

VARs NEWSLETTER

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



THE WORLD BANK



MOLNR MINISTER MAHE, FLANKED BY WORLD BANK BERNARD HARBORNE & TEVI OBED & VARs LAWRIE CARLSON @ ELOL ETAS PROJECT SITE

VANUATU AFFORDABLE & RESILIENT SETTLEMENT (VARs) PROJECT UPDATE

Belated seasons greetings to everyone from VARs PMU. Vanuatu Affordable & Resilient Settlement (VARs) project is on track to deliver its mandate in the time period allocated for the project to be implemented. Status of the three main components are as follows:

COMPONENT 1 – ETAS SITE & SERVICES

- Works contracts signed with RSPE (Road Stabilizer Process Enterprise Ltd) and UNELCO.
- The Government of Vanuatu has taken a major step toward expanding access to affordable land for ni-Vanuatu families, with the awarding of the Elol Etas Site and Services Works Contract for the development of a new residential subdivision targeting low- to middle-income, first-time land buyers.

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COMPONENT 1 - ETAS SITE & SERVICES CONTINUED

- The contract was formally awarded by the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Rick Tchamako Mahe, to Road Stabilizer Process Enterprise Ltd (RSPE), a locally owned and operated company led by Mr Sandrino Traverso. Construction works are scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2026.
- BECA supervision team expected to commence mobilisation shortly, with one staff member anticipated to be co-located with the PMU in February 2026.

COMPONENT 2 – SETTLEMENT UPGRADING IN 4 INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

- MOLNR is in the process of awarding contracts for upgrading works in the 4 Informal Settlements of :
 1. Seaside
 2. Tokyo
 3. Anamburu
 4. Ohlen-Mataso

UPGRADING WORKS WILL INCLUDE:

- Comprehensive drainage improvements to address long-standing flooding and sanitation issues;
- New and rehabilitated walkways and lighting to enhance safety and mobility;
- Upgrades to sanitation systems and other essential services;
- Measures to improve community security and resilience.

These plans were developed through extensive and ongoing community consultations, ensuring local priorities are reflected in the design. The ministry has expressed gratitude for the strong participation and ownership shown by residents.

- National Housing Policy initiatives progressing well in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- Procurement for design and supervision services for National Housing Policy implementation (including model low-cost housing) scheduled to be issued soon.



MOLNR PLANNING SESSION

COMPONENT 3 – INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

- Ongoing initiatives include putting together MOLNR:
 - Corporate Plan (2026–2030)
 - Business Plan
 - Reform Master Plan (2026–2036)
 - Land Management Information System
 - Land Bank Processes
 - Revenue Management
- Increasing focus in 2026 will also focus on:
 - Land Development Investment Strategy
 - Settlement Upgrading Resilience Plan

LOOKING AHEAD

Taken together, the steady progress across all three components of the VARS Project reflects a Ministry that is increasingly confident, capable, and future-focused. With major infrastructure works moving into implementation, settlement upgrading grounded in strong community engagement, and a comprehensive institutional reform agenda taking shape, the Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources is well positioned to be a major contributor towards inclusive and climate-resilient urban development in Vanuatu. As these initiatives advance, they lay not only physical foundations for improved land access and housing, but also strengthen systems, partnerships, and community trust—ensuring that the Ministry continues to deliver sustainable outcomes for ni-Vanuatu families now and into the future.



VARS PMU PLANNING SESSION



ELOL ETAS PROJECT SITE

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.