



Australian Government

AusAID



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Australian Development
Assistance to Vanuatu 2008-09

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ISBN 978-1-921285-55-4

For further information about the
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www.ausaid.gov.au

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Edited by Clarity Communications Australia, Canberra
Designed by GRI.D, Canberra
Printed by Blue Star Print, Canberra

Cover: Young girls near Hatbol Aid post, Malekula island. Photo: Rob Maccoll

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The Port Vila vegetable markets. Photo: Rob Maccoll

Introduction

Country program estimate 2008-09: VT4.7 billion

(bilateral—VT3.4 billion, regional—VT1.3 billion)

Australia's VT4.7 billion development assistance program in Vanuatu aims to achieve broad-based economic growth by focusing on governance and improved service delivery. It is guided by the Australia-Vanuatu Joint Development Cooperation Strategy 2005–2010 and supports the Vanuatu Government's *Priorities and Action Agenda 2006–2015*.

The main guiding themes of the Vanuatu Government's agenda include:

- > growing the productive sector, especially agriculture and tourism
- > raising public-service performance
- > cutting costs associated with transport and utilities
- > improving access to basic services such as health and education
- > maintaining a macroeconomic balance.

Australia works closely with government, civil society and the private sector to support development in Vanuatu. Building demand for better governance through civil society partnerships is one approach AusAID takes.

Gender is a core feature of all AusAID programs in Vanuatu. Recognising that women are particularly disadvantaged in areas of decision-making and economic empowerment, Australia is working with the Vanuatu Government and women's organisations to support these development priorities.

Key achievements to date of Australia's development program include:

- > Strong support for financial management reform, which has led to stronger financial management. In 2007, Vanuatu achieved its sixth consecutive year of surplus or neutral budgets.
- > The Governance for Growth program helped facilitate the successful negotiation of the opening up of the telecommunications monopoly. This has resulted in a significant expansion in access to telecommunications in rural areas.
- > A more visible police presence and extended reach of police operations in Vanuatu, Port Vila and Luganville. New recruits have joined the Vanuatu police force for the first time since 1997 (27 per cent of whom are young women compared with the current representation of women of around two per cent).
- > More than 200 ni-Vanuatu studying under AusAID scholarships, in Australia and the region.
- > Ninety per cent immunisation coverage for children against measles, and a decrease in infant and maternal mortality.

Economic reform and governance

Australia's development assistance program builds on a history of support designed to strengthen financial systems, controls and processes and improve public-service recruitment and management. Australia is now extending its focus to the broader goals of improving Government of Vanuatu policy mechanisms and growth and service delivery in rural areas.

Governance for Growth Program

Contribution estimate: VT3 billion

Duration: 2006–10

Partner: Vanuatu Government

This program supports policy reforms that aim to address obstacles to economic growth and services delivery in rural areas. Current reforms are in telecommunications, aviation, public financial management, rural electrification power and commodities marketing. The program also oversees the twinning arrangement between the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Vanuatu National Statistics Office as part of improving data quality for government planning.

Successful reforms to date are in telecommunications and the establishment of Vanuatu's first Utilities Regulatory Authority.



Malekula island coconut plantation. Photo: Rob Maccoll

Land program

Contribution: VT108 million

Duration: 2006–December 2008

Contractor: GHD Hassall

This country-driven program is guided by the Ministry of Lands, the National Land Steering Committee and the 2006 National Land Summit resolutions. To date, Australian assistance has enabled an analysis of the lands administration system and land legislation and policy. The analysis supports developing a long-term reform strategy for improving sustainable social and economic development. A number of short-term reform initiatives, including public awareness and piloting of reform methodologies in land administration and land-use planning, are underway and will inform the design of a long-term reform strategy. Technical assistance for the preparation of a land-sector framework is also underway. Australian development assistance will support work with the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs to help with issues relating to customary tenure. In 2008-09, additional support will be provided through AusAID's regional Pacific Land Program.

Demand for better governance

Australian development assistance supports improved governance through strengthening the reach and stability of key institutions. One strategy is to strengthen partnerships and foster civil society participation in governance, to improve access to information through a more effective media industry and to support leadership development.

Vois Blong Yumi Program

Contribution: VT265 million

Duration: 2007–09

Whole-of-government partner: Australian Broadcasting Corporation

This twinning arrangement between Radio Australia and Radio Vanuatu is based on the premise that a well-informed public is the basis of good governance. It aims to help the Government of Vanuatu extend its reach to all rural areas across the nation and support organisational strengthening of the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC). Through a related, multi-donor activity Australia is providing VT62 million in assistance to the VBTC to restore its shortwave service in 2008.

Vanuatu Kastom Governance Partnership

Contribution: VT225 million

Duration: 2006–11

Partners: University of Queensland and the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs

This partnership aims to strengthen and extend contributions from *kastom* and community leadership to encourage and foster change and development. It focuses on conflict prevention, community governance and community development and is delivered through a series of *storian* and workshops.

Vanuatu Church Partnership Program

Contribution: VT27 million

Duration: September 2007–August 2008

Partner: Australian Church Non-Government Organisations and Vanuatu Christian Council

This partnership program, current in design, will focus on developing the organisational capacities of the Vanuatu Christian Council and its members to be effective in national policy dialogue and actively participate in expanding government services delivery programs. The program is important because churches were the traditional providers of education and health services before Vanuatu's independence and continue to be a big influence on the lives of all ni-Vanuatu.

Vanuatu Women's Centre

Contribution: VT340 million

Duration: 2007–12

Partner: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

This centre aims to reduce violence against women and children, and has placed this issue on the national agenda as a major social and economic problem. The centre provides counselling and support services. A major activity in 2008-09 will be a baseline survey of gender-based violence throughout Vanuatu.

Women in decision-making and leadership

Contribution: VT9 million

Duration: 2007–December 2008

Partners: Department of Women's Affairs and Vanuatu National Council of Women

This initiative is based on the premise that women's participation in decision-making is fundamental to achieving good development outcomes. Australian assistance is strategically provided to the Department of Women's Affairs and the Vanuatu National Council of Women to increase women's participation and leadership. In 2008, voter awareness and a survey of women's participation in politics following the 2008 national election period are key activities. Australia will also explore opportunities for working closely with the Council to strengthen its leadership on women's issues.



Children and teenagers playing ball games at Wan Smolbag. Photo: Rob Maccoll

Wan Smolbag Partnership

Contribution: VT260 million

Duration: 2007–11

Partner: Wan Smolbag

This partnership focuses on helping unemployed youth by extending service delivery to populations in greatest hardship, especially isolated rural communities and informal settlements in urban areas. Wan Smolbag provides reproductive health services and is the leading provider of media content on issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, relationships, reproductive health, good governance and voter education.

Australia-Vanuatu Joint Development Cooperation Strategy 2005–2010

Goal: Long-term stability resulting from accelerated development, including broad-based growth and improved

Strategic objectives

1. Improved governance through strengthening the stability and reach of key institutions

2. Improved service delivery to

Program outcomes

1.1 Improved financial management and accountability through continued public sector reform

1.2 More effective legal institutions/ improved police services

1.3 Stronger links between central, line and provincial systems

2.1 Greater targeting by key service delivery agencies in rural communities and informal settlements in urban areas

Activities and initiatives

Public Sector Reform Project (1999–06)
MFEM Institutional Strengthening Project (1999–2006)
Governance for Growth Program (2006–17)

Vanuatu Police Force Capacity Building Project (2006–ongoing)
Legal Sector Strengthening Project (2000–11)
Justice for the Poor (2008–12)

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Grants (ongoing)
Governance for Growth (2006–17)

Village Health Worker Program (2008–11)
Workforce Capacity—Medical Specialists (ongoing)
Health Economist in MoH (2006–8)
Pacific Malaria Initiative (2007–11)
HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Health
Australia Pacific Technical College
TVET Project (2005–)
Secondary School Extension Project (2004–2007)
VESAP (2008–09)

Australian Scholarships: Australian Development Scholarships, Regional Development Scholarships,

welfare of the general population

populations in greatest hardship

3. Raised productive capacity of ni-Vanuatu, particularly women and young people

2.2 Stronger partnerships between Non-government Organisations, Council of Chiefs, Council of Churches, women's and other civil society groups and Government in service delivery in rural communities and informal settlements in urban areas

3.1 Expanded rural (farm and off-farm) productivity, providing income generation, particularly for women and young people

3.2 Strengthened tourism sector providing employment opportunities, particularly for young people

3.3 Stronger enabling environment for private sector development

Kastom Governance Partnership (2006–)
 Vanuatu Women's Centre (2002–07)
 Wan Smolbag Partnership (2005–10)
 Vanuatu Churches Partnership (2008–)
 VANGO core funding 2007
 Vois Blong Yumi-Vanuatu Broadcasting and TV Corporation partnership with Radio Australia (2007–09)
 Gender Program – Women in Leadership

REDI Grants (2005-06)
 Governance for Growth Program (2006–10)
 Vanuatu Tourism Office Marketing Manager (2005-06)
 Infrastructure for Growth Initiative (2008–)
 Land Program (2006–08)
 Performance Incentive Initiative – Telecommunications Reforms (2008-09)
 Support for National Statistics Office – partnership with Australian Bureau of Statistics and funding for Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2007, Agriculture Census 2006, National Accounts (2006, 2007)
 Gender Program – Women's Economic Empowerment

Australian Leadership Awards, In-Country Scholarships, ANZ School of Government, Volunteers

Law and justice

Legal Sector Strengthening Project Phase 3

Contribution: VT865 million

Duration: 2006–11

Whole-of-government partner: New South Wales Attorney General's Department

This project aims to improve public access to, and confidence in, the justice system. Mechanisms are being put in place to access training and technical assistance funds to meet priority needs. Activities aim to ensure long-term sustainability of the State Law Office, the Public Solicitor's Office and the Public Prosecutor's Office. Support has been provided since 2000.

Vanuatu Police Force Capacity Building Project

Contribution: VT2.52 billion

Duration: 2006–11

Whole-of-government partner: Australian Federal Police

This project, with Australian assistance, sees the Australian Federal Police (AFP) working closely with the Vanuatu Police Force to provide a safer, more secure environment for communities by preventing and detecting crime through close police/community relations. With the technical expertise of the AFP, the project aims to strengthen organisational effectiveness to enhance community safety, crime prevention and victim support. It also support training to enhance service delivery to both internal and external clients. In addition, the project provides support to Vanuatu Government border control agencies (customs, quarantine, immigration, fisheries and the Vanuatu Maritime Authority). One major achievement has been major refurbishments to the police stations in Port Vila and Luganville and the Force Training Wing in Luganville. Support has also been provided to two of three recruit courses (the first time since 1997) with 30 new police joining in 2006, eight of whom were women.

Education and training

The Vanuatu Ministry of Education is leading a major reform of Vanuatu's education system. In 2006, the Council of Ministers approved developing a sector-wide approach to education. The Ministry developed a Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy 2007–16 outlining the country's priorities. Australia's program in education supports these.

Vanuatu Education Support Annual Plan

Contribution: VT296 million and VT43 million for technical assistance

Duration: 2008–09

Co-funder: New Zealand's International Aid & Development Agency

This project provides support for the Vanuatu Education Support Annual Plan (VESAP). With equal funding by AusAID and New Zealand's International Aid & Development Agency (NZ Aid), it is the first step towards the development of a sector-wide approach in the Vanuatu education sector. The VESAP addresses four key areas: (1) support for increased access to education; (2) improved quality of education; (3) enhanced Ministry of Education management of the education sector; and (4) contribution to the development of a National Human Resource Development Plan. VESAP is led by the Department of Education. AusAID and NZ Aid are also jointly funding a pool of Technical Assistants, a need identified by the Ministry of Education to facilitate the implementation of the Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy.



Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strengthening Program

Contribution: VT1.3 billion

Duration: 2005–2012

Contractor: GRM International

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strengthening program aims to ensure that employment and training services provide increased employment and income earning outcomes for women and men, which, in turn, contributes to improvements in provincial socio-economic standards of living. While Phase 1 (2005–07) focused on inputs (e.g. training modules), Phase 2 (2008–12) focuses on outcomes. In 2008–09 the program will set up two provincial TVET centres providing basic business services and counselling.

Scholarship and training programs

Contribution: VT180 million (approximately)

Duration: ongoing

Contractors: Vanuatu, regional and Australian institutions

These programs include scholarships for study in Australia, the Pacific region and Vanuatu. AusAID works closely with the Vanuatu Government to ensure scholarship awards address priority study areas, including human resources for health and education, capacity-building in the public sector and technical and vocational education.



Opposite: The Australia Pacific Technical College, school of Tourism and Hospitality. Students from local restaurants are taught the preparation and handling of meals. Photo: Rob Maccoll

Left: Students in a classroom at Rensarie High School, Malekula. Photo: Rob Maccoll

Health

Australian development assistance activities support the priorities of the Vanuatu Government's Master Health Services Plan 2004–2009, which includes:

- > improving the health of the people
- > improving access to services
- > improving the quality of services delivered
- > making more effective use of resources.

Australia's focus has been on strengthening health systems to improve service delivery and addressing public health concerns such as HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Malaria. Australia also provides a Health Sector Planning Adviser who supports the Ministry of Health Executive in moving towards a sector approach and planning and implementing the Master Health Services Plan.

During 2008–2012, VT35million will assist the Ministry of Health with cervical cancer screening, and treatment if necessary, of at least 75% of Vanuatu's women aged 30-50 years. This will include training of practitioners in the use of the low-technology techniques. Also during 2008-2012, through a partnership with Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO), VT120million will be used to strengthen the capacity of the Vanuatu Ministry of Health and NGOs to address HIV and STIs across the country. An additional VT63million will be provided to Wan Smolbag for the production of *Love Patrol Series II*, a regional TV drama which has HIV related themes and aims to bring about behaviour change to reduce the transmission of HIV and STIs.

Village Health Worker Program

Contribution: VT171 million

Duration: 2008–11

Contractor: Save the Children Australia

This program has been supported by Australia since 1997. Village Health Workers are community based workers, trained in basic health service delivery, who operate in the most remote areas. In alignment with the new sector-program approach in Health, this program has transitioned for oversight to the Ministry of Health and continues to improve the skills of aid post staff through training and supervision.

Health Workforce Capacity

Contribution: VT410 million

Duration: 2006–11

Contractors: through the Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism

This specialist support program addresses workforce capacity. It is primarily based at the Vila Central Hospital and currently provides a senior surgeon, anaesthetist, physician, obstetrician/gynaecologist, community health specialist, and the principal pharmacist. AusAID has been funding the health workforce capacity program for more than a decade and is currently working with the Ministry of Health to localise these specialist positions.

Pacific Malaria Initiative

Contribution: VT540 million

Duration: 2007–11

Partner: Vanuatu Ministry of Health

This initiative supports the implementation of partner Government National Malaria Control Programs, focusing on prevention, disease management, health system strengthening and piloting malaria elimination activities (the Solomon Islands are also part of the initiative with separate funding). In addition, the Pacific Malaria Initiative Support Centre receives funding to provide flexible, highly-focused, demand-driven, locally appropriate and cost-effective program management, training and technical assistance to partner governments. The aim is to achieve the overall goal and objectives of country National Malaria Control Programs.

Productive sector support

Contribution: VT252 million

Duration: 2005–09

This financial contribution enables Australia to work with the Vanuatu Government and other donors to encourage growth in key productive sectors, especially agriculture and tourism. Future development assistance will address market development in Vanuatu's areas of comparative advantage. It will also help set up an enabling environment for the private sector through regulatory and state-owned enterprise reform. Program design work is ongoing with the aim of a more substantial and long-term program of support in the coming year or so (in collaboration with other donors).

Assistance to date has included grant funding to the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) for the Agriculture Census and Household and Income Expenditure Survey, the Vanuatu Quarantine Inspection Service for eradicating bovine venereal disease that restricts reproduction rates in cattle. A twinning arrangement between the VNSO and the Australian Bureau of Statistics was also funded to ensure the sustainable development and capability of the VNSO.

Women's economic empowerment

Contribution: VT9 million

Duration: 2007-08

Partners: VANWOODS, Vanuatu Cultural Centre (Women's Culture Program)

This development assistance aims to strengthen women's economic empowerment, which is essential to grow the national economy. Australian assistance has supported an analysis of microfinance enterprises' impact on improved quality of life for women in Vanuatu. Australian assistance also works closely with rural women in handicraft development to further income-generating opportunities. Support for financial literacy training will be a main activity in 2008-09.

Regional programs



Sgt Ephraim Kalarib teaching at Vanuatu Police College. Photo: Rob Maccoll

Australia provides assistance to Vanuatu through regional programs including the Australia-Pacific Technical College, the regional HIV/AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health Program, the Non-Communicable Diseases Program, provision of medical specialist visits, the Pacific Regional Policing Initiative, the Pacific Governance Support Program, the Pacific Judicial Services Program, the Pacific Leadership Program, the Pacific Land Program and the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme. Support to Vanuatu is typically through training and capacity-building opportunities.

Volunteers

Australia has a long history of providing volunteers to Vanuatu as part of its development assistance program. Through the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development, Australian Volunteers International, Australian Business Volunteers and the Volunteers for International Development Australia, technical assistance is provided to the Vanuatu Government, Non-Government Organisations and the private sector in priority development areas identified by the Vanuatu Government. These have included health, education, legal and productive sectors, environment, media, youth and sports. Placements can be anywhere in the country. During 2008-09, there will be 47 Australian volunteers in Vanuatu.

Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

AusAID is committed to the principles of the Paris Declaration. Australia is keen to integrate throughout its development program:

- > the principles of partner ownership
- > donor/partner program alignment
- > donor harmonisation
- > managing for results and mutual accountability.

