

# Stories of Impact

*A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management*

## Supporting Resilient Recovery in Vanuatu after Cyclone Pam



The beach at Port Narvin on Erramango Island, Vanuatu

**REGION:** EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

**FOCUS:** RESILIENT RECOVERY

**COUNTRY:** VANUATU



### RESULTS:

- Based on the damage impact assessment findings, the government prepared a robust National Recovery and Economic Strengthening Plan, completed in May 2015.
- A \$1.9 million payout for recovery was enabled by the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative.
- The damage assessment helped to leverage World Bank financing for Vanuatu totaling \$70 million, including \$50 million from the IDA Crisis Response Window to finance infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as support economic and private sector recovery, and enhance climate and disaster resilience.

Located in the Pacific Ring of Fire and at the center of the Pacific cyclone belt, Vanuatu is exposed to one of the world's highest levels of natural disaster risk. Following the destructive Tropical Cyclone Pam that swept across the Pacific nation in March 2015, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and the World Bank quickly mobilized to respond.

With funding from the Africa Caribbean Pacific – European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program (ACP-EU NDRR), an initiative of the ACP Group of States, funded by the EU and managed by GFDRR, as well as support from the Japan–World Bank Program for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management in Developing Countries, the government and partners collaborated to assess and quantify damages, identify disaster recovery and reconstruction needs, and leverage funds for implementing the nation's recovery framework.



**GFDRR**  
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery



**WORLD BANK GROUP**

**ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program**

*An initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group, funded by the European Union and managed by GFDRR*

## CONTEXT:

Vanuatu is exposed to a range of hazards including volcanic eruptions, cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, storm surges, flooding, and landslides, as well as climate variability such as sea-level and temperature extremes. From March 10–14, 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam struck 22 of Vanuatu’s 83 islands as an extremely destructive Category 5 cyclone – the strongest on record in the South Pacific. Calling the damage “unprecedented,” Vanuatu’s President appealed for support to the international community gathered at the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan. Altogether, 11 lives were lost, 188,000 people (67% of the population) were affected, and 75,000 were left in need of emergency shelter. The toll on infrastructure was also significant, with damages and losses totaling \$447.1 million, or approximately 64% of Vanuatu’s GDP.

## APPROACH:

In response to the cyclone’s devastation, GFDRR, in partnership with the World Bank, United Nations, the European Union, and the Secretariat of Pacific Communities supported the government of Vanuatu in conducting a post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) which provided comprehensive recommendations for funding recovery and reconstruction.

In addition, on March 30, 2015, Vanuatu received a \$1.9 million payout from the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI). A grant provided through the Japan-World Bank Program for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management in Developing Countries helped cover the Government of Vanuatu’s insurance premium. In parallel, IDA finances were also quickly mobilized to support medium to long-term recovery and reconstruction.

## NEXT STEPS:

Recovery efforts are under way in line with the National Recovery and Economic Strengthening Program. In the medium-long term, the government’s aim is to increase the resilience of Vanuatu’s vulnerable population and sectors in line with Vanuatu’s Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management National Action Plan (2006–2016).

This goal will also be pursued through Vanuatu’s participation in a regional Pacific Resilience Program (PREP) project, supported by the World Bank and GFDRR, to strengthen disaster resilience, early warning and preparedness, and improve post-disaster response capacity of the participating Pacific Island countries.

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\*ALL MONETARY VALUES IN USD



*“On behalf of the Government of Vanuatu, I would like to thank our development partners for their continued support as we continue to work together to help the people of Vanuatu recover from this disaster.”*

— Hon. Sato Kilman, Prime Minister of Vanuatu

## LESSONS LEARNED:

**A timely and robust damage assessment is vital to guide the government’s recovery strategy.** The GFDRR-supported assessment estimated recovery and reconstruction costs of \$317.7 million, with total public sector recovery needs comprising approximately \$140 million, largely to rehabilitate public infrastructure. The data gathered and validated in the assessment provided necessary inputs for comprehensive and targeted recovery planning and corresponding project finance.

**Quick access to finance is crucial in responding to urgent needs.** \$1.9 million from the PCRAFI was disbursed two weeks after the cyclone to provide immediate liquidity to the government to help finance relief needs. As Vanuatu faces substantial reconstruction needs, quickly mobilized IDA finances will support urgently-needed recovery projects.