 million and aims to address immediate food security needs while mitigating economic losses for affected households.

Recovery Needs

The earthquake has also disrupted seafood supply chains, with many coastal communities unable to transport their catches to urban markets like Port Vila due to damaged infrastructure. This disruption has limited income opportunities for fishers and reduced the availability of fresh seafood in local markets, affecting food security for urban and rural populations alike. Rebuilding fish markets and processing facilities will be essential to restoring supply chains and supporting the economic recovery of the fisheries sector.

Long-term recovery strategies will focus on building resilience in the fisheries sector. This includes incorporating disaster-resilient designs into infrastructure reconstruction, such as cyclone- and earthquake-resistant office buildings and storage facilities. A new Department of Fisheries office headquarter is needed as Fisheries is still leasing commercial office spaces. The estimated value of the new office building is VUV1,520,990,000. Enhancing fisheries management practices, including sustainable stock management and habitat restoration, will be critical for ensuring the sector's long-term sustainability. Capacity-building initiatives will train fishers in disaster preparedness and recovery planning, strengthening their ability to adapt to future risks.

By addressing both immediate needs and long-term resilience measures, the recovery efforts in the fisheries sector aim to restore livelihoods, ensure food security, and build a stronger, more sustainable foundation for fisheries in Vanuatu. These actions are critical not only for the recovery of the sector but also for the well-being and economic stability of the communities that depend on it.

8.4 Livestock

Sector Lead: Department of Livestock
Contact information: Director, Mr Nambo Moses (nmoses@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The livestock sector in Vanuatu has faced severe disruptions as a result of the recent earthquake, particularly in the SHEFA Province. This sector, which is a vital source of food, income, and livelihood for rural households, has sustained significant damage to critical infrastructure, livestock production systems, and breeding facilities. Preliminary estimates indicate that the cost of restoring the livestock sector exceeds VUV 135 million, reflecting the need for extensive rehabilitation and resilience-building efforts.

Key livestock infrastructure, such as water systems, breeding centres, and feed storage facilities, sustained major damage. For instance, the livestock water system infrastructure requires replacement, including the installation of 10,000-litre poly water tanks, which is expected to cost approximately VUV 6 million. The loss of water infrastructure has resulted in high mortality rates among livestock, particularly in areas where access to alternative water sources is limited. Additionally, small livestock breeding centres in Tanvasoko require rebuilding to ensure the continued production of animals such as poultry, goats, and pigs. The reconstruction of these facilities, which includes pens, paddocks, and feed storage, is estimated to cost VUV 20 million.

The earthquake has also disrupted the availability of essential livestock resources, such as feed and breeding stock. The importation of 600 bags of grower and layer feed to support smallholder poultry farmers and commercial farms is urgently required, with an estimated cost of VUV 4.8 million. The replacement of 100 beehives and the procurement of liquid nitrogen machines for cattle breeding programmes are also critical needs, with the latter costing approximately VUV 35 million. These investments are essential to sustaining livestock production and ensuring the availability of protein-rich food sources for affected households.

Recovery Needs

Livelihoods dependent on livestock have been severely impacted, with many smallholder farmers losing animals, income, and access to markets. To address immediate needs, recovery efforts are focusing on distributing essential resources, such as fertile hatching eggs, feed, and tools, to enable farmers to restart livestock production. The importation of 100,000 fertile hatching eggs, at an estimated cost of VUV 10 million, is a critical intervention to replenish poultry stocks and provide a reliable protein source for affected communities.

Long-term recovery efforts will emphasise resilience-building in the livestock sector. This includes integrating disaster-resilient designs into infrastructure reconstruction, such as earthquake-resistant water systems and breeding centres, and promoting climate-resilient livestock breeds to reduce vulnerability to future disasters. Training programmes will equip farmers with the skills needed to improve livestock management and disaster preparedness, ensuring sustainable production systems. Enhanced coordination between the government, NGOs, and local communities will also be essential to achieving a comprehensive and inclusive recovery process.

By addressing both immediate recovery needs and long-term resilience measures, the livestock sector's recovery efforts aim to restore livelihoods, improve food security, and strengthen the economic foundation of rural communities. These efforts are critical for building a sustainable and disaster-resilient livestock industry that supports the well-being of Vanuatu's population.

8.5 Biosecurity

Sector Lead: Department of Biosecurity
Contact information: Lindon Tari (ltari@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The biosecurity sector in Vanuatu has sustained significant damage due to the recent earthquake, particularly in SHEFA Province. This sector, critical for protecting the country's agriculture and natural resources from pests, diseases, and invasive species, has faced disruptions in its operations due to the destruction of essential infrastructure and equipment. The estimated cost of recovery for the biosecurity sector exceeds VUV 115 million, underscoring the need for immediate and long-term investments to restore functionality and build resilience.

Key infrastructure, such as the Post-Entry Quarantine (PEQ) Facility and the Biosecurity Office in Tanvasoko, has sustained major damage. The PEQ facility, essential for the safe introduction of new plant and animal species, requires complete reconstruction to meet modern disaster-resilient standards. This facility ensures the screening and quarantine of imported goods to prevent the introduction of harmful pests and diseases.[10] The reconstruction of the PEQ facility is estimated to cost VUV 15 million. Similarly, the Biosecurity Office, which serves as a coordination hub for biosecurity activities, also requires rebuilding at an estimated cost of VUV 100 million. Both structures will need to incorporate earthquake- and cyclone-resilient designs to ensure long-term operational sustainability.

The earthquake has also disrupted the supply chain for climate-resilient and improved cultivars, which are essential for agricultural recovery. The lack of adequate facilities and resources has delayed efforts to distribute improved seeds and planting materials to farmers. This disruption has further exacerbated food security challenges in affected communities, as biosecurity plays a vital role in maintaining the quality and safety of agricultural inputs.

Recovery Needs

Immediate recovery efforts for the biosecurity sector include re-establishing operations in temporary facilities and procuring essential equipment to resume services. These efforts will focus on supporting the safe importation of seeds, livestock, and other agricultural resources necessary for recovery in the agriculture and livestock sectors. Additionally, strengthening biosecurity surveillance to monitor and respond to potential outbreaks of pests and diseases is a critical priority in the short term.

Long-term recovery strategies will emphasise building resilience in the biosecurity sector by integrating disaster risk reduction measures into infrastructure and operations. This includes constructing facilities that are resistant to earthquakes and other natural disasters and enhancing the capacity of biosecurity staff through training in disaster preparedness and response. Upgrading technology and systems for pest and disease monitoring will also be crucial to improving the sector's ability to respond to emerging biosecurity threats.

By addressing immediate operational disruptions and implementing long-term resilience measures, the recovery efforts in the biosecurity sector aim to safeguard Vanuatu's agricultural productivity, natural resources, and food security. These efforts will not only restore biosecurity operations but also strengthen the sector's capacity to mitigate future risks and ensure the sustainable development of the country's agricultural and natural resource sectors.

8.6 WASH

Sector Lead: Department of Water Resources
Contact information: Clifford Vusi (vusic@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The recent earthquake has had a profound impact on Vanuatu's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector, particularly in SHEFA Province. Damage to critical WASH infrastructure, including water supply systems, sanitation facilities, and hygiene support mechanisms, has disrupted access to clean water and safe sanitation for thousands of households. These disruptions have heightened the risk of waterborne diseases, such as diarrhoea, which are expected to rise significantly in affected areas. The estimated cost of restoring WASH services across the affected regions exceeds VUV 200 million.

Initial assessments indicate that major damage has occurred to water distribution networks, with key water systems in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas requiring immediate repair or replacement. For example, damaged water tanks and pipelines have left many communities without access to safe drinking water, forcing reliance on unsafe or contaminated sources. The replacement of critical infrastructure, including 10,000-litre poly water tanks and distribution pipelines, is estimated to cost VUV 6 million. Additionally, sanitation facilities in schools, health centres, and public spaces have been severely affected, increasing vulnerabilities among women, children, and people with disabilities.

The earthquake has also disrupted hygiene promotion activities and the distribution of essential hygiene items, such as soap, sanitary products, and cleaning supplies. These disruptions have further exacerbated public health risks, particularly in displacement camps and shelters where overcrowding and limited facilities increase the likelihood of disease outbreaks. Temporary sanitation solutions, such as mobile toilets and handwashing stations, are urgently needed to mitigate these risks and ensure basic hygiene standards are met.

Recovery Needs

Immediate recovery efforts are focused on restoring access to safe drinking water and improving sanitation and hygiene conditions in affected areas. This includes distributing water purification tablets, repairing damaged water supply systems, and establishing emergency sanitation facilities in displacement camps. Hygiene promotion campaigns are being rolled out to educate communities on the importance of safe water usage, handwashing, and proper waste management during the recovery period.

Long-term recovery strategies will prioritise building resilience in the WASH sector to reduce vulnerability to future disasters. This includes upgrading water supply and sanitation infrastructure to meet disaster-resilient standards, such as earthquake-resistant water tanks and pipelines. Strengthening community-level water resource management and integrating climate adaptation measures into WASH planning will also be critical. Additionally, enhancing WASH services in schools and health centres will ensure these facilities are better equipped to support affected populations during emergencies.

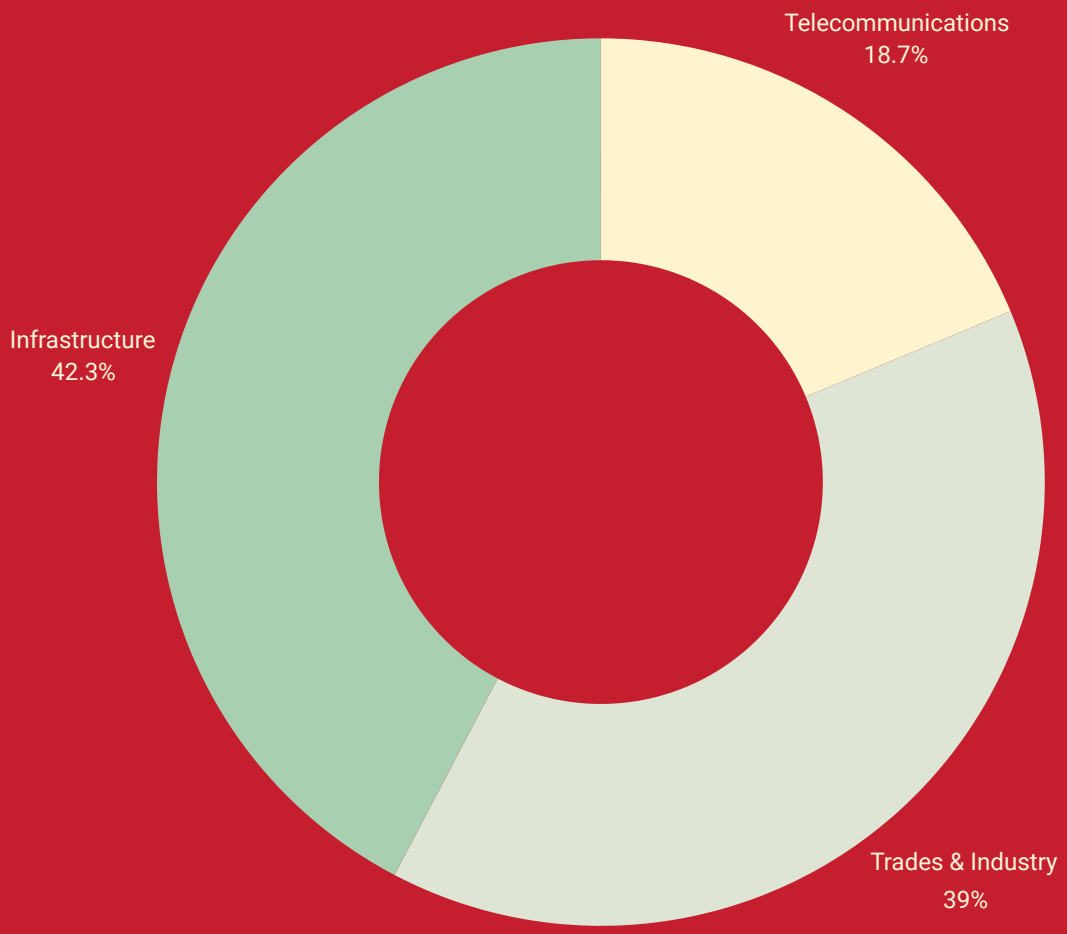
By addressing both immediate and long-term needs, the recovery efforts in the WASH sector aim to restore essential services, safeguard public health, and build a more resilient system capable of withstanding future disasters. These efforts are vital not only for meeting the urgent needs of affected communities but also for supporting sustainable development and improving the overall well-being of Vanuatu's population.

9.0

Economic Pillar

The economy pillar seeks to ensure we have a stable economy based on equitable, sustainable growth that creates jobs and income earning opportunities accessible to all people in rural and urban areas.

Economic Pillar: Sectoral Recovery Costs **VUV 11,819,357,212**



9.1 Telecommunication

Sector Lead: Prime Minister's Office, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
Contact information: Andre Taga (ataga@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The recent earthquake caused severe disruptions to Vanuatu's telecommunications sector, with widespread impacts on infrastructure and connectivity that have hindered emergency response and day-to-day communications. The telecommunications network, which is critical for public safety, disaster coordination, and economic activity, sustained major damage, particularly in SHEFA Province and Port Vila. The most significant disruption involved the nation's sole submarine cable, the lifeline for international internet and data connectivity.

Immediate Impacts and Cable Damage

The earthquake caused significant damage to the building housing the submarine cable landing site in Port Vila. Structural failure within the building led to a fire, which in turn caused the release of poisonous gas from damaged electrical components. The hazardous environment delayed initial repair efforts, requiring specialist equipment and expertise to safely assess and mitigate the situation. The fire also damaged critical components of the cable infrastructure, interrupting data transmission and causing a near-total disruption to international connectivity.
As the only submarine cable servicing Vanuatu, the damage had a cascading effect across telecommunications services. Internet service providers and mobile network operators, heavily reliant on the submarine cable for high-speed data and connectivity, experienced major outages. This disruption affected businesses, schools, hospitals, and government operations, including emergency coordination efforts. To mitigate the disruption, many providers resorted to re-routing traffic via alternative systems such as Starlink, but this temporary solution offered only limited bandwidth and significantly higher latency.

Wider Network Impacts

The earthquake also affected terrestrial telecommunications infrastructure, including antennas and transmission towers. Power supply issues, caused by damaged breakers and generators, compounded the problem, leaving key transmission equipment offline. Many urban areas in Port Vila reported intermittent or no service, while rural and remote communities became entirely disconnected. These communication gaps significantly hampered emergency response efforts and delayed the dissemination of critical information to affected populations.

Furthermore, damage to underground fibre-optic cables in Port Vila disrupted broadband services, adding to the strain on local businesses and public services. With no immediate alternatives, connectivity was significantly impaired across sectors, delaying the recovery process and limiting access to vital services such as health and education.

Recovery Needs

The recovery priorities for the telecommunications sector include both immediate restoration of services and long-term infrastructure resilience. Repairing the submarine cable landing site is the highest priority, requiring specialised engineering teams and equipment to fully restore functionality. Addressing the structural integrity of the building and replacing damaged components are essential to resuming international connectivity. Investments in enhanced fire prevention and safety systems will also be necessary to prevent similar incidents in the future.
Temporary measures, such as deploying portable satellite units and increasing reliance on systems like Starlink, are helping to restore partial connectivity, but these are insufficient for meeting national data and communications needs. Efforts to repair damaged antennas, transmission towers, and fibre-optic cables are underway, but full restoration will require weeks of coordinated action and significant financial investment.

Long-Term Recovery and Resilience

Building resilience into Vanuatu's telecommunications sector is a critical component of recovery. This includes upgrading the submarine cable infrastructure to include redundancy systems, such as a secondary cable, to ensure continuous connectivity during future disasters. Strengthening the structural resilience of cable landing sites and critical facilities will also be a priority. Additionally, expanding the reach and capacity of alternative systems, such as satellite connectivity, will provide a reliable backup during emergencies.

Strategic Goals

The earthquake has highlighted the critical importance of telecommunications in disaster response and recovery. Strengthening partnerships between government agencies, telecommunications providers, and international donors will be essential to mobilising the resources and expertise needed to restore and improve the sector. By prioritising these efforts, Vanuatu can build a telecommunications system that is more resilient, efficient, and capable of supporting the nation's needs during emergencies and in everyday life.

Through a combination of immediate interventions and long-term investments, Vanuatu's telecommunications sector can emerge stronger and more capable, ensuring connectivity and information flow are safeguarded against future crises. These efforts are vital not only for supporting recovery efforts but also for driving sustainable development and resilience across the country.

9.2 Infrastructure

Sector Lead: Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities
Contact information: Nathan Tabi (ntabi@vanuatu.gov.vu)

Summary

The recent earthquake has caused extensive damage across Vanuatu's infrastructure sector, particularly in SHEFA Province. The disruptions span critical infrastructure including roads, ports, airports, and public buildings, which are essential for connectivity, economic activity, and service delivery. The estimated recovery cost exceeds VUV 1 billion, reflecting the scale of immediate, medium-term, and long-term restoration efforts required. The disaster has highlighted the vulnerabilities of Vanuatu's infrastructure to seismic events and the urgent need for resilience-building measures.

Roads

The earthquake has significantly disrupted Vanuatu's road network, which spans 388 km in the affected areas. While approximately 99% of the network remains accessible, critical damage has been identified in key sections, notably Wharf Road and parts of the Efate Ring Road. Continuous landslides have rendered Wharf Road impassable, cutting off key access routes, while Klem's Hill is operating with single-lane access as ongoing debris clearance progresses. Urban areas have also been heavily affected, with significant cracks forcing the closure of roads between the Port Vila Municipality Centre (PVMC) and the Childcare Junction. Assessments are ongoing to determine the structural integrity of key bridges such as Tagabe Bridge, which plays a critical role in heavy-duty transport operations.

The damage to roads has not only disrupted transportation but also hindered the delivery of emergency supplies and the evacuation of affected populations. Landslides have exacerbated vulnerabilities in already unstable areas, posing additional risks of further isolation for communities. Immediate recovery efforts are focused on reopening critical roadways, clearing landslides, and conducting structural evaluations to ensure the safety of heavily used routes. Repairs to bridges, culverts, and damaged road surfaces are also being prioritised, with an emphasis on improving disaster resilience through reinforced designs.

Ports and Harbours

Ports have been significantly impacted, with structural and operational challenges disrupting maritime transport. While major ports like Lapetasi Multipurpose Wharf and the Main Wharf in Port Vila remain operational, safety concerns persist due to settlement and displacement. The Main Wharf has experienced a 20-30 cm shift, raising concerns over its long-term structural stability. Smaller ports such as Sinovan and Emua Wharf have suffered limited capacity due to minor damages, while Pierre Brunet is completely non-operational following severe structural failure. Despite these challenges, fuel and gas tankers have been able to offload supplies, and cruise ships are expected to dock on 24 December, highlighting the critical need for ongoing evaluations to maintain operational capacity.

The loss of full port functionality has created bottlenecks in the movement of goods, particularly emergency supplies and construction materials required for recovery efforts. Assessments of structural safety and immediate repairs are critical to ensuring the ports can handle the increased demand associated with recovery operations. Long-term plans must include upgrading port infrastructure to meet disaster-resilient standards, safeguarding the country's maritime lifelines.

Airports

Bauerfield International Airport, a critical transport hub, has resumed operations following safety inspections, though challenges persist. Pavements and navigation systems are operational, the airport power supply has been restored. Key facilities such as water storage towers for firefighting is still damaged. Additionally, the loss of the automated check-in system has led to manual processing of passengers, causing delays and operational inefficiencies. Coordination with utility providers, including Unelco and Interchange, is underway to restore power and connectivity to airport systems.
The airport's operational challenges underscore the need for robust emergency response capabilities and disaster-resilient infrastructure. Short-term recovery efforts focus on restoring basic functionality, while long-term strategies include upgrading airport systems to ensure resilience against future seismic events. Enhancements to water storage and firefighting capabilities, as well as the automation of key processes, are critical for maintaining the airport's status as a regional hub.

Public Buildings

Out of 202 public buildings assessed, 74 have been inspected, with five confirmed as structurally unsafe and recommended for demolition. This includes key government offices and commercial properties such as the Lolam Building and Dream House Shop. Schools have also been heavily impacted, with assessments revealing major structural damage to 53 buildings. Structural engineers from the Public Works Department (PWD), private firms, and international partners are collaborating to prioritise repairs and identify buildings that pose immediate safety risks to the public.

The loss of functional public buildings has disrupted government operations and community services. Schools, which serve as both educational institutions and emergency shelters, require immediate repairs to resume classes and provide safe spaces for displaced families. The recovery and resilience plan will prioritise rebuilding these facilities with disaster-resilient designs, ensuring they can withstand future seismic and climatic events. Offices and commercial properties must also be restored promptly to support economic recovery and public administration.

Challenges and Risks

The earthquake has exacerbated vulnerabilities to secondary disasters, such as landslides and flooding, particularly in areas like Wharf Road and other high-risk zones. Rapid assessment teams have identified critical areas where additional mitigation measures are needed to prevent further damage. The structural integrity of key transport and utility infrastructure remains a concern, with ongoing assessments required to address potential hazards.

Moreover, the disruption to infrastructure has created ripple effects across other sectors, including health, agriculture, and education. The inability to transport goods and services efficiently has delayed recovery efforts in these sectors, underscoring the interconnected nature of infrastructure and broader recovery needs.

Recovery Needs

The recovery of Vanuatu's infrastructure sector will require a phased approach, focusing initially on clearing debris and reopening critical transport routes. Immediate priorities include repairing Wharf Road, stabilising Klem's Hill, and restoring bridge functionality, particularly for Tagabe Bridge. Ports and airports will require both immediate repairs and long-term upgrades to improve resilience and operational capacity. Public buildings, including schools and government offices, must be prioritised for repairs to ensure the continuity of essential services and provide safe spaces for displaced populations.

Long-term recovery efforts will focus on incorporating disaster-resilient designs into all reconstructed infrastructure, ensuring it can withstand future earthquakes, cyclones, and other natural hazards. Investments in advanced engineering and construction techniques will be essential to building a more resilient infrastructure system. Additionally, enhanced coordination between government agencies, international partners, and local communities will be critical for ensuring an efficient and inclusive recovery process.

The recovery of Vanuatu's infrastructure sector is not just about restoring physical assets but also about building resilience for the future. By addressing both immediate and long-term needs, these efforts aim to safeguard public safety, support economic recovery, and strengthen the country's capacity to withstand future disasters.

9.3 Trade, Commerce and Industries

The recent earthquake has severely disrupted trade, commerce, and industrial activities across Vanuatu, particularly in SHEFA Province. The damage to infrastructure, supply chains, and commercial facilities has led to significant economic losses, limiting access to goods and services for both businesses and consumers. Preliminary assessments indicate that the earthquake's impact on these sectors could have long-term implications for economic stability, requiring coordinated recovery efforts to restore functionality and build resilience.

Trade and Supply Chain Disruptions

The earthquake caused widespread damage to roads, ports, and market infrastructure, severely disrupting the flow of goods and raw materials. Key trade routes, such as the Wharf Road and parts of the Efate Ring Road, remain partially inaccessible, delaying the transportation of essential supplies to urban and rural areas. Damage to the Main Wharf in Port Vila, including structural displacement, has further limited the capacity for imports and exports, increasing bottlenecks in the supply chain. Smaller ports like Sinovan and Emua are operating at reduced capacity, while Pierre Brunet remains completely non-operational, exacerbating logistical challenges.

The disruption to supply chains has affected the availability of essential goods, including food, fuel, and building materials. Retailers have reported shortages of key items, leading to increased prices and reduced consumer purchasing power. These supply chain constraints have also delayed recovery efforts in other sectors, such as agriculture and construction, which rely on imported inputs to resume operations.

Commerce and Market Activities

Commercial centres, including markets and retail spaces, have sustained varying levels of damage, limiting their ability to serve as hubs for economic activity. The Port Vila Main Market House, a key hub for local farmers and vendors, sustained medium-level damage, restricting operations. Similarly, rural market houses, particularly in Tanvasoko, require complete reconstruction to resume trade. The inability of these markets to function has left many small businesses, farmers, and vendors without income-generating opportunities, further deepening economic vulnerabilities in affected communities.

Retail and hospitality businesses, which are crucial contributors to Vanuatu's economy, have also been heavily impacted. Structural damage to shops, hotels, and restaurants has forced many to close temporarily, resulting in job losses and reduced tourism-related revenue. Disruptions to telecommunications and power supplies have further compounded these challenges, hindering businesses from communicating with suppliers, processing transactions, and serving customers effectively. Businesses in Port Vila's Central Business District (CBD), which houses over 2,000 registered entities, have been disproportionately affected, with structural damage to commercial buildings and significant operational disruptions.

Industrial Activities

Industrial operations, particularly in manufacturing and processing, have been disrupted by damage to facilities and infrastructure. The lack of reliable power supply and connectivity has significantly slowed production lines, affecting both local consumption and export capacity. For instance, fish processing facilities reliant on ports and cold storage have faced operational challenges, limiting their ability to process and export seafood. Similarly, small-scale manufacturing enterprises, which depend on local markets for raw materials and distribution, have struggled to resume normal operations.

Recovery Needs

The recovery priorities for trade, commerce, and industry include restoring critical infrastructure and providing financial support to affected businesses. Immediate efforts must focus on repairing and reopening key trade routes, such as roads and ports, to enable the efficient movement of goods and raw materials. Market infrastructure, including urban and rural market houses, should be prioritised for reconstruction to support the livelihoods of small vendors and farmers.

Targeted financial assistance, such as grants and low-interest loans, will be essential to help businesses recover from losses and resume operations. Specific support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is crucial, as they account for a significant portion of economic activity and employment in Vanuatu. Restoring power and telecommunications infrastructure is also critical for enabling commerce and industrial activities to resume at full capacity.

Long-Term Resilience

Building resilience in the trade, commerce, and industry sectors is a critical component of recovery. Investments in disaster-resilient infrastructure, such as earthquake-resistant market buildings and port facilities, will reduce vulnerabilities to future disasters. Strengthening supply chain management, including the development of alternative trade routes and storage facilities, will enhance the sector's ability to adapt to disruptions.

Additionally, digital transformation initiatives, such as e-commerce platforms and mobile payment systems, can support businesses in maintaining operations during crises. Expanding access to these technologies, particularly in rural and remote areas, will increase economic resilience and inclusivity. Training programmes to enhance disaster preparedness and risk management among business owners and industrial operators will further strengthen the sector's ability to withstand future shocks.

9.4 Macrofiscal Analysis

According to the Cooperative 2022 Annual Report, the overall number of cooperatives has been increasing over the past last 11 years. The trend over the 11 years period showed that only stronger cooperatives are surviving over this challenging business environment. The officers have taken steps to focusing more on stronger cooperatives with large membership base. COVID-19 has been a major factor to cooperative downfalls in 2020.

There are currently 312 active co-operative societies throughout the country with a total of around 13,000 members. The Office of the Registrar of Cooperative & Ni-Vanuatu Business Development Services was set up to strengthen, develop and regulate cooperatives across the country (MTC, 2020). This was to ensure that products and services provided by cooperatives were competitive for the local market and for export.

During the time this report was finalized, cooperatives have not submitted any data for the TC Lola recovery needs, however for TC Judy and Kevin, Severe damage has been reported in several provinces causing widespread loss of gardens, food security, Loss of Business, Produce & damaged to buildings. The summary of cost of losses and damages provided by provinces severely impacted by the twin cyclones, amounted to VUV35,000,000. The recovery needs are still valid since it was only six months after TC Lola hits Vanuatu.

Summary

The earthquake caused significant damage to buildings and infrastructure, severely affecting the operations of many businesses and government departments, especially those in Port Vila's CBD. Many of these structures will need to be demolished and rebuilt, with support from development partners. As a result, the economy will likely face a dual impact: a negative supply shock from the closure and partial demolition of the CBD, and a positive demand shock from reconstruction efforts, only partly offset by weaker tourism numbers. These factors are expected to put upward pressure on inflation, and while the overall end GDP impact is likely to be positive, this is highly uncertain. Further, there may be a reallocation of economic activity between sectors, with some benefiting and others losing out, affecting employment and livelihoods. Finally, a deteriorating trade balance, coupled with an influx of development assistance and potentially remittances, will create an uncertain impact on the Balance of Payments, official reserves, money supply, and the exchange rate, each of which requiring careful monitoring and appropriate policy action where needed.

Real Sector
Agriculture

The agriculture sector is likely to be the least impacted of the three main sectors, given little damage to farms and other agricultural producers. Exports may be affected depending on how quickly wharves and other key pieces of infrastructure can be repaired, however for most producers exports constitute a relatively small part of demand, while many key agricultural exports are shipped from northern ports which have been unaffected [?]. The main market in Port Vila remains closed for now, potentially impacting local farmers, however this supply will likely be distributed across other markets in Port Vila/Efate, reducing the overall impact on producers.

Industry

The construction sector will see very strong growth once reconstruction efforts begin, with the extent of this growth dependent on the number of buildings needing reconstruction, as well as the generosity of development partners in funding these projects. While some local quarries and forestry businesses will benefit, a large part of this increased activity will leak out of the economy via imports. Manufacturing will be hit in the short run given damage to plants, and its medium term recovery will depend on its capacity to rebuild.

Services

Many of the businesses located within Port Vila's CBD are service sector businesses, with the sector accounting for 87% of firms within Port Vila's central ward (556 firms out of 638). Therefore, a key issue is how long the CBD will remain closed, and how many buildings housing services firms will need to be rebuilt. While demand (i.e. consumer spending and other economic activity) will likely simply shift to other areas of Port Vila, at the firm level, the impact will likely depend on whether the affected firms are able to relocate to other areas of town, which in turn depends on the availability of suitable office/retail etc. real estate in other areas. Thus we can likely expect some winners and losers from the current situation, with resultant effects on employment and firm profitability.

The wholesale and retail sectors, once immediate issues around supply chains and wharf access are resolved, will likely benefit from recovery and rebuilding efforts, in particular as donor funds and remittances start to flow. The combination of this increased demand, along with possible reduced competition (due to the closure of many centrally located firms) will likely apply upwards pressure to prices, pushing up inflation.

The impact of the earthquake on tourism businesses is highly uncertain. In the very short run, the exodus of tourists will partly be compensated for by incoming aid and recovery workers. In the medium term, while most resorts and hotels have been unaffected, there is a real risk that tourists from key markets such as Australia and New Zealand stay away given negative news stories, which affects the sector just as it was starting to recover from the Air Vanuatu liquidation. Further, there is a risk that cruise ships divert away from Port Vila for the foreseeable future, resulting in a hit to the handicraft manufacturers, duty free stores and other firms that supply day tourists. However, these ships could potentially be encouraged to call at Santo instead, minimising the overall impact on the national economy.

Commercial banks are largely headquartered within the CBD, however, most have restored basic services. Given their vital role in the economy, it is important that full banking services are restored in order to enable recovery in other sectors, for example through the provision of credit. Insurance firms are likely to be inundated with claims, posing risks to their profitability and viability, a systemic risk which needs to be monitored by the respective supervisory bodies.

Education and health, while not large contributors to the economy directly, play an important role in enabling economic activity, by providing a healthy and educated workforce. Schools also play a role in freeing labour supply (i.e. allowing parents to go to work), and so it is vital that schools reopen where possible once the new term starts.

While government services will likely face disruption from a service delivery perspective, the economic impact will be low provided that basic enabling services such as payments can take place. Government payroll has been unaffected, eliminating any negative impact to household consumption.

Overall GDP

Overall, it is likely GDP will see a moderate uplift once reconstruction efforts start in earnest, although this is highly dependent on a number of factors including:

- How quickly economic activity can displace away from the CBD to other areas in the short term
- How long until unaffected buildings in the CBD can be reoccupied (i.e. how disruptive will the demolition and reconstruction process be)
- The extent of any demand shifts especially for sectors such as tourism
- Given these shifts, how quickly can labour markets and supply chains adjust

The timing of the earthquake means we will likely see slightly slower growth for 2024, with negative supply shock effects dominating in the last few weeks of the year, before reconstruction efforts start in 2025 to boost output.

Table 2: Macroeconomic Committee pre-earthquake GDP forecast (Q3 2024)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry Sector	-2.7	-2.7	3.9	-0.9	2.2	2.5	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.1
Industry Sector	4.0	-1.3	-19.7	4.6	2.1	9.6	9.4	10.3	4.1	4.2
Services Sector	-6.7	0.4	7.8	4.6	2.8	3.2	3.1	3.3	2.9	3.0
Real GDP (2006 Prices	-5.0	-1.6	5.2	3.0	2.1	3.5	3.8	4.2	3.4	3.5

Source: Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics and Macroeconomic Committee

Employment

The output impacts outlined above mean there are likely to be significant changes to Vanuatu's labour market and the distribution of jobs across sectors. Sectors set to benefit from rebuilding, such as construction, may face labour shortages, while other sectors such as tourism may face reduced labour demand. According to the 2021 Business Survey, there are 6439 private sector workers in Port Vila central ward, who are likely to be among the most affected by the closure of the CBD, while there are 6854 workers in accommodation and food, highly impacted by tourism, across Port Vila. Some of these jobs may be at risk, demonstrating the need for assistance with finding new employment or potentially reskilling to allow them to adapt to changes in demand patterns.

External Sector/Balance of Payments

Goods imports, especially of construction and related materials are likely to increase, while services exports risk a decline depending on visitor arrivals numbers, resulting in a deteriorating trade balance. Official Development Assistance inflows however are likely to increase significantly, while Ni-Vanuatu seasonal workers abroad may increase remittances offsetting (partially or fully) the effect on the overall Balance of Payments.

This means that the net impact on the BoP is unclear. Foreign exchange reserves remain adequate, sufficient to cover 6.8 months of imports at the end of July 2024. However these should be monitored carefully by the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu in case of any deterioration.

Monetary Sector, Inflation and the Exchange Rate

The influx of foreign aid and remittances, combined with increased domestic private sector lending for reconstruction and any potential increase in government borrowing, will see an increase in broad money supply, or M2. Given the increase in net foreign assets (NFAs), there is a chance of upwards pressure on the Vatu's exchange rate, although this will also depend on other BoP movements as outlined above. Should this happen, the RBV could consider the sterilisation of aid inflows to mitigate the impact.

Inflation is likely to face upwards pressure, due to the aforementioned dynamics of constrained supply, and buoyant demand originating both domestically and from abroad in the form of development assistance. In Q3 2024, year-on-year CPI inflation turned negative, with prices 1.5% lower than in Q3 2023. Base effects play a large role here and are likely to unwind naturally, but this nonetheless reduces the likelihood of inflation overshooting the RBV's target range.

Fiscal Sector

Sustained private and public sector demand will support tax receipts, dependent on whether the government grants temporary relief to specific activities (such as construction). Partially offsetting this, there may be reduced receipts from tourism businesses, as well as those firms facing disruption due to being forced to close or relocate following the earthquake. The government may also face demands for higher spending, especially to aid relief and reconstruction. However, the ability of the Vanuatu government to finance these demands may be limited, with debt levels already approaching unsustainable levels. Further, excessive borrowing by the government may crowd out private sector reconstruction efforts by reducing bank lending to firms, while central bank financing of any deficits risks fiscal dominance, further exacerbating the inflationary problem. This highlights the need for effective cooperation with development partners to effectively meet the needs of Vanuatu's recovery.

10.0 Priority Sectors

The priority sectors identified for the earthquake response plan reflect areas essential for addressing immediate humanitarian needs and ensuring long-term recovery and resilience. The health sector remains critical due to significant injuries and the heightened risk of disease outbreaks caused by damaged sanitation systems and disrupted access to clean water. Similarly, the WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) sector is central to public health, focusing on restoring water supplies, repairing sanitation infrastructure, and preventing the spread of waterborne diseases. The education sector is also a priority, as damaged schools have disrupted learning for many children. Recovery in this sector aims to rebuild schools, replace learning materials, and ensure continuity in education while incorporating disaster-resilient designs.

The livelihood, social protection, and employment sector is vital for supporting affected communities in regaining their means of income and ensuring economic stability. Many livelihoods have been disrupted, particularly in agriculture and food security, which require immediate recovery efforts to restore farming, livestock, and fisheries operations. The macroeconomic environment must also address the broader economic impact of the disaster, including restoring government revenue streams and ensuring fiscal stability to fund recovery activities. Additionally, the infrastructure sector is a priority, as damaged roads, bridges, buildings, and energy systems have disrupted essential services, transportation, and communication. The restoration of these systems is fundamental to supporting recovery across all sectors.

Cross-cutting considerations, including gender, climate change (CC), and disaster risk reduction (DRR), play a crucial role in recovery planning. Ensuring gender-inclusive approaches, integrating climate-resilient practices, and reducing future disaster risks are vital for sustainable and equitable recovery. Lastly, rebuilding and strengthening the tourism and manufacturing sectors will help revitalize the economy, create employment opportunities, and contribute to long-term economic recovery. The response plan strategically integrates these sectors to rebuild stronger, more resilient communities and create a stable and sustainable future for Vanuatu.

10.1 Implementation Arrangement for Recovery

Recovery Programs Coordination Level

Under the Government Act (Cap 243), as amended by the National Recovery Committee Order 154 of 2018, responsibility for disaster recovery is assigned to the National Recovery Committee (NRC). The NRC oversees governance and provides strategic direction for recovery projects funded by the Government of Vanuatu and international donor partners. The Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC), housed within the Prime Minister's Office, serves as the Secretariat for the NRC, ensuring efficient management and coordination of recovery efforts.

The NRC's mandate includes oversight of post-disaster needs assessments, development of recovery programs, and ensuring that recovery aligns with national development priorities. DSPPAC supports these efforts by coordinating across government departments to prepare comprehensive recovery strategies. This includes integrating disaster recovery requirements into broader national development initiatives to ensure a seamless connection between recovery and long-term development planning.

Integrating Disaster Recovery into National Planning

As the government's central planning authority, DSPPAC is tasked with ensuring that all development planning is informed by disaster risk considerations. This includes incorporating disaster risk indicators into the plan and project review mechanisms of the Development Committee of Officials and the Council of Ministers. Such measures are essential to building resilience and reducing the vulnerabilities of communities and infrastructure to future disasters.
To further enhance coordination and preparedness, the Prime Minister's Office released revised corporate and business plan guidelines for government ministries in 2022. These guidelines establish clear entry points for integrating disaster recovery and risk-informed actions into ministry plans and budgets. This ensures that disaster recovery is embedded within sectoral strategies and operationalized at all levels of government planning.

10.2 Recovery Resilient Activities Prioritization and Approval

Ministry Prioritisation and Submission Process

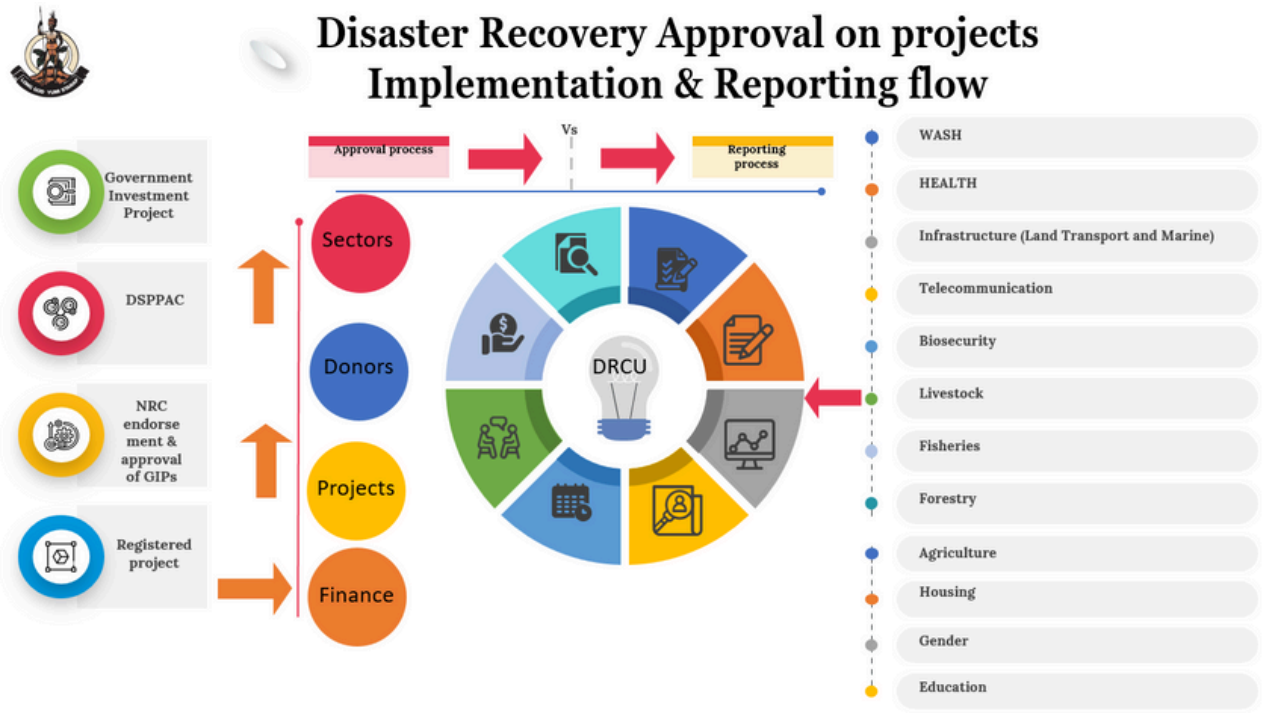
Each line ministry is responsible for prioritizing its recovery needs and submitting them as Government Investment Projects (GIPs) through the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning, and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC). Sector Analysts within DSPPAC conduct thorough screening of these GIP proposals to ensure they align with national priorities and meet rigorous standards. Once screened, the proposals are submitted to the Aid Coordination Unit (ACU) for project registration.

Following registration, recovery proposals are reviewed and endorsed by the National Recovery Committee (NRC). Approved projects are then returned to the ACU for funding allocation and proper financial coding by the Department of Finance and Treasury. This process ensures that all recovery projects are well-documented, strategically aligned, and properly integrated into the national financial management system.

Coordination with Development Partners and Civil Society

All recovery projects or activities initiated by development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), or other external actors must receive approval from the NRC before implementation. This approval process ensures alignment with national recovery priorities and allows DSPPAC and NRC to monitor activities effectively. Coordination with development partners is critical for achieving the objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Plan, as Official Development Assistance (ODA) plays a central role in funding and implementing recovery programs.

ODA contributions may take various forms, including bilateral grants, multilateral funding, cash support, budgetary assistance, or aid-in-kind such as supplies and services. Recovery programs are often delivered through partnerships involving development partners, government ministries, private sector actors, and CSOs. By engaging local NGOs and grassroots organizations, recovery efforts can leverage existing community networks to ensure efficient and inclusive implementation. This multi-stakeholder approach enhances the impact of recovery activities, strengthens local resilience, and ensures sustainable outcomes for affected communities.



10.3 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) was updated in 2024 to include priorities for disaster risk management and post-disaster recovery. This update ensures that each of the three pillars of the NSDP—society, environment, and economy—now includes specific indicators and targets for tracking recovery efforts and building resilience. The Earthquake Recovery and Resilience Plan aligns seamlessly with these updates, enabling clear measurement of progress and impact while ensuring consistency with Vanuatu's broader policy and planning frameworks.

DSPPAC, through its M&E Unit and Disaster Recovery Unit, will lead efforts to monitor the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan. This will include close collaboration with line ministries and sectors to establish relevant outcome-level targets and indicators that are consistent with the NSDP M&E framework and ministry level corporate plans as prescribed in NPF. Progress reporting on recovery projects will follow the formal reporting processes within the NPF, namely through the quarterly, half yearly, and annual report. There will also be wider progress updates through the NSDP M&E Framework and its annual monitoring reporting; the Annual Development Report. By embedding disaster recovery priorities into existing monitoring mechanisms, the government ensures that recovery efforts are both measurable and aligned with long-term national development goals.

In addition to tracking progress, DSPPAC will oversee effective support and collaboration across all levels of government, sectors, and communities. The department will work to ensure that recovery priorities are communicated clearly to all stakeholders, fostering a shared understanding of the objectives and strategies required for resilient recovery and risk-informed development. This integrated approach enables the government to rebuild not just infrastructure and livelihoods but also institutional and community resilience, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for Vanuatu.

As described above, the Recovery and Resilience Plan M&E Framework will be formulated based upon an "inputs and outputs based" framework that DSPPAC Recovery/M&E Unit/PPAs will develop with ministries according to their specific recovery priorities and develop specific indicators and targets that are aligned to current Corporate Plan objectives and business plan programs. An example is shown below:

Table 3: Recovery and Resilience Plan M&E Framework Example

Recovery Strategy	Recovery Output/Input	Lead Agency	Indicators	Targets	Link to NSDP	Link to Ministry CP

10.4 Coordination of Aid and Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Recovery

Effective management of Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be vital in ensuring that resources are deployed in a timely, transparent, and impactful manner. The framework for ODA coordination adheres to the principles outlined in Vanuatu's Official Development Assistance Management Policy (ODAMP) and its Implementation Strategy, which prioritise national ownership, alignment with the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), and adherence to global best practices such as the Paris Declaration and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.
Framework for ODA Coordination.

Centralised Leadership and Oversight:

The Aid Coordination Unit (ACU), operating under the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC), will act as the central body responsible for reporting on ODA. In collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and External Trade (MoFAICET), the ACU will ensure that recovery aid aligns with national priorities and is integrated into the government's recovery strategy.

Integration with National Systems:

All ODA-funded recovery initiatives will be incorporated into existing government planning, budgeting, and monitoring systems. This includes the use of platforms such as the Vanuatu Budget Management System (VBMS) and the Aid Project Management System (APMS), ensuring a cohesive approach to tracking, monitoring, and reporting on development assistance.

Alignment with National and Sectoral Priorities:

Development partners will align their assistance with the priorities identified in the NSDP and sector-specific recovery plans. This alignment will reduce duplication, improve efficiency, and ensure resources are directed towards areas of greatest need.

11.0 Roles and Responsibilities

National Recovery Committee

The NRC, established under the National Disaster Recovery Framework, provides strategic oversight and governance for all recovery activities. It is chaired by a senior government official, typically a Minister or Secretary of State, and includes representatives from key government ministries, development partners, and the private sector.

Key Roles and Responsibilities:

1.Strategic Oversight:

- Define the strategic vision and priorities for recovery efforts, ensuring alignment with national development goals and policies.
- Approve sectoral recovery and resilience plans and budgets, including proposals for funding from international development partners.

2.Policy and Decision-Making:

- Formulate and endorse policies, guidelines, and standards for the recovery process, such as building codes and disaster-resilient infrastructure designs.
- Make high-level decisions on resource allocation and the prioritisation of recovery projects across sectors.

3.Governance and Accountability:

- Provide oversight to ensure that recovery efforts are transparent, efficient, and aligned with the principles of good governance.
- Monitor compliance with national and international standards for disaster recovery and resilience-building.

4.Resource Mobilisation:

- Coordinate efforts to secure funding from bilateral and multilateral development partners, international NGOs, and the private sector.
- Ensure that financial resources are allocated effectively to address the most urgent recovery needs.

5.Dispute Resolution and Advocacy:

- Address disputes or challenges arising during the recovery process, such as delays in project implementation or coordination issues.
- Advocate for policy reforms and institutional changes to enhance disaster recovery and resilience in the long term.

National Recovery Unit

The NRU serves as the operational arm of the recovery process, responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of recovery activities across sectors. It operates within the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning, and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) under the Prime Minister's Office.

Key Roles and Responsibilities:

1.Coordination of Recovery Activities:

- Act as the central coordination body for all recovery initiatives across government agencies, development partners, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- Ensure alignment of sectoral recovery and resilience plans with the overarching National Recovery Framework and the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP).

2.Technical and Operational Support:

- Provide technical expertise and guidance to line ministries and provincial governments in planning and implementing recovery projects.
- Oversee the development of Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) and recovery and resilience plans to identify sector-specific needs.

3.Monitoring and Reporting:

- Track the progress of recovery projects, ensuring adherence to timelines, budgets, and performance indicators.
- Prepare quarterly and annual progress reports for submission to the NRC and other stakeholders.

4.Capacity Building:

- Strengthen institutional capacities at the national, provincial, and community levels to implement recovery strategies effectively.
- Organise training programmes for government staff and other stakeholders on recovery planning and disaster risk reduction.

5.Stakeholder Engagement:

- Facilitate coordination meetings and consultations with development partners, community representatives, and the private sector to ensure inclusivity in recovery efforts.
- Serve as the primary liaison between government agencies and external stakeholders during the recovery process.

Aid Coordination Unit (ACU)

- Act as the central point of coordination between development partners, line ministries, and other stakeholders.
- Facilitate sectoral coordination meetings and recovery planning workshops to ensure alignment of donor support.
- Monitor compliance with the ODAMP and integration of ODA into government systems.
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM):
- Ensure that ODA funds are included in the national budget and are allocated in line with recovery priorities.
- Monitor financial management systems to ensure transparency and fiscal accountability.
- Manage concessional loans and grant agreements to support recovery projects.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and External Trade (MoFAICET):

- Act as the entry point for diplomatic engagement with bilateral and multilateral partners.
- Negotiate development cooperation agreements to secure resources for recovery.
- Disaster Recovery Coordination Unit (NDRCU):
- Oversee multi-sectoral recovery efforts and ensure alignment with national recovery objectives.
- Facilitate coordination between government agencies, development partners, and NGOs.

Line Ministries and Provincial Governments:

- Implement recovery programmes and projects, ensuring proper use of resources and adherence to reporting requirements.
- Collaborate with local communities and stakeholders to address region-specific recovery needs.

11.1 Recovery Modalities

Direct Budget Support:

Direct budget support will be the preferred modality for ODA funding, enabling the government to maintain ownership of the recovery process and ensure that funds are allocated effectively within existing systems.

Pooled Funds for Priority Sectors:

Sector-specific pooled funds will be established to streamline resources for critical areas such as housing, education, WASH, and health. These funds will allow for more efficient allocation and monitoring of resources.

Project-Specific Support:

ODA may also be channelled towards specific projects such as rebuilding damaged infrastructure, restoring livelihoods, and enhancing disaster resilience.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring of ODA-funded recovery efforts will be integrated into the government's existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Regular progress updates will be captured in Ministry Quarterly and Annual Reports, providing a clear picture of the outcomes achieved.

Transparency and Accountability:

Transparency will be ensured through regular publication of ODA expenditure reports. Development partners will also be required to submit detailed reports on disbursements and project outcomes using government-approved templates.

Build Long-Term Resilience:

Use ODA as a tool not only to address immediate recovery needs but also to strengthen resilience against future disasters by integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures into all recovery efforts.

By adhering to these principles and leveraging a well-coordinated approach, Vanuatu can maximise the impact of ODA, ensuring that recovery efforts are efficient, inclusive, and aligned with the long-term development goals of the nation. This approach will help rebuild affected communities while creating a stronger and more resilient foundation for the future

Picture 4: Damaged Wong Store, Tagabe

Port Vila, Efate Earthquake
Recovery and Resilience Plan 2024

Recovery Operation Centre
Department of Strategic Policy, Planning & Aid Coordination
Office of the Prime Minister
Republic of Vanuatu