

VARs NEWSLETTER

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



THE WORLD BANK



HON. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER / MINISTER OF FINANCE JOHNNY RASOU KOANAPO SIGNS WITH BERNARD HARBORNE, WBG RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, WITNESSED BY HON. MINISTER OF LANDS & NATURAL RESOURCES MP RICK TCHAMAKO MAHE AND BJORN PHILIPP, WBG PRACTICE MANAGER - URBAN RESILIENCE AND LAND UNIT, EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC.

GOVERNMENT OF VANUATU AND WORLD BANK SIGN ADDITIONAL FINANCING AGREEMENT TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENT SETTLEMENTS

The Government of Vanuatu and the World Bank today signed an agreement for additional financing of US\$28 million to support the Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements (VARs) Project. The agreement was signed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Management, Hon. Johnny Koanapo Rasou, and Mr. Bernard Harborne, World Bank Country Representative for Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

The additional financing reflects both immediate recovery needs and long-term development priorities. Of the total amount, US\$12 million will replenish funds that were redirected under the Rapid Response Option (RRO) following the December 2024 earthquake, while US\$16 million represents new financing to scale up recovery and resilience-building activities.

This support comes at a critical time as Vanuatu continues to recover from the earthquake, which caused widespread damage to infrastructure, government facilities, and livelihoods. The financing will help ensure that key investments under the VARS Project are completed while expanding support for reconstruction and “building back better.”

A major priority under the additional financing is the reconstruction of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MoLNR) headquarters. The new facility will be built to modern seismic and energy-efficiency standards, strengthening the Government’s ability to deliver essential services, safeguard national land records, and lead revenue collection efforts.

The project will also modernize land management systems by digitizing critical records and improving geospatial data and revenue systems. These investments will enhance planning, improve disaster response, and support more efficient and transparent land administration.

For communities, the additional financing will deliver tangible benefits, including the development of a new multi-purpose market and bus terminal at Etas. This facility will create opportunities for small businesses, improve connectivity, and support livelihoods—particularly for low-income households and women engaged in market activities.

The VARS Project aims to improve access to resilient infrastructure and services while strengthening land planning and management across Vanuatu. This additional financing underscores the Government and World Bank’s shared commitment to rebuilding stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient communities for the people of Vanuatu.