



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 2 – 2140 VU2: National Facilitating Committee for the GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project		
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.

4.3.1. Formation of National Facilitating Committee (NFC)

This activity was completed within a prior reporting period.

4.3.2. 6-monthly meeting of NFC

A meeting of the NFC was convened on 29th March 2016. As the previous meeting was in December 2015, the bi-annual meeting was not due until June 2016, however the chair for the NFC and CMS dugong focal point Mt Trinson Tari felt during the early stages of this project's implementation more frequent meetings would be useful.

Christina Shaw (VESS) gave a report on the activities that had taken place for the VU1 project. Some discussions were had and suggestions made on the various aspects of implementing the VU1 project activities as described in the minutes (attached).

In addition to the Scheduled NFC meeting, Jerry Spooner of the Department of Tourism (DoT) 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. The need for it was decided at the meeting that the next steps are to engage the relevant government departments at a Director level and invite them to the next NFC meeting followed by a workshop to discuss these issues with all stakeholders and that SPREP would be willing to send experts from the head office in Samoa to facilitate the discussions. VESS would be able to host the workshop under the umbrella of this project. It is hoped that guidelines for tourism operators and for tourist for viewing turtles and dugongs will be an output from these discussions. VESS consulted the PCT to ensure that this would be within the scope of the dugongs and seagrass project and was informed that it is.

4.3.3. Press releases / communications activities / publications on internet sites

The press was informed of the launch of the Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project website via a press release. The VESS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/vanuatuconservation> has carried posts of dugong sightings including video of rare footage of a female dugong suckling calf. VESS has also posted photographs of the survey team at work.

The VESS website <http://www.vanuatuconservation.org> has been launched and features a page of current projects including the details of the Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project. The educational materials which were produced with a small grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and will be given out during this project are also available to download from the VESS website.

The Vanuatu Times featured two articles about dugongs and seagrass in March. "Dugong twins from Pango are a real rarity" and "Seagrasses are modest plants of the sea that usually won't receive much attention" by Lise Brix. Christina Shaw was interviewed for the articles and the Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project was mentioned in both articles.

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 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 1: 4.3.1. Formation of National Facilitating Committee (NFC)	September 2015	100%	No problems were encountered
Activity 2: 4.3.2. 6-monthly meeting of NFC	September 2018	43%	Whilst most of the members of the NFC attend the meetings, the representative of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Francis Hickey, has unfortunately been too busy to attend any of the meetings.
Activity 3: 4.3.3. Press releases / communications activities / publications on internet sites	September 2018	40%	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

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.

Project Management (team capacity, internal communication, co-financing, budget, financial management, reporting, etc.)	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.	Medium	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.
Socio-cultural issues (external communications, capacity of and work with stakeholders, cultural aspects)	The lack of priority placed on conservation in Vanuatu may result in a low level of commitment from the agencies invited to participate in the NFC. Many government departments, NGOs and civil society organisations are under-funded and under-staffed and therefore may not have the time or capacity to send a representative to the NFC.	Low	The representatives will be encouraged to participate. The dates of the meetings will be managed so they do not clash with other meetings that may be deemed of greater priority. So far the there has been a good commitment to the NFC by most of the government departments involved.
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 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.	Low	Meetings and activities may require rescheduling should a natural disaster occur.
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 Project Coordination Team was consulted to ensure that extending the NFC's platform to included discussion on tourism involving turtles and other threatened species as well as dugongs was within the scope of this project.

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
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

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

2	David Lobser, SPREP	New Zealand
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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	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
4	Newspaper articles	“Dugong twins from Pango are a real rarity” and “Seagrasses are modest plants of the sea that usually won’t receive much attention”	Lise Brix	Vanuatu Times		24 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.