

Vanuatu National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-
Induced Displacement
2026

DRAFT

Internal review period: 13 April to 23 April 2026

Comments requested by: 23 April 2026

Note for Reviewers:

- Please provide your feedback through written comments. Where possible, please suggest alternative language to address the comments.
- This version is based on the draft implementation framework that was circulated for consultations between August and October 2025. The version builds from feedback received from over 40 different entities and consultations with the National Durable Solutions Taskforce.
- The policy vision, scope and objectives remain true to the [2018 policy](#), treating this as an 'update' to align language and approaches with evolving climate change, displacement and durable solutions context, including the 2025 Loss and Damage Policy.
- Scope and framing of the policy are based on endorsement of the Taskforce in February 2026.
- References to 'Lead ministry' will be updated upon confirmation by the Taskforce. A section of roles and responsibilities will be added in the final version based on this.
- Implementation Framework is kept alongside policy actions for ease of review and will be separated in the final version.
- Editorial changes (for examples acronyms and glossary) will be completed in the final version.

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Introduction and policy purpose

1.1 Preamble - Rational and Background

Ni-Vanuatu lives are shaped by climate change and disaster related hazards, with profound implications for national development and stability. Climate driven processes such as sea level rise and coastal erosion, alongside hazards such as cyclones, flooding, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, can devastate livelihoods, physical security and wellbeing, placing communities, cultures and ecosystems under increasing pressure.

Displacement is one of the most significant consequences of these hazards. Temporary or protracted displacement exposes people to multiple, overlapping risks. While family, community, church and kinship networks remain critical safety nets, the frequency and scale of recent events, such as Tropical Cyclone Harold in 2020 and the twin cyclones Judy and Kevin in 2023, have demonstrated the limits of traditional coping capacities and the need for coordinated national action. Sudden-onset hazards such as cyclones, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions can trigger large-scale displacement rapidly, requiring immediate evacuation and emergency response. Slow-onset processes including sea level rise, coastal erosion and salinity intrusion can drive gradual and cumulative displacement that may be less visible but is equally significant.

This policy understands displacement holistically, regardless of its trigger, and responses are guided by a common set of principles to ensure protection and support for all people affected, including those at risk of displacement, internal migrants, people in informal settlements and host communities.

The Government of Vanuatu first adopted the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement (Displacement Policy) in 2018 to fill this gap. The policy established a vision to prevent displacement where possible, to protect and assist people when it occurs, and to support durable solutions that restore safety, dignity and livelihoods. Experience since 2018, combined with lessons from recent disasters and the evolution of national and regional resilience frameworks, highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional coordination, linking displacement more directly to national development goals, climate action and ensuring that responses are equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

The 2026 Displacement policy reaffirms the Government's commitment to a coherent, whole-of-government approach to displacement as a critical development, climate, humanitarian and governance issue. It integrates displacement considerations across sectors and levels of government, guided by Vanuatu's Constitution, Vanuatu 2030 – The People's Plan, and other national climate, disaster and resilience policies. By strengthening systems, partnerships and accountability, the Policy seeks to reduce displacement risk, protect all people affected, and

ensure that recovery and resilience efforts contribute to a stable, sustainable and prosperous Vanuatu for present and future generations. The Policy continues and updates the structural approach first set out in 2018, grouping its strategic areas (SA) into systems-level enablers and sectoral-level interventions so that displacement and wider human mobility are addressed through a whole-of-government approach.

System-level interventions focus on strengthening the enabling environment for effective action on displacement, including:

- SA.1** Institutions and governance arrangements for coordinated leadership and decision-making.
- SA.2** Evidence, information and monitoring systems that track risks, displacement and durable solutions.
- SA.3** Safeguards and protection frameworks that uphold rights, equity and inclusion.
- SA.4** Capacity-building, training and resourcing across national, provincial, municipal and community levels.
- SA.5** Financing, resource mobilisation and financial protection.

Sectoral-level interventions address displacement risks, impacts and durable solutions within key areas central to human security and development, including:

- SA.6** Land, housing, planning and environment.
- SA.7** Health, nutrition and psychosocial support.
- SA.8** Education.
- SA.9** Infrastructure and connectivity.
- SA.10** Agriculture, food security and livelihoods.
- SA.11** Safety and security.
- SA.12** Traditional knowledge and culture.

The policy also identifies cross-cutting issues, such as partnerships, gender responsiveness, social inclusion, community participation, as well as disaster-risk reduction, climate change adaptation and safe, well-managed migration, which relate to and underpin all of the twelve areas.

The development of the 2026 Displacement Policy has been led by the National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB) under the guidance of the National Durable Solutions Taskforce. The Taskforce was established by the Council of Ministers in 2025 to ensure a whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort to address displacement. The Taskforce is Chaired by the Ministry of Adaptation, Meteorology & Geo-Hazards, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management (MoCC) and co-Chaired by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MoLNR).

Development of this policy has taken a conflict-sensitive approach, incorporating the views of many different stakeholders. Wide-ranging consultations have been held with communities affected by displacement, government and non-government agencies at national, provincial and local levels, the private sector and academia.¹⁵ At the request of the Government, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has provided technical support to develop the policy.

Recovering from displacement requires a well-coordinated, well-resourced, multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach to ensure that all people receive the support and assistance required. This policy aims to ensure that all people affected by displacement, including host communities, are included in national development planning and have equal opportunities to share in the country's growing security, wealth and prosperity.

1.2 Policy Vision, Objectives and Scope

1.2.1 Policy Vision

An inclusive and equitable nation in which no one is left behind, and all Ni-Vanuatu people—including those at risk of displacement, displaced populations, internal migrants and host communities—are resilient and have equal opportunities to share in the country's growing security, wealth and prosperity.

1.2.2 Policy Objectives

The objectives build on the 2018 Policy and responds to emerging challenges, evolving displacement dynamics and lessons from implementation experience.¹ The policy will guide national, provincial and sectoral action across all phases of the displacement cycle prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and the achievement of durable solutions. It does not replace sector-specific legislation, policies or operational procedures but seeks to align and strengthen them.

In doing so, the policy will:

- Reduce the risks of climate and disaster-induced displacement through strengthened prevention, preparedness and risk-informed development, including climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, land use planning and resilience building.²

¹ Government of Vanuatu (2018) National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018–2030. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu.

² Government of Vanuatu (2022) *National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2022–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu.

- Protect and support persons and communities affected by displacement in accordance with national legislation, human rights principles and relevant regional standards.³
- Ensure durable solutions through voluntary, safe and dignified return, local integration or, where necessary, planned relocation with community participation, effective safeguards and sustained institutional coordination.^{4 5}
- Integrate displacement prevention and solutions across development, land governance, climate change, disaster management and social protection policies, in alignment with Vanuatu 2030: The People’s Plan and the National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2022–2030.⁶
- Strengthen institutional leadership, coordination and accountability among ministries, provincial and municipal authorities, and custom governance systems.^{7 8}
- Recognise displacement as a form of climate-related loss and damage and ensure consistent responses in line with the National Loss and Damage Policy 2025.⁹
- Strengthen the evidence base for policy and decision-making through improved data, analysis and monitoring, drawing lessons from past displacement and planned relocation experiences.^{10 11}

³ United Nations (1998) *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. New York: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

⁴ United Nations (1998) *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. New York: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

⁵ Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and UNHCR (2015) *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation*. Geneva: PDD/UNHCR.

⁶ Government of Vanuatu (2022) *National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2022–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu.

⁷ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu.

⁸ Government of Vanuatu (2022) *National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2022–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu

⁹ Government of Vanuatu (2022) *National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2022–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu.

¹⁰ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu.

¹¹ Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and UNHCR (2015) *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation*. Geneva: PDD/UNHCR

1.2.3 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all forms of displacement arising from sudden-onset hazards, slow-onset processes, recurrent disaster impacts, and, where necessary, planned relocation undertaken as a measure of last resort when continued residence is no longer safe or viable.

Vanuatu's approach to internal displacement governance is informed by and contributes to the evolving regional and global normative framework, including the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility (2023), the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030) and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. While cross-border migration and labour mobility fall outside its operational scope, the policy recognises their linkages with national migration, employment and development frameworks.

The policy seeks to support and protect all ni-Vanuatu persons and communities affected by climate change and disaster-induced displacement. Drawing on the framework established in the 2018, the policy identifies five principal groups of concern:

- **Internally displaced persons** - including evacuees, persons temporarily or permanently displaced by hazard events, and persons displaced from their land as a result of disaster or climate-related processes;
- **Persons and communities at risk of displacement or planned relocation** - including those whose land, housing or livelihoods are under increasing threat from slow-onset or recurrent hazards;
- **Persons living in informal or peri-urban settlements with insecure tenure** - whose precarious legal status limits their ability to access protection and assistance and increases their exposure to displacement risk;
- **Internal migrants** - including those who have moved or are moving in response to the displacing effects of climate change, environmental degradation or hazards, whether or not their movement is formally recognised as displacement; and
- **Host communities and communities impacted by displacement** - including communities receiving displaced or relocated populations, whose own capacity, land and social fabric may be affected.

Across all five groups, the policy recognises the distinct rights, capacities and needs of women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and other groups facing heightened vulnerability. It applies a rights-based, gender-responsive and culturally sensitive approach to all aspects of displacement prevention, response and durable solutions.

The Framework also affirms the centrality of cultural identity, language and connection to land and place in any approach to climate mobility. For ni-Vanuatu communities, displacement involves not only physical movement but potential disruption to kastom, language, social structures and relationships with land that are foundational to wellbeing, governance and identity.

It also recognises the importance of voluntary and informed decision-making and the pursuit of durable solutions, including return, local integration or planned relocation. Planned relocation is acknowledged as a measure of last resort that must be undertaken with appropriate safeguards, institutional coordination and long-term planning.

The primary audience for this policy is national government ministries, departments and agencies with responsibilities for climate change, disaster risk management, land, housing, infrastructure, health, education, justice and social protection. Secondary audiences include provincial and municipal authorities, customary and community governance structures, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and development partners supporting implementation.

2. Policy Landscape

2.1 Global policy context

The global policy environment on internal displacement, climate change and disaster risk reduction has evolved significantly since the Displacement Policy was adopted in 2018. The United Nations Secretary General’s High- Level Panel on Internal Displacement and the Secretary- General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement call for solutions to be treated as a national, whole- of- -government priority, embedded in development, climate and human rights strategies and supported by costed national solutions plans.¹² This Policy reflects that direction by framing internal displacement in Vanuatu as a long--term development, climate and rights concern that requires coordinated leadership, clear institutional mandates and sustained resourcing across government.

¹² United Nations (2021) Shining a light on internal displacement: A vision for the future. Report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/>

United Nations (2022) The United Nations Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/internal-displacement-action-agenda> United Nations (2022) The United Nations Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/internal-displacement-action-agenda>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals commit States to “leave no one behind”, including people at risk of or affected by displacement, and call for strengthened resilience to climate related extreme events and other shocks, safe and well- managed mobility, and universal access to essential services and social protection.¹³ The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration further encourages States to address the drivers of migration, including climate change and disasters, and to develop coherent approaches to disaster displacement, planned relocation and migration as an adaptation strategy.¹⁴ Vanuatu’s Displacement Policy aligns these commitments with Vanuatu 2030 The People’s Plan by ensuring that prevention, response and durable solutions contribute to inclusive, climate resilient- development and to strengthened social protection systems.¹⁵

Since the development of the original Displacement Policy in 2018, global climate and disaster frameworks now give greater attention to displacement, loss and damage and human mobility. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, including the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage and its Task Force on Displacement, recognise that climate change is already causing and will increasingly cause displacement and other forms of mobility, and call for action to avert, minimise and address related loss and damage, particularly in small island developing States (SIDS).^{16 17 18} The establishment of new funding arrangements, including a fund for responding to loss and damage, and the operationalisation of the Santiago Network for technical assistance create opportunities for countries to access support for risk -informed planning, displacement prevention, planned relocation and durable solutions.¹⁹ The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 identifies displacement as a key impact of disasters and urges States to reduce disaster displacement risk, improve preparedness and “build back better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, including by protecting all human rights.²⁰ This Policy positions Vanuatu to use

¹³ United Nations (2015) Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

¹⁴ United Nations (2018) Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, A/RES/73/195. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/migrationcompact/>

¹⁵ Republic of Vanuatu (2016) Vanuatu 2030: The People’s Plan. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.gov.vu/images/publications/Vanuatu2030-PeoplePlan-English-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁶ United Nations (1992) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>

¹⁷ United Nations (2015) Paris Agreement. New York: United Nations. Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

¹⁸ United Nations (1992) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>

¹⁹ UNFCCC (2023) Decisions on funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage and on the Santiago Network. Bonn: UNFCCC Secretariat. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/loss-and-damage-ld> and linked decisions pages

²⁰ UNISDR (2015) Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Geneva: UNISDR. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

these mechanisms and frameworks to strengthen its own systems and to secure predictable, accessible international support for displacement-related measures.

This Policy is guided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and grounded in international human rights law, which together set out the rights of internally displaced persons and the responsibilities of States before, during and after displacement.²¹ It is aligned with the Inter Agency- Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, which defines durable solutions and emphasises that they require long-term, integrated approaches that address root causes, reduce risk and restore access to rights, services, livelihoods, land and housing.²² Global guidance on early recovery and “build back better” stresses that recovery should begin as soon as possible, support national ownership, restore and strengthen institutions, and advance gender equality and social inclusion.²³ Lessons from global practice, including in small island developing States, highlight the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage, language, identity and customary governance systems as part of durable solutions and planned relocation.²⁴ These principles underpin this Policy’s focus on locally grounded, rights respecting-, culturally appropriate approaches to displacement, evacuation and planned relocation.

2.2 Regional policy context

The Pacific region is a leading voice on climate change, disaster risk reduction and human mobility, and Vanuatu is at the forefront of these efforts. The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent identifies climate change as the single greatest threat to Pacific peoples’ livelihoods, security and wellbeing, and recognises that the aspiration of Pacific peoples to remain safely in their homelands and their right to dignified mobility when remaining is no longer viable - is a defining issue for the region.²⁵ The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific calls on Pacific Island countries to anticipate and prepare for displacement, integrate human mobility into

²¹ United Nations (1998) Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/guiding-principles-internal-displacement>

²² Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution–University of Bern. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons-0>

²³ UNDG/Early Recovery Cluster (2008) Guidance Note on Early Recovery. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/publications/guidance-note-early-recovery>

²⁴ Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) Internal displacement in the context of slow-onset processes in the Pacific. Geneva: Platform on Disaster Displacement. Available at: [disasterdisplacement](https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/21_0907_IDMCVanuatuRiskprofile.pdf)
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2021) Sudden-onset hazards and the risk of future displacement in Vanuatu. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/21_0907_IDMCVanuatuRiskprofile.pdf

²⁵ Pacific Islands Forum (2022) 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Available at: <https://www.forumsec.org/2050strategy/>

disaster preparedness, response and recovery, and ensure that development planning reduces underlying risk.²⁶ The Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility (2023), developed through Pacific-led processes and reflecting the priorities of Pacific peoples and governments, builds directly on these regional commitments and provides the most specific guidance on climate-related mobility.^{27,28} The PRFCM positions ‘staying in place’ - where communities choose and are able to remain safely and sustainably in their homelands - as the first and preferred pathway on the mobility continuum, and affirms that all policies and programmes should prioritise the conditions that make this possible. Pacific leadership and collaboration are foundational: the PRFCM affirms that responses to climate mobility must be driven by Pacific peoples and governments, building on Pacific knowledge systems, institutions and governance structures. The Framework further recognises the right of Pacific peoples to continuing statehood, self-determination and sovereignty, and the enduring importance of ties to ancestral land, place and community - even where climate change ultimately forces movement.

The Framework also affirms the centrality of cultural identity, kastom, language and connection to land in any approach to climate mobility: for ni-Vanuatu communities, displacement involves not only physical movement but potential disruption to kastom, language, social structures and relationships with land that are foundational to wellbeing, governance and identity. Planned relocation is affirmed as a measure of last resort, grounded in inclusive consultation, robust safeguards and full respect for land, culture and collective identity. This Policy contributes to operationalising these regional commitments within Vanuatu.

Regional practice on climate and disaster-related displacement has advanced considerably since 2018. Fiji’s Planned Relocation Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures, and Solomon Islands’ national planned relocation guidelines, demonstrate how countries can operationalise the principles of last resort, participation, gender equality and livelihood restoration in

²⁶Pacific Community, SPREP, PIFS et al. (2016) Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (FRDP) 2017–2030. Suva: Pacific Community. Available at: <https://gem.spc.int/projects/frdp>

²⁷Pacific Islands Forum (2024) Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility. Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Available at: <https://forumsec.org/publications/pacific-regional-framework-climate-mobility>

²⁸Pacific Resilience Partnership (2023) Human Mobility – Technical Working Group on Human Mobility: Background and Workplan. Suva: Pacific Resilience Partnership. Available at: <https://pacificresiliencepartnership.org/human-mobility/>

community relocation processes.²⁹³⁰³¹ These experiences, together with emerging Pacific guidance on internal planned relocation, inform Vanuatu's own approach.

2.3 National policy context

Since the adoption of the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster Induced Displacement in 2018, addressing disaster and climate-related displacement is increasingly recognised as a national priority, while exposing gaps that this updated Policy now addresses. Major events such as Tropical Cyclone Pam (2015), the 2017–2018 Ambae volcanic evacuations, Tropical Cyclone Harold (2020), Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin (2023), Tropical Cyclone Lola (2023) and Port Vila earthquake (2024) have displaced tens of thousands of people, tested systems for evacuation, evacuation centre management, land access, relocation, return and long-term recovery, and highlighted gaps in coordination, safeguards, urban and informal settlement responses, data and financing.³² During this period, the Department of Climate Change (DoCC) was established and the role of National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) strengthened, to advance multi hazard mapping and early warning, develop national and provincial evacuation and shelter guidance, and investigate the integration of displacement and relocation considerations into land use planning and sector policies. This Policy and its Implementation Framework are designed to build on those gains and to address the identified gaps over the life of the Policy.

The Policy now operates within a more developed national climate and disaster governance framework. Vanuatu's Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (VCCDDR) policy provides the overarching framework for integrated risk management, calling for risk-informed development, early warning and preparedness, and strengthened disaster response and recovery for both sudden- and slow-onset hazards.³³ Vanuatu's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) sets detailed targets across mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, and explicitly recognises displacement, planned relocation and land-related impacts as dimensions of climate-related loss

²⁹Government of Fiji (2018) Planned Relocation Guidelines: A Framework to Undertake Climate Change Related Relocation. Suva: Government of Fiji. Available at: <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Documents/Supplements/Fiji-Planned-Relocation-Guidelines.pdf>

³⁰Human Rights Watch (2025) 'There's Just No More Land': Community-led Planned Relocation as a Last Resort Adaptation to Climate Change in Solomon Islands. New York: Human Rights Watch. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/03/17/theres-just-no-more-land/community-led-planned-relocation-last-resort-adaptation>

³¹International Organization for Migration (2021) IOM Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030. Geneva: IOM. Available at: <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/iom-strategy-migration-environment-and-climate-change-2021-2030>

³²Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) Internal displacement in the context of slow-onset processes in the Pacific. Geneva: Platform on Disaster Displacement. Available at: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/internal-displacement-in-the-context-of-slow-onset-processes-in-the-pacific>

³³Republic of Vanuatu (2016) National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrpolicy2015.pdf

and damage.³⁴ The two instruments are explicitly complementary: the National Loss and Damage Policy 2025 identifies displacement as a priority loss and damage concern and defers to this Policy as the primary operational framework for displacement prevention, response and durable solutions.³⁵

The 2026 Displacement Policy constitutes the primary national reference for displacement-related loss and damage. Loss and damage considerations are integrated throughout this Policy as a normative framing principle, embedded within the evidence and monitoring architecture of Strategic Area 2, the safeguards and protection standards of Strategic Area 3, and the financing and resource mobilisation framework of Strategic Area 5. The National Loss and Damage Policy should be read alongside this instrument and, at its next scheduled review, updated to reflect the displacement-related provisions established here.

Land, planning and custom are also central to how displacement is experienced and resolved in Vanuatu. The Constitution recognises custom as a source of law and provides that all land belongs to indigenous custom owners and their descendants, which shapes how land can be identified and secured for evacuation centres, temporary shelter and relocation sites.³⁶ The MoLNR has primary responsibility for land administration, leasing, registration and aspects of land dispute resolution, and has been closely involved, in coordination with provincial governments and custom landowners, in securing land for displaced communities and for infrastructure and subdivision projects that involve land acquisition and resettlement. Existing land laws and policies, including those governing custom land management and formal leasing, have been used to negotiate access to land for displaced communities, but practice has highlighted recurring challenges in securing suitable land, clarifying tenure and protecting the rights of both custom owners and occupants in situations of displacement, informal settlement or development projects. Volcanic land-use planning and zoning initiatives, together with geohazard mapping, are important steps in clarifying where people can safely live and build in high-risk areas and in linking hazard information to land-use decisions.

The Policy is grounded in Vanuatu's decentralised system of governance and constitutional recognition of custom, and is intended to support key sector policies that shape how

³⁴ Republic of Vanuatu, Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation (2025) National Loss and Damage Policy and Implementation Plan. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://docc.gov.vu/index.php/Ind/Ind-policy> and via Climate Policy Radar at: https://app.climatepolicyradar.org/document/vanuatu-loss-and-damage-policy_89b3

³⁵ Republic of Vanuatu, Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation (2025) Updated Policy and Implementation Framework for the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://mocca.gov.vu/images/Updated%20Policy%20and%20Implementation%20Framework.docx>

³⁶ Republic of Vanuatu (n.d.) Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.gov.vu/images/publications/constitution_english.pdf

displacement is prevented and addressed in practice.³⁷ Chiefs, custom landowners, provincial governments, area councils and municipal councils play essential roles in preventing and managing displacement, mediating land access and supporting displaced and host communities, as demonstrated in responses to the Ambae evacuations and major cyclones. Experience has shown that displacement responses are most sustainable when they are developed in partnership with these institutions, respect custom and local decision-making, and strengthen, rather than bypass, local governance systems. By clarifying responsibilities for preventing and managing displacement, and by setting out principles and directives for evacuation, planned relocation and durable solutions, the Policy seeks to strengthen coherence across land, housing and urban development, water and sanitation, agriculture and food security, health, education, social protection, child protection, gender equality, disability inclusion and infrastructure policies, and to ensure that displacement-related actions are integrated into medium-term and annual planning and budgeting. In doing so, it supports the implementation of Vanuatu 2030 The People's Plan vision of a resilient, inclusive and just society.

3. Displacement dynamics and national context

Vanuatu is one of the world's most disaster-prone and climate-vulnerable countries, with most people and critical infrastructure concentrated in coastal and hazard-exposed areas.³⁸ Displacement arises from the interaction between this exposure, climate- and weather-related hazards, geophysical events, slow-onset environmental change, development choices and underlying social, economic and governance conditions.³⁹ These factors combine to expose individuals, households and communities to disaster-induced displacement, recurrent evacuations, protracted stays away from home and, in some cases, the need for planned relocation.

Vanuatu's geography as an archipelago of 83 islands presents distinct logistical challenges for displacement response. Distance, limited inter-island transport, communication constraints and the uneven distribution of services mean that ensuring consistent protection, assistance and

³⁷ Republic of Vanuatu (2016) Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.gov.vu/images/publications/Vanuatu2030-PeoplePlan-English-FINAL.pdf>

³⁸ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2021) *Vanuatu: Disaster Displacement Risk Profile*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/vanuatu-disaster-displacement-risk-profile/>

³⁹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2021) *Sudden-Onset Hazards and the Risk of Future Displacement in Vanuatu*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/21_0907_IDMCVanuatuRiskprofile.pdf

durable solutions across all islands requires deliberate planning, decentralised coordination and sustained investment in provincial capacity.

Ni-Vanuatu experience these pressures along a continuum of human mobility that includes evacuation, internal displacement, rural-to-urban migration, circular and seasonal migration and, in some cases, planned relocation and regional labour mobility.⁴⁰ A single household may be evacuated during a cyclone, later return and rebuild, send one member to town for work, and eventually consider relocation in response to coastal erosion and repeated storm damage. Degrees of choice narrow as environmental, economic and social conditions deteriorate, and widen when people have access to information, resources, social support and safe mobility pathways. The Policy recognises that people move under different degrees of choice and constraint, from pre-emptive relocation and migration through to emergency evacuation and displacement, and focuses primarily on internal displacement while acknowledging broader mobility linkages.⁴¹

3.1 Drivers of displacement

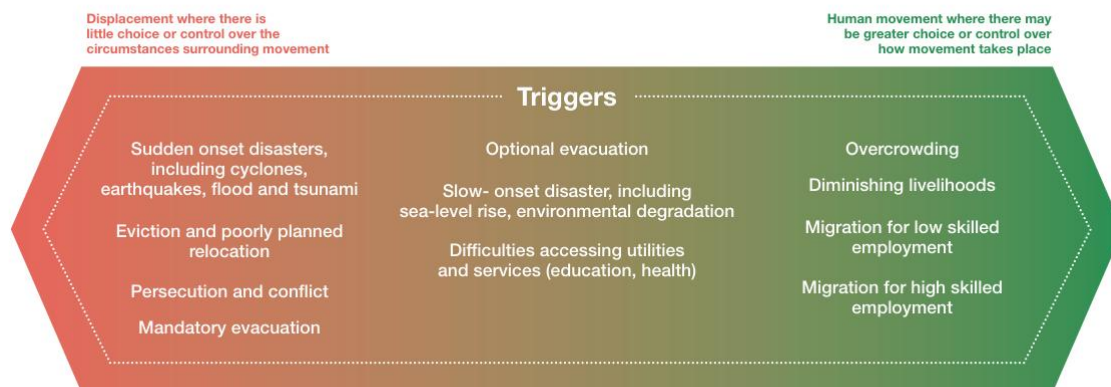


Figure 1: Continuum of human mobility²⁰

Graphic from 2018 policy for reference only

3.1.1 Rapid-onset hazards and disaster-induced displacement

Repeated and overlapping disasters have displaced tens of thousands of people in Vanuatu in recent years and have led to multiple or protracted episodes of displacement for many of the

⁴⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) *Disaster Displacement: Vanuatu Country Briefing*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Vanuatu_country_briefing.pdf

⁴¹ Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) *Vanuatu National Law and Policy Report on Disaster Displacement*. Geneva: Platform on Disaster Displacement. Available at: https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Vanuatu-Displacement-Law-and-Policy-Brief_English.pdf

same households.⁴² When public infrastructure and housing are repeatedly damaged, livelihoods are disrupted and essential services are slow to recover, households may remain displaced for extended periods or move between temporary sites, host communities and damaged home areas without achieving a durable solution.⁴³ Over time, such repeated shocks deepen poverty, weaken traditional support systems and increase reliance on limited public budgets and humanitarian assistance.

Geohazards, including volcanic activity, earthquakes, tsunamis and associated secondary hazards, represent a distinct and significant driver of displacement in Vanuatu. Volcanic ashfall in particular can function as both a rapid-onset and a slow-onset hazard, with compounding effects that extend well beyond episodes of mass evacuation. Persistent or repeated ashfall damages crops and water sources, compromises the health and productivity of livestock, and can render garden land unviable over extended periods, creating cumulative pressure on household food security and livelihoods. In communities already managing the effects of other climate-related stresses, ashfall can be a determining factor in decisions to move or to remain, particularly on volcanic islands such as Tanna, Ambrym and Ambae. The Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD) has primary responsibility for geohazard monitoring, scientific risk assessment and community-level awareness on evacuation triggers associated with volcanic, seismic and tsunami hazards. DoCC leads on climate-induced displacement risk assessment and the planning of pre-emptive and planned relocation responses for communities at risk from climate-related drivers. This reflection of departmental mandates is reflected in the governance and safeguards architecture of this Policy's Implementation Framework.

3.1.2 Slow-onset processes, loss and damage and anticipatory movement

Slow-onset processes can have displacing effects on communities even where people continue to live in the same location. In contexts where disasters, climate change and other unsustainable development processes diminish livelihoods through drought, salinisation of water bodies, sea-level rise or environmental degradation, communities may be functionally displaced in economic and cultural terms without having physically moved. Slow-onset undermine the habitability and productive capacity of some islands and coastal areas, contributing to both economic and non-economic loss and damage.⁴⁴ These processes gradually erode livelihoods, food and water

⁴² Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) *Disaster Displacement: Vanuatu Country Briefing*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Vanuatu_country_briefing.pdf

⁴³ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) *Disaster Displacement: Vanuatu Country Briefing*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Vanuatu_country_briefing.pdf

⁴⁴ Global Green Growth Institute (2025) 'Vanuatu launches bold climate justice policy on loss & damage', 22 July. Available at: <https://gggi.org/vanuatu-launches-bold-climate-justice-policy-on-loss-damage/>

security and cultural and spiritual ties to land, increasing pressure on households and communities to move.

Mobility patterns can reflect this pressure - households may secure land in other areas to grow food and maintain access to markets, or maintain split residence between origin and destination sites. These patterns of anticipatory and precautionary mobility should be recognised within the policy's evidence and response architecture, rather than treated as permanent settlement decisions.

Community consultations conducted during the preparation of this Policy provide important insights into how ni-Vanuatu communities understand and experience displacement and planned relocation. Community members emphasised the importance of remaining in place, maintaining access to customary sites and essential services, and preserving community cohesion and social networks throughout any relocation process. These perspectives directly inform the safeguards and community participation requirements set out in Strategic Area 3.

In this context, some households and communities adopt anticipatory mobility strategies such as seasonal migration, partial household migration, internal migration to towns, cyclical migration through the purchase of 'second homes' and, in some cases, local or inter-island relocation.⁴⁵ The boundary between "voluntary" movement and displacement can become blurred as options to remain safely in place diminish, particularly for people with limited resources or insecure land access. Planned relocation and other forms of planned movement must therefore be carefully designed, in line with this Policy and the Vanuatu Loss and Damage Policy, to reduce existing risks, avoid creating new displacement risks and uphold cultural continuity and rights to land and resources.⁴⁶

3.1.3 Land, development and urbanisation

Development decisions and land use change can themselves become drivers of displacement when they lead to evictions, rezoning, loss of access to customary land or environmental degradation. Infrastructure, tourism, commercial agriculture and extractive projects can displace communities or push low-income households into marginal, hazard-exposed areas, especially where safeguards, consultation and consent are weak.⁴⁷ Rapid urbanisation around Port Vila, Luganville and emerging secondary centres has contributed to the expansion of informal and

⁴⁵ Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) *Vanuatu National Law and Policy Report on Disaster Displacement*. Geneva: Platform on Disaster Displacement. Available at: https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Vanuatu-Displacement-Law-and-Policy-Brief_English.pdf

⁴⁶ Department of Climate Change (2025) *Vanuatu Loss and Damage Policy*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://docc.gov.vu/index.php/lnd/lnd-policy>

⁴⁷ Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) *Vanuatu National Law and Policy Report on Disaster Displacement*. Geneva: Platform on Disaster Displacement. Available at: https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Vanuatu-Displacement-Law-and-Policy-Brief_English.pdf

semi-formal settlements in peri-urban and hazard-exposed areas, including on customary land outside municipal boundaries.⁴⁸

Residents of informal and unplanned settlements often face insecure tenure, limited disaster-resilient housing and community infrastructure, and poor access to water, sanitation, electricity and safe access roads.⁴⁹ When disasters occur, they are more likely to be evacuated or displaced, and insecure tenure can hinder safe rebuilding or access to durable housing solutions. Unplanned settlement growth in hazardous areas is significantly increasing the country's risk profile, making it more difficult and costly to provide services and to implement risk-informed land use planning and upgrading.⁵⁰

3.1.4 Inequality, protection and governance

Gender inequality, harmful social norms, disability exclusion and other forms of discrimination shape who is most exposed to displacement, who can move safely and who can secure durable solutions.⁵¹ Women, girls, persons with disabilities or illness, older persons and people living in remote or informal settlements may have reduced access to information, resources, transport and decision-making spaces that are essential for preparedness, evacuation and relocation.⁵² Evidence from recent cyclones in Vanuatu shows that overcrowded and poorly designed evacuation and displacement sites can heighten risks of gender-based violence, harassment and exploitation, which can deter evacuation and increase exposure to hazards.⁵³ Addressing these structural inequalities is integral to reducing displacement risks and ensuring that mobility, when it occurs, is safe and dignified.

⁴⁸ World Bank (2022) *Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/941521648046668260/pdf/Vanuatu-Affordable-and-ResilientSettlements-Project.pdf>

⁴⁹ World Bank (2022) *Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/941521648046668260/pdf/Vanuatu-Affordable-and-ResilientSettlements-Project.pdf>

⁵⁰ Asian Development Bank (2021) *Greater Port Vila Urban Resilience Project – Additional Financing: Sector Assessment (Summary)*. Manila: ADB. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/52031-002-ssa.pdf>

⁵¹ Global Protection Cluster (2022) *Vanuatu: Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement*. Available at: <https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/vanuatu.pdf>

⁵² Global Protection Cluster (2022) *Vanuatu: Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement*. Available at: <https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/vanuatu.pdf>

⁵³ Government of Vanuatu and UNFPA (2023) *Tropical Cyclones Judy & Kevin: Gender and Protection Analysis*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu and UNFPA. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/vanuatu/tropical-cyclones-judy-kevin-gender-protection-analysis-22-march-2023-version-3>

Governance arrangements, institutional capacity, public finance and data systems significantly influence how the drivers of displacement are managed.⁵⁴ Where land use planning, building control, environmental regulation and risk information are not consistently applied, communities may continue to reside in high-risk areas or in housing that cannot withstand known hazards. Limited and unpredictable financing for disaster risk reduction, resilient infrastructure, durable solutions and displacement data systems can delay reconstruction, weaken evacuation and shelter management, and result in ad hoc approaches to planned relocation and urban upgrading.⁵⁵ Strengthening risk-informed, participatory and accountable governance, supported by robust data, early warning systems and the Loss and Damage Policy, is therefore central to averting, minimising and addressing displacement in line with Vanuatu's national and regional commitments.⁵⁶

3.2 Displacement context in Vanuatu

Vanuatu's displacement context reflects its extreme exposure to climate- and weather-related hazards, combined with demographic change, urbanisation, land dynamics and evolving development pathways.^[58] Vanuatu has been assessed as having the highest disaster risk worldwide, with more than half of the population living close to the coast and in areas exposed to cyclones, floods, volcanic activity and earthquakes.^[59] Over the last decade, disasters have triggered an estimated 175,000 internal displacements in Vanuatu, with around 3,700 people projected to be displaced by sudden-onset hazards in an average year in future.^[60] Many households have experienced multiple displacements over time, and some have remained in protracted or secondary displacement, including in urban and peri-urban locations. To support this overview, Annex A presents factual profiles of major displacement events since 2015 (*Annex A to be added as part of next version*).

3.2.1 Disaster-related displacement since 2015

Major cyclones, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes since 2015 have generated repeated, large-scale evacuations and internal displacements across several provinces.⁵⁷ Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015 caused widespread damage, affecting around 188,000 people and displacing

⁵⁴ Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) *Vanuatu National Law and Policy Report on Disaster Displacement*. Geneva: Platform on Disaster Displacement. Available at: https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Vanuatu-Displacement-Law-and-Policy-Brief_English.pdf

⁵⁵ UNDP Pacific (2025) 'Vanuatu's Ministry of Climate Change launches national loss and damage policy', 19 July. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/pacific/press-releases/vanuatus-ministry-climate-change-launches-national-loss-and-damage-policy>

⁵⁶ Department of Climate Change (2025) *Vanuatu Loss and Damage Policy*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://docc.gov.vu/index.php/lnd/lnd-policy>

⁵⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) *Disaster Displacement: Vanuatu Country Briefing*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/disaster-displacement-vanuatu-country-briefing/>

an estimated 65,000 people, including in Port Vila's informal settlements.⁵⁸ In 2017–2018, eruptions of the Manaro Vouï volcano on Ambae led to two full off-island evacuations of approximately 11,000 people and subsequent relocations to Maewo, Santo and other locations, creating complex patterns of longer-term displacement and settlement in host communities, and challenges relating to voluntary return and recovery.⁵⁹ Tropical Cyclone Harold in 2020 triggered about 80,000 internal displacements and significant shelter damage in Sanma, Malampa and Penama, with many people staying in evacuation centres and with host families.⁶⁰

More recent events, including the Port Vila earthquake in 2024 and Tropical Cyclones Judy, Kevin and Lola in 2023, again caused fatalities, significant infrastructure damage and localised evacuations and displacement, including in communities still recovering from previous disasters.⁶¹ These shocks highlight how repeated events compound impacts on housing, livelihoods, services and local governance capacity, and demonstrate the need for systematic approaches to evacuation planning, shelter management, durable solutions and support for host communities. Further information on major displacement events and key lessons is provided in Annex A.

3.2.2 Slow-onset change, rural mobility and land

In low-lying coastal and outer island communities, as well as in urban centres, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, changing rainfall patterns and ecosystem degradation undermine land, water and livelihood bases and intensify the effects of cyclones and storm surges.⁶² These pressures are prompting some communities to consider or undertake movement to nearby, safer land on the same island or to other islands, often through negotiated arrangements with customary landholders.

Experience from Vanuatu and other Pacific Island countries shows that such movements are complex and can have significant social, cultural and economic consequences if not carefully

⁵⁸ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and Government of Vanuatu (2022) *Pacific Response to Disaster Displacement: Urban Case Study – Port Vila, Vanuatu*. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Port_Vila_Briefing_Paper.pdf

⁵⁹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) *Disaster Displacement: Vanuatu Country Briefing*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Vanuatu_country_briefing.pdf

⁶⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) *Disaster Displacement: Vanuatu Country Briefing*. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Vanuatu_country_briefing.pdf

⁶¹ ReliefWeb (2022) *Disaster Displacement: Vanuatu Country Briefing*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/vanuatu/disaster-displacement-vanuatu-country-briefing>

⁶² Global Green Growth Institute (2025) 'Vanuatu launches bold climate justice policy on loss & damage', 22 July. Available at: <https://gggi.org/vanuatu-launches-bold-climate-justice-policy-on-loss-damage/>

planned, consulted and resourced.⁶³ In this context, the Vanuatu Loss and Damage Policy provides an important national framework for assessing and addressing both economic and non-economic loss and damage, including where this leads to displacement, planned relocation or other forms of movement.⁶⁴ National and provincial guidance on identifying suitable sites, negotiating land arrangements and ensuring access to livelihoods, services and cultural continuity is evolving and will be further developed through the implementation of this Policy.

3.2.3 Urbanisation, informal settlements and internal migration

Urban population growth in Vanuatu has been increasing faster than rural population growth, with a growing share of the population now living in Port Vila, Luganville and surrounding peri-urban areas.⁶⁵ Most internal migration is towards Shefa and Sanma provinces, with rural-urban and circular migration now central elements of the mobility continuum. Environmental change, disasters and livelihood pressures in places of origin intersect with pull-factors such as employment opportunities, education, health services and social networks in towns.⁶⁶ Land access and tenure arrangements, including customary land ownership systems, land disputes and rezoning decisions, are key factors shaping displacement dynamics in Vanuatu and influence whether communities can remain in place safely, relocate temporarily, or pursue longer-term solutions.

As more people move to urban centres, informal and semi-formal settlements in peri-urban areas have expanded, often on customary land and in hazard-prone locations with insecure tenure and limited access to basic services and disaster-resilient infrastructure.⁶⁷ Studies in Port Vila and Luganville show that many residents in these settlements live in poor-quality housing in flood- and cyclone-exposed areas, with constrained access to safe water, sanitation and roads.⁶⁸ When natural hazards occur, these communities face heightened risks of evacuation and displacement, and unresolved land and tenure issues can complicate recovery and durable solutions.

⁶³ Massey University Research Online (2020) *Case Study of the 2017–2018 Eruption of Ambae Volcano, Vanuatu*. Available at: <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/items/f88a20da-4b48-497e-98ad-de348928dbf4>

⁶⁴ Department of Climate Change (2025) *Vanuatu Loss and Damage Policy*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://docc.gov.vu/index.php/lnd/lnd-policy>

⁶⁵ UNDP (2016) *Assessing the Impact of Displacement on IDPs and Host Communities: Vanuatu*. Available at: <https://data.undp.org/insights/impact-displacement-idps/VUT>

⁶⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and Government of Vanuatu (2022) *Pacific Response to Disaster Displacement: Urban Case Study – Port Vila, Vanuatu*. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Port_Vila_Briefing_Paper.pdf

⁶⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and Government of Vanuatu (2022) *Pacific Response to Disaster Displacement: Urban Case Study – Port Vila, Vanuatu*. Available at: https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Port_Vila_Briefing_Paper.pdf

⁶⁸ Government of Vanuatu (2002) *Urban Informal Settlements in Vanuatu: Challenge for Equitable Development*. Port Vila: Ministry of Justice and Community Services. Available at: https://mjcs.gov.vu/images/research_database/Vanuatu_Squatter_Settlement_Study_2002.pdf

3.2.4 Broader mobility and regional dynamics

Vanuatu's displacement context also sits within broader patterns of mobility across the Pacific. Labour mobility schemes and other forms of migration are increasingly part of household strategies to manage environmental, livelihood and economic risks, including in areas affected by disasters and slow-onset change.⁶⁹ At the same time, regional frameworks such as the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility and global processes under the UNFCCC and the Platform on Disaster Displacement are shaping how States understand and respond to climate-related mobility, including internal displacement, planned relocation and potential cross-border movement.⁷⁰ This Policy aligns domestic action on displacement with these regional and international developments, while maintaining a primary focus on the rights, needs and agency of people displaced within Vanuatu.

4. Policy principles and safeguards

4.1 Guiding principles

The Policy is guided by Vanuatu 2030 - The People's Plan 2016–2030, which sets out the national vision of a stable, sustainable and prosperous Vanuatu and emphasises resilience, inclusion and the protection of livelihoods in the face of climate change and disasters.⁷¹ In this context, the Policy recognises displacement as a risk to development gains and social cohesion, and commits to prevention, protection and durable solutions for affected populations. The Policy is also informed by the National Loss and Damage Policy, recognising displacement as both a form and a driver of climate-related loss and damage that must be addressed in an equitable and planned manner.⁷²

Consistent with the 2018 Policy, the Policy continues to be guided by the principles set out in the Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030, namely accountability, sustainability, equity, community focus, collaboration and innovation.⁷³ It is further guided by principles specific to the displacement context in Vanuatu, identified through implementation

⁶⁹ UNDP (2016) *Assessing the Impact of Displacement on IDPs and Host Communities: Vanuatu*. Available at: <https://data.undp.org/insights/impact-displacement-idps/VUT>

⁷⁰ Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) *Vanuatu National Law and Policy Report on Disaster Displacement*. Geneva: Platform on Disaster Displacement. Available at: https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Vanuatu-Displacement-Law-and-Policy-Brief_English.pdf

⁷¹ Government of Vanuatu (2016) *Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.gov.vu/images/publications/Vanuatu2030-EN-FINAL-sf.pdf> [accessed 16 February 2026].

⁷² Government of Vanuatu (2025) *Vanuatu Loss and Damage Policy*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://docc.gov.vu/index.php/lnd/lnd-policy>

⁷³ Government of Vanuatu (2015) *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrpolicy2015.pdf

experience since 2018 and consultation with communities, government and non-government stakeholders.⁷⁴ The guiding principles and safeguards in this section underpin the interpretation and implementation of this Policy across all strategic areas and actions and guide Government decision-making at all stages of the displacement cycle. They do not prescribe detailed operational arrangements, which are addressed through the Implementation Framework and Costed Implementation Plan.

4.1.1 Human rights, protection, participation and inclusion

All persons affected by displacement have the right to safety, protection, dignity, health and well-being, freedom from discrimination of any kind, and other rights as reflected in Vanuatu 2030 The People's Plan, regardless of the cause, duration or location of displacement. Every effort shall be made to realise these rights for people at risk of displacement, displaced persons, internal migrants and host communities, with particular attention to women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and others who may face heightened or intersecting risks. People affected by displacement have the right to make voluntary and informed choices about their future and to participate in the planning and management of displacement responses and durable solutions in ways that are inclusive, culturally appropriate and sustained.⁷⁵ Choices relating to evacuation, return, local integration or relocation shall be made freely, on the basis of accessible information and genuine opportunities to influence outcomes, and participation processes shall address barriers that limit the inclusion and leadership of women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and children.⁷⁶

4.1.2 Gender equality and social inclusion

Displacement affects women, men, girls and boys differently, and responses must address gender-specific risks, needs and capacities.⁷⁷ Women are often disproportionately affected by displacement and are frequently excluded from decision-making processes at community and institutional levels. Planning for displacement risk reduction, responses and durable solutions shall promote gender equality, meaningful participation and leadership of women, and the

⁷⁴ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

⁷⁵ United Nations (1998) *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/43ce1cff2/guiding-principles-internal-displacement.html>

⁷⁶ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/4a8a5f009/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons.html>

⁷⁷ Platform on Disaster Displacement and GIZ (2017) *A Toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change*. Bonn: PDD/GIZ. Available at: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/a-toolbox-planning-relocations-to-protect-people-from-disasters-and-environmental-change>

systematic inclusion of youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and other at-risk groups in decisions that affect their safety, rights, services and future opportunities.⁷⁸

4.1.3 Custom, land, culture and traditional knowledge

Respect for custom - custom, culture and community are embodied in the Constitution and underpin life, land and spirit in Vanuatu.⁷⁹ Respect for law, including the different customs and laws of each island, especially as they relate to land dealings, shall guide decisions and processes relating to displacement and the establishment of durable solutions. Custom owners and community leaders, including nakamals and area secretaries, are essential partners in the governance of displacement at all levels.

Protection of traditional knowledge is a foundational commitment of this Policy. Traditional knowledge relating to land, ecology, agriculture, music, culture and social organisation are part of Ni-Vanuatu identities and must be respected, protected and preserved to minimise the disruptive impacts of displacement and to support coping, adaptation and recovery.⁸⁰ Displacement poses a direct threat to the transmission and practice of that knowledge; this Policy requires that all displacement responses actively seek to protect, preserve and, where possible, restore access to the landscapes, practices and communities through which traditional knowledge is sustained. The roles of customary governance structures, community leadership and formal State institutions are central to participation and legitimacy, and the balance between these systems varies by context and requires careful management through implementation.⁸¹

4.1.4 Prevention, resilience, environment and durable solutions

Measures to reduce displacement risk must be anticipatory, risk-informed and multi-sectoral, and be integrated into climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, land use planning, environmental management and development planning.⁸² Environmental and ecological sustainability shall be safeguarded in all displacement responses and durable solutions, including through conservation and protection of biodiversity and surrounding ecosystems and by avoiding the creation of new environmental risks or the exacerbation of existing vulnerabilities that may

⁷⁸ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2023) *Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility*. Suva: PIFS. Available at: <https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/document/pacific-regional-framework-climate-mobility>

⁷⁹ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

⁸⁰ Government of Vanuatu (2015) *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrpolicy2015.pdf

⁸¹ Government of Vanuatu (2016) *Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.gov.vu/images/publications/Vanuatu2030-EN-FINAL-sf.pdf>

⁸² Government of Vanuatu (2015) *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrpolicy2015.pdf

contribute to future displacement. The aim of displacement responses is the achievement of durable solutions, which may include return, local integration or relocation, depending on context and choice.⁸³ Planned relocation is a measure of last resort and shall only be pursued where continued residence is no longer safe or viable, with processes that safeguard rights, livelihoods, cultural identity and social cohesion, and are informed by evidence, participation and long-term planning.⁸⁴

4.1.5 Mobility, self-reliance, coherence and State responsibility

Freedom of movement, protected in the Constitution, is an important means of adapting to changing environmental and socio-economic conditions and may be life-saving in the context of displacement.⁸⁵ Safe and well-managed mobility, including internal movement and movement abroad where relevant, should be facilitated where appropriate as part of resilience, recovery and durable solutions.⁸⁶

Fostering self-reliance is a core commitment of this Policy. Displaced persons shall be respected, empowered and supported as agents of their own recovery, including through strengthening skills, assets, networks and self-reliance.⁸⁷ Assistance provided during displacement should strengthen, not undermine, the capacities of affected individuals, households and communities to meet their own needs, pursue livelihoods and contribute to the recovery of the communities in which they find themselves.

Responses to displacement require coherent and coordinated action across institutions, sectors and levels of administration, with clear roles, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms to avoid fragmentation, overlap and gaps.⁸⁸ Displacement-related action shall align with national

⁸³ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/4a8a5f009/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons.html>

⁸⁴ Platform on Disaster Displacement and GIZ (2017) *A Toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change*. Bonn: PDD/GIZ. Available at: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/a-toolbox-planning-relocations-to-protect-people-from-disasters-and-environmental-change>

⁸⁵ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

⁸⁶ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2023) *Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility*. Suva: PIFS. Available at: <https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/document/pacific-regional-framework-climate-mobility>

⁸⁷ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/4a8a5f009/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons.html>

⁸⁸ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

development, climate change, disaster risk, land and social protection frameworks, and with applicable legislation.⁸⁹ The Government has the primary responsibility to protect its population and to deliver essential services that enable community resilience, and has the central role in authorising, directing and coordinating humanitarian and development assistance from national and international partners in line with national priorities.⁹⁰ As displacement dynamics evolve, policy and practice shall be informed by data, analysis and learning from experience, including displacement responses, recovery processes and relocation initiatives, so that implementation remains effective, accountable and adaptable over time.⁹¹

Voluntary and informed choices must guide all stages of displacement response. Ni-Vanuatu people affected by displacement have the right to make voluntary and informed decisions about evacuation, temporary shelter, return, local integration and planned relocation. No person shall be compelled to relocate or to remain displaced against their will. Where planned relocation is necessary, the free, prior and informed consent of affected communities must be obtained and documented, consistent with established national and international guidance.

4.2 Cross-cutting priorities

Cross-cutting priorities underpin the interpretation and implementation of this Policy and apply across all strategic areas and actions contained in the Implementation Framework. They are not stand-alone initiatives. They set minimum standards for how Government and partners plan, consult, implement and monitor measures relating to displacement risk reduction, displacement responses and durable solutions, and shall be reflected in institutional arrangements, indicators and the Costed Implementation Plan.⁹²

The core cross-cutting priorities of this Policy are:

4.2.1 Women's leadership, gender responsiveness and social inclusion

This Policy requires women's representation and leadership to be systematically embedded in institutional arrangements, provincial and local decision-making and implementation

⁸⁹ Government of Vanuatu (2015) *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrrpolicy2015.pdf

⁹⁰ Government of Vanuatu (2016) *Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.gov.vu/images/publications/Vanuatu2030-EN-FINAL-sf.pdf>

⁹¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/4a8a5f009/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons.html>

⁹² Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

processes.⁹³ Policy measures shall address barriers that exclude women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and children from participating in decisions that affect their safety, rights, services and future opportunities.⁹⁴ Information, consultation and grievance channels must be accessible, safe and culturally appropriate for all groups, including through targeted outreach and accessible formats.⁹⁵

4.2.2 Community participation and locally grounded governance

The Policy prioritises community-led and locally owned approaches, including defined roles for communities, Chiefs and customary governance structures, women’s representatives, faith-based groups and other vulnerable and minority groups in decision-making processes.⁹⁶ Participation shall be meaningful and sustained across preparedness, displacement response, recovery and the identification of durable solutions, with specific attention to child and family well-being and to the legitimacy of decisions affecting land, livelihoods and settlement patterns.⁹⁷

4.2.3 Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

As this Policy sits within the national climate and disaster risk policy framework, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation considerations must inform all actions, including risk analysis, climate and hazard mapping, environmental and social assessment, and the integration of resilience and sustainability planning into coordination mechanisms, standard operating procedures and sectoral programming.⁹⁸ Risk information used in displacement-related decision-making shall draw on national systems, local knowledge and lived experience, and be regularly updated.⁹⁹

⁹³ Platform on Disaster Displacement and GIZ (2017) *A Toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change*. Bonn: PDD/GIZ. Available at: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/a-toolbox-planning-relocations-to-protect-people-from-disasters-and-environmental-change>

⁹⁴ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2023) *Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility*. Suva: PIFS. Available at: <https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/document/pacific-regional-framework-climate-mobility>

⁹⁵ Platform on Disaster Displacement and GIZ (2017) *A Toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change*. Bonn: PDD/GIZ. Available at: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/a-toolbox-planning-relocations-to-protect-people-from-disasters-and-environmental-change>

⁹⁶ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

⁹⁷ United Nations (1998) *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/43ce1cff2/guiding-principles-internal-displacement.html>

⁹⁸ Government of Vanuatu (2015) *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrpolicy2015.pdf

⁹⁹ Government of Vanuatu (2015) *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrpolicy2015.pdf

4.2.4 Environmental stewardship and safeguards

Displacement-related decisions, particularly those involving site selection, planned relocation and reconstruction, must incorporate environmental safeguards and stewardship to avoid increasing future risk. Planning shall respect ecosystems and natural resources that underpin livelihoods and cultural identity, and prevent environmental degradation that could exacerbate displacement drivers over time.¹⁰⁰ Where relevant, environmental and social safeguards adopted by Government shall be applied consistently across displacement-related interventions.

4.2.5 Culture, kastom and traditional knowledge

This Policy requires culturally grounded approaches across all stages of preparedness, displacement, relocation and recovery, including the use of kastom protocols and the engagement of customary institutions and cultural practitioners where relevant. Decisions on documentation, knowledge sharing and the protection of cultural ownership and consent must be community-driven and reflect locally agreed processes, with particular care to safeguard cultural sites, practices and languages that may be at risk due to displacement.¹⁰¹

4.2.6 Safe and well-managed mobility pathways

Where mobility is used as a risk management strategy, including internal movement, labour mobility or other rights-based pathways, measures should strengthen safety, regularity and rights protection along the mobility pathway.¹⁰² This includes preparedness and information in areas of origin, protection support in host locations and reintegration systems that contribute to resilience and reduce vulnerability to exploitation, trafficking and irregular migration.¹⁰³ Linkages between this Policy and relevant migration, labour and social protection frameworks shall be maintained and strengthened.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

¹⁰¹ Government of Vanuatu (2015) *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/46449_vanuatuccdrrpolicy2015.pdf

¹⁰² Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2023) *Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility*. Suva: PIFS. Available at: <https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/document/pacific-regional-framework-climate-mobility>

¹⁰³ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/4a8a5f009/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons.html>

¹⁰⁴ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2023) *Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility*. Suva: PIFS. Available at: <https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/document/pacific-regional-framework-climate-mobility>

4.2.7 Partnerships, coordination and resourcing

Implementation of this Policy depends on effective partnerships across Government, provincial and municipal authorities, civil society and faith-based organisations, the private sector and development partners.¹⁰⁵ Partnerships should strengthen coordination, expand access to technical capacity and support financing and resource mobilisation aligned with Government priorities, including, where relevant, through climate- and disaster-related funding mechanisms. Specific partnership platforms, mandates and financing pathways shall be confirmed through Government decision and reflected in the institutional arrangements and costing sections of this Policy, rather than being predefined here.

Towards Durable Solutions

Durable solutions for people displaced by climate change and disasters are a core objective of this Policy and a necessary condition for achieving the vision and objectives of Vanuatu 2030 The People's Plan and related climate and disaster policies.¹⁰⁶ Durable solutions are understood as a long-term development, climate and resilience priority that must be planned from the outset of displacement and pursued through nationally led, whole-of-government approaches, rather than treated only as a humanitarian concern.¹⁰⁷

In line with recognised international and regional guidance, this Policy defines a durable solution as the point at which temporarily or permanently internally displaced persons no longer have specific displacement-related needs or vulnerabilities and are able to enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others in Vanuatu.¹⁰⁸ Displacement-affected people may reach a durable solution through safe and voluntary return to places of origin, local integration in the communities where they have found refuge, or settlement to a suitable location, giving priority to areas as close to

¹⁰⁵ Government of Vanuatu (2018) *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement>

¹⁰⁶ Republic of Vanuatu (2016) *Vanuatu 2030 The People's Plan: National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030*. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://www.gov.vu/images/publications/Vanuatu2030-PeoplePlan-English-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ United Nations (2022) *The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement*. New York: United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/internal-displacement-action-agenda>

¹⁰⁸ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution / University of Bern. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons-0>

their place of origin as practicable, including through planned relocation undertaken as a measure of last resort and in accordance with national law, safeguards and community participation.¹⁰⁹

Consistent with the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility (2023), ‘staying in place’ - where communities choose and are able to remain in their locations and where safety, dignity and sustainable livelihoods can be secured - is explicitly recognised under this Policy as a priority outcome. Achieving durable outcomes through staying in place requires proactive investment in hazard risk reduction, climate adaptation, resilient infrastructure and livelihood support in communities at risk of displacement, so that displacement can be prevented or resolved without requiring permanent relocation. This Policy therefore supports both preventative investments to enable staying in place and effective solutions for those who have been displaced.

Vanuatu adopts the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) eight criteria for durable solutions as a shared reference for planning, implementation and monitoring.¹¹⁰

The Government of Vanuatu commits to actively supporting the implementation of durable solutions for displaced persons — not only through guidance and planning, but through the provision of resources, inter-agency coordination and technical assistance to translate durable solutions frameworks into operational outcomes for affected communities.

These are:

- long-term safety, security and freedom of movement;
- an adequate standard of living, including at a minimum access to food, water, housing, health care and basic education;
- access to employment and livelihood opportunities;
- access to mechanisms to restore housing, land and property or provide compensation;
- access to and replacement of personal and other documentation;
- voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement;
- participation in public affairs on an equal basis with the resident population; and

¹⁰⁹ Platform on Disaster Displacement and UNHCR (2015) Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation. Geneva: PDD/UNHCR. Available at: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/guidance-on-planned-relocation>

¹¹⁰ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution / University of Bern. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons-0>

- effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations.¹¹¹

These criteria provide a practical basis for assessing whether displaced persons are moving closer to, or further from, sustainable solutions over time, and will guide the development of indicators, baselines and targets in the costed implementation plan and in relevant sector plans and monitoring systems.¹¹² In applying them, Government will ensure that indicators and benchmarks reflect Vanuatu’s realities, including the central importance of land, kastom and traditional governance systems, social and spiritual wellbeing, and the constraints associated with small island geographies, limited land availability and rapid urbanisation.¹¹³

Responsibility for resolving internal displacement rests with the Government of Vanuatu, working closely with provincial and municipal authorities, customary leaders, communities and partners, and integrating displacement-affected and host communities into national and sub-national planning, budgeting and monitoring frameworks.¹¹⁴

Implementation Framework

This Implementation Framework gives operational structure to the policy commitments set out in the preceding sections. It carries forward the authority, logic and sequencing of the 2018 National Policy, while updating the architecture to reflect lessons learned, institutional developments and alignment with current national frameworks.

The Framework is organised around two complementary tiers of action.

System Strategic Areas 1–5 establish the enabling foundations required for effective and accountable implementation. These areas address governance and coordination, evidence and monitoring systems, safeguards and protection standards, institutional capacity development, and financing and resource mobilisation. They provide the policy infrastructure within which all sector actions operate.

¹¹¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2010) IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution / University of Bern. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons-0>

¹¹² Republic of Vanuatu, Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation (2025) Updated Policy and Implementation Framework for the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. (Draft – typically accessed via the Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation website, e.g. <https://mocca.gov.vu>)

¹¹³ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2021) Vanuatu Disaster Displacement Risk Profile. Geneva: IDMC. Available at: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/vanuatu-disaster-displacement-risk-profile>

¹¹⁴ Government of Vanuatu (2018) National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018–2030. Port Vila: Government of Vanuatu. Available at: <https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/vanuatu.pdf>

Sector Strategic Areas 6–12 translate policy commitments into delivery-level actions across land and spatial planning, health, education, infrastructure and connectivity, food security and livelihoods, safety and security, and traditional knowledge and kastom. These areas focus on practical measures within existing ministerial mandates to prevent, prepare for and address displacement impacts.

The Implementation Framework has been structured to align with, and not duplicate, existing national instruments. Actions are framed to complement the National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, the National Loss and Damage Policy, and Vanuatu 2030 The People’s Plan. Where subject matter is governed under another national policy, this Framework aligns with and reinforces that instrument rather than creating parallel mechanisms.

This section should be read as the policy’s action backbone. Each Strategic Area sets out clearly defined policy actions that can be sequenced, monitored and costed. System Strategic Areas provide the standards and institutional mechanisms that apply across all sectors. Sector Strategic Areas describe how those standards are implemented in practice within sector mandates.

Together, these components provide a coherent and implementation-ready structure to operationalise the commitments of this Policy in continuity with the 2018 framework and in alignment with current national priorities.

System Strategic Area 1 - Institutions and Governance

Objective

Strengthen institutional and governance arrangements to ensure coordinated, accountable and sustainable implementation of this Policy.

Rationale and background

Effective action on climate change and disaster-induced displacement requires clear institutional ownership, defined mandates and coordinated governance arrangements across national and subnational levels. Vanuatu faces recurrent rapid-onset disasters, slow-onset environmental change and complex localised drivers of displacement that require structured, whole-of-government responses.

Since adoption of the 2018 Policy, progress has been made in strengthening disaster management systems and inter-agency coordination during emergencies. However, responsibilities relating to displacement prevention, protection, relocation and durable solutions continue to sit across multiple institutions. This has, at times, resulted in fragmented accountability, overlapping mandates and uncertainty regarding policy ownership and scope.

Experience demonstrates that displacement governance cannot rely solely on emergency coordination mechanisms. Long-term recovery, relocation planning, land management, infrastructure development, service delivery and social protection require sustained institutional arrangements beyond disaster response structures. Clear designation of a lead ministry and establishment of a permanent institutional focal point are therefore essential to provide continuity, coherence and authority.

This Strategic Area establishes Institutions and Governance as a core enabling function of Government. It consolidates leadership, inter-ministerial coordination, provincial engagement, inclusive participation and legal anchoring within a single governance architecture.

By institutionalising governance arrangements, the Policy strengthens prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and durable solutions, and supports alignment with national development planning, decentralisation priorities and climate policy frameworks.

Cross-Cutting Considerations

Implementation of this Strategic Area shall ensure that all institutional arrangements operate in accordance with human rights standards, principles of equity and accountability, and respect for dignity and non-discrimination.

Governance structures shall be gender-responsive, child-sensitive and disability-inclusive. Representation and participation mechanisms shall actively promote inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable groups in decision-making processes.

Traditional leadership structures, kastom governance systems and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms shall be recognised as integral components of displacement governance, and engaged in ways that respect cultural norms while upholding national legal standards.

Inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms shall ensure that displacement safeguards and policy measures reflect Vanuatu’s specific risk profile and institutional context, and are not premised on external models or scenarios not applicable to national circumstances. Institutional arrangements should align with existing disaster risk management, climate change, land governance, decentralisation and national development frameworks to ensure coherence and avoid duplication of mandates.

Monitoring of institutional performance, coordination effectiveness and legislative alignment shall promote transparency, accountability and continuous improvement, and shall inform periodic review of this Policy and its implementation framework.

1.1 Institutional leadership and Coordination

Policy Action 1.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Formally designate a lead Ministry responsible for overall coordination and implementation of this Policy.	Immediate
Outcome	Clear institutional ownership and accountability for policy implementation.	

Policy Action 1.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Designate responsible focal points within the Lead Ministry and relevant sector ministries, and establish internal coordination and reporting functions within the Lead Ministry to support oversight of policy implementation.	Short-term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	A functional institutional coordination structure within the Lead Ministry supporting oversight, reporting and implementation of the Policy.	

Policy Action 1.1.3		Timeframe
Action	Develop and endorse Terms of Reference, internal coordination protocols and defined resource	Short-term (Years 1–2)

	requirements for the Lead Ministry’s coordination and oversight function.	
Outcome	Institutional roles, reporting lines and resource responsibilities within the Lead Ministry are formally defined and operational.	

Policy Action 1.1.4		Timeframe
Action	Establish interim focal point arrangements within the Lead Ministry to provide a first point of contact for affected communities, institutions and partners during the initial implementation phase.	Short-term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	Affected communities and institutions have access to a clear and responsive entry point during the transition period	

Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	MoCC, through the Durable Solutions Taskforce, NAB Secretariat, DSPPAC, MoLNR, MoIA, PMO, IOM, relevant NGOs and stakeholder
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal endorsement confirming the Lead Ministry and its mandate (linked to 1.1.1) • Official government notice clarifying institutional ownership and reporting lines (linked to 1.1.1) • Internal coordination and support function within the Lead Ministry formally established within the Lead Ministry with approved structure and staffing plan (linked to 1.1.2) • Dedicated technical and coordination positions within the Lead Ministry recruited or assigned (linked to 1.1.2) • Internal coordination and support function within the Lead Ministry Terms of Reference and internal governance structure formally adopted (linked to 1.1.3) • Internal coordination protocols and reporting procedures within the Lead Ministry established and operational (linked to 1.1.3) • Multi-year operational plan and indicative resource framework for the Lead Ministry developed and endorsed (linked to 1.1.3) • Interim displacement focal officer appointed within the Lead Ministry and publicly communicated (linked to 1.1.4) • Internal coordination and support function within the Lead Ministry (linked to 1.1.4)

1.2. Inter-Ministerial Coordination and Technical Mechanisms

Policy Action 1.2.1	Timeframe
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Action	Establish and formalise an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism, including approved Terms of Reference, to oversee cross-sector implementation of displacement-related actions.	Medium term (Years 2–3)
Outcome	Technical coordination mechanisms are in place to address diverse displacement typologies in a structured and coherent manner.	

Policy Action 1.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Facilitate and formalise an inter-ministerial coordination and data-sharing agreement between key ministries and agencies.	Medium term (Years 2–3)
Outcome	Horizontal coordination across sectors is strengthened through formalised collaboration and reporting mechanisms.	

Policy Action 1.2.3		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen coordination between emergency response mechanisms and longer-term recovery and development planning processes.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Continuity is ensured across preparedness, response and durable solutions phases.	

Actions:	1.2.1 – 1.2.3
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	MoCC, through Durable Solutions Taskforce, DoCC, NAB Secretariat, NDMO, VMGD, DLA, DUAP, Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MoJCS), MoLNR, MoIA, MIPU, MoET, MoH, State Law Office, relevant NGOs and stakeholders
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-ministerial coordination mechanism formally constituted with approved Terms of Reference (linked to 1.2.1) • Regular coordination meetings convened with documented decisions and action points (linked to 1.2.1) • Inter-ministerial coordination and data-sharing agreement formally endorsed (linked to 1.2.2) • Specialised technical working groups, or adapted existing technical mechanisms, established with defined scope and membership where required (linked to 1.2.2)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National standard operating procedures for displacement coordination formally adopted and aligned with Provincial Disaster and Climate Change Plans (linked to 1.2.3) • Technical guidance notes on evacuation, relocation and durable solutions developed and aligned with Provincial Disaster and Climate Change Plans (linked to 1.2.3) • Institutional reporting and accountability framework endorsed (linked to 1.2.3)
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1.3. Provincial and Decentralised Governance

Policy Action 1.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen structured coordination and information exchange mechanisms between national institutions and provincial and community-level authorities to support displacement planning, preparedness and response.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Provincial and community-level actors are systematically linked to national displacement governance arrangements and decision-making processes.	

Actions:	1.3.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	DoCC, Provincial governments, DLA, DUAP, Department of Women’s Affairs (DWA), Malvatumauri, VCC, relevant NGOs, including NGO consortia, and other stakeholders
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial displacement focal points formally designated and notified (linked to 1.3.1) • Provincial coordination Terms of Reference developed and adopted (linked to 1.3.1) • Displacement risk, preparedness, response and durable solutions integrated into Provincial Disaster and Climate Change Plans, aligned with this Policy (linked to 1.3.1) • Capacity-building and orientation programmes delivered to provincial and area-level officials on displacement coordination, data management and implementation of this Policy (linked to 1.3.1)

1.4 Inclusive and Customary Governance

Policy Action 1.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Ensure structured participation of chiefs, women’s representatives and faith-based organisations as key community actors within displacement governance	Short to medium term (Years 1–3)

	mechanisms, alongside inclusive representation of persons with disabilities, the elderly and other vulnerable groups, at national and provincial levels.	
Outcome	Inclusive, participatory and culturally grounded governance arrangements for displacement decision-making.	

Actions:	1.4.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	Vanuatu Cultural Center (VKS), Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs, State Law Office, MoJCS, MoCC, relevant NGOs and stakeholders
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and representation guidelines for displacement governance developed and endorsed (linked to 1.4.1) • Formal mechanisms for community representation integrated within coordination structures (linked to 1.4.1) • Regular consultations conducted with at-risk, displaced and host communities (linked to 1.4.1) • Training and orientation provided to community and customary representatives (linked to 1.4.1).

1.5 Legal and Regulatory Anchoring

Policy Action 1.5.1		Timeframe
Action	Undertake a legislative and regulatory review to assess and, where necessary, develop amendments or enabling legislation to formally anchor institutional arrangements for displacement governance.	Years 4–5 and beyond
Outcome	Institutional arrangements for displacement governance formally recognised and secured within national legal frameworks.	

Actions:	1.5.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	MoJCS, relevant ministries, State Law Office
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive legislative and regulatory review report completed (linked to 1.5.1) • Draft legislative amendments or enabling provisions prepared (linked to 1.5.1) • Required legislation enacted or regulations issued to formalise governance arrangements (linked to 1.5.1)

- Official legal guidance and public communication materials disseminated (linked to 1.5.1)

1.6 Regional and International Monitoring

Policy Action 1.6.1		Timeframe
Outcome	National displacement governance informed by evolving regional and international standards and practice	

Actions:	1.6.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	MoCC, Department of Foreign Affairs, relevant regional partners and NGOs
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual briefing note on regional and international displacement developments prepared and circulated (linked to 1.6.1) • Relevant regional commitments and guidance reflected in periodic policy review processes (linked to 1.6.1)

System Strategic Area 2 - Evidence, Information, Monitoring and Learning

Objective

Embed displacement risk analysis, event tracking and learning within national systems so that policy and investment decisions are informed, targeted and accountable.

Rationale and background

Effective action on climate change and disaster-induced displacement requires a coherent national evidence system. Vanuatu faces recurrent rapid-onset hazards, slow-onset environmental change and cumulative risk factors that generate both temporary and protracted displacement. While disaster data systems have strengthened in recent years, displacement-specific analysis remains fragmented across events and institutions.

Experience since 2018 demonstrates that displacement information is often collected during emergency response but not consistently integrated into long-term planning, recovery programming or monitoring of durable outcomes. Slow-onset processes and non-economic losses associated with displacement remain under-documented.

This Strategic Area establishes displacement evidence, monitoring and learning as a core enabling function of Government. It consolidates risk analysis, displacement tracking, vulnerability assessment and Loss and Damage data alignment within a single national analytical backbone. It strengthens institutional coordination between MoCC, including DoCC, NDMO and VMGD, and the Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics (VBoS) and relevant sectoral ministries.

By institutionalising evidence and learning systems, the Policy supports prevention, preparedness, protection, recovery and durable solutions in alignment with national development and climate frameworks.

Cross-Cutting Considerations

Implementation of this Strategic Area shall ensure that all evidence, monitoring and information systems operate in accordance with human rights principles, including confidentiality, informed consent and do no harm.

Data collection and analysis shall be gender-responsive, age-sensitive and disability-inclusive, with disaggregation used to inform equitable and targeted policy responses.

Traditional knowledge, kastom and community-based governance systems shall be recognised as complementary sources of evidence and, where appropriate, integrated into national information systems.

All displacement-related data systems shall align with existing disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and national statistical frameworks to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.

Monitoring and reporting processes shall promote transparency, institutional learning and accountability, and shall inform periodic policy review and implementation adjustments.

2.1 National Displacement Risk and Profile

Policy Action 2.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Develop and periodically update a National Displacement Profile and Risk Analysis, with clear, standardised definitions and guidance on the full spectrum of mobility typologies, integrating hazard exposure, vulnerability, land use patterns and demographic data to identify displacement patterns, trends, hotspots and risk scenarios.	Short-term (Year 1-2)
Outcome	A nationally endorsed displacement risk profile informing prevention, preparedness and planning.	

Policy Action 2.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Integrate standardised displacement indicators, including but not limited to risk indicators, into national and sectoral data systems, frameworks and reporting mechanisms	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	A coherent and standardised set of displacement indicators is applied across national and sectoral systems, enabling consistent analysis, reporting and decision-making on displacement dynamics. A nationally endorsed Displacement and Mobility Risk Classification Framework is developed and provides a shared understanding of distinct displacement drivers and typologies, supporting specific role allocation, coordinated policy, planning, and targeted interventions across different sectors.	

Actions:	2.1.1 – 2.1.2
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Lead	MoCC
Support	DoCC, NDMO, VMGD, VBoS, DUAP, DLA, MoFA, Relevant NGOs & stakeholders.
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Displacement Profile Report is developed (linked to 2.1.1) • Mechanism for periodic update to the National Displacement Profile is established (linked to 2.1.1) • Standardised displacement indicators endorsed across ministries (linked to 2.1.2) • Displacement indicators integrated into national and sector planning templates (linked to 2.1.2)

2.2 National Displacement Event and Tracking Matrix System

Policy Action 2.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Establish and maintain a national displacement event registry and tracking system capturing displacement movements, relocation processes and settlement outcomes.	Short-term (Year 1-2)
Outcome	Standardised national tracking of displacement events.	

Policy Action 2.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Ensure interoperability of displacement data systems through standardised protocols, including data sharing arrangements and integration into national statistical systems	Medium-term (Year 2-5)
Outcome	Displacement data systems are interoperable, with established data sharing mechanisms and integration into national statistics, enabling consistent and coordinated analysis and reporting.	

Actions:	2.2.1 – 2.2.2
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	VBoS, NDMO, DoCC, DLA, VMGD, NDMO, DWA, Child Desk, Disability Desk, Relevant NGOs & stakeholders
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Displacement Event Registry platform is operationalised (linked to 2.2.1) • Standard operating procedures and decentralised training programmes for displacement data collection, reporting and data sharing developed (linked to 2.2.2)

- Harmonised displacement data tools aligned with disaster assessment systems and national statistical frameworks (linked to 2.2.2)
- Periodic displacement situation summaries (linked to 2.2.1)

2.3 Risk Mapping, Vulnerability Assessment and Early Warning Integration

Policy Action 2.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Consolidate hazard typology mapping, vulnerability assessments and local profiling mechanisms using disaggregated data across age, sex, disability, geographic location and other relevant vulnerability markers, incorporating development and urban growth scenarios to identify displacement hotspots and risk scenarios.	Medium-term (Year 2-5)
Outcome	Updated multi-hazard displacement risk maps guiding prevention and adaptation measures	

Policy Action 2.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Ensure participatory, protection-sensitive and culturally grounded methodologies in risk mapping and integrate displacement risk triggers into NDMO evacuation mapping and early warning systems.	Medium-term (Year 2-5)
Outcome	Inclusive and anticipatory displacement risk management.	

Actions:	2.3.1 – 2.3.2
Lead	DoCC, NDMO, VMGD
Support	VBoS, provincial authorities, DWA; Department of Lands;
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated multi-hazard displacement risk maps (linked to 2.3.1) • Consolidated vulnerability assessment reports with disaggregated data (linked to 2.3.1) • Community-informed risk profiling processes documented (linked to 2.3.2) • Displacement risk triggers integrated into Early Warning Systems (linked to 2.3.2)

2.4 Loss and Damage Data Alignment and Methodological Development

Policy Action 2.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Align displacement-related data collection with national Loss and Damage assessment and reporting systems.	Medium-term (Year 2-5)
Outcome	Displacement impacts are systematically reflected within national Loss and Damage reporting frameworks.	

Policy Action 2.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Develop methodologies to quantify economic and non-economic losses associated with displacement, including cultural and social dimensions, and to inform preventative planning and culturally appropriate risk reduction measures.	Long term (Years 4–5 and beyond)
Outcome	Strengthened national capacity to document and analyse displacement-related loss.	

Actions:	2.4.1 – 2.4.2
Lead	DoCC
Support	VBoS, NDMO, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM), Vanuatu Cultural Centre, relevant sectoral NGOs and ministries
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement-inclusive Loss and Damage reporting templates (linked to 2.4.1) • Harmonised displacement data fields within national Loss and Damage systems (linked to 2.4.1) • Methodological guidance for documenting economic and non-economic displacement loss, including cultural loss, and for informing preventative and culturally appropriate risk reduction measures (linked to 2.4.2) • Analytical reports on displacement-related loss (linked to 2.4.2)

2.5 Monitoring, Reporting and Institutional Learning

Policy Action 2.5.1		Timeframe
Action	Establish a monitoring and reporting framework for this Policy, including defined indicators, baselines and review cycles.	Short term (Years 1–2)

Outcome	Operational monitoring system aligned with the Costed Implementation Plan.	
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Policy Action 2.5.2		Timeframe
Action	Institutionalise mechanisms for capturing lessons from displacement events, relocation processes and recovery programmes, and incorporate comparative analysis of relevant regional and international practices into periodic policy review processes.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Continuous policy improvement informed by documented evidence and learning.	

Actions:	2.5.1 – 2.5.2
Lead	Lead Ministry in coordination with Durable Solutions Taskforce
Support	MoCC, MoLNR, MoIA, VBoS, sectoral ministries
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the Policy (linked to 2.5.1) • Baseline indicator set established (linked to 2.5.1) • Annual or biennial implementation progress reports (linked to 2.5.1) • Lessons learned compendium from displacement and relocation processes (linked to 2.5.2) • Structured policy review cycle mechanism established (linked to 2.5.2)

System Strategic Area 3 - Safeguards, Protection, Participation and Access to Justice

Objective:

Institutionalise safeguards and accessible accountability mechanisms so that all climate and disaster induced internal displacement processes are conducted lawfully, transparently and with meaningful participation.

Rationale and background

Effective governance of climate change and disaster induced internal displacement requires more than sectoral delivery. It requires clear procedural safeguards that guide how decisions are taken, how communities are consulted and how disputes and grievances are addressed. Evacuations, return processes, local integration, planned relocation, land use changes and dispute resolution all require transparent procedures, informed participation and accessible remedies. All safeguards and procedures under this Strategic Area shall be grounded in a rights-based approach and do no harm principles. This Strategic Area is aligned with the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility, including its emphasis on enabling people to remain safely in place where displacement can be avoided, alongside safeguards for displacement and durable solutions where movement occurs.

Experience since 2018 demonstrates that while protection principles were articulated, procedural safeguards were not always consistently applied across evacuation, return, local integration and relocation processes. Grievance pathways were not uniformly accessible, and linkages between customary dispute resolution and formal accountability mechanisms required clearer definition. These lessons underscore the need to consolidate safeguards and access to justice as a coherent governance function within displacement management.

This Strategic Area establishes safeguards, participation and access to justice as a core enabling function of Government. It consolidates protection standards, consent procedures, eviction safeguards, grievance mechanisms, legal support pathways and mediation frameworks within existing institutional and legal arrangements. It strengthens coordination between MoCC, MoJCS, MoLNR, Provincial Governments and customary authorities.

Cross Cutting Considerations

Implementation of this Strategic Area shall ensure that all safeguards and accountability arrangements are grounded in principles of legality, proportionality, transparency and equity, and are applied consistently across displacement contexts.

Consultation, consent, grievance and dispute resolution procedures shall be designed to ensure the active and meaningful participation of affected communities. Processes shall be gender responsive, child sensitive and disability inclusive, and shall provide accessible information and complaint channels.

Custom land tenure systems, kastom leadership and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms shall be engaged as essential components of displacement governance, in a manner that respects cultural practice while remaining consistent with national law.

Safeguards and access to justice arrangements shall be integrated with existing disaster management, climate governance, land administration and decentralised governance systems to promote institutional coherence and avoid parallel structures. Safeguards under this Strategic Area shall align with national safeguarding frameworks, including applicable Vanuatu Humanitarian Cluster safeguarding policies.

Oversight and review of safeguards implementation, grievance effectiveness and dispute resolution outcomes shall support institutional learning, accountability and periodic refinement of this Policy and its implementation framework.

3.1 Protection Standards and Participatory Safeguards

Policy Action 3.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Ensure participatory and community-led approaches, including free, prior and informed consent, are embedded in displacement planning, decision-making and implementation.	Short term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	Participatory displacement safeguards framework developed and adopted, including inclusive participation guidelines tailored to displacement contexts and the needs of affected stakeholder groups.	

Policy Action 3.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Develop and operationalise protection-centred standard operating procedures for evacuation and temporary displacement, including roles, responsibilities and minimum standards	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Solutions processes governed by informed and participatory standards.	

Policy Action 3.1.3		Timeframe
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Action	Develop, apply and support the implementation of protection-centred guidance and standard operating procedures for durable solutions, including return, local integration and relocation, as well as staying in place, ensuring consistency with national frameworks	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Safe and dignified solutions pathways supported by institutional safeguards.	

Policy Action 3.1.4		Timeframe
Action	Establish minimum national safeguards standards applicable across all displacement responses and solutions	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Minimum safeguards standards are consistently applied across evacuation, displacement and durable solutions processes	

Actions:	3.1.1 – 3.1.4
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	DoCC; NDMO; Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Department of Justice; DWA; MoLNR; MoJCS; MoIA; Provincial Governments; Custom authorities, National Recovery Committee
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory displacement safeguards framework developed (linked to 3.1.1) • Evacuation and temporary displacement SOPs endorsed (linked to 3.1.1) • Solutions guidance incorporating voluntary and informed choice adopted (linked to 3.1.2) • Return and local integration safeguards issued (linked to 3.1.3)

3.2 Planned Relocation Safeguards

Policy Action 3.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Establish and apply safeguards and standard operating procedures for planned relocation as a last resort.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Relocation decisions governed by transparent and participatory safeguards.	

Actions:	3.2.1
Lead	Lead Ministry

Support	DoCC, MoLNR; MoJCS; Provincial Governments; Vanuatu Police Force; Vanuatu Mobile Force; Custom authorities
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned relocation safeguards and SOPs adopted (linked to 3.2.1) Participatory relocation planning guidance issued (linked to 3.2.1)

3.3 Eviction and Land Use Safeguards

Policy Action 3.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Establish and apply eviction safeguards and due process standards for evictions that may lead to displacement, as well as those occurring within displacement and relocation processes. This includes minimum notice requirements; the right to consultation and participation; access to legal assistance; provision of alternative land or housing; and prohibition of forced or unlawful eviction without judicial process.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Displacement-related evictions conducted in accordance with lawful safeguards.	

Policy Action 3.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Ensure that land use planning, rezoning and settlement development processes incorporate displacement risk considerations and safeguards, including provisions related to land access, tenure security and protection standards, in line with national frameworks.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Land-use decisions incorporate displacement safeguards.	

Actions:	3.3.1 – 3.3.2
Lead	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), Department of Lands, Survey and Registry
Support	DUAP, DLA, MoLNR, MoJCS, Provincial Governments, Relevant NGOs and Stakeholders
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eviction safeguard procedures formalised (linked to 3.3.1)

- Planning guidelines updated to incorporate displacement and eviction safeguards, including due process standards (linked to 3.3.2)

3.4 Grievance Mechanisms and Legal Assistance

Policy Action 3.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Establish accessible grievance and appeal pathways for displacement contexts.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Affected communities have accessible mechanisms for raising concerns and seeking redress.	

Policy Action 3.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen legal support and referral services for displaced and host communities.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Legal assistance pathways accessible and functional.	

Policy Action 3.4.3		Timeframe
Action	Provide legal assistance or case support for displacement-related insurance claims.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Displaced persons able to access existing claims processes.	

Policy Action 3.4.4		Timeframe
Action	Implement public information and legal literacy initiatives on safeguards and remedies.	Short term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	Communities informed of safeguards and available remedies.	

Actions:	3.4.1 – 3.4.4
Lead	MoJCS,
Support	MoCC; MoLNR; Provincial Governments; Legal aid providers
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance and appeal mechanisms formalised for displacement contexts (linked to 3.4.1) • Legal referral pathways strengthened (linked to 3.4.2) • Insurance claim legal support guidance issued (linked to 3.4.3) • Public information materials developed and disseminated (linked to 3.4.4)

3.5 Mediation and Dispute Resolution

Policy Action 3.5.1		Timeframe
Action	Establish and operationalise a neutral broker mechanism for mediation in displacement-related disputes, including the designation or creation of an independent and impartial body to support land, tenure and displacement-related disputes. The mechanism shall include clearly defined terms of reference, adequate resourcing, and formal referral pathways across provincial and national governance structures.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Displacement-related disputes are addressed through accessible, impartial and institutionalised mediation mechanisms with clear accountability and referral pathways.	

Policy Action 3.5.2		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen community-based dispute resolution capacity aligned with kastom and referral pathways.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Customary and formal dispute mechanisms operate cohesively.	

Actions:	3.5.1 – 3.5.2
Lead	MoJCS
Support	MoCC; Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Provincial Governments; Local Custom authorities; Malvatumauri, DLA
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutral mediation framework developed (linked to 3.5.1) • Mediation protocols and standards issued (linked to 3.5.1) • Capacity building programmes for chiefs and community leaders delivered (linked to 3.5.2)

3.6 Readiness Testing and SOP Validation

Policy Action 3.6.1		Timeframe
Action	Conduct regular simulation exercises and pilot operations to test displacement protection protocols, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and use findings to	Medium to Long term (Years 4–5)

	strengthen institutional readiness and refine operational procedures.	
Outcome	Protection protocols and SOPs are regularly tested, validated and refined through simulation and practical exercises, strengthening institutional readiness for displacement response.	

Actions:	3.6.1
Lead	MoCC
Support	MoJCS; DLA; DUAP; DOCC; NDMO; MoIA; Provincial Governments and other relevant stakeholders
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulation exercise design framework and schedule developed (linked to 3.6.1) • At least one national-level simulation or tabletop exercise conducted per policy cycle, with provincial participation (linked to 3.6.1) • Lessons learned reports and SOP refinement recommendations produced following each exercise (linked to 3.6.1) • Updated protection protocols and SOPs reflecting exercise findings (linked to 3.6.1)

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System Strategic Area 4 Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resourcing

Objective

Build sustained institutional and community capability to implement displacement prevention, response and solutions in a coordinated, inclusive and nationally consistent manner.

Rationale and Background

Achieving the capacity strengthening objectives of this Strategic Area requires sustained partnerships with regional bodies, UN agencies, civil society organisations, academic institutions and the private sector. Partnerships are not supplementary to capacity development — they are its primary mechanism, enabling knowledge transfer, co-financing, peer learning and technical assistance that government cannot provide alone.

The effectiveness of this Policy depends not only on clear institutional mandates but on the ability of actors at all levels to carry out their responsibilities with confidence and technical competence. Climate and disaster-induced displacement in Vanuatu involves multiple ministries, provincial administrations, customary authorities and community structures. Where capacity is uneven or unsupported, implementation becomes inconsistent and outcomes are difficult to sustain.

Since the adoption of the 2018 Policy, progress has been made in strengthening coordination mechanisms and policy awareness. However, implementation experience has shown that displacement-related training has not been systematically embedded across public institutions. Provincial authorities and frontline officials have faced practical challenges in relocation planning, land mediation and inclusive engagement. Community and faith-based organisations have played a central role in supporting affected households, yet structured support to these actors has remained limited. Recent events have reinforced the need for practical guidance, peer learning and stronger linkages between national policy direction and local practice.

This Strategic Area recognises capacity development and partnerships as foundational elements of displacement governance. It formalises national training systems, supports community-level representation, strengthens knowledge exchange and promotes structured learning within the Pacific region. By consolidating these enabling measures, the Policy ensures that sector-level interventions are supported by capable institutions, informed customary leadership and resilient community networks.

Cross-Cutting Considerations

Implementation of this Strategic Area shall ensure that all capacity-building initiatives and partnership arrangements are grounded in principles of equality, accountability and respect for human dignity.

Training systems and mentoring arrangements shall promote equitable participation and leadership by women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and other groups who may experience heightened displacement risks. Capacity initiatives shall be designed to address structural barriers to inclusion and strengthen representative community engagement.

Customary governance institutions and kastom-based dispute resolution processes shall be recognised as central to displacement mediation and planning. Capacity development efforts shall work through these structures in ways that respect cultural practice while maintaining consistency with national legal and protection standards.

Capacity strengthening and partnership mechanisms shall be coordinated with existing disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, land management and decentralisation frameworks to ensure coherence across government systems.

Review of training effectiveness, partnership outcomes and knowledge integration shall support continuous improvement and inform future adjustments to this Policy and its implementation framework.

4.1 National Displacement Training and Institutional Capability

Policy Action 4.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Ensure displacement considerations are systematically integrated into national and sub-national emergency preparedness, response and coordination processes, including early warning, evacuation, temporary displacement and immediate response systems	Short term (Years 1–2), with continued institutionalisation
Outcome	Emergency management systems at national and sub-national levels incorporate displacement considerations across preparedness, response and early recovery phases.	

Actions:	4.1.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	DoCC; VMGD; NDMO; Department of Lands; Public Service Commission, MoLNR, MoIA, MoJCS, provincial authorities
Outputs	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National displacement training curriculum developed (linked to 4.1.1) • Training delivered to relevant ministries and provincial administrations (linked to 4.1.1) • Training incorporated into public service development systems (linked to 4.1.1) • Periodic training review and update mechanism established (linked to 4.1.1)

4.2 Community and Civil Society Capacity Strengthening

Policy Action 4.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen the capacity of local NGOs, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations to support inclusive representation, mediation and assistance in displacement contexts.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–4)
Outcome	Community and civil society actors effectively contribute to inclusive and locally grounded displacement responses.	

Actions:	4.2.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	DoCC, DWA, provincial authorities, civil society networks, faith-based organisations, Vanuatu Cultural Centre, NDMO, relevant NGOs
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building sessions delivered to civil society and community organisations (linked to 4.2.1) • Strengthened representation of vulnerable groups in displacement processes (linked to 4.2.1) • Community engagement toolkits disseminated (linked to 4.2.1) • Partnership coordination mechanism documented (linked to 4.2.1)

4.3 Knowledge Resources and Practical Guidance

Policy Action 4.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Develop and maintain practical guidance materials, case studies and resource repositories to support displacement records, planning and mediation at regional, national and community levels.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing updates
Outcome	Accessible and context-specific knowledge resources supporting consistent displacement practice across provinces.	

Actions:	4.3.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	DoCC, Malvatumauri, MoJCS, DLA, DUAP, provincial authorities, Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compendium of displacement and relocation case studies (linked to 4.3.1) • Practical guidance materials for chiefs, mediators and officials (linked to 4.3.1) • Centralised displacement resource repository established (linked to 4.3.1) • Mechanism for periodic knowledge update documented (linked to 4.3.1)

4.4 Peer Mentoring and Customary Governance Support

Policy Action 4.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Establish peer mentoring arrangements and structured knowledge exchange platforms led by customary and women's leadership networks to strengthen locally grounded displacement practice.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Customary and community governance systems strengthened to mediate land issues and support displacement solutions.	

Actions:	4.4.1
Lead	Lead Ministry and Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Support	MoCC, Women's networks, Malvatumauri, provincial authorities, Civil Society organisations and relevant NGOs
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mentoring framework established (linked to 4.4.1) • Provincial knowledge exchange visits conducted (linked to 4.4.1) • Traditional knowledge integrated into guidance materials (linked to 4.4.1) • Documentation of locally grounded mediation practices (linked to 4.4.1)

4.5 Regional Learning and Partnership Integration

Policy Action 4.5.1		Timeframe
Action	Participate in structured Pacific and international knowledge exchange platforms and integrate relevant	

	lessons into national displacement governance systems.	Medium to Long term (Years 3–5 and beyond)
Outcome	National displacement practice strengthened through structured regional learning while maintaining a domestic implementation focus.	

Actions:	4.5.1
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	MoCC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regional organisations, development partners, Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in structured regional displacement forums (linked to 4.5.1) • National summaries of lessons learned from exchanges (linked to 4.5.1) • Integration of relevant lessons into national training and guidance materials (linked to 4.5.1) • Periodic review of regional alignment documented (linked to 4.5.1)

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System Strategic Area 5: Financing, Resource Mobilisation and Financial Protection

Objective

Ensure predictable, transparent and sustainable financing arrangements that enable prevention, response and durable solutions to climate and disaster-induced displacement within Vanuatu.

Rationale and background

Effective implementation of the policy requires a coherent and integrated financing framework. Vanuatu faces recurrent rapid-onset hazards, escalating climate impacts and cumulative vulnerability factors that generate both immediate response costs and long-term recovery, relocation and resilience investment needs. While humanitarian and sectoral financing mechanisms exist, displacement-related financing remains dispersed across institutions and funding streams.

Experience since 2018 demonstrates that displacement-related expenditure is often mobilised reactively following major events, but is not consistently integrated into medium- and long-term public finance planning, climate finance strategies or development investment frameworks. Expenditure tracking has been uneven, links to national Loss and Damage financing positions have not always been explicit, and access to international climate and adaptation finance has not been systematically aligned with nationally prioritised displacement actions. As a result, financing for prevention, recovery and durable solutions has lacked predictability and strategic coherence.

The Strategic Area establishes displacement financing and resource mobilisation as a core enabling function of Government. It consolidates domestic budget integration, climate finance access, expenditure tracking, risk-transfer mechanisms and Loss and Damage alignment within a structured national financing architecture.

The national climate finance strategy currently being finalised by Government of Vanuatu provides an important opportunity to embed displacement-related priorities within Vanuatu's climate finance architecture. Actions under this Strategic Area should ensure that displacement prevention, response and durable solutions are explicitly referenced in the finalised strategy, so that displacement needs can access climate finance streams alongside other adaptation and resilience priorities.

It strengthens institutional coordination between MoCC, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM), and relevant sectoral ministries. By institutionalising financing systems and financial oversight, the Policy supports prevention, preparedness, protection, recovery and

durable solutions in alignment with national development, climate and public finance frameworks.

Cross-Cutting Considerations

Implementation of the Strategic Area shall ensure that all financing, budgeting and resource mobilisation systems operate in accordance with principles of transparency, accountability and equity. Budget allocation and expenditure tracking shall be gender-responsive, age-sensitive and disability-inclusive, with resource flows informed by differentiated risk and vulnerability profiles.

Traditional governance systems, kastom institutions and community-based decision-making structures shall be recognised as relevant actors in locally grounded financing processes and, where appropriate, engaged in priority-setting and oversight arrangements.

All displacement-related financing systems shall align with existing disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, Loss and Damage and national public finance frameworks to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. Monitoring and reporting processes shall promote fiscal transparency, institutional learning and accountability, and shall inform periodic policy review and implementation adjustments.

5.1 Domestic Budget Integration and Expenditure Tracking

Policy Action 5.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Integrate displacement prevention, response and durable solutions within national and sectoral budget processes, including medium-term expenditure frameworks	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Displacement priorities reflected within national and sectoral budget allocations.	

Policy Action 5.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Establish mechanisms to track, monitor and report displacement-related public expenditure across relevant ministries and provinces.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Transparent and accountable reporting of displacement-related public expenditure.	

Actions:	5.1.1 – 5.1.2
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	Department of Finance and Treasury, MoCC, DSPPAC, Provincial governments, VBoS

Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget circular guidance updated to include displacement-responsive budgeting requirements (linked to 5.1.1) • Displacement-related budget lines identified within relevant sectoral plans (linked to 5.1.1) • Medium-term expenditure framework reflecting displacement priorities (linked to 5.1.1) • Displacement expenditure tracking methodology developed (linked to 5.1.2) • Annual displacement-related public expenditure report produced (linked to 5.1.2) • Financial reporting integrated into Policy monitoring framework (linked to 5.1.2)

5.2 Climate Finance Access and External Resource Mobilisation

Policy Action 5.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen institutional capacity to access and manage climate finance and Loss and Damage funding for displacement-related priorities.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Increased access to climate and Loss and Damage finance aligned with national displacement priorities.	

Policy Action 5.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Coordinate a national external financing pipeline aligned with the Costed Implementation Plan.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	External financing aligned with nationally prioritised displacement actions.	

Actions:	5.2.1 – 5.2.2
Lead	MoCC
Support	MFEM, DoCC, DSPPAC, NDMO, Relevant sectoral stakeholders
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional capacity assessment for displacement-related climate finance access (linked to 5.2.1) • Pipeline of displacement-aligned climate finance concept notes developed (linked to 5.2.1) • Alignment mechanism established between displacement priorities and Nationally Determined • Contribution and adaptation planning (linked to 5.2.1) • National displacement financing pipeline document developed and maintained (linked to 5.2.2)

- Coordination platform for development partner engagement established (linked to 5.2.2)
- Annual review of external financing mobilisation against Costed Implementation Plan (linked to 5.2.2)
- Climate and development financing frameworks and strategies reflect displacement-related priorities. (linked to 5.2.2)

5.3 Risk Financing and Financial Protection Instruments

Policy Action 5.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Assess and strengthen risk financing and insurance mechanisms, including parametric insurance instruments, to enhance financial resilience to displacement-related shocks.	Medium to Long term (Years 2–5 and beyond)
Outcome	Risk financing mechanisms contribute to improved financial protection for vulnerable households and communities.	

Actions:	5.3.1
Lead	MFEM
Support	MoCC, DSPPAC, Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, Relevant NGOs and stakeholders
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National assessment of displacement-related risk financing gaps completed (linked to 5.3.1) • Feasibility analysis of micro-insurance and climate insurance models undertaken (linked to 5.3.1) • Policy recommendations on risk transfer instruments developed (linked to 5.3.1) • Integration options for risk financing within national resilience strategies identified (linked to 5.3.1)

5.4 Alignment with National Loss and Damage Financing

Policy Action 5.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Align displacement-related impacts and recovery needs with national Loss and Damage financing frameworks and programme design processes, ensuring that displacement considerations are integrated within broader national pathways rather than established as parallel mechanisms.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)

Outcome	Coherent and nationally aligned approach to displacement-related Loss and Damage financing.	
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Policy Action 5.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Develop financing mechanisms to support recovery, rehabilitation and durable solutions, including planned relocation where necessary, and to address housing loss and associated displacement impacts in accordance with national Loss and Damage and social protection frameworks.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Financial mechanisms support sustained recovery and durable solutions outcomes.	

Actions:	5.4.1 – 5.4.2
Lead	MoCC
Support	MFEM, NDMO, DSPPAC, Provincial governments
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of displacement-related financing streams against National Loss and Damage Policy mechanisms (linked to 5.4.1) • Guidance note on alignment of displacement finance with Loss and Damage principles (linked to 5.4.1) • Financing framework for recovery and durable solutions developed (linked to 5.4.2) • Funding prioritisation criteria for relocation and recovery investments established (linked to 5.4.2) • Monitoring indicators for Loss and Damage-aligned displacement financing integrated into Policy M&E framework (linked to 5.4.1 and 5.4.2)

Sector Strategic Area 6: Land, Housing, Planning and Environment

Objective

Strengthen land administration, spatial planning and housing systems to minimise displacement risk, secure lawful and equitable land access, and support resilient and durable settlement outcomes.

Rationale and background

Land underpins identity, kastom, livelihoods and social stability in Vanuatu. Customary tenure remains the dominant system of landholding, governed through traditional authority and intergenerational stewardship. At the same time, climate change, recurrent disasters, coastal erosion and urban growth are intensifying pressure on land and settlement systems.

Displacement in Vanuatu is expressed through temporary evacuation, prolonged settlement in host communities, growth of informal and peri urban settlements and, in some cases, planned relocation. Informal and peri urban settlements in Port Vila and Luganville have expanded in hazard exposed areas, often with limited tenure clarity and inadequate infrastructure. In rural areas, communities face declining land productivity, coastal erosion and environmental loss, prompting consideration of relocation or negotiated access to alternative land within customary systems.

Experience since adoption of the 2018 Policy indicates that displacement outcomes are shaped not only by emergency response but by land allocation decisions, zoning controls, site selection processes and housing standards. Where planning systems fail to integrate hazard exposure and future risk, displacement may become recurrent and protracted. Where tenure arrangements are unclear or poorly documented, social tension and insecurity may increase.

This Strategic Area positions land and housing systems as primary delivery instruments for reducing displacement risk and supporting durable solutions. including access to temporary housing support, reconstruction assistance or financial support mechanisms in accordance with national legislation and financing frameworks. It assumes that coordination, evidence systems, safeguards, capacity development and financing architecture are established under System Strategic Areas 1 to 5.

The National Housing Policy (2025–2035), led by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), provides an important complementary framework for the land and housing actions under this Strategic Area. Pillars 1 (climate-resilient housing) and 3 (informal settlements) of the Housing

Policy are directly relevant, and actions under SA6 should be read alongside and implemented in alignment with that Policy. Housing, planning and zoning actions are led by DUAP within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in coordination with the Department of Lands and Local Authorities (DLA) and the Customary Land Management Office (CLMO) for customary land matters.

Cross-cutting Considerations:

Land and housing actions under this Strategic Area must be implemented in ways that respect customary ownership and kastom processes, ensuring that land access arrangements are voluntary, transparent and culturally legitimate. Sector delivery must promote equitable access to land and housing for women, persons with disabilities, youth and marginalised groups, recognising differentiated impacts of displacement. Meaningful participation of affected communities must inform land use decisions, settlement upgrading and relocation planning, in accordance with national safeguard standards. Environmental sustainability must guide site selection and settlement development, and cultural and spiritual connections to land, including gravesites and sacred areas, must be recognised in any relocation or land allocation process.

6.1 Land and Housing Availability and Options

Policy Action 6.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Map, identify, assess and periodically update information on safe, suitable and available land and housing options for communities displaced or at risk of displacement, aligned with hazard exposure and planning controls.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing updates
Outcome	Displacement informed land and housing options are integrated into spatial planning and land administration decisions.	

Policy Action 6.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Map, identify and engage potential host households and private housing options willing and able to provide temporary accommodation during displacement, within existing local governance and community structures.	Short term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	Temporary accommodation pathways are strengthened within existing community and housing systems.	

Actions:	6.1.1 – 6.1.2
Lead	MoLNR; Lead Ministry

Support	MoCC, NDMO, DLA, NCLMO, National Resilience Unit, provincial authorities
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic mapping assessment of safe, suitable and available land and housing options aligned with hazard exposure and planning controls (linked to 6.1.1) • Spatial planning overlays identifying areas suitable for temporary and longer term settlement in displacement contexts (linked to 6.1.1) • Identification and documentation of potential host household and private housing options in priority risk areas (linked to 6.1.2)

6.2 Land Access, Tenure and Negotiated Arrangements

Policy Action 6.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Support early, community-led and culturally appropriate processes for negotiating land access and allocation arrangements for relocation, temporary settlement or local integration, including structured engagement with customary landowners and mediation mechanisms to reduce delays and uncertainty.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Voluntary and transparent land access arrangements are strengthened to support displacement responses.	

Policy Action 6.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Work with customary landholders, Malvatumauri and relevant authorities to explore land access and acquisition options within existing legal frameworks, prioritising voluntary agreements.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Lawful and culturally legitimate land access pathways are available to address displacement needs.	

Policy Action 6.2.3		Timeframe
Action	Utilise existing legal provisions for land acquisition in the public interest, where necessary and lawful, to address displacement and relocation requirements, subject to due process.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Statutory land acquisition powers are applied transparently and lawfully where displacement	

	related needs cannot be addressed through voluntary arrangements.	
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Policy Action 6.2.4		Timeframe
Action	Establish clear allocation pathways within land administration systems to facilitate access to land for displaced households, linked to basic settlement planning requirements.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Displaced households have access to secure and planned land allocation pathways within existing systems.	

Policy Action 6.2.5		Timeframe
Action	Ensure that land agreements related to displacement, relocation or integration are formally documented, registered and, where required, gazetted in accordance with national law.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Land arrangements associated with displacement are transparent, legally recognised and accessible for future reference.	

Actions:	6.2.1 – 6.2.5
Lead	MoLNR; Lead Ministry
Support	Office of the Attorney General, Malvatumauri, DoCC, NCLMO, Vanuatu Cultural Centre, provincial authorities
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector guidance on culturally appropriate and displacement sensitive land negotiation and allocation processes within existing legal frameworks (linked to 6.2.1) • Documented engagement processes with customary landholders and traditional authorities on displacement related land access pathways (linked to 6.2.2) • Application of existing lawful land acquisition procedures in displacement related cases, where voluntary arrangements are not feasible (linked to 6.2.3) • Standardised land allocation procedures within land administration systems for displaced households (linked to 6.2.4) • Registration and, where required, gazettal of land agreements related to relocation or integration (linked to 6.2.5)

6.3 Relocation Site Planning and Development Control

Policy Action 6.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Apply clear planning, land suitability and approvals processes to proposed relocation sites, including consideration of hazard exposure, access to services, livelihoods and environmental impacts.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Relocation sites meet national planning standards and reduce future displacement risk.	

Policy Action 6.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Integrate displacement and future risk considerations into spatial planning, zoning and rezoning decisions to prevent the creation of new high risk settlements.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Spatial planning decisions systematically reduce exposure to displacement risk	

Actions:	6.3.1 – 6.3.2
Lead	Lead Ministry
Support	MoLNR, DUAP, DoCC, NDMO, DEPC, municipal councils, MIPU, DLA
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation site planning and land suitability assessment procedures applied to proposed relocation areas (linked to 6.3.1) Documentation of hazard exposure, service access and environmental considerations in relocation site approval processes (linked to 6.3.1) Updated zoning and spatial planning instruments integrating displacement and future risk considerations (linked to 6.3.2)

6.4 Housing Standards, Informal Settlements and Managed Retreat

Policy Action 6.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen housing standards, building guidance and settlement planning practices to support resilient reconstruction, reduce recurrent displacement and align relocation and reconstruction efforts with national housing and building codes and regulatory frameworks.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Housing and settlement design contribute to reduced hazard exposure and improved resilience.	

Policy Action 6.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Prioritise upgrading of safe and viable informal and peri urban settlements in hazard exposed areas, particularly in Port Vila and Luganville, to improve safety, tenure clarity and access to essential services, in alignment with national housing standards and service access benchmarks.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Vulnerable settlements experience reduced displacement risk and improved living conditions.	

Policy Action 6.4.3		Timeframe
Action	Develop planning pathways for managed retreat or relocation from high risk settlements where risk reduction or upgrading is not viable, ensuring alignment with national housing standards and safeguard requirements	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	High risk settlements have lawful and planned transition pathways that minimise harm and preserve community cohesion.	

Actions:	6.4.1 – 6.4.3
Lead	DUAP
Support	MoLNR; MIPU, DoCC, municipal councils, DLA, provincial authorities.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised housing and settlement planning guidance incorporating displacement and resilience considerations (linked to 6.4.1) Settlement upgrading plans in hazard exposed informal and peri urban areas, including Port Vila and Luganville (linked to 6.4.2) Planning pathways and procedural guidance for managed retreat or relocation from high risk settlements (linked to 6.4.3)

Sector Strategic Area 7 – Health, WASH, Nutrition and Psychosocial Support

Objective

Reinforce public health, (including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - WASH), nutrition and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) so they anticipate, withstand and respond effectively to displacement, protecting wellbeing and enabling sustained recovery.

Rationale and background

Population health in Vanuatu depends on the strength of primary care networks, outreach services, nutrition systems and community-based support structures operating across dispersed islands. Climate change, recurrent hazard events and environmental degradation are increasing pressure on these systems and exposing structural service gaps.

Displacement alters health determinants in immediate and systemic ways. Evacuation and temporary shelter arrangements affect sanitation, water access and disease exposure. Prolonged displacement disrupts continuity of care, interrupts treatment for chronic conditions and places strain on maternal, child and reproductive health services. Damage to gardens, fisheries and food supply chains reduces dietary diversity and heightens malnutrition risk.

Urban growth and expansion of informal settlements further compound environmental health risks, particularly where drainage, waste management and service coverage are inadequate. In rural and relocation settings, distance from facilities and workforce shortages may delay access to care.

Health impacts extend beyond physical illness. Displacement can generate sustained psychological stress associated with loss of land, housing, livelihood and community cohesion. Without structured psychosocial support, these effects may persist beyond the emergency phase and undermine recovery and resilience.

Experience since 2018 demonstrates that displacement outcomes are shaped by the resilience of routine health systems, workforce distribution, referral pathways and supply chain reliability. Where preparedness planning does not incorporate displacement scenarios, service disruption may become prolonged and inequitable.

The Health National Adaptation Plan, launched in 2024, provides a framework for strengthening health system resilience to climate and disaster impacts and is directly complementary to the health-related actions under this Strategic Area. Actions under SA7 should be implemented in

alignment with the Health NAP and should draw on its analysis of climate-sensitive health risks in Vanuatu.

This Strategic Area positions health, nutrition and psychosocial systems as central components of protection, recovery and durable solutions. It assumes that coordination, safeguards, data systems, financing and capacity architecture are established under System Strategic Areas 1 to 5.

Cross-cutting considerations

Implementation must promote equitable access to health and nutrition services for women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and other groups facing heightened vulnerability in displacement contexts. Delivery of essential public services models should be culturally appropriate and responsive to community governance structures. Affected communities must inform facility restoration, outreach planning and relocation site development, in accordance with national safeguard standards.

Environmental health considerations, including water quality, WASH conditions, and settlement density, must guide health planning and service delivery decisions in displacement contexts. Psychosocial responses should acknowledge cultural and spiritual dimensions of loss and recovery.

7.1 Displacement-Responsive Health System Planning

Policy Action 7.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Integrate displacement scenarios into national and provincial health preparedness and response planning frameworks.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Health sector plans systematically incorporate evacuation, prolonged displacement and relocation risk scenarios.	

Policy Action 7.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen surge capacity, referral systems and mobile outreach mechanisms for activation during displacement events.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Scalable public service delivery models are operational during displacement events.	

Actions:	7.1.1 – 7.1.2
Lead	Ministry of Health
Support	Lead Ministry, NDMO; Provincial Health Authorities; Relevant stakeholders.

Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of national and provincial health preparedness plans to incorporate evacuation, prolonged displacement and relocation scenarios (linked to 7.1.1) • Integration of displacement surge modelling within annual health sector planning processes (linked to 7.1.1) • Health sector coordination mechanisms are strengthened to support preparedness and response to displacement, aligned with national emergency coordination arrangements (linked to 7.1.1) • Established surge staffing and deployment protocols for displacement events (linked to 7.1.2) • Operational guidelines for activation of mobile outreach and emergency referral systems in temporary and relocation settings (linked to 7.1.2) • Health workers are trained to deliver displacement-responsive services, including mental health and psychosocial support (linked to 7.1.2)

7.2 Continuity of Essential Health Services

Policy Action 7.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Ensure continuity of primary health care, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, immunisation and chronic disease management during displacement.	Ongoing
Outcome	Essential health services remain accessible throughout displacement phases.	

Policy Action 7.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Restore and upgrade damaged health facilities using hazard-resilient standards in high-risk and relocation areas.	Medium to Long term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Reduced service disruption in hazard-exposed areas and relocation sites.	

Actions:	7.2.1 – 7.2.2
Lead	MoH
Support	MIPU; National Recovery Committee; Department of Water Resources; MOCC; DLA; Provincial Authorities; Wash Cluster.
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service continuity protocols for essential primary care and specialised services during displacement (linked to 7.2.1)

- Pre-positioning and continuity arrangements for essential medicines and medical supplies in high-risk provinces (linked to 7.2.1)
- WASH services are maintained or restored in evacuation centres, temporary settlements and relocation sites to reduce public health risks (linked to 7.2.1)
- Coordination between health services and water, sanitation and hygiene providers is strengthened in displacement settings (linked to 7.2.1)
- Targeted health risk communication and community awareness initiatives are implemented for displacement-affected populations (linked to 7.2.1)
- Post-disaster health facility assessment procedures incorporating displacement-related demand projections (linked to 7.2.2)
- Application of hazard-resilient design standards in reconstruction and upgrading of damaged health facilities (linked to 7.2.2)

7.3 Nutrition Security in Displacement Contexts

Policy Action 7.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Prioritise nutrition screening, referral and support for infants, young children, pregnant and lactating women and other at-risk groups in displacement settings.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing
Outcome	Reduced malnutrition risk among vulnerable populations during displacement.	

Policy Action 7.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Support restoration of household food production and local market access in return and relocation contexts.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Stabilised nutrition outcomes in recovery and durable solution settings.	

Actions:	7.3.1 – 7.3.2
Lead	Ministry of Health
Support	Lead Ministry, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries, and Biosecurity; Provincial Authorities; Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC); relevant NGOs and stakeholders
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted nutrition screening and referral protocols for vulnerable groups in displacement settings (linked to 7.3.1)

- Integration of displacement-related risk variables into existing community-based nutrition monitoring systems (linked to 7.3.1)
- Nutrition response guidelines for evacuation centres, temporary settlements and relocation sites (linked to 7.3.1)
- Joint recovery planning arrangements supporting restoration of household food production and local market systems (linked to 7.3.2)

7.4 Psychosocial Support and Community Wellbeing

Policy Action 7.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Integrate psychosocial support services within emergency response and recovery programming in displacement contexts.	Short term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	Psychosocial support is systematically activated during displacement events.	

Policy Action 7.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen community-based mental health and referral mechanisms in relocation and return settings.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Improved long-term psychosocial recovery outcomes in displacement-affected communities	

Actions:	7.4.1 – 7.4.2
Lead	Ministry of Health
Support	MoJCS; MoET; Faith-Based and Community Organisations; Vanuatu Red Cross Society; relevant civil society organisations; faith-based organisations.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard operating procedures for integration of psychosocial support within emergency health response (linked to 7.4.1) • Community-based psychosocial outreach models for temporary, host and relocation settings (linked to 7.4.1) • Established referral pathways between primary care services and specialised mental health providers in displacement contexts (linked to 7.4.2) • Development of culturally grounded psychosocial support materials recognising kastom and community support structures (linked to 7.4.2)

7.5 Health Data, Surveillance and Learning

Policy Action 7.5.1	Timeframe
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Action	Strengthen health information systems to capture displacement-related morbidity, nutrition indicators and psychosocial impacts.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Health planning and resource allocation informed by displacement-sensitive evidence.	

Actions:	7.5.1
Lead	Ministry of Health
Support	VBoS; MoCC; Red Cross Society; Relevant Stakeholders
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of displacement markers into routine morbidity, mortality and nutrition reporting systems (linked to 7.5.1) • Post-displacement health impact assessments informing recovery planning (linked to 7.5.1) • Periodic analytical reports on displacement-related health trends to inform policy review (linked to 7.5.1)

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Sector Strategic Area 8 – Education

Objective

Embed displacement risk within education planning and delivery so that learning continues safely, equitably and without prolonged interruption.

Rational background

Education in Vanuatu provides foundational skills, social stability and pathways to long-term development. Schools function as structured environments that support learning, protection and community cohesion across dispersed islands and rural settings. However, hazard exposure, environmental change and settlement expansion are increasing pressure on school infrastructure, staffing and service continuity.

Displacement disrupts learning in multiple ways. Evacuation may lead to temporary school closure or conversion of facilities for shelter. Damage to buildings and transport routes delays reopening. Population movement into host communities can increase classroom density, strain teacher capacity and limit access to learning materials. In relocation contexts, the absence of nearby facilities may delay enrolment or reduce attendance.

Children and young people are among those most directly affected by displacement-related education disruption. Extended school closures interrupt not only learning but also child protection, psychosocial wellbeing and social cohesion. Young adults face compounding impacts including loss of vocational training pathways and barriers to economic recovery. Inclusive, age-responsive approaches to education continuity must be central to displacement response and recovery planning.

These challenges demonstrate that education continuity depends on system-level preparedness, infrastructure resilience and adaptive delivery models. Where school siting does not account for hazard exposure, repeated closure may occur. Where teacher deployment and curriculum frameworks lack flexibility, learning gaps may widen. Where displaced learners are not supported to re-enter the system, dropout risk increases.

Experience since the 2018 Policy confirms that sustained recovery requires more than temporary classroom arrangements. Risk-informed reconstruction, structured reintegration and inclusive access are necessary to prevent long-term educational disruption.

This Strategic Area positions the education system as a stabilising and protective mechanism in displacement contexts. It integrates displacement considerations into infrastructure planning, teacher deployment, learning continuity and reintegration measures, operating within the

broader coordination, evidence, safeguard and financing frameworks established under System Strategic Areas 1 to 5.

Cross-cutting Considerations

Education measures under this Strategic Area must ensure safe and inclusive learning conditions for all students affected by displacement. Particular attention must be given to barriers faced by girls, children with disabilities and learners from marginalised households. Temporary or relocated learning environments should uphold national safety and accessibility standards. Engagement with parents, school committees and community leaders should guide decisions on temporary learning spaces, reconstruction and enrolment processes. Hazard exposure and environmental sustainability must inform school site planning and rebuilding. Education responses should also recognise the role of schools in restoring routine, stability and psychosocial wellbeing following displacement.

8.1 Displacement-Responsive Education Planning

Policy Action 8.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Integrate displacement scenarios, risk projections and relevant knowledge on displacement and durable solutions into national and provincial education sector planning and preparedness frameworks.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Education planning frameworks reflect evacuation, prolonged displacement and relocation scenarios, and incorporate learning and awareness on displacement and durable solutions.	

Policy Action 8.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Establish contingency arrangements for temporary learning spaces, continuity of academic calendars and integration of displacement-responsive learning approaches during displacement events..	Short term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	Displacement events do not result in prolonged interruption of formal learning cycles, and education systems support awareness and preparedness among learners..	

Actions:	8.1.1 – 8.1.2
Lead	Ministry of Education and Training
Support	MoCC; Education cluster; DLA; DUAP; Provincial Education Authorities; relevant NGOs and stakeholders

Outputs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of national and provincial education preparedness plans to incorporate evacuation, temporary shelter use of schools and relocation scenarios (linked to 8.1.1) • Integration of displacement risk projections into annual education sector planning and school management guidelines (linked to 8.1.1) • Education curricula and learning materials incorporate age-appropriate content on displacement, climate risks and durable solutions (linked to 8.1.1) • Teachers and education personnel are supported to deliver learning and awareness on displacement, resilience and adaptation (linked to 8.1.1) • Standard operating procedures for establishment and management of temporary learning spaces (linked to 8.1.2) • Academic calendar adjustment protocols for displacement-affected provinces (linked to 8.1.2) 	

8.2 Continuity and Reintegration of Learning

Policy Action 8.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Ensure continuity of formal education for displaced learners through flexible enrolment, teacher deployment and curriculum adaptation measures.	Ongoing
Outcome	Displaced learners maintain access to structured learning without exclusion or delay.	

Policy Action 8.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Implement accelerated learning and reintegration programmes for students affected by prolonged displacement.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Reduced long-term learning loss and dropout among displacement-affected students.	

Actions:	8.2.1 – 8.2.2
Lead	Ministry of Education and Training
Support	Curriculum Development Unit; DLA; Provincial Education Authorities; relevant NGOs and INGOs
Outputs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible enrolment and transfer procedures for displaced students across provinces (linked to 8.2.1) • Teacher deployment guidelines addressing temporary population influx in host communities (linked to 8.2.1) 	

- Curriculum adaptation guidance for disrupted learning periods (linked to 8.2.1)
- Accelerated learning programme framework for displacement-affected learners (linked to 8.2.2)
- Reintegration support guidelines for return and relocation settings (linked to 8.2.2)

8.3 Safe and Resilient Education Infrastructure

Policy Action 8.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Reconstruct and upgrade damaged schools using hazard-resilient design standards.	Medium to Long term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Reduced future disruption of education services in hazard-exposed areas.	

Policy Action 8.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Apply risk-informed site selection and facility planning in relocation and high-risk areas.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Education facilities are located and designed to minimise future displacement-related disruption.	

Actions:	8.3.1 – 8.3.2
Lead	Ministry of Education and Training
Support	Lead Ministry, MIPU; MoCC; Provincial Authorities; relevant NGOs and INGOs
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard-resilient school reconstruction standards applied in post-disaster rebuilding (linked to 8.3.1) • Post-event school damage assessments informing reconstruction prioritisation (linked to 8.3.1) • Risk-informed site planning guidelines for new or relocated schools (linked to 8.3.2) Environmental and hazard screening incorporated into school infrastructure approval processes (linked to 8.3.2)

8.4 Inclusive and Protective Learning Environments

Policy Action 8.4.1	Timeframe
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Action	Integrate psychosocial support measures within school-based programming in displacement contexts.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Schools provide structured psychosocial support during and after displacement events.	

Policy Action 8.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen inclusive education measures to ensure equitable access for displaced girls, children with disabilities and marginalised learners.	Ongoing
Outcome	Displacement does not result in exclusion from formal education	

Actions:	8.4.1 – 8.4.2
Lead	Ministry of Education and Training
Support	MoJCS; MoH; Provincial Education Authorities; relevant NGOs and INGOs
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based psychosocial support guidance for displacement-affected settings (linked to 8.4.1) • Referral pathways between schools and specialised support services (linked to 8.4.1) • Inclusive education access guidelines for displaced learners (linked to 8.4.2) • Monitoring mechanisms tracking enrolment and attendance of displacement-affected students (linked to 8.4.2)

8.5 Displacement Awareness, Curriculum Integration and Civic Education

Policy Action 8.5.1		Timeframe
Action	Develop and integrate age-appropriate educational content on climate change, disaster displacement, durable solutions and community resilience into national school curricula at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and into civic education and community awareness programmes.	Medium to Long term (Years 3–5)
Outcome	Climate displacement, associated risks and available durable solutions are systematically reflected in national curricula and civic education, strengthening informed community engagement and long-term resilience.	

Actions:	8.5.1
Lead	Ministry of Education and Training – Curriculum Development Unit
Support	DoCC; NDMP; Vanuatu Qualifications Authority; Provincial Education Authorities; UNICEF; Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-appropriate curriculum modules on displacement, climate risk and durable solutions developed and endorsed for primary, secondary and tertiary levels (linked to 8.5.1) • National curriculum framework updated to formally incorporate displacement and resilience content (linked to 8.5.1) • Teacher training and professional development programmes on displacement awareness and curriculum delivery conducted (linked to 8.5.1) • Student-led awareness activities and community resilience initiatives supported in pilot schools (linked to 8.5.1) • Curriculum materials translated into vernacular languages and made accessible in remote and island settings (linked to 8.5.1)

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Sector Strategic Area 9 Infrastructure and Connectivity

Objective

Ensure that critical infrastructure and connectivity systems remain functional, adaptable and risk-informed in contexts of climate and disaster-induced displacement.

Rationale and background

Transport corridors, energy supply, water and sanitation networks, ports, airstrips and telecommunications systems form the operational backbone of Vanuatu's economy and public services. These interconnected assets enable mobility, trade, service access and communication across dispersed islands. Increasing hazard intensity and environmental change are exposing structural weaknesses in asset durability, maintenance and network redundancy.

Displacement reshapes infrastructure demand and stress patterns. Evacuation requires safe and reliable transport routes. Temporary settlement increases short-term load on water, sanitation and power systems. Population concentration in host communities or informal settlements may exceed existing design capacity. Damage to ports, roads and communication towers restricts relief access and delays recovery operations. In relocation settings, insufficient network extension can isolate communities from markets, services and information flows.

These realities demonstrate that infrastructure performance directly influences displacement outcomes. Asset failure can extend displacement duration, while inadequate service provision in relocation areas may undermine sustainability. Infrastructure design that does not account for hazard exposure and settlement dynamics may require repeated reconstruction and contribute to recurrent disruption.

Since the adoption of the 2018 Policy, hazard events have highlighted the importance of resilient standards, maintenance planning and redundancy in connectivity systems. Recovery that focuses solely on physical restoration without strengthening resilience may perpetuate vulnerability.

This Strategic Area positions infrastructure and connectivity as essential systems that maintain continuity of services and support stability in displacement contexts. It integrates risk screening, service continuity planning and adaptive network design within sector mandates, operating within the coordination, evidence, safeguard and financing frameworks established under System Strategic Areas 1 to 5. Infrastructure planning for displacement settings incorporates provision for water supply, sanitation systems and waste management services.

Cross-cutting Considerations

Infrastructure and connectivity actions under this Strategic Area must incorporate hazard exposure, environmental sustainability and long-term climate risk in planning and design decisions. Sector delivery must promote equitable and inclusive access to essential utilities, transport networks and digital services for displaced and host communities, recognising disparities between urban, peri-urban and remote island settings. Particular attention shall be given to ensuring accessible infrastructure and connectivity for persons with disabilities and older persons, including through barrier-free design, safe access to transport and services, and appropriate communication and information systems.

Community engagement should inform infrastructure siting and service restoration in relocation and recovery contexts, consistent with national safeguard standards. Infrastructure planning should also recognise cultural and livelihood considerations, particularly where transport routes, utilities or relocation sites intersect with customary land and community structures.

Digital connectivity measures must support access to information and services while respecting data protection and communication standards. Lead responsibility for telecommunications and digital connectivity actions rests with the Department of Communications and Digital Transformation (DCDT). The NDMO co-leads on telecommunications actions relating to early warning systems and disaster response communications.

9.1 Risk-Informed Infrastructure Planning

Policy Action 9.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Integrate displacement risk, hazard exposure and projected settlement patterns into national and provincial infrastructure planning processes.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Infrastructure planning frameworks reflect displacement scenarios and long-term climate risk.	

Policy Action 9.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Apply hazard-resilient design and engineering standards in high-risk and relocation areas.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Infrastructure assets are constructed or upgraded to reduce future displacement-related disruption.	

Actions:	9.1.1 – 9.1.2
Lead	MIPU and NDMO
Support	MoCC; Provincial Authorities; DCDT
Outputs	

- Integration of displacement risk screening within national and provincial infrastructure planning guidelines (linked to 9.1.1)
- Incorporation of hazard and settlement projections into infrastructure investment appraisal processes (linked to 9.1.1)
- Adoption and enforcement of hazard-resilient engineering standards for infrastructure in high-risk and relocation areas (linked to 9.1.2)
- Technical review procedures ensuring risk-informed design compliance in new and rehabilitated infrastructure projects (linked to 9.1.2)

9.2 Continuity of Essential Utility Services

Policy Action 9.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Ensure continuity of water, sanitation, energy, waste management services, primary health care facilities and telecommunications during displacement events.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing
Outcome	Essential utilities, health services and telecommunications remain operational in evacuation, host and temporary settlement contexts	

Policy Action 9.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Prioritise timely restoration and upgrading of damaged utility infrastructure in displacement-affected areas.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Utility services are restored with improved resilience following hazard events.	

Actions:	9.2.1 – 9.2.2
Lead	MIPU
Support	Lead Ministry; Utility Service Providers; Provincial Authorities DoWR, DoE, DUAP; DLA; PWD.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service continuity protocols for evacuation centres and temporary settlements, including water, sanitation, energy, primary health care and telecommunications (linked to 9.2.1) • Pre-disaster service redundancy and contingency arrangements for utilities, health services and telecommunications in high-risk areas (linked to 9.2.1) • Post-event infrastructure damage assessment and restoration prioritisation procedures, including utilities, health facilities and telecommunications networks (linked to 9.2.2) • Resilient upgrading of damaged water, sanitation, energy, health and telecommunications systems in displacement-affected communities (linked to 9.2.2)

9.3 Transport and Physical Connectivity

Policy Action 9.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Maintain functional transport corridors and access routes to enable evacuation, relief delivery and return movements.	Ongoing
Outcome	Safe and reliable transport access is maintained during displacement events.	

Policy Action 9.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Ensure that access to essential services and connectivity is a key criterion in the selection of relocation and settlement sites, and that transport and communications infrastructure is planned or upgraded to maintain service access for remote and resettled communities.	Medium to Long term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Relocated and remote communities maintain access to services and markets.	

Actions:	9.3.1 – 9.3.2
Lead	Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities
Support	Provincial Authorities; Civil Aviation Authorities Vanuatu (CAAV); MoCC; DLA Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and rapid repair protocols for critical evacuation and relief transport routes (linked to 9.3.1) • Prioritised restoration of damaged roads, ports and airstrips serving displacement-affected communities (linked to 9.3.1) • Risk-informed transport planning guidelines for relocation and high-exposure areas (linked to 9.3.2) • Integration of relocation sites within provincial transport network development plans (linked to 9.3.2)

9.4 Digital Connectivity and Communication Systems

Policy Action 9.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen communication infrastructure to support early warning, coordination and community information during displacement events.	Short term (Years 1–2)

Outcome	Reliable communication systems operate during hazard and displacement scenarios.	
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Policy Action 9.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Expand digital and telecommunications access in relocation and high-risk areas to support public service delivery and economic recovery.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Displacement-affected communities maintain access to communication and digital services.	

Actions:	9.4.1 – 9.4.2
Lead	DCDT
Support	Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator; MIPU; Telecommunications Service Providers
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened redundancy measures for communication towers and network infrastructure in hazard-prone areas (linked to 9.4.1) • Operational communication continuity protocols for displacement scenarios (linked to 9.4.1) • Network expansion planning for relocation and underserved areas aligned with national digital strategies (linked to 9.4.2) • Service coverage assessments identifying connectivity gaps in displacement-affected communities (linked to 9.4.2)

Sector Strategic Area 10 Agriculture, Food Security and Livelihoods

Objective

Strengthen agriculture, food security and livelihood systems across agricultural, fisheries, livestock and non-farm economic activities so that households affected by displacement can protect productive assets, maintain food access and restore income in a timely and sustainable manner.

Rationale and background

Agriculture and fisheries are primary sources of food and income for most households in Vanuatu, complemented by informal and small-scale non-farm economic activities, and shaped by customary land use, seasonal production and local market exchange. Smallholder gardens, livestock rearing and coastal fishing also support social obligations and community resilience.

Climate variability, cyclones, erosion and environmental stress are increasingly affecting yields, asset stability and market functionality. Displacement disrupts production and livelihood continuity. Evacuation may occur during key agricultural periods, resulting in lost harvests, damaged gardens and reduced livestock care. Movement to host communities can reduce access to productive land and fishing grounds and increase pressure on shared resources. In coastal areas, changing shorelines and relocation decisions can shift access to traditional fisheries and require adaptation of livelihood practices. Disruption to roads, ports and storage facilities limits market access and weakens value chains, increasing household food insecurity.

Displacement also disrupts non-farm livelihoods, including small businesses, informal trade and service-based activities, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings. These dynamics show that livelihoods across both farm and non-farm sectors are not only a recovery issue after a disaster but a central determinant of displacement duration and outcomes. Where production systems are highly exposed, repeated shocks can lead to recurrent displacement and deepening poverty. Where extension services and recovery support are not tailored to displacement contexts, households may be unable to restart production or diversify income sources.

Experience since 2018 indicates that durable outcomes depend on linking immediate livelihood restoration to longer-term adaptation. Short-term support can stabilise households, but sustained recovery requires risk-informed extension services, resilient production practices, functioning local markets and access to employment and skills development opportunities.

Livelihood restoration under this Strategic Area encompasses all economic activities, not only agriculture, fisheries and livestock. For households engaged in trade, services, tourism, construction and the informal economy, displacement may equally disrupt income, assets and market access. Policy actions under SA10 shall apply to the full range of livelihood types present in affected communities, and support programmes shall avoid inadvertently reinforcing inequalities by focusing only on primary sector activities.

This Strategic Area positions livelihoods as a key pathway for self-reliance and recovery in displacement contexts, while maintaining a strong focus on agriculture, fisheries and food security. It assumes that coordination, evidence systems, safeguards, capacity development and financing architecture are established under System Strategic Areas 1-5.

Cross-cutting Considerations

Actions under this Strategic Area must support equitable access to productive inputs, extension services, employment opportunities and market access for displaced and host households across both farm and non-farm sectors. Particular attention should be given to women and youth, whose roles and economic opportunities may shift following displacement. Community dialogue should guide livelihood adaptation in relocation settings where access to land or marine resources changes. Support measures should maintain dietary diversity and align with local food practices. Agricultural and fisheries interventions must safeguard ecosystem integrity, recognising that environmental degradation can increase long-term displacement risk.

Strengthen access for young people affected by displacement to education, vocational training and employment opportunities, including through engagement with the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, TVET providers and private sector employers, to ensure that displacement does not permanently disrupt the economic and livelihood trajectories of young adults. Young women facing compounded barriers to employment and training should be specifically targeted.

10.1 Preparedness and continuity of livelihoods

Policy Action 10.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Integrate displacement risk and mobility considerations into agriculture, fisheries and livestock sector preparedness and planning frameworks	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Productive sectors are better prepared to anticipate and respond to displacement-related disruptions.	

Policy Action 10.1.2	Timeframe
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Action	Promote continuity of livelihoods during displacement through adaptive, climate-resilient and mobile livelihood practice	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	At-risk and displaced populations are able to maintain livelihood activities during periods of disruption.	

Actions:	10.1.1 – 10.1.2
Lead	MALFFB
Support	Department of cooperatives and ni-Vanuatu Business development; DoCC; NDMO; Provincial Authorities; relevant NGOs
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of displacement scenarios into sector preparedness and contingency planning for agriculture, fisheries and livestock (linked to 10.1.1) • Identification and promotion of climate-resilient, mobile and diversified livelihood practices suitable for displacement contexts (linked to 10.1.2) • Adaptation of extension services to support displaced populations and host communities (linked to 10.1.2)) • Technical standards for adaptive production systems in relocation settings (linked to 10.1.2)

10.2 Livelihood Protection and Rapid Recovery

Policy Action 10.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Support restoration of livelihoods in displacement-affected areas across agricultural, fisheries, livestock and non-farm economic activities..	Short term (Years 1–2)
Outcome	Displaced and host communities are able to re-establish diverse income-generating activities following displacement events.	

Policy Action 10.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen access to markets, services and value chains for displacement-affected populations.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Livelihood recovery is sustained through improved economic integration and market access..	

Actions:	10.2.1 – 10.2.2
Lead	MALFFB

Support	Provincial Authorities; NDMO, DLA; Department of Labor
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for restoration of livelihoods through access to inputs, tools, technical support and extension services across farm and non-farm sectors (linked to 10.2.1) • Inclusion of displacement-affected populations within local market systems and value chain recovery initiatives (linked to 10.2.2) • Strengthening of local supply chains, services and distribution networks in displacement-affected areas (linked to 10.2.2)

10.3 Skills development, employment and inclusion

Policy Action 10.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Promote access to skills development, vocational training and employment opportunities for displaced populations in high-risk and displacement-prone areas	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing
Outcome	Displaced populations, including youth, are able to access employment and diversify income sources without long-term disruption to livelihood trajectories.	

Policy Action 10.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Ensure inclusive livelihood programming that addresses the needs of women, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Livelihood interventions are inclusive and responsive to diverse needs in displacement contexts.	

Actions:	10.3.1 – 10.3.2
Lead	MALFFB; Vanuatu Skills Partnership
Support	Ministry of Trade and Commerce; MIPU; Provincial Authorities; Vanuatu Society for people with Disabilities; MoJCS; MoET; Department of Youth and Sports
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of vocational training and skills development programmes tailored to displacement-affected populations in high-risk and displacement-prone areas (linked to 10.3.1) • Inclusion of youth in livelihood recovery measures, including access to vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, in collaboration with TVET

providers, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and private sector employers, with targeted support for young women facing barriers to participation (linked to 10.3.1)

- Targeted support to promote participation of women, persons with disabilities and older persons in livelihood activities (linked to 10.3.2)

10.4 Livelihood Diversification and Adaptation

Policy Action 10.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Promote diversified and adaptive livelihood options in high-risk and relocation settings.	Medium to Long term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Households reduce exposure to repeated displacement-related economic loss.	

Policy Action 10.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Support skills development and enterprise opportunities linked to evolving settlement patterns.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Economic activities align with changing environmental and settlement conditions.	
Actions:	10.4.1 – 10.4.2	
Lead	MALFFB	
Support	Ministry of Trade and Commerce; MoET; Vanuatu Skills Partnership; Provincial Authorities; relevant stakeholders	
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector guidelines for livelihood diversification in climate and displacement-prone areas (linked to 10.4.1) • Pilot livelihood adaptation initiatives in selected high-risk and relocation communities (linked to 10.4.1) • Skills development modules supporting alternative income pathways linked to agricultural and marine sectors (linked to 10.4.2) • Enterprise support mechanisms aligned with new settlement and market dynamics (linked to 10.4.2) 	

Sector Strategic Area 11 Safety and Security

Objective

Maintain lawful order and public confidence during displacement through anticipatory policing, conflict prevention and protection of persons and assets.

Rational and Background

Security in Vanuatu rests on a combination of statutory authority and community-based legitimacy. The Vanuatu Police Force, supported by correctional services and local leadership structures, sustains everyday order and mediates disputes across geographically dispersed islands.

Evacuation, temporary sheltering and relocation change settlement density, modify access to shared resources and introduce unfamiliar authority arrangements. Even where intent is cooperative, rapid demographic shifts can strain customary boundaries, generate misunderstanding or create opportunities for misconduct. In confined evacuation settings, privacy is reduced and supervision pressures increase. In host communities, perceptions of unequal assistance or land access may create friction.

Security risk in displacement contexts is therefore relational as well as operational. It concerns trust between institutions and communities, predictability of enforcement and clarity of rules in unfamiliar environments. If authority is absent or inconsistent, minor incidents can escalate and disrupt recovery efforts.

Since the adoption of the 2018 Policy, hazard events have demonstrated that early visibility of law enforcement, structured engagement with local leaders and prompt response to grievances contribute significantly to stability. Conversely, uncertainty regarding jurisdiction, delayed intervention or unclear communication can weaken confidence and prolong disruption.

Displacement contexts also create heightened protection risks, including gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse, child protection concerns and reduced access to essential services. Safety considerations must therefore extend beyond security and law enforcement to include prevention, risk reduction and community-based protection approaches. These risks are often compounded in evacuation centres, temporary settlements and relocation sites, particularly for women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. While public order and operational preparedness remain essential, safety and security actions are grounded in the protection of displaced persons from violence, exploitation, abuse and rights violations, including gender-based violence and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Measures must prioritise

prevention, support survivor-centred approaches and ensure accessible, trusted reporting mechanisms.

This Strategic Area embeds displacement considerations within policing, community safety engagement and asset protection mandates. It does not create new governance structures but ensures that existing security institutions anticipate and manage the altered social dynamics associated with displacement, operating within the broader coordination and safeguard architecture established under System Strategic Areas 1 to 5.

Cross-Cutting Considerations

Safety and security actions under this Strategic Area must be implemented in ways that uphold human rights, proportionality and accountability. Particular attention must be given to the protection of women, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable individuals in displacement settings. Community engagement and dialogue should guide policing approaches in host and relocation contexts, recognising customary authority structures and local conflict resolution practices. Security measures must support, not undermine, social cohesion and recovery. Protection of infrastructure and public assets should align with hazard risk considerations and settlement planning decisions.

11.1 Public Order and Operational Preparedness

Policy Action 11.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Integrate displacement scenarios into operational planning of law enforcement and community safety institutions.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Safety institutions anticipate population movement and are prepared to manage associated public order risks.	

Policy Action 11.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Deploy community-oriented policing approaches in evacuation, host and relocation settings, and support inclusive evacuation centre management structures with community representation and accessible mechanisms for reporting safety, gender-based violence and exploitation and abuse incidents.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing
Outcome	Risks of gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse in displacement settings are reduced, and affected persons, particularly women, children and persons with disabilities, have clear, accessible and safe pathways to report incidents and access support.	

Actions:	11.1.1 – 11.1.2
Lead	Ministry of Internal Affairs; Vanuatu Police Force; Vanuatu Mobile Force
Support	MoJCS, Provincial Authorities; MoCC, Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of operational policing plans to include displacement and evacuation scenarios (linked to 11.1.1) • Standard operating procedures for law enforcement deployment in evacuation centres and temporary settlements (linked to 11.1.1) • Community policing engagement protocols tailored to host and relocation contexts (linked to 11.1.2) • Structured liaison mechanisms between police and community leaders in displacement-affected areas (linked to 11.1.2) • Integration of safety and protection considerations, including gender-based violence and exploitation risks, into evacuation centre management arrangements (linked to 11.1.2)

11.2 Protection of Vulnerable Persons

Policy Action 11.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen prevention and response measures addressing risks of violence, exploitation and abuse in displacement settings, including gender-based violence, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and child protection concerns.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing
Outcome	Protection risks in displacement settings are reduced through preventive, community-based and institutional measures..	

Policy Action 11.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Enhance coordination between law enforcement and existing protection services in displacement-affected communities.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Security responses reinforce, rather than duplicate, established protection mechanisms.	

Actions:	11.2.1 – 11.2.2
Lead	Lead Ministry

Support	MoIA; Vanuatu Police Force; Vanuatu Mobile Force; MoJCS; MoH; Provincial Authorities
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment guidance addressing gender-based violence, exploitation and child protection risks in evacuation and temporary accommodation settings (linked to 11.2.1) • Measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and exploitation and abuse in displacement settings (linked to 11.2.1) • Community-based protection mechanisms to identify and address safety risks (linked to 11.2.1) • Referral coordination procedures aligning policing response with existing protection services (linked to 11.2.2) • Awareness initiatives clarifying reporting channels and available protection services in displacement-affected communities (linked to 11.2.2)

11.3 Community Stability and Conflict Mitigation

Policy Action 11.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Prevent and manage disputes arising from displacement-related resource pressures and settlement changes.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Displacement-related tensions are addressed early and do not escalate into broader instability.	

Policy Action 11.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Support structured engagement between law enforcement and customary authorities in relocation and host contexts.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Security interventions align with customary leadership structures and strengthen local legitimacy.	

Actions:	11.3.1 – 11.3.2
Lead	Vanuatu Police Force; NDMO
Support	MoJCS; Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Malvatumauri; Provincial Authorities; relevant stakeholders.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early warning indicators for displacement-related tension incorporated into policing practice (linked to 11.3.1) • Incident management guidelines addressing disputes over land, services or resource access in displacement contexts (linked to 11.3.1)

- Engagement frameworks formalising communication between police and customary leaders (linked to 11.3.2)
- Documentation of good practice in community-based dispute mitigation in relocation settings (linked to 11.3.2)

11.4 Protection of Critical Assets and Essential Services

Policy Action 11.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Strengthen protection of critical public infrastructure and facilities during displacement events.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing
Outcome	Essential services and public assets remain secure and operational in displacement contexts.	

Policy Action 11.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Enhance incident reporting and response coordination related to safety risks in displacement settings.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Safety incidents are identified and addressed in a timely and structured manner.	

Actions:	11.4.1 – 11.4.2
Lead	MoIA; Vanuatu Police Force
Support	MIPU; Provincial Authorities; MOJCS; relevant NGOs and INGOs
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection plans for critical facilities including evacuation centres, health facilities and storage sites (linked to 11.4.1) • Security deployment guidelines for safeguarding infrastructure during and after hazard events (linked to 11.4.1) • Integration of displacement-related safety incidents within existing reporting systems (linked to 11.4.2) • Periodic review of incident response effectiveness in displacement-affected provinces (linked to 11.4.2)

Sector Strategic Area 12 Traditional Knowledge and Culture

Objective

Preserve and integrate traditional knowledge, cultural heritage and kastom authority within displacement responses to sustain social legitimacy, continuity and collective identity.

Rational and Background

Customary governance structures, oral traditions, land-based spiritual connections and community rituals shape how decisions are made and how communities understand belonging. These systems continue to operate alongside formal institutions and remain foundational to social order.

Climate change and disaster-induced displacement disrupt not only physical settlements but also cultural continuity. Temporary evacuation, prolonged displacement, relocation and urban migration can separate communities from ancestral land, sacred sites (tabu places) and customary leadership structures. In such contexts, the erosion of cultural practices may deepen social fragmentation and weaken legitimacy of decision-making.

Traditional knowledge has long guided resource use, seasonal planning, hazard awareness and adaptation practices. As climate variability intensifies, these knowledge systems remain relevant. However, displacement and generational change risk interrupting the transmission of such knowledge, particularly where communities are resettled or urbanised.

Relocation processes may affect gravesites, sacred spaces and spiritually significant land. Where these dimensions are overlooked, relocation can generate resistance, tension and long-term grievance. Conversely, when cultural authority and knowledge are recognised within displacement planning, decisions are more likely to be accepted and sustained.

This Strategic Area positions traditional knowledge and culture as integral to displacement governance at all stages of preparedness, response, relocation and recovery. It assumes that institutional coordination, safeguard systems, financing architecture and national evidence mechanisms are established under System Strategic Areas 1 to 5. It focuses specifically on cultural integrity, legitimacy and continuity within displacement contexts.

Cross-Cutting Considerations

Traditional knowledge and cultural actions under this Strategic Area must be implemented in ways that recognise the authority of customary institutions while remaining consistent with

national law and constitutional principles. Engagement with chiefs and traditional governance structures should be structured, transparent and clearly linked to decision-making processes. Cultural processes associated with displacement planning must be inclusive, ensuring that women, youth and marginalised groups have meaningful opportunities to contribute to consultations and community deliberations. Protection of sacred sites, gravesites and historically significant landscapes must be addressed proactively in evacuation, relocation and settlement development planning so that cultural loss is not an unintended consequence of risk reduction measures. Documentation and preservation of traditional knowledge must respect cultural ownership and intellectual rights, and transmission initiatives should strengthen intergenerational continuity without codifying or appropriating customary systems. Cultural engagement in displacement contexts should reinforce social cohesion between host and displaced communities and support peaceful adaptation to social and environmental change.

12.1 Customary Authority and Cultural Governance

Policy Action 12.1.1		Timeframe
Action	Recognise and engage customary authorities in displacement-related decision-making processes affecting land, relocation and community governance.	Short term (Years 1–2) ongoing
Outcome	Displacement decisions are grounded in recognised customary authority structures and command community legitimacy.	

Policy Action 12.1.2		Timeframe
Action	Ensure displacement planning processes respect kastom protocols and community decision-making traditions.	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Planning processes align with customary norms and strengthen community acceptance of outcomes.	

Actions:	12.1.1 – 12.1.2
Lead	Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Malvatumauri;
Support	MoLNR; MoCC; MoIA; Provincial Authorities; relevant stakeholders
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for engagement of chiefs and customary councils in displacement and relocation processes (linked to 12.1.1) Documentation of kastom consultation protocols to be applied in displacement planning (linked to 12.1.2)

- Advisory framework clarifying interaction between customary and formal decision-making structures in relocation contexts (linked to 12.1.1)
- Inclusion of kastom compliance checkpoints within relocation planning templates (linked to 12.1.2)

12.2 Traditional Knowledge in Risk Awareness and Adaptation

Policy Action 12.2.1		Timeframe
Action	Promote the use of traditional knowledge within community-level displacement preparedness and adaptation initiatives, ensuring that such knowledge informs locally appropriate approaches.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Community risk awareness and adaptation practices are informed by both scientific and traditional knowledge systems..	

Policy Action 12.2.2		Timeframe
Action	Support preservation and intergenerational transmission of traditional coping and adaptation practices in displacement-affected communities.	Medium to Long term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Traditional knowledge systems remain active and accessible despite displacement pressures.	

Policy Action 12.2.3		Timeframe
Action	Develop and disseminate educational materials for students and communities on displacement, disaster preparedness and durable solutions, integrated within national curriculum, school-based disaster risk reduction programmes and community awareness initiatives. Materials should be produced in Bislama and vernacular languages and be culturally appropriate across island contexts	Medium to Long term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Communities and students demonstrate improved awareness of displacement risks, preparedness measures and culturally grounded response practices.	

Actions:	12.2.1 – 12.2.3
Lead	Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Malvatumauri;

Support	MoET; MoIA; Provincial Authorities; Faith based organisations; other relevant stakeholders
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community documentation initiatives capturing traditional knowledge and mapping of kinship, historical networks and cultural systems relevant to displacement and climate adaptation (linked to 12.2.1) • Integration of traditional hazard indicators within community awareness materials (linked to 12.2.1) • Cultural knowledge preservation programmes in relocation and host communities (linked to 12.2.2) • Support frameworks for intergenerational transmission of customary practices disrupted by displacement (linked to 12.2.2) • Integration of displacement, disaster preparedness and durable solutions content into national curriculum and school-based DRR programmes (linked to 12.2.3) • Development and dissemination of culturally appropriate educational materials in Bislama and vernacular languages (linked to 12.2.3) • Community awareness initiatives on displacement risks and preparedness approaches aligned with cultural practices (linked to 12.2.3)

12.3 Protection of Cultural Heritage in Displacement Contexts

Policy Action 12.3.1		Timeframe
Action	Protect culturally significant sites, artefacts and spiritual locations in evacuation, return and relocation processes	Short to Medium term (Years 1–3)
Outcome	Cultural heritage assets are identified and safeguarded during displacement movements.	

Policy Action 12.3.2		Timeframe
Action	Ensure all stages of displacement and relocation planning consider spiritual, historical and cultural attachments to land.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Cultural and spiritual attachment to place is recognised in displacement and relocation decisions.	

Policy Action 12.3.3		Timeframe
Action	Support the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, customary authorities and local institutions to develop cultural	Medium term (Years 2–5)

	security and preparedness measures that minimise non-economic loss and damage associated with displacement.	
Outcome	Cultural heritage, practices and social structures are proactively protected and maintained throughout displacement processes.	

Actions:	12.3.1 – 12.3.2
Lead	Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Support	Lead Ministry; MoLNR; Provincial Authorities; MoIA; National Archives; relevant stakeholders
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage screening guidelines for relocation site selection (linked to 12.3.1) • Registry of culturally significant sites at risk from displacement impacts (linked to 12.3.1) • Advisory procedures for addressing gravesites and sacred areas in relocation planning (linked to 12.3.2) • Integration of cultural heritage considerations within settlement development planning tools (linked to 12.3.2) • Cultural heritage documentation protocols applied prior to evacuation or relocation (linked to 12.3.3) • Community-based cultural resilience and continuity planning frameworks (linked to 12.3.3) • Cultural protocols guiding displacement, relocation and settlement processes (linked to 12.3.3)

12.4 Cultural Continuity and Social Identity

Policy Action 12.4.1		Timeframe
Action	Support cultural practice, language and identity preservation in host, return and relocation communities.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Displacement does not result in erosion of cultural identity and community cohesion.	

Policy Action 12.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Encourage dialogue and cultural exchange mechanisms that promote peaceful coexistence between host and displaced communities.	Medium term (Years 2–5)

Outcome	Cultural engagement contributes to stability and social harmony.	
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Actions:	12.4.1 – 12.4.2
Lead	Vanuatu Cultural Centre
Support	Provincial Authorities; Malvatumauri; DLA;
Outputs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community cultural preservation initiatives in displacement-affected areas (linked to 12.4.1) • Programmatic support for traditional ceremonies and identity practices in relocation settings (linked to 12.4.1) • Structured cultural dialogue initiatives between host and relocated communities (linked to 12.4.2) • Documentation of good practice in culturally grounded dispute prevention in displacement contexts (linked to 12.4.2)

12.5 Personal and civil documentation

Policy Action 12.5.1		Timeframe
Action	Map family histories, birth records, connections to land, and property and assets ownership to provide records in the event of displacement.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Access to verified documentation supporting identity protection, land and asset recovery, and access to services is maintained during and after displacement.	

Policy Action 12.4.2		Timeframe
Action	Improve birth registration to ensure personal identification documentation is protected in the event of displacement, in line with existing efforts by the Department of Civil Registry and Vital Statistics and the Ministry of Health.	Medium term (Years 2–5)
Outcome	Reliable personal identification documents are available to protect legal status and enable access to essential services, benefits, and recovery assistance during and after displacement	
Actions:	12.5.1 – 12.5.2	
Lead	Civil Registry and Vital Statistics (CRVS), NCLMO	
Support	Lead ministry; VKS, Malvatumari; DLA; MoH	
Outputs		

- Baseline survey and Displacement Documentation Protocol finalised (linked to 12.5.1).
- Individuals' identity, land, and property records mapped and preserved (linked to 12.5.1).
- Secure digital archives established for individuals and community histories and records (linked to 12.5.1)
- Documentation linked to relocation, legal, and recovery processes (linked to 12.5.1).
- Mobile birth registration services operating in high-priority displacement locations (linked to 12.5.2).
- Outreach campaigns to increase birth registration delivered at provincial level (linked to 12.5.2).
- Birth registration integrated into relocation and humanitarian systems (linked 12.5.2).
- Periodic tracking of registration rates in high-risk areas (linked 12.5.2).

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