



# Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority (VMSA)

Autorité de Sécurité Maritime du Vanuatu (vmsa)



## National Action Plan (NAP) for sea-based marine plastic litter Republic of Vanuatu

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PREPARED WITH SUPPORT FROM IMO/FAO-NORWAY GLOLITTER PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT

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## **Acronyms**

ALDFG – Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear

COM – Council of Ministers

CROP – Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FFA – Forum Fisheries Agency

GGGI – Global Ghost Gear Initiative

GloLitter – GloLitter Partnerships Project

IMO – International Maritime Organization

LDC(s) – Least Developed Countries

LPC(s) – Lead Partnering Countries

LPIR – Legal, Policy and Institutional Reforms

MPL – Marine Plastic Litter

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NAP – National Action Plan

NMTP – National Maritime Transport Policy

NTF – National Task Force

NGO(s) – Non-Governmental Organization(s)

PICs – Pacific Island Countries

SBMPL – Sea-based Marine Plastic Litter

SIDS – Small Island Developing States

SLO – State Law Office

SPC – Pacific Community (formerly known as South Pacific Community)

SPREP – Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

VFD – Vanuatu Fisheries Department

VGMFG – Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear

VMSA – Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority

WCPFC – Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

## **Introduction**

The GloLitter Partnerships Project (GloLitter), funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and implemented by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is an initiative that is both vital and timely in nature and is a response to the growing marine plastic litter (MPL) issue, especially in the maritime transport and fisheries sectors.

Vanuatu was selected as a Lead Partnering Country (LPC) for the Pacific region and is committed to taking the lead in regional efforts to prevent and reduce sea-based marine plastic litter (SBMPL). As such, Vanuatu must ensure the reform of its legal, policy and institutional structures based on the outcomes of the national status assessment report on SBMPL and will participate in the development of national policies and action plans for the reduction of SBMPL.

Therefore, this National Action Plan (NAP) outlines the actions that need to be taken on a national scale to ensure effective and robust measures to prevent and reduce SBMPL in Vanuatu.

## **Background to the National Action Plan**

This NAP was developed in consultation with the National Task Force (NTF) established under the framework of the GloLitter in Vanuatu which comprised of the Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority (VMSA) as the National Focal Point (NFP), the Vanuatu Department of Fisheries (VFD), the Vanuatu Ports and Harbour Department and the Oceans Division within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vanuatu.

This NAP is based on Vanuatu's Country Status Assessment Report which provided an overview of the status of MPL in Vanuatu and the existing legal, policy and institutional makeup of the country. It also identified activities and deliverables that need to be developed throughout the course of this partnership. The institutions first came up with their own department- level NAPs to address SBMPL. Later, they all contributed to the development of this single NAP document that reflects each department's actions to address SBMPL in Vanuatu by prioritizing actions that are more suited for the GloLitter project. Finally, the most suitable actions by each of these institutions were compiled into this NAP to address SBMPL in Vanuatu.

## **Overall Objective of the NAP**

The main objective of this NAP is to guide Vanuatu to effectively prevent and reduce marine plastic litter from sea-based sources, mainly from the maritime and fisheries sectors through targeted national priorities and interests that are related to SBMPL.

## **Country context**

Vanuatu is an archipelagic nation of 83 islands that extends over 1,000 kilometers in a north-south direction between the equator and the tropic of Capricorn. It lies some 2,000 kilometers to the northeast of Brisbane in the Coral Sea, at similar latitude to Cairns in North Queensland. The population of Vanuatu is approximately 319,137 (2021). Port Vila, on the island of Efate, is the capital. Formerly known as the New Hebrides, Vanuatu was jointly governed by British and French administrations before attaining independence. Vanuatu's main economic pillars are comprised of tourism, agriculture and fisheries.

## **Governance system**

Vanuatu has a unicameral 52-member parliament, elected to a four-year term by universal adult suffrage. The President of the Republic (constitutional head of state) is elected for a five-year term through secret ballot by an electoral college comprising members of parliament and the Presidents of Vanuatu's six provincial governments. The current President, His Excellency Nikenike Vurobaravu, was elected for a five-year term on 23 July 2022. The Prime Minister is elected by parliament by secret ballot. Following the recent national elections 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, the parliament elected the Hon Ishmael Kalsakau as the Prime Minister of Vanuatu.

New laws in Vanuatu are developed and passed through a rigorous but transparent process whereby the policy is drafted by respective governmental departments and presented to the Council of Ministers (COM). Once the policy is approved by the COM, the State Law Office (SLO) uses this policy as the basis of drafting it to law. A consultation will then be made by the SLO with the relevant ministry together with the population that this new law is likely to impact. After these consultations, the new law will be tabled in the parliament by the relevant minister. The parliament is the body that passes the law. The President of the Republic of Vanuatu then assents to the law. The new law is then gazetted and becomes effective.

Below is a list of the specific actions that this NAP covers:

### **Specific Actions**

There are five (5) specific actions for this NAP. They are:

1. Actions related to the legal, policy and enforcement reforms,
2. Actions related to institutional capacity and reforms,
3. Actions related to education and outreach,
4. Actions related to regional and global cooperation, and
5. Actions related to private sector engagement.

Below are reasons pertaining to the specific actions and activities that the National Task Force (NTF) prioritizes in order to prevent and reduce SBMPL in a national level:

#### **Action 1: Legal, Policy, and Enforcement Reforms**

**1.1** Develop and implement a regulatory and legal framework for marine pollution and waste management to align with SBMPL objectives. (Priority: High)

**1.2** Develop and enforce regulations banning single-use plastics in Vanuatu. (Priority: Medium)

**1.3** Enhance enforcement mechanisms for marine pollution violations through increased monitoring and penalties. (Priority: High)

**1.4** Establish a national reporting system to track plastic waste generation, disposal, and impacts on the environment. (Priority: Medium)

#### **Action 2: Institutional Capacity and Reforms**

**2.1** Strengthen the capacity of government agencies responsible for waste management and environmental protection through training and resource allocation. (Priority: High)

**2.2** Establish a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Environment to coordinate and implement SBMPL initiatives. (Priority: Medium)

**2.3** Foster partnerships with civil society organizations, academic institutions, and private sector entities for knowledge exchange and collaboration in SBMPL management. (Priority: High)

**2.4** Develop and implement training programs and awareness campaigns for government staff on SBMPL management and best practices. (Priority: Medium)

### **Action 3: Education and Outreach**

- 3.1** Develop and implement public awareness campaigns targeting different sectors of society to educate on SBMPL impacts and prevention measures. (Priority: High)
- 3.2** Incorporate SBMPL topics into school curricula and develop educational materials for students to promote environmental responsibility. (Priority: Medium)
- 3.3** Organize community workshops and training sessions to empower local communities with knowledge and skills for SBMPL reduction. (Priority: High)
- 3.4** Collaborate with media outlets to promote SBMPL awareness through TV commercials, radio programs, and online campaigns. (Priority: Medium)

### **Action 4: Regional and Global Cooperation**

- 4.1** Participate in regional and global agreements to address marine pollution and SBMPL, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. (Priority: High)
- 4.2** Collaborate with regional and global partners, including the IMO and FAO, to access resources, knowledge, and best practices in SBMPL management. (Priority: Medium)
- 4.3** Establish and participate in regional or global networks focused on SBMPL to share experiences, lessons learned, and coordinate actions. (Priority: High)
- 4.4** Contribute to regional and global research efforts on SBMPL through data sharing, joint studies, and participation in scientific forums. (Priority: Medium)

### **Action 5: Private Sector Engagement**

- 5.1** Encourage the private sector to adopt sustainable practices and reduce plastic waste through awareness campaigns and incentives. (Priority: High)
- 5.2** Establish platforms for dialogue and collaboration between the government and private sector to identify opportunities for innovation and investment in SBMPL solutions. (Priority: Medium)
- 5.3** Recognize and promote businesses that demonstrate responsible SBMPL management and support their initiatives through financial incentives. (Priority: High)
- 5.4** Foster public-private partnerships (PPP) to leverage resources and expertise for SBMPL reduction and innovation in Vanuatu. (Priority: Medium)

## Vanuatu National Action Plan [NAP]

The table below outlines the specific actions for each of the five main Actions for Vanuatu:

Action	Description	Priority Level	Responsible Authority	Start Date	End Date	Resources	Progress Indicators	Methods of Verification
<b>Action 1: Legal, Policy, and Enforcement Reforms</b>								
1.1	Developed and implement regulatory and legal framework for marine pollution and waste management to align with SBMPL objectives.	High	Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Legal experts, policymakers	Regulations established line with SBMPL objectives	Regulations developed and gazetted
1.2	Develop and enforce regulations banning single-	Medium	Ministry of Trade	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Regulatory experts,	Implementation of ban on single-use plastics	Reports on enforcement activities,



	use plastics in Vanuatu.					enforcement agencies		compliance monitoring
1.3	Enhance enforcement mechanisms for marine pollution violations through increased monitoring and penalties.	High	Department of Fisheries and Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Enforcement officers, legal experts	Increased number of inspections, fines, and penalties	Records of enforcement actions, inspection reports
1.4	Establish a national reporting system to track plastic waste generation, disposal, and impacts on the environment.	Medium	Ministry of Environment, Department of Fisheries and Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Data management tools, reporting infrastructure	Regular reports on plastic waste generation and impacts	Reporting system documentation, data reports

### Action 2: Institutional Capacity and Reforms

2.1	Strengthen the capacity of government agencies responsible for waste management and environmental protection through training and resource allocation.	High	Ministry of Climate change, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Fisheries, Department of Ports and Harbour and Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Training programs, resource allocation plans	Increased expertise and resources within relevant agencies	Training reports, resource allocation documentation
2.2	Establish a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Environment to coordinate and implement SBMPL initiatives.	Medium	Ministry of Climate change and Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Administrative support, personnel allocation	Established dedicated unit for SBMPL coordination	Unit establishment documentation, organizational structure

2.3	Foster partnerships with civil society organizations, academic institutions, and private sector entities for knowledge exchange and collaboration in SBMPL management.	High	Ministry of Climate change and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Fisheries and Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Collaboration agreements, partnership frameworks	Increased collaborations and knowledge sharing	Partnership agreements, collaboration reports
2.4	Develop and implement training programs and awareness campaigns for government staff on SBMPL management and best practices.	Medium	Ministry of Climate change, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Ports and Harbour, Department of Fisheries and Vanuatu	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Training materials, awareness campaign resources	Trained staff and increased awareness on SBMPL management	Training attendance records, campaign reports published

			Maritime Safety Authority					
<b>Action 3: Education and Outreach</b>								
3.1	Develop and implement public awareness campaigns targeting different sectors of society to educate on SBMPL impacts and prevention measures.	High	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Climate change and Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Awareness campaign materials, media platforms	Increased public awareness and knowledge on SBMPL impacts	Campaign reports, public surveys
3.2	Incorporate SBMPL topics into school curricula and develop educational materials for students to promote	Medium	Ministry of Education	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Curriculum development, educational resources	Integration of SBMPL topics in school curricula	Updated curricula, educational materials

	environmental responsibility.							
3.3	Organize community workshops and training sessions to empower local communities with knowledge and skills for SBMPL reduction.	High	Ministry of Climate change, Ministry of Education, Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority (VMSA)	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Workshop venues, trainers	Increased community engagement and participation	Workshop attendance records, community feedback
3.4	Collaborate with media outlets to promote SBMPL awareness through TV commercials, radio programs, and online campaigns.	Medium	Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC), Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority (VMSA)	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Media partnerships, campaign materials	Increased media coverage and public engagement	Media coverage reports, campaign reach metrics

<b>Action 4: Regional and Global Cooperation</b>								
4.1	Participate in regional and global agreements to address marine pollution and SBMPL, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.	High	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Participation agreements, coordination frameworks	Active participation in relevant agreements and initiatives	Participation records, coordination meeting reports
4.2	Collaborate with regional and global partners, including the IMO and FAO, to access resources, knowledge, and best practices in	Medium	Department of Environment, Department of Fisheries, Vanuatu	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Collaboration agreements, partnership frameworks	Increased collaboration and knowledge sharing	Partnership agreements, collaboration reports

	SBMPL management.		Maritime Safety Authority					
4.3	Establish and participate in regional or global networks focused on SBMPL to share experiences, lessons learned, and coordinate actions.	High	Department of Environment, Department of Fisheries, Department of Ports and Harbour, Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Network membership, coordination mechanisms	Active participation in regional/global networks on SBMPL	Network membership records, coordination meeting reports
4.4	Contribute to regional and global research efforts on SBMPL through data sharing, joint studies, and participation in scientific forums	Medium	Department of Environment, Department of Fisheries, Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Research collaborations, data sharing agreements	Active contribution to SBMPL research and scientific discussions	Research reports, conference participation records

### Action 5: Private Sector Engagement

5.1	Encourage the private sector to adopt sustainable practices and reduce plastic waste through awareness campaigns and incentives.	High	Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Environment, Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority and Department of Fisheries	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Collaboration agreements, incentive programs	Increased adoption of sustainable practices by private sector	Partnership agreements, reports on incentive uptake
5.2	Establish platforms for dialogue and collaboration between the government and private sector to identify opportunities for innovation and investment in SBMPL solutions.	Medium	Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Environment, VMSA and Department of Fisheries	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Collaboration platforms, investment frameworks	Increased private sector involvement in SBMPL solutions	Meeting records, investment reports



5.3	Recognize and promote businesses that demonstrate responsible SBMPL management and support their initiatives through financial incentives.	High	Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Fisheries, Department of Ports and Harbour, VMSA, Department of Environment	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Recognition programs, incentive frameworks	Increased recognition and support for responsible businesses	Recognition records, incentive program reports
5.4	Foster public-private partnerships (PPP) to leverage resources and expertise for SBMPL reduction and innovation in Vanuatu.	Medium	Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Environment, Department of Fisheries and VMSA	01/08/2023	Ongoing	Partnership agreements, collaboration frameworks	Increased PPPs for SBMPL reduction and innovation	Partnership records, collaboration reports