



Organization: Santo Sunset Environment Network (SSEN)

Location: Western Santo, Sanma Province, Vanuatu

Solution: Supporting grassroots Indigenous climate adaptation and resilience in Vanuatu

Factsheet Period: First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (18 months)



Santo Sunset Environment Network raising adaptation awareness among chiefs and community leaders @SSEN

Vanuatu is one of the most vulnerable nations in the South Pacific to the impacts of climate change, with natural disasters costing around 6% of GDP annually ([World Bank, 2021](#)). Adaptation support remains severely limited for islanders in remote, underserved villages with little to no access to government services, climate finance or modern technology. SSEN offers an innovative solution that empowers communities by preserving and enhancing traditional knowledge systems that form the backbone of local food production, fisheries, construction, bush medicine and navigation. By integrating these practices with climate risk projections, SSEN has developed a science-based, culturally relevant adaptation and development programme. This initiative is led and owned by 42 communities across two remote Area Councils on Espiritu Santo Island, Vanuatu, ensuring long-term resilience and sustainable development.



Key achievements

- Trained 89 Indigenous Climate Rangers (25% women) from 42 villages, on environmental & climate change impacts using tools and apps
- Attended to the first SSEN Mini Climate Agriculture Show, engaging over 5,000 community members in Western Santo
- Assisted in the development of Community Management Plans for Community Conservation Areas in Molpo and Wunon
- Conducting biodiversity & climate impact surveys in communities to inform resilience strategies
- Equipping Community Disaster Climate Change Committees with tools and knowledge for climate resilience, linked to national disaster management systems.
- Establishing Taboo Protected Area Management Plans through community and government collaboration



Social impact

- Implementation of nature-based solutions led by women, alongside the adoption of climate resilience plans
- Traditional chiefs and community members empowered to lead local consultation has resulted in community-driven plans like the Traditional Agrikalja Book
- Organized coastal tree planting initiatives to combat sea-level rise, involving chiefs and youth in restoration efforts.



Adaptation benefits

- Enhanced resilience to climate food risks through community-led training and adaptation strategies
- Diversified production processes, integrating traditional knowledge with climate-smart agricultural practices
- Improved land management with nature-based solutions, reducing vulnerabilities to tropical cyclones and landslides
- Promoted backyard gardening in village communities, creating a sustainable impact despite erratic weather conditions



Innovation

- Integration of smart agriculture with traditional methods, with households planting resilient crops like pineapples, taro and ginger to combat erratic rainfalls and drought



Funding snapshot

- UNDP AFCIA Grant: US\$125,000 (initial grant)
- Government of Vanuatu and Community Support: US\$4,000 ~ US\$8,000



Replication potential

- Sharing training programmes with local and national stakeholders to promote adoption of nature-based climate adaptation solutions