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CASE STUDY

GOVERNANCE & PREPAREDNESS

From Registration to Legal Authority – Provincial Disaster & Climate Change Committee (PDCCC) – PENAMA PROVINCE, VANUATU

Under Part 5 of Vanuatu's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act, the PDCCC transitions from registration to legal authority - coordinating multi-stakeholder disaster risk management and climate change adaptation across Penama Province. Strengthened by 2023 DRM Act provisions, the committee now accesses emergency funding to mobilize rapid response, safeguarding vulnerable communities in the critical early stages of a disaster.



Satellite view of the Gaua volcano on Gaua Island, Vanuatu – one of the many permanently active volcanoes across the archipelago.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01 COUNTRY/REGION/LOCATION
Vanuatu, in the Southwest Pacific along the Ring of Fire, ranks #1 globally for disaster risk (World Risk Index) across 83 islands and six provinces.

02 RISK ADRESSED
Multi-hazard risks including cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, flooding, coastal erosion, and landslides threaten Penama Province.

03 IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD/TIMEFRAME
Over 6 days in March 2026 (2 - 9 March), the PDCCC was nominated, inducted, registered and officially launched in Penama Province.

04 ACTORS/IMPLEMENTING AND LOCAL PARTNERS
Led by National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and Penama Provincial Government (PPG), with Line Departments, Vanuatu Police Force, Save the Children, and Red Cross.

05 KEY BENEFICIARIES
Penama Province's 35,607 residents (2020 Census), prioritising vulnerable groups - women, children, the elderly, and those with special needs.

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE

Penama Province faces severe multi-hazard risks, most notably from Manaro Volcano - which triggered full island evacuations in 2017 and 2018 - alongside cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, flooding, and landslides.

Compounding these hazards are deep - rooted challenges: limited access to financing, delayed disaster response, poor telecommunications, inadequate road infrastructure, and disrupted water systems. Both the PPG and communities struggled with unclear roles within the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC), NDMO cluster system, and coordination structures.

As the first - ever PDCCC established in Penama, its formal registration was a landmark step - providing the legal mandate and institutional authority necessary to coordinate response, access resources, and lead recovery efforts across the province.

WHY THIS ACTION MATTERS?

The PDCCC's registration marks a landmark in Vanuatu's decentralisation policy - replicating the National Disaster Committee (NDC) at provincial level and empowering Penama to lead its own disaster response. Aligned with the DRM Act, People's Plan 2030, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it strengthens governance, climate adaptation, and inclusive decision - making.

Communities gain timely, locally sourced relief and meaningful participation in disaster planning. Most significantly, Penama became the first province to endorse a response plan - approved through the NDC to the Council of Ministers (CoM) - unlocking finance and setting a precedent for all the provinces of Vanuatu.

See the intervention and results on page 2 →



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INTERVENTION AND APPROACH

A coordinated 6 - day process underpinned the PDCCC's establishment - encompassing logistical arrangements, procurement, airline bookings, and printing of members' Terms of References and Standard Operating Procedures, all coordinated through close liaison with Penama's Provincial Disaster Officer (PDO).

The induction workshop allowed the NDMO officers to deliver structured presentations on the PDCCC members' roles, PEOC's roles, NDMO coordination structure, and disaster response cycle. VMGD; Geo-Hazards officers conducted volcano assessments and community awareness sessions, with findings integrated into Penama's first

- ever volcano response plan - developed through interactive discussions within the PEOC.

Strengthening the institutional relationship between NDMO and PPG was a key outcome of the process. On 9 March 2025, the PDCCC was formally registered and officially launched by the President of the PPG - marking a historic milestone for disaster governance in Penama. Sub-Regional Hubs and National Liaison Offices. It enables rapid deployment of human and material resources, supports harmonisation of operational procedures, strengthens anticipatory action capacities and promotes real-time information exchange through AMHEWAS-linked systems.

PROGRAMME OUTPUT ALIGNMENT



ALIGNED WITH BSRP-II KRA 4 - URBAN RESILIENCE

Registration of PDCCCs across Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa, and Tafea provinces. Penama's successful registration and endorsed response plan demonstrates concrete progress toward this output and sets a national precedent.



We are proud to be the first to endorse a volcano response plan approved by the Council of Ministers.

This committee belongs to our people - and together with our communities and fellow provinces, we will build a resilient Vanuatu.,,

MR. CHARLOT TABIGERIANO
President
Penama Provincial Government

RESULTS AND CHANGE

- Registration **transformed the PDCCC from an unrecognised body into Penama's authoritative disaster coordination mechanism.**
- Members now clearly **understand their roles, cluster coordination within the PEOC is significantly strengthened**, and the Penama Provincial Government fully recognises the committee's mandate.
- **Communities are informed of the PDCCC's authority** and its role in protecting them during disasters.
- On its launch day, **the PDCCC endorsed Penama's first-ever volcano response plan** - a milestone achievement subsequently approved by the Council of Ministers, unlocking critical disaster response financing and setting a precedent for provincial disaster governance across Vanuatu.

EARLY CONCRETE UPTAKE IN ONGOING INVESTMENTS:

REPLICATION ACROSS FIVE REMAINING PROVINCES

Penama's PDCCC model has been replicated across all five remaining provinces, with the Penama PDO sharing lessons learnt - strengthening national capacity and improving coordination efficiency during disasters.



Penama's volcano response plan was activated during an actual volcano response. Its approach - island evacuation, host communities, family tracing, and consultations - is now replicated in other provinces with active volcanoes.

KEY ENABLERS OF SUCCESS

NDMO & VMGD
TECHNICAL EXPERTISE
AND GUIDANCE.



PENAMA PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENT'S
POLITICAL WILL.



DECENTRALISATION
POLICY ENABLING
PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY.



COMMUNITY AWARENESS
AND INCLUSIVE
PARTICIPATION



SOURCES

- Vanuatu Disaster Risk Management Act
- World Risk Index

- Vanuatu 2020 National Census
- Building Safety & Resilience in the Pacific Phase II (BS-