

VARs NEWSLETTER

Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources – Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project Weekly Newsletter



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MINISTRY OF LANDS & NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICIALS & VARS PROJECT TAS

BUILDING VANUATU'S FUTURE: A 10-YEAR MASTERPLAN (2026–2036)

The Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources (MOLNR) has started work on a 10-Year Masterplan that will guide how Vanuatu manages land, water, minerals, and other natural resources from 2026 to 2036. The goal is to create a practical roadmap that helps government, communities, and partners work together to support development while protecting what makes Vanuatu unique.

The process involves all parts of the Ministry – Lands, Water Resources, Geology & Mines, the Valuer General, Registry, Surveyor General, and IT. Each unit will feed into the plan, but MOLNR is also making sure that input comes from other government ministries & sectors, outside government, including provincial councils, chiefs, landowners, and the private sector.

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WHY IT MATTERS

Natural resources are central to how Vanuatu functions. They provide food, housing, energy, and income, but they are also deeply tied to culture and community life. With the population increasing, towns expanding, and climate risks becoming more serious, the way land and water are managed is under growing pressure.

The Masterplan is being developed as a way to address these pressures in a coordinated manner. It is intended to bring together the work of different departments so that responsibilities are clearer, services are more reliable, and decisions are made with better information. Importantly, it will create more space for communities and stakeholders to be involved in shaping how resources are used in the long term.

KEY PRIORITIES

Through early discussions, several areas have already been highlighted as priorities for the next decade:

- **Land Management:** Improving the way land is registered and valued, making records more reliable, and ensuring that customary ownership is safeguarded within modern systems.
- **Water Security:** Putting the National Water Policy into action, decentralising services so they are closer to communities, and planning for water use with climate risks in mind.
- **Geology & Mines:** Strengthening oversight of mining activities, encouraging safer and more sustainable practices, and building technical expertise in geosciences.
- **Data & Technology:** Moving towards digital systems for land and water management, improving the quality of GIS and valuation databases, and using data to inform planning and decisions.

Each of these priorities links back to the overall aim: creating systems that are more reliable, more transparent, and better equipped to handle future challenges.

NEXT STEPS

In the coming months, MOLNR will open up wider discussions on the Masterplan. Consultations will be held with provincial governments, landowners, communities, and investors to collect views and ensure the plan reflects the needs of different groups.

To make sure the plan leads to action, an implementation framework will also be designed. This will set out who is responsible for what, and how progress will be tracked. The intention is to avoid a plan that sits on a shelf, and instead build one that guides daily work across the Ministry and its partners.

A SHARED COMMITMENT

The Masterplan is being approached as a shared national project. Government has a leading role, but success will depend on commitment from many others, including chiefs, community leaders, civil society, and development partners.

By working together, Vanuatu can ensure its resources are managed in a way that supports growth and stability while also protecting heritage and culture. As the Director General noted during internal discussions:

“Our land and resources are our heritage and our future – this Masterplan is our chance to steward them wisely.”

FEEDBACK & CONTRIBUTIONS:

We want your input!

Send your updates, suggestions, or stories to de@vars.vu by Thursday 3 PM for inclusion in next week's issue.