



The GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project

Project Progress Report

Reporting Period **From:** January / 2016 **To:** June / 2016

1. PROJECT GENERAL INFORMATION

National Project Code & Title:	VU 1 – 2139 Project title: To develop recommendations for a National Plan for conservation of dugongs and their seagrass habitats, identify areas important for dugongs and seagrasses conservation in Vanuatu and to raise awareness about dugongs and seagrasses amongst the local communities in these areas.		
Project Partner(s):	Implementing partner: Vanuatu Environmental Science Society (VESS) Supporting Partners: Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC), Vanuatu and Vanuatu Fisheries Department (VFD)		
Location (country, region/ district and commune/ city/ village/ region etc.)	Vanuatu		
Of which areas under protection (please indicate the name and size of protected areas or locally managed marine areas, if applicable)	n/a		
Project start date	1 st July 2015	Project intended completion date	30 th September 2018

2. PROJECT PROGRESS

2.1. Narrative of project progress during the past semester by Project Activity¹

¹ Briefly describe progress made during the previous six months highlighting major outcomes/benchmarks achieved during the period.

1.2.1. Workshops for communities in hotspots to increase awareness about dugong and seagrass conservation

This activity is not due to begin until 2017 and no workshops have begun. However at each of the sites where the questionnaire survey has been conducted booklets about dugongs and seagrass and posters, one on dugongs and one on seagrass, were given out. These books and posters were developed and printed by VESS with funding from a Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) small grant. There are English and Bislama versions of these materials and the community members chose which they preferred. The materials are being handed out to begin the awareness activities and will be a precursor to the awareness workshops in the communities in 2017.

VESS was also donated a dugong puppet made by Anne O'Brian, who was visiting Vanuatu from Fiji. VESS is very grateful for the half life-sized puppet which will be as assess in the awareness campaign.

1.2.2. Integration of dugong and seagrass conservation in the management plans of Community Conservation Areas.

This activity is not due to begin until 2017.

3.1.1. Adaptation of survey to Vanuatu situation and to include eco-tourism practices and translation into Bishlama

This activity was completed prior to this reporting period.

3.1.2. In country training for survey team by CMS-DTG

This activity was completed prior to this reporting period.

3.1.3. Conduct the survey throughout Vanuatu and by utilising the existing meetings of networks in existence in Vanuatu

Eighty-one surveys have been conducted. These have been on Efate and close surrounding islands. The survey team all live on Efate and it was decided to concentrate on areas close by initially so that more training and monitoring could be achieved in the early stages of the survey. Christina Shaw has continued to train the survey team with discussions on survey technique and feedback to the team on the questionnaires they have completed. The aim of the project is to complete a minimum of 250 questionnaires. Therefore, to date 32% of the minimum number of questionnaires has been completed.

4.3.2. Attending NFC

Christina Shaw (VESS) attended a meeting of the NFC on 29th March 2016. (Minutes of the meetings are enclosed). At the meeting the National Plan of action for Dugongs and the seagrass habitats was discussed. As it was noted that one of the impediments to writing a meaningful plan was the lack of data about dugongs and seagrasses in Vanuatu it was suggested that the discussions for the national plan of action should begin once the survey is complete and we have more up to date data.

In addition to the Scheduled NFC meeting, Jerry Spooner of the Department of Tourism requested a meeting to discuss dugong and turtles in tourism. DoT are implementing a new policy to ensure all tourism operators in Vanuatu adhere to a minimum standard. DoT requested input on what should be included in the minimum standards regarding wildlife including dugongs and turtles. They also asked for advice on responding to reports of turtles and dugongs being kept in captivity for tourism. At the meeting it was decided that a workshop to discuss these issues would be useful and SPREP would be willing to send experts form the head office in Samoa to facilitate the discussions. VESS would be able to host the workshop under the umbrella of this project.

4.3.3. Submitting findings and results to NFC

At the meeting on the 29th March Christina Shaw (VESS) gave a progress report of the VU1 project to the committee. (Minutes of the meetings are enclosed). The members of the NFC gave advice and made suggestions to improve the success of the implementation of the project.

2.2. Project implementation progress²

Outputs & Activities ³	Expected completion date	Implementation status as of end of reporting period expressed in %	Describe any problems in delivery and any changes/mitigation action required.
Output 1: Output 1.2 Capacity developed for community-based stewardship (conservation and monitoring of dugongs & seagrass)			
Activity 1: 1.2.1. Workshops for communities in hotspots to increase awareness about dugong and seagrass conservation	July 2018	0%	Activity has not started as yet
Activity 2: 1.2.2. Integration of dugong and seagrass conservation in the management plans of Community Conservation Areas.	July 2018	0%	Activity has not started as yet
Output 2: Output 3.1 Critical knowledge gaps (dugongs and seagrass ecosystems) identified and surveys initiated/ completed			
Activity 3: 3.1.1. Adaptation of survey to Vanuatu situation and to include eco-tourism practices and translation into Bislama.	October 2015	100%	No problems were encountered

² Information provided in “Quarterly Expenditure Report” should be in line with output/activity progress reported in this table.

³ Outputs and activities as described in the project proposal or in any updated project revision. Expand table as necessary.

Outputs & Activities ³	Expected completion date	Implementation status as of end of reporting period expressed in %	Describe any problems in delivery and any changes/mitigation action required.
Activity 4: 3.1.2. In country training for survey team by CMS-DTG	December 2015	100%	No problems were encountered
Activity 5: 3.1.3. Conduct the survey throughout Vanuatu and by utilising the existing meetings of networks in existence in Vanuatu	November 2016	32%	VESS was hoping to attend the AGM of Wan Smol Bag resource monitors in order to conduct interviews with the resource monitors. However despite useful discussion prior to the 2016 AGM with WSB, VESS wasn't informed of the dates of the meeting. This is likely due to the workload of the environment team at WSB in the run up to the AGM and the project not being a high priority. However the survey team will still be able to utilise the network of Vanua Tai resource monitors when conducting the surveys in the outer islands later this year. As most of the volunteers for the survey team are university students some were not able to attend all the survey field trips due to their study or exam commitments.
Activity 6: 3.1.4. Results of survey analysed and map of hotspots for dugong and seagrass conservation compiled	January 2017	0%	Activity has not started as yet
Output 3: Output 4.3 Capacity for national and regional networking and contribution to global policy for effective dugong and seagrass conservation in Indian and Pacific Ocean basins			
Activity 7: 4.3.1. Recommendations developed for the establishment of a National Plan for conservation of dugongs and their seagrass habitats.	January 2018	5%	No problems were encountered

Outputs & Activities ³	Expected completion date	Implementation status as of end of reporting period expressed in %	Describe any problems in delivery and any changes/mitigation action required.
Activity 8: 4.3.2. Attending NFC	September 2018	43%	No problems were encountered
Activity 9 4.3.3. Submitting findings and results to NFC	September 2018	43%	No problems were encountered

2.3. Risk and risk management

Please describe internal and external risks (examples included in brackets) that could affect successful implementation of project activities and the proposed risk mitigation measures.

Risk group	Description	Risk level (Low/ Medium/ High)	Mitigation measures
Project Management (team capacity, internal communication, co-financing, budget, financial management, reporting, etc.)	<p>The questionnaire survey team is, and the awareness workshop delivery team will be, comprised of volunteers. Some of these volunteers may not have the time to conduct the activities due to other commitments such as study or work.</p> <p>Co-financing commitment from the supporting partners are not easily fulfilled due to the limited capacity of the government departments. Staff time, equipment and premises may not be available due to other work commitments.</p>	Low	<p>Twenty-three people were trained for the questionnaire survey team therefore, should some members of the team be unavailable for the activity, there is enough reserve capacity to conduct the survey. So far there has been at core of 5 to 6 dedicated volunteers who continue to turn up to the survey days.</p> <p>Other sources of co-funding from VESS, other NGOs and projects and the private sector can be sort to fulfil the over all project co-funding commitment</p>
Socio-cultural issues (external communications, capacity of and work with stakeholders, cultural aspects)	Communities not willing to be interviewed for the questionnaire survey. Communities not willing to create CCAs or to incorporate dugong and seagrass conservation into their management	Low	Training survey team members in good communication skills so they can fully explaining the aims and importance of the survey. So far the communities have

	plans.		been very willing to participate in the surveys. Ensuring the awareness workshops are well delivered and ensuring the results of the survey are available to the communities will help them to understand the importance of dugong and seagrass conservation.
Political risks (Political stability in country, political impacts on the project)	Vanuatu has a history of instability within the government. However since the election earlier this year the government appears to have been relatively stable. It is not anticipated that the political situation will affect the project activities, however there may be changes to government departments that may alter the relationships with the project partners.	Low	Continuation of VESS's good relationships with government departments and officers.
Environmental risks (severe weather events/ disasters, natural causes negatively affecting project areas, habitats and species)	Port Vila is reportedly the city most at risk of natural disasters. Vanuatu is within the cyclone belt and the pacific rim of fire and therefore susceptible to cyclones, flooding, volcanic eruption, earthquakes and tsunamis. However it is anticipated that although the project activities may be delayed by a natural disaster, they will still be able to be completed at a later date.	Medium	The majority of fieldwork that involves VESS teams members travelling to remote islands will be conducted outside of the main cyclone risk season.
Other (please specify)			

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

3.1. Please describe activities for monitoring and evaluation carried out during the reporting period.

Examples include: baseline data collection, stakeholder surveys, field surveys, steering committee meetings to assess project progress, peer review of documentation to ensure quality, mid-term review, etc.

Do not include routine project reporting.

- The booklets and posters being handed out to the communities at the time of the questionnaire surveys were written and printed with funding from a different project but were designed complement this project. Donna Kwan, Nicolas Pilcher and Len McKenzie from the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animal (CMS)- Dugong MOU Technical Team of Experts and Mike Donoghue, Threatened and Migratory Species Adviser at Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as well as officers from the Department of Environmental Protection Conservation (DEPC) and the Vanuatu Fisheries Department (VFD) reviewed the information in the booklets and posters to ensure they were technically correct prior to printing and distributing.

4. OTHER INFORMATION

4.1. Meetings⁴

Meeting type ⁵	Title	Venue	Dates	Convened by	Organised by	No. of participants	Report issued Y/N	Language	Dated
Expert group meeting	Meeting of NFC	Chantilly's Hotel, Port Vila, Vanuatu	29 th March 2016	Dugong Focal Point / DEPC	Trinison Tari / Christina Shaw	6	Y	English	29 th March 2016
Expert group meeting	Meeting of to discuss dugongs and turtles in tourism and minimum standards	SPREP Office	16 th June 2016	Jerry Spooner, Department of Tourism	Andrea Pigdon	4	N		

4.2. List(s) of meeting participants⁶

No.	Name of participant	Nationality
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⁴ Expand table as necessary

⁵ Meeting types: e.g. expert group meeting, project inception workshop, training workshop/seminar, partners consultation workshop, project Steering Committee meeting etc.

⁶ Expand table as necessary

1	Names are listed in minutes of the NFC meeting	
2	Christina Shaw, VESS	British / New Zealand
2	Jerry Spooner, Department of Tourism	Ni-Vanuatu
2	Andrea Pigdon, Department of Tourism	Australian
2	David Lobser, SPREP	New Zealand

4.3. Documents, other printed materials, videos, and soft products (such as CDs or websites)

No	Type ⁷	Title	Author(s) Editor(s)	Publisher	ISBN	Publication date
1	Posts on VESS Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/vanuatuconservation	Christina Shaw	VESS		January - June 2016
2	Project Page on VESS website	Our current projects www.vanuatuconservation.org/our-projects/current-projects	Christina Shaw	VESS		15 April 2016
3	Poster	Koafis blong Vanuatu	Christina Shaw	VESS		
4	Poster	Dugongs of Vanautu	Christina Shaw	VESS		
5	Poster	Seagrass facts	Christina Shaw	VESS		
6	Poster	Gras Blong Solwata	Christina Shaw	VESS		
7	Book	Dugongs and their Seagrass habitat	Christina Shaw	VESS		
8	Book	Kaofis mo plis we oli kakae gras blong solwata	Christina Shaw	VESS		
9	Minutes	Minutes for Meeting of the National facilitating Committee (NFC) for the GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project on 29 th March 2016	Christina Shaw	VESS		29 th March 2016

Name of Project Manager: Christina Shaw		Name of Project Manager Supervisor: n/a	
Signature: <i>Christina Shaw</i>	Date: 10 th July 2016	Signature:	Date:

⁷ Documents and printed material types: e.g. technical publication, meeting report, technical/substantive report, brochures, media releases, etc.