

SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	Vanuatu	Project Title:	COVID-19 Response for Affected Poor and Vulnerable Groups Project
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project	Department/Division:	Pacific Regional Department/Social Sectors and Public Sector Management Division

I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY
Poverty targeting: targeted intervention
A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy, and Country Partnership Strategy
<p>The project is aligned with Vanuatu's Recovery Strategy, which recognizes the compound effects of Tropical Cyclone Harold (TCH) and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and which, among other things, aims to enhance lives and livelihoods through greater food processing and preservation capabilities, food security and nutrition, and promotion of income-generating activities.^a The project also supports the National Gender Equality Policy. Accordingly, the Ministry of Justice and Community Services launched a plan to (i) prevent gender-based violence (GBV) through public awareness and advocacy; (ii) engage men and boys to end violence against women and girls; (iii) strengthen protective, social, and support services—e.g., protection of women, children, and people living with a disability—in times of emergencies; and (iv) improve productivity, skills, and income for women in the informal and traditional economy. The project is aligned with the Pacific Approach 2021–2025—the country partnership strategy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the 11 smaller Pacific developing member countries, including Vanuatu—and its focus on minimizing vulnerabilities to external shocks.^b The project supports ADB's Strategy 2030 and its operational priorities of reducing poverty and inequality; accelerating progress in gender equality; and promoting rural development and food security.</p>
B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during Project Preparation or Due Diligence
<p>1. Key poverty and social issues. Vanuatu is a small Pacific island country with a land mass of 12,281.25 square kilometers and an estimated population of 307,105 in 2020.^c The urban centers of Port Vila and Luganville have the highest population density and poverty levels.^d The urban population has been growing at about 3.5% annually, compared with 2.3% annually for the rural population.^e The combined economic impacts of COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold are estimated at Vt60.35 billion, or 54% of the gross domestic product forecast for 2020,^f and Vanuatu's economy is estimated to have contracted by about 8.5% in 2020. The pandemic-related travel and trade restrictions had significant impacts on the tourism industry and related sectors. Tourism contributed \$175.8 million (19.3%) to Vanuatu's gross domestic product in 2019 and accounted for 29.7% of total employment; the provinces of Shefa (capital: Port Vila) and Sanma (capital: Luganville) are the nation's main tourism destinations.^g Reductions in income are expected to have a more pronounced impact on households who rely predominantly on cash purchases to meet basic needs, especially in urban areas (footnote f). In Vanuatu's informal sector, women account for more than 75% of market vendors and have been hard hit by zero international tourism.^h</p> <p>2. Beneficiaries. The project directly addresses food security and income generation needs among key vulnerable groups, such as female informal workers and adolescent girls. It targets at least 250 poor and vulnerable households headed by women who are affected by the pandemic, giving priority to survivors of GBV and/or carers for a person living with a disability. The project will also directly benefit at least 500 adolescent girls and 500 adolescent boys through GBV education and prevention activities, and reach at least 15,000 young people through online GBV awareness campaigns.</p> <p>3. Impact channels. Output 1's direct impact channels include the provision to at least 250 poor and vulnerable households headed by women of (i) backyard garden kits (raised beds, seeds, soil, fertilizer, tools, and equipment); (ii) training on backyard garden cultivation and healthy nutrition; and (iii) training on food processing and packaging standards, development of microenterprises, and business coaching. Indirect impact channels include news and social media campaigns to disseminate backyard gardening methods, particularly vertical gardening; success stories; lessons; and approaches to food preservation and packaging. Promotional "Vanuatu Made" events will reach hundreds of the wider community who attend and learn about new and improved approaches to food preparation, preservation, and nutrition; and gain better access to locally prepared, affordable, and healthy foods. Output 2's direct impact channels include (i) GBV prevention activities, training, and mentorship to empower and build leadership skills and education on sexual reproductive health and menstrual health management among adolescent girls; and (ii) training to empower adolescent boys to engage in healthy and respectful relationships and to speak out against violence against women and girls.</p> <p>4. Other social and poverty issues. The project focuses on households headed by women. Support to other vulnerable groups is being provided by other development partners. The Oxfam cash transfer program has funding to support vulnerable households in Port Vila (caring for a person with disability) and in Luganville (caring for a person with disability and/or affected by TCH). The governments of New Zealand, Australia, and Vanuatu support workers</p>

through the Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme and Australian Seasonal Worker Program; about 3,656 workers are currently employed in Australia, while 1,336 were deployed after the borders closed.ⁱ

5. **Design features.** The project design seeks to support and increase the skills and knowledge needed to improve food security, nutrition, and livelihoods affected by the pandemic. Integrated support will be given to poor and vulnerable women who were disproportionately affected. The targeted households will (i) be given backyard gardening training as well as the materials, tools, and equipment to apply the new skills, and follow-up support; (ii) be trained in food processing and packaging, and given a seed grant for buying equipment and materials; and (iii) receive training on how to start, manage, and sustain microenterprises, supported by the Department of Industry.

II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. **Participatory approaches and project activities.** The project design was informed by community consultations to better understand the challenges faced by vulnerable households headed by women, and to determine how the project interventions can best provide assistance. The involvement of poor and vulnerable women beneficiaries will be ensured through continuous consultations and entrepreneurial coaching during implementation; and civil society organizations (CSOs) will be directly involved in the implementation.

2. **Civil society organizations.** The project will coordinate closely with CSOs to maximize the impacts for project beneficiaries and promote the sustainability of project outcomes. *Wan Smolbag*, a local nongovernment organization (NGO), will design and deliver nutrition training under output 1 and an NGO specializing in GBV will be involved in Output 2. It is envisioned that NGOs will be involved in the design and implementation of periodic surveys, and will also play a key role in monitoring and evaluation, and in networking.

3. The following forms of civil society organization participation are envisaged during project implementation, rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):

Information gathering and sharing (H) Consultation (H) Collaboration (M) Partnership (N/A)

4. **Participation plan.** A stakeholder communication strategy prepared during project implementation will ensure effective communication with the beneficiaries and the involvement of CSOs as representatives of poor and vulnerable groups to reach potential project participants and provide services to the project.

Yes. No.

III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: gender equity theme

A. Key issues. Disasters and shocks are experienced differently by different groups in society. Women are more likely to fall outside formal employment protection systems, since they account for a smaller share of the paid workforce and dominate the informal economy in Vanuatu.^j The COVID-19 border closure drastically reduced incomes earned through tourism and tourism-related employment or as operators of microenterprises such as handicraft stalls, which are dominated by women. A national survey by Oxfam Vanuatu reports that 31% of female respondents in Shefa and Sanma provinces lost their job because of COVID-19, and 44.5% said they were struggling or unable to access fresh food markets, while only 21.8% reported having access to food gardens.^k The urban and peri-urban areas have a high percentage of single-parent households—23% of households in Port Vila and almost 25% of households in Luganville are headed by women, most with 1–9 dependents.^l While all households in Vanuatu tightened spending on food, education, and health as a result of COVID-19 and TCH, households led by women are likely to carry a greater burden of adjustment. Adolescent girls are also particularly vulnerable when they lose peer support because of mobility restrictions during lockdown. It can lead to depression and anxiety, increased boredom and risk-taking behaviors, more exposure to predators, and online harassment, exploitation, and bullying.

B. Key actions. The project will directly target poor and vulnerable households headed by women who are struggling with the compound effects of COVID-19 and TCH. Output 1 will support 250 poor and vulnerable households headed by women with (i) backyard gardening and crop management training, including material and equipment to apply the new skills; (ii) food preparation and nutrition training; (iii) food processing training and microbusiness coaching; (iv) seed grants and promotional support to launch a microenterprise at "Vanuatu Made" events; (v) an allowance to compensate for time spent in training; (vi) childcare support for women attending the training; and (vii) representation in working groups. Output 2 activities include (i) curriculum development to support adolescent girls' safety and empowerment, and modules to sensitize boys and primary carers; (ii) mentorship support to empower and build leadership skills among adolescent girls; (iii) a safety and empowerment program for adolescent girls; (iv) awareness and capacity building for adolescent boys to promote healthy and consensual relationships; (v) online GBV prevention campaigns and events; (vi) policy papers highlighting insights from and scalability of the program for adolescent girls; (vii) independent monitoring of the program for adolescent girls; and (viii) participation in at least one regional event highlighting the lessons from the program.

Gender action plan Other actions or measures No action or measure

IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

A. Involuntary Resettlement

Safeguard Category: A B C FI

1. Key impacts. The project will not lead to involuntary resettlement or land acquisition.

2. Strategy to address the impacts. Not applicable.

3. Plan or other Actions.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement and indigenous peoples plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement framework	<input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action	
B. Indigenous Peoples	Safeguard Category: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI
1. Key impacts. The project will not have any impacts on indigenous people as defined under ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (2009).	
Is broad community support triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
2. Strategy to address the impacts. Not applicable.	
3. Plan or other actions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement plan and indigenous peoples plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples planning framework	<input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan elements integrated in project with a summary
<input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action	
V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS	
A. Risks in the Labor Market	
1. Relevance of the project for the country's or region's or sector's labor market, indicated as high (H), medium (M), and low or not significant (L).	
<input type="checkbox"/> unemployment (L) <input type="checkbox"/> underemployment (L) <input type="checkbox"/> retrenchment (L) <input type="checkbox"/> core labor standards (L)	
2. Labor market impact. No significant labor market impact of the project is expected.	
B. Affordability: The government will procure the supplies needed for the food security and income generation activities to prevent disadvantageous pricing of goods that might deter project participants.	
C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks	
1. The impact of the following risks are rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicable diseases (NA) <input type="checkbox"/> Human trafficking (NA)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____	
2. Risks to people in project area. No communicable diseases and other social risks to the project are envisaged.	
VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	
1. Targets and indicators. Poor and vulnerable female heads of households, and adolescent girls and boys are the targeted beneficiaries, as reflected in the design and monitoring framework and the gender action plan.	
2. Required human resources. A gender specialist, a consulting firm specialized in GBV prevention, and a consulting firm experienced in monitoring and evaluation will be engaged to help implement and monitor targets and indicators for the poor and vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls.	
3. Information in the project administration manual. A specific number of vulnerable groups expected to benefit from the project, and gender targets are reflected in the project administration manual for monitoring.	
4. Monitoring tools. The project team will design a project performance monitoring system as an overall project monitoring tool. The monitoring and evaluation consulting firm will undertake independent regular monitoring and periodic evaluation surveys.	

^a Government of Vanuatu. 2020. *Yumi Evriwan Tugeta, Vanuatu Recovery Strategy 2020–2023*. Port Vila.

^b ADB. 2021. *The Pacific Approach, 2021–2025*. Manila.

^c World Population Review. [Vanuatu Population 2021 \(Demographics, Maps, Graphs\)](#) (accessed 13 September 2021).

^d Vanuatu National Statistics Office. 2016. *Mini Census Report*. Port Vila, Vanuatu; and Vanuatu National Statistics Office. 2010. *Household Income and Expenditure Survey*. Port Vila.

^e Vanuatu National Statistics Office. 2016. *Mini Census Report*. Port Vila.

^f Government of Vanuatu. 2020. *Yumi Evriwan Tugeta, Vanuatu Recovery Strategy 2020-2023, version 1.0*. Port Vila.

^g Food and Agriculture Organization. 2020. *Impacts of COVID-19 on the Food Systems in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) and A Look into the PSIDS Responses*. Bangkok.

^h The UN Women. [Markets for Change Vanuatu, Brief](#) (accessed online 20 January 2020).

ⁱ Noy, Pacific Labour Facility (personal communication, 16 April 2021).

^j CARE. 2020. [CARE Rapid Gender Analysis COVID-19 Vanuatu](#) (accessed 1 May 2021). Women make up half the producers (49.5%) in the informal and traditional economy including the growing and processing food, cash crops, and production of handicraft

^k Oxfam Vanuatu. 2020. *Vulnerable Livelihood and Income Impact Survey*. Port Vila.

^l Vanuatu National Statistics Office. 2016. *Post TC Pam Mini Census Report*. Port Vila.

Source: Asian Development Bank.