

Vanuatu Launches \$28 Million Project to Boost Climate-Resilient Water Security for 215,000 People

September 29, 2025



The Government of Vanuatu has launched the Vanuatu Water Security Project, a crucial USD \$28 million (VT 3 billion) initiative designed to combat increasing water insecurity caused by climate change. The five-year project aims to strengthen climate-resilient water systems and directly benefit more than 85,000 people, while indirectly reaching an additional 200,000—nearly three-quarters of the national population.

Funded by the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**, the project is supported by the **Pacific Community (SPC)**, **UNICEF**, and multiple Vanuatu government ministries, including the **Department of Water Resources (DoWR)**. The initiative was formally launched at an inception workshop in Port Vila on September 19, 2025.

Urgent Action Against Climate Threats

Vanuatu is consistently ranked among the world's most disaster-prone countries. The combined threats of stronger cyclones, prolonged droughts, flooding, and sea-level rise are threatening freshwater resources and damaging fragile infrastructure. Currently, only about **55%** of rural water systems can provide reliable year-round access, undermining health, food security, and livelihoods in rural communities.

Mr. William Nasak, Director General of the Vanuatu Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, said the project comes at a critical time. "Vanuatu is on the frontline of climate change. Rural

communities, which make up the majority of our population, are vulnerable, with many water systems already under strain. Data show us that we must act with urgency and determination.”

The project will address these vulnerabilities by working on three primary fronts:

1. **Empowering communities** to manage their own climate-resilient water resources.
2. **Expanding and climate-proofing** rural water infrastructure to withstand extreme events.
3. **Building the capacity** of provincial and national institutions to plan for climate risks in the water sector.

Strong Partnerships for Sustainable Results

The project is being implemented by the **DoWR**, which will lead delivery in communities and provinces nationwide. The SPC is serving as the accredited entity to the GCF and is co-executing the project alongside the DoWR to ensure international climate finance translates into practical results. UNICEF will act as a delivery partner, bringing its specific expertise in water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Ms. Esline Garaebiti, Deputy Director, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Division (CCES) SPC, said the project was not just about infrastructure. “It is about dignity, safety, and long-term prosperity. It gives us the opportunity to strengthen water systems, improve governance, and empower communities to manage their own resources sustainably.”

The project is built on strong partnerships to ensure a collaborative approach. **Mr. Kieren Davis, Project Manager, Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division (GEM) at SPC, said:** “It is about working together across divisions and with partners and member countries to bring the best of SPC’s science and technical knowledge to support government leadership. By combining expertise from water governance, engineering and community engagement, we can make sure this project delivers sustainable results for Vanuatu.”

The initiative builds directly on Vanuatu’s **National Adaptation Plan** and **National Sustainable Development Plan**. Its success will be measured simply: when families in rural communities can **open a tap and trust that safe water will flow, even after the next cyclone**. The project contributes directly to achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 6: Clean Water and Sanitation**.