



Cost-Benefit Analysis of Vanuatu's Participation in the Rio Convention COPs

November 2025

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AF	Adaptation Fund
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
CBIT	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
CCDRR	Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
CFWG	Climate Finance Working Group
COP	Conference of the Parties
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEPC	Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation
DG	Director-General
DoCC	Department of Climate Change
DoFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DPH	Department of Public Health
DSPPAC	Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN
FRLD	Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage
FNC	Fourth National Communication
GBF	Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
ICCCAD	International Centre for Climate Change and Development
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LDWG	Loss and Damage Working Group
MALFB	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, and Biosecurity
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MoCC	Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geohazards, Environment, Energy, and Disaster Management
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and External Trade
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NAB	National Advisory Board on CCDRR
NBV	National Bank of Vanuatu
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance
NGEF	National Green Energy Fund
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PACCIL	Pacific Climate Change Collaboration, Influencing and Learning
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PSIDS	Pacific Small Island Developing State
RBV	Reserve Bank of Vanuatu
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SoW	Scope of Work
SPC	Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program
STC	Save The Children
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
URA	Utilities Regulatory Authority
VANGO	Vanuatu Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
VBoS	Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics
VCAN	Vanuatu Climate Action Network
VCC	Vanuatu Christian Council
VFD	Vanuatu Fisheries Department
VLD	Vanuatu Livestock Department
WHO	World Health Organisation

1. Introduction and Background

Vanuatu's engagement with the United Nations (UN) Rio Conventions¹ is a strategic commitment to shape global rules, secure finance and technology, and build partnerships that advance national resilience and sustainable development.

- The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)* sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change. Its objectives are to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system, within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change.
- The *United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)* focuses on the conservation of biological diversity, its sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from commercial and other utilization of genetic resources. The Convention also covers biotechnology, and all possible domains that are directly or indirectly related to biodiversity and its role in development, ranging from science, politics and education to agriculture, business and culture.
- The *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)* aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, through effective actions at all levels. These are supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, with a view to contributing to sustainable development in the affected areas.

Vanuatu is Party to all three conventions,² having signed the UNFCCC in June 1992 (ratified March 1993), the UNCBD in June 1992 (ratified March 1993), and the UNCCD in September 1995 (ratified Aug 1999). Vanuatu coordinates with other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and other negotiating groups to amplify a common Pacific voice across priorities such as finance, capacity building, transparency, technology and gender.

1.1 Purpose and Rationale

This Cost–Benefit Analysis (CBA) consolidates official reports and stakeholder input to quantify core costs, classify monetised and non-monetised benefits, and identify practical options to strengthen value-for-money, readiness and coherence Vanuatu's participation. It builds on established national practice (e.g., drafting of national positions and submissions, appointment of thematic leads, participation in AOSIS and PSIDS spaces) while aiming to make preparation more predictable and participation more targeted and strategic.

The external landscape across all three conventions has recently shifted into an implementation-focused phase with major financing and delivery implications for SIDS:

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-rio-conventions>

² A UN Convention is a binding agreement between different countries. Under such Conventions, nations adopt key goals at annual Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and report periodically on progress in implementing these goals. Each Rio Convention has a supporting secretariat that organises annual COPs attended by national delegations and numerous participants of observer organizations, including from business and civil society. Other secretariat tasks include supporting governments report data and to organise technical workshops.

- Under the UNFCCC, COP29 adopted a New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)³ that points to at least USD 300 billion per year by 2035 for developing countries, alongside a broader call to mobilise USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2035 from all sources.
- Under the UNCBD, the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)⁴ sets 23 targets for 2030 (including ‘30×30’ and subsidy reform) and a resource-mobilization target of USD 200 billion per year by 2030, with USD 20 billion by 2025 and USD 30 billion by 2030 in international flows to developing countries. A dedicated Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)⁵ has been launched to channel implementation finance.
- Under the UNCCD, COP16 elevated drought resilience and land restoration, including the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership (RGDRP)⁶ and related high-level declarations that signal near-term opportunities for targeted engagement on land degradation neutrality and drought risk.

National stakeholders emphasize both the benefits of having a meaningful presence at negotiations, as well as persistent challenges that include high per-delegate costs, inadequate and unpredictable financial support, and limited time for technical preparation. Common technical and financial challenges are visible with engagement across all three conventions, reinforcing the case for a whole-of-government approach to multilateral engagements. This CBA is intended to help Vanuatu right-size delegations, target the partners and coalitions that matter most, and link budget decisions to expected returns (finance, partnerships, and policy influence).

1.2 Key Objectives⁷

The key objectives of this assessment include:

- Assessing the total costs incurred by the Government of Vanuatu in participating at COPs (including travel, logistics, and delegation expenses) against the outcomes achieved from negotiations, bilateral engagements, and networking opportunities.
- Identifying how participation in past COPs has contributed to the creation of new national initiatives and projects across climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and disaster risk reduction.
- Examining the extent to which COP participation has facilitated access to international climate, biodiversity, and land management financing opportunities for Vanuatu.
- Providing a consolidated cost-benefit analysis report with evidence-based findings and actionable recommendations on strengthening Vanuatu’s strategic engagement in future COPs, ensuring optimal use of resources and maximization of benefits.

1.3 Structure of the report

This CBA report is structured as noted below:

³ <https://unfccc.int/NCQG>

⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/gbf>

⁵ <https://www.thegef.org/what-we-do/topics/global-biodiversity-framework-fund>

⁶ <https://www.unccd.int/our-work/flagship-initiatives/riyadh-global-drought-resilience-partnership>

⁷ Per the Terms of Reference.

- Section 1 sets the scene by providing background information on the purpose and rationale for the CBA, outlining key objectives from the Terms of Reference, and defining the scope across the UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD.
- Section 2 details how the analysis was conducted, summarising the main evidence streams used, setting working definitions of “cost” and “benefit,” and noting limitations that affect interpretation.
- Section 3 covers to the costs of participation, anchored in verified 2025-price benchmarks (under UNFCCC SB62/COP30) and past delegation sizes to estimate gross economic costs. Consideration is given for distinguishing external partner offsets from domestic budget outlays and data gaps under UNCBD and UNCCD events.
- Section 4 speaks to the benefits of participation, reflecting monetised results (e.g., recent project funding under multilateral climate funds) alongside non-monetised gains (e.g., policy influence, capacity, networks and visibility), and closes with measurement gaps.
- Section 5 translates the findings into actionable recommendations covering a professional negotiators’ group, right-sizing and role clarity, external network engagement, resource mobilisation tracks, political leader leverage, delegation selection and retention, a cross-government diplomacy task force, a year-round capacity program, and a single Party-driven strategy across all three Conventions.
- Section 6 lists references, including academic publications and Party reports.
- Annexes provide supporting material, including a list of stakeholders consulted, list of international treaties under the Ministry of Climate Change, an overview of UNFCCC Party negotiation groups, and presentation slides presented to the NAB for endorsement in late October 2025.

2. Methodology and Approach

This assessment uses a mixed methods design to capture the full pathway from participation inputs to results across all three Rio Conventions. This approach includes:

- Bottom-up cost accounting for Party-driven activities across governing-body meetings, intersessionals, coalition coordination, public diplomacy (e.g., side events, pavilions, bilaterals, targeted media) and post-session follow through.
- Benefits framework that distinguishes monetised (e.g., finance mobilised, partnerships formalised) and non-monetised gains (e.g., policy influence, capacity, networks).

Evidence is triangulated from official Vanuatu reports and stakeholder inputs, regional coordination summaries, and peer-reviewed literature and datasets. This includes newly released attendee-level records for UNFCCC meetings (1991–2023)⁸ that enable more precise mapping of participation patterns, while recent research on procedural justice and side-event dynamics informs how delegation capacity and outreach relate to influence and inclusivity. The following subsections provide a summary of the evidence base, working definitions of cost and benefits, and data limitations faced in assessing participation costs and benefits.

2.1 Evidence Base

This CBA draws on three complementary evidence streams that collectively make participation activities and results observable across all three Rio Conventions. First, official reports from both the national government (e.g., event summary reports, intersessional briefs) and negotiating groups (e.g., AOSIS, PSIDS) provide details on outcomes and progress during negotiations, caucusing, side events, bilaterals, and submissions. For example, One CROP reports provide details on the region’s thematic work, training support, and pavilion diplomacy that shape year-round workloads and outcomes for many delegates.

Second, peer-reviewed research informs how participation can translate into access and influence.⁹ Recent work on procedural justice¹⁰ shows how small delegations face structural disadvantages in highly technical negotiations, informing assumptions about minimum coverage and the risks of negotiation by exhaustion.¹¹ Research that a strong link between income and delegation size,¹² including for multilateral negotiations beyond climate change¹³ Complementary analyses use side-

⁸ Blinova, D., Emuru, R., and Bagozzi, B. (2024). *Individual attendance data for over 30 years of international climate change talks*. Scientific Data, 11:1134.

⁹ Richards, M. (2001). *A Review of the effectiveness of developing country participation in the climate change convention negotiations*. Overseas Development Institute, Working Paper.

¹⁰ Klock, C., Baatz, C., and Wendler, N. (2025). *Procedural justice and (in)equitable participation in climate negotiations*. UCL Open: Environment, (7)02.

¹¹ Martinez, et al (2019). *Delegation size and equity in climate negotiations, an exploration of key issues*. Carbon Management, 10:4, 431-435.

¹² Kaya, A. and Schofield, L. (2020). *Which countries send more delegates to climate change conferences? Analysis of UNFCCC COPs, 1995-2015*. Foreign Policy Analysis, Vol. 16, Issue 3, 478–491.

¹³ Onderco, M. (2021) *Variation in delegation size in multilateral diplomacy*. Br J Politics Int Relat. 2019;21(2):421–38. Vlček, V. (2021). *How many and why? Size variation of national delegations to plenary meetings of international organisations*. Czech Journal of International Relations, 56(1), 7-33.

event and interest group data to show how informal spaces mirror and shape formal agendas, evidence that is used to treat side events and pavilions as part of influence pathways rather than as peripheral activities.¹⁴ Attendee-level datasets help reconstruct all UNFCCC rosters from 1991–2023, with variables such as affiliation, role and gender. This allows benchmarking of delegation size/composition, caucus coverage and the rooms/spaces covered that matter for influence.

Additional research suggests that under-representation at the individual country level is mitigated by coalitions, with many countries not typically negotiating as individual countries, but through negotiation groups.¹⁵ Coalitions can increase negotiation capacity and bargaining power and are therefore particularly relevant for countries with smaller delegations. However, coalitions represent compromise positions, which may be relatively far away from the preferences of individual coalition members. In addition, agreeing on those compromise positions again requires negotiation and coordination, and therefore resources and capacity, which vary between coalition members. The same inequalities that characterise the overall climate negotiations are also found within coalitions.¹⁶

Third, stakeholder consultations held in-person or virtually between September and October 2025. Approximately 50 consultations were facilitated with representatives from government (e.g., MoCC, MFEM, MoH, MALFB), civil society (e.g., VANGO, VCAN, VCC, STC), private sector (e.g., VCCI, VBRC, NBV), CROP agencies (e.g., SPC, SPREP, PIFS), UN agencies (e.g., UNDP, FAO, IOM, UNICEF, WHO), multilateral development banks (e.g., ADB), bilateral partners (e.g., high commissions of Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom), and statutory bodies (e.g., RBV, NGEF). These consultations included individual key informant interviews, focus group discussions, technical working group meetings, and participatory workshops with stakeholders.

2.2 Defining Costs and Benefits

Costs are defined as the economic resources used to enable Vanuatu's Party-driven participation before, during and after governing-body meetings across the UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD. Within the cost boundary, we include direct outlays (e.g., international and in-country travel, per diems, visas/insurance, registration where applicable, ICT/connectivity, translation/printing, and pavilion/side-event expenses) and attributable staff/consultant time for preparation, in-session coverage (e.g., caucus coordination, bilaterals) and immediate follow-up (e.g., submissions, briefings, partner engagement). Where external partners cover items such as travel or pavilion hosting, we record the gross economic cost (for comparability) and the net fiscal cost to government (to inform budgeting). Items excluded from quantification are purely domestic implementation expenditures without a credible link to an international participation output, and independent observer activities not aligned to Vanuatu's Party positions.

Benefits are defined as the results reasonably linked to Vanuatu's Party-driven participation before, during and after governing-body meetings across the UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD. Monetised

¹⁴ Xie, et al (2025). *Tracing inclusivity at UNFCCC conferences through side events and interest group dynamics*. Nature Climate Change, Vol. 15, 270-278.

¹⁵ Dupont, C. (1996). *Negotiation as coalition building*. International Negotiation, 1(1), 47-67. Klock, C., Baatz, C., and Wendler, N. (2025). *Procedural justice and (in)equitable participation in climate negotiations*. UCL Open: Environment, (7)02.

¹⁶ Ibid.

benefits, such as finance mobilised or de-risked (grants, technical-assistance packages, readiness support, or co-financing opportunities attributable to meetings, side events, submissions or caucus strategies) are distinguished from non-monetised benefits, such as policy influence (e.g., text secured, agenda items advanced, roles in constituted/working bodies), institutional capacity (e.g., skills, templates, coordination routines) and diplomatic/network gains (e.g., access to decision-makers, coalition positioning, visibility). Evidence for monetised benefits prioritises signed instruments and funder confirmations, and evidence for non-monetised benefits draws on documented outputs (e.g., rooms covered, speaking roles, side-event objectives and attendance, media mentions) and is interpreted considering empirical research on participation equity and the agenda shaping role of side events.

Attribution follows a conservative contribution logic. We link benefits to Vanuatu's participation when a plausible chain connects inputs (e.g., time, spend) to outputs (e.g., coverage, submissions, side events, bilaterals) and then to outcomes (e.g., text change, partnerships, funding decisions), triangulated across national/regional reports, partner documents and, where appropriate, comparative participation data.

2.3 Data Limitations

This assessment is constrained by the availability, quality and consistency of underlying data. Stakeholder consultation notes acknowledge that systematic tracking of participation costs is incomplete, especially for items like in-kind support, per-diem variance, and post-session follow-up time. As a result, there is reliance on conservative estimates and proxies where detailed records were not available. In biodiversity reporting, national systems to organise and share environmental information remain a work in progress, with gaps in mainstreaming and practical application across agencies. These conditions limit the precision of benefits attribution and cross-Convention comparability.

Participation and outcome data are uneven across modalities and years. The pandemic-era shift to virtual/hybrid formats changed access and engagement dynamics for small delegations, and some sessions were not streamed, affecting both participation opportunities and the evidence base we can draw on for those years. In addition, our quantitative reference on UNFCCC participation is an attendee-level dataset derived from official lists. This data measures presence rather than influence and does not aggregate effects at the organisation or coalition level, which can limit interpretability for assessing outcomes.

Attribution is inherently challenging in multilateral diplomacy. Negotiation outcomes are collective and path-dependent, with long lags between inputs (e.g., interventions, submissions, coalition work) and measurable benefits (e.g., finance mobilised, programme access, policy leverage). For example, analyses of COPs document procedural barriers (e.g., compressed agendas, late-night sessions, and negotiation by exhaustion) that can dilute individual small-delegation influence despite presence or effort. Evidence on observer forums and side events similarly cautions that visibility does not equate to decision influence, which affects how we interpret non-monetised networking and advocacy benefits.

Convention-specific evidence gaps also impact this assessment. Under the UNCBD many indicators lack baseline data or rely on qualitative assessments. Additionally, reporting quality varies across community-level submissions and storage/archival practices are inconsistent, both factors that constrain robust time-series analysis. Under the UNCCD, evaluations highlight that participation by civil society is important, but funding is largely reliant on voluntary contributions and a narrow donor base, which can affect representativeness and continuity of inputs into the intergovernmental process.

Lastly, this CBA focuses on a relatively limited period between 2021–early 2025. Decisions and initiatives agreed late in this window (e.g., new programmes or workplans) may only yield benefits beyond the observation period. Where practicable, these limitations are mitigated by triangulating across official reports, peer-reviewed studies, and stakeholder testimony to document assumptions and flag results that are indicative rather than definitive.

3. Costs of Participation

This section presents estimates of average delegation costs using observed historical expenses and funding patterns for participation in negotiations under the UNFCCC. Unfortunately, no comparable data for recent engagement under the UNCBD and UNCCD was made available for this study. However, estimates for cost of participation under the UNFCCC can be extrapolated to provide guidance for participation in other conventions. Data from the NAB Secretariat, development partners, CROP agencies, negotiating groups, UN agencies, peer-reviewed studies, and stakeholder consultations informed cost estimates and assumptions.

3.1 Estimated Costs under UNFCCC

Please note all figures presented below are benchmarks and not reconstructed historical spends. They are expressed in 2025 nominal Vatu, use COP30 budget assumptions (e.g., economy airfare, UN-rate DSA, mid-range accommodation), and exclude incidentals. Additionally, they also do not adjust for venue-specific DSA updates, exchange-rate/airfare volatility, itinerary differences, or side-event hosting costs. As such, the figures provide a consistent like-for-like yardstick to compare years and size scenarios. Finally, they represent gross economic cost across all funders. Actual government of Vanuatu cash outlays are typically far lower because most seats are financed by partners and UN participation support.

Tables 1 and 2 below provide per-delegate budget benchmarks that can be used to scale total costs by delegation size. For SB62 (held in Bonn, Germany in June 2025) the benchmark is approximately VUV 1.6m for 15 nights (technical dates only) and VUV 2m for 19 nights (preparatory and technical dates). For COP30, current cost estimates reported are approximately VUV 1.9m to 2.1m for the same 15-to-19-day period. These figures include roundtrip airfare, accommodation, and daily subsistence allowance (DSA), but do not account for ex-ante imprests or ex-post reimbursements and are therefore conservative estimates.

Table 1: Estimated budget per delegate to attend UNFCCC SB62 per NAB Secretariat (VUV)¹⁷

	Technical Meeting Dates			Technical Meeting Dates (including Preparatory Meeting Dates)		
Cost	Unit Cost (VUV)	Units	Total (VUV)	Unit Cost (VUV)	Units	Total (VUV)
Roundtrip Airfare (economy)	439,200	1	439,200	439,200	1	439,200
DSA (per PSSM rate)	40,000	15	600,000	40,000	19	760,000
Accommodation (estimate)	40,000	15	600,000	40,000	19	760,000
Incidentals (e.g., visas) (for imprest)	Depends on individual delegate			Depends on individual delegate		
Sub-Total (VUV)	1,639,200			1,959,200		

¹⁷ Estimated budget figures for SB62 provided by NAB Secretariat as example to establish recent benchmark data.

Table 2: Estimated budget per delegate to attend UNFCCC COP30 per stakeholder consultations (VUV)¹⁸

	Technical Meeting Dates			Technical Meeting Dates (including Preparatory Meeting Dates)		
Cost	Unit Cost (VUV)	Units	Total (VUV)	Unit Cost (VUV)	Units	Total (VUV)
Roundtrip Airfare (economy)	550,000	1	550,000	550,000	1	550,000
DSA (per PSSM rate)	40,000	15	600,000	40,000	19	760,000
Accommodation (estimate)	50,000	15	750,000	50,000	19	950,000
Incidentals (e.g., visas) (for imprest)	Depends on individual delegate			Depends on individual delegate		
Sub-Total (VUV)	1,900,000			2,100,000		

Figure 1: Estimated budget per delegate as a percentage of overall costs to attend UNFCCC COP30 per stakeholder consultations (VUV)

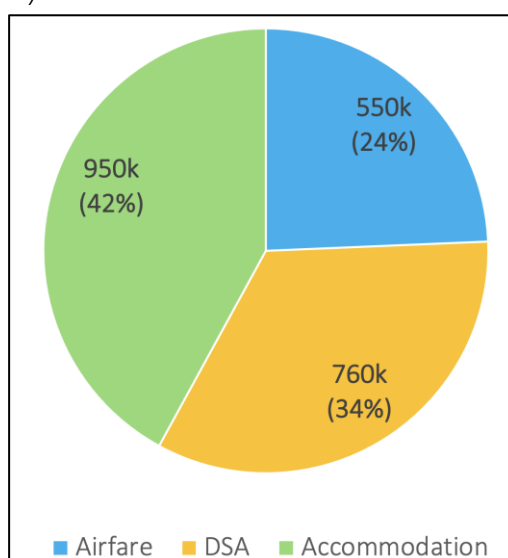


Figure 1 below shows that accommodation is the largest cost centre, representing nearly double the cost of roundtrip airfare. Applying these benchmarks to the observed SB delegation sizes from 2015 to 2024 (Table 3) yields an estimate of gross economic cost ranges per SB and COP. Please note that actual government net fiscal outlays are significantly lower as most seats are externally funded (Table 6).

Table 3: Vanuatu delegation size for UNFCCC COPs from 2015 to 2024 (in-person modality only) per Klock et al (2025) and UNFCCC

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024	2015-24
COP	COP21	COP22	COP23	COP24	COP25	COP26	COP27	COP28	COP29	Average

¹⁸ Estimated budget figures for COP30 provided by stakeholders during consultations.

Total	31	19	39	23	18	3	50	51	31	33
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Table 4: Vanuatu delegation size for UNFCCC SBs and COPs from 2019 to 2025 (in-person and virtual modalities) per UNFCCC¹⁹ and NAB Secretariat

Year	2019		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025
Event	SB50	COP25	SB52 SB54	COP26	SB56	COP27	SB58	COP28	SB 60	COP29	SB62
In-person	4	18	16	3	9	50	11	51	11	31	11
Virtual				62			5	1	1		
Total	4	18	16	65	9	50	16	52	12	31	11

Table 5 applies the COP30 per-delegate budget estimate as a common benchmark to historical COP delegation sizes to show the minimum gross economic cost of attendance if every delegate were self-funded. Using VUV 1.9m per delegate for the technical meeting dates only (15 days) and VUV 2.1m per delegate when preparatory dates are included (19 days), in-person participation for nine COPs from 2015 to 2024 equals approximately VUV 504m and VUV 557m, respectively. Assuming an average COP delegation of 33 people, the per-COP planning envelope at 2025 prices can be estimated at approximately VUV 63m to VUV 69m per delegation.

Table 5: Estimated delegation costs for attending UNFCCC COPs (inclusive and exclusive of preparatory meeting dates) from 2015 to 2024 (VUV, 2025 figures).

COP (Year)	Total Delegation Size	Estimated Delegation Cost (Only Technical Mtg. Dates)	Estimated Delegation Cost (Incl. Preparatory Mtg. Dates)
COP 21 (2015)	31	VUV 58,900,000	VUV 65,100,000
COP 22 (2016)	19	VUV 36,100,000	VUV 39,900,000
COP 23 (2017)	39	VUV 74,100,000	VUV 81,900,000
COP 24 (2018)	23	VUV 43,700,000	VUV 48,300,000
COP 25 (2019)	18	VUV 34,200,000	VUV 37,800,000
COP 26 (2021)	3	VUV 5,700,000	VUV 6,300,000
COP 27 (2022)	50	VUV 95,000,000	VUV 105,000,000
COP 28 (2023)	51	VUV 96,900,000	VUV 107,100,000
COP 29 (2024)	31	VUV 58,900,000	VUV 65,100,000

¹⁹ <https://unfccc.int/documents>. Data on confirmed attendance limited to availability of official records provided by UNFCCC. Figures differ from list of nominated delegates approved by the NAB each year.

Total (past 9 COPs)	265	VUV 503,500,000	VUV 556,500,000
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Figure 2: Estimated delegation costs for attending UNFCCC COPs (inclusive and exclusive of preparatory meeting dates) from 2015 to 2024 (VUV millions, 2025 figures).

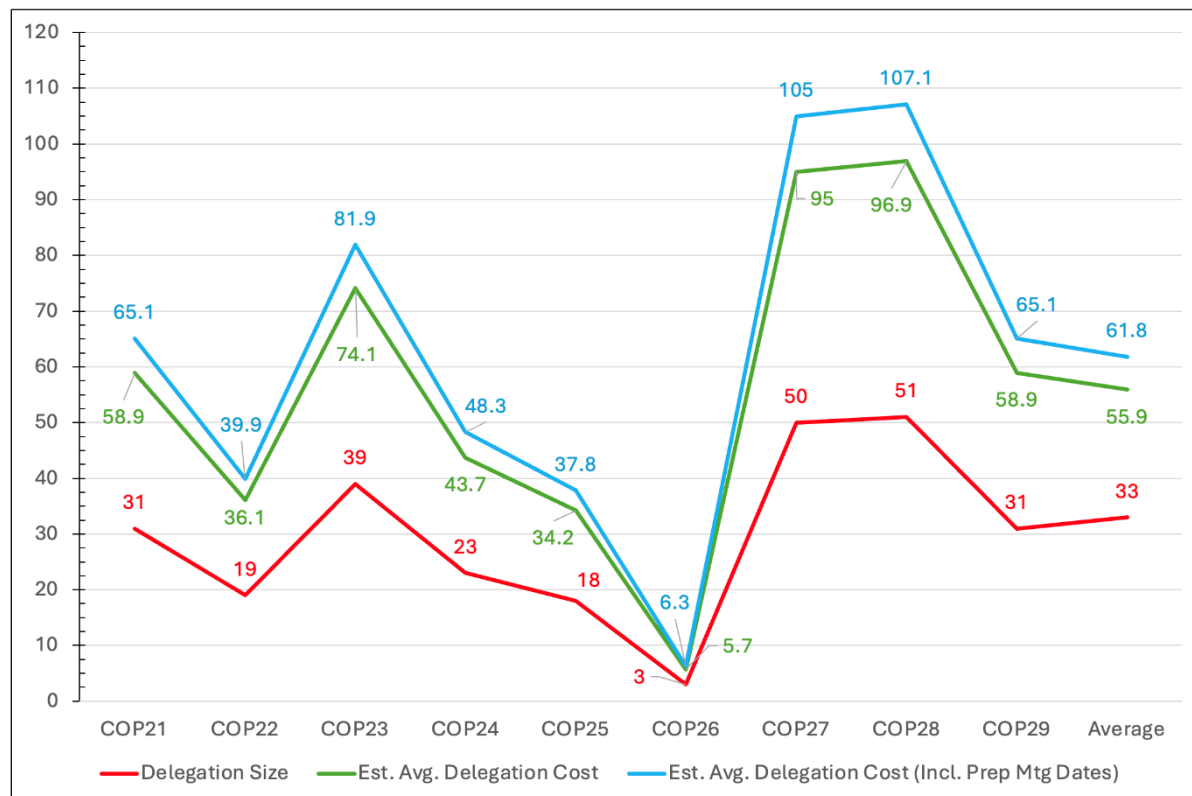
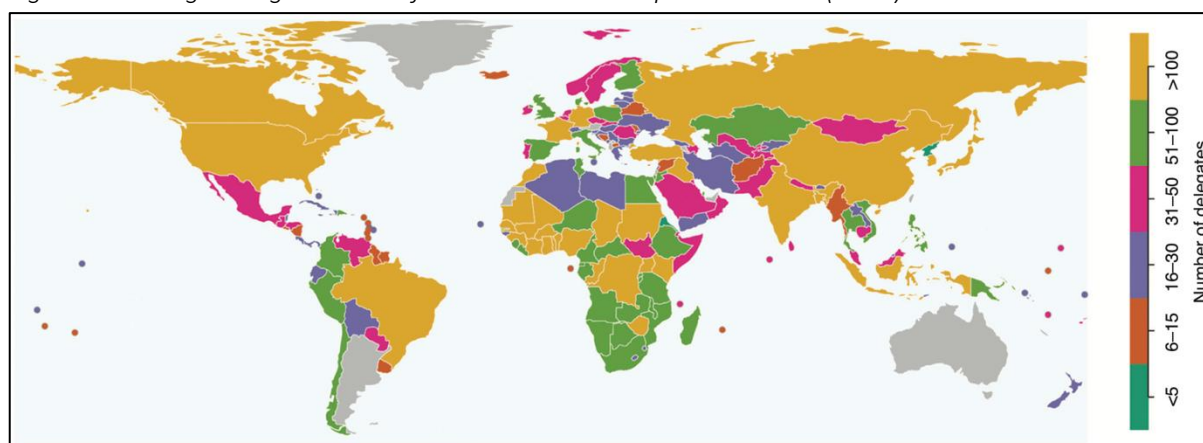
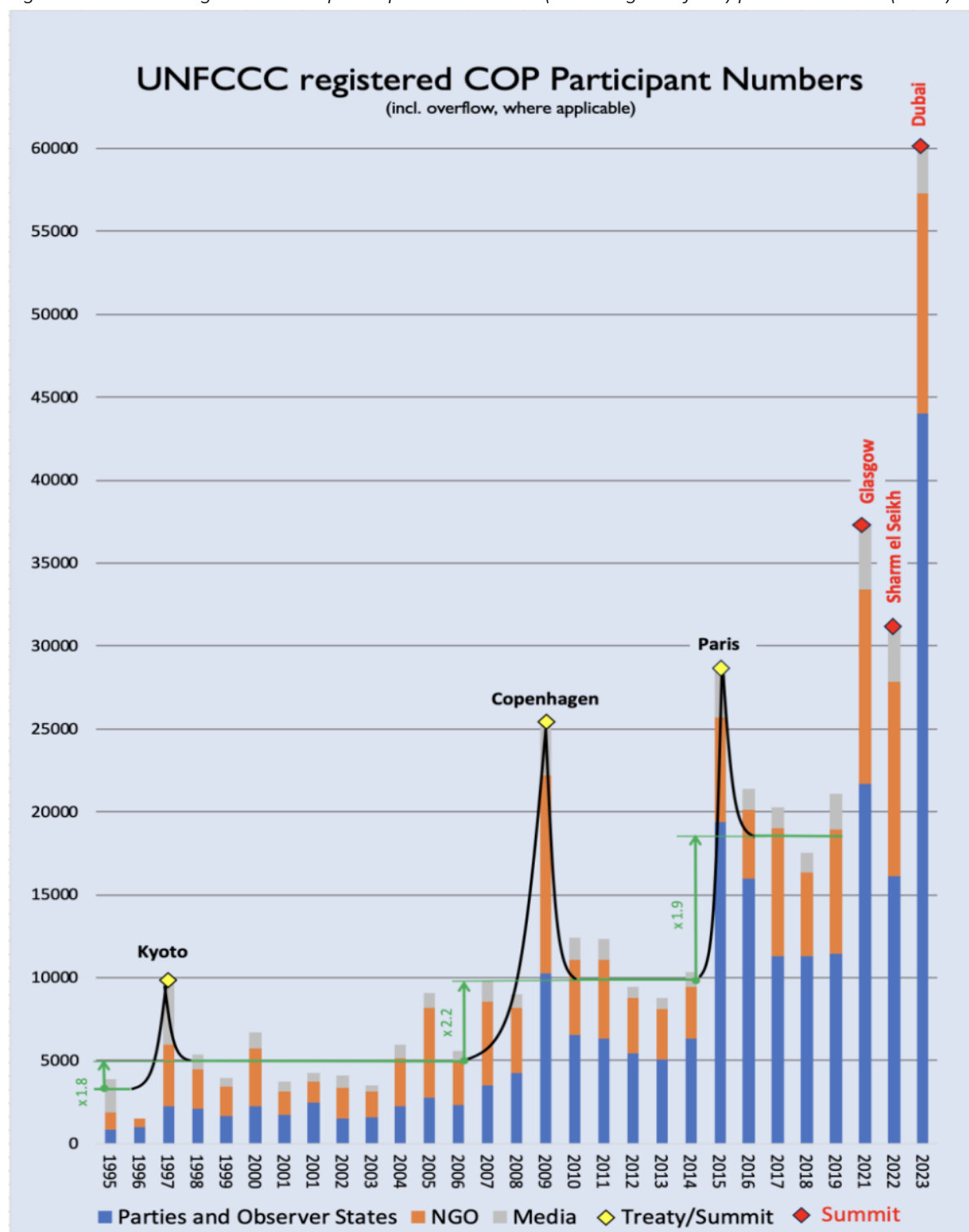


Figure 3: Average delegation sizes for COP21 to COP28 per Klock et al (2025)²⁰



²⁰ Klock, C., Baatz, C., and Wendler, N. (2025). *Procedural justice and (in)equitable participation in climate negotiations*. UCL Open: Environment, (7)02.

Figure 4: UNFCCC registered COP participation numbers (including overflow) per Muller et al (2024)²¹



3.2 External Partners Offsets

²¹ Benito et al (2024). *Quo Vadis COP? Future arrangements for intergovernmental meetings under the UNFCCC – Settled and Fit for Purpose.*

Data provided by the NAB Secretariat and stakeholder consultations reveal that the national government allocates domestic budget resources for only a handful of senior officials to attend international negotiations each year. Instead, significant technical and financial support is received from external sources (e.g., multilateral, bilateral, civil society, philanthropic, academia, and projects budget). UN participation trust funds (and similar mechanisms under other conventions) also finance travel and subsistence for eligible Party delegates when resources permit. As a result, the government's net fiscal outlay is typically a small fraction of the total economic cost of attendance.

Table 6 provides a list of sources of funding that have supported Vanuatu's delegation to UNFCCC COP the past two years, reflecting a diverse mix of external partners. Multilateral and regional mechanisms (e.g., COP/SIDS Presidency funds, UNFCCC support, PIFS, SPREP, SPC, UNCDF, GGGI, MSG) routinely underwrite airfares and subsistence, often tied to specific tracks (e.g., transparency, gender, youth). Bilateral partners (e.g., Australia, China, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, United Kingdom) provide travel and on-ground support, sometimes linked to programmatic cooperation. Civil-society and philanthropic actors (e.g., ActionAid, Save the Children, WEDO, ClimateWorks Foundation, FILE) provide targeted support for youth and women technical experts, and project windows (e.g., BTR, CBIT, FNC, Van-Kirap, ICAT, regional collaboration/learning initiatives) finance participation connected to facilitating side events and capacity building activities. Academic institutions (e.g., ANU, Monash, UNSW, Yale) appears as a niche channel for fellowships or research-linked support, and a minority of delegates report self-sponsoring.

Table 6: Examples of external sources of finance for Vanuatu UNFCCC COP delegation members in 2023 and 2024 per NAB Secretariat and stakeholder consultations

Sector	Source of Finance (Self-Reported)	Delegates Supported in 2023/24 ²²
Multilateral	Climate Youth Negotiator Programme (CYNP)	2
	Commonwealth	1
	COP Presidency Funding	1
	Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)	1
	International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)	1
	Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)	4
	Pacific Community (SPC)	1
	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)	3
	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	5
	SIDS Presidency Funding	4
	United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)	1

²² Please note specific amounts of funding support provided by each organization differs by delegate, with some receiving support from multiple sources of finance (e.g., bilateral partner, project funding, and domestic budget resources).

	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	8
	United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)	2
Bilateral	Government of Australia	1
	Government of China	4
	Government of New Zealand	1
Civil Society	ActionAid	4
	Save the Children	3
	Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO)	1
Philanthropic	Climate Emergency Collaboration Group (CECG) via the Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC)	4
	ClimateWorks Foundation via the Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC)	3
	Foundation for International Law for the Environment (FILE) via the International Court of Justice (ICJ) initiative	1
Project Funding	Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) and Fourth National Communication (FNC) Project	1
	FAO Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Project	1
	GCF Van-Kirap Project	15
	Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) Project	1
	Pacific Climate Change Collaboration, Influencing and Learning (PACCIL) Project via the Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN)	3
	Strengthening Loss and Damage Response Capacity in the Global South (STRENGTH) Project	1
Academia	Harding Fund	1
	University of New South Wales	2
Domestic Budget	Parliamentary Appropriations (<i>NPP, agency budgets</i>)	16
Other	Self-Sponsored	1

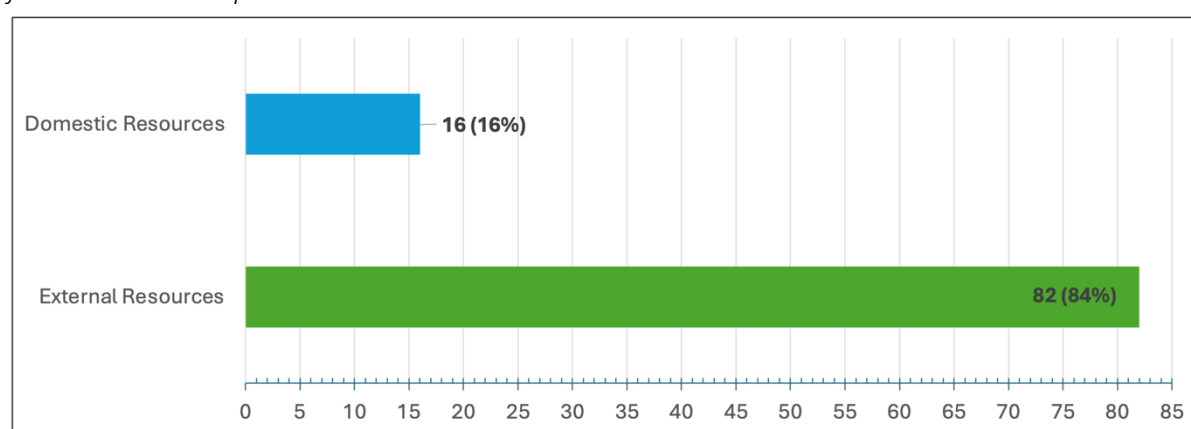
3.3 Government Contributions

Data provided by the NAB Secretariat with self-reported sources of funding for delegates attending UNFCCC COP28 (2023) and COP 29 (2024) show only one recurring New Policy Proposal (NPP) of VUV 5m for the Minister for Climate Change to attend. Other government officials, including directors and technical officers, have also utilised domestic budget resources to support their participation. However, these domestic contributions usually only cover a portion of total costs and are paired with financial support from external partners or donor projects.

Governmental agencies that have used domestic budget resources to at least partially fund delegate participation during this period includes:

- Prime Minister’s Office
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (Department of Finance and Treasury)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of Foreign Affairs, New York Mission)
- Ministry of Climate Change (Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department, Department of Energy, Department of Environment, Department of Climate Change)
- Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (Department of Urban Affairs and Planning)
- Ministry of Oceans (Vanuatu Fisheries Department)

Figure 5: Estimate of sources of finance (domestic vs. external) for Vanuatu COP delegation members from 2023 to 2024 per NAB Secretariat and stakeholder consultations



3.4 Key Findings

Costs of participation for Vanuatu’s delegations are heavily reliant on external partners, shaping public finances, negotiating room coverage, and accountability. In practice, most delegate costs are covered by entities other than the government of Vanuatu, with net cash exposure representing only a fraction of total economic costs. As gross resource use is not readily tracked and communicated regularly, costs of participation for international negotiations may misunderstood as overly costly or burdensome. Yet this discretionary, session-by-session funding landscape can also produce last-minute gaps, uneven coverage of priority rooms (e.g., when support is tied to narrow mandates), and a significant administrative burden to align sponsors with Party roles. These dynamics make it essential to keep selection Party-driven, with clear guardrails (e.g., role descriptions, funding disclosures, and event reporting) to ensure externally funded delegates advance Vanuatu’s strategy rather than sponsor agendas.

3.5 Data Gaps

In contrast to robust record keeping for recent engagements under the UNFCCC, no comparable quantitative cost records or delegation lists were provided for UNCBD and UNCCD during this window. Available biodiversity and land reports note data, finance and logistics constraints that likely shape participation but do not include itemised cost series needed for reliable aggregation. UNCCD reporting

also highlights inadequate, untimely and unpredictable assistance during the period reviewed, underlining why consistent cost capture is difficult. As the MoCC (including the NAB Sec and DEPC) and other focal points (e.g., MoFA) does not utilise standard cost tracking across all conventions, this CBA assumes broadly similar unit-cost structures for like-for-like itineraries for participation under all three Rio conventions.

4. Benefits of Participation

This section summarises the value Vanuatu derives from sustained engagement across the Rio Conventions, grouping results into monetised (e.g., finance and formal partnerships) and non-monetised (e.g., policy influence, capacity, networks and visibility) benefits. Evidence comes from official reports and partner confirmations, regional coordination summaries documenting outcomes across priority themes (e.g., finance, loss and damage, adaptation, Article 6, transparency, gender), attendee-level datasets that make delegation presence and roles observable over time, and recent scholarship showing how side-events and coalition spaces help shape formal agendas. Please note that that influence is shared and not all visibility translates into decisions.

Therefore, where possible, quantified finance and partnership outcomes credibly linked to participation are presented under Section 4.1. Documented non-monetised gains (e.g., rooms covered and speaking roles on agenda items important to Vanuatu/PSIDS, caucus leadership and text contributions, targeted side-events and media that amplify priorities, and skills and coordination improvements within government) are presented under Section 4.2. Use of a conservative contribution lens and simple indicators to connect inputs (e.g., delegation time) to outputs (e.g., coverage, submissions, side-events, bilaterals) and outcomes (e.g., text shifts, agreements, funding decisions) is applied throughout the section, noting data limitations and coalition effects.

4.1 Monetised benefits

Participation yields direct, quantifiable benefits including subsidised or avoided financial outlays for delegate travel and logistic and access to significant pools of concessional finance (e.g., grants) that materially exceeds the costs of membership.

4.1.1 *External partners routinely underwrite a large share of Vanuatu's negotiations attendance.*

Government records for 2023–2024 show 84% of seats (82 of 98 delegates) financed by partners, with only 16% covered by domestic resources. Using the UNFCCC COP30 per-delegate benchmark (VUV 2.1m for technical and preparatory dates), a 50-person delegation implies a gross economic cost near VUV 105 m. If 84% of seats are externally funded, the avoided cash outlay for government is approximately VUV 88.2m (net VUV 16.8m before imprest/incidentals). These avoided costs are periodically reinforced by the UNFCCC Trust Fund for Participation, which covers travel and DSA for eligible Parties when resources permit.

4.1.2 *Party status unlocks multi-year investments in resilience*

As a signatory to these conventions, Vanuatu is eligible to access funding under various multilateral funds (e.g., GCF, GEF, Adaptation Fund). Under the GCF, three national projects now under implementation collectively account for USD 67.6m in GCF grants and USD 82.7 m in total project value for Vanuatu. These include *FP035: Climate Information Services for Resilience Development Planning in Vanuatu (Van-Kirap)* valued at USD 21.8m, *FP184: Vanuatu Community Based Resilience Project (VCCRP)* valued at USD 32.7m and *FP191: Enhancing Adaptation and Community Resilience by Improving Water Security in Vanuatu* valued at USD 28.3m). Complementary flows include the

Adaptation Fund’s planned investment of USD 7.13m for forest and landscape restoration. The active GEF portfolio includes successive investment in resilience programmes worth more than USD 100m over the past decade. These include *Vanuatu Coastal Adaptation Project (VCAP) - Phase I* valued at USD 51m, *VCAP - Phase II* valued at USD 63m, *Expanding Conservation Areas Reach and Effectiveness (ECARE)* valued at USD 8.4m, and *Barrier Removal to Achieve the National Energy Road Map Target of Vanuatu (BRANTV)* valued at USD 20.1m.

4.1.3 *Returns dwarf the annual cost of membership to the Rio Conventions*

Vanuatu’s indicative UNFCCC core-budget contribution for 2025 is EUR 334 (plus EUR 29 under the Kyoto Protocol scale), while its UNCBD core-budget assessment for 2025 is USD 183. UNCCD assessments for SIDS follow a similarly low scale. In practice, fees of a few hundred dollars USD secure eligibility for participation trust funds and access to the UNFCCC/Paris, GEF/GBF and Adaptation Fund finance windows that have already channelled tens of millions of dollars to Vanuatu.

4.2 Non-monetised benefits

Vanuatu’s sustained presence across the Rio Conventions also generates value that are material to national interests but not easily monetised.

4.2.1 *Policy-influence gains*

Policy-influence gains include coverage of contact groups and caucus diplomacy with AOSIS/PSIDS helping shape negotiating language, aligning red lines, and securing speaking roles on agenda items that matter to SIDS. Recent Pacific coordination reports document how this shared platform concentrates advocacy on priority thematic areas (e.g., finance, loss and damage, adaptation) and converts it into interventions and submissions over the year, reinforcing Vanuatu’s leverage within larger coalitions. Additionally, the UNFCCC’s inclusive platform and caucus structure (e.g., AOSIS, G77+ China) amplifies SIDS voices and observer expertise, providing access and influence pathways that are material even when they are not monetised.²³

4.2.2 *Access, visibility, and networks*

Benefits come from access, visibility and networks built through side events, the Pacific Delegation Office, and the Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion. These spaces provide meeting rooms, media reach and convening power that Vanuatu can deploy to spotlight national priorities, cultivate partners and keep issues on the agenda. Independent scholarship shows that side-event ecosystems mirror, and often shape, the formal agenda by linking actors and ideas that later surface in negotiating rooms. In practice, this means time invested in pavilions and curated events translates into agenda-setting influence even when formal floor time is scarce.

²³ Leal-Arcas, R., Alghamdi, A., and Alharethi, M. (2025). *Effectiveness of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement*. Connecticut Journal of International Law, Vol. 41, Issue 1.

4.2.3 Institutional capacity and readiness

Negotiators accumulate technical skill, document templates and cross-ministry routines that improve the quality and timeliness of Vanuatu's submissions, reporting and follow-through. These capabilities are essential for accessing multilateral finance windows and for defending text in fast-moving sessions. Comparative evidence highlights the procedural disadvantages small delegations face and indicates a 'sufficiency' threshold for equitable participation. Building and rotating a trained group of delegates helps Vanuatu overcome negotiation-by-exhaustion dynamics and maintain coverage across parallel rooms.

4.2.4 Participation quality and inclusivity outcomes beyond Convention outcomes

Under the UNCCD, an independent evaluation found that strengthened civil-society participation delivered non-financial gains such as improved visibility of vulnerable groups and better information flows into policy, illustrating how engagement can enhance the relevance and uptake of decisions. These are the types of results (e.g., greater voice, better evidence in the room, faster learning loops) that underpin long-term effectiveness even when they do not immediately convert to financial support.

4.3 Key Findings

4.3.1 External partners offset most direct costs of participation

Multilateral, regional, and bilateral partners provide finance for the bulk of participation costs. This includes UN trust fund participation support and shared Pacific facilities further reduce use of limited national financial resources. Fiscal exposure depends more on how many delegates require use of government funding than on airfare or DSA levels, underscoring the importance of proactive partner coordination and securing external finance early.

4.3.2 Monetised benefits already in the tens of millions of USD

Active Party status has translated into multi-year grant finance, including three GCF projects under implementation total of USD 82.7m in overall project value (USD 67.6m in GCF grants), the Adaptation Fund has approved USD 7.1m for forest and landscape restoration, and Vanuatu's active GEF/LDCF portfolio exceeds USD 30m in grants (over USD 200m with co-finance). UNCBD and UNCCD windows (e.g., GBF Fund) broaden eligibility for future biodiversity and land-related grants.

4.3.3 Large non-monetised gains that enable the money to flow

Regular presence delivers policy influence, access and networks that are hard to price but consequential. These include caucus coordination (AOSIS/PSIDS), speaking roles on priority agenda items, and side-event visibility that helps secure partners and keep SIDS issues in view. Participation also builds institutional capacity (e.g., templates, negotiating skills, cross-ministry routines) that improves submissions and follow-through, often prerequisites for unlocking finance.

4.3.4 Returns dwarf the cost of membership

Annual assessed contributions to remain a Party are modest (a few hundred EUR/USD), yet eligibility confers access to convention-linked trust funds and finance mechanisms that have already channelled tens of millions of USD to Vanuatu, plus recurring cash-equivalent offsets for delegate travel and logistical costs.

4.3.5 Exposure and data gaps to manage

Total economic cost scales with delegation size and days on the ground, while net fiscal exposure hinges on how many seats require domestic funding each year. Reliance on discretionary partner support can create coverage and timing risks. Quantified cost evidence is strong for UNFCCC but not yet available for UNCBD or UNCCD. There is a demonstrated need to establish simple, standard trackers across all three Conventions to allow fuller measurement of benefits relative to costs.

4.4 Data Gaps

Despite clear evidence of value, the benefits record remains patchy in places that matter for decision-making. For monetised benefits, documentation of participation offsets is incomplete. UN Trust Fund covered tickets/DSA and partner-financed seats are not consistently tracked by session, and there is no central register of funding letters, MoUs and confirmations that links each inflow to the participation event that enabled it. Pavilion/office in-kind support (e.g., meeting rooms, comms services) is rarely valued, so cash-equivalent savings are understated. Project finance tallies (GCF/GEF/AF/GBF) generally capture approvals, but they seldom record the intermediate participation outputs (e.g., submissions, bilaterals, coalition asks) that substantiated causality. Co-finance is sometimes double counted across portfolios, and CBD/UNCCD grant flows are not compiled alongside UNFCCC.

For non-monetised benefits, there is no systematic, cross-convention log of negotiation coverage and influence. Rooms covered, speaking roles, text proposals, caucus functions, and “wins” in decisions are inconsistently recorded. Side-event objectives, audience profiles and follow-up actions are not standardised. Media/visibility metrics (e.g., mentions, reach, briefings delivered) are often ad hoc. Capacity gains (e.g., training completed, briefs/templates reused, cross-ministry workflows) are not tracked with simple indicators, making it hard to show how participation improves readiness over time.

Attribution and comparability are further constrained by coalition dynamics and inconsistent data structures. Outputs are often joint (e.g., AOSIS/PSIDS), yet roles (e.g., primary/significant/supporting) are rarely tracked. Counterfactuals (e.g., what would likely have happened with lower coverage) are not routinely tested against regional comparators. Benefits can materialise with long lags that fall outside annual reporting cycles. Lastly, gaps in partner tracking (e.g., multiple funders per delegate), absence of DEPC-compiled series for UNCBD and UNCCD conventions, and price-level effects (e.g., inflation, exchange rates, venue-specific DSA, varying day counts) limit comparability across years.

5. Key Recommendations

Presented below are 15 key recommendations informed by stakeholder consultations²⁴ and literature review to strengthen engagement under the three Rio Conventions. This includes identification and long-term development of delegation members, strategic engagement with multilateral partners and networks outside of negotiations, targeted focus of delegate contributions by skill and background, reestablishment of an inclusive multi-sectoral coordination mechanism for climate diplomacy, and development of a single multilateral cross-Convention strategy.

Table 7: Summary of Key Recommendations

#	Recommendation
1	Establish a core multilateral negotiations team
2	Right-size delegations for priority thematic areas
3	Strengthen delegation selection and retention
4	Institutionalise year-round capacity building program
5	Engage with networks beyond negotiating rooms
6	Focus non-negotiator participation on resource mobilisation
7	Focus political leaders on diplomacy and public narratives
8	Request targeted support from technical partners
9	Re-establish cross-government coordination mechanism for multilateral diplomacy
10	Adopt a single, Party-driven multilateral strategy across all three Rio conventions
11	Centre ni-Vanuatu leadership, with external technical assistance in the background
12	Provide new and recurring domestic financing for negotiations and implementation
13	Adopt delegation quotas and enabling measures for under-represented groups (e.g., women, youth)
14	Develop standardised tracking tools for pre- and post-negotiation across all three Conventions
15	Strengthen national data systems to equip negotiators and political leaders

5.1 Establish a core multilateral negotiations team

Develop a small, skills-based cadre of around six primary negotiators (plus two to three alternates) who serve across all three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD) selected for negotiation competencies rather than seniority or sector expertise. This approach would align to common practice by many SIDS and other parties. Each negotiator should be room-agnostic, able to shift across thematic areas as needed (e.g., loss and damage, finance, adaptation, mitigation transparency). Negotiators

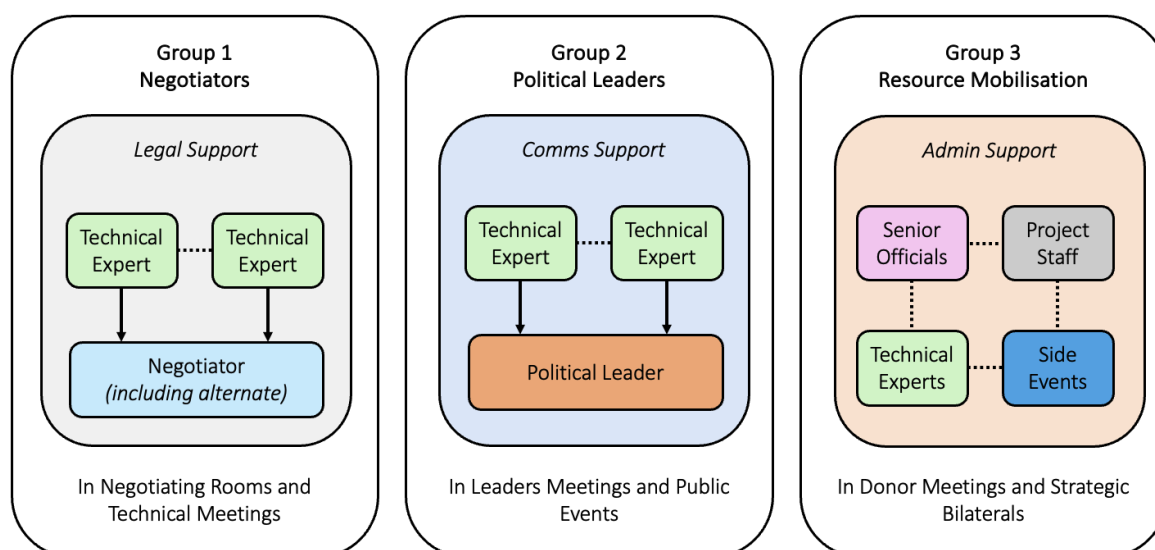
²⁴ This include stakeholder consultations for inception, validation, and NAB endorsement held between September and October 2025.

would be paired with technical experts (e.g., between one and two) that could prepare briefs, review proposed text language, and draft interventions and talking points.

5.2 Right-size delegations for priority thematic areas

As the delegation cannot engage meaningfully under every thematic area, negotiations should prioritise their time and effort on those areas where movement most affects us (e.g., loss and damage, finance, adaptation). For each thematic area, a lead negotiator and alternate should be identified. Negotiators would be given clear speaking mandates and develop plans for late-night and parallel sessions to ensure someone is always present. Targets for minimum coverage would help negotiators avoid exhaustion. If AOSIS or PSIDS teams are already providing strong coverage in a particular space, negotiators can shift to cover a demonstrated gap where Vanuatu can add value (e.g., another room / negotiating meeting, legal drafting huddles, facilitator discussions). Keep non-speaking officials out of negotiating rooms and focused on bilaterals, side events and media. Inside the negotiating rooms, only those with a speaking or text-defence role should be seated. Provide negotiators with a support team (e.g., technical experts) and facilitate short huddles between sessions to update positions and trade space. Measure effectiveness by tracking rooms covered, interventions delivered, text captured in conclusions/decisions, and issues successfully escalated through caucuses.

Figure 6: Example of delegation groupings by function



5.3 Strengthen delegation selection and retention

Delegate selection should be based on an individual's skills, contributions, and pre-committed outputs as opposed to inclusion by default due to seniority or institutional norms. Recruitment should be open (including beyond the public service) and guided by a clear competency framework. Each appointment would come with a ToR that articulates expected contributions. Every delegate should provide a conditional high-level plan that clearly demonstrates the value of their participation (e.g., thematic areas to cover, list of bilaterals and donor meetings to hold, side-events scheduled, text / submissions to draft, press events to hold). The pool of junior delegates should be retained and grown by encouraging mentoring between junior and senior members and establishing clear pathways to

advancing in seniority. Efforts should be made to ensure gender balance, youth and provincial representation, and identification of alternate delegates for each key thematic area.

5.4 Institutionalise year-round capacity building program

Establish a permanent, year-round cross-Convention training and capacity building program. This program should include recurring domestic budget support and led by the NAB Secretariat with support from line-ministries. Key capacity building activities would include mock contact groups, pre-session bootcamps, short secondments (where resources allow) to AOSIS / PSIDS coordination teams or constituted bodies, and invitations to external technical partners to run training clinics. Knowledge management products and training materials should be kept in a shared repository (e.g., NAB Portal, DoCC website) to support continuity in approach.

A practical curriculum should be delivered around four key areas, including:

1. Rules and process under the various conventions (e.g., UNFCCC/CMA/SBSTA/SBI, UNCBD/GBF targets and monitoring, and UNCCD LDN/drought governance) including caucus mechanics, drafting-room etiquette, and administrative procedures.
2. Substance per thematic area (e.g., finance, loss and damage, adaptation, Just Transition, GBF implementation, LDN)
3. Technical skill sets, including text drafting, legal redlining, developing speaking notes, data analysis, and media and stakeholder engagement.
4. Resource mobilisation (e.g., pitching project concept notes, funding agreements, partnership MOUs).

5.5 Engage with networks beyond negotiating rooms

Treat caucuses and political groupings as force multipliers and manage them deliberately. Engage key networks (e.g., AOSIS, PSIDS, G77+China, High Ambition Coalition, Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group, Climate and Development Ministerial (C&DM)) with a clear mandate to attend presessionals, provide inputs to group positions, and secure speaking slots and joint statements. The NAB Secretariat could act as the coordinating body. These networks could help open doors for bilaterals and to push coordinated text across rooms and thematic areas where our delegation's presence is low.

5.6 Focus non-negotiator participation on resource mobilisation

Focus all non-negotiators (e.g., senior officials, project-based staff, side event presenters, and technical experts) on resource mobilisation (e.g., donor commitments, funding agreements, strategic partnerships, etc.) in parallel to efforts inside negotiating rooms. Include preparation of a project pipeline with concept notes (e.g., one-page summary with budget envelope and implementation model) mapped to specific windows (e.g., GCF readiness/PPFs, GBF Fund, GEF, AF, MDB trust funds, philanthropic funds, bilateral programs) to share with donors and partners. Facilitation of bilaterals and donor roundtables could be supported through AOSIS and PSIDS networks and the Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion / Pacific Delegation Office. Each non-negotiator could be assigned a list of priority partners and daily/weekly meeting quotas. Progress could be tracked using a simple template to log meetings,

outcomes/leads, and follow-up actions. Success could be measured by concrete outputs (e.g., number and value of donor support agreements, MoUs, and post-COP submissions).

5.7 Focus political leaders on diplomacy and public narratives

Encourage political leaders (e.g., ministers) to shape public narratives and champion national/PSIDS positions with other leaders. Focus should be on big-picture outcomes and paradigm shifts rather than line-by-line text. Leaders could be briefed with speaking points and specific asks (e.g., NCQG access and delivery, loss and damage implementation modalities, just transition support) prior to speaking engagements. Examples of key actions include convening leader roundtables, brokering compromises on positions between parties, and signalling red lines publicly when helpful. High-leverage forums (e.g., AOSIS, V20, C&DM) and major events should be targeted, allowing political leaders to avoid technical drafting exercises on legal text.

5.8 Request targeted support from technical partners

Shift from the current practice of receiving passive, supply-driven technical support to clear, time-bound requests for targeted data or information. Key technical partners (e.g., One CROP, regional programs, UN agencies, MDBs, universities, CSOs, pro bono legal networks) should be mapped by area of expertise and modality of support to inform strategic engagement. Examples could include legal review of draft text, development of specific data sets, and development of thematic talking points. Non-confidential outputs should be shared amongst the delegation for use across negotiating rooms, bilaterals meetings, and public media events.

5.9 Re-establish cross-government coordination mechanism for multilateral diplomacy

Consideration for re-establishing the Climate Diplomacy Task Force that convened ministries and non-government stakeholders to act as the primary focal point and coordination mechanism for all multilateral diplomacy activities related to climate resilience (e.g., UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD, ICAO, IMO, global plastics treaty, UNCLOS, ecocide initiatives, ICJ, ICC, V20, C&DM, etc.). Could include existing senior officials from central agencies (e.g., foreign affairs, climate change, finance), sector agencies (e.g., environment, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, infrastructure, energy, trade, CAAV), members from the core delegation team, and non-government stakeholders (e.g., civil society, private sector, academia)

5.10 Adopt a single, Party-driven multilateral strategy across all three Rio Conventions

Define one whole-of-government strategy that sets priorities and red lines across UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD negotiations. The strategy should make AOSIS / SPIDS coordination the default pathway for advancing country positions and ensure alignment to national policy frameworks. Additionally, the strategy should inform delegation selection, delegation roles, and side-event messaging so technical partners support (but do not set) Vanuatu's positions. Anchor the strategy in near-term workstreams (UNFCCC and NCQG implementation, UNCBD and GBF delivery, UNCCD and drought resilience framework) and in Pacific caucus timetables. Evidence shows coalitions can amplify small-state

influence when interventions are consistent across rooms and forums. This single strategy ensures every delegate, partner, and platform engaged with across the Rio Conventions is advancing the same set of coordinated outcomes and public messaging.

5.11 Centre ni-Vanuatu leadership, with external technical assistance in the background

Commit to ni-Vanuatu delegates driving the process while positioning external technical assistance as backend support. Practically, this means local leads set strategy, deliver interventions and develop submissions. External technical assistance would focus on preparing briefs, legal redlines, data analysis and talking points, and briefs before (and debriefs after) sessions. This could include pairing external technical assistants with ni-Vanuatu counterparts, requiring a simple handover plan (e.g., templates, checklists, contacts), and encourage working in tandem as opposed to in parallel. Limited external technical assistant presence in negotiating rooms (except for short, pre-cleared legal huddles), and prioritise secondments, fellowships and AOSIS/PSIDS placements that build local depth. Track progress with concrete metrics (e.g., ≥80% of speaking roles delivered by ni-Vanuatu, 100% of submissions with a local lead author, TA outputs archived as reusable templates, and an annual reduction in consultant days). Resource this shift with targeted training (Recommendation 5.9), a small legal backstop roster, and clear budget ratios that favour local capacity over external delivery to ensure expertise remains with Vanuatu, not with external technical assistants or development partners.

5.12 Provide new and recurring domestic financing for negotiations and implementation

Create a dedicated, recurring budget line (e.g., under the NAB Sec or MoCC) to guarantee minimum Party coverage at SB sessions and COP each year. Design the budget to separate gross economic cost from net fiscal outlay, continuing to maximise partner offsets while de-risking dependence with a guaranteed floor (e.g., core seats for 6 negotiators per major session) and a small contingency to underwrite 1–2 critical slots if external support falls through. Include modest allocations for targeted expert inputs (e.g., legal backstops) and concept note preparation so fundraising and implementation keep pace with negotiations. Manage funds within a simple multi-year envelope with carry over to smooth session-to-session volatility, and tie disbursements to outputs (e.g., rooms covered, interventions delivered, submissions on time, LoIs/MoUs secured). Publish an annual participation ledger (seats funded by GoV vs partners, outputs achieved) to keep the process Party-driven, accountable and focused on turning international engagement into domestic benefit.

5.13 Adopt delegation quotas and enabling measures for under-represented groups

Commit to a minimum 25-50% women across the overall delegation and ensure at least one youth delegate with a speaking or drafting mandate at each SB and COP, with a pathway for youth to become future negotiators. Quotas must apply to roles, not just headcount. Reserve a proportion of room leads/alternates and side event principals for women and youth, and pair each with a mentor and a technical/legal backstop so participation is substantive, not symbolic. Build the pipeline year-round (e.g., targeted training, mock groups, secondments to AOSIS/PSIDS), and remove practical barriers via childcare or caregiver stipends, flexible travel/DSA rules, disability-inclusive arrangements, and a safeguarding/code-of-conduct with confidential reporting. Track and publish simple metrics (e.g., share

of women/youth by role, # interventions delivered, text insertions attributed) and make future seat offers contingent on delivery (e.g., interventions made, submissions filed), ensuring inclusion strengthens Vanuatu's negotiating performance.

5.14 Develop standardised tracking tools for pre- and post-negotiation across all three Conventions

Adopt a simple, uniform toolkit owned by the NAB Secretariat and used for UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD so every delegate logs the same core data before, during and after sessions. Examples could include a pre-session positions and calendar tracker (e.g., rooms, caucus deadlines, submission windows, side event slots, pre-booked bilaterals), roles and funding log (e.g., lead/alternate/speaker, partner offsets vs GoV cash), and a partner requests register (e.g., products, owners, due dates) to set expectations and resource needs. In-session, a one-page intervention sheet (e.g., issue, ask, counterproposal, outcome), a side event record (e.g., objective, audience, follow-up), and a bilateral tracker (e.g., offer/ask, next step, owner, date) can help capture outputs as they happen. Keep it simple to use and manage (e.g., shared repository with version control, Excel/Google Sheets to start, unique session IDs and common fields across conventions). Publish concise dashboards after each session (e.g., rooms covered vs plan, interventions, partner products delivered, financing outcomes) to improve attribution, reduce double counting, inform budgets, and make performance comparable across climate, biodiversity and land portfolios.

5.15 Strengthen national data systems to equip negotiators and political leaders

Utilise national data systems to turn domestic evidence into negotiation-ready resources. Under NAB Secretariat leadership (with VBoS and line ministries) designate a chief data focal point and sector data focal points to maintain shared, version-controlled datasets and one-page briefs for delegates. These could capture data on emissions and NDC trajectories, adaptation needs and costed pipelines, loss-and-damage analytics (e.g., PDNAs, sector losses), climate finance tracked by source/instrument, GBF biodiversity indicators, and UNCCD land/LDN and drought metrics. Formalise data sharing MoUs, simple privacy rules, and a common template so evidence flows from sectors to negotiators without delay. Performance could be measured by turnaround time, # of briefs used in interventions/bilaterals, and the share of funding/partnership outcomes that cite national data.

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Annex A: List of Stakeholder Consultations

The table below presents a list of stakeholders consulted with either in-person or virtually between September and October 2025. Meetings include individual key informant interviews, focus group discussions, technical working group meetings, and participatory workshops.

Table 8: List of Stakeholder Consultations by Sector and Organisation

Sector	#	Organisation
Government	1	Office of the DG, Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC DG)
	2	National Advisory Board on CCDRR Secretariat, Ministry of Climate Change (NAB Sec)
	3	Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Climate Change (DoCC)
	4	Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation, Ministry of Climate Change (DEPC)
	5	Department of Energy, Ministry of Climate Change (DoE)
	6	National Disaster Management Office, Ministry of Climate Change (NDMO)
	7	Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, Prime Minister's Office (DSPPAC)
	8	Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (VBoS)
	9	Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health (DPH)
	10	Vanuatu Livestock Department (VLD)
Private Sector	11	Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)
	12	Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC)
	13	National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV)
	14	Pacific Advisory
	15	Nabanga Consortium
	16	Future Group
Civil Society	17	Vanuatu Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (VANGO)
	18	Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN)
	19	Save The Children (STC)
	20	Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC)

Multilateral Partners	21	Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)
	22	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
	23	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
	24	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
	25	World Health Organisation (WHO)
	26	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
	27	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
	28	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
	29	Pacific Community (SPC)
	30	Pacific Islands Forums Secretariat (PIFS)
Bilateral Partners	31	British High Commission
	32	New Zealand High Commission
	33	Australia High Commission
Statutory Bodies	34	National Green Energy Fund (NGEF)
	35	Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (RBV)
	35	Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA)
Technical Working Groups	36	NAB Climate Finance Working Group (CFWG)
	37	NAB Loss and Damage Working Group (LDWG)

Annex B: List of International Treaties under Ministry of Climate Change²⁵

The table below presents the list of international treaties under the Ministry of Climate Change, organised by date of signature, date of ratification, and the current status (as of early 2025).

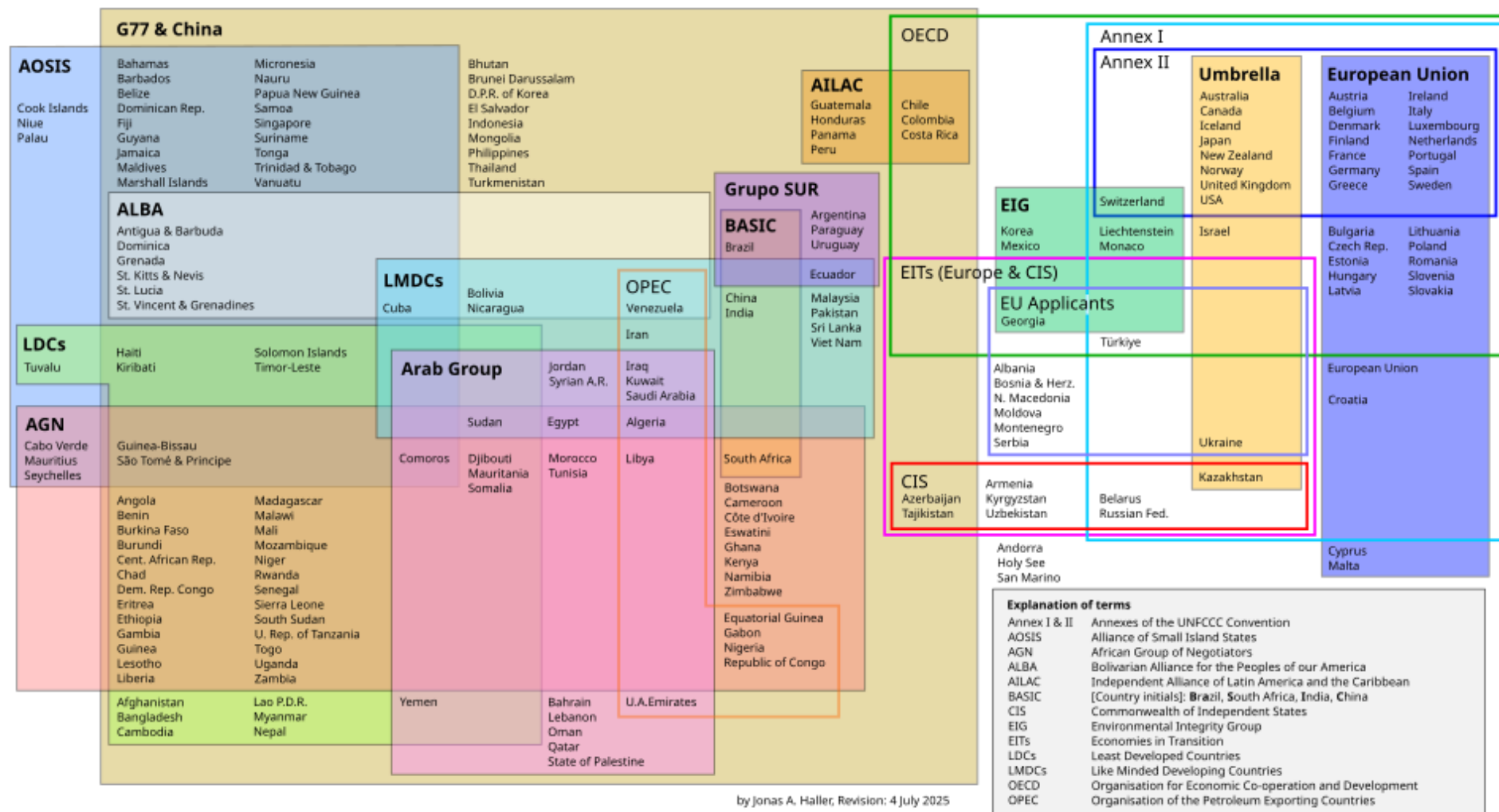
Table 9: List of International Treaties under the MoCC by Date and Status

Treaty	Signature	Ratification	Status
Basel Convention		16 Oct 2018	Accession
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)	9 June 1992	25 Mar 1993	Ratification
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	17 June 1989	15 Oct 1989	Accession
Kyoto Protocol		17 July 2001	Accession
Minimata Convention on Mercury		16 Oct 2018	Accession
Montreal Protocol		21 Nov 1994	Accession
Nagoya Protocol	18 Nov 2011	1 July 2014	Ratification
Paris Agreement	22 Apr 2016	21 Sept 2016	Ratification
Rotterdam Convention		16 Oct 2018	Accession
Stockholm Convention	21 May 2002	16 Sept 2005	Ratification
Kigali Amendment	20 Apr 2018		Signatory
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	28 Sept 1995	10 Aug 1999	Ratification
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	9 June 1992	25 Mar 1993	Ratification
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)	10 Dec 1982	10 Aug 1999	Ratification
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas		25 Oct 2002	Accession
Vienna Convention		21 Nov 1994	Accession

²⁵ Vanuatu Ministry of Climate Change (2025). *Annual Report 2024*:

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Annex C: Figure of UNFCCC Party Negotiation Groups²⁶



²⁶ Mejia, C. and Espinoza, D. (2024) and Haller, J. (2025). <https://voicesforjustclimateaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/UNFCCC-Guide-desktop-final.pdf>

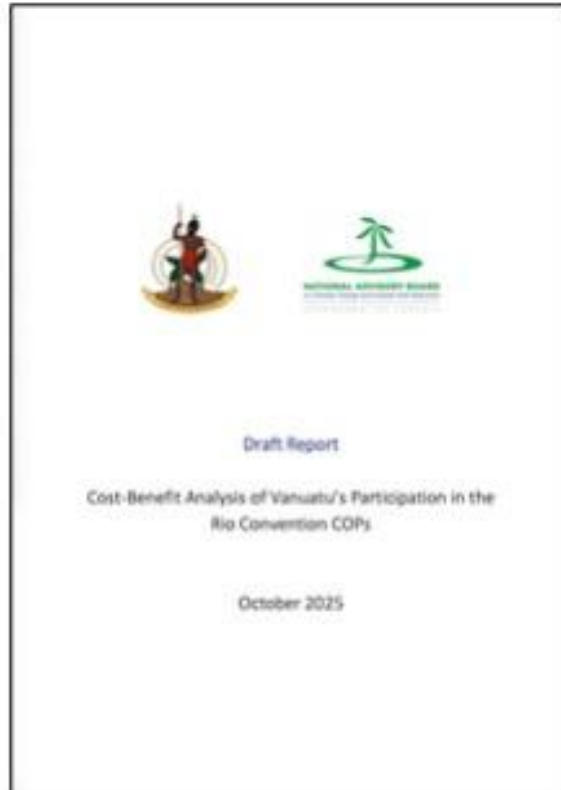


Cost-Benefit Analysis of Vanuatu's Participation in the Rio Convention COPs

Overview for NAB Endorsement

Wednesday 29 October 2025

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE



- **Participation** in Rio Convention negotiations (UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD) **is costly** (e.g., money, time, energy, opportunity cost)
- However, engagement can **yield tangible and intangible benefits** (e.g., policy/text wins, mobilising finance, capacity building, strengthening networks)
- Overall question of ***“what do we get in return for our investment?”***

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

August 2025

- Desk review of literature and stakeholder consultations

September 2025

- Inception workshop / activities
- Ongoing desk review and stakeholder consultations

October 2025

- Submission of draft CBA Report
- Validation workshop / activities
- Submission of final CBA Report

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive stakeholder participation is key:

- **Government:** MoCC, MFEM, MoFA, MPM, line ministries
- **Civil Society:** VANGO, VCAN
- **Private Sector:** VCCI, VBRC, NBV
- **Development Partners:** UN agencies, MDBs, CROP agencies, bilateral and multilateral partners
- **Statutory Bodies:** RBV, NGEF

Goal – to build ownership, transparency, and accountability

DATA COLLECTION CHALLENGES

- Gaps in historical data (e.g., financial figures, delegation lists)
- Intangible benefits hard to quantify
- Difficulty linking COP participation directly to funding outcomes
- Time and resources constraints

KEY FINDINGS – PEER-REVIEWED LITERATURE

- **Participation → access and influence:** Attendance itself opens doors to agenda shaping and voice (*Richards, 2001*).
- **Small-team constraints:** Highly technical talks disadvantage small delegations; implies minimum coverage needs and risks “negotiation by exhaustion” (*Klock et al., 2025; Martinez et al., 2019*).
- **Size tracks resources:** Delegation size strongly correlates with national income, across climate and other regimes (*Kaya & Schofield, 2020; Onderco, 2021; Vlček, 2021*).
- **Informal arenas matter:** Side events and pavilions mirror/shape formal agendas—treat them as core influence pathways, not peripherals (*Xie et al., 2025*).

KEY FINDINGS – COSTS

- **Costs mostly externalized:** Most delegate expenses are paid by partners; direct fiscal outlay is only a small share of total economic cost.
- **Coverage shaped by funders:** Reliance on external support influences room coverage and accountability.
- **Tracking gap fuels perceptions:** Limited reporting of gross resource use makes participation seem “too costly.”
- **Ad-hoc funding risks:** Session-by-session support creates last-minute gaps, uneven priority-room coverage, and heavy admin load.
- **Keep it Party-driven:** Use clear roles, funding disclosures, and event reporting so externally funded delegates advance Vanuatu’s strategy—not sponsor agendas.

KEY FINDINGS – BENEFITS

Monetised benefits

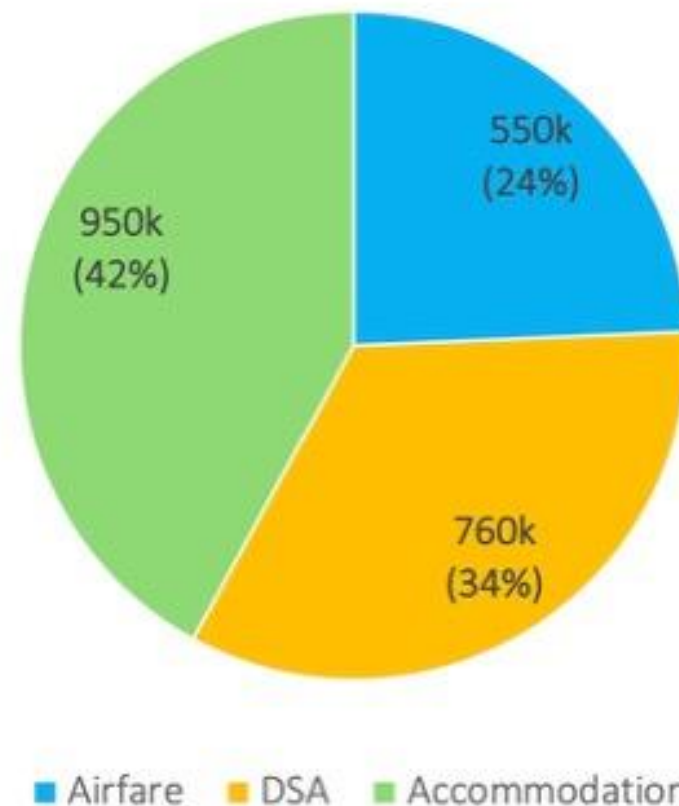
- **Partner underwriting offsets costs:** 82 of 98 delegates (84%) of UNFCCC COP delegates (2023–24) received funding by external partners, easing fiscal burden.
- **Party status unlocks finance:** Eligibility for GCF, GEF, AF, FRLD, and other funds.
- **Tiny dues, outsized returns:** Fees of a few hundred USD secure access to trust funds and climate finance that has already delivered tens of millions to Vanuatu.

Non-monetised benefits

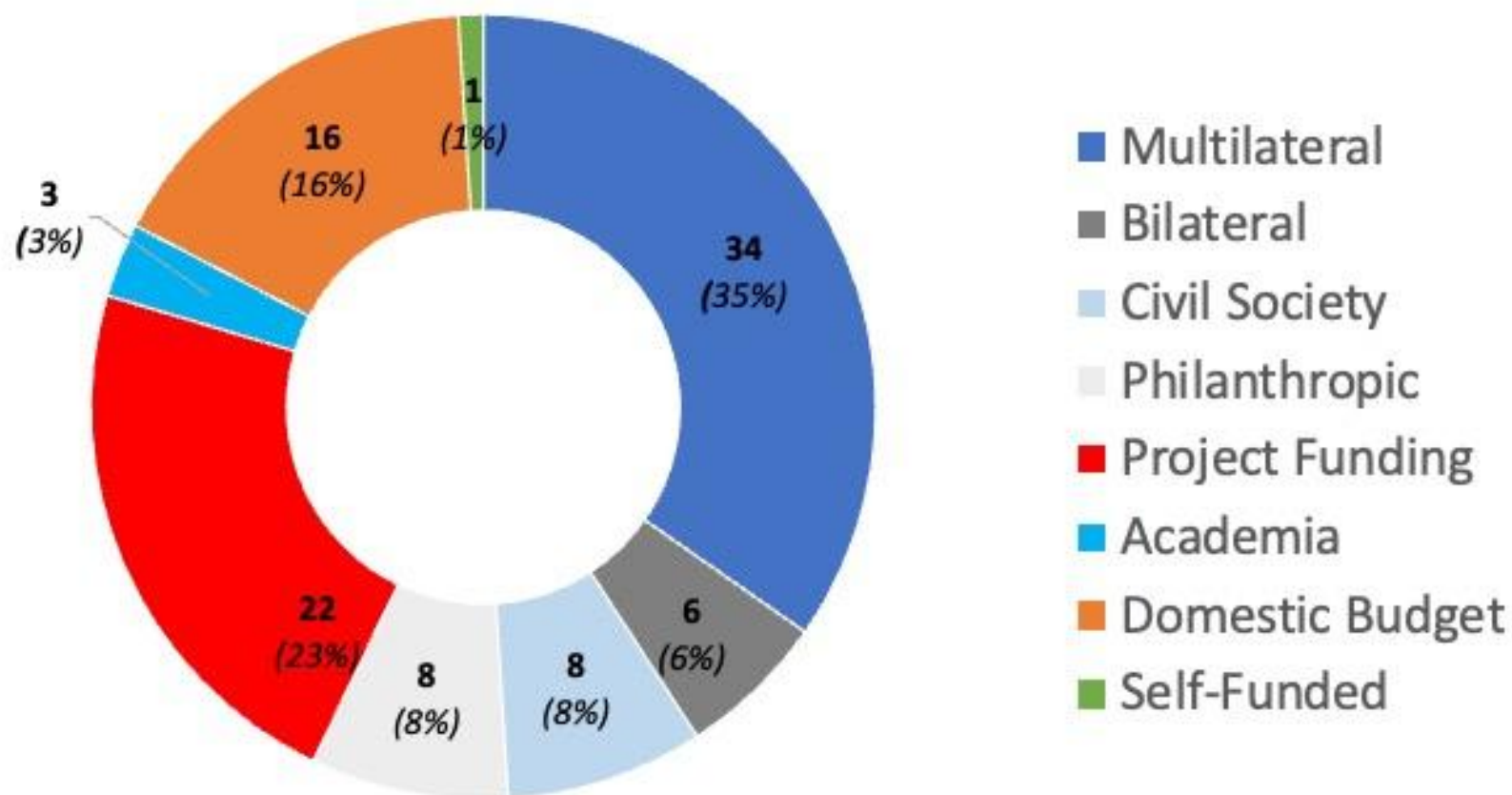
- **Policy leverage via coalitions:** Contact-group coverage and AOSIS/PSIDS caucus diplomacy shape text, align red lines, and secure speaking roles on SIDS-priority items.
- **Access → Visibility → Influence:** Side events, the Pacific Delegation Office, and the Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion convert limited floor time into agenda-setting visibility and networks.
- **Capacity compounds:** Negotiators build technical skills, templates, and cross-ministry routines, improving submission quality, timeliness, and follow through.
- **More inclusive Outcomes:** Stronger civil-society engagement boosts visibility of vulnerable groups and improves information flows into policy, increasing relevance and uptake of decisions.

COSTS PER DELEGATE FOR COP30 PER NAB SEC.

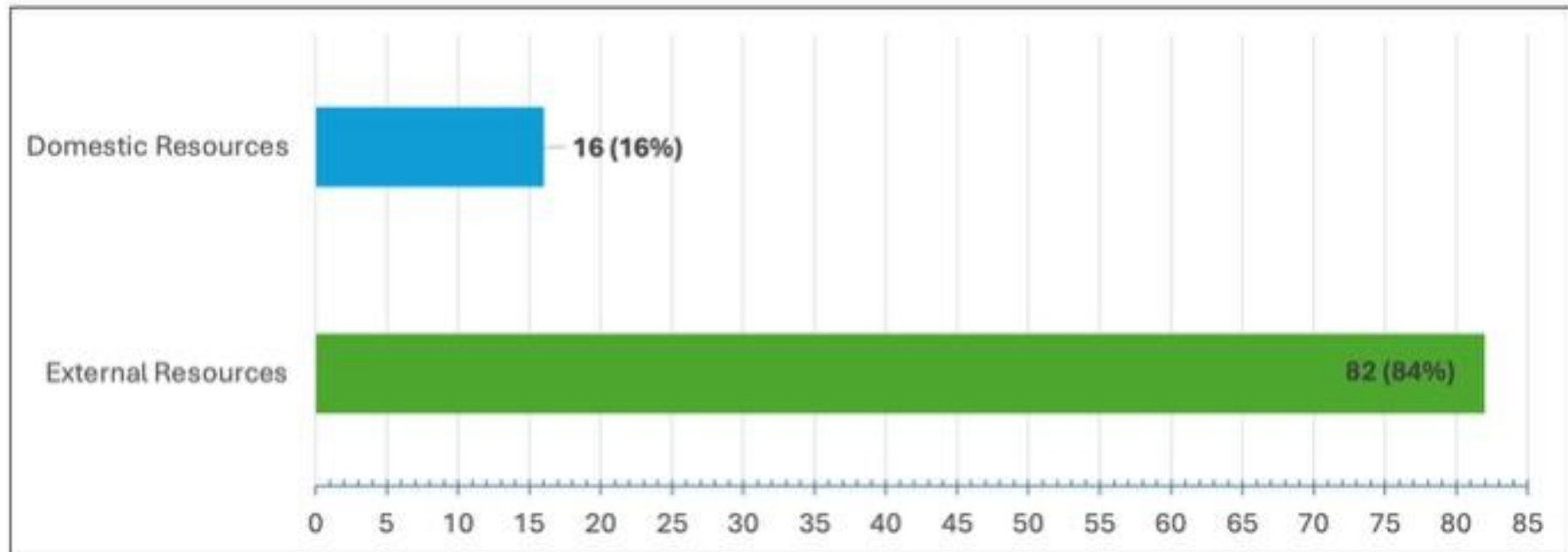
- Figures show **estimated budget per delegate** by cost centre to attend UNFCCC COP30 (including preparatory meeting dates)
- **Accommodation is the largest cost centre**, representing nearly double the cost of roundtrip airfare.



DELEGATE SUPPORT BY SOURCE FOR COP 2023-24



DELEGATE SUPPORT BY SOURCE FOR COP 2023-24



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a core multilateral negotiations team	6. Focus non-negotiator participation on resource mobilisation
2. Right-size delegations for priority thematic areas	7. Focus political leaders on diplomacy and public narratives
3. Strengthen delegation selection and retention	8. Request targeted support from technical partners
4. Institutionalise year-round capacity building program	9. Re-establish cross-government coordination mechanism for multilateral diplomacy
5. Engage with networks beyond negotiating rooms	10. Adopt a single, Party-driven multilateral strategy across all three Rio Conventions

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCORPORATE

- Focus on **building capacity of ni-Vanuatu delegates** to drive process, with use of external support in background
- New, recurring **financial support from GoV** to support negotiations and implementation of outcomes from COP (e.g., NPP)
- Consider **delegation quotas by group** (e.g., women, youth)
- Development of **standard tracking tool** for pre- and post-negotiations across all three conventions
- Strengthen **data collection at national level** to support COP delegates and political leaders

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TANK YU TUMAS