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Revitalizing forests and seascapes: an agroforestry and fishing community network for ecosystem restoration and land conservation in Vanuatu

Project coordinator : Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2025 – March 2027

AMOUNT OF FUNDING

€ 200,000

Across four islands in Vanuatu, deforestation, frequent tropical cyclones, soil erosion, and declining marine biodiversity are impacting local livelihoods and climate resilience. The Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN) is coordinating a multi-site, community-led project to restore terrestrial and coastal ecosystems through Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

The project will strengthen local food systems, rehabilitate mangroves and forests, and support the establishment of protected areas, while building governance and leadership among youth, women, and customary groups. It supports long-term resilience by integrating environmental restoration with sustainable livelihoods and inclusive governance.

Specific objectives:

- Reforest 400 hectares of degraded forestlands with native tree species, and develop agroforestry on 500 hectares of farmland.
- Restore 200 hectares of coral reefs and create 3 marine protected areas (MPAs).
- Build capacity and create cooperatives for 500 women and youth.

Theme

Terrestrial Ecosystem Management and Restoration

Main co-benefits, in addition to climate change adaptation

Biodiversity conservation

Food security

Children at the Yekukok village nursery taking seedlings to transfer to planting areas © Kiwa Initiative - July 2024

Subregion: ■ Melanesia/Timor Leste ☐ Micronesia ☐ Polynesia

Vanuatu

Tanna Island - Iounanen village
Pentecost Island - Walli village
Malekula Island - Dravail village
Mota Lava Island - Nerenigman village

Beneficiaries:

- Direct: 635 households (~4,500 individuals), including youth, women, and customary leaders.
- Indirect: broader populations of four target islands will benefit from restored ecosystems and enhanced livelihoods.
- Inclusion: remote and vulnerable communities with strong leadership roles for women and young people.

Main activities planned:

- **Plant nursery development and ecosystem restoration**
  - 7 community nurseries will be established on 4 islands, supporting large-scale reforestation of 400 hectares of degraded forestlands.
  - 200 hectares of coral reefs restored using coral propagation and transplantation.
- **Sustainable land use and food systems**
  - Agroforestry techniques will be promoted on 500 hectares of farmland, alongside organic gardening, composting, and climate-smart practices, to improve food security for 635 subsistence farming households.
- **Community governance and Locally Managed Marine Areas**
  - 3 LMMAs will be established through consultations, combining traditional knowledge with modern planning tools. 2,000 fishers will be trained in sustainable and alternative livelihoods.
- **Capacity building and regional exchange**
  - Island focal points will receive leadership training and participate in national and regional exchanges to strengthen governance and peer learning.

Nature-based Solutions implemented and how they benefit to communities

The project uses a holistic, ridge-to-reef NbS approach that links forest restoration, sustainable agriculture, and coastal protection. By placing communities at the centre of planning and implementation, it improves local governance, food security, climate resilience, and biodiversity while empowering traditional leadership and youth networks. The multi-site model offers a valuable approach for scaling NbS in diverse island settings.

DATA UNDER IUCN-ORO VALIDATION

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