

Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project (VARS)

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MoLNR) is implementing the Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements (VARS) Project through a US\$25 million grant from the World Bank International Development Association (IDA).*

Project Development Objective (PDO): The objective of the VARS project is to: (i) improve access to and resilience of infrastructure and services in selected new and existing settlements, and (ii) strengthen land planning and management for resilient human settlement.

Project Components: There are four components to the project.

1. **Affordable and Resilient New Settlement Development.** This component will develop a pilot subdivision on 10 ha of public land in Etas. The objective is to develop a replicable model for future urban expansion that is planned; has basic public infrastructure (roads, drainage, streetlights, sanitation) and amenities (schools, community centres and public green space); and introduces new standards and practices for affordability through higher-density development, urban resilience to disaster and climate risks, on-site communal sanitation treatment, and cost-recovery models.
2. **Affordable and Resilient Settlement Upgrading.** This component will finance upgrading and regularization of four existing settlements. Improvements will include local access roads and footpaths, improved drainage and sanitation, streetlights and security lighting.
3. **Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability.** This component will finance technical assistance to MoLNR (to develop a Land Management Information System), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Port Vila City Council (in the case of settlement upgrading) and Shefa Province (in the case of the Etas greenfield site).
4. **Contingent Emergency Response.** This zero-cost component is a mechanism available to Government to gain rapid access to financing in response to an eligible crisis or emergency. Implementation of the component would enable rapid reallocation of uncommitted project funds towards urgent needs, in the event of a disaster or public health emergency.

VARS Help Desk: The Help Desk is set up to (i) respond to requests for information or requests for project design change, (ii) receive and resolve complaints, and (iii) address and resolve grievances in a timely, effective and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved. The **VARS Complaint Form** is available online, with Chiefs at the target settlements or through calling the project management unit on M: 555 1551 or M: 774 9233 or via email: ses@vars.vu. The Help Desk at the project management unit is established to

receive your calls or email and will help project stakeholders to receive information or register a request for design change or to resolve any concerns that may arise as a result of the project.

Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF): The VARS ESMF has been prepared to assess and manage the environmental and social risks and impacts of the project. The framework provides guidance to the MoLNR and its project management unit to ensure that environmental and social assessments and other safeguard requirements will be carried out in compliance with national regulations and in accordance with the World Bank's Environment and Social Framework.

Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP): The ESCP sets out the material measures and actions that the VARS project will meet to apply the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards over the project lifecycle. The ESCP will form part of the VARS project and World Bank legal agreement.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan_Waste Disposal: The project will prepare, disclose and implement site specific stakeholder engagement plans prior to commencing project activity. The attached stakeholder engagement plan was prepared specifically for the Waste Disposal activity, which was carried out in November and December 2023, when 82 truckloads of solid waste were removed from 4 target informal settlements in Port Vila.

*The International Development Association (IDA) was established in 1960 with aim to reduce poverty by providing zero to low-interest loans (called "credits") and grants for programs that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities and improve people's living conditions.