



AFD and
Vanuatu

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Vanuatu, an archipelago of 83 islands with nearly 330,000 inhabitants and a GDP of USD 1.12 billion, is particularly vulnerable to climate risks and natural disasters. Cyclones, earthquakes, and rising sea levels threaten its infrastructure and development. The country declared a climate emergency in 2022.

A long-standing partner since 1961, the AFD Group currently supports Vanuatu through three key priorities: climate action and biodiversity, strengthening health and prevention systems, and supporting youth and education.

1

Tackling Climate Change and Preserving Biodiversity

Since 2021, Vanuatu has benefited from the CLIPSSA regional action-research program (Climate in the Pacific, Local Knowledge and Adaptation Strategies), which collects unique scientific data on the future climate conditions at the scale of small islands. It also analyses impacts on agriculture and water resources by placing them in dialogue with local knowledge, with the aim of supporting adaptation strategies.

The multi-donor Kiwa Initiative funds climate change adaptation projects relying on nature-based solutions. Three projects are currently underway in Vanuatu, including Kiwa ResiCo, implemented by the IAC (New Caledonian Agronomic Institute) across Vanuatu's nine most populated islands and in the Loyalty Islands (New Caledonia). It aims to strengthen the resilience of rural communities, particularly women, by rehabilitating agroforestry.

By supporting the French Red Cross's PIROPS (Preparedness and Response Platform for the Pacific), AFD supports disaster preparedness and response in the Pacific, notably by equipping the Vanuatu Red Cross with the human resources needed to act in the face of climatic and natural crises.

The regional SWAP (Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific) project, funded by France via AFD and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), addresses pollution by supporting waste management policies.

2

Strengthening the Health and Prevention System

AFD supports Vanuatu in strengthening its health system to improve access to healthcare and prevention, as well as the country's capacity to respond to health crises.

Launched in 2025, the HASAP project aims to improve access to primary healthcare in the archipelago. It targets Pentecost Island, where it will enable the rehabilitation and equipping of two health centres and a dispensary—notably the Melsisi Health Centre, which was severely damaged by Cyclone Harold and serves a population of 5,000 people. The project also includes a significant component of national nurse training, as well as technical support for the Ministry of Health.

Vanuatu also benefits from the PPHSN program (Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network), implemented by the Pacific Community and funded by France via AFD. In Vanuatu, PPHSN contributes to national health security by providing, for example, technical support for transporting infectious substances, responding to epidemics, sequencing DNA, and establishing early warning systems for climate-sensitive diseases.

The DIRECCT+ program, delegated by the European Union and completed in 2024, supported the creation of a database of people with disabilities to facilitate their inclusion in the event of natural disasters.

3

Acting for Education, Youth, and Employment

With 38% of the population under the age of 15, Vanuatu's youth represents a key driver for development. To support this potential, AFD focuses its efforts on strengthening the education system and building the skills of new generations.

France, via AFD, supports the National University of Vanuatu (NUV) in developing quality bilingual higher education and improving the economic and social integration of young people. This project involves both infrastructure (construction of the university campus) and institutional support, helping NUV teams expand their training offer in line with labour market needs.

Through the EU's DIRECCT+ program, all students and staff at the National University of Vanuatu now have functional access to digital tools, with 215 computers, dedicated classrooms, and training on online teaching methods.

France co-financed the construction of the Maison des Francophonies, opened in 2025 as part of a decentralised cooperation with the municipality of Dumbéa (New Caledonia). This venue offers opportunities for meetings, training, expression, and promotion for the youth of Port Vila as well as for Francophone associations and businesses.