

Republic of Vanuatu

**Vanuatu Contingent Emergency Response Project
(CERP)**

CERP Manual: Annex 2

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

June 2026

1. Purpose

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) describes the approach of the Government of the Vanuatu for engaging stakeholders – including affected communities, civil society organizations, and other relevant parties – throughout the implementation of the Contingent Emergency Response Project (CERP). Meaningful stakeholder engagement is a requirement under Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10 of the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework.

The CERP enables the Government of Vanuatu to access World Bank-financed emergency response funds through its Investment Project Financing portfolio. It is structured as a six-year mechanism with activations for specific crises. Each activation is expected to be implemented within a period of 12 months. The CERP is designed to provide prompt, scalable support during emergencies or crises.

Project activities would be delivered through the established institutional arrangements, processes, and implementation mechanisms already in place under existing government systems. Further details on project components and activities provided in the CERP Manual, available on the Government of Vanuatu website. An Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) has also been prepared for the project which outlines the environmental and social risks and mitigation measures for this project accessible via the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management website.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) is responsible for CERP activation and project implementation as the designated CERP-PIU. The Ministry will be supported by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and the crisis-specific technical working group(s). The PIU provides intersectoral strategic coordination and serves as the counterpart for the World Bank. It will be responsible for CERP fiduciary management, technical monitoring, E&S compliance, and related reporting. At the onset of preparing the CERP Activation Request, MFEM or PIU Manager will appoint an E&S Focal Point who will have the responsibility for SEP implementation amongst other responsibilities. This person may be temporarily seconded from another government agency or from a World Bank-funded Project Management Unit. The PIU may also procure environmental or social specialist consultants with CERP funds under Category C in the positive list of eligible expenditures (CERP Manual, Table 3).

This SEP represents a living document and will be updated as needed during project implementation.

2. Stakeholder Identification

The key stakeholders for the CERP are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Stakeholder identification

Project Component	Identified Stakeholders
Overall Project (CERP activation, governance, and oversight)	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) / Project Implementation Unit (CERP-PIU) National Disaster Committee (NDC) - Project Steering Committee (PSC)

	Council of Ministers (COM) National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) National Recovery Committee (NRC) and Recovery Unit Technical Working Groups (TWG) Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management (MoCC) Prime Minister's Office (PMO) / DSPPAC Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and sub-national authorities
Category A: Emergency Livelihood Support	DSPPAC (adaptive social protection coordination) Financial institutions and payment service providers Contractors, NGOs, and community groups (cash-for-work) Affected households and beneficiaries Vulnerable groups (women, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, rural and remote communities) Local authorities and community leaders
Category B: Emergency Supplies and Services	National cluster system including Logistics Cluster, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster Sector cluster leads including: Ministry of Health (Health and Nutrition), Department of Water Resources (WASH), Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forestry and Biosecurity (Food Security and Agriculture), Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities (Shelter/Infrastructure/Transport) Provincial Disaster Operations Centres and sub-national authorities Suppliers, contractors, service providers UN agencies and humanitarian partners (e.g. FAO, WFP, WHO) Private sector (shipping operators, utilities) Affected communities Vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups
Category C: Response and Coordination	Recovery Operations Centre (ROC) and Recovery Unit Ministries and cluster leads Consultants, surge staff, enumerators Provincial, municipal and community disaster committees Vanuatu Police Force, Maritime Safety Authority, Civil Aviation Authority Development partners

3. Stakeholder Engagement Program

a. Previous consultations undertaken

Stakeholder engagement during preparation was limited to relevant government ministries, departments and agencies due to the nature of the project, which focuses on readiness to respond promptly to eligible crises. Preliminary consultation meetings were held virtually during May and June 2026. Consultations focused on the project design and implementation arrangement, agreement on the positive list of eligible activities and ineligible expenditures, and monitoring and reporting aspects.

b. Project Implementation / Activation

Project-level stakeholder engagement will focus on relevant national ministries and other relevant stakeholders on project design, implementation and activation. Table 2 below outlines the stakeholder engagement that the project will undertake during implementation and activation.

Table 2 Plan for stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder group	Interest/concern	Engagement method	Frequency
All relevant authorities at the national and local level	Project updates including updates to Positive list, project feedback, activation	Consultations with national and local level authorities	During project implementation and activation as needed
DSPPAC, financial institutions, other relevant stakeholders under Category A	E&S requirements as outlined in the ESCP, ESMP and SEP for cash transfers and other initiatives	Meetings	Prior to and during activation as needed
Clusters for emergency response	Activation timelines, roles and responsibilities, E&S requirements as outlined in the ESCP, ESMP and SEP	Meetings	Prior to and during activation as needed

As noted in the ESMP, the project will use existing country systems to execute emergency response activities. In this way, any existing systems to communicate information regarding activities activated to the affected populations – including vulnerable groups, and other interested parties including humanitarian groups, the media and the general public – will be followed. At the same time, the Project will ensure that stakeholder engagement is carried out in a manner consistent with ESS10, through the application of project-level oversight and gap-filling measures, rather than relying solely on country systems.

Specifically, Vanuatu's emergency response system is supported by established standard operating procedures (SOPs) which outline a multi-layered system for information dissemination across national, cluster and sector levels. The SOPs provide for formal tools and protocols, such as communication logs and communication trees, SMS/voice alert systems, media releases and coordination meetings. Institutional roles are also clearly defined. These systems will be applied to Category B activities. However, community-level dissemination and inclusion mechanisms are less clearly defined or operationalized.

To address these limitations and ensure alignment with ESS10, the CERP-PIU, through the E&S Focal Point, will review and monitor the application of these systems to ensure that information reaches affected communities in a timely, understandable and accessible manner, including vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups. Where existing arrangements are not sufficient, the Project will introduce additional outreach and communication measures to strengthen inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability.

During project implementation, additional measures will be developed as needed to strengthen stakeholder engagement and information dissemination for emergency supplies and services activities, in line with ESS10 requirements, to improve inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability.

As Vanuatu does not currently have an institutionalized social protection system, procedures for cash transfers to households, as well as cash-for-work (CfW) opportunities or other financial assistance related to disaster/emergency activities (which are prospective list of activities under Category A), will need to be developed in line with World Bank requirements prior to including these under positive list of expenditures. These procedures will be outlined in Operations Manuals for cash transfers and CfW, which will need to receive World Bank No Objection prior to inclusion of the activities under positive list of expenditures. In particular, the Government will need to design and put in place measures to disseminate information to potential beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders. These will need to be developed and operationalized in line with the requirements under ESS10.

4. Information disclosure

The Government of Vanuatu commits to disclosing the following project documents:

- The CERP Manual (including all annexes) on the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management and the World Bank project page
- The Crisis Response Plan (CRP) for each activation, prior to activation approval
- Semiannual progress reports.

5. Grievance mechanisms

Recognizing that existing mechanisms are fragmented and vary across sectors, the Project will adopt a layered approach that combines the use of existing country systems with project-level coordination, oversight, and gap-filling measures to ensure consistency with ESS10.

Grievance mechanisms are somewhat included in cluster SOPs for emergency supplies and services, but it is ad hoc. For example, the Food-Security and Agriculture Cluster SOPs include the following:

“A basic complaints mechanism must be activated during distribution such as a phone number or designated focal officer and all complaints or incidents must be logged, addressed within 72 hours, and reported to the FSAC Coordinator and NDMO when necessary.”¹

During project implementation, the project will also need to ensure that mechanisms for receiving grievances with respect to emergency supplies and services from affected populations under Category B are developed, focusing on accessibility, transparency and accountability.

The project-level GM will operate as follows:

¹ <https://malffb.gov.vu/images/Policies/MALFB%20FSAC%20SOP%20v4.0%202025.pdf>

1. Use of Existing Systems Existing grievance uptake mechanisms within cluster SOPs, relevant ministries, and World Bank-financed projects will be used as primary entry points where appropriate.

2. Project-Level Coordination and Oversight The CERP-PIU will:

- Maintain a centralized grievance log for all project-related complaints;
- Monitor the timeliness and quality of grievance resolution across implementing entities;
- Receive and follow up on grievances not adequately addressed through existing systems; and ;
- Escalate complex or sensitive grievances as required.

3. Gap-Filling Measures Where existing systems are not sufficient to meet ESS10 requirements, the Project will:

- Establish additional grievance uptake channels (such as designated focal points, telephone, or email contacts);
- Ensure that grievance procedures are clearly communicated to affected communities;
- Provide accessible entry points for vulnerable and remote populations; and;
- Apply clear timelines for acknowledgement and resolution of complaints.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management will also receive complaints related to CERP activities and is accessible at: <https://doft.gov.vu/> Further, grievances may be received through World Bank-funded project grievance mechanisms in Vanuatu.

Information on how to access the grievance mechanism will be disseminated through existing communication channels, including cluster coordination systems, government announcements, and, where feasible, community-level information sharing. Multiple entry points will be maintained to allow grievances to be submitted verbally, in writing, or through digital means, depending on context.

The CERP-PIU will be responsible for tracking grievances received, monitoring their resolution, and including summary information in six-monthly ESHS reports to the World Bank. Grievance data will also be used to identify systemic issues and inform improvements to project implementation.

Grievances related to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH)

The gender and protection cluster has guidelines for humanitarian workers on the prevention of SEA/SH and a referral pathway². These processes and guidelines will be followed by the CERP-PIU and workers. Sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment-related grievances will be referred to the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) (www.vanuatuwomenscentre.org) and will be handled in accordance with survivor-centric principles including safety, confidentiality and informed consent, respect and dignity, non-discrimination, and survivor agency.

In line with the requirements of the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), the Project will establish and maintain a project-level grievance mechanism (GM) to receive and facilitate resolution of

² <https://ndmo.gov.vu/resources/downloads/106-cluster-materials/31-gender-and-protection-cluster/32-general-information>

concerns and complaints related to activities related to the Cash Transfer and Cash for Work prior to these activities inclusion in the positive list.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

The CERP-PIU will include a summary of stakeholder engagement activities carried out and complaints received in the project's six-monthly reports on the environment, social, health and safety (ESHS) performance.