



## ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/PPRC.37/40  
April 7-8, 2026

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Adaptation Fund Board  
Project and Programme Review Committee  
Thirty-seventh meeting  
Bonn, Germany

Agenda Item 7 i)

### **LOCALLY-LED ADAPTATION SINGLE COUNTRY PROPOSAL FOR VANUATU**

## Background

1. At its thirtieth meeting, having considered document AFB/B.30/5/Rev.1, the Adaptation Fund Board decided:

*(a) To adopt the medium-term strategy as amended by the Board, as contained in the Annex 1 of the document AFB/B.30/5/Rev.1 (the MTS); and*

*(b) To request the secretariat:*

*(i) To broadly disseminate the MTS and work with key stakeholders to build understanding and support;*

*(ii) To prepare, under the supervision of the MTS task force, a draft implementation plan for operationalizing the MTS, containing a draft budget and addressing key assumptions and risks, including but not limited to funding and political risks, for consideration by the Board at its thirty-first meeting; and*

*(iii) To draft, as part of the implementation plan, the updates/modifications to the operational policies and guidelines of the Adaptation Fund needed to facilitate implementation of the MTS, for consideration by the Board at its thirty-first meeting.*

*(Decision B.30/42)*

2. Pursuant to decision B.30/42, subparagraph b (ii), the secretariat prepared a draft implementation plan for the MTS, including an assessment of assumptions and risks. The secretariat shared a version of the draft with the MTS task force for comments.

3. The draft implementation plan also contains suggestions for specific funding windows that might be opened under the MTS in complement of the Fund's existing funding windows for single-country and regional adaptation projects and readiness support projects. Following the approval of the implementation plan, the secretariat would present specific proposed details for each new funding window at subsequent meetings of the Board for its consideration, in accordance with the timeline contained in the implementation plan.

4. At its thirty-first meeting, the Adaptation Fund Board discussed the draft implementation plan for the MTS, and members of the Board proposed amendments to the document. The secretariat then presented a revised draft, in document AFB/B.31/5/Rev.1. Having considered that document, the Board decided:

*(a) To approve the implementation plan for the medium-term strategy for the Fund for 2018–2022 contained in the Annex I to document AFB/B.31/5/Rev.1 (the plan);*

*(b) To request the secretariat:*

*[...]*

- (iii) *To prepare, for each proposed new type of grant and funding window, a specific document containing objectives, review criteria, expected grant sizes, implementation modalities, review process and other relevant features and submit it to the Board for its consideration in accordance with the tentative timeline contained in Annex I to document AFB/B.31/5/Rev.1, with input from the Board's committees;*
- (iv) *Following consideration of the new types of support mentioned in subparagraph (b)(iii), to propose, as necessary, amendments to the Fund's operational policies and guidelines Fund to better facilitate the implementation of such new types of support; and*

[...]

*(Decision B.31/32)*

5. Having recognized that there was a high level of interest among the Fund's stakeholders on Enhanced Direct Access (EDA), a specific funding window on EDA was included in the MTS implementation plan to complement the Fund's existing funding window for single-country projects.

6. At the second session of its thirty-fifth meeting the Board considered the document AFB/PPRC.26.b/18, Window for Enhanced Direct Access under the MTS and the Board decided:

- (a) *To approve the pilot for projects submitted through the window for enhanced direct access (EDA) to promote EDA and further promote locally led adaptation under the Fund;*
- (b) *That the pilot window to promote EDA projects/programmes shall be available to national implementing entities (NIEs) only, in the form of a grant up to a maximum of US\$5 million per country;*
- (c) *That the window for EDA will not count against what the country could access under the country cap established by the Board for regular concrete projects/programmes;*
- (d) *That the execution costs for proposals submitted under the EDA window should be up to a maximum of 12 per cent of the total project/programme budget requested before the implementing entity fees, and should not exceed 1.5 per cent in cases where the Implementing Entity has also taken on the role of Execution Entity for the proposed project/programme activities, and that the implementing entity fee should be up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the total project costs;*
- (e) *That NIEs submitting proposals through the EDA window should do so using the existing approved proposal template and guideline materials for regular concrete projects/programmes nonetheless taking note of the project fees in subparagraph (d) and that EDA proposals submitted through the two-step project approval process are eligible for the project formulation grant and project formulation assistance grant as per the approved criteria by the Board for those grants;*
- (f) *That the review cycle and approval of projects/programmes submitted through the EDA window shall follow the review and approval process as well as reporting*

*requirements for regular projects/programmes under the Fund notwithstanding adherence to subparagraph where it concerns the review and approval of project fees; and*

*(g) To request the secretariat to present to the PPRC at its twenty-eighth meeting, an analysis of the project review cycle for EDA projects including an update on the implementation status of the EDA window.*

*(Decision B.35.b/10)*

7. The Adaptation Fund Board adopted at its thirty-ninth meeting in October 2022 the medium-term strategy of the Adaptation Fund for the period 2023-2027 (MTS-II). The strategy introduced a special emphasis on promoting locally led adaptation (LLA) in the Fund's work and included a new cross-cutting theme to "Promote locally based and locally led adaptation action including by devolving access and decision-making on adaptation finance to national, subnational, and local levels."

8. Three modalities were proposed through Decision B.40/72 in March 2023:

*(a) Enhancing the existing Enhanced Direct Access window,*

*(b) Establishing a new Global MIE Aggregator programme for channeling grants for LLA to non-accredited entities,*

*(c) Opening the option for EDA-type national programmes for MIEs and RIEs.*

9. The Adaptation Fund Board at its forty-second board meeting in April 2024, considered the paper entitled 'Additional delivery modalities for expanding support to locally led adaptation' and the Board decided:

*Single country locally-led adaptation projects and programmes*

*a. To merge the window for enhanced direct access into an expanded and enhanced window for single-country locally led adaptation (LLA) projects/programmes as contained in paragraphs 37–42 of document AFB/PPRC.33/39;*

*b. That the window for single-country LLA projects/programmes will be available for access by eligible countries through national, regional or multilateral implementing entities, in the form of a grant of up to a maximum of US\$ 5 million per project;*

*c. That the window for single-country LLA programmes will continue to be financed outside the country cap established by the Board for regular concrete projects/programmes;*

*d. That single-country LLA proposals can be submitted through the three-step project approval process and are eligible for a project formulation grant (PFG) for a maximum of US\$ 150,000 as per the approved criteria by the Board for those grants;*

*e. That an additional PFG amount (inclusive of the management fee) can be provided on a case-by-case basis for LLA projects up to a maximum of US\$ 100,000, and that such amount should be dedicated to support activities that enable decision making by local actors over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed and implemented;*

- f. *That, for a PFG at the pre-concept stage, up to 20 percent of the maximum amount of the PFG set in subparagraphs (d) and (e) above could be granted;*
- g. *To approve the revised proposal template and project review sheet contained in annex 3 and annex 4 to document AFB/PPRC.33/39, respectively;*
- h. *To request the secretariat to develop instructions for preparing requests for proposals and additional guideline materials for projects/programmes under this window;*

[...]

(Decision B.42/37)

10. Having considered the recommendation of the Project and Programme Review Committee, the Board decided to include in its work programme for fiscal year 2026 a provision for an amount of US\$ 26.5 million for single country LLA grants (B.44/41).

11. The following concept note proposal document titled “*ROOTS – Restoring Our Original Trees and Shore – Nature-based, Community-Led forest restoration and Management*” was submitted for Vanuatu by The Pacific Community (SPC), which is a Regional Implementing Entity of the Adaptation Fund.

12. This is the fifth submission of the concept note proposal using the two-step submission process.

13. The current submission was received by the secretariat in time to be considered in the forty-sixth Board meeting. The secretariat carried out five technical reviews of the project proposal, with the Project ID number AF00000455.

14. In accordance with a request to the secretariat made by the Board in its 10th meeting, the secretariat shared this review sheet with SPC and offered it the opportunity of providing responses before the review sheet was sent to the PPRC.

15. The secretariat is submitting to the PPRC the summary and, pursuant to decision B.17/15, the final technical review of the project, both prepared by the secretariat, along with the final submission of the proposal in the following section. In accordance with decision B.25/15, the proposal is submitted with changes between the initial submission and the revised version highlighted or with track changes.



ADAPTATION FUND

# ADAPTATION FUND BOARD SECRETARIAT TECHNICAL REVIEW OF PROJECT/PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

PROJECT/PROGRAMME CATEGORY: LLA Single country concept note

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**Country/Region:** Vanuatu  
**Project Title:** ROOTS – Restoring Our Original Trees and Shore – Nature-based, Community-Led forest restoration and Management  
**Thematic Focal Area:** Ecosystem-based Adaptation / Nature-based Solutions (with a focus on forest restoration and management)  
**Implementing Entity:** Pacific Community (SPC)  
**Executing Entities:** Vanuatu Department of Forestry; Pacific Community (SPC)  
**AF Project ID:** AF00000455  
**IE Project ID:** **Requested Financing from Adaptation Fund (US Dollars):** 5,000,000  
**Reviewer and contact person:** Andrew Hollander **Co-reviewer(s):** Alyssa Gomes  
**IE Contact Person:**

<b>Technical Summary:</b>	<p>The project “ROOTS – Restoring Our Original Trees and Shore – Nature-based, Community-Led forest restoration and Management” aims to address the entire restoration continuum, including community engagement and participatory planning, soil regeneration, nursery establishment, seedling production and management, site selection, planting, invasive species management, watershed and catchment management, plantation establishment, benefit-sharing mechanisms, long-term maintenance, monitoring, adaptive management, ongoing training, and documentation and knowledge sharing—ensuring comprehensive, science-based, and sustainable landscape restoration. This will be done through the three components below:</p> <p><u>Component 1:</u> Capacity Building, Institutional Strengthening &amp; Inclusive Planning (USD 539,957);</p> <p><u>Component 2:</u> Community-Led Restoration Implementation (USD 3,300,000);</p> <p><u>Component 3:</u> Knowledge Sharing, Monitoring &amp; Policy Mainstreaming (USD 460,000).</p> <p><u>Requested financing overview:</u>  Project/Programme Execution Cost: USD 308,338  Total Project/Programme Cost: USD 4,608,295  Implementing Fee: USD 391,705  Financing Requested: USD 5,000,0000</p>
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	<p><b>The proposal includes a request for a project formulation grant (PFG) of USD 225,000 (150,000 + 75,000)</b></p> <p>The initial technical review raised several issues, such as insufficient detail on project causal pathways, project activity sequencing, locally led adaptation arrangements, gender considerations, and enhanced stakeholder engagement among others, as is discussed in the number of Clarification Requests (CRs) and Corrective Action Requests (CARs) raised in the review.</p> <p>The second technical identified that there are a few remaining points requiring clarification or corrective action including issues related to land use tenure in Vanuatu, the use of unidentified sub-projects (USPs), complementarity with other projects, and calculating project execution costs, as discussed in the Clarification (CRs) and Corrective Action Requests) raised in the review.</p> <p>The third technical review identified only a few outstanding items requiring clarification or corrective action including issues related to consistency of figures across the proposal, output labelling, and application of the USP approach as discussed in the CR and CARs raised in the review.</p> <p>The fourth technical review identified only a couple outstanding items requiring clarification or corrective action include issues related to alignment with the Fund's results framework and the consistency of figures in the PFG application form, as discussed in the CR and CAR raised in the review</p> <p>The fifth technical review finds the pending CR and CAR to be addressed.</p>
Date:	February 17 , 2026

Review Criteria	Questions	Comments 1 <sup>st</sup> Review (August 20 <sup>th</sup> 2025)	Comments 2 <sup>nd</sup> Review (5 <sup>th</sup> November 2025)	Comments 3 <sup>rd</sup> Review (23 December 2025)	Comments 4 <sup>th</sup> Review (12 February 2026)	Comments 5 <sup>th</sup> Technical Review (17 February 2026)
Country Eligibility	1. Is the country party to the Kyoto Protocol and/or the Paris Agreement?	<b>Yes</b>	-	-	-	-
	2. Is the country a developing country particularly vulnerable to the adverse	<b>Yes</b> Vanuatu, an archipelagic nation in the South Pacific, is	-	<b><u>General feedback</u></b>  - Please note that in the final	=	=

	effects of climate change?	<p>among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. Vanuatu faces intensifying climate hazards, including cyclones, droughts, sea-level rise, and increased storm surges.</p> <p><b><u>General feedback</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please review page numbers (as pages 3-5 appear to be missing)</li> <li>- Please number the paragraphs</li> <li>- Please review the concept note cover page as the Type of Implementing Entity</li> </ul>		<p>version of the concept note submitted to the board, <b>the relevant boxes on the cover page</b> should be ticked referring to the LoE and stage of submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>It is important that the track changes version of the proposal is also submitted.</b> The current submission package included a document titled "track changes" but the document</li> </ul>		

		should read: Regional Implementing Entity.		was a clean version.		
Project Eligibility	1. Has the designated government authority for the Adaptation Fund endorsed the project/programme?	Yes, as per the Endorsement letter dated July 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2025. <b>However, the LoE has got the IE and the EE the wrong way around. Please check the LOE to ensure the IE and EE names are correctly mentioned for the implementation and execution functions.</b>	-	<b>New CAR8:</b> Please correct the LOE to ensure that point 3 is revised to mention SPC as the IE and the Vanuatu Department of Forestry and SPC will co-execute the project,  Point 3 of the LOE says the project will be implemented by the Department of Forestry and executed by SPC. <b>As per AF terminology the project will be implemented by SPC (SPC is the implementing entity of the Fund).</b> The project can be co-executed by the Department of Forestry and SPC. Please revise the LoE before so that	<b>New CAR8: Cleared</b> The Endorsement letter dated January 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2026 states that the “project will be implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) and co-executed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB)/Department of Forestry and the Pacific Community (SPC).”	-

				the technically cleared proposals can be presented to the Board.		
	2. Does the length of the proposal amount to no more than fifty (50) pages for the Concept note project document, including its annexes?	<b>Yes</b> the proposal is 36 pages including LoE.	-	-	-	-
	3. Does the project / programme support concrete adaptation actions to assist the country and/or the local actors in addressing adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change and build in climate resilience?	<b>Needs clarification</b>  The proposed project supports concrete adaptation actions that aim to enhance Vanuatu's climate resilience by restoring, conserving, and sustainably managing forest ecosystems – including inland, transitional, and mangrove forests. The proposal takes a community-led approach to		-	-	

	<p>devolve leadership, decision-making, and resource management to local actors.</p> <p>While the overall approach is promising, several elements require further elaboration to assess how effectively the proposed actions will be translated into tangible outcomes:</p> <p><u>Adaptation Activities:</u> <u>Linkages and Phasing</u></p> <p>The proposal presents a range of adaptation activities set to take place under the three components of the project. However, as currently presented, the activities appear in isolation and lack a strong connection to</p>	<p><b>CR1: Cleared</b></p> <p>In the revised concept note, there is a much clearer articulation of causal pathways. The narrative now explicitly outlines a phased, step-wise sequence: participatory baseline and vulnerability assessments → site-specific planning and technical protocols → nursery establishment and resource preparation → community-led restoration and agroforestry interventions → long-term maintenance, participatory monitoring, and adaptive management → policy</p>			
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	<p>each other, as well as a connection to the proposed outcomes of the project.</p> <p><b>CR1:</b> Please provide clearer articulation of the causal pathways and explicitly link activities, outputs, outcomes, and long-term adaptation impacts.</p> <p>While acknowledging that some elements of the project will be designed and refined later through community-led processes, the proposal lacks significant detail on how it will take a phased approach and sequence proposed project activities. For example, participatory baseline and vulnerability</p>	<p>mainstreaming and regional knowledge sharing. This flow helps ensure that each activity directly informs the next, and that outputs logically build toward outcomes and long-term resilience impacts.</p> <p><b>CR2: Cleared</b></p> <p>The sequencing of activities and outputs has been clarified in the revised concept note. This follows a logical flow. Stakeholder mapping and participatory planning will lead first to site selection and access agreements. These results will then inform the development of site-specific restoration plans and technical protocols, followed by</p>			
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	<p>assessments will be carried out under component 1, but it is unclear how the results of these processes will influence subsequent activities.</p> <p><b>CR2:</b> Please provide more information that demonstrates how the project will employ an overarching, step-wise approach that guides the sequencing of project activities.</p> <p><u>Capacity Building</u></p> <p>It is positive that capacity building, Training of Trainer models, and building local expertise are all integral elements of the project. The proposal highlights that these will be co-designed with local institutions and will work towards building adaptive capacity</p>	<p>nursery establishment, soil preparation, and resource mobilization. Restoration and agroforestry interventions will then be implemented, with subsequent focus on long-term monitoring, adaptive management, and policy integration.</p> <p><b>CR3: Cleared</b> (page 12).</p> <p>The revised concept note provides additional information on the capacity building model and approach (page 12). For the ToT cascade model, SPC will provide overall technical oversight and quality assurance, the Department of Forests (DoF) will coordinate</p>			
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		<p>and ensuring that technical expertise is retained at the community level beyond the lifetime of the project.</p> <p><b>CR:3</b> Please provide additional information on the capacity building model and approach that explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the roles and responsibilities related to capacity building and training for the project? (e.g. for SPC, the Department of Forests, and other partners).</li> <li>• How will SPC oversee and</li> </ul>	<p>and co-deliver training through its provincial offices, and local trainers and community-based organisations will cascade knowledge at community level. Oversight will be ensured through joint SPC–DoF supervision and standardised curricula.</p> <p><b>CR4: Cleared</b> (page 9).</p> <p>The revised concept note clarifies that site selection will be supported through national and community-level consultations, participatory mapping, and vulnerability assessments. Preliminary criteria, to be jointly validated during community consultations will</p>			
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		<p>ensure the quality of capacity building if it is carried out by other partners?</p> <p><u>Project beneficiaries:</u></p> <p>The project is set to be implemented at national and community level, targeting high-priority and high-exposure areas. While it is anticipated that the project will work in three to four sites, the proposal states that the final number and geographic spread of sites will be confirmed in the early project phase or during the development of the full proposal - with support from a Project Formulation Grant.</p>	<p>include ecosystem degradation, community exposure to climate risks, potential for recovery of ecosystem services, and community readiness, with emphasis on women, youth, and customary landowners. SPC and the Department of Forests will jointly oversee this process to ensure to ensure transparency and alignment with national priorities (page 9).</p> <p><b>CR5: Cleared</b> (page 9).</p> <p>The revised concept note has now included indicative figures for direct and indirect beneficiaries (page 9). Using available demographic</p>			

		<p><b>CR4:</b> Please provide more information on the participatory processes, community engagement, and preliminary criteria that will be used to determine these sites.</p> <p><b>CR5:</b> Using the best available information available at this stage, please provide an indicative estimate of the number and/or type of direct beneficiaries expected to benefit from the adaptation actions (e.g., individuals, households, or communities) – noting this may be adjusted at a later stage.</p> <p><b><u>Project Formulation Grant (PFG)</u></b></p>	<p>data, the revised concept note estimates 8,000–12,000 direct beneficiaries and 30,000–40,000 indirect beneficiaries. These estimates are preliminary and will be refined through PFG-supported consultations, site assessments, and vulnerability mapping, and validated during the full proposal stage.</p>			<p><b>CR8: Cleared</b></p>	<p><b>CR8: Cleared.</b> The PFG form is</p>
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		<p>The proposal includes a request for a project formulation grant of USD 150,000. This will be used for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner and stakeholder mapping, mobilization, and technical validation consultations;</li> <li>2. Comprehensive site assessment and selection;</li> <li>3. Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and risk assessment;</li> <li>4. Initial baseline data collection and MEL plan design;</li> <li>5. Drafting the full proposal and</li> </ol>	<p><b>CR6: Cleared</b></p> <p>The revised concept note clarifies which activities will be supported by the PFG, and confirms there will not be any duplication with activities under the main project components.</p> <p><b>CR7: Cleared</b></p> <p>The revised PFG application form confirms that SPC will serve as both the Implementing Entity and the Executing Entity for the PFG, while also working in close cooperation with the Department of Forestry (DoF) of Vanuatu.</p> <p><b>CR8: Cleared (but please note)</b></p>	<p>The revised Project Formulation Grant is for a <u>total of USD 225,000</u>.</p> <p>This includes USD 150,000 which is requested to support:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner and stakeholder mapping, mobilisation, and technical validation consultations;</li> <li>2. Comprehensive site assessment and selection;</li> <li>3. ESMS and risk assessment;</li> <li>4. Initial baseline data collection and MEL plan design;</li> <li>5. Drafting the full proposal and supporting documents.</li> </ol> <p>This includes an additional USD 75,000 which is</p>	<p><b>CR8: Not Cleared (reopened)</b></p> <p>At the top of page 5 of the Project Formulation Grant Application it states “LLA Supplemental Project Formulation Grant: \$70,000”. Please ensure the figure is aligned with the rest of the application form, which currently states \$75,000.</p>	<p>adequately revised.</p>
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		<p>supporting documents.</p> <p>The PFG submission form also highlights that several PFG-supported activities are specifically designed to enable and strengthen devolved decision-making for locally led adaptation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory site selection and planning workshops;</li> <li>• Mobilization of local committees and identification of site-level cham</li> </ul>	<p>SPC has confirmed that no Implementing Entity fee is requested for the PFG. They state that the decision was made to maximise the budget available for preparatory activities on the ground.</p> <p><b><u>Please note:</u></b> For Project Formulation Grants (PFGs) under the single-country Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) funding window, the typical maximum threshold is USD 150,000. However, noting the complexities of LLA projects/programmes and the need for additional engagement with local stakeholders, the Adaptation Fund can also provide up to an additional USD</p>	<p>requested to support:</p> <p>6. Development of national restoration protocols and technical guidelines.</p> <p>The additional LLA PFG Funding requested (USD 75,000) will be used to develop a set of restoration protocols and guidelines. Within the PFG application form, this is “justified by the need to equip communities, customary landowners, local committees, women’s and youth groups, and provincial forestry staff with clear, practical, and culturally grounded technical instructions that directly enable them to independently define, prioritise, design, and implement</p>		
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		<p>pions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) processes and inclusive stakeholder consultations.</li> </ul> <p><b>CR6:</b> In the concept note, please acknowledge which activities will be supported by the PFG and how they will support the development of a Full Proposal. To avoid duplication, please also ensure that that the same activities are not listed under the main project components in the concept note</p>	<p>100,000 for LLA PFGs, as determined on a case-by-case basis. <u>There is therefore a total maximum threshold of USD 250,000 (150,000 + 100,000) available.</u></p> <p>If SPC were to choose to pursue this option and request the additional funding, we kindly request that in the revised PFG application form, they provide two separate tables. One table highlighting which proposed project preparation activities will be funded by the original (up to) USD 150,000. And a second table highlighting which proposed preparation activities will be funded by the</p>	<p>adaptation and restoration actions at the local level". This justification is appropriate - as it will further enable devolving decision-making to the local level, and it will support a the development of a more robust LLA full proposal.</p>		
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		<p>as well as the PFG submission form (e.g. site selection).</p> <p><b>CR7:</b> Noting that the arrangements do not have to be the same for Project implementation and for PFG implementation, please clarify if the Pacific Community (SPC) is anticipated to be the Implementing Entity of the PFG, and the Vanuatu Department of Forestry is anticipated to be the Executing Entity of the PFG.</p> <p><b>CR8:</b> No Implementing Entity fee is listed in the PFG budget. Please also clarify that no Implementing Entity Fee is required for the PFG – which if included, must not exceed 8.5%.</p>	<p>additional (up to) USD 100,000. As has been done in the previously submitted PFG application form – please ensure that a description, output, amount, and budget note are provided for each activity. All activities require suitable justification, and any activities budgeted against the additional (up to) USD 100,000 should clearly justify how these activities would directly serve to enable devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level and enable actors to make informed decisions on how adaptation actions are defined, prioritised, designed, and implemented.</p>			
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	<p>4. Does the project/programme enable devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level? Does it give local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, implemented; how progress is monitored and how success is evaluated.</p>	<p><b>Needs clarification</b></p> <p>One of the key strengths of the proposal is its emphasis on empowering local communities. The project aims to devolve decision-making, planning, implementation, and monitoring responsibilities to local institutions – including community-based organisations, customary landowners, and site-level committees.</p> <p>Yet, how these community-led processes will be implemented in practice requires further articulation.</p> <p>The proposal states on page 18 that the project will build on and strengthen existing structures, rather</p>	<p><b>CR9: Cleared</b> (pages 11 + 13).</p> <p>The revised concept note clarifies how existing governance structures at community, provincial, and national levels will be identified, engaged, and given decision-making roles</p> <p><b>CR10: Cleared</b></p>			

		<p>than establish parallel or project-specific entities.</p> <p><b>CR9:</b> Please elaborate on the process for identifying and engaging with existing structures and local institutions. Please also provide details on which activities and decisions they will specifically influence and lead on.</p> <p><b>CR10:</b> In terms of roles and responsibilities, please provide additional information on which activities and decisions SPC and the Department of Forestry will specifically influence and lead on.</p> <p>Component 2, “Community-Led Restoration</p>	<p>The revised concept note provides clarifications and additional information on the roles and responsibilities of SPC (as Implementing Entity and co-Executing Entity) and DoF (as co-Executing Entity).</p> <p><b>CR11: Cleared</b></p> <p>The revised concept note describes a preliminary devolved financing mechanism that brings resources as close as possible to communities,</p>			

		<p>Implementation”, of the project has the largest amount of budgeted financing (USD 3,300,000). The proposal states on page 13 that this component’s activities are fully community-led, with budget and decision-making responsibilities devolved to local community-based organisations and groups.</p> <p>This strongly aligns with the first Principle for Locally-Led Adaptation which calls for direct access to finance and devolving decision-making. However, the concept note lacks detail on proposed financial management and how financing will be distributed to a local level.</p>	<p>while maintaining strong fiduciary controls and oversight. It also states that the financing mechanism will be further elaborated and supported with a diagram at the full proposal stage.</p>			
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		<p><b>CR11:</b> Please provide preliminary information on the mechanism for distributing finance and how this will be implemented in practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a clear, detailed explanation of the proposed financing model.</li> <li>• Specify the roles and responsibilities anticipated for this model, as well as how financing will be distributed between and amongst the identified communities.</li> <li>• Detail how oversight, transparency, and accountability will be ensured throughout the financial allocation and</li> </ul>				
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		<p>disbursement process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A diagram or flow chart would be very helpful to illustrate the proposed structure and demonstrate the path of funds from the project to the communities.</li> </ul>				
	<p>5. Does the project / programme provide economic, social and environmental benefits, particularly to vulnerable communities, including gender considerations, while avoiding or mitigating negative impacts, in compliance with the Environmental and Social</p>	<p><b>Needs clarification</b></p> <p>The concept note outlines the project's intent to deliver integrated economic, social, and environmental benefits to the most climate-vulnerable communities in Vanuatu. Page 15 states that it will address barriers to participation and ensure that women, youth, persons with disabilities, customary landowners, and</p>	<p><b>CR12: Cleared</b> (pages 10 and 11).</p> <p>The revised concept note clarifies how</p>			

	<p>Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund? Does the project/programme address structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people with disabilities, people who are displaced, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized ethnic groups?</p>	<p>other marginalized groups are actively involved and empowered.</p> <p>Some parts of the concept note require additional clarification to ensure that these elements are realised in practice.</p> <p><b>CR12:</b> The proposal highlights that the project has the potential to deliver widespread economic benefits and lists a number of different livelihood pathways, but lacks specific detail about how these will be implemented as part of the project. Please provide further information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proposed process for</li> </ul>	<p>livelihood diversification will be identified, prioritised, and implemented (pages 10 and 11). This includes participatory livelihood assessments, community-led prioritisation, and SPC/DoF technical backstopping to ensure activities remain within the adaptation and forestry scope. The communities will design and pilot diversified livelihood activities with devolved budget allocations and inclusive decision-making structures.</p>	<p><b>CR13: Cleared</b> (pages 16 and 17)</p> <p>Thank you for including this additional</p>		

		<p>identifying , prioritizing , and implementing specific opportunities for building economic resilience to the impacts of climate change;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How in practice communities will have decision-making power over the prioritized income diversification strategies;</li> <li>- How to balance having community-led decision-making while ensuring that</li> </ul>	<p><b>CR13: Not Cleared</b></p> <p>The response sheet from SPC states: <i>“We have added a dedicated text box under Part II: Project Justification, Component 2 to provide a clear overview of Vanuatu’s land tenure context and the project’s engagement approach.”</i> Please clarify where this information is listed within the concept note, as it is not immediately clear. In case this information was omitted, please include it.</p>	<p>information. The revised proposal provides information on the land tenure context in Vanuatu, and outlines how the project will work within the country’s legal and customary framework to ensure legitimacy, community ownership, and long-term sustainability.</p>		
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		<p>project activities still fall within the parameters of the project scope (i.e. aligned with adaptation and forestry).</p> <p>The first activity listed under Component 2 on page 13 is “Identify and secure access to land for nurseries, planting sites, and demonstrations plots, formalizing agreements (e.g. MoUs, land-use agreements) with landowners and communities.”</p> <p><b>CR13:</b> To gain a stronger picture of the contextual environment that the project is operating in, please provide more information</p>	<p><b>CAR1: Cleared</b> (pages 1-3).</p> <p>The revised concept note now includes an initial gender assessment (pages 1-3). This new section highlights women’s limited land rights, economic participation, and high dependence on non-wood forest products, as well as youth-specific challenges such as constrained livelihood opportunities and underrepresentation in governance. The initial gender assessment also explains how these findings have informed project design.</p>			
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		<p>in the concept note on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An overview of the land ownership system in Vanuata, as it relates to forestry and proposed project activities;</li> <li>- The proposed project approach for engaging with landowners and communities;</li> </ul> <p>It is positive that the concept note states that during the full proposal development stage, the project will incorporate a comprehensive gender and social inclusion assessment. However, please</p>				
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		<p>note that a preliminary gender analysis is required at the concept note stage to inform the eventual design and further planning stages of the measure.</p> <p><b>CAR1:</b> Please include an initial gender assessment to demonstrate how gender considerations have been incorporated into the project design. Please provide information on how the unique concerns of women and youth were incorporated into project design.</p> <p><u>At the fully developed proposal stage, please include an in-depth gender analysis and gender action plan that includes</u></p>				
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		<i>disaggregated data for women, youth, indigenous peoples, and marginalized groups, and provides specific strategies to address their unique vulnerabilities.</i>				
	6. Is the project / programme cost effective?	<p><b>Yes, with clarification</b></p> <p>The concept note states that the project design already incorporates several features to maximise cost-effectiveness, sustainability and value for money. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Devolving decision-making and financial management;</li> <li>- Building on and strengthening existing structures;</li> </ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adopting a Training of Trainers (ToT) model;</li> <li>- Leveraging in-kind contributions;</li> <li>- Phasing investments.</li> </ul> <p>The concept note makes a brief comparison between the project approach and other adaptation options, such as large-scale grey infrastructure (pages 15 + 18).</p> <p>The concept note also explains that a comprehensive cost-effectiveness assessment – including a comparative analysis of adaptation options, and quantification of cost per hectare restored and per beneficiary reached – will be</p>	<p><b>CR14: Cleared</b></p> <p>The revised concept note now highlights that the cost-benefit analysis and feasibility studies will be undertaken under Component 1 rather than through the PFG.</p>			
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		<p>completed as part of the full proposal development, with support from the PFG.</p> <p><b>CR14:</b> If the intention is that the planned cost-effectiveness assessment will be developed with support of the PFG, please ensure that this is included within the PFG submission form.</p>				
	<p>7. Is the project / programme consistent with national, sub-national or local sustainable development strategies, national, sub-national or local development plans, poverty reduction strategies, national communications and</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p>The concept note provides a comprehensive overview of relevant policy frameworks, and provides rationale for how the proposed project is aligned and supportive of each.</p> <p>Please also <u>double-check the accuracy of the dates</u> for some of</p>	-	-	-	

	<p>adaptation programs of action and other relevant instruments?</p>	<p>the policy frameworks. For example, the proposal states that the Vanuatu NAP was published in 2022, while the UNFCCC database indicates that the NAP is still under development. Similarly, the proposal states that Vanuata's NDC was communicated in 2020. The UNFCCC database indicates that the Revised and Enhanced NDC was communicated in 2022, and it appears from the Vanuata Department of Climate Change website, that the NDC 3.0 is under development and a draft is currently publicly available for consultation (accessible as of August 2025).</p>				
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	<p>8. Does the project / programme meet the relevant national technical standards, where applicable, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy of the Fund? Does the project provide support to local actors and build their capacities to comply with the standards?</p>	<p><b>Needs Clarification</b></p> <p>The concept note states that all project activities will adhere to Vanuatu’s national legal and technical frameworks, including environmental assessment requirements under the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act (CAP283), national standards for reforestation and nursery practices, forest management guidelines, and where applicable, building codes for any physical infrastructure. However, the concept note falls short of providing information on how the project will specifically do so.</p> <p><b>CR15:</b> Please provide more information on how the project will take steps to</p>	<p><b>CR15: Cleared</b> (page 13,24)</p> <p>The revised concept note states that under the ESMS, required authorisations and clearances will be identified and draft compliance-monitoring protocols will be designed (page 24). Under component 1, the following activity has also been included: “Conduct legal and regulatory review to map required permits/authorisations (e.g. EIAs,</p>			

		<p>comply and monitor compliance for each of the frameworks listed above, as well as information on any authorization/clearance that may be required for project implementation. If further details will be included in the fully developed proposal stage following additional consultations, please clarify this in the concept note.</p> <p><b>CR16:</b> The concept note states on page 21 that capacity building for standards compliance will be undertaken for local actors and implementing partners. Please ensure this is also reflected as an activity under the project components.</p>	<p>forestry permits, land-use agreements) and establish compliance-monitoring protocols, with results integrated into planning and safeguards.” (page 13)</p> <p><b>CR16: Cleared</b> (page 13)</p> <p>The revised concept note includes an activity under Output 1.3 that will “Deliver training and capacity building for local actors and implementing partners on compliance with national legal frameworks, the project’s Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), gender and</p>			
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			social inclusion standards, and monitoring and reporting requirements.” (page 13)			
	<p>9. Is there duplication of project / programme with other funding sources? Does the project enhance collaboration across sectors and enhance efficiencies and good practice?</p>	<p><b>Needs Clarification</b></p> <p>The concept note provides a list of identified relevant projects and programmes in Vanuatu and briefly describes the approach of each. It also outlines overarching potential areas of complementarity with relevant projects and programmes.</p> <p>Furthermore, the concept note states on 223 that during development of the full proposal, the project will collaborate with relevant government and non-government actors to validate</p>	<p><b>CR17: Not Cleared</b></p> <p>The revised concept note has strengthened the section on Complementarity and Ongoing Initiatives. In particular, it has identified additional projects/programmes such as the Live &amp; Learn – Climate</p>	<p><b>CR17: Cleared</b> (pages 26-31)</p> <p>Thank you for further strengthening the section on promoting complementarity and avoiding duplication. The concept note also highlights that a deeper mapping and analysis will be</p>		

		<p>the mapping of existing and planned interventions.</p> <p><b>CR17:</b> To ensure there are no duplications and promote complementarity, please provide clarifications on a few further areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have lessons from any of the identified projects and programmes been utilized to influence the design of this project, and will deeper</li> </ul>	<p>Resilient Islands (CRI Programme) and the Nakau – Community-Based Forest Carbon Programmes. The revised concept note now also highlights several programmes where there could be potential areas of cooperation, which is a valuable addition.</p> <p>At the concept note stage, this level of detail is sufficient. The proposal confirms that deeper mapping and analysis will be conducted at the full proposal stage.</p> <p><u>Please also include GCF FP184 Vanuatu community-based resilience project (VCCRP) under the “Identified Relevant Projects and Programmes in Vanuatu” sub-heading on page 28. GCF FP184 aims to implement</u></p>	<p>conducted at the full proposal stage.</p>		
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		<p>analysis be carried out at the full proposal stage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do any of the identified projects and programmes have a community-led or locally-led adaptation component? If yes, are there lessons to be learned? If</li> </ul>	<p>community-led processes and Output 2.1 of the project involves nature-based-solutions and reforestation. It would be useful to include GCF FP184 as an identified project at the concept note stage, so that it is considered when doing the mapping and analysis at the full proposal stage.</p>			
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		<p>no, could learnings from this project feed into others ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Will the existence of these identified projects and programmes, and their beneficiaries, be a considering factor when carrying out the site selection process for</li></ul>				
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		<p>this project?</p>				
	<p>10. Does the project / programme have a learning and knowledge management component to capture and feedback lessons, in particular managing traditional and/or indigenous knowledge, where relevant? Does it contribute to building and institutionalizing local capabilities?</p>	<p><b>Yes with a clarification</b></p> <p>Component 3 of the project focuses on Knowledge Sharing, Monitoring, and Policy Mainstreaming. The project will also embed mechanisms for knowledge capture and adaptive learning, promote local capacity building, and prioritise the integration and protection of traditional and indigenous knowledge. However, the concept note lacks detail on how this will be implemented.</p> <p><b>CR18:</b> Please clarify the roles and responsibilities anticipated for the</p>	<p><b>CR18: Cleared</b></p> <p>The revised concept note clarifies the learning and knowledge management roles and responsibilities of SPC, DoF, and community partners.</p>			

		project activities related to learning and knowledge management.				
	11. Has a consultative process taken place, and has it involved and encouraged all key stakeholders, and vulnerable groups, to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions? Did the consultative process consider and address gender-based, economic and other inequalities in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and	<p><b>No</b></p> <p>It is positive that in developing this concept note, national and technical consultations were held which can work towards ensuring that the overall project objectives are aligned with national priorities and project activities are technically sound.</p> <p>However, there is little indication of participation by community-based organisations, local institutions, women’s networks, youth, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable populations. Although the proposal expresses a</p>	<p><b>CAR2: Cleared</b> (page 34).</p> <p>It is highlighted that the project design builds on outcomes from discussions with</p>			

	Gender Policy of the Fund?	<p>commitment to gender equity and social inclusion, it does not describe how these considerations shaped the current project design. Participatory consultations are largely deferred to the full proposal stage, which limits opportunities for communities and civil society to shape the project from the outset.</p> <p><b>CAR2:</b> Please present the outcomes of any preliminary consultations with communities including gender groups that may have taken place. For the fully developed proposal stage please explain the process where marginalized and vulnerable groups will be consulted, so that their interests or concerns can be</p>	<p>the Vanuatu DoF and technical stakeholders, as well as the PPIN project's capacity needs assessment in Vanuatu, and regional consultations that were conducted during the design of Phase II of the Kiwa Initiative's technical assistance. This is sufficient for the concept note stage.</p> <p>It is also highlighted that in the development of the full proposal (with support from the PFG), inclusive, participatory consultations will be undertaken. Marginalised and underrepresented groups will specifically be targeted through tailored outreach and supported participation mechanisms (page 34).</p>			

		taken into account for project design.				
	12. Is the requested financing justified on the basis of full cost of adaptation reasoning?	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p>The concept note provides justification that all requested funds will be allocated to adaptation-specific activities which will support Vanuatu's most climate-vulnerable communities and critical ecosystems to withstand and adapt to the accelerating impacts of climate change.</p> <p>A baseline scenario is provided in qualitative terms to illustrate what would occur without the requested funding. This is contrasted against the project scenario, which provides adaptation measures that go beyond development alone.</p>	-	-	-	-

		<p>The proposed project activities will be implemented independently of any co-financing.</p>				
	<p>13. Is the project / program aligned with AF's results framework?</p>	<p><b>Yes, with correction needed.</b></p> <p>The concept note specifies project alignment with the Adaptation Fund Strategic Results Framework in the table found in Part III, Section A.</p> <p><b>CAR3:</b> Please also include, when describing the components, how they are aligned with the Adaptation Fund's Strategic Results Framework.</p>	<p><b>CAR3: Partially cleared</b></p> <p>The revised concept note provides text that explicitly shows how each project component aligns with the Adaptation Fund Strategic Results Framework. <u>However,</u> please ensure that the table found in Part III, Section A includes a grant amount (USD) for each Fund outcome and Fund outcome indicator, followed by Fund output and Fund output indicator. At</p>	<p><b>CAR3: Not Cleared</b></p> <p>Thank you for including the results framework alignment table. However, please consider aligning those project outcomes related to development of knowledge products, best practices, and lessons learned disseminated at national and regional levels and number of regional peer learning/ exchange events held with the Fund Outcome 3.</p>	<p><b>CAR3: Not Cleared</b> (pages 44-45)</p> <p>In the current results framework alignment table, the grant amounts for Fund output indicator 2.1.1 and 3.2.2 are lumped together. Similarly the grant amounts for Fund output 7.1 and 3.2.2 are lumped together.</p> <p>Please ensure that grant amounts are disaggregated per Fund output indicator. For further information, please</p>	<p><b>CAR3: Cleared</b> (pages 44-45)</p>

			<p>the concept stage it acceptable if these figures are indicative and many change in the next stage of submission.</p> <p><a href="#">Results Framework Alignment Table</a> (Template)</p>	<p><b><u>New CAR7:</u></b></p> <p>The project components and financing table (pages 6-8) labels outputs under Component 1 and Component 2, but does not label outputs under Component 3. <u>Please label outputs in the table under Component 3, and ensure alignment with the subsequent descriptive section (pages 17-18).</u></p>	<p>refer to this guidance document (updated November 2025): <a href="#">Updated Results Framework Alignment Table</a></p> <p><b><u>New CAR7:</u></b> <b><u>Cleared</u></b> (pages 6-8 and 17-18)</p> <p>The project components and financing tables have been revised to include labelled outputs under Component 3, in alignment with the subsequent descriptive section.</p>	
	<p>14. Has the sustainability of the project/programme outcomes been taken into account when designing the project? Does the project/programme support</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p>The concept note appropriately considers the sustainability of project outcomes. This includes a strong emphasis on the sustainability of local governance and institutional strengthening,</p>	-	-	-	-

	<p>long-term development of local governance processes, and improve the capacity of local institutions to ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions over the long term?</p>	<p>ensuring technical expertise is retained in communities, environmental sustainability, and economic sustainability.</p> <p>Furthermore, as a proof-of-concept, it is proposed that successful implementation of the project could lead to the project model being scaled across national and regional levels.</p>				
	<p>15. Does the project / programme provide an overview of environmental and social impacts / risks identified, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?</p>	<p><b>Needs corrective action</b></p> <p>Based on a preliminary screening, the project has been classified as Category B.</p> <p><b>CR19:</b> Please ensure that the concept note explicitly acknowledges that risk findings are preliminary and will require further</p>	<p><b>CR19: Cleared</b>(page 40). The revised concept note acknowledges that risk findings are preliminary and will be elaborated further during the PFG and full proposal stage (page 40).</p>			

	<p>elaboration during the full proposal stage.</p> <p>The Checklist of Environmental and Social Principles mixes the identification of potential risks with perceived positive impacts and proposed mitigation measures. A risk assessment should focus solely on identifying potential direct, indirect, transboundary, and cumulative risks associated with the project, without incorporating mitigation strategies or perceived benefits at this stage.</p> <p><b>CAR4:</b> Please revise the checklist to focus solely on identifying potential risks under each principle without including positive impacts or mitigation measures.</p>	<p><b>CAR4: Cleared</b> The revised concept note provides a checklist that identifies risks against each ESP principle.</p> <p><b><u>New CR20: Not Cleared</u></b> The revised concept note describes the implementation of activities that are not fully formulated at the time of proposal development (e.g. under Component 3). The Adaptation Fund defines <u>Unidentified Sub-Projects (USPs)</u> as project/programme activities that have not been formulated, at the</p>	<p><b>CR20: Not Cleared</b> (page 42)</p> <p>Thank you for providing a dedicated subsection on the use of USPs. This acknowledges the use of the USP approach in this project and provides suitable justification. It also states that all USPs will undergo AF-compliant environmental, social, and gender screening prior to implementation. However, when the proposal discusses the application of the USP approach, it states that “these include specific community-led</p>	<p><b>CR20: Cleared</b> (pages 41-42)</p> <p>Thank you for clarifying in the revised proposal that the USP approach will be applied for activities under Component 2 and Component 3.</p>	
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		<p>time of proposal submission, to the extent that their environmental and social risks can be identified in line with the ESP. While specific details on interventions may be finalised during implementation for LLA projects, the revised concept note should acknowledge the use of the USP approach and provide clear justification for its use - in compliance with the AF guidance for USPs.</p> <p>It is positive to see that the revised concept note already states that “all project activities will undergo a structured environmental and social screening process using the Adaptation</p>	<p>restoration and policy mainstreaming actions specifically under Component 3” (page 42). The response sheet also states that this new subsection “acknowledges the use of the USP approach for certain activities (mainly under Component 3)”. It is understood that sub-project implementation would take place primarily under Component 2.</p> <p><u>Please clarify if the USP approach will also be used for actions under Component 2.</u></p>		
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			<p>Fund's ESP checklist." (page 40)</p> <p><u>Please ensure that the revised concept note employs USP terminology, acknowledges the use of the USP approach in this project, and provides clear justification for doing so.</u></p> <p>Please refer to the AF updated guidance for IEs on the use of USPs:  <a href="https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Updated-guidance-on-USPs-.pdf">https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Updated-guidance-on-USPs-.pdf</a></p>			
Resource Availability	1. Is the requested project / programme funding within the size for LLA single country	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p>The requested financing is USD 5,000,000.</p>	-	-	-	-

	grants?					
	<p>2. Is the Implementing Entity Management Fee at or below 8.5% per cent of the total project/programme budget before the fee?</p>	<p><b>No.</b></p> <p>The Implementing Entity Management Fee (USD 454,545) is 10% of the total project budget before the fee, which exceeds the cap of 8.5%.</p> <p><b>CAR5:</b> Please ensure that the Implementing Entity Management fee is at or below 8.5% of the total project budget before the fee.</p> <p>The proposal requests a Project Formulation Grant (PFG) of USD 150,000, which is appropriate for a single-country project with a total budget of USD 5 million. No associated PFG fee has been included in the PFG budget.</p>	<p><b>CAR5: Cleared</b></p> <p>In the revised concept note, the Implementing Entity Fee (USD 386,364) is 8.4% of the total project budget before the fee.</p>		<p>Noting that the Implementing Entity Fee (USD 391,705) has been revised so that it is 8.5% of the total project budget before the fee, and therefore permissible.</p>	-

	<p>3. Are the Project/Programme Execution Costs at or below 9.5% per cent of the total project/programme budget (including the fee)?</p>	<p><b>Unclear,</b></p> <p>As <b>CAR5</b> above will affect the overall project budgeting, compliance with the Project Execution Cost cap will be assessed once CAR5 has been corrected.</p>	<p><b><u>New CAR6: Not cleared</u></b></p> <p>In the revised concept note, the Project Execution Costs (USD 432,818) are 9.4% of the total project budget (including the fee).</p> <p>However, the previous concept note listed SPC as the IE and DoF as the EE. The revised concept note clarifies that SPC will be the IE, and SPC and DoF will serve as co-Executing Entities.</p> <p>Please note that for any project activity, output, or component where SPC acts as both the IE and EE, the Execution Costs are capped at 1.5% of the cost of that</p>	<p><b>CAR6: Cleared</b></p> <p>In the revised concept note, the Project Execution Costs are USD 308,338. This is at 6.7% which is within the cap of 9.5%. Of this, USD 18,780 is execution fee for SPC and the remaining USD 289,558 for DoF.</p> <p>Execution costs have been calculated based on the estimated distribution of implementation responsibilities between SPC and the Department of Forests (DoF) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component 1 – 50% SPC / 50% DoF;</li> <li>• Component 2 – 20% SPC / 80% DoF;</li> </ul>		
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		<p>activity, output, or component.</p> <p>For any project activity, output, or component where SPC acts as the IE, and another entity acts as the EE, the Execution Costs are capped at 9.5% of the cost of that activity, output, or component.</p> <p>Kindly provide an updated figure for Project Execution Costs which reflects the guidance above and does not exceed the cap. Please also provide a narrative within the revised concept note that broadly explains how that figure was calculated. This will be based on how implementation of activities, outputs, or components are split between the respective entities (SPC and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component 3 – 70% SPC / 30% DoF.</li> </ul> <p>Based on the estimated distribution of execution responsibilities, SPC's execution fees for the responsibility of of USD 1,251,978.5 is USD 18,780 which is at 1.5% and therefore appropriate.</p> <p><i>At the <u>fully developed proposal stage</u> the breakout of execution responsibility between SPC and DoF will need to be specified at the output level. SPC's share will need to be capped at 1.5 of the total outputs/ activities that SPC would execution. In total the execution cost of SPC and DoF execution responsibilities</i></p>	
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			<p>DoF). Figures can be indicative at the concept note stage, and refined further during development of the full proposal.</p> <p><i>You can consider utilising the IE and EE fees calculator on the Adaptation Fund website:</i>  <a href="https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/ie-and-ee-fees-calculator/">https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/ie-and-ee-fees-calculator/</a></p>	<i>must be capped at 9.5%.</i>		
Eligibility of IE	1. Is the project/programme submitted through an eligible Implementing Entity that has been accredited by the Board?	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p>SPC is an AF accredited Regional Implementing Entity. SPC's accreditation is valid until 25<sup>th</sup> August 2026.</p>	-	-	-	-





ADAPTATION FUND

**REQUEST FOR PROJECT/PROGRAMME FUNDING  
FROM THE ADAPTATION FUND**

The annexed form should be completed and transmitted to the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat by email or fax.

Please type in the responses using the template provided. The instructions attached to the form provide guidance to filling out the template.

Please note that a project/programme must be fully prepared (i.e., fully appraised for feasibility) when the request is submitted. The final project/programme document resulting from the appraisal process should be attached to this request for funding.

Complete documentation should be sent to the email: [submissions@adaptation-fund.org](mailto:submissions@adaptation-fund.org)



**LOCALLY-LED ADAPTATION PROJECT/PROGRAMME  
PROPOSAL FOR SINGLE COUNTRY**

**PART I: PROJECT/PROGRAMME INFORMATION**

**Title of Project/Programme:** ROOTS –  
Restoring Our Original Trees and Shore  
Nature-based, Community-Led forest restoration and Management

**Country:** Vanuatu

**Thematic Focal Area:** Ecosystem-based Adaptation / Nature-based Solutions (with a focus on forest restoration and management)

**Type of Implementing Entity:** *Regional Implementing Entity*

**Implementing Entity:** Pacific Community (SPC)

**Executing Entities:** Vanuatu Department of Forestry; Pacific Community (SPC)

**Amount of Financing Requested:** 5,000,000 U.S Dollars

**Letter of Endorsement (LOE) signed:** Yes  No

*NOTE: The LOE should be signed by the Designated Authority (DA). The signatory DA must be on file with the Adaptation Fund. To find the DA currently on file check this page: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/apply-funding/designated-authorities>*

**Stage of Submission:**

- This proposal has been submitted before including at a different stage (pre-concept, concept, fully- developed proposal)
- This is the first submission ever of the proposal at any stage

In case of a resubmission, please indicate the last submission date: 05/12/2025.

**Please note that fully-developed proposal documents should not exceed 100 pages for the main document, and 100 pages for the**

## 1. Project / Programme Background and Context:

Provide brief information on the problem the proposed project/programme is aiming to solve. Outline the economic social, development and environmental context in which the project would operate.

Vanuatu, an archipelagic nation in the South Pacific, is among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. Its forests—including inland rainforests, transitional forests, and mangrove ecosystems—are crucial to the nation's resilience, providing essential ecosystem services such as water regulation, soil stabilization, biodiversity conservation, and cultural value. In 2020, Vanuatu had approximately 440,000 hectares of natural forest, covering about 37% of its land area.<sup>1</sup>

### Climate Risks and Impact Linkage:

Vanuatu faces intensifying climate hazards, including cyclones, droughts, sea-level rise, and increased storm surges, as well as geophysical hazards such as earthquakes. These hazards are not only increasing in severity and frequency due to climate change, but are also having direct, compounding impacts on Vanuatu's forests and dependent communities. Recent analysis indicates a rising trend in the frequency of severe cyclones, with models projecting increased Category 4 and 5 events in the region by 2050<sup>2</sup>. Each event causes significant treefall, canopy loss, soil erosion, and disruption of forest regrowth. For example, Cyclone Pam (2015) and Cyclone Harold (2020) caused widespread windthrow and uprooting of native trees, exposing soils to further erosion and undermining natural regeneration<sup>3</sup>. Droughts, projected to increase in both intensity and length, further inhibit seedling survival, reduce forest growth, and contribute to forest dieback.

Reforestation and ecosystem restoration are effective adaptation interventions in this context. Reforesting with cyclone- and drought-resilient native species accelerates canopy recovery, stabilizes soils, restores watershed function, and reduces the vulnerability of both people and biodiversity to climate shocks. Restoration also mitigates the risk of invasive species proliferation, which often follows disturbance events.

In 2023 alone, Vanuatu lost 612 hectares of natural forest, resulting in approximately 499 kilotons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Degradation is further exacerbated by the spread of invasive species such as *Merremia peltata* and *Cordia alliodora*, which impede natural regeneration and displace native biodiversity.

### Climate Projections and Trends:

Sea-level rise projections indicate that Vanuatu could experience up to 0.7 meters of sea-level increase by 2100 under high-emission scenarios, intensifying the risk of coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion into mangrove forests<sup>4</sup>. Regional climate projections for Vanuatu indicate rising frequency of

<sup>1</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Vanuatu Country Report*. Rome, 2020. Available at: <https://fra-data.fao.org/VUT>

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, 2022. Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4 "Tropical Forests." <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

<sup>3</sup> Government of Vanuatu (2020) / Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery: *Vanuatu Post-Disaster Needs Assessment: Tropical Cyclone Harold*.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO (2022). *Climate Change in the Pacific: Scientific Assessment and New Research*.

very hot days and heat extremes; increased variability in rainfall; and a trend toward more intense or prolonged droughts in some emission pathways. These changes pose growing risks to forest ecosystems, agriculture, and dependent communities<sup>5</sup>.

### **Adaptive Capacity and Social Dimensions:**

Approximately 75% of Vanuatu's population lives in rural areas and depends heavily on forests for fuelwood, building materials, food, and income, making them particularly vulnerable to forest loss and climate stressors. Within this predominantly Indigenous population (94% Ni-Vanuatu), women and youth often bear a disproportionate share of these burdens, with women spending more time collecting fuelwood as forests degrade, and youth facing reduced livelihood prospects from declining forest resources<sup>6</sup>. Customary land tenure systems, while supporting community stewardship, can also limit coordinated restoration where land rights are unclear.

### **Initial Gender Assessment<sup>7</sup>**

#### **Context**

Vanuatu's policy and legal frameworks reflect a strong commitment to advancing gender equality. International commitments include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration. On the national level, Vanuatu has mainstreamed gender equality in a multitude of sectors including land tenure, the economy, education, health, violence prevention, disability inclusion, and WASH (UN Women, 2022).

Despite this framework, cultural norms and customary law (*kastom*) continue to drive unequal outcomes for women and girls. Land tenure and inheritance systems remain largely patrilineal, restricting women's decision-making power, with men holding primary rights over customary land and women only representing 30% of lease applicants (UN Women, 2022). These structural inequalities are reflected in

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rccap.org/uploads/files/2c538622-72fe-4f3d-a927-7b3a7149e73f/Vanuatu%20Country%20Report%20Final.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), 2022. *Pacific Gender and Social Inclusion in Climate and Forest Policy – Regional Brief*.

<sup>7</sup> Brikke, Sarah (2008). Women's Perception of their Forest Resources in Espiritu Santo (Vanuatu). Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. Thesis. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wqtn.16992718.v1>

FAO (1995). Non-Wood Forest Products in Vanuatu. In: Durst, P.B. & Bishop, A. (eds.), *Beyond Timber: Social, Economic and Cultural Dimensions of Non-Wood Forest Products in Asia and the Pacific*. FAO, Bangkok

Naupa, Anna. "Making the Invisible Seen: Putting Women's Rights on Vanuatu's Land Reform Agenda." In *Kastom, Property and Ideology: Land Transformations in Melanesia*, edited by Siobhan McDonnell, Matthew Allen, and Colin Filer, ANU Press, 2017, pp. 305-327.

UN Women. Gender Equality Brief for Vanuatu. Asia-Pacific. Ridgeway Information Ltd., for UN Women. 2022. 20 pages.

Vanuatu National Statistics Office. (2017). 2016 Post Pam Mini Census Report. Ministry of Finance and Economic Management.

economic participation where women's labour force participation remains lower than men's, with their work concentrated in informal and unpaid roles. While women account for almost half of the population, only 17.5% of households were headed by women in 2016 (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2017), highlighting the combined effects of customary norms and economic constraints on women's autonomy.

Furthermore, gender-based violence (GBV) remains alarmingly high, with over 60% of ever-partnered women reporting physical, sexual, or emotional abuse (UN Women, 2022). Awareness of protective laws and access to justice or services against household GBV remain low, especially in rural areas. Health and hygiene challenges also disproportionately affect women, including high adolescent fertility rates, limited reproductive health services, and uneven WASH access. These intersecting inequalities mean that women's participation in decision-making, control over resources and access to services remain constrained despite legal and policy commitments.

#### **Gender-Specific climate risks related to forest resources**

In examining the GESI landscape as it relates to access to forestry resources there is a pattern of high involvement of women in labor and informal use of forest resources, but constrained power in land rights, formal decision-making, and control over benefits. While Vanuatu's Constitution and written laws do not explicitly discriminate against women in land ownership, customary laws and social norms often limit women's practical access and decision making (UNWomen, 2022). Customary systems vary throughout the country, with some islands being patrilineal while others are matrilineal. That being said, even in matrilineal systems, women often only hold the rights to decision making in name only and delegate that authority to male relatives (Naupa, 2017). So, while women are very active in forest-adjacent tasks such as gathering non-timber forest products, fuelwood, medicinal plants, etc. (FAO, 1995), generally, due to custom, women are often locked out of decision-making spaces when it comes to land use regardless of whether the system of inheritance is matrilineal or not.

In looking at use of forest resources, we see that in most rural areas, women depend substantially on non-wood forest products—such as tubers, fruits, nuts, fibers, thatch materials for homes, leaves for sauces, wild vegetables, medicinal plants. These are used for food, income, medicine, ceremonies, and construction (FAO, 1995). An in-depth GESI assessment will be used to ascertain exactly what species of plants are depended on, and the restoration planning will as a result protect the identified valued plants. Additionally, these identified valued plants will be integrated into the nursery component of the project to ensure these restored ecosystems continue to meet their needs.

Lastly, capacity-building training will be given to community members to ensure they are equipped with the proper knowledge to maintain these non-wood plants essential to daily life in the midst of an ever-changing climate. More than just a productive resource, for many women, forests are central to culture, learning, knowledge, social cohesion (Brikke, 2021). Thus, additionally these community-based trainings should also touch on preservation of traditional knowledge as it relates to the forests and their fruits, ensuring that particularly the younger generations of Ni-Vanuatu continue to hold and use this knowledge.

To ensure diverse needs are represented, forest restoration community governance groups will be established comprising a range of demographics present. This way vulnerable groups will have a voice not only in how forests are restored but how they are managed as well. To ensure maximum engagement from all vulnerable groups, considerations for when, where, and how the meetings are run will be informed by the in-depth GESI assessment to be conducted once implementation sites are chosen.

Vanuatu is ranked #1 globally in the World Risk Index (2021) for disaster risk due to high exposure to

risks like cyclones and earthquakes, as well as 64% of the population living within 1 km of the coast (2009), heightening exposure (UNWomen, 2022). Within this context of high risk, women are often disproportionately impacted by disasters due to roles as caregivers, food providers, and water collectors (UNWomen, 2022).

To help account for this disproportionate impact of disasters, Vanuatu requires that community disaster preparedness and climate change committees are comprised of at least one-third women leaders (UNWomen, 2022). However, this hasn't been achieved yet. There are several structural and cultural barriers that explain why this gap between policy and reality persists, namely customary norms favoring male leadership, social norms looking at DRM as men's work, and women's heavy workloads leaving them with little time to attend committee meetings as well as training sessions (UNWomen, 2022). Once implementation sites have been selected, an in-depth GESI assessment will be conducted to ensure that these barriers are addressed to ensure women's active participation and leadership in community forest restoration and management alongside DRM.

These preliminary findings have directly informed project design. For example, Components 1 and 3 ensure women's and youth's participation in governance and monitoring; Component 2 integrates NWFPs valued by women into nurseries and restoration; and the Training of Trainers cascade explicitly targets women and youth to build equitable leadership. These measures will be refined through a comprehensive GESI assessment at the full proposal stage.

**Barriers to Restoration:**

Despite government efforts—such as the National Forest Policy (2013–2023), the Vanuatu Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy (2020-203) or the National REDD+ Strategy of Vanuatu—significant barriers remain. These include insufficient and unpredictable funding for large-scale restoration, limited technical capacity at community and provincial levels, unclear or contested land rights, lack of market incentives for sustainable management, and limited inclusion of traditional knowledge in restoration planning. Communities are often forced to prioritize immediate recovery after disasters, leaving little opportunity or resources for long-term forest and landscape rehabilitation.

**Rationale for Intervention:**

This project directly addresses the systemic barriers that have limited large-scale, sustained restoration in Vanuatu to date: unpredictable financing, limited technical capacity at community and provincial levels, and insufficient integration of customary governance and traditional knowledge into formal planning. These barriers are being intensified by climate risks—such as increasingly frequent cyclones, prolonged droughts, and soil erosion—which accelerate forest degradation and deepen community vulnerability. Despite strong local interest, past responses have often been fragmented or short-term, leaving communities exposed to repeated climate shocks.

To overcome these barriers, the project is designed to deliver targeted solutions that link directly to Vanuatu's context and urgent needs. It supports integrated, community-led forest and landscape restoration across Vanuatu's diverse ecosystems—including forests, farmlands, fallow lands, and grazing lands. By empowering local communities—including women and youth—with resources, training, and decision-making authority, the project not only restores forest health but also tackles the structural obstacles that have hindered previous efforts.

The proposed intervention takes a holistic, community-led and ecosystem-based approach that spans

the full restoration continuum—from participatory planning and nursery establishment to restoration, monitoring, and policy mainstreaming. By sequencing activities step by step and front-loading critical preparatory tasks through the Project Formulation Grant (PFG), the project ensures readiness to move immediately into implementation with robust site assessments, safeguards, and local agreements already in place.

During the PFG phase, SPC will serve as both the Implementing Entity and the Executing Entity, working in close cooperation with the Department of Forestry. For full project implementation, SPC and DoF will act as co-Executing Entities, ensuring both fiduciary/technical oversight and strong national ownership of on-the-ground delivery.

Reforestation is prioritized as the most effective adaptation response for stabilizing soils, accelerating recovery after cyclone and drought impacts, and restoring critical ecosystem services that underpin food security, water supply, human health and disaster risk reduction. At the same time, the project directly responds to the barrier of “single focus” restoration by going beyond tree planting to include soil regeneration, watershed protection, agroforestry, and invasive species management.

Key features of the project approach, and how they address identified barriers, are as follows:

- **Devolved leadership and decision-making:** Resources and authority are placed with community-based organisations and landowners, ensuring legitimacy and sustainability. (responds to the barrier of limited integration of customary governance).
- **Training of Trainers (ToT) cascade model:** Builds durable capacity within local institutions and communities, addressing chronic skills gaps while reducing reliance on external expertise. (responds to the barrier of limited technical capacity).
- **Integrated landscape focus:** Extends restoration across inland forests, coastal areas, and productive landscapes to deliver water security, food system resilience, and disaster risk reduction. (responds to the barrier of fragmented and short-term interventions).
- **Institutional strengthening and policy integration:** Anchors restoration in national and provincial strategies, while building the Department of Forests’ role as the co-executing partner (responds to the barrier of weak institutional anchoring).
- **Knowledge generation and replication:** Establishes participatory monitoring and knowledge products to document lessons, enabling replication across Vanuatu and the Pacific (responds to the barrier of limited documentation and scaling mechanisms).

The strategy is fully aligned with Vanuatu’s national adaptation priorities, including its National Forest Policy, National Adaptation Plan, and international commitments such as the UNFCCC. The inclusive approach ensures restoration extends beyond forests to encompass the full range of landscapes critical for livelihoods, social cohesion, and resilience.

Importantly, the project will work in close collaboration with other restoration partners and programmes already active in Vanuatu, ensuring complementarity with relevant partners including Nakau project, Live & Learn, the Kiwa Initiative and others. Site selection will explicitly take into account the footprint of these initiatives to avoid duplication, maximize synergies, and reinforce a coherent national approach

to ecosystem restoration.

By combining community empowerment, robust technical oversight by SPC and DoF, collaboration with national partners, and a phased design that ensures readiness through the PFG, the project provides not only direct resilience benefits to vulnerable communities, but also a transformational model for scaling up Nature-based Solutions across the Pacific.

## 2. Project / Programme Objectives:

*List the main objectives of the project/programme.*

The project is designed to address the entire restoration continuum, including community engagement and participatory planning, soil regeneration, nursery establishment, seedling production and management, site selection, planting, invasive species management, watershed and catchment management, plantation establishment, benefit-sharing mechanisms, long-term maintenance, monitoring, adaptive management, ongoing training, and documentation and knowledge sharing—ensuring comprehensive, science-based, and sustainable landscape restoration.

In line with this holistic and integrated restoration approach, the project pursues the following main objectives:

**Objective 1** - Restore, conserve, and sustainably manage Vanuatu's inland, transitional, and mangrove forests, as well as key water catchments, through community-led, nature-based solutions that strengthen ecosystem services, water security, biodiversity, and climate resilience, while addressing land degradation and invasive species.

**Objective 2**- Empower communities—including women, youth, and Indigenous groups—to lead the design, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management of forest and landscape restoration through inclusive governance, participatory decision-making, capacity building (including robust Training of Trainers), and continuous knowledge exchange.

**Objective 3** - Reduce climate vulnerability and disaster risk for rural and coastal populations by restoring forest cover, stabilizing soils, managing invasive species, and supporting climate-resilient livelihoods, while mainstreaming community-led, nature-based restoration into national and sub-national policies and planning frameworks to enable long-term impact, scaling up, and regional replication.

The project is designed to follow a clear sequence of activities—from participatory assessments and site planning to nursery establishment, restoration, and monitoring—ensuring that interventions are evidence-based, community-driven, and technically sound.

## 3. Project / Programme Components and Financing<sup>8</sup>:

*Fill in the table presenting the relationships among project components, activities, expected concrete outputs, and the corresponding budgets. If necessary, please refer to the attached instructions for a detailed description of each term.*

*For the case of a programme, individual components are likely to refer to specific sub-sets of stakeholders, regions and/or sectors that can be addressed through a set of well-defined*

<sup>8</sup> IE and EE fees calculator: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/ie-and-ee-fees-calculator/>

interventions / projects.

Project/Programme Components	Expected Concrete Outputs	Expected Outcomes	Amount (US\$)
<p><b>1. Capacity Building, Institutional Strengthening &amp; Inclusive Planning</b></p>	<p><b>Output 1.1:</b> Stakeholder mapping and engagement completed, with inclusive participation of women and youth.</p> <p><b>Output 1.2:</b> Participatory vulnerability, ecosystem service, and baseline assessments completed and endorsed.</p> <p><b>Output 1.3:</b> Community awareness, training sessions, and capacity-building delivered at provincial and local levels.</p> <p><b>Output 1.4:</b> Participatory planning documents, including local adaptation and restoration action plans, developed and validated.</p>	<p>Increased local capacity, inclusive governance, and knowledge management systems for climate adaptation</p>	<p>539,957</p>
<p><b>2. Community-Led Restoration Implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Output 2.1:</b> Land and site-access agreements (MoUs) formalized, and site-specific land-use plans developed and endorsed.</p> <p><b>Output 2.2:</b> Priority sites assessed and prepared for restoration (biophysical/tenure checks, site preparation, invasive removal as required).</p> <p><b>Output 2.3:</b> Decentralized nurseries established and operational, with basic quality assurance for native species.</p>	<p>Forests, landscapes, and catchments restored; ecosystem services, resilience, and food/livelihood security increased and sustained</p>	<p>3,300,000</p>

	<p><b>Output 2.4:</b> Seed technology and nursery management training delivered to community groups and Department of Forests staff.</p> <p><b>Output 2.5:</b> Seedlings and cuttings produced and distributed to priority implementation sites.</p> <p><b>Output 2.6:</b> Local groups mobilized and trained to implement and maintain restoration works.</p> <p><b>Output 2.7:</b> Restoration activities implemented and monitored across inland forests, coastal areas, and agroforestry systems.</p> <p><b>Output 2.8:</b> Maintenance and aftercare systems operational (e.g., weeding, replacement planting, watering schedules, firebreaks).</p>		
<p><b>3. Knowledge Sharing, Monitoring &amp; Policy Mainstreaming</b></p>	<p><b>Output 3.1:</b> Community monitoring teams established and functional</p> <p><b>Output 3.2:</b> Monitoring data and learning products produced and disseminated</p> <p><b>Output 3.3:</b> Project lessons and NbS approaches integrated into national and local policies, including the updated 2030 Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy</p> <p><b>Output 3.4a:</b> Regional knowledge exchange and peer learning events organized</p> <p><b>Output 3.4b:</b> Knowledge</p>	<p>Adaptive management institutionalized; best practices and policy updated; regional impact and replication enabled</p>	<p>460,000</p>

	products, case studies, and training manuals developed in local languages	
8. Total Project/Programme Execution cost		308,338 <sup>9</sup>
8(a). Project/Programme Execution Cost – DoF (Non-IE executes, 9.5%)		289,558
8(b). Project/Programme Execution Cost – SPC (IE executes as co-EE, 1.5%)		18,780
9. Total Project/Programme Cost		4,608,295
10. Project/Programme Cycle Management Fee charged by the Implementing Entity 8.5%)		391,705
<b>Amount of Financing Requested</b>		<b>5,000,000<sup>10</sup></b>

#### 4. Projected Calendar:

Indicate the dates of the following milestones for the proposed project/programme

Milestones	Expected Dates
<b>Start of Project/Programme Implementation</b>	January 2027
<b>Mid-term Review (if planned)</b>	June 2029
<b>Project/Programme Closing</b>	January 2032
<b>Terminal Evaluation</b>	June 2032

<sup>9</sup> Execution costs have been calculated based on the estimated distribution of implementation responsibilities between SPC and the Department of Forests (DoF) as follows: Component 1 – 50% SPC / 50% DoF; Component 2 – 20% SPC / 80% DoF; Component 3 – 70% SPC / 30% DoF. Accordingly, execution costs were applied at 1.5% for SPC-implemented activities and 9.5% for DoF-implemented activities.

<sup>10</sup> Budget figures are indicative and will be further refined during the development of the full project proposal, in close consultation with Vanuatu authorities and all relevant project partners. Final budget allocations will also depend on the implementation arrangements to be defined jointly with national stakeholders during project preparation, with an emphasis on maximizing direct investment at the local level.

## PART II: PROJECT / PROGRAMME JUSTIFICATION

- A. Describe the project / programme components, particularly focusing on the concrete adaptation activities of the project, and how these activities contribute to climate resilience. For the case of a programme, show how the combination of individual projects will contribute to the overall increase in resilience. **Specify how the project/programme enables devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level and gives local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, implemented; how progress is monitored and how success is evaluated.**

This project is structured around a suite of concrete, locally led adaptation activities that aim to restore, manage, and sustain forest ecosystems—including inland, transitional, and mangrove forests—in Vanuatu. The initiative directly responds to increasing climate risks such as droughts, floods, landslides, coastal erosion, and declining ecosystem services, all of which are exacerbated by climate change and disproportionately affect vulnerable island communities.

The project will be implemented at national and community level, targeting high-priority and high-exposure areas. The project anticipates working intensively in three to four high-priority sites, which will be selected through a transparent and participatory process using vulnerability mapping, stakeholder input, and technical assessments to ensure resources are focused where needs and potential for impact are greatest.

Based on available demographic data, it is anticipated that approximately 8,000–12,000 people will directly benefit from restoration activities at the selected sites, with an additional 30,000–40,000 people benefiting indirectly through improved catchment services, ecosystem functions, and replication. These estimates are preliminary and will be refined through PFG-supported assessments and validated during full proposal development in collaboration with the Vanuatu National Statistics Office and the Department of Forests.

Site selection will be carried out through a transparent and participatory process during project preparation and Component 1. This process, supported by the Project Formulation Grant (PFG), will include national and community-level consultations, participatory mapping, and vulnerability assessments. Preliminary criteria, to be jointly validated during community consultations, will include: (i) degree of ecosystem degradation and vulnerability, (ii) exposure of communities and livelihoods to climate risks, (iii) potential for recovery of key ecosystem services, (iv) readiness and willingness of communities to engage, with emphasis on women, youth, and customary landowners, and (v) opportunities for replication and scaling, and (vi) potential cooperation and complementarity with past and ongoing projects. SPC and the Department of Forests will jointly oversee this process to ensure transparency and alignment with national priorities.

The final number and geographic spread of sites will be confirmed in early project phases, in close consultation with national and local authorities. Activities are designed to produce visible, measurable, and verifiable results on the ground, while contributing to long-term resilience through a systems-based, community-driven approach.

The project's objective is fully aligned with the Adaptation Fund Results Framework, particularly Outcome 2 ("Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced socioeconomic and environmental losses") and Outcome 5 ("Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress").

The project will follow a phased, stepwise approach to ensure coherence and effectiveness of

interventions. Participatory baseline assessments and vulnerability analyses (Component 1) will provide the evidence base for prioritizing sites, restoration strategies, and benefit-sharing arrangements. Building on these assessments, site-specific restoration plans and technical protocols will be co-developed with communities and landowners, leading to the establishment of nurseries and resource preparation (Component 2). Once sites and resources are secured, large-scale, community-led restoration and agroforestry interventions will be implemented, focusing on the most vulnerable landscapes and catchments. These activities will then be supported by long-term maintenance, participatory monitoring, and adaptive management systems (Component 3). Finally, lessons and results will be institutionalized through policy mainstreaming and knowledge sharing at national and regional levels.

This causal pathway—assessments → planning → resource preparation → restoration → maintenance/monitoring → policy mainstreaming—ensures that each step directly informs the next, delivering sustained climate resilience impacts. A results chain diagram will also be developed during the full proposal stage to further illustrate these pathways.

Each project component is designed to generate outputs that feed directly into outcomes and collectively contribute to the project's overall impact of enhancing the resilience of communities and ecosystems to climate change. For example:

- Participatory baseline and vulnerability assessments will generate site-specific risk and vulnerability profiles (Output), which will guide evidence-based prioritization of restoration sites and inform the design of restoration strategies (Outcome).
- Nursery establishment and resource preparation will produce high-quality planting materials and build local technical capacity (Output), providing the inputs and skills needed for effective restoration activities (Outcome).
- Community-led restoration, agroforestry, and soil regeneration interventions will result in restored hectares of forest, catchments, coastal areas, and productive landscapes (Output), directly improving soil stability and fertility, food and livelihood security, disaster risk reduction, and adaptive capacity (Outcome), while laying the foundation for long-term monitoring and management.
- Maintenance, monitoring, and adaptive management systems will deliver participatory monitoring data and support adaptive management decisions (Output), ensuring sustainability of restoration efforts and generating evidence to inform local and national decision-making (Outcome).
- Policy mainstreaming and knowledge sharing will generate policy briefs, updated strategies, and regional knowledge products (Output), drawing on monitoring evidence and lessons learned to drive systematic integration of NbS into policies and practices (Outcome).

Together, these outcomes contribute to a single project-level impact: strengthened resilience of Vanuatu's ecosystems and communities to climate hazards and long-term climate change.

Beyond ecosystem restoration, the project will strengthen economic resilience and livelihood diversification in participating communities. The process will begin with participatory livelihood assessments, undertaken in each selected site as part of baseline and vulnerability analyses.

These assessments, facilitated by the Department of Forests, will map existing forest- and land-based livelihoods—such as agroforestry, non-timber forest products, sustainable harvesting, and small-scale ecotourism—and identify potential opportunities.

Communities will then prioritize options using co-developed criteria, including adaptation relevance, feasibility, equity, and environmental sustainability. Decision-making power will rest with community-based committees established under Component 1, which will include women, youth, and customary landowners to ensure inclusive representation. During Component 2, these committees will manage budget allocations for pilot livelihood activities, with SPC and DoF providing technical backstopping to ensure that choices remain within the project's adaptation and forestry scope and comply with safeguards. This approach combines genuine community leadership with technical oversight, ensuring that livelihood diversification pathways are both locally relevant and aligned with the Adaptation Fund's mandate.

The project will build on and strengthen existing governance structures and local institutions rather than creating parallel systems. During the PFG phase, participatory mapping will identify relevant institutions at community, provincial, and national levels, including community-based organisations (CBOs), customary landowner groups, women's and youth associations, provincial councils, and technical bodies such as Department of Forestry provincial offices.

Engagement will be structured through consultations and participatory planning workshops to confirm their roles and responsibilities.

Community-level institutions will co-lead site selection, restoration planning, nursery management, and participatory monitoring. Provincial authorities will coordinate across sites, integrate activities into local development and land-use plans, and support oversight. National authorities (Department of Forestry, Department of Climate Change) will provide technical guidance, policy alignment, and quality assurance.

To avoid duplication and maximize impact, the project will work closely with relevant partners and programmes already active in Vanuatu, including Nakau (community-based forest carbon and livelihood programmes) and Live & Learn's Climate Resilient Islands initiative, as well as initiatives under the Kiwa Initiative such as PEBACC+ or the Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project (VCAP).

At the regional level, the project will leverage SPC's convening role through the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Working Group (30+ organisations, 60+ experts) and SPC's Land Resources Division networks. By anchoring implementation within these structures and partnerships, the project will ensure coherence, complementarity, and national ownership.

**Key adaptation activities include:**

- Participatory baseline assessments and vulnerability analyses that combine scientific data and traditional knowledge to identify priority areas for restoration and ensure interventions are tailored to local needs and climate risks.
- Inclusive stakeholder mapping, consultations, and planning workshops, where community members—including women, youth, customary landowners, chiefs and local communities<sup>11</sup>—jointly select sites, design interventions, and determine benefit-sharing

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<sup>11</sup> In the context of Vanuatu, "Indigenous groups" refers to the Ni-Vanuatu population, who are native to the islands and comprise 99% of the total population. For the purposes of this project, the terms "local

arrangements, ensuring social equity and legitimacy.

- Establishment and management of decentralized nurseries for native and climate-resilient species, supporting large-scale forest restoration and building local technical expertise in nursery management and propagation.
- Community-led Forest restoration and agroforestry implementation, using best-practice Nature-based Solutions (NbS) adapted to Vanuatu's diverse forest ecosystems and local contexts. Restoration activities are managed by trained local groups, with an emphasis on water catchments and areas most exposed to climate hazards.
- Development of inclusive maintenance, aftercare, and adaptive management systems that enable ongoing stewardship, invasive species control, fire prevention, and responsive action as conditions change.
- Deployment of community monitoring teams, trained through a robust Training of Trainers model, to regularly track forest health, biodiversity, soil and water condition, and the delivery of ecosystem services. This data supports adaptive management and transparent reporting.

**These activities are operationalized through three main mutually reinforcing components:**

#### **Component 1: Capacity Building, Institutional Strengthening & Inclusive Planning**

##### **Description:**

This component establishes a strong foundation for locally led restoration by empowering communities and stakeholders through participatory planning, building institutional and technical capacity, and ensuring activities are shaped by robust baseline data, gender/social inclusion, and local knowledge. It explicitly invests in local leadership, safeguards, and community-driven grievance redress.

Capacity building will follow a Training of Trainers (ToT) cascade model, institutionalized through the Vanuatu Department of Forests (DoF) and SPC as co-Executing Entities, working with community-based organizations. SPC will provide overall technical support and quality assurance, ensuring all training modules meet international standards on NbS and safeguards. The DoF will lead national coordination, mobilize provincial offices, and co-deliver technical training, embedding it into national forestry and restoration programmes. Community-based organizations and local trainers will be responsible for cascading knowledge at site level, conducting peer-to-peer training and embedding skills within communities. Oversight will be maintained through regular joint supervision missions (SPC–DoF), standardized training materials, and participatory evaluation of training effectiveness. This approach ensures quality control while building long-term, community-owned expertise that continues beyond the project's lifespan.

##### **Key Activities:**

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communities," "customary landowners," and "Ni-Vanuatu" are used interchangeably, reflecting the sociocultural realities and legal status of land ownership and governance in Vanuatu.

**For Output 1.1: Stakeholder mapping and engagement completed**

- Map stakeholders and conduct inclusive consultations (including women, youth, customary landowners, and local government) to ensure broad participation, ownership, and leadership.
- Map and engage existing institutions and networks (CBOs, customary groups, provincial councils, DoF provincial offices, women's/youth associations).
- Conduct participatory consultations to confirm roles and decision-making responsibilities at community, provincial, and national levels.
- Formalise cooperation with partners such as Nakau, Live & Learn, SPREP, Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project (VCAP) and other key relevant projects, programmes and partners to harmonise approaches and avoid duplication.

**For Output 1.2: Participatory vulnerability, ecosystem service, and baseline assessments completed and endorsed**

- Design and conduct a Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment and an Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) assessment at project inception; use findings to inform activity design, targets, indicators, and monitoring frameworks.
- Carry out participatory baseline and vulnerability assessments (ecological, social, soil, land use, threats, traditional knowledge, climate risk, food security, ecosystem services).
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and feasibility assessments of restoration and livelihood options, building capacity of national and community stakeholders to use these tools in planning and decision-making.
- Conduct legal and regulatory review to map required permits/authorizations (e.g., EIAs, forestry permits, land-use agreements) and establish compliance-monitoring protocols, with results integrated into planning and safeguards.

**For Output 1.3: Community awareness, training sessions, and capacity-building delivered**

- Deliver targeted community training and awareness sessions on Nature-based Solutions, climate adaptation, forest restoration, and sustainable resource management, with a comprehensive Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for local leaders, CBOs, and technical focal points (covering restoration, monitoring, ESS/GESI, and grievance handling, incorporating traditional knowledge and practices where appropriate).
- Deliver training and capacity building for local actors and implementing partners on compliance with national legal frameworks, the project's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), gender and social inclusion standards, and monitoring and reporting requirements.
- Establish, train, and operationalize a community-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), ensuring accessibility for women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.

**For Output 1.4: Participatory planning documents developed and validated**

- Facilitate participatory planning workshops to define site selection, priority interventions, benefit-sharing arrangements, and local management/decision-making structures.
- Complete site mapping and prioritization during project preparation, focusing on 3–4 high-priority sites with the greatest threats and restoration potential, using transparent criteria co-developed with national and local authorities.
- Support the establishment or strengthening of community-based organizations (CBOs) and local committees, providing them with resources and leadership training to lead project planning, implementation, monitoring, and decision-making at site level.

**Alignment with the Adaptation Fund's Strategic Results Framework:**

This component aligns with Outcome 2 (*Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced socioeconomic and environmental losses*) by building the technical and institutional capacity of the Department of Forestry, provincial authorities, and community-based organisations to plan, manage, and monitor restoration. It also contributes to Outcome 3 (*Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level*) through participatory planning processes, inclusive consultations, and training that empower communities—including women, youth, and customary leaders—to take leadership roles in restoration and safeguards compliance. By embedding the ESMS, FPIC, and GESI approaches, this component ensures that climate risk reduction and adaptation processes are locally owned and institutionally sustained.

**Component 2: Community-Led Restoration Implementation**

**Description:**

This component drives the on-the-ground delivery of restoration and sustainable management of forests and landscapes. Activities are fully community-led, with budget and decision-making responsibilities devolved to local CBOs/groups. The focus is on nursery development, planting, agroforestry, invasive species management, and ongoing maintenance, with robust support for sustainability and local ownership beyond the project period.

**Key Activities:**

**For Output 2.1: Land and site-access agreements formalized, and land-use plans endorsed**

- Identify and secure access to land for nurseries, planting sites, and demonstration plots, formalizing agreements (e.g., MoUs, land-use agreements) with landowners and communities.
- Develop site-specific restoration and Nature-based Solution (NbS) implementation plans and technical protocols (including native species selection, propagation, restoration, and local/traditional knowledge).

**For Output 2.2: Priority sites assessed and prepared for restoration**

- Assess and prepare sites (biophysical/tenure checks, soil assessments, invasive removal,

and site preparation for planting).

**For Output 2.3: Decentralized nurseries established and operational**

- Establish or strengthen decentralized nurseries (inland, coastal, mangrove).
- Demonstrate best practices for substrate and site preparation.

**For Output 2.4: Seed technology and nursery management training delivered**

- Train community members in nursery management, seed collection and storage, propagation, and invasive species control (through ToT cascade).

**For Output 2.5: Seedlings and cuttings produced and distributed**

- Produce high-quality planting materials (seedlings, cuttings) tailored to planned interventions.

**For Output 2.6: Local groups mobilized and trained**

- Mobilize and train local groups for planting and restoration, with ToT graduates cascading knowledge throughout the communities.

**For Output 2.7: Restoration activities implemented and monitored**

- Implement inland restoration, assisted natural regeneration, agroforestry demonstration plots, and coastal/mangrove restoration using best-practice, locally adapted NbS techniques.

**For Output 2.8: Maintenance and aftercare systems operational**

- Set up inclusive maintenance and aftercare systems (watering, weeding, fire and invasive species control, enrichment planting).
- Deliver hands-on training in adaptive, community-based forest management.

**Cross-cutting activities contributing to Outputs 2.6–2.8**

- Conduct participatory livelihood assessments in each site, mapping existing and potential income sources linked to forests and restoration, drawing on the Family Farm Teams (FFT) approach to ensure equitable contributions and benefit-sharing among all household members, including women and youth.
- Support community committees to prioritize and select livelihood diversification strategies using agreed criteria (adaptation relevance, feasibility, equity, environmental sustainability).
- Jointly develop sustainability and exit strategies with local actors (e.g., community management agreements, revolving funds, business models for nurseries and restoration) to ensure restoration, monitoring, and livelihoods continue after project completion.

**Alignment with the Adaptation Fund's Strategic Results Framework:**

This component directly contributes to **Outcome 4** (Increased adaptive capacity within relevant development and natural resource sectors) by piloting forest and landscape restoration practices

that increase resilience of agriculture, water, and forestry systems. It supports Outcome 5 (Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress) through large-scale reforestation, soil stabilization, and watershed restoration, helping ecosystems recover from cyclones, droughts, and invasive species pressure. Finally, it contributes to Outcome 6 (Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas) by supporting communities to develop climate-resilient livelihood options, such as agroforestry diversification, sustainable non-timber forest products, and small-scale eco-tourism. Together, these activities reduce vulnerability while strengthening both ecosystems and livelihoods.

#### **Land Tenure Context and Community Engagement Approach**

##### **Land Tenure Context in Vanuatu**

Land in Vanuatu holds deep cultural, economic, and spiritual significance. Approximately 98% of the country's land is held under customary ownership, governed by the traditional rules (*kastom*) of the diverse indigenous groups that make up the Ni-Vanuatu population. Only about 2% of land is classified as public or state land, mainly covering urban and administrative areas such as Port Vila and Luganville.

The **Custom Land Management Act (CLMA) No. 33 of 2013** provides the legislative framework for the administration, resolution, and recording of customary land ownership and use rights. It establishes customary land management institutions such as:

**Nakamals (customary assemblies)** and **custom area land tribunals**, which are the legitimate authorities for making decisions on land ownership and use, according to local customs.

**Customary Land Management Offices** and **Custom Land Officers**, who provide administrative support, maintain land records, and ensure that decisions are consistent with national law; and

**A National Coordinator for Land Dispute Management**, responsible for registering and archiving decisions reached through customary processes.

Under this system, customary landowners hold inalienable rights to their land. Decisions on land allocation or use—whether for forestry, agriculture, or restoration—must be made collectively and approved by the recognized *nakamal* and landowning groups before being recorded as binding decisions. The CLMA formalizes this customary process and ensures that such decisions, once recorded, have legal standing as “recorded interests in land.”

Complementing the Act, the **National Land Use Planning Policy (2013)** sets out national principles for sustainable and inclusive land-use planning, emphasizing that development or conservation initiatives must be based on transparent consultation, respect for customary governance, and integration of environmental and social safeguards. The policy calls for balancing land use between development and conservation, integrating local and national planning processes, and ensuring community consent for any proposed land-use changes.

In practice, this framework means that all land-based initiatives in Vanuatu—including forest restoration—must operate through customary governance structures, with formal recognition of landowner consent and equitable participation in decision-making. The project therefore works fully

within this legal and customary framework to ensure legitimacy, community ownership, and long-term sustainability.

#### **Project Engagement and Access Approach**

The project will work directly with customary authorities, landowning groups, and local governance structures to ensure that all restoration interventions are community-led, legitimate, and equitable. Engagement will follow the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), with consultations conducted through *nakamals* and in coordination with custom land officers and Island Councils of Chiefs, in accordance with the Custom Land Management Act. Land access for nurseries, planting sites, and demonstration plots will be formalised through signed agreements—including Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), land-use agreements, and co-management arrangements—ensuring full consent, transparency, and alignment with both national and provincial land-use priorities. Inclusive community committees will be established to oversee implementation, ensure representation of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups, and support participatory decision-making and benefit-sharing. This approach guarantees that restoration activities respect customary rights, build local trust, and strengthen the partnership between traditional and government institutions in achieving long-term landscape resilience.

### **Component 3: Knowledge Sharing, Monitoring & Policy Mainstreaming**

#### **Description:**

This component ensures that project lessons, technical advances, and innovations are institutionalized and upscaled. It builds systems for robust monitoring, learning, and policy integration, including all necessary E&S and gender safeguards, and creates pathways for regional knowledge sharing and replication.

#### **Key Activities:**

##### **For Output 3.1: Community-based monitoring systems established and functional**

- Develop and operationalize participatory monitoring systems, with regular data collection and analysis on ecological, social, and safeguard (ESS/GESI/FPIC) indicators.
- Train community monitoring teams in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), and budget for ongoing compliance/risk tracking (including FPIC, grievances, and cultural elements) using accessible, adapted tools and templates.

##### **For Output 3.2: Monitoring data, learning products, and knowledge products produced and disseminated**

- Produce and disseminate user-friendly monitoring and learning products for adaptive management and transparent reporting.
- Document and disseminate lessons learned, case studies, and best practices in accessible formats and local languages, ensuring broad uptake by practitioners, policymakers, and communities.

**For Output 3.3: Lessons and NbS approaches integrated into national and provincial policies**

- Provide technical assistance to integrate forest and landscape restoration approaches (NbS) and project lessons into national and local policies—including supporting the review and update of Vanuatu's 2030 Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy.
- Deliver targeted capacity building for government, provincial, and customary authorities to enhance mainstreaming of restoration and NbS across all relevant sectors.
- Develop or update forestry and restoration guidelines (if none exist), ensuring alignment with NbS principles, safeguards, and customary knowledge, and facilitate their endorsement by the Department of Forests.

**For Output 3.4a: Regional knowledge exchange and peer-learning events implemented**

- Facilitate ongoing knowledge exchange, peer learning, and regional cooperation on restoration and NbS with other Pacific forestry countries and initiatives.

**For Output 3.4b: Knowledge products, case studies, and training manuals developed in local languages**

- Establish and operationalize a national restoration network to coordinate restoration efforts, facilitate resource/lesson sharing among stakeholders, and provide a scalable platform for upscaling effective practices at national and regional levels.

**Alignment with the Adaptation Fund's Strategic Results Framework:**

This component contributes to **Outcome 7** (*Improved integration of climate-resilience strategies into country development plans*) by ensuring that lessons from restoration and community-led adaptation feed directly into national forestry, land-use, and climate policy processes. It also supports Outcome 8 (*Strengthened capacity for adaptive management, learning, and knowledge-sharing*) through participatory monitoring systems, knowledge products, and regional exchanges via SPC's NbS Working Group and Land Resources Division networks. By linking field-level evidence with national and regional platforms, this component ensures that project results inform broader adaptation planning and strengthen long-term capacity for adaptive management.

**Contribution to Climate Resilience:**

These activities work synergistically to increase Vanuatu's resilience to climate change by restoring degraded forests and water catchments, stabilizing soils, protecting watersheds, and improving biodiversity and ecosystem function. They also reduce the exposure and sensitivity of rural and coastal populations to climate hazards, strengthen food and water security, and provide alternative, climate-resilient sources of income.

**Local Leadership, Empowerment, and Sustainability:**

From the outset, the project devolves decision-making, planning, implementation, and monitoring responsibilities to local institutions—including community-based organizations (CBOs), customary landowners, and site-level committees. Local actors will be supported through tailored

training, participatory governance structures, and ongoing technical assistance to ensure they can effectively lead and sustain restoration efforts. The project will work closely with communities to jointly develop sustainability and exit strategies—such as community management agreements, income-generating activities, and business models for nurseries and restoration—ensuring that restoration outcomes and improved livelihoods can be maintained, adapted, and scaled after project completion. The use of the Training of Trainers (ToT) approach ensures that expertise and leadership are built and retained within communities and local institutions, supporting ongoing adaptation and resilience long beyond the life of the project.

#### **Direct Access and Participatory Monitoring:**

Throughout the project, communities have a direct role not only in defining and executing activities but also in collecting, analysing, and using data for adaptive management. Success is evaluated through a participatory monitoring and learning framework, with regular feedback loops to ensure that project benefits are equitably shared, and interventions remain relevant to changing local contexts.

In summary, the project is designed as a transformative pilot—devolving leadership, decision-making, and resource management to the community level at a scale not previously attempted in Vanuatu's forest sector. This integrated approach leverages community leadership and devolved governance to deliver tangible, scalable adaptation benefits, fully aligning with Vanuatu's priorities and the Adaptation Fund's requirements for locally led adaptation. The project will serve as a model for replication across the Pacific.

- B.** Describe how the project / programme provides economic, social and environmental benefits, with particular reference to the most vulnerable communities, and vulnerable groups within communities, including gender considerations. Describe how the project / programme will avoid or mitigate negative impacts, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund. **In particular, specify how the project/programme is addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people with disabilities, people who are displaced, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized ethnic groups.**

This project is designed to deliver integrated economic, social, and environmental benefits to the most climate-vulnerable communities in Vanuatu. In full alignment with the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy, the project actively addresses barriers to participation and ensures that women, youth, persons with disabilities, customary landowners, and other marginalized groups are actively included and empowered. Through participatory planning, inclusive governance, tailored training, and community-driven decision-making structures, the project enables these groups not only to benefit from restoration and livelihood improvements, but also to lead and sustain these outcomes over the long term.

**Economically**, the project enhances community resilience by restoring and sustainably managing forests and water catchments that support livelihoods, food security, and disaster risk reduction. Activities such as reforestation, soil stabilization, and watershed protection reduce the financial burden of climate-related losses, particularly in rural and coastal areas where households have limited capacity to recover from shocks. By promoting ecosystem-based approaches over costly grey infrastructure, the project also helps reduce public spending over the long term. Local economic resilience is further strengthened through the establishment of community-managed nurseries, support for agroforestry and nature-based enterprises, and the provision of technical skills in restoration, propagation, and monitoring—creating opportunities for

income diversification and self-reliance.

**Social benefits** are generated through participatory and inclusive processes that ensure that traditionally excluded groups—especially women, youth, people with disabilities, and rural communities—are not only beneficiaries but active decision-makers throughout the project. This will be achieved by conducting targeted outreach and capacity-building sessions, reserving seats for these groups in local project committees and planning workshops, and providing dedicated leadership and skills training to enable their meaningful engagement in all decision-making and monitoring processes.

Community planning processes, Training of Trainers (ToT) models, and inclusive monitoring frameworks help build agency, leadership, and social cohesion. Education and awareness activities will be delivered in local languages and formats that are accessible to all, ensuring broad-based understanding and engagement.

All interventions will be guided by best practices in social inclusion and ecosystem management, and will be informed by indigenous and local knowledge, traditional land stewardship approaches, and customary practices. This integration of traditional knowledge ensures that restoration strategies are locally relevant, culturally appropriate, and more likely to be sustained and owned by communities over the long term.

**Environmentally**, the project restores and enhances forest ecosystems, including critical inland, transitional, and mangrove zones, contributing to increased biodiversity, improved soil health, enhanced carbon sequestration, and protection against climate hazards such as droughts, floods, and cyclones. Mangrove restoration in coastal areas supports fisheries and food security, while inland reforestation improves catchment health and agricultural resilience. Invasive species control and fire management activities will further protect ecosystem services that underpin human wellbeing.

**Gender equality and social inclusion** are integrated throughout the project lifecycle. A gender and social inclusion assessment will be undertaken early in the implementation phase to identify and address barriers to participation, influence, and benefits. Quotas or minimum targets - determined in consultation with key stakeholders and informed by the findings of the gender and social inclusion assessment- will be applied to ensure meaningful representation of women and youth in planning bodies, training sessions, and field teams. Activities will be designed with sensitivity to time constraints, caregiving responsibilities, and mobility challenges, ensuring that women and other marginalized groups can engage fully and equitably. Indigenous and customary knowledge systems will be respected and integrated into project design, with benefits distributed in a culturally appropriate and inclusive manner.

The project also includes **robust safeguards** to avoid and mitigate negative impacts. All proposed activities will be screened against the Environmental and Social Policy of the Adaptation Fund, with a participatory environmental and social impact assessment conducted during the design phase. A grievance redress mechanism will be established at the community level, adapted to local norms and languages. The project will avoid any activities that could result in involuntary resettlement, environmental degradation, or the marginalization of vulnerable groups. Where risks are identified—such as the potential exclusion of certain stakeholders, increased workloads for women, or unintended ecological impacts—appropriate mitigation strategies will be developed and applied, and progress will be tracked through participatory monitoring.

By devolving decision-making authority and technical capacity to the lowest appropriate level (community level), and by creating inclusive spaces for marginalized voices, the project proactively addresses structural inequalities. It promotes access to decision-making processes, tailored training, and benefit-sharing mechanisms that empower women, Indigenous communities, youth, and others who have been historically excluded from formal adaptation processes.

In summary, the project advances climate-resilient development in Vanuatu by delivering tangible, measurable benefits that are economically viable, socially just, and environmentally sound. Through an integrated approach grounded in equity, safeguards, and participatory governance, the project contributes to long-term resilience while ensuring that no one is left behind.

- C. Describe or provide an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the proposed project / programme., focusing on the implementation and execution arrangements, in particular the mechanism which will provide more direct access to finance.

While a detailed quantitative cost-effectiveness analysis will be conducted during the full proposal development if the Project formulation Grant is granted, the project design already incorporates several features to maximize cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and value for money.

The selected scope and approach focus on community-driven, nature-based adaptation interventions that are demonstrably more cost-effective in the Pacific context than conventional engineered alternatives. For example, mangrove restoration for coastal protection has consistently proven to deliver better long-term value than hard infrastructure such as seawalls, especially when factoring in co-benefits such as fisheries enhancement, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity recovery. Similarly, forest restoration and agroforestry reduce vulnerability to floods and droughts at a fraction of the cost of large-scale irrigation or engineered slope stabilization works.

Investing in local capacity, leadership, and inclusive governance structures increases opportunities for local ownership of adaptation solutions, builds skills and social capital within communities, and reduces long-term dependency on external technical assistance or donor support. By empowering local actors to drive restoration, monitoring, and sustainable livelihoods, the project creates systems that are self-sustaining, adaptable, and replicable. This approach improves return on investment and ensures that benefits continue well beyond the project's operational period. The activities proposed are further grounded in the robust needs assessment conducted under the PPIN project, ensuring that interventions are fit-for-purpose and directly address identified local priorities.

The project's implementation and execution arrangements will be defined in close partnership with national authorities and key project partners. The aim is to maximize local coordination, capacity, and ownership by placing most technical project positions directly within Vanuatu—including within the Department of Forestry (DoF) as the national co-Executing Entity. This approach will enhance day-to-day collaboration, knowledge transfer, and local leadership of restoration activities. The Pacific Community (SPC), as the Regional Implementing Entity, will also act as a co-Executing Entity alongside DoF. SPC will retain overall responsibility for fiduciary oversight, procurement, safeguards, and reporting to the Adaptation Fund, while DoF will lead operational management, provincial mobilisation, and forestry technical implementation. These arrangements are specifically designed to strengthen direct access to finance and decision-making by local actors—a key driver of both effectiveness and efficiency. In collaboration with

national partners and community organizations, SPC and DoF as co-Executing Entities will facilitate rapid and equitable financial flows to the local level, minimizing bureaucratic delays and avoiding high-cost intermediaries.

Key mechanisms for enhancing cost-effectiveness and direct access to finance include:

- **Devolving decision-making and financial management** to community groups and local institutions wherever feasible, enabling more targeted and context-specific investments and reducing administrative overhead.
- **Building on and strengthening existing structures** (e.g., local nurseries, customary governance, community monitoring groups) rather than establishing parallel or project-specific entities, which improves efficiency and promotes sustainability beyond the life of the project.
- **Adopting a Training of Trainers (ToT) model** that creates local capacity for ongoing restoration and monitoring, thus reducing costs for future scaling-up and replication.
- **Leveraging in-kind contributions** from local communities—including land, time commitments, and locally available raw materials—as well as from government agencies, and partners to reduce direct financial outlays while increasing ownership and sustainability.
- **Phasing investments** so that initial resources focus on capacity building and infrastructure (nurseries, training, planning), with subsequent allocations determined by participatory assessments and real-time monitoring of results, ensuring that funds are directed to activities with the highest impact.

Compared to other adaptation options, such as large-scale grey infrastructure or externally managed environmental programs, this locally led and ecosystem-based model ensures that resources are primarily invested in concrete, on-the-ground actions that generate measurable adaptation benefits and multiple co-benefits for livelihoods, food security, biodiversity, and climate mitigation.

This approach also allows for replication and scalability at low incremental cost, as trained local actors and restored systems can serve as demonstration sites and technical hubs for neighbouring communities.

In sum, the project provides a cost-effective pathway to adaptation that is tailored to the realities of Vanuatu—small, dispersed islands with limited fiscal space and high exposure to climate risks. The combination of community ownership, nature-based approaches, and direct access to resources delivers both short-term adaptation outcomes and long-term resilience, while minimizing financial inefficiencies and maximizing sustainability.

A comprehensive cost-effectiveness assessment—including a comparative analysis of adaptation options, and quantification of cost per hectare restored and per beneficiary reached—will be completed as part of the full proposal development if the Project Formulation Grant is granted.

- D. Describe how the project / programme is consistent with national, **sub-national and local** sustainable development strategies, including, where appropriate, national adaptation plan (NAP), national, **sub-national or local development plans**, poverty reduction strategies, national communications, or national adaptation programs of action, or other relevant instruments, where they exist.

The proposed project is fully aligned with Vanuatu's national, sub-national, and local sustainable development and climate adaptation strategies. Specifically, the project supports the following frameworks:

**National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030 (“The People’s Plan”)**

- The project contributes directly to Environment Goal 4 (“A nation which utilises and sustainably manages our natural resources”) and Society Goal 1 (“A just, inclusive and equitable society”), as well as the economic, environmental, and social policy objectives set out in the People’s Plan.

**Vanuatu National Forest Policy (2013–2023) & draft updates**

- The project operationalizes the National Forest Policy’s objectives of restoring degraded forests, enhancing community-based management, building local capacity, and integrating traditional knowledge with modern forestry practices.
- The project’s focus on sustainable forest management, catchment restoration, and invasive species control is fully consistent with the policy’s stated actions and priorities.

**Vanuatu Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy (2020–2030)**

- The project is fully aligned with the objectives and approaches of the Vanuatu Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy (FLRS), which aims to restore ecological processes, improve biodiversity, and strengthen resilience to environmental change through participatory, landscape-scale interventions.
- The project contributes to FLRS priorities such as restoring degraded lands, protecting climate-sensitive ecosystems, and empowering local communities as primary stewards of restoration efforts, as well as establishing permanent monitoring and learning systems to support adaptive management and upscaling of effective practices.

**National REDD+ Strategy of Vanuatu (2021)**

- The project directly supports the National REDD+ Strategy’s vision to safeguard and restore forest landscapes, facilitate climate- and forest-friendly production systems, build resilience in forest-based communities, and promote sustainable livelihoods.
- Activities such as afforestation, reforestation, agroforestry, and sustainable land management are designed to address both direct and underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, while promoting inclusive, community-based management and benefit-sharing in line with the REDD+ strategy’s enabling interventions and safeguards.

**Vanuatu NDC Forestry Sector Investment Strategy**

- The project is closely linked to the Vanuatu NDC Forestry Sector Investment Strategy, supporting key priorities for mitigation and adaptation, including large-scale reforestation, forest and landscape restoration, and agroforestry development.
- By targeting increased forest cover, improved land management, and enhanced carbon sequestration, the project contributes to the achievement of Vanuatu's enhanced NDC commitments under the Paris Agreement, while mobilizing investment, technical assistance, and capacity building as outlined in the Investment Strategy.

**Vanuatu National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA, 2007) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2022)**

- The project supports the NAPA's priority adaptation interventions for the forestry sector, including reforestation, watershed management, and enhancing resilience to climate-induced hazards.
- The project's locally led, nature-based solutions approach is fully consistent with the NAP, which prioritizes ecosystem-based adaptation, integrated water and land management, community participation, and the strengthening of local capacity.

**Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs, 2020)**

- The project contributes directly to Vanuatu's commitments under the Paris Agreement to increase forest cover, enhance ecosystem resilience, and promote community-based adaptation measures.
- It specifically supports NDC targets for afforestation/reforestation, biodiversity conservation, and building resilience in climate-vulnerable communities.

**Vanuatu National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2018)**

- The project advances NBSAP objectives for restoring degraded habitats, enhancing community-based conservation, and promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity resources, including forests and catchments.

**Provincial and Local Area Plans**

- The project will work directly with provincial governments and local area councils to ensure activities are tailored to local development and land-use plans, respecting customary land tenure and promoting inclusive, participatory governance at the community level.

**National Disaster Risk Reduction & Climate Change Policy (2016–2030)**

- The project's focus on ecosystem restoration, catchment protection, and reducing climate and disaster risk is fully aligned with this policy's strategic priorities for integrated risk reduction and resilience building.

**Gender and Social Inclusion Policies**

- The project is consistent with the Vanuatu National Gender Equality Policy (2020–2030), by actively promoting the participation and leadership of women, youth, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups in climate adaptation and resource management.

### **Vanuatu Biosecurity Policy 2016-2030**

The project contributes to or complements Vanuatu's efforts on its biosecurity policy particularly in thematic areas covering plant health), pesticide and industrial chemicals management, GEDSI, climate change and linkages with national, regional and international stakeholders.

- E. Describe how the project / programme meets relevant national technical standards, where applicable, such as standards for environmental assessment, building codes, etc., and complies with the Environmental and Social Policy of the Adaptation Fund.

**Also describe, as needed, how the project/programme will provide support to local actors and build their capacities to comply with the standards.**

The project is fully committed to meeting all relevant national technical standards and complying with the Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) of the Adaptation Fund throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring. A strong focus is placed on ensuring that local institutions and communities are equipped to understand and meet these standards in a practical and inclusive manner.

The project will ensure full compliance with Vanuatu's regulatory frameworks and the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy. During the project formulation phase, an **Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS)** will be carried out to identify required authorizations and clearances—such as environmental impact assessments, forestry permits, and land-use consents—and to design draft compliance-monitoring protocols. These arrangements will be refined during the full proposal stage following consultations with national authorities, ensuring transparency, accountability, and adherence to both national and international standards.

#### **Compliance with National Technical Standards:**

All project activities will adhere to Vanuatu's national legal and technical frameworks, including environmental assessment requirements under the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act [CAP 283], national standards for reforestation and nursery practices, forest management guidelines, and, where applicable, building codes for any physical infrastructure. Prior to implementation of restoration or infrastructure activities, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) or Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) will be conducted as required by Vanuatu's Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC). Project activities will also respect all customary land tenure systems and ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of affected landowners and communities.

#### **Compliance with Adaptation Fund ESP:**

The project has been screened against the Environmental and Social Policy of the Adaptation Fund. Safeguards will be integrated through:

- Participatory environmental and social risk assessment during project preparation and site selection;
- Avoidance of involuntary resettlement or significant adverse impacts on habitats and vulnerable groups;
- Grievance redress mechanisms at the community level, with clear procedures for raising and resolving concerns;

- Ongoing monitoring and reporting of environmental and social impacts, including gender and inclusion indicators;
- Ensuring equitable benefit sharing and respect for human rights, Indigenous rights, and cultural heritage.

- 

**Capacity Building for Standards Compliance:**

Recognizing that technical standards and safeguards are essential for effective, sustainable outcomes, the project will provide tailored support and capacity building for local actors and implementing partners to ensure full compliance. This includes:

- Training programs for local government, community leaders, and partner organizations on national regulations
- Development and dissemination of user-friendly implementation tools (e.g., step-by-step guides, checklists, and protocols in local languages) covering nursery management, agroforestry safety, EIA procedures, and gender-responsive engagement;
- Technical support and oversight provided by SPC and national experts throughout the project cycle to assist with environmental compliance and safeguard application;
- Integration of compliance and safeguards into all Training of Trainers (ToT) modules, enabling knowledge transfer to community-level practitioners.
- Learning exchanges, peer-peer learning and best practices shared between different communities.

By embedding national technical standards and international best practice throughout the project cycle, and by building the capacity of local actors to comply, the project not only ensures regulatory compliance but also strengthens long-term sustainability and local ownership.

- F. Describe if there is duplication of project / programme with other funding sources, if any. Describe how the project/programme will ensure coordination of different initiatives, sub-projects and small grants towards a common goal, enhances collaboration across sectors and outlines how activities avoid duplication and enhance efficiencies and good practice.

This project is carefully designed to complement and build upon existing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and forest restoration initiatives in Vanuatu, while addressing critical gaps in community-led, large-scale restoration and locally driven adaptation. Preliminary mapping and engagement with the NDA indicate no duplication of funding or activities. Rather, the project is positioned to maximize synergy, coordination, and value for money by aligning with ongoing initiatives and contributing to a coherent national approach to ecosystem-based adaptation.

The design of this project will be informed by lessons from ongoing and past initiatives in Vanuatu and the wider Pacific, such as the Kiwa Initiative, Live & Learn's Climate Resilient Islands (CRI) Programme, Nakau's community-based forest carbon programmes, MACBLUE, PEBACC+ or Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project. These initiatives demonstrate the importance of community-

led governance, early engagement with customary landowners, and integration of livelihood options to strengthen resilience. Building on these lessons, the project ensures that community-based committees are central to decision-making and that restoration is closely linked with sustainable livelihoods.

Potential areas of cooperation have been identified with live & learn and nakau, whose complementary experience and networks offer strategic added value for this project.

**Live & Learn (Climate Resilient Islands – CRI Programme):** Works directly with communities and customary landowners in Vanuatu to strengthen resilience through restoration, sustainable livelihoods, and governance support, with established baselines, resilience plans, and facilitation mechanisms in place.

- **Linkages with this project:** CRI's sites and knowledge products provide a ready platform to align and scale restoration activities.
- **Potential cooperation areas:** community facilitation, participatory planning, integration of resilience planning into restoration sites, and knowledge exchange.
- **Added value:** ensures stronger mainstreaming of project activities into national programmes, avoids duplication, and leverages proven methodologies for community-led adaptation.

**Nakau:** A regional mechanism enabling communities to access carbon finance through conservation and restoration. In Vanuatu, Nakau operates at sites such as Loru and Vunausi, pioneering approaches that link restoration, customary governance, and carbon standards.

- **Linkages with this project:** experience aligns with the project's focus on long-term sustainability and linking restoration with climate finance.
- **Potential cooperation areas:** carbon-compatible restoration models; support to early years of carbon projects (high labour costs, low credit volumes); and equitable benefit-sharing models.
- **Added value:** enhances technical credibility, creates opportunities for carbon-linked finance, and ensures interventions are compatible with international standards, strengthening sustainability and scaling potential.

**Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project (VCAP, Phase II):** Implemented by the Department of Climate Change with UNDP support, VCAP focuses on strengthening resilience in vulnerable coastal zones through ecosystem-based adaptation, biodiversity conservation, land degradation control, and improved climate information systems (e.g., AWS and river gauges). It works at community and provincial levels, with strong links to national strategies and policy frameworks.

- **Linkages with this project:** VCAP's ridge-to-reef approach and community adaptation mechanisms overlap with the proposed forest and landscape restoration activities, particularly in vulnerable watersheds and coastal catchments. Its monitoring systems and governance structures complement the project's restoration and adaptation interventions.

- *Potential cooperation areas:* aligning restoration sites with VCAP's target provinces; joint use of vulnerability assessments and monitoring systems; harmonized safeguards and gender approaches; coordination on community-based planning and grants mechanisms; and knowledge sharing across ridge-to-reef interventions.

*Added value:* ensures complementarity between forest restoration and coastal adaptation; leverages VCAP's established data, governance structures, and community networks; avoids duplication; and creates stronger pathways for national policy integration and replication across the Pacific

**PEBACC+ (Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change Plus, implemented by SPREP):**

In Vanuatu, PEBACC+ builds on the original PEBACC project by piloting ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) interventions in priority landscapes and seascapes, strengthening national capacity to mainstream EbA into policies, and producing tools and case studies for replication across the Pacific.

- *Linkages with this project:* PEBACC+ has established EbA demonstration sites, methodologies, and partnerships with national institutions (including the Department of Forestry and Department of Environment). These align with the project's forest restoration and NbS objectives.
- *Potential cooperation areas:* harmonizing EbA and restoration guidelines; building on PEBACC+ demonstration sites for scaling; joint development of policy briefs and mainstreaming tools; and leveraging SPREP's regional platform for knowledge dissemination.
- *Added value:* ensures stronger alignment with regional EbA standards, avoids duplication of pilot efforts, and strengthens the scientific and policy basis for NbS in Vanuatu, enhancing credibility and opportunities for replication.

**MACBLUE (Managing Coastal Aquifer Resources and Blue Economy, EU-funded):**

MACBLUE supports Vanuatu and other Pacific Island countries to sustainably manage coastal aquifers, protect groundwater resources, and link water security with climate adaptation and blue economy opportunities. In Vanuatu, it emphasizes hydrological monitoring, integrated water resource management, and capacity building for national institutions.

- *Linkages with this project:* MACBLUE's focus on aquifer and groundwater protection directly complements restoration interventions in upland forests and catchments, which are critical for recharge and water regulation.
- *Potential cooperation areas:* coordinated watershed and aquifer management planning; integration of hydrological monitoring data into restoration site planning; joint awareness-raising on the forest–water nexus; and alignment of policy messages on water security and NbS.

- *Added value*: ensures forest restoration contributes directly to water security outcomes, leverages MACBLUE’s technical expertise in hydrology and aquifer management, and strengthens multi-sectoral cooperation across forestry, water, and climate adaptation agendas.

Overall, collaboration with live & learn and nakau will reinforce national synergies, better mainstreaming of activities into policy frameworks, and greater community impact. these partnerships bring trusted community networks (through cri), technical expertise in restoration and carbon finance (through nakau), and strong links with the department of forestry (through both).

At the full proposal stage, a deeper mapping and analysis of complementarities will be undertaken with national partners to identify additional linkages and ensure coherence with other investments. Where relevant, lessons from other projects with community-led adaptation approaches will be incorporated into project design, and conversely, experiences generated through this project will be shared to strengthen collective learning and scaling across Vanuatu and the Pacific. During the project formalation phase, these potential partnerships with Live & Learn and Nakau will be further developed and formalised to ensure complementarity, avoid duplication, and embed the project within Vanuatu’s broader locally led adaptation and restoration strategies.

#### Identified Relevant Projects and Programmes in Vanuatu

- **Kiwa Initiative**
  - ✓ **PEBACC+ (SPREP)**: Ecosystem-based adaptation and urban tree planting in Port Vila and Tanna.
  - ✓ **LAMACCA Ecosystem Restoration Project (South Malekula)**: Community-led ecosystem and forest restoration, including coastal protection and coral reef rehabilitation.
- **MACBLUE (SPREP / EU / AFD)**
  - ✓ Focused on blue carbon, mangrove ecosystem management, and policy development for coastal and marine NbS.
- **PPIN – Promoting Pacific Islands Nature-based Solutions**
  - ✓ Led by SPC in partnership with IUCN, SPREP, and GGGI, under MFAT funding.
  - ✓ Focused on regional and national NbS capacity-building, with pilots and mainstreaming support in Vanuatu.
- **Live & Learn – Climate Resilient Islands (CRI) Programme**
  - ✓ Works with communities and customary landowners to strengthen resilience through ecosystem restoration, agroforestry, and community-based governance.
  - ✓ Established community baselines, resilience plans, and facilitation networks in partnership with the Department of Forestry and provincial authorities.
- **Nakau – Community-Based Forest Carbon Programmes**

- ✓ Active in Vanuatu at sites such as Loru and Vunausi, linking restoration and conservation to international carbon standards.
- ✓ Provides technical expertise on benefit-sharing models and supports communities to access long-term carbon finance through forest conservation and restoration.
- **FAO/GEF Forestry and Protected Area Management Project (GEFPAS-FPAM)**
  - ✓ Supporting improved forest governance and protected area management in Vanuatu and other Pacific countries.
- **Endospermum medullosum (Whitewood) Management and Processing Project**
  - ✓ Focused on enhancing propagation, sustainable harvesting, and value-chain development of a climate-resilient timber species.
- **Aniwa Community Reforestation Project (Department of Forests)**
  - ✓ Small-scale, community-led forest restoration initiative with a strong focus on local engagement and technical capacity-building.
- **Climate Resilient by Nature Programme**
  - ✓ *Ni-Vanuatu Women Leading Solutions to Climate Change*: Women-led ecosystem restoration and adaptation.
  - ✓ *NbS for Forests and People*: Forest and catchment restoration with a strong community-based approach.
- **GEF 6/FAO – Ecosystem Restoration and Sustainable Land Management in Tongoa**
  - ✓ *Focused on ecosystem restoration, reforestation, and the promotion of sustainable land management practices on Tongoa Island, strengthening local capacity and resilience to land degradation and climate change.*
- **GEF/UNDP – VCAP 2 (Adaptation to Climate Change in the Coastal Zones of Vanuatu)**
  - ✓ *Large-scale adaptation project targeting coastal communities; includes integrated approaches to coastal protection, ecosystem restoration, and strengthening of local governance and climate-resilient livelihoods.*
- **GCF FP184 Vanuatu community-based resilience project (VCCRP)**
  - ✓ VCCRP strengthens community-led climate resilience through ecosystem restoration, sustainable livelihoods, and improved access to climate information and services.
  - ✓ Output 2.1 focuses on Nature-based Solutions (NbS), including community reforestation, watershed protection, and agroforestry, to enhance food security and reduce vulnerability to climate hazards.

**Potential areas of complementarity include:**

- Alignment of monitoring and evaluation frameworks, indicators, and NbS standards;

- Coordination of capacity-building and training activities, particularly for community-based forest management and restoration;
- Knowledge exchange and joint technical guidance, including on ecosystem restoration, benefit-sharing models, and participatory planning;
- Collaborative site selection and sequencing to avoid geographic and thematic overlap, while expanding coverage to underserved communities or ecosystems.
- Collaboration with Live & Learn's Climate Resilient Islands (CRI) programme to leverage existing community baselines, resilience plans, and facilitation networks, ensuring strong mainstreaming into national systems;
- Partnership with Nakau to align restoration activities with carbon methodologies, explore carbon-compatible restoration models, and support equitable benefit-sharing and access to long-term climate finance.
- Coordination with the Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project (VCAP II) to align ridge-to-reef approaches, share vulnerability assessments and monitoring systems, and integrate safeguards and gender-responsive planning;
- Engagement with PEBACC+ to harmonize EbA and restoration approaches, build on demonstration sites, and scale policy integration of ecosystem-based adaptation;
- Linkages with MACBLUE to connect forest and watershed restoration with aquifer recharge and water security, aligning hydrological monitoring and joint awareness on the forest–water nexus.

SPC, as a regional implementing entity with strong thematic expertise and longstanding partnerships in Vanuatu, is well-positioned to lead and facilitate coordination. Its direct engagement with national authorities, technical partners, and community-based organisations ensures visibility across ongoing programmes and the ability to integrate complementary efforts from the outset. Coordination will also benefit from the active participation of national institutions, such as the Department of Forests and the Department of Climate Change, which are jointly involved in the planning and implementation of many relevant initiatives.

To further ensure complementarity and avoid duplication, the project will:

- Collaborate with relevant government and non-government actors to validate the mapping of existing and planned interventions during the full proposal stage;
- Establish or strengthen a national NbS and restoration coordination platform, allowing for ongoing dialogue, information sharing, and joint planning;
- Promote the harmonisation of tools, protocols, and outreach strategies with other initiatives to reduce inefficiencies and amplify impact.
- These coordination mechanisms, along with SPC's leadership and in-country networks, will be formalized during the full proposal development, including the identification of

entry points for collaboration, joint knowledge-sharing strategies, and planning for complementary investments.

This project will not duplicate existing efforts but will instead act as a strategic catalyst to scale, harmonize, and sustain NbS investments across Vanuatu. Through alignment with national priorities and robust coordination with ongoing initiatives, it will contribute to a more efficient, inclusive, and impactful adaptation response.

- G.** If applicable, describe the learning and knowledge management component to capture and disseminate lessons learned and how this contributes to building and institutionalizing local capabilities. Provide details on managing traditional and/or indigenous knowledge, where relevant.

A dedicated learning and knowledge management component is central to this project's design, ensuring that lessons learned, innovations, and community-led practices are systematically captured, analysed, disseminated, and institutionalised to inform adaptive management and long-term scaling. The project is explicitly conceived as a demonstration initiative, laying the foundation for replication and upscaling across all ten forestry countries and territories in the Pacific region.

#### **Knowledge Capture and Adaptive Learning Mechanisms**

The project will adopt a Results-Based Management (RBM) approach, embedding learning into all stages of implementation through:

- Participatory monitoring and evaluation systems at community and landscape levels, enabling the routine collection of quantitative and qualitative data from all stakeholders—including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalised groups.
- Community reflection workshops, after-action reviews, and landscape-level learning exchanges, timed with key implementation milestones, to surface emerging lessons, challenges, and adaptive strategies.
- Use of learning indicators linked to the project's outputs and outcomes to track progress on knowledge generation, uptake, and impact—supporting real-time adjustment and strategic learning.

#### **Dissemination Tools and Knowledge Products**

To ensure broad visibility and application of project-generated knowledge, the following dissemination tools and platforms will be used:

- Development of knowledge products such as case studies, technical manuals, policy briefs, multimedia stories, short videos, and restoration toolkits, all tailored for different audiences and translated into local languages where appropriate.
- Distribution through national and regional knowledge platforms, including the Department of Forests, SPC portals, the PIRT NbS Working Group, and others.
- Engagement with media and communication channels, including newsletters, community

radio, social media, and dedicated project webpage to document and share ongoing lessons, progress updates, and milestone events.

### **Institutionalisation and Local Capacity Building**

The project will prioritise the embedding of learning processes and tools within local institutions, ensuring continuity beyond the project's timeframe:

- Training materials and knowledge products will be institutionalised within local government departments, customary authorities, and community-based organisations.
- The Training of Trainers (ToT) model will enable the continued delivery of capacity-building and peer mentoring at the community level.
- Opportunities for cross-project and cross-sectoral learning will be actively pursued, including through collaboration with other NbS initiatives, regional exchanges, and shared learning events.

### **Integration and Protection of Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge**

Respectful and ethical integration of traditional knowledge is central to the project's learning approach:

- Engagement of customary landowners and Indigenous leaders will follow Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles.
- Traditional ecological knowledge—covering areas such as forest and watershed management, species selection, and climate forecasting—will be integrated with scientific knowledge in restoration protocols and monitoring systems.
- The project will support community storytelling, participatory mapping, and knowledge documentation activities, ensuring community ownership and recognition of intellectual property rights.

### **Catalysing Regional Upscaling**

This project serves as a proof-of-concept for scaling Nature-based Solutions across the Pacific. It will:

- Package and share its methodologies, tools, and results to inform future proposals, donor programmes, and national policies in the region.
- Facilitate regional exchange visits, joint workshops, and engagement in Pacific-wide forums to promote regional learning and knowledge transfer.
- Contribute insights and practices to the development of coordinated regional approaches to NbS and forest restoration, aligned with national and regional climate adaptation strategies.

The project's knowledge management component not only empowers local actors with the tools and knowledge they need to sustain and replicate successful practices but also supports the institutionalisation of learning and the creation of a regional knowledge base to advance

ecosystem-based adaptation at scale across the Pacific.

- H. Describe the consultative process, including the list of stakeholders consulted, undertaken during project preparation, with particular reference to vulnerable groups, including gender considerations, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund. **Provide details on how the consultative process considered and addressed gender-based, economic and other inequalities and encouraged vulnerable and marginalized individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.**

The concept for this project was developed through a robust initial consultation process involving key national and regional stakeholders, with a particular focus on forestry authorities and technical partners in Vanuatu and across the Pacific. While direct community consultations will be undertaken during full proposal development, this concept note reflects the outcomes of multiple engagement efforts with those institutions currently responsible for forest restoration, environmental policy, and land resource management in Vanuatu.

#### **Initial Consultations and Stakeholders Engaged**

The project design draws on extensive consultations and needs assessments carried out at both national and regional levels. This includes the PPIN project's capacity building needs assessment for forestry in Vanuatu, wide-ranging engagement with all Pacific forestry countries during the design of Phase II of the Kiwa Initiative's technical assistance, and the comprehensive regional needs assessment on forest and coastal restoration conducted by SPC's Land Resources and Climate Change and Sustainability Divisions in early 2025. Together, these processes involved detailed technical consultations with forestry departments, senior technical officers, and other key practitioners across 10 Pacific Island Countries and Territories—including Vanuatu—to identify restoration priorities, capacity gaps, and enabling conditions.

In Vanuatu, the consultation included direct engagement with the Department of Forestry—and staff responsible for native species propagation, nursery operations, and restoration site management. This work was complemented by a separate in-country needs assessment conducted under the Pacific Islands Promote Nature-based Solutions (PPIN) project, which focused on Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu. These assessments highlighted gaps in training, tools, and institutional coordination that are now addressed in the project design.

In addition, Vanuatu's participation in the Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) meeting, organised by SPC in June 2025, provided a platform for high-level dialogue with government stakeholders. The discussions held during that regional forum, including with the Vanuatu Department of Forests and Department of Climate Change, further reinforced the strategic alignment of this project with national restoration goals and climate adaptation priorities.

While the concept was informed primarily through engagement with technical and institutional partners, direct consultations with community representatives—including women's groups, youth, and people with disabilities—are planned for the full proposal phase, contingent on securing the Project Formulation Grant

#### **Gender and Social Inclusion Considerations**

Throughout the assessments and dialogue to date, emphasis has been placed on identifying structural barriers to inclusion in forest restoration—especially regarding the role of women, youth, Indigenous people, and persons with disabilities. Stakeholders consistently raised the need for gender-responsive training, culturally relevant outreach materials, and mechanisms to ensure equitable access to benefits. These priorities have been integrated into the project’s design, with inclusive participation, leadership quotas, and benefit-sharing principles proposed as core operational features.

During the full proposal development stage, the project will incorporate a comprehensive gender and social inclusion assessment to inform the design of all components. FPIC protocols will be systematically applied, and the differentiated needs and capacities of vulnerable groups will be actively explored and addressed.

#### **Community-Level Engagement – Planned Next Steps**

While this concept note was developed through national and technical consultations, a thorough community-level consultative process is planned for the proposal development stage and will continue throughout the project implementation. Communities, landowners, and local groups will not only be consulted but actively co-design project activities through participatory planning workshops, site visits, and benefit-sharing negotiations. Marginalized and underrepresented groups will be specifically targeted through tailored outreach and supported participation mechanisms.

This process will include:

- Public meetings and dialogue forums at community level (ensuring gender balance and accessibility);
- Focus group discussions with women, youth, and customary leaders;
- Mapping of local knowledge, priorities and threats through participatory tools;
- Validation of project design elements (site selection, nursery management, restoration methods, etc.) with target communities.

Consultations will also be held with implementers of complementary national and regional initiatives and relevant thematic experts to coordinate strategies, ensure alignment, and jointly address gaps identified in other NbS and restoration efforts.

The project concept reflects broad-based input from national and regional stakeholders, with a strong foundation of evidence from recent needs assessments and technical dialogues. It is grounded in the lived realities of those implementing restoration at scale in Vanuatu and beyond. Moving forward, the project will ensure inclusive, gender-responsive, and locally led consultations to refine and deliver an effective, equitable adaptation response fully aligned with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund.

- I. Provide justification for funding requested, focusing on the full cost of adaptation reasoning.

The requested funding represents the full cost of adaptation required to enable Vanuatu's most climate-vulnerable communities and critical ecosystems to withstand and adapt to the accelerating impacts of climate change. In the absence of external support, communities and local authorities lack the resources, technical capacity, and institutional frameworks to implement the integrated, community-driven forest restoration and adaptation activities proposed by this project.

**Without Adaptation Funding:**

- Degraded forests and catchments would continue to deteriorate, further reducing water availability, destabilising soils, and increasing the risk of landslides, drought, flooding, and cyclone impacts.
- Vulnerable communities—including women, youth, and Indigenous groups—would remain exposed to food and water insecurity, deteriorating natural resource bases, and disaster-related loss of livelihoods, infrastructure, and human life.
- Local and Indigenous knowledge systems, which provide important low-cost solutions, would remain underutilised and unintegrated in formal planning processes due to lack of documentation, recognition, and capacity.
- Vanuatu would fall short of its national adaptation goals, including those articulated in its National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly on forest restoration, climate-resilient livelihoods, and biodiversity protection.

**With Adaptation Funding (Full Cost of Adaptation):**

Adaptation Fund resources will directly finance the **incremental adaptation costs** required to implement, sustain, and scale community-led climate resilience actions. Funding will:

- Establish the enabling environment—knowledge, tools, governance mechanisms, and financial resources—for local communities to plan and implement climate-resilient forest and catchment restoration at scale.
- Support inclusive, gender-responsive, and locally led adaptation actions rooted in best-practice Nature-based Solutions and traditional knowledge.
- Cover the costs of restoring degraded ecosystems, establishing and maintaining decentralized nurseries, developing restoration protocols, and supporting resilient agroforestry systems in priority areas.
- Provide training, institutional capacity-building, and technical support for participatory planning, monitoring, and adaptive management.
- Address specific barriers that communities cannot overcome alone, including: upfront investment in nurseries and planting materials, design of legal frameworks for benefit-sharing, and the establishment of monitoring systems and knowledge platforms.

### **Incremental Value and Non-Duplication:**

All requested funds are allocated to adaptation-specific activities, targeting the incremental costs that go beyond baseline development needs. The project has been carefully designed to avoid duplication and instead complement other donor-funded or government-led efforts. As described in Section F, mapping of initiatives has already been undertaken to ensure alignment and synergy.

Although some activities (e.g., community mobilisation, local training, nursery development) might also appear in development programmes, in this project they are specifically tailored to deliver concrete climate adaptation outcomes and have been framed accordingly. The proposed activities will be implemented independently of any co-financing, ensuring that Adaptation Fund outcomes and outputs are achieved regardless of contributions from other sources.

### **Catalytic Impact:**

This project is expected to generate sustained and measurable adaptation benefits. These include reduced climate-related losses, improved food and water security, healthier ecosystems, and more resilient livelihoods. In addition, the project will create institutional, technical, and knowledge assets that can be leveraged for wider regional replication and policy influence.

By supporting this demonstration initiative, the Adaptation Fund will catalyse transformational change—positioning Vanuatu as a regional leader in community-led, nature-based forest restoration and management and helping to build a blueprint for resilience across other Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

- J. Describe how the sustainability of the project/programme outcomes has been taken into account when designing the project / programme. **In particular, describe how the project/programme supports long-term development of local governance processes, and improves the capacity of local institutions (including through simpler access modalities), and how it can ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions, facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based donor funding.**

Sustainability has been a core principle in the design of this project. Every component is structured to ensure that the benefits—environmental, social, and institutional—extend well beyond the project lifecycle, enabling communities and local institutions to independently sustain, manage, and expand climate adaptation actions over time. The project strengthens systems, capacities, and partnerships that are essential for long-term resilience, reducing reliance on project-based donor funding.

### **Institutional and Governance Sustainability**

The project places local governance and institutional strengthening at its core, aiming to embed climate adaptation and forest restoration into existing structures rather than creating parallel systems. Sustainability will be supported through:

- Strengthening of customary and local governance mechanisms for land and natural resource management, including inclusive benefit-sharing models and participatory land-

use planning.

- Support to national and provincial government institutions—particularly the Department of Forests and Department of Climate Change—to embed Nature-based Solutions (NbS) into policy, planning, and budgeting processes.
- Establishment or reinforcement of multi-stakeholder coordination platforms (e.g., NbS/Restoration Committees) that ensure long-term dialogue, strategic planning, and coordinated investments across sectors and partners.

By building the capacity of duty bearers and decision-makers, the project creates the enabling environment required for Vanuatu to institutionalize climate adaptation and ecosystem restoration beyond the project's duration.

### **Capacity Strengthening and Local Ownership**

A robust Training of Trainers (ToT) model ensures that technical expertise is retained at the community level and can be mobilized after the project ends. Local actors will be trained in:

- Nursery establishment and management
- Site-specific restoration and ecosystem management
- Participatory monitoring and adaptive management
- Family Farm Teams (FFT) approaches for equitable household and community resource management
- Environmental and social safeguard compliance
- Governance and facilitation of inclusive planning

These trainings will be co-designed with local institutions and embedded within provincial and customary governance processes. By fostering peer-to-peer learning networks, the project helps create a cadre of local restoration champions, capable of continuing and expanding activities independently.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The project focuses on the restoration and sustainable management of critical inland, transitional, and mangrove forests—ecosystems that are foundational to long-term resilience. Activities are designed to:

- Restore ecological function and biodiversity
- Reduce erosion, fire risk, and water stress
- Reinforce natural buffers against extreme climate events

Only native and climate-resilient species will be used, and planting designs will incorporate long-

term ecological principles. Post-planting maintenance systems (e.g., invasive species control, fire breaks, enrichment planting) will be community-led and included in site management plans, with resource allocations where necessary.

### **Economic and Financial Sustainability**

The project invests in income-generating and cost-saving ecosystem services by:

- Promoting agroforestry and food security in tandem with restoration
- Reducing disaster-related losses and costs to households
- Strengthening access to local water sources through catchment protection

Where possible, the project will explore and build awareness around blended finance options and sustainable financing mechanisms for post-project continuation, such as:

- Integration into national and provincial climate budgets
- Exploring small-scale ecotourism or PES (Payment for Ecosystem Services) models
- Creating local business cases for sustaining nurseries and restoration enterprises

While donor support kick-starts the intervention, sustainability is embedded through community ownership, capacity, and alignment with long-term national priorities.

### **Replication and Scaling Potential**

As a proof-of-concept, this project is intentionally designed for scaling across Vanuatu and the wider Pacific region. The methodologies, training modules, planning tools, and governance models developed under this project will be documented, refined, and disseminated for use by other provinces and countries. Lessons learned will feed into regional platforms.

By embedding adaptation into the institutional fabric of Vanuatu, and by equipping local actors with the knowledge, tools, and leadership roles to continue implementation, this project establishes a strong foundation for sustainable, locally driven resilience. Its multi-dimensional sustainability strategy ensures that the impacts will be enduring, equitable, and scalable, transforming not just landscapes but the systems and capacities that support them.

### **K. Provide an overview of the environmental and social impacts and risks identified as being relevant to the project / programme.**

This project is designed as a large-scale, community-driven Nature-based Solution (NbS) for climate adaptation, forest restoration, and improved ecosystem services. It is expected to deliver significant positive environmental and social impacts, particularly for vulnerable communities in rural, inland, and coastal areas of Vanuatu. At the same time, the project acknowledges the need to proactively manage a set of moderate, site-specific risks, in full compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund.

Based on preliminary screening, the project has been classified as a Category B initiative. It may involve moderate and manageable environmental and social risks that are site-specific, reversible, and can be effectively mitigated. It does not involve any activities with significant, irreversible, or widespread adverse impacts, and therefore does not fall under Category A.

#### **Positive Environmental and Social Impacts**

The project is expected to generate broad, long-term benefits for both ecosystems and communities, including:

- Restoration of degraded forests (inland, transitional, and mangrove) leading to improved biodiversity, enhanced soil health, regulation of freshwater flows, and strengthened climate resilience at the landscape scale.
- Protection and enhancement of ecosystem services, supporting local food production, water security, and reduced disaster risks, especially in vulnerable areas exposed to cyclones, drought, and landslides.
- Empowerment of local actors, with a strong emphasis on participatory governance, gender equity, and the inclusion of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities in decision-making, implementation, and benefit-sharing.
- Revitalization of traditional knowledge systems and cultural values through respectful integration into restoration planning and monitoring processes.

#### **Potential Environmental and Social Risks and Mitigation Measures**

**Note:** Risk identification presented at the concept note stage is preliminary. A comprehensive Environmental and Social Risk Assessment will be undertaken during the full proposal stage, including more detailed analysis of direct, indirect, transboundary, and cumulative risks. Final risk categorization and mitigation measures will be presented in the full proposal.

While overall risks are low to moderate, the following have been identified through initial screening:

- Disturbance to soil and vegetation during nursery establishment or planting may lead to short-term degradation. Mitigation: use of site-appropriate NbS best practices, native species only, minimal site clearing, and continuous field-level monitoring.
- Land tenure disputes or unclear resource rights could arise during site selection. Mitigation: application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), participatory land use agreements, and inclusive consultations with customary landowners and traditional authorities.
- Social exclusion risks, particularly for women, youth, persons with disabilities, or other marginalised groups. Mitigation: clear inclusion targets, use of gender and social inclusion strategies, trained local facilitators, and community monitoring of participation and benefits.
- Temporary restrictions on land access or labour availability due to restoration activities. Mitigation: community scheduling that respects seasonal livelihood cycles, equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, and compensation or alternative arrangements where

necessary.

- Undervaluing of customary institutions or Indigenous knowledge. Mitigation: dedicated engagement with Indigenous leaders, documentation and respectful integration of traditional knowledge, and active promotion of customary governance as a project strength.
- Grievances or disputes related to benefits, roles, or project outcomes. Mitigation: establishment of accessible, transparent community-level grievance redress mechanisms, with clear timelines and culturally appropriate channels for dispute resolution.

### Screening and Safeguard Compliance

All project activities will undergo a structured environmental and social screening process using the Adaptation Fund's ESP checklist. Where appropriate, site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) will be developed, particularly in areas with sensitive ecosystems or complex land tenure arrangements.

An initial screening conducted during project preparation confirms that:

- No physical displacement or involuntary resettlement is anticipated.
- No critical habitats will be adversely impacted.
- All restoration activities will enhance rather than diminish ecosystem function.
- Gender and Indigenous inclusion risks are moderate but addressable with appropriate safeguards.

The project will establish ongoing monitoring mechanisms—including community-level reporting and feedback loops—to ensure that risks are identified early and managed effectively throughout implementation.

This project is inherently aligned with the principles of environmental protection, social equity, and cultural respect, given its design as an NbS-based, community-driven restoration programme. While it carries low to moderate risks, these are well understood and can be managed through robust safeguards and inclusive governance mechanisms. In doing so, the project is expected to become a model of socially and environmentally responsible adaptation—generating net benefits for both people and nature in a climate-challenged context.

As a Nature-based Solution, all restoration interventions will be aligned with the IUCN Global Standard for NbS to ensure positive environmental and social outcomes, minimize risks, and reinforce sustainability and equity across project sites.

**Note:** The risks identified in this checklist are preliminary and will be elaborated further during the Project Formulation Grant and full proposal stage, including detailed analysis of direct, indirect, transboundary, and cumulative risks. At this stage, the checklist focuses solely on identifying potential risks, without mitigation measures or positive impacts.

### Use of Unidentified Sub-Projects (USPs) Approach

In accordance with the Adaptation Fund's *Updated Guidance on the Use of Unidentified Sub-Projects (USPs)* this project will apply the USP approach to a limited set of activities that require further definition during the Proposal Development Phase and early implementation stages. These include specific community-led restoration [Component 2] and policy mainstreaming

[Component 3], which will be identified through participatory planning, national consultations, and technical assessments.

The use of the USP approach is justified by the project’s locally led and adaptive nature, which requires that final activity design and site selection be informed by provincial and community engagement, traditional governance structures, and gender and social inclusion analyses. This ensures that interventions remain context-specific, equitable, and sustainable.

All sub-projects identified under this approach will undergo structured environmental and social screening in line with the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy (ESP), Gender Policy, and SPC’s Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS). Detailed risk assessments and management plans will be completed prior to implementation, ensuring compliance with AF requirements and national safeguards.

A register of approved sub-projects, including safeguards documentation and monitoring results, will be maintained and reported through the project’s Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework.

<b>Checklist of environmental and social principles</b>	<b>No further assessment required for compliance</b>	<b>Potential impacts and risks – further assessment and management required for compliance</b>
<b>Compliance with the Law</b>	Preliminary screening indicates that the project is consistent with Vanuatu’s national laws, policies, and international conventions, including those on forestry, land, environment, and customary tenure.	Potential risk of non-compliance with specific legal requirements (e.g., EIAs, forestry permits, land-use agreements) once sites are selected.
<b>Access and Equity</b>	The project is designed to provide fair, equitable access to activities, resources, and benefits for all community members—regardless of gender, age, ability, or social status—through participatory, transparent processes.	Potential risk that marginalized groups (e.g., women, youth, people with disabilities) may face barriers to participation or equitable benefit-sharing.
<b>Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups</b>	The project respects the rights and cultural values of all community members, and will ensure that no activities infringe upon or discriminate against marginalized or vulnerable groups (including people with disabilities, women, youth)	Potential risk that vulnerable groups could be unintentionally excluded from decision-making or benefit distribution.
<b>Human Rights</b>	The project is not expected to infringe on fundamental human rights.	Potential risk of inadvertent restrictions on access to resources or participation rights if engagement processes are inadequate.

<b>Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</b>	The project mainstreams gender equality by ensuring meaningful representation, participation, and leadership of women and youth in all planning and implementation bodies.	Potential risk that women and youth may have limited influence if not adequately supported in decision-making structures.
<b>Core Labour Rights</b>	The project is expected to comply with Vanuatu's labour laws and standards.	Potential risk of labour rights violations (e.g., unsafe working conditions, informal labour use) if not effectively monitored.
<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>	The Ni-Vanuatu population is recognized as indigenous, and customary land tenure will be respected.	<i>Potential risk of disputes with customary landowners or lack of broad community support if FPIC is not effectively obtained.</i>
<b>Involuntary Resettlement</b>	The project does not anticipate involuntary resettlement.	Potential risk of land-use conflicts or economic displacement if land agreements are unclear, even without physical relocation.
<b>Protection of Natural Habitats</b>	Restoration activities are designed to enhance and rehabilitate natural habitats.	Potential risk that restoration activities could disturb sensitive habitats if site selection and design are not carefully managed.
<b>Conservation of Biological Diversity</b>	The project will prioritize native species and management of invasives.	Potential risk of introducing non-native species or failing to adequately control invasive species, with impacts on native biodiversity.
<b>Climate Change</b>	The project directly supports climate adaptation and mitigation through ecosystem-based measures.	Potential risk that project activities (e.g., vehicle use, equipment) could generate localized emissions; restoration outcomes could be undermined by extreme events or prolonged drought.
<b>Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency</b>	Project design includes resource-efficient practices for nurseries, planting, and agroforestry.	Potential risk of pollution from chemical use (e.g., invasive species control) or inefficient resource use
<b>Public Health</b>	No negative public health impacts are anticipated	Potential risk of accidental introduction of pests or disease vectors, or health risks from unsafe agrochemical use.
<b>Physical and Cultural Heritage</b>	Project sites will be screened to avoid known cultural heritage areas.	Potential risk of disturbing undocumented cultural or spiritual sites during restoration or nursery establishment.
<b>Lands and Soil Conservation</b>	Restoration and agroforestry activities are designed to promote soil conservation, fertility, and sustainable land management.	Potential risk of erosion or soil degradation if land preparation or planting is poorly managed.

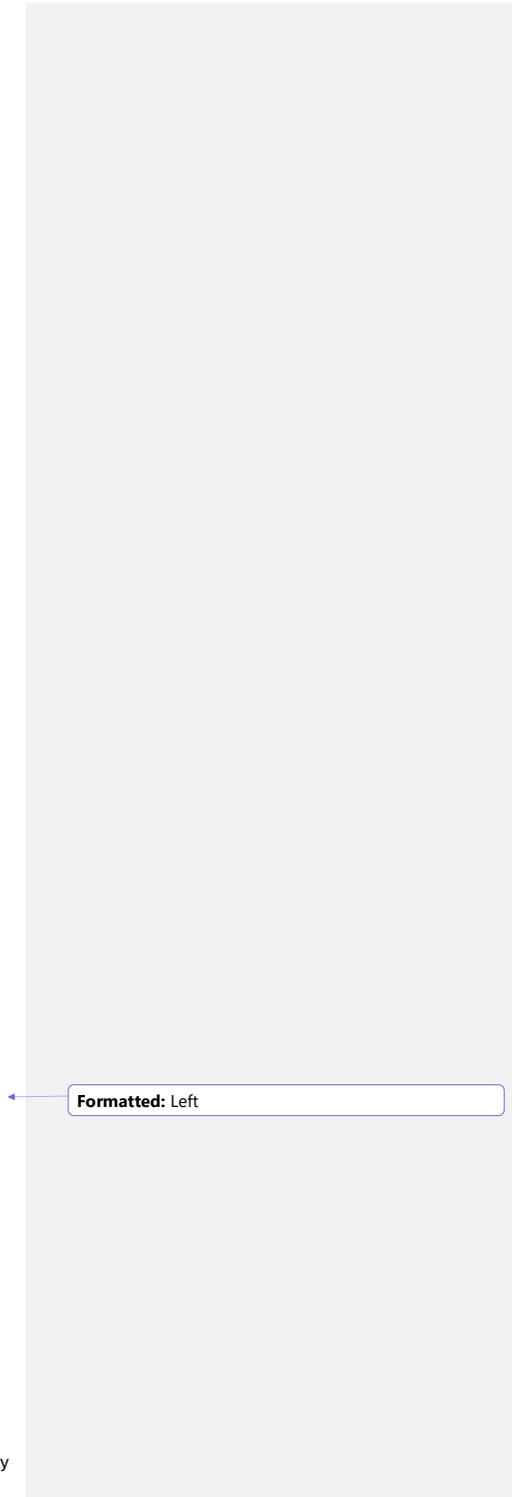
## PART III: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### A. Demonstrate how the project/programme aligns with the Results Framework of the Adaptation Fund

Project Objective(s) <sup>1</sup>	Project Objective Indicator(s)	Fund Outcome	Fund Outcome Indicator	Grant Amount (USD)
Empower communities—including women, youth, and Indigenous groups—to lead the design, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management of forest and landscape restoration through inclusive governance, participatory decision-making, capacity building, and continuous knowledge exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community-based organizations (CBOs) and site-level committees leading project activities</li> <li>• Number of local actors trained and engaged in restoration, monitoring, and governance</li> </ul>	Outcome 2: Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced socioeconomic and environmental losses	2.1 Capacity of staff to respond to, and mitigate impacts of, climate-related events from targeted institutions increased	480,000
Restore, conserve, and sustainably manage Vanuatu's inland, transitional, and mangrove forests, as well as key water catchments, through community-led, nature-based solutions that strengthen ecosystem services, water security, biodiversity, and climate resilience, while addressing land degradation and invasive species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area (ha) of forests and catchments restored or under improved management</li> <li>• Number of communities with restored or improved ecosystem services</li> </ul>	Outcome 5: Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress	5. Ecosystem services and natural resource assets maintained or improved under climate change and variability-induced stress	3,300,000
Reduce climate vulnerability and disaster risk for rural and coastal populations by restoring forest cover, stabilizing soils, managing invasive species, and supporting climate-resilient livelihoods, while mainstreaming community-led, nature-based restoration into national and sub-national policies to enable long-term impact, scaling up, and regional replication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of vulnerable people with increased resilience and reduced climate risk</li> <li>• Number of national/subnational policies updated to integrate NbS and community-led restoration</li> </ul>	Outcome 7: Improved policies and regulations that promote and enforce resilience measures	7. Climate change priorities are integrated into national development strategy	400,818
Project Outcome(s)	Project Outcome Indicator(s)	Fund Output	Fund Output Indicator	Grant Amount (USD)
Increased local capacity, inclusive governance, and knowledge management systems for climate adaptation	• Number of people (by gender) trained in restoration, monitoring, and adaptive management	Output 2.1: Strengthened capacity of national and sub-	2.1.1 No. of staff trained to respond to, and mitigate impacts of, climate-	<del>300,000</del> 480,000

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community-based organizations and local committees established and operational</li> <li>• Number of participatory adaptation action plans developed and validated by stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>national centres and networks to respond rapidly to extreme weather events</p> <p>Output 3.2: Strengthened capacity of national and sub-national stakeholders and entities to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning</p>	<p>related events (by gender)</p> <p>3.2.2 No. of tools and guidelines developed (thematic, sectoral, institutional) and shared with relevant stakeholders</p>	<p><u>180,000</u></p>
<p>Forests, landscapes, and catchments restored; ecosystem services, resilience, and food/livelihood security increased and sustained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hectares of forests, landscapes, and catchments restored or under improved management</li> <li>• Number of native seedlings planted and survived after 2 years</li> <li>• Number of communities benefiting from improved ecosystem services and reduced climate risk</li> </ul>	<p>Output 5: Vulnerable ecosystem services and natural resource assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including variability</p>	<p>5.1. Number of natural resource assets created, maintained, or improved to withstand conditions resulting from climate variability and change (by type and scale)</p>	<p>3,300,000</p>
<p>Adaptive management institutionalized; best practices and policy updated; regional impact and replication enabled</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of policies and strategies updated to integrate adaptive management and community-led NbS</li> <li>• Number of knowledge products, best practices, and lessons learned disseminated at national and regional levels</li> <li>• Number of regional peer learning/exchange events held</li> </ul>	<p>Output 7: Improved integration of climate-resilience strategies into country development plans</p> <p>Output 3.2: Strengthened capacity to capture and disseminate knowledge</p>	<p>7.1. No. of policies introduced or adjusted to address climate change risks (by sector)</p> <p>3.2.2 No. of tools and guidelines developed and shared</p>	<p><del>200,818,400,848</del></p> <p><u>200,000</u></p>

<sup>1</sup> The AF utilized OECD/DAC terminology for its results framework. Project proponents may use different terminology but the overall principle should still apply



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## B. Foreseen Implementation Arrangements

### Institutional Roles

#### Implementing Entity (IE):

The Pacific Community (SPC), through its Climate Finance Unit, will act as the Implementing Entity. SPC will be in charge of overall fiduciary and administrative oversight of the project, including:

- Fiduciary management and reporting to the Adaptation Fund;
- Ensuring alignment with SPC's procurement processes and requirements;
- Oversight of financial management;
- Ensuring monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) activities are undertaken in accordance with AF standards and SPC systems.

#### Executing Entities (EEs):

The project will use a **co-executing modality**, recognising the complementary mandates and capacities of SPC CCES and the Vanuatu Department of Forestry (DoF).

- **Vanuatu Department of Forestry (DoF):** DoF will lead operational management of the project and day-to-day implementation of restoration activities, including site selection, nursery establishment, reforestation, soil and watershed management, invasive species control, and livelihood diversification. DoF will ensure that activities are carried out in alignment with Vanuatu's national forest policies, the National Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy 2030, and other relevant climate and development strategies. DoF's deep knowledge of national context and provincial networks ensures strong ownership and legitimacy of project interventions.
- **SPC CCES Division:** In agreement with the Government of Vanuatu, SPC will also act as co-Executing Entity. SPC will provide technical backstopping and advisory support across NbS design and application, environmental and social safeguards (ESS/GESI/FPIC), and policy mainstreaming. SPC will also support procurement where national systems face bottlenecks, ensuring procurement in compliance with SPC's policies, which have been deemed consistent with AF standards. SPC's co-execution role will ensure international best practice is embedded into all restoration activities and that lessons from across the Pacific are incorporated into the Vanuatu project.

#### Institutional Advantage of SPC as IE and co-EE

SPC's comparative advantage lies in its:

- Extensive relationships with Pacific governments, administrations, and agencies;
- Broad technical mandate covering climate change, NbS, forestry, biodiversity, gender, and social inclusion;
- Dedicated expertise in climate finance and safeguards through its CCES division;
- Large funding base and implementation experience with multi-lateral and bilateral donors;
- 75+ years of operational presence across 22 Pacific Island countries and territories;
- Staffing that includes a high proportion of Pacific Islanders, ensuring contextual knowledge and regional ownership;
- Longstanding presence in Vanuatu across multiple sectors, providing a trusted platform for national implementation.

#### Project Management Structure

A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be jointly supported by the Vanuatu Department of Forestry

(DoF) and SPC to ensure strong national ownership combined with robust fiduciary and technical oversight.

- **National PMU (within DoF):** Based in Port Vila and at selected provincial offices, the national team will include a **National Project Coordinator**, Technical Officers, an M&E Officer, and an Environmental and Gender Safeguards Officer. The National Coordinator, embedded in the Department of Forestry, will oversee day-to-day implementation in Vanuatu, liaise with provincial authorities and communities, supervise technical staff, and ensure activities align with national forestry policies and strategies. The team will also be responsible for ESS/GESI screening of site-level interventions and for supporting participatory monitoring systems.
- **Project Manager (within SPC):** A Project Manager will be based within SPC (CCES or LRD Division) to lead overall project management, procurement, and quality assurance. This role will ensure compliance with Adaptation Fund policies, provide technical backstopping, and coordinate reporting obligations. The Project Manager will work in close partnership with the National Coordinator to align regional expertise and fiduciary standards with national execution.
- **SPC Support Team (Suva/Noumea):** SPC will designate additional staff to provide fiduciary management, procurement support, technical advice, and policy mainstreaming support. These staff will work closely with both the Project Manager and the National PMU to ensure timely procurement, fiduciary obligations are met, and technical advice reflects international best practice.

#### **Project Governance Structure**

A **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** will be established during the inception phase. The PSC will be co-chaired by the Director of Forestry and SPC, and include representatives from relevant government ministries (Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture, Finance), civil society, customary landowner groups, women's and youth representatives, and community-based organisations. SPC and other technical partners will participate as members/observers.

The PSC will provide:

- Strategic guidance and implementation oversight;
- Review of progress and evaluation reports, and recommendations for improved implementation;
- Guidance on cross-cutting issues requiring consensus across stakeholders;
- Oversight of institutional strengthening activities to ensure alignment with national policies;
- Endorsement of the project's administrative, financial, and operations manual;
- Approval of Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPB).

#### **Procurement, and Technical Backstopping**

- **Procurement:** Where needed, SPC will support procurement of goods, services, and materials in compliance with SPC's procurement policy, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and adherence to AF standards. Subsidiary agreements will define specific procurement responsibilities between SPC and DoF.
- **Technical backstopping:** SPC will provide advisory support in restoration methods, nursery practices, invasive species control, and agroforestry systems, as well as in the application of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) principles and standards to ensure interventions deliver climate, biodiversity, and livelihood benefits. SPC will also lead on ESS/GESI and safeguards monitoring. This will be complemented by DoF's technical knowledge and networks at national and

community levels, ensuring NbS approaches are context-specific and grounded in local priorities.

### **Learning and Knowledge Management**

Learning and knowledge management will be embedded as a cross-cutting function throughout the project, with clearly defined roles across SPC, the Department of Forestry (DoF), and community partners. SPC, as Implementing Entity and co-Executing Entity, will coordinate the overall knowledge management strategy, ensuring alignment with regional platforms such as the Pacific NbS Hub and the PIRT NbS Working Group. SPC will also lead quality assurance of knowledge products, manage technical backstopping, and facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges across Pacific Island Countries to ensure regional reach and impact.

At the national level, the Department of Forestry will take responsibility for capturing, synthesising, and disseminating project lessons to inform policy updates (including the 2030 Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy) and to share across relevant ministries, provincial governments, and national coordination platforms.

At the community level, CBOs and site-level committees will play a central role in documenting practices, innovations, and lessons from restoration interventions, feeding into participatory monitoring frameworks and co-producing knowledge products such as case studies, videos, and local guidelines. Training will be provided to strengthen community capacities in documentation and communication, ensuring that communities are not only contributors of information but co-creators of knowledge. All lessons will be disseminated in accessible formats and local languages to maximise uptake and support wider replication of effective practices.

### **Financing Mechanism**

At concept note stage, the financing model remains indicative and will be refined further during the PFG and full proposal stages in consultation with the Government of Vanuatu. The intention is to establish a devolved financing mechanism that brings resources as close as possible to communities while maintaining strong fiduciary controls and oversight.

Under this arrangement, funds will flow from the Adaptation Fund to SPC, in its role as Implementing Entity and co-Executing Entity. SPC will be responsible for fiduciary management, compliance with AF requirements, and quality assurance of disbursements. From SPC, resources will be transferred in tranches to the Department of Forestry, acting as national co-Executing Entity, based on approved workplans and budgets validated through the Project Steering Committee. The Department of Forestry will then channel funds to its provincial offices and to community-based organisations through accountable agreements that are co-signed with customary landowners and provincial authorities. These agreements will cover specific restoration activities, such as nursery establishment, planting, maintenance, and livelihood diversification initiatives.

Oversight, transparency, and accountability will be ensured through multiple layers. Annual Work Plans and Budgets will be reviewed and approved by the Project Steering Committee, which will provide a joint platform for decision-making. Tranche disbursements will be tied to progress reports on both technical and financial performance, verified jointly by SPC and DoF. At the community level, monitoring committees will be established to review both progress and expenditures, providing local accountability. Independent audits and spot checks will form part of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework, and a grievance redress mechanism will be in place to address any concerns around financial flows or benefit-sharing.

At the full proposal stage, this financing mechanism will be further elaborated and supported with a diagram showing the pathway of funds: from the Adaptation Fund to SPC, then to the Department of

Forestry, and subsequently to provincial offices and community-based entities that directly implement restoration activities. This model is designed to balance efficiency with accountability—ensuring resources reach those restoring forests and landscapes on the ground, while safeguarding fiduciary standards through SPC's oversight and DoF's national mandate.

## PART IV: ENDORSEMENT BY GOVERNMENT AND CERTIFICATION BY THE IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

### A. Record of endorsement on behalf of the government<sup>12</sup>

Provide the name and position of the government official and indicate date of endorsement. If this is a regional project/programme, list the endorsing officials all the participating countries. The endorsement letter(s) should be attached as an annex to the project/programme proposal. Please attach the endorsement letter(s) with this template; add as many participating governments if a regional project/programme:

Mr. David Gibson, Director General, Ministry of Climate Change – Vanuatu (NDA)	Date: 16/02/2026
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### B. Implementing Entity certification

Provide the name and signature of the Implementing Entity Coordinator and the date of signature. Provide also the project/programme contact person's name, telephone number and email address.

<p>I certify that this proposal has been prepared in accordance with guidelines provided by the Adaptation Fund Board, and prevailing National Development and Adaptation Plans (.....list here.....) and subject to the approval by the Adaptation Fund Board, <u>commit to implementing the project/programme in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and the Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund</u> and on the understanding that the Implementing Entity will be fully (legally and financially) responsible for the implementation of this project/programme.</p>	
<p>Name &amp; Signature: Dirk Snyman, Climate Finance Coordinator</p> <p>Signature: </p> <p><b>Implementing Entity Coordinator</b></p>	
Date: 16/02/2026	Tel. +678 26 20 00 and email: <a href="mailto:dirks@spc.int">dirks@spc.int</a>

<sup>12</sup> Each Party shall designate and communicate to the secretariat the authority that will endorse on behalf of the national government the projects and programmes proposed by the implementing entities.

**Project Contact Person:** Kunal Singh

Tel. +679 8741145 And Email: [kunals@spc.int](mailto:kunals@spc.int)

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GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU  
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE  
ADAPTATION, METEOROLOGY,  
GEO-HAZARDS, ENVIRONMENT &  
ENERGY & NDMO  
PMB 9074, PORT VILA  
VANUATU



GOUVERNEMENT DE LA  
RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU  
MINISTÈRE DE L'ADAPTATION AU  
CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE, LA  
MÉTÉOROLOGIE, LES RISQUES  
GÉOLOGIQUES, ENVIRONNEMENT &  
ENERGIE & NDMO  
SPR 9074, PORT-VILA, VANUATU

Tel: (678) 22068

Website: [www.mocca.gov.vu](http://www.mocca.gov.vu)

Ref: MoCC/NAB Sec/DG/AF/140725#2

January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026

By Email: [Secretariat@Adaptation.Fund.org](mailto:Secretariat@Adaptation.Fund.org)  
The Adaptation Fund Board  
c/o Adaptation Fund Secretariat

Dear Secretariat,

**Endorsement for Restoring our original tress and shore (ROOTS) – Nature- based, community – led forest restoration and management Project:**

1. In my capacity as the designated authority for the adaptation Fund in Vanuatu, I confirm that the above national project proposal is in accordance with the Vanuatu Government's national priorities in implementing adaptation activities to reduce impacts of, and risks, posed by climate change.
2. The outcome of the proposal complements key areas of Vanuatu's National Forest Policy (2013 – 2023), National Adaptation Plan 2022, National Determined Contributions and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2018.
3. Accordingly, I am pleased to endorse the above project proposal with support from the Adaptation Fund. If approved, the project will be implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) and co-executed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB)/Department of Forestry and the Pacific Community (SPC).
4. Please not that this Letter of Endorsement ('LOE') applies to the Concept Note only. We will issue subsequent LOE to the accredited entity for the implementation of the project upon receipt of a Full Funding proposal.
5. For any queries, please contact Mr. Godfrey Bome on email via [gbome@vanuatu.gov.vu](mailto:gbome@vanuatu.gov.vu) or by phone on +678 7653723.

Yours sincerely

.....  
Mr. David Gibson  
Designated Authority, Adaptation Fund  
Direct General, Ministry of Climate Change





**Revised PFG Submission Form<sup>1</sup> (additions in red)**

**Project Formulation Grant (PFG)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Submission Date:** June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Submission Date:** December 5<sup>th</sup> 2025  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Submission Date:** January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
**4<sup>th</sup> Submission Date:** February 16, 2026

**Adaptation Fund Project ID:**

**Country/ies:** Vanuatu

**Title of Project/Programme:** ROOTS – Restoring Our Original Trees and Shore – Nature-based Community-led restoration and Management

**Type of IE (NIE/RIE/MIE):** RIE

**Implementing Entity:** Pacific Community (SPC)

**Executing Entity/ies:** Pacific Community (SPC)

**A. Project Preparation Timeframe**

<b>Start date of PFG</b>	November 2025
<b>Completion date of PFG</b>	August 2026

**B. Proposed Project Preparation Activities (\$)**

<b>List of Proposed Project Preparation Activities</b>	<b>Output of the PFG Activities</b>	<b>US\$ Amount</b>	<b>Budget note<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>1. Partner and stakeholder mapping, mobilisation, and technical validation consultations (identification, outreach, small-group technical meetings and validation)</b>	Stakeholder and partner mapping and engagement report; summary of consultations;	\$15,000	Includes costs for targeted outreach, travel for consultations, technical meetings, expert facilitators, venue hire, and feedback documentation.
<b>2. Comprehensive site assessment and selection (field missions,</b>	Site pre-feasibility and assessment report; vulnerability maps;	\$40,000	Covers consultant fees, travel and subsistence (airfare,

<sup>1</sup> As presented in AFB/PPRC.33/40 Annex 1.

<sup>2</sup> The proposal should include a detailed budget with budget notes indicating the break- down of costs at the activity level. It should also include a budget on the Implementing Entity management fee use.

participatory mapping, validation workshops)	consultation summaries; selected priority sites		accommodation, per diems), data collection materials, GIS/mapping supplies, workshop costs, and report writing.
<b>3. Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and risk assessment</b> (including FPIC, gender/social assessment, legal review)	Completed ESMS/ESIA, FPIC documentation, Gender & Social Inclusion Assessment	\$30,000	Consultant time for ESMS/ESIA; field visits, workshops for FPIC and social inclusion, legal review (local expert input), translation, and reporting.
<b>4. Initial baseline data collection and MEL plan design</b>	Baseline indicator database, draft MEL plan and reporting tools	\$20,000	Field staff/consultants for data collection, travel costs, data entry, database/tool development, and MEL planning meetings.
<b>5. Drafting of the full proposal and supporting documents</b>	Full AF proposal, annexes, budget, workplan, risk register, safeguards	\$45,000	Expert/consultant time for drafting, stakeholder review meetings, internal quality assurance, editing, and printing.
<b>Total Project Formulation Grant</b>		\$150,000 <sup>3</sup>	

Please describe below each of the PFG activities and provide justifications for their need and for the amount of funding required:

**1. Partner and stakeholder mapping, mobilisation, and technical validation consultations (identification, outreach, small-group technical meetings and validation)**

This activity is critical to ensure early and inclusive engagement of all relevant stakeholders—including government agencies, community organizations, technical partners, and NGOs—across national and local levels. Effective mapping, outreach, and validation consultations will build broad support, clarify roles, and help align project design with community priorities. The process will also identify existing initiatives to avoid duplication, and secure local ownership.

*Amount:* \$15,000 — This covers travel, meetings, targeted outreach, expert facilitation, venue hire, and the documentation required to secure meaningful input and commitment from all partners.

<sup>3</sup> Budget is indicative and will be refined with Vanuatu authorities and partners; final allocations will reflect agreed implementation arrangements and maximize local investment.

## **2. Comprehensive site assessment and selection (field missions, participatory mapping, validation workshops)**

Thorough and participatory site assessment is foundational for impact and cost-effectiveness. This work will combine ecological and social assessments, participatory mapping, field missions, and stakeholder workshops to identify and prioritize project intervention sites. Site pre-feasibility studies ensure technical and social suitability, maximize restoration potential, and help focus resources on areas with the highest vulnerability and opportunity for scaling.

*Amount:* \$40,000 — Covers consultant fees, travel (including to remote islands), mapping/GIS, field supplies, workshop facilitation, and preparation of selection reports and maps.

## **3. Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and risk assessment (including FPIC, gender/social assessment, legal review)**

Early and robust safeguards are essential for compliance with Adaptation Fund policy, managing risks, and ensuring that interventions are equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. This includes a draft ESMS/ESIA, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) documentation, gender and social assessments, and legal reviews. These will inform design, monitoring, and mitigation strategies throughout the project, while ensuring broad community support and adherence to national/international requirements.

*Amount:* \$30,000 — Reflects specialist consultant and legal input, fieldwork, translation, community consultations, and reporting.

## **4. Initial baseline data collection and MEL plan design**

Accurate baseline data is essential for tracking change, demonstrating results, and enabling adaptive management. This activity will gather ecological, social, and climate data at each selected site, and develop a participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plan, with tools and indicators tailored for local implementation and reporting.

*Amount:* \$20,000 — Supports field staff/consultant time, travel, data collection and management, and collaborative MEL planning sessions.

## **5. Drafting of the full proposal and supporting documents**

A strong, detailed, and fully compliant proposal is key for AF approval and timely project launch. This task includes drafting the full proposal and all supporting documents (annexes, budgets, workplans, risk registers, and safeguard documents), ensuring that inputs from all previous activities and stakeholder feedback are integrated.

*Amount:* \$45,000 — Reflects the intensive expert/consultant time, stakeholder review process, and multi-stage editing, quality assurance, and production for a high-quality submission.

## Total Project Formulation Grant: \$150,000

The requested budget is appropriate for the depth and complexity of work required to prepare an ambitious, community-driven forest and landscape restoration proposal for Vanuatu and is aligned with Adaptation Fund guidance. These activities are costed based on local rates, anticipated field costs, and the scope of work needed to deliver a high-quality implementation-ready full proposal.

List of Proposed Project Preparation Activities	Output of the PFG Activities	US\$ Amount	Budget note <sup>4</sup>
<b>6. Development of restoration protocols and technical guidelines (forest, agroforestry, mangrove, soil, invasive species, nursery and seed systems, monitoring, traditional knowledge integration).</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National restoration protocol package (forest, agroforestry, soil, invasive species, nursery systems).</li><li>• Practical technical guidelines validated with DoF, MALFB PMU, provincial officers, customary authorities, women's and youth groups, and communities.</li><li>• Finalized guidance toolkit for community-led restoration, adapted for local use.</li></ul>	\$75,000	Covers specialist consultants (forestry, nursery, soil, mangrove, seed systems), national technical contributors, co-development workshops with communities and customary authorities, validation missions, field-based verification, design of user-friendly materials, and preparation of annexes for the full proposal.
<b>Total Project Formulation Grant</b>		\$75,000	

### 6. Development of national restoration protocols and technical guidelines

This activity will produce a set of practical, standardised restoration protocols to guide communities, customary landowners, and provincial forestry teams in designing and implementing high-quality ecosystem restoration across selected sites.

Drawing on the findings of the stakeholder consultations, site assessments, safeguards analysis, and baseline studies (Activities 1–4), the protocols will provide clear guidance on native species selection, nursery practices, seed technology, soil and watershed restoration, agroforestry, , invasive species control, and maintenance/aftercare. The work will be carried out through a participatory co-development process involving DoF, MALFB PMU, provincial officers, chiefs, women's groups, youth groups, and CBOs, ensuring strong ownership and cultural relevance. Once drafted, the protocols will be verified, refined, and prepared as user-friendly materials for local implementation.

Completing this activity during the PFG phase will allow restoration activities to start immediately after project approval and will ensure communities have the technical tools needed to lead decision-making and implementation.

<sup>4</sup> The proposal should include a detailed budget with budget notes indicating the break-down of costs at the activity level. It should also include a budget on the Implementing Entity management fee use.

**LLA Supplemental Project Formulation Grant: ~~\$70,000~~\$75,000**

**For LLA Projects only:**

If requesting additional funding for LLA projects to enable devolving decision making to the local level, please specify the activities that would directly serve to enable devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level and enable local actors to make informed decisions on how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, and implemented:

Please provide justifications for their need and for the amount of additional funding required:

Several PFG activities are specifically designed to enable and strengthen devolved decision-making for locally led adaptation:

- **Participatory site selection and planning workshops** ensure communities and local stakeholders actively define, prioritize, and validate intervention sites and activities.
- **Mobilization of local committees and identification of site-level champions** will empower community-based groups to participate in, and eventually oversee, project planning, monitoring, and benefit-sharing frameworks.
- **FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) processes and inclusive stakeholder consultations** will guarantee that local knowledge, priorities, and voices—including those of women, youth, and vulnerable groups—directly shape the final project design.
- **Preparation of local governance and benefit-sharing agreements** will set the foundation for direct community management of restoration activities.

**Justification for PFG funding (150,000\$) :**

The Project Formulation Grant is essential for ensuring that the ROOTS project meets the highest standards for locally led adaptation under the Adaptation Fund's Locally Led Adaptation window. All PFG activities are designed to devolve decision-making to the community level from the earliest stages. Through participatory site selection in close partnership with Vanuatu Department of Forestry, early establishment of pilot sites, and comprehensive baseline and safeguard assessments, the PFG will empower local actors to set project priorities and implementation modalities. The deliverables—such as detailed site selection reports, stakeholder engagement records, a preliminary Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), gender analysis, and a draft Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework—will directly enable the rapid launch of implementation activities upon approval of the full proposal.

The outputs of the PFG are closely aligned with Components 1–3 of the concept note, ensuring continuity and a direct line from formulation to implementation. The PFG will also support the development of scalable tools, protocols, and lessons that will contribute to broader upscaling of restoration efforts in Vanuatu and the Pacific region. Additional resources are necessary to support the expanded scope and depth of local consultations and the organization of inclusive planning and decision-making workshops. These activities ensure that, once implementation begins, communities are fully prepared and have a strong sense of ownership, facilitating direct local leadership throughout the project cycle.

A preliminary Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) will be developed under the PFG and finalized in the full proposal, ensuring robust safeguards and compliance with Adaptation Fund policy from project inception.

## Justification for Additional LLA PFG Funding (75,000\$)

In addition to the five activities originally foreseen under the PFG, the project will use the optional additional funding available under the LLA window to develop a set of restoration protocols and technical guidelines. This activity is justified by the need to equip communities, customary landowners, local committees, women's and youth groups, and provincial forestry staff with clear, practical, and culturally grounded technical instructions that directly enable them to independently define, prioritise, design, and implement adaptation and restoration actions at the local level.

These protocols will provide step-by-step guidance on native species selection and propagation, nursery establishment, seed collection and storage, soil stabilisation, watershed restoration, agroforestry techniques, invasive species control, maintenance and aftercare, and community-led ecological monitoring. By making this knowledge accessible and standardised across provinces, the guidelines allow local actors to make fully informed decisions.

This activity is essential to devolving decision-making authority in line with LLA requirements, as the protocols will be directly used during FPIC consultations, participatory land-use planning sessions and the establishment of benefit-sharing and governance arrangements. Customary authorities, nakamal representatives, and local committees will use these tools to ensure decisions are equitable, technically sound, and adapted to the local context.

The development of these protocols is also fully complementary to the five existing PFG activities. The stakeholder mapping will identify the contributors to the co-development process, site assessments will provide ecological and social data that inform protocol content, and ESMS/GESI findings will be integrated into the guidelines to ensure cultural legitimacy and safeguard compliance. Baseline data and MEL design will be embedded in the monitoring sections of the protocols, and the final guidelines will form an essential technical annex of the full proposal.

This additional activity therefore consolidates and operationalises the outputs of the five existing PFG activities and provides the technical foundation needed for communities and DoF to begin implementation immediately after project approval. It directly strengthens local autonomy, decision-making capacity, and technical readiness—core requirements for LLA financing.

## C. Implementing Entity

This request has been prepared in accordance with the Adaptation Fund Board's procedures and meets the Adaptation Fund's criteria for project identification and formulation

Implementing Entity Coordinator, IE Name	Signature	Date (Month, day, year)	Project Contact Person (s)	Telephone	Email Address
Pacific Community (SPC) - Mr. Dirk Snyman, Climate		December, 5 <sup>th</sup> 2025	Mr. Kunal Singh - SPC) – <a href="mailto:kunals@spc.int">kunals@spc.int</a>	+678 26 20 00	dirks@spc.int

Finance Coordinator					
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