

Port Vila Vulnerability Assessment: Initial Scoping Interviews & Fieldwork (April 2014)

Synthesis Report

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Engagement Process

Roughly 90 stakeholders were identified through an initial scoping process, half of whom were prioritized and contacted for interviewing during the initial field visit. A number of key personnel were unavailable during the scheduled interview period, and will be interviewed early in the second engagement phase, or remotely where this is not possible.

Interviews were held over four days (14-17th April) with 14 representatives of stakeholder groups in the Port Vila municipality, as well as with relevant climate change adaptation representatives and experts across provincial and national governments, civil society and peak representative bodies (at a ratio of 3:4 female to male participants). Interviews were semi-structured, focused through key questions regarding: 1) individual roles; 2) organisational engagement in climate change related projects; 3) projects within the Port Vila municipality; 4) knowledge of other key projects and actors relating to CCA, DRR or Port Vila's development and/or climate vulnerability; and 5) how the Port Vila Vulnerability Assessment (PVVA) engagement process and outputs could be of best use to their organisation.

Interviewee	Organisation	Role
Christopher Bartlett	SPC-GIZ	Country Director
Dave Lees	Ministry of Infrastructure	Consultant - Climate Resilience
Mark Le Roux	ADRA Vanuatu	Country Director
Pete Turnbull	National Advisory Board (NAB)	CCA/DRR Policy Advisor
Derek Brien	Pacific Institute of Public Policy	Executive Director
Dulciana Somare-Brash	Pacific Institute of Public Policy	Director Research & Programs
Tim Nelson	Save the Children	School/Community DRM Mgr
Daniel Vorbach	Oxfam / Vanuatu Climate Adaptation Network (VCAN)	CCA Program Manager
Blandine Boulekone	Vanuatu Nat. Council of Women	President
Leiasmanu Cullwick	Vanuatu Nat. Council of Women	Executive Director
Zoe Ayong	Shefa Provincial Council	Climate Change Officer
Owen Sisi	Shefa Provincial Council	Property Tax Officer
Siula Bulu	Wan Smolbag Theatre	Health Clinic Project Manager
Malcolm Dalesa	Dept. Meteorology & Geo-hazards	Principal Officer - Adaptation

Note: An alphabetised list of cited acronyms is provided at the end of this document

Key Themes:

Interview responses have been coded by theme and grouped accordingly, with recurrent themes and responses discussed below. Responses are categorised according to a SWOT analysis structure in relation to the broader Climate Adaptation Planning for Port Vila process by UN Habitat CCI, as well as more immediate considerations in planned follow up Vulnerability Assessment activities.

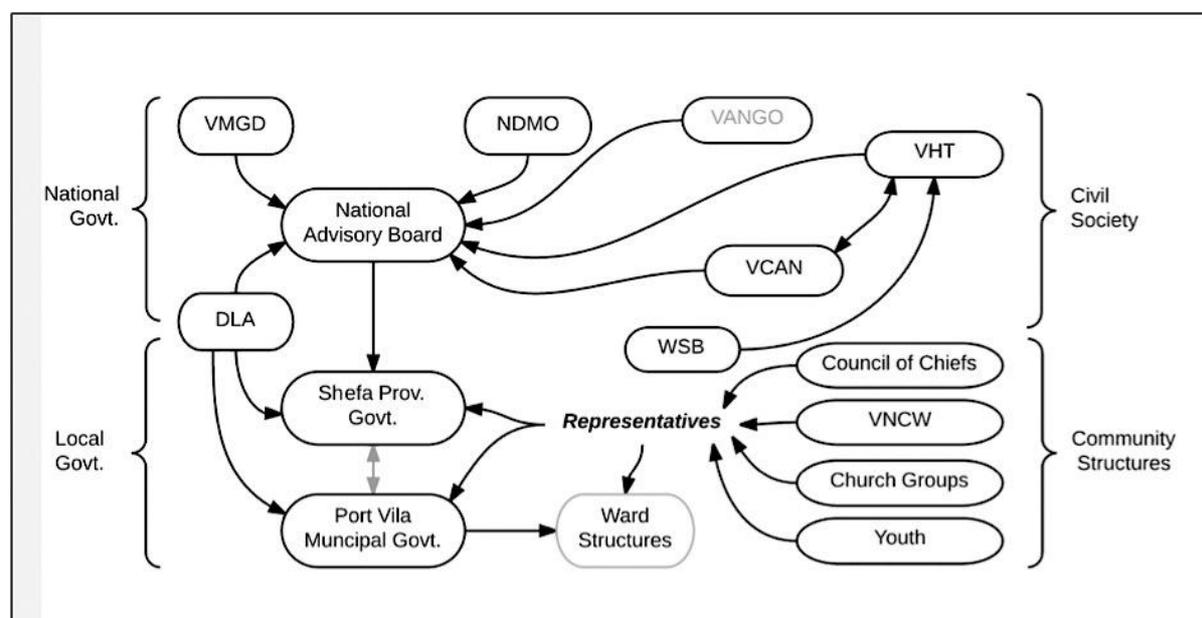


Figure 1: Outline of Existing CCA/DRR Institutional Structures and Linkages

National Level CCA/DRR Capacity & Expertise - Strength

Nationally there is strong, coordinated, capacity and expertise regarding both CCA and DRR, with bodies such as National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department (VGMD), National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB), Vanuatu Climate Adaptation Network (VCAN) and Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT) being positively appraised by many of those interviewed. The Vanuatu Association of NGOs (VANGO) was the exception to this, having been referred to as being relatively inactive recently by several respondents. It was suggested that this was largely due to extensive aid-based funding for 'climate-related' projects, with some concerns being raised regarding how much of this funding 'trickled down' to community-level implementation. Nonetheless the strength of this institutional capacity – much of which is based in Port Vila – is a key capacity for the city moving forward with adaptation planning.

As shown in Figure 1, VCAN plays a central role in providing a focal point for the strong co-ordination between civil society and national government departments, providing technical input to the NAB and minimizing overlap in NGO agendas and activities nationally. Efforts to both map CCA/DRR actors nationally, and establish reporting baselines will be of significant assistance to the UN-Habitat agenda moving forward, in particular through the current leadership roles of Oxfam and SPC-GIZ, and their potential role in supporting knowledge sharing and coordination.

Rural focus of existing CCA/DRR Activities – Strength/Opportunity

A majority of interviewees made explicit reference to the urban dimension of climate change adaptation, assessment, and disaster risk reduction, being a gap in current government and NGO-led activities. This was re-affirmed by only one recent activity relating to CCA being identified within the

urban boundary: a youth-focused vulnerability assessment run by Save the Children in *Ohlen Mataso*. The otherwise rural focus across the organisations paralleled wider observations relating to the strength of the rural constituency politically in Vanuatu (Port Vila has 7 elected members from a total of 52 seats), and a corresponding gap in urban planning despite rapid and ongoing urbanisation. The lack of an urban focus for projects in Vanuatu is a key strength of the PVVA, representing a point of differentiation from past work.

Within the urban boundary a number of loan-based, top-down projects currently underway have the potential to enhance the integration of climate data and the implementation of adaptation responses: the JICA-led 'Port Vila Lapetasi International Multi-purpose Wharf Development' (2012-ongoing); the Australian Aid/ADB 'Port Vila Urban Development Project' (2013-2018); a New Zealand Aid supported tourism infrastructure project; and the World Bank funded 'Increasing Resilience to Climate Change and Natural Hazards in Vanuatu' project (2013-ongoing). The latter is to include risk mapping and modeling relating to natural hazards for Port Vila, and has the most self-evident overlap with the PVVA objectives and processes.

Urban Planning & Tenure: Regulation and Implementation – Weakness/Opportunity

The lack of enforced or existing urban land use regulation, strategic planning, and standards for building construction was referred to as a fundamental structural issue by almost half of the respondents. Key missing regulatory and planning devices include a national building code (legislation was put to Parliament in December 2013, though this is yet to be endorsed), a road construction standard, and an urban plan for Port Vila (1979 and 1992, though never endorsed, also a draft Zoning and Development Strategy in 2010). Although some of these areas are being actively worked on at the national level (having being included in the Prime Minister's *100 Day Plan of Action Priority List*), assessing the vulnerability of existing infrastructure without such baselines and standards will be problematic, and will require flexibility to integrate considerable uncertainty in respect to impacts from key hazards such as flooding and severe storms. More positively, this represents an opportunity to integrate climate change information into the formative stages of any such policy or regulatory development.

Correspondingly, land tenure issues – both regarding informal settlements and conflict between market-based land sales and traditional land ownership systems – are central issues in and around Port Vila, with overcrowding, questionable land development and inequitable and poorly built, ill-serviced informal settlement areas, all recurring in discussions of Port Vila's climate vulnerability as a whole.

Urban Linkages: Beyond the Physical Boundary - Weakness

Although the PVVA is inherently focused on the urban area itself, it was emphasized in some of the interview responses that issues around climate vulnerability were characterized by co-dependencies between urban and rural residents, and rural society on the city of Port Vila. Food security was one example, with almost all of the country's imported food produce entering via the city's port. Urban dwellers were stated to be less concerned with climate-related food security threats than their rural counterparts, due to the ability to purchase food, however the heavy dependency on this one key infrastructure asset could have significant consequences if supply chains are disrupted by extreme events. Equally, rural food producers rely upon the Port Vila markets to sell produce – the one entry point to a market-based economy for many farmers (note: there is also an Efate ring-road

association of market vendors). If the assessment is to be meaningful for local stakeholders, the role of the city as an interface for the cultural shift from subsistence to a market-based economy (which has been occurring over many years), as well as the broader urban-rural linkages and resource flows across these boundaries, will need to be explicitly addressed.

Outdated or Incomplete Spatial Hazard and Future Climate Data - Weakness

No city-wide hazard mapping was identified by any of the participants (though there are several technical reports from SPC-SOPAC in the 1990s and 2002). GIS-based analysis is intended to take place over the next 12-18 months through the ADB project, while CMIP5 climate projections by CSIRO are also not yet available. Downscaling of RCP-based climate futures using an alliterative software package, SimClim, was suggested by one participant to be of little benefit as there was minimal differentiation within GCM grid cells. Inundation models for 1 in 100 and 1 in 10 year storm surge events for current, 2030, 2055 and 2090 sea level conditions have recently been completed, as well as high-resolution, up-to-date aerial photography and a digital elevation model for the city. Roadside flash-flooding hotspots have also been mapped. However, there remains the question of access to the data and who can use it.

Bottom-up, community-based vulnerability mapping was observed to be a key area where the PVVA could add value, in tandem with ongoing top-down/GIS-based processes led by ADB.

Potential Championing of the PVVA by Municipal & Shefa Provincial Councils - Opportunity

Shefa Provincial Council has recently employed a Climate Change Officer who could act as a potential local champion of the UN Habitat adaptation process going forward. The officer was receptive to ongoing scientific support from the Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) and/or the CCAP program, having recently graduated from the University of the South Pacific (USP). Ongoing partnership with local academic institutions may also present an opportunity for strengthening local-level engagement in the medium term.

Engagement with the new Port Vila Municipal Council (PVMC), particularly the recently elected Lord Mayor, was strongly recommended by roughly half of the interview participants, with the current lack of a forward climate change agenda within the municipality suggesting an opportunity for local political support and engagement. *[Prof McEvoy will attempt to follow up with preliminary contact at the CLGF meeting in PNG in May].*

The new council is the first to be elected under the new 5 ward municipal structure (Malapoa - Tagabe Ward; Anabrou - Melcoffee Ward; Freswota - Tassiriki Ward; Central Ward; South Ward), which is the first amendment to Port Vila's municipal boundaries since 1980 (see Figure 2). Although the amendment to the Port Vila Municipal Act was passed in October 2013 by the National Parliament, the research team is yet to clarify the adjusted ward boundaries, which will form the basis for sub-city vulnerability analysis.

Possible re-establishment of the 5 ward councils within Port Vila (including representation of youth, women's, church and disability groups) offers a strong sub-municipal structure to use in 'down-scaling' community-based city-wide vulnerability assessment, and future adaptation planning, however this proposal has not yet been finalized. The current level of climate change knowledge and

capacity within PVMC is unknown (as the interview with the Town Clerk did not take place) however it was said to be limited by other interview participants.

The division of responsibility between municipal and provincial government levels was also unclear, with rural sub-provincial structures not existing within the urban boundary (unlike elsewhere in Shefa). This overlap should be dealt with cautiously, given the lack of clarity in jurisdiction (also recognizing that national authorities have responsibility for infrastructure and climate change); however managing this co-operatively will ensure mutual capacity building and could establish information-sharing relationships of benefit elsewhere in the province.

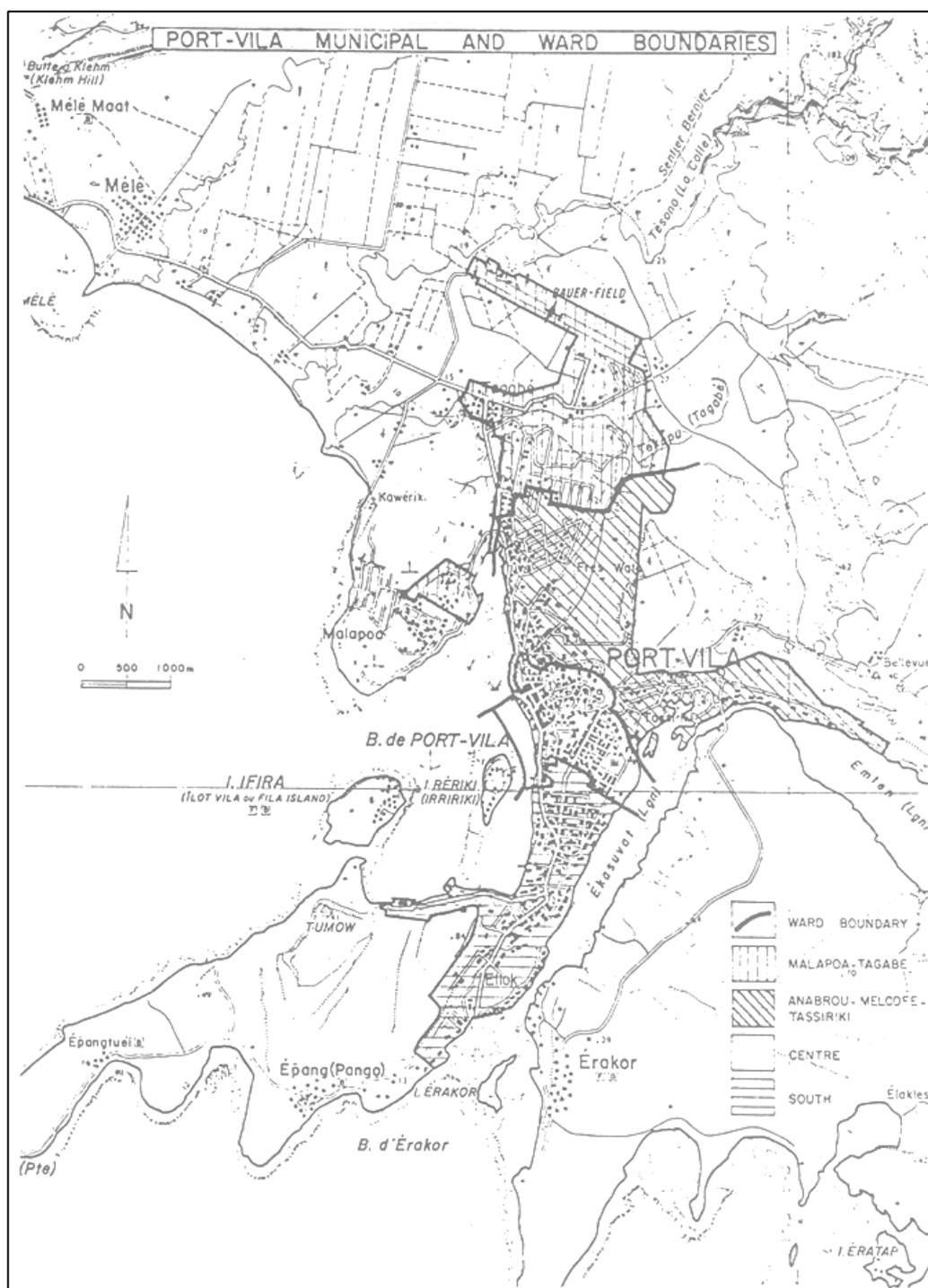


Figure 2: Original 1980 Port Vila Ward Boundaries (2013 amendment not yet available)

Grassroots Urban Champions: Churches, Chiefs, Women's Councils, Won Smolbag - Opportunity

A number of respondents identified that genuine grassroots participation was important for the ongoing success and sustainability of climate change adaptation planning in the city, and a reason for the failure or discontinuance of a number of past initiatives. Positive examples of community-owned CCA and DRR given by interviewees included references to culturally-based or traditional disaster coping mechanisms, whereby socio-cultural support formed a vital component of the community's resilience to climate-related events. However, it was also observed by multiple respondents that these social structures were 'disrupted' within the urban environment. Reinforcement of these 'modified' customary mechanisms through participatory engagement with Chiefs, Churches, and Women's Councils (potential Adaptation Planning champions) could therefore provide a dual purpose, strengthening both community and climate resilience.

Won Smolbag (WSB) was repeatedly proposed by interviewees as a potential grassroots, cross-sector champion for the CCCI agenda, due to its diverse range of communications approaches, existing environmental programs, and strong links into vulnerable informal settlements in Port Vila such as Blacksands (which is also adjacent to their main centre in Port Vila). Support for such an approach was offered by WSB, although the organisation is currently lacking a director for their environmental program. In particular this offers an opportunity to engage with low-literacy groups in the community, who are often located in the most vulnerable and least serviced urban areas.

Diverse Engagement Needs: Women, Youth, Disabled Persons & Informal Residents - Threat

In addition to variable literacy rates, the need to engage across different community groups through targeted communication mechanisms was a recurrent theme across all interviews, with suggestions ranging from using Facebook to engage youth through to conducting *Storian* group discussion sessions to involve community elders and chiefs. It was repeatedly stated that workshops had been overdone, and an alternative format - such as targeted focus groups - would be more effective. Mixed responses were received regarding field-based engagement and activities, with one example being the different perspectives and needs of stay-at-home women and men (including different dependencies on urban green space, and understandings of water and sanitation issues). This highlights the challenge of conducting a representative assessment 'off-site'. Other respondents suggested that stakeholders "know what areas are vulnerable, they don't need to be looking at them", suggesting the research team visit such sites prior to engaging groups in an office or workshop setting. Approval and support of both the Vanuatu National Women's Council (VNWC) and the Council of Chiefs - whether Malvatumauri (national), Vativisu (provincial) or Town Chiefs Council (local) - was nonetheless strongly stated as being vital to gaining grassroots support.

The multiplicity of cultural and ethnic groupings (such as Paama Seaside, Pentecost, Tongoa and Futuna) within the urban setting represents a key challenge, with different linguistic groupings (though Bislama does help to overcome this to some degree), respective political alignments and shifting population sizes due to changing migration patterns. Maintaining mechanisms for engaging across all of these groups will need to be a core focus if equitable participation is to be achieved and sustained.

Balancing Political Support, Bipartisan Community Involvement and Implementation - Threat

The difficulty of establishing and implementing long-term projects in the context of highly volatile political cycles and rapid personnel turnover (both in civil society and government departments) was a theme across many interviews. As stated by one respondent, *'MPs are tasked with delivering to their thousand-odd voters ... for all their best intentions nation building does not cut through'*. Understanding, or at least acknowledging the social disruptions and political dynamics within the urban environment is central to identifying the vulnerability of the Port Vila municipality to current and future climate impacts, as well as to building a platform for undertaking meaningful and effective adaptation actions. The strongest examples of cross-political adaptation potential appeared to hinge on building on albeit diverse cultural and traditional practices (and how they translates in the urban setting), and education (which was a consistent focus and strength of engaged civil society organisations – a capacity that could be further supported in Port Vila).

Major Stakeholders Needing Further Engagement

Four key stakeholder groups will be targeted prior to the second phase of field visits, each of which are considered central to establishing ongoing project support and effective community-level engagement.

Support from the Council of Chiefs, as well as sub-groupings within informal settlements and wards, will enable wider access to communities, traditional cultural structures and provide a clearer picture of community sub-groups within the urban area. Furthermore, the current Minister of Lands has gone on record to offer his support in facilitating consultations with various urban actors (news article on the Land Reform Act and the establishment of a Land Management and Planning Committee).

Church groups were also identified to provide a central point of contact, as well as provide support services for the community that can be leveraged for future CCA/DRR decision-making. Contact with the Port Vila Municipal Council Town Clerk – Ronald Sandy, was made following provision of his contact details by the VNWC, however this was too late in the visit to finalise an interview. It is hoped that a meeting between Prof McEvoy and either the Town Clerk and/or with the Port Vila Lord Mayor Ulrich Sumptoh can be organized during the *Pacific Local Government Forum* to be held in Port Moresby in mid-May. If this is not possible, this will be a priority for the follow-up visit to Port Vila either at the end of May or in July. It is also hoped to engage with the Port Vila Lady Mayor Leimara Malachi either during the forum, or upon returning to Port Vila.

The joint project by World Bank/ADB has the most obvious linkages with the UN-Habitat agenda; however the key contact point Nancy Wells was unavailable during the visit, with key meetings between the World Bank project team and the NAB/NDMO/VGMD unfortunately overlapping. Appropriate avenues for building this relationship and aligning with the PVVA process are to be explored in future discussions.

Key follow up contacts	Organisation	Role
Ulrich Sumptoh	Port Vila Municipal Council	Lord Mayor
Ronald Sandy	Port Vila Municipal Council	Town Clerk
Brian Phillips	National Advisory Board	Manager NAB PMU
Jotham Napat	Vanuatu Met. Geo-hazards Dept.	Director
Shadrack Welegtabit	Nat. Disaster Mgmt. Office	Director
Cherol Ala	Department of Local Authorities	Director
Nancy Wells	World Bank/ADB Joint Project	Country Liaison Officer
Michael Bonte	World Bank	DRM specialist
Jennifer Worthington	Vanuatu Humanitarian Team	Co-ordinator
Amos Kalo	Save the Children	CCA Manager
Rebecca McNaught	Red Cross Climate Centre	Senior Climate Advisory – Pacific

Engagement Phase 2

The structure for the next phase of engagement has been discussed with the UN-Habitat CCCI team, and input from existing contacts and the follow-up stakeholders listed in the table above will also be sought. Given engagement with the PVMC and Cherol Ala at the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in PNG, core activities are intended to be held in PV during the week of the 7th July [McEvoy & Trundle].

Three main activities are envisaged:

- Focus group discussions with key stakeholders from municipal, provincial and national levels (city-scale);
- Vulnerability mapping and transects (ward level, to be agreed by PVMC);
- Engagement with informal settlements (possible collaboration with Won Smolbag).

These will integrate with the tools outlined in the UN Habitat CCCI Planning for Climate Change Toolkit, specifically:

- Tool 3G: Sensitive Places Mapping
- Tool 3H: Community-based Sensitivity Mapping
- Tool 3I: Sensitivity Threshold Identification
- Tool 3J: Priority Threat Assessment
- Tool 3K: Climate Threat Plotting
- Tool 3L: Adaptive Capacity Assessment

Potential formats include: ‘storian’ Nakamal sessions, field visits to informal settlements, activities appropriate to youth groups, churches and group interviews with VNWC representatives. Won Smolbag may also present additional avenues for engagement.

Identified Themes (interview analysis extracts)

Theme	Description	Weight	Notes
Current focus on rural areas for both CCA/DRR	Activities	5	
PVMC as a potential champion, capacity limited	Actors	5	<i>use as a seedbed, build capacity</i>
Won Smolbag as the key grassroots actor	Capacity	2	
Strong National-level bureaucratic CCA knowledge/capacity	Capacity	2	
Strong customary/culturally-based disaster response mechanisms	Capacity	2	<i>Potential to be disrupted if not integrated</i>
Role of Women in Households	Capacity	2	
Issues of implementation at multiple levels	Capacity	4	
Climate data limitations/lacking to date	Capacity	3	<i>CSIRO vs. CMIP5 SimClim</i>
Broad-based education as NGO strength	Capacity	3	<i>Lacking standardisation currently</i>
Culture/Traditions modified in urban environ.	Institutions	5	
Church groups as a key engagement area locally	Institutions	2	<i>Vanuatu Christian Council</i>
A need for standards/legislation	Institutions	5	<i>Building, subdivision codes</i>
Urban Linkages - beyond the physical boundary	Vulnerability	2	
Lack of effective urban land use arrangements/planning	Vulnerability	4	
Heavy rainfall vulnerability/lack of drainage/sewage/water access	Vulnerability	5	<i>untreated water supply, drainage lacking</i>
Food security - the hidden issue	Vulnerability	5	<i>Complacency in urban areas</i>
Food and goods shifting from subsistence/local to global/monetary: new exposures	Vulnerability	3	<i>Urban centres as catalyst for this</i>
Waste Management	Activities	2	<i>Not clear re. CC link though</i>
No more workshops	Activities	1	<i>Focus groups or field visits</i>
Rapid personnel 'churn'	Capacity	1	
Issues around healthcare response resources	Capacity	1	<i>JICA involved in hospital build</i>
Adaptation as economic empowerment	Capacity	1	
Downscaling makes limited difference to PV	Data	1	<i>Complexity not worth it</i>
Well-funded high-level CCA nationally but sustainability over time not clear	Institutions	1	
Lack of ongoing maintenance - short-term initiatives only	Institutions	1	
Diverse cultural/ethnic groupings driving politics/settlement	Institutions	1	
Development agency 'top-down', NGO 'bottom-up' divide	Institutions	1	<i>Lack of clarity over roles & local govt. as an 'in between'</i>
Co-ordinated Civil Society	Institutions	1	<i>VHT as a key grouping body</i>
Blurred Municipal/Provincial divide of responsibility	Institutions	1	
Importance of non-written communication	Methodology	1	
Community/stakeholder ownership/longevity and sustainability of action needed	Outputs	1	
Urban Greenspace/Gardens lacking, vital for women	Vulnerability	1	<i>Potential PVMC and community action</i>

List of Organisational Acronyms:

ADB – Asian Development Bank
ADRA – Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CCA – Climate Change Adaptation
CCAP – Climate Change Adaptation Program
CCCI – UN Habitat Climate Change and Cities Initiative
CLGF – Commonwealth Local Government Forum
DLA – Department of Local Authorities
DRR/M – Disaster Risk Reduction / Management
JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency
NAB – National Advisory Board
NDMO – National Disaster Management Office
PIPP – Pacific Institute of Public Policy
PVMC – Port Vila Municipal Council
PVVA – Port Vila Vulnerability Assessment
RMIT – Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SPC-GIZ – Secretariat of the Pacific Community – German Society for International Cooperation
USP – University of the South Pacific
VANGO – Vanuatu Association of Non-Government Organisations
VCAN – Vanuatu Climate Adaptation Network
VHT – Vanuatu Humanitarian Team
VMGD – Vanuatu Meteorological and Geo-hazards Department
VNCW – Vanuatu National Council of Women
WSB – Won Smol Bag