



The Electoral Commission of Vanuatu

2022 Snap Parliamentary Elections
Operational Concept

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Vanuatu has a 52-member unicameral national Parliament, which is elected using a combination of Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) in multiple-member constituencies and First Past the Post (FPTP) in single member constituencies.
2. The parliamentary term is four years. The Constitution, however, allows for the President to dissolve Parliament before the constitutional term is completed, in which case “snap elections” are to take place not earlier than 30 days and no later than 60 days following the dissolution of Parliament. The last snap elections in the country were held in 2016, following which the twelfth legislature was elected in 2020. The next general elections to elect the members of Parliament were scheduled for 2024, but on 18 August 2022 the President exercised his right to dissolve Parliament at the request of the Council of Ministers, making necessary the preparation and conduct of snap general parliamentary elections between 18 September and 18 October 2022.
3. The following paper presents a concept of operations for the timely and effective preparation and conduct of the 2022 snap Parliamentary Election to be held on 13 October 2022.

II. ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES: BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

4. *Institutional background.* The Electoral Commission of Vanuatu (EC) is the sole authority in charge of supervising the registration of electors, and preparing and conducting all elections in the country, including elections to Parliament. The EC consists of a chairman and two members appointed by the President of the Republic, who serve a five-year term.
5. The Electoral Commission is assisted by an Executive Secretariat, called the Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO), headed by the Principal Electoral Officer (PEO). As such, the VEO is the operational arm of the EC and is responsible for the electoral administration and operations.
6. *Objective.* The primary objective of the EC is to manage and supervise a credible and transparent electoral process which meet international standards for democratic elections. The planning and execution of electoral operations, including the establishment of the Voter Register and polling station Voter Lists, candidate nominations, polling and counting are conducted by the VEO.
7. *Strategy.* National Parliamentary Elections are conducted in 18 national constituencies consisting of six provinces and two municipalities (seven single-member with First Past the Post (FPTP) and 11 multi-member electoral districts with Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV), going from two to seven members). In both systems, candidates run as individuals for Parliamentary seats in their constituencies. Voters cast their vote for one candidate. The candidates with the most votes win the seats.
8. There are disparities between the electoral districts in terms of size of population, resources and geographical features. National constituencies respect provincial boundaries. Polling and counting will be conducted simultaneously throughout Vanuatu in a single day, on a date approved by the EC, Minister Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and Prime Minister and called by the Parliament, in line with the current electoral legislation.

9. For the purposes of parliamentary elections, the VEO has identified containing over 352 polling stations across the 18 national constituencies.

10. In order to ensure its neutrality and non-partisan nature, the EC and the VEO operate as independent bodies, exercising their functions without regard to any influence, direct or indirect, from any source.

11. The successful development and execution of snap Parliamentary elections require that:

- all the necessary, interdependent activities and tasks are identified and sequenced;
- plans for effective coordination with different stakeholders are in place;
- these activities meet all legal deadlines outlined in the Constitution, electoral legal and regulatory framework, electoral procedures and guidelines;
- responsibilities for the various tasks are assigned.

As such, this paper details the major operational concept, to be complemented by detailed operational plans.

III. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

12. *Legal framework.* The Vanuatu Constitution, the Representation of the People Act (RPA) of 1982 and its amendments form the basis for the legal framework for the Vanuatu national parliamentary electoral process. In addition, the EC has its own regulations for the preparation and conduct of parliamentary elections.

13. The RPA is the main electoral law in the country, approved in 1982 and amended several times since. The Act and its amendments set out the basic rules related to elections and includes several “Schedules” that provide more detail on specific aspects of the elections. The “Schedules” include, among other things, stipulations on the electoral authorities and their functions, as well as the processes pertaining to the registration of voters and the way members of Parliament are to be elected.

14. An Electoral Reform Working Group has together with the Office of the Attorney General prepared a new Electoral Bill, a Single Harmonized Electoral Bill with a number of new innovations which is pending until the next sitting of Parliament to be tabled and debated. If approved, it will repeal and replace the current electoral legislation.

15. The time-frame for holding general elections stipulated in article 28 (4) of the Constitution states “not earlier than 30 days and not later than 60 days after any dissolution.” Therefore, once Parliament has been dissolved, the EC meets, following consultation with the PM, to approve the election calendar and logistics. The logistics capture all important dates from lodging of candidature application date, the polling date etc. and PEO subsequently requests the State Law Office to draft the instruments for this polling date and required Public Holiday. The PM sends the instruments to the President, who has to approve and sign, and thereafter goes back to State Law Office for the official Gazette.

16. *Eligibility criteria.* The Constitution determines that to run as a candidate he/she must be a registered voter, must be a citizen of Vanuatu, shall be 25 years of age on the date of submitting their candidacy and shall not be convicted of crimes against humanity, a criminal act or deprivation of civil rights by a court. In addition, the candidates are required to provide signature/thumbprint of 10 sponsors (not relatives) as supporting documentation during the candidate nomination process.

17. *Electoral disputes* (Art 54 of the Constitution). The jurisdiction to hear and determine any question as to whether a person has been validly elected to Parliament is determined by the Supreme Court in Port Vila, which receives, investigates and rules on complaints about the electoral process, challenges and appeals. Its decisions are final. The Supreme Court has its own procedures, which includes close coordination with, and collaboration from, the EC.

18. *Regulations*. The EC passes and adopts regulations which determine how to implement articles in the Constitution and the corresponding electoral laws. In order to provide the required regulatory framework, the EC has developed and adopted the following regulations - General Election Regulation, Local Government Council Election Regulation, Municipal Council Election Regulation.

These are public and are available on the EC/VEO website.

19. *Procedures*. The VEO develops procedures based on the EC regulations. The procedures govern all aspects of operations, and include: establishment of the voter register and development of polling station electoral lists, candidate nomination, party/candidate agent's accreditation, observer's accreditation, media accreditation, polling and counting, including development of operational forms (reconciliation forms, counting and results tabulation and transmission, results form, record of the seals forms, material transfer forms). Procedures are approved by the EC Board of Commissioners and published on the EC/VEO website.

IV. OTHER KEY INSTITUTIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

20. In addition to the electoral authorities, other institutions have key roles to play. The EC and VEO will work closely with all stakeholders involved in the electoral process. These include the Vanuatu National Police Forces, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Public Service Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Civil Registration and Identity Management Department (CRIMD), Attorney General, the Department of Local Authorities (DLA) and Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs, Vanuatu Council of Churches (VCC) etc. as well as other ministries and institutions that are required to support the electoral process.

21. *Voter Awareness Committee*. The VEO has established a Voter Awareness Committee made up of media groups, Transparency International (Vanuatu), disability groups, women, youths, the Vanuatu Council of Churches, Malvatumauri and community-based NGOs working with voter awareness and information and functions like a 'sounding board' for targeted election public outreach, and transparency.

22. Although not initially seen as an "electoral authority," the critical importance of the Civil Registration and Identity Management Department's contribution for verifiable up-to-date accurate Voter Register, Voter Lists based partially on national ID card and the use of that card for identification of voters and detection of locations to allocate to nearest polling stations, has led to considerable inputs into strengthening and improving the relationship between the EC/VEO and the CRIMD.

23. The key stakeholders of the electoral process include of course the voters themselves, the political parties, candidates and their representatives, national/international observer groups and other civil society groups, as well as the media.

24. In addition to national institutions and organizations, the international community also provides support to the process through financial assistance, technical assistance and capacity-building.

25. *National police force.* Providing security for all aspects of the electoral process is the responsibility of the national Vanuatu Police Force (VPF). The primary law and order function rests with the VPF which is responsible for the security of EC/VEO buildings and sites in which electoral activities are carried out. The police also provide escorts for convoys with sensitive material if necessary, and big polling centers (mega stations). The VEO coordinates security arrangements with the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the national level and with police both centrally and in the provinces. At a more local level, some rural polling stations security arrangements are coordinated with local chief's and their security/watchmen.

26. *Attorney General/Judicial Service Commission (JSC).* The Attorney General is the Principal Legal Adviser to the Government, and all VEO's legal proceedings, electoral legislation matters will pass through the Office of the Attorney General (OAG).

27. *Relationship with key stakeholders.* For all stakeholders, including political party and candidates' representatives, observers and various security personnel involved in the elections, timely and accurate information of each stage of the process and their role in each stage, the VEO will conduct regular briefings, and coordination meetings. The VEO will provide detailed briefing materials and information packs to these groups on each stage of the operation, coordinated by the VEO Public outreach officer and the VEO's Information Dissemination Plan.

28. *Electoral observers.* In order to ensure the transparency of the process the VEO will invite and accredit national observer groups as they become more active, and international groups or organizations that wish to deploy electoral observers for the nomination period, the political campaign and for polling, counting and tallying. The VEO will provide them with relevant information regarding the electoral process through briefings and information packs, as well as providing the compulsory Electoral Observer Code of Conduct, stating the rights and responsibilities of the observer groups.

29. *Media.* The VEO will organize media events and provide up-to-date information and coordinate with other groups involved in electoral information dissemination to facilitate the widest dissemination of information as possible. The VEO Public outreach officer is responsible for related technical aspects of organizing, managing and implementing these activities throughout the electoral process. The Public outreach officer will mirror the HQ activities in the provinces and organize similar briefings and meetings at provincial level with provincial stakeholders as necessary. The Public outreach officer will work closely with the Voter Awareness Committee.

30. *International Technical Assistance.* The international community provides technical advice and assistance to the EC/VEO at its HQ through some direct funding support and ad hoc technical experts as required. All support should be coordinated by the PEO. UNDP administers a basket fund through which donors provide financial assistance to the process and provides technical assistance through its "Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project" (VEEP), managed by a technical team based in Port Vila, under the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji.

31. *The Tally Center.* The policy for counting ballots requires counting at polling station level and tabulation of results, first at polling station level and subsequently at the National level in Port Vila. Therefore, adequate tally facilities at polling station level as well as HQ level need to be created. The space needs to allow easy access for observers and party/candidate representatives to all the phases of the tally process and will further enhance the transparency and credibility of the process. During the intake of results, the Tally Center could be at the Electoral Commission or move to the MoIA Corporate Service Unit (CSU) conference room.

IV. ELECTORAL OPERATIONS

32. Based on characteristics and the electoral timeline, the electoral processes and activities are divided into the following phases for planning and implementation purposes:

- Budget and finances;
- Recruitment of temporary staff;
- Adapting field operations;
- Accreditation of representatives, observers and the media;
- Nomination of candidates;
- Update of the voter register and development of polling station electoral lists;
- Polling and counting;
- Tally and announcement of results;
- Post-electoral activities.

BUDGET AND FINANCING

33. Since the dissolution of Parliament was not anticipated, there is no allocated budget in the 2022 Appropriations Act for the preparation and conduct of the 2022 Snap Parliamentary Elections. The VEO estimates the cost of the elections to be 130 million vatu. On 20 August, the EC sent to the Council of Ministers (COM) a paper asking for the approval of the electoral budget and the release of the required funds as soon as possible in order to be able to meet the constitutional deadlines for national elections following the dissolution of Parliament.

34. The EC paper to the Council of Ministers also included a request for approval of the use of government assets including class-rooms, vehicles and other facilities required during the operation and administration of the snap election.

RECRUITMENT OF TEMPORARY STAFF

35. The VEO will recruit all necessary staff to carry out the election process. For VEO HQ and provincial offices the recruitment will start as soon as possible following the dissolution of Parliament in order to have everyone identified and all positions filled in time.
36. As in previous elections, Registration officers/Constituency Electoral Officers will be in charge of recruiting returning officers and other polling staff in the various constituencies. It is important that these temporary staff are well trained in polling and counting procedures. The VEO will develop a Cascade Training Program to ensure polling staff are sufficiently trained, and understand and implement the polling and counting procedures in a consistent manner. VEO will also be using specifically developed online video visuals as supporting training material.
37. Ideally, temporary staff at polling level need to be identified minimum one month ahead of Election Day to start paperwork of signing code of conduct, allow for training/brush up training etc. A VEO Recruitment Plan covers details of temporary staff requirements and recruitment phases.
38. *Temporary staff at headquarters.* Immediately following the call for snap elections, several temporary staff are required in the HQ Office to sustain the increase in activities. Temporary staff positions at HQ level would need to take up their position as soon as possible. HQ temporary staff will remain in place until after elections depending on operational requirements. Most will be released in the weeks after Election Day.
39. *Call centre staff and VEO Website queries.* A couple of members of the existing staff in the VEO office will work in shifts to answer any potential questions on the electoral process by phone, on a free phone number, which will be disseminated through public outreach messages to the public. This will only be available on the Polling Day. Call Centre staff will attend to any queries not addressed through the new feature on VEOs website to check voters polling station: [Find your Polling Station - Vanuatu Electoral Office \(gov.vu\)](#)
40. *Temporary staff at provincial offices.* Temporary staff is also required for the implementation of elections at the provincial level. The Provincial Electoral Officer is responsible for continuous voter registration updates and candidate nominations at provincial level. Nevertheless, staff need to be gradually seconded/co-opted, e.g. area administrators and later polling staff, according to operational requirements and will be released at the end of the electoral operations. Provincial Electoral Officers are in place in Malekula, Sanma, Tanna provinces while Penama and Torba is still pending recruitment.
41. *Area Administrators.* The area administrators play a key role in final detailed planning, in final preparations of polling station locations, lay-out, voter information messages etc. prior to polling day and in the retrieval of materials post counting. Recognizing the different considerations in urban and rural areas, the number of area administrators and polling centers/stations will vary. In due course, the Area Administrators will also work with disseminating *voter information*, supervised by the relevant Provincial Electoral Officer.

ADAPTING FIELD OPERATIONS

42. *Transport.* In the operational period, there will be an increased need for transportation for the Registration officers/Constituency Electoral Officers and area administrators to move around in their areas of responsibility. Provincial vehicles and boats can be requested through the Department of Local Authorities for usage where they are available. Alternatively, a transport allowance sufficient for the rental of one vehicle per island should be made available given that their work in the field involves constant travel. These vehicles will also be used for the deployment and retrieval of polling materials. This is only relevant to the islands where vehicle

movement is possible, as some islands don't have roads at all and here alternative plans for movement need to be developed.

ACCREDITATION OF REPRESENTATIVES, OBSERVERS AND MEDIA

43. In order to ensure the transparency of the electoral process, representatives of political parties, candidates, observer groups and the media will be granted privileged access to the different phases of the electoral process. For this to be managed efficiently and fairly, the representatives will need to obtain official accreditation from the VEO. All these external stakeholders will need to follow the EC regulations and to sign the compulsory code of conduct.

44. Accreditation facilities will be provided at VEO HQ within the timelines provided by the EC/VEO, and end latest five days ahead of Election Day. The process is managed by the VEO public outreach officer, however application forms can also be submitted at provincial offices and then coordinated centrally with the VEO public outreach officer, not at polling station level as previously undertaken.

NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

45. *Objective.* Citizens of Vanuatu, who wish to stand as candidates in the parliamentary snap elections, must apply for registration in order to have a ballot in their name. The VEO, through the candidate nomination procedures and regulations will ensure that all registered candidates are eligible and that all required data is accurately captured for the production of ballot papers. For the national snap elections, the VEO will register candidates in its six provincial offices and two municipalities.

46. Through the candidate nomination process, political parties are required to show that their candidates meet the basic requirements for taking part in the elections as far as minimum age, being registered voters, and any other qualifications set in the Constitution or the law. The same applies to independent candidates.

47. There will be a Launch of Candidate Nomination, where potential candidates or their representatives can visit the VEO to collect Candidate Nomination Packs (containing application forms and instructions for filling the forms) and receive detailed information on the nomination process. All candidates will also receive the Candidate Handbook and code of conduct. The VEO is to set a date before which all candidature declarations are lodged, and this period will last for *two weeks*.

48. All candidate nomination and accreditation materials are dispatched from VEO HQ in Port Vila, and distributed to the provinces:

- The materials are delivered to the provinces. The provincial electoral officer will receive nomination packs containing application forms and instructions on how to complete the nomination application files.
- The candidates are registering.
- The retrieval of candidate nomination documents.

49. 352 Polling station boxes with all required materials will be packed from VEO HQ with support from temporary HQ staff and disseminated to the provinces.

50. Potential candidates should present a declaration of candidature to the provincial electoral officer corresponding to the constituency they plan to run. The provincial electoral officer is to immediately forward the declaration of candidature to the VEO (attention of PEO), who is to review the declarations. Following the closing date for lodging of candidature application forms, there will be an additional *one week* for the VEO to screen the applications.

51. Aspiring candidates for the national Parliament need to lodge with the VEO, within the nomination period as declared by the EC, a declaration of candidature in the corresponding form dully filled-in and signed by him/her, including a declaration that the applicant is eligible as provided by the law. The aspiring candidate should also make a deposit of VT 100,000 (non-refundable), as well as two full face personal photographs. Candidates nominated by a political party will be issued with the corresponding symbol as approved by the EC; independent candidates are required to produce an illustration on paper of his/her personal electoral symbol (the symbol should be in black and white and should not include any words).
52. A declaration of candidature shall also contain the signatures of not less than ten sponsors, which need to be persons registered to vote in the constituency of the candidate and not being related to the candidate. When receiving a declaration of candidature, the PEO will give a receipt to the candidate.
53. No person is allowed to lodge a declaration of his own candidature for more than one constituency; or if he is a member of Parliament. Political parties are allowed to nominate more than one candidate in a constituency.
54. The PEO will, within 24 hours after the end of the nomination period, make a list of the candidates named in the declarations of candidature received by him and send copies to the EC, along with his comments on the validity of the candidature of any person named in the preliminary candidate list.
55. The EC will declare a candidature invalid if the candidate or his sponsors do not have the necessary qualifications or are disqualified. The decision of the EC that a candidature is valid or invalid is final and cannot be overruled.
56. The PEO will present a final list of candidates for each constituency, no less than 14 days before polling day. In the case of re-submitted candidatures, the period is no less than 12 days before polling day. A list of candidates shall be displayed at the office of every Local Government Council, the Parliament Building, the VEO and any other places in Vanuatu chosen by the EC for not less than 14 days before polling day.
57. A political party representative or any Vanuatu citizen eligible to vote may challenge the eligibility of candidates after the election through an election petition. The challenge must be lodged to the Supreme Court within 21 days after gazettal of the official election results.
58. The EC will determine the procedures to determine the order of the candidates in the ballot booklet. Usually, the EC adds the candidates in the ballot booklets in the order in which each candidate is cleared. To guaranty the transparency of the process, clear procedures for the allocation of ballots in the candidate booklets will be developed and shared with political party representatives, active civil society organizations, media and international stakeholders.
59. Following the vetting, challenge and correction processes, and the final list of candidates will be published on the EC/VEO Website. At the same time, the design of the candidate booklet will be finalized for each constituency.
60. *Political campaign period.* The campaign allows candidates to inform voters about their programs and to encourage voters to vote for them. The VEO's role in the political campaign is limited, but its contribution aims to encourage a peaceful campaign during which candidates can avail themselves of their freedom of movement and their freedom of expression.

61. As stipulated in the law, the campaign period will last two weeks, and end three days before polling day. Attention should be given to separate public awareness and voter information activities from the political campaign undertakings. The EC has regulated campaign-related issues and all candidates will have to sign the candidate code of conduct during candidate nominations. The VEO will use public outreach messages and external relations activities to encourage candidates to respect these rules.

62. The VEO will produce an information sheet to sensitize candidates and other stakeholders on their duties and responsibilities. Regular meetings with stakeholders will be held according throughout the period.

63. Complaints regarding the behavior of candidates and others during the campaign have to be submitted to and adjudicated by the Supreme Court.

64. *Security.* Security requirements during the candidate nomination phase as well as campaign period will be communicated and coordinated with National Police. This will include security of provincial offices from the arrival of nomination materials to the publication of the final list of candidates. If security is needed by candidates for their campaign activities, these are to be coordinated directly between candidates and the police at the provincial level. The VEO does not intervene in or facilitate security arrangements for campaign activities.

UPDATE OF THE VOTER REGISTER

65. In order to ensure that only eligible citizens are allowed to vote, voters need to be registered and present either their electoral card or their national ID card on polling day.

66. According to the new voter registration model, the VEO no longer registers voters or issues new voter electoral cards. Instead, it develops the national voter register from the data provided by the CRIMD. The final aim is to base all data in the national voter register from the Civil Registration data collected by CRIMD and transferred to the VEO. Before the dissolution of Parliament, this was expected to take place before the scheduled 2024 national parliamentary elections. At the moment, there is still a transition period which combines data from the VEO electoral registration and the Civil Registration office.

Preliminary Electoral Lists

67. *Purpose.* It is important that the Voter Register contains the names of all eligible voters. Therefore, the preliminary electoral lists will be exhibited at the polling station for which it was developed in order for eligible voters to:

- a. Receive confirmation of their presence on the electoral list;
- b. Apply to have their names added to the voters' list if they have registered but have been erroneously omitted from the list;
- c. Correct any mistakes in their data recorded on the voter register;
- d. Obtain information as to the exact location where they will vote;
- e. Challenge the inclusion on the list of any person whom they believe to be ineligible to vote.

68. *Printing of Preliminary Lists.* For this snap election VEO prepares the preliminary electoral lists in pdf form out of GVRS, the old electoral database. Those included in the lists are all Vanuatu citizens registered in GVRS, who has a national ID card or the old electoral cards, and who has come to register with the VEO. Registration is open all year but closes six weeks before Election Day. In the future, the electoral lists will be established from the Central Civil Register, RV5. Voter identification will in the future be based on national ID only and the old electoral cards will become obsolete.

69. *Distribution of Preliminary Lists.* They are then printed on papers to be sent to all of the following people, by softcopy and printed version where needed:

- a. Area council administrators.
- b. Provincial electoral officer and Provincial Civil registration officer.

70. *Exhibition Staff.* Exhibition teams will consist of Provincial Electoral/CRIM Officers and Area Administrators. Provincial Electoral Officers will monitor the process and select those staff who will be retained for the Exhibition process. The process for selection and paperwork required will be detailed later in a Guideline from VEO HQ.

71. *Exhibition Locations.* Exhibition locations will be in the same locations as polling stations, and the lists are held by the Area Administrators and Provincial Officers. The preliminary list will also be exhibited at the VEO office.

72. *Period of Exhibitions.* The exhibition process will be conducted over a 14-day period. The period will commence on 2 September 2022 and finish on 15 September.

73. *Mass Awareness.* Political entities and observer groups will be informed about the process and will be allowed to observe it. The VEO will disseminate information to the public on the process mainly through the Radio FM107, Buzz98 FM and Radio Vanuatu, radio tok-bak shows, SMS blast messages, VEO Website updates and social media (primarily Facebook). Messages will mainly focus on purpose, eligibility criteria, documentation required and locations. They will also underline the point that there is a transition to a new model for establishing the voter register, using a new methodology with the issuance of a new digital laminated national ID card with photo and unique ID number, and from here onwards continuous voter registration updates are feasible throughout the year.

74. *Logistics.* Area Administrators are to collect the electoral lists from the pre-approved location and either:

- a. come with the needed information to update the polling station electoral list; or
- b. take the electoral list back to the Village Local Council and update the list based on the pre-approved symbols guide found below.

All lists are sent back or emailed back to VEO headquarters by Friday, 16 September.

75. *Authorized claimants.* Each person registered in the electoral lists in their electoral district, may request the inclusion of the names of those wrongfully omitted or delete those wrongfully inserted. These requests shall be presented to the electoral authorities within fifteen days starting from the day following the date of announcing the lists. These requests shall be entered by date and the responses thereto in a special register with a receipt being issued to applicant. *Every voter has the right to examine this register.* The VEO shall publish the inclusion and deletion requests in its premises concurrently until the end of the period specified for issuing decisions.

76. *Inclusions.* Until the new legislation enters into force, the current legal framework mandates that voters must register. Individuals who are not on the lists and who wish to be included should go through the corresponding voter registration process. Registrations are allowed for this election up to six weeks before e-day. Between the end of registration for this electoral event, and the establishment of final lists one week before polling station, if a person is registered to vote but does not appear on a list, they can file a claim for inclusion with corresponding proof to be included in the lists. The VEO will investigate the request and make a decision on inclusion or rejection of request within two days from day of filling a request.

77. *Transfers.* Every Area Administrator will read through the list and ensure the information is accurate and updated based on the symbols guide provided below. If a person has moved to a different locality, they will be reported accordingly. The process of VEO adjudication on the transfer claim is the same as with inclusions.





78. *Corrections.* Any names that are incorrect should be updated in GVRS using the appropriate Amendment form and process. The process of VEO adjudication on the correction claim is the same as with inclusions.

79. *Removals.* Any deceased family member will also need to be removed from the GVRS database using the appropriate CRIMD Death registration process and forms. The process of VEO adjudication on the removal claim is the same as with inclusions.

80. *National Identification.* Wherever possible, a national ID number should be collected for future reconciliation with CRIMD data when claims for inclusion, transfer, correction, or removal are made.

81. *GVRS update.* Data Validation Officers (DVOs) at VEO HQ level will update this information in GRVS and work on notifying any person who is moved. This notification can be made by calling the related individuals directly where contact information is available.

82. *Symbols Guide.* The following are the accepted symbols. Each person on the voter list must be given either a check mark, cross, or circle with an arrow.

	Check Mark = <i>Good, correct information</i>
	Cross = <i>Deceased and should be removed from the list</i>
	Circle arrow = <i>Moved out to a different Area (what village?)</i>
	Duplication = <i>People who appear on the list two times, or more</i>

83. *Exhibition Procedures and Manuals.* The VEO will develop exhibition procedures and procedures manual which will detail all aspects of the process, including each participant's role in the process, how each task is to be carried out and the handling of documentation. These procedures and manuals will be issued to all staff as appropriate.

84. *Appeals against rejections.* In cases where the registrants were taken off the voter lists they can appeal the VEO decisions at judiciary. The judiciary will also hear and decide on appeals made by those persons who were rejected upon applying for registration during the voter registration period.

85. *Data Collection and Delivery.* The process for data collection and delivery will be similar to that used during the registration period. Details will be provided in the Exhibitions procedures and procedures manual. Data on claims, objections and appeals will be collected at booth level, then transferred to VEO HQ in regular intervals and according to the proper procedures. As in registration it is essential that all forms are properly completed in order to maintain an accurate track of data movements.

86. *Processing of Data.* The processing of data will be carried out in a similar manner to the regular data entry process in GVRS. Procedures will be strictly adhered to and monitored by the VEO.

PRODUCTION OF FINAL VOTER REGISTER

87. *Production of final voter register.* Following exhibitions and VEO decisions on appeals, claims and challenges any required changes to the preliminary voter register will be processed to produce the final voter register. For this snap election there will not be time to send back the final electoral list to be displayed at polling stations before e-day.

88. Political entities and observer groups will be informed about the process and will be allowed to observe it. The VEO will disseminate information to the public on the process mainly through the radio FM107, Buzz98 FM and Radio Vanuatu, and SMS blast and Facebook messages.

POLLING AND COUNTING

89. Polling Day is the highlight of the electoral process. The objective of preparations for polling is that all procedures, arrangements, materials, equipment and staff are in place and ready to allow a timely commencement of polling on Election Day.

90. For the snap general elections, polling will take place in a single day in more than 352 polling stations across all six provinces and two municipalities of the country. It will involve around 1,100 polling staff to cater for the currently registered *301,684* eligible voters. Both vehicles, naval boats, ferries and airlifts will be used to move material in a timely, suitable and efficient manner. Issues with mechanics of patrol boats and surety of Air Vanuatu domestic flights being cancelled or unavailable will mean quotations are needed from private aircraft operators/firms.

91. Preparations for this event are the most complex of the electoral process and include the formulation of various procedures and guidelines, identification of polling centers and polling stations, movement planning, preparation of warehouses, production of ballot papers, procurement, reception, checking, packing and labeling of various other electoral, voter awareness, information and training materials, their delivery to polling stations, freight logistics (air sea & land) recruitment, training and deployment of staff, public outreach activities, polling and counting themselves, and finally retrieval of materials and staff.

92. All voters will cast their ballots in the same locations where they are registered. Currently, the only overseas polling station, is Noumea in New Caledonia, which is included within the Port Vila constituency.

93. Polling day will be declared a Public Holiday in order to facilitate polling. Polling will be conducted over nine hours, starting at 7:30 and closing at 16:30.

94. Notwithstanding proxy voting, voters will be required to cast their ballots in person, and they must be in possession of either their electoral card or their national ID card. Polling will be conducted in a manner to ensure the secrecy of the ballot.

95. *Proxy voting.* There is provision for enabling voters to vote by proxy on polling day. Each applicant must explain why he/she is outside his/her normal constituency (e.g. health, education, occupation etc.) and produce a certificate from the relevant institution or company to certify this. With the recent change of procedure, applications must now reach the VEO not less than 2 weeks before polling, which is an improvement from the former deadline of 72 hours before polling. This will allow more time to process applications and verify documentation authenticity, especially considering the high numbers of applications. The proxy voting practice appears to be abused and additional methods of integrating integrity and safeguards, and perhaps further restrictions should be considered. Firstly, applications should *only* be handled directly with proxy voters, *not* candidates acting on behalf of voters. Secondly, the VEO should establish a proxy voter database, which consolidates all proxy voters for an easy overview. Thirdly, in an area with high concentration of old and vulnerable people, e.g. sanctuaries for elderly, a mobile team could be considered.

96. Only accredited media personnel, electoral observers and candidate representatives will be accepted within the polling station premises. Police officers/watchmen should be present at all polling stations, but only outside of the polling perimeters; they will only be allowed inside if the returning officer (presiding the polling station) explicitly ask them to.

97. *Polling and counting procedures.* The procedures will provide the rules on how to implement the process and this is why the EC/VEO have developed are detailed and clear formal procedures. The procedures explain in details polling and counting steps, describe materials and forms used during the polling and counting process.

98. *Polling centres and polling stations.* A polling centre is a location with more than one polling station, where voters go to cast their ballot on polling day. In order to facilitate efficient and smooth polling and counting operations, highly populated urban areas will have polling centers with a number of polling stations where a predefined maximum number of 600 voters can cast their ballot. Less populated rural areas will simply have one polling station catering for up to 600 voters to cast their ballot. Mega stations, with multiple polling stations, can reach up to 8,000 voters. Their location must be in close proximity to the voters, so continuous analysis must be made that this is indeed the case.

99. *Polling centre/station locations and station numbers.* The majority of polling centres/stations will be in the same locations that were used for previous elections. Internal movements, long distances will be the key criteria for the VEO to make a decision regarding the location of polling stations, and consider changing some locations, or establishing more stations and closer to the voters.

100. As soon as possible, the VEO will draft a consolidated list with the maximum number of polling centres and polling stations, reflecting updated demography of the country. This will be circulated to the police for security assessments of the locations. Area Administrators will visit the polling stations, as well to judge appropriateness and suitability as polling location.

101. Area administrators will be allocated polling stations to supervise and to consider primarily on the basis of geographical considerations, to deliver and retrieve materials from there, but also considering issues such as the estimated voters and the population density in each locality, ensuring that there will be sufficient materials and other resources at each polling station on polling day. The maximum number of voters in any one polling station should be 600. The estimated total number of voters at a polling centre will be divided by 600, and rounded up,

to calculate the number of stations and the related material requirements. Polling stations will be mixed male and female stations.

102. *Polling Centre/Station Coding.* Each polling centre, and each polling station, should have a simple but unique centre code and station code encompassing the province, centre code and station code. The code will consist of letters and digit numbers, and polling station will be the added number with slash e.g. xxxx/1. The number should follow a consistent manner.

For example, below location example could carry the code: SHE/A/1, SHE/A/2, SHE/A/3 etc. (SHE –SHEFA Province, A – polling centre code, 1 – polling station code)

Letter	No. of PS	Polling Centre	Polling station code	Sheet No from..... To	Number of polling staff	Polling Centre Manager	Queue Controller
A	4	Anglican Church				1	1
			A - 1		3		
			A - 2		3		
			A - 3		3		
			A - 4		3		

If there is no polling centre but only one single polling station, then simply for example: TAF/1, TAF/2 etc. (TAF – TAFEFA Province, 1 – polling station number).

103. These codes will be used throughout the process including for labeling of materials and transmission of results. The accuracy of the codes will be vital for the electoral process as they will be the key for ensuring all materials are delivered to the correct polling center/polling station.

104. *Special voting.* The VEO recognizes the need to facilitate access to polling for voters with special needs. These include members of the Vanuatu National Army, National Police, prisoners and people that are hospitalized. In order to facilitate polling for these voters, the VEO could consider to add a polling station to one existing polling center/station that is close to the special needs voting population. The military will have to proceed to the polling station where a station is added to cater for them. For designated hospitals and prisons, polling staff and material for the station would most likely leave from the parent polling centre/station on Election Day and be escorted by the police to the premises concerned, and then return to the parent polling centre/station for the counting along with the other stations. The procedures to be followed at this particular station is the same as at the regular stations.

105. *Distribution of materials to the provincial offices.* Public outreach materials will be distributed together with non-sensitive materials, along with distribution of training materials. Onward distribution of public outreach materials will be ensured by Provincial Electoral Officers and of training materials by Area Administrators.

106. *Distribution and retrieval of polling materials.* The deployment of polling materials to the polling centres/stations and the retrieval of these materials and the results, are the most sensitive and complex movements and require detailed planning. Given the geography and natural characteristics of Vanuatu, movement options and their feasibility must be carefully assessed. The VEO will develop its movement plan in close cooperation with other governmental offices and their resources, as well as police, always keeping in mind that the materials must arrive at the correct polling stations on time and undamaged, with appropriate security measures. In addition, the results and all materials will need to be retrieved following

the conclusion of counting. For the purposes of movement planning, the VEO has divided the process into national level planning and provincial level planning.

107. *Distribution Guideline.* The VEO will prepare a movement planning template with guideline. The Guideline will be used by registration officers/constituency electoral officers to develop movement plans for the province in a timely manner.

108. Each provincial office, with advice and assistance from its Area Administrators, will develop provincial movement plans, which will describe in detail what material need to be moved, the routes, timeframe and resources required to deliver and retrieve all polling materials to and from each and every polling station.

109. The VEO will be responsible for the movement of materials from Port Vila to the provincial capitals. The VEO will also be responsible for liaising with the police forces, which will ensure relevant security escorts are in place.

110. The Provincial Movement Plans have to be submitted to VEO HQ, where they will be checked, seek for any necessary clarification consolidate them into a National Movement Plan. This Plan will enable the VEO to identify precisely the resources required, ground, sea, air and human, for the implementation of the Plans, as well as the timeframe which will govern its implementation. The plan will also allow the VEO HQ to ensure movements conform to its overall plan including procedures and timeframes for collection, storage and tallying of results and also to facilitate the development of contingencies. The Plan will be shared with Vanuatu Police in order to allow for sufficient security coordination and planning.

111. *Storage Facilities.* Storage facilities will be prepared to receive electoral materials at all stages. These storage facilities will be in Port Vila, at the provincial level, and at polling center/station level. The storage facilities will be in place and ready to receive materials before delivery of any electoral material.

112. *HQ Storage Facilities.* A new storage area has been built at the VEO HQ in Port Vila for the on-going storage, receipt and control of materials in order to facilitate central storage, packing and distribution of polling and counting materials. The building is already finished, and final touches are currently being worked on. Given the sensitive nature of the materials that will be stored at the warehouse, security and access to the warehouse have been carefully considered.

113. *Provincial-level Storage:* The VEO will utilize, in the majority of cases, the provincial offices as warehouses. In some instances, new storage premises might need to be identified.

114. In some places, polling materials will be stored for a short period of time at the district level to facilitate distribution of materials to polling stations. These storage facilities must be secure and will be identified by Area administrators as part of their movement planning.

115. *PC/PS-level storage.* It will be necessary to store electoral materials at polling center/polling station prior to polling day. Specific requirements in this regard as well as security arrangements that need to be put in place will be the subject of a detailed guideline.

116. *Ballot Design.* The current ballot design requires one ballot paper for each candidate, bundled in a booklet, and one envelope to be handed to each voter. Depending on the number of candidates in the constituency, ballot booklets can have numerous pages. All ballots and ballot booklets will be bundled and shrink-wrapped into sequentially numbered packs of 600. Each polling station will be supplied with at least 600 ballot booklets.

117. *Printing company* for the ballot papers and ballot booklets will ideally be selected through a competitive procurement process, although the number of qualified printing houses is limited. The ballot paper design will be finalized, in coordination with political candidates, within two weeks of the publication of the final list of candidates. The printing of the ballot papers and booklets is expected to take less than one week. This process will be monitored by VEO staff including site visits. The VEO will check the quality and quantity of the ballot papers printed. At the completion of the printing of ballot packs, the printing company will be required to submit the printing plates and films to the VEO. Delivery of the ballot papers and booklets is to be finalized seven days before Election Day to the VEO HQ and from there distributed to Provinces.

118. *Procurement.* Most procurement of electoral material will be carried out by VEO's procurement/admin/finance officer, in coordination with the Central Tender Board, in line with Vanuatu public procurement rules and regulations. Some procurement will be undertaken by UNDP/VEEP project, as required. Whenever feasible, existing materials from previous elections will be used. As much as possible, electoral materials will be procured from within Vanuatu, to support the local economy and the save money on costly freight. Ideally, all material deliveries should be completed three weeks ahead of Election Day, and the VEO will put special arrangements in place to facilitate customs clearance where relevant. Materials will be delivered to the new VEO warehouse in Port Vila.

119. *Reception.* Upon arrival of the materials at the warehouse, the VEO will check all materials to ensure that the correct quantities have been received and that the quality is acceptable. All materials will be entered in the relevant inventories, and in case of materials procured by UNDP ownership is transferred from UNDP to the VEO as per agreement between the two institutions. The VEO will then pack the material and label the polling center/polling station kits.

120. *Sensitive and Non-sensitive Materials.* Electoral materials are categorized as either sensitive or non-sensitive. Sensitive materials are those materials that could, due to their specific nature and in the event of damage or loss, seriously affect the election operation. Non-sensitive materials are those materials needed to perform the election process and that, in the event of damage or loss, could be replaced in a short period of time, and would not jeopardize the operation.

121. Sensitive materials consist of ballot papers/ballot booklets, forms, indelible ink, stamps, ballot boxes and numbered seals to be used on polling day. These materials will be packed into ballot boxes. A brief description of the various materials is provided below.

122. *Ballot boxes.* The VEO now uses transparent ballot boxes procured by UNDP. They will be clean and ready for distribution to the polling stations. Ballot boxes will be supplied by VEO HQ to provincial offices/provincial warehouses, and from provincial level to polling centers/stations.

123. *Polling Station Kits.* Each polling station will be issued one Polling Station Kit. The Polling Station Kit will include items such as: validation stamps, indelible ink, numbered seals, VR card punch/ID card scanner, laptop and power supply, and stationary. All items will be packed inside the ballot box.

124. *Polling and counting forms.* Forms will be developed to ensure proper records for all stages of the processes. One reconciliation form and one results form. The other forms will be for materials transfer, complaints, attendance forms, Election Day Voter List form and record of seals form. Forms will be printed and pre-packed per station by VEO logistics Officer.

125. *Polling Centre Kits.* In a few instances in bigger urban areas like Port Vila and Luganville there will be polling centers, meaning more than one polling station in same location. Polling Centre kits will be slightly different – these kits, one per polling centre, will contain all materials required for the setting up and managing polling center including stationery, direction signs, queue control tape and other materials.
126. Materials that are classified as non-sensitive, will still be stored alongside the sensitive materials in order to prevent any mishaps. In most cases, they will be stored and delivered in either the polling center or polling station kits or along with them. These materials will be returned to the provincial electoral offices at the completion of the polling and counting processes.
127. *Voting screen.* The VEO will use existing wooden voting booths with curtains. Minimum two voting screens will be supplied to each polling station to allow a good flow of voters passing through the station. Alternative to voting booths are simple curtains/local fabric fixed to any stable material/tree, to ensure the secrecy of the vote.
128. *Support materials.* In order to ensure the success of the polling and counting process various support materials will need to be in place. These support materials include furniture, tents, lights and communications equipment.
129. *Training kit.* The training kits will contain materials identical to the polling and counting materials to be used for the training of electoral staff. For training purposes mock ballots/ballot booklets and other training printing materials such as polling and counting manual, training guide, flipchart with graphics will be produced. Pre-assembled training kits will be prepared for the training. Training materials will be printed locally.
130. *Voter awareness and information materials.* Various voter information materials such as flipcharts, brochures, leaflets, posters, billboards etc. and sample of ballots/ballot booklets will be produced prior to polling and distributed throughout Vanuatu.
131. *Contingency supplies.* In order to react to any problems or mishaps that might arise during preparation or delivery of materials the VEO will procure additional contingency supplies.
132. *Packing of materials.* Strict packing procedures and quality control mechanisms will be developed and implemented by VEO logistics Officer for packing and labeling. There will be a designated area for packing of polling materials in the VEO warehouse. Two packing teams will work in shifts. The packing of the materials for each province will be done separately. Each team will be responsible for the packing of polling center/polling station kit materials for one province at a time, in order not to mix up materials and numbering.
133. *Polling station kits* will be generic for all stations will be packed in the VEO HQ warehouse and delivered to provinces pre-packed into sealed ballot boxes.
134. All other materials are generic and can be delivered to any polling station as long as the correct quantities are delivered.
135. *Packing of Contingency Materials.* Contingency sensitive material will be packed in a manner that minimizes the risk of tampering. Each province will receive 5 percent contingency ballot papers/booklets and 10 percent of sensitive forms, and polling station kits. Contingency materials will be packed into the color-coded boxes and labeled indicating the content.
136. *Tracking worksheet.* During packing, all sensitive materials and polling station codes will be entered into a tracking database. This will allow the VEO to follow the correct deployment of

materials, improve control of VEO HQ over the allocation of materials. The DPO and VEO Logistics Officer in collaboration with VEO ICT Officer will develop this simple worksheet.

137. *Labeling.* The VEO Logistics Officer/Store man is responsible for the labeling. For example, each polling center kit (colored box) will be labeled with the polling center/polling station code that corresponds to its final destination.

138. *Deployment of materials.* The implementation of the national movement plan will require numerous transport assets and security arrangements including escorts. The VEO officer/s responsible for procurement will contract vehicles, sea and air assets for this operation. VEO will make police security arrangements at the central level and the provincial offices at their level. Overall responsibility for the movement of materials and personnel, as well as its tracking, remains with the VEO officer/s responsible for procurement.

139. *Air and sea support.* The National Consolidated Movement Plan will enable the VEO to identify air and sea support requirements. The VEO will secure air and sea assets dedicated to the electoral process, in collaboration with donors and relevant governmental offices.

140. *Vehicles.* The same vehicles rented for Provincial Officers/Constituency Electoral Officers/Area Administrators will be used for the delivery and retrieval of polling materials where possible to move by road. The exact requirements will be defined during the movement planning exercise. It is expected that some additional trucks might be needed.

141. *Animal or human transport.* For polling stations that are not accessible by vehicles, horses or manpower will be contracted for the deployment and retrieval of polling materials.

142. *Security.* Due to the sensitive nature of the materials, security arrangements will need to be in place. Guidelines on required handling and security arrangements will be issued by VEO HQ. Additional security for warehouses and possible escorts for the movements will be arranged by DPEO for the movement to provinces and by provincial offices for onward deployment and retrieval.

143. *Tracking.* The movement of all materials will be tracked by the VEO HQ using a hand-over form.

144. *Contingencies.* All movement planning will incorporate contingency planning to ensure that in case of unforeseen events alternative means of transport are available to ensure materials arrive on time to the correct location.

145. *Recruitment of polling centre and polling station staff.* The number of polling staff has been determined to be three polling staff per polling station. Current estimates are that in total there will be a requirement for about 1,100 polling staff - approximately 1,050 -60 polling station staff, 20 polling centre managers, 20 polling center queue controllers. These figures may be revised once polling centres and polling stations have been finalized.

146. HR (MOIA) will issue an operational instruction on the responsibilities for recruitment. Constituency Electoral Officers will identify and select candidates for their respective polling stations. The process will involve advertisement in the urban area newspaper and schools, testing, selection and completing the necessary paperwork. The Constituency Electoral Officers will be responsible for ensuring all the required paperwork is submitted to HR. Polling staff will be recruited locally. In order to ensure a good level of education among its polling staff, the VEO will particularly focus on recruiting teachers, university and school students who reached 18 years of age.

147. The VEO maintains a policy of promoting employment possibilities for Vanuatu women in the electoral process. Constituency Electoral Officers are encouraged to recruit as many qualified women as possible.

148. *Payment of staff.* Upon completion of their duties, polling staff will be paid an allowance, irrespective of the number of days they are actually required to work, but depending on their job title. The lump sum will cover their training and the days they work. Below is an indicative summary of contract duration, periods of employment and rates of pay. The payment will be issued to polling officials at the end of Election Day, a Guideline will be provided by field operations and the admin and finance officers for the payment process.

149. *Training cascade.* In order to train all staff on polling and counting procedures, the VEO will use the cascade model of training. HQ trainers will train Constituency Electoral Officers on training techniques and all aspects of the polling and counting process, including the setting up of polling centers and polling stations, the steps of polling and counting, completion of forms, and retrieval of materials. The last day will be dedicated to specialized training on area administrators' administrative tasks.

150. The Constituency Electoral Officers will train the Area Administrators at the provincial level who will then train the Polling Station Returning Officer and identification/ballot issue officers at the polling station. Returning Officers will then train the additional station staff, and Polling Centre Managers will brief center queue controllers about Election Day responsibilities. The VEO public outreach officer/training officer will monitor the training sessions at the provincial and polling station level and provide any required assistance.

151. *Training materials.* The VEO will deploy training materials minimum one month ahead of elections. The training kits will include samples of all materials and forms to ensure a comprehensive training. In addition to the kits, trainers will be provided with printed voter awareness and informational materials, as well as YouTube video link with audio visuals. This material will assist the trainer to carry out the training effectively.

CIVIC AND VOTER AWARENESS AND INFORMATION

152. *Voter Awareness and Information Plan.* The VEO public outreach officer will provide a detailed Voter Information and Education Plan. This will include the voter awareness and information messages, timings and strategy for their delivery, and an overview of materials to be produced.

153. *Messages.* In addition to messages on the candidate nomination, voter registration and political campaign periods, messages will include:

- how to decide/pack a ballot paper correctly in the envelope;
- that only Ni-Vanuatu's who are at least 18 years old and who have a valid voter registration card will be allowed to vote;
- that voters can only vote in the provinces that are indicated on their voter registration card,
- that voters will have their finger inked before they are issued a ballot/ballot booklet;
- that only approved proxy voting will be allowed on Election Day.

154. *Voter Awareness and Information Strategy.* The VEO is only responsible for voter information around a particular election. Voter awareness and information awareness and information messages will be delivered through the media, print, radio, face-to-face events, social media (Facebook), Internet and TV, through the distribution and display of voter

awareness and information materials, meetings with and briefings of institutions and organizations that can serve as channels of communication, as well as through face-to-face meetings with chiefs, opinion leaders, civil society organizations and voters themselves. The VEO will commission and supervise the work of CSOs supporting voter awareness and awareness and information.

155. *Coordination role.* The VEO is the only authorized source of voter awareness and information materials. However, the VEO can request other institutions to assist in the distribution of messages and material and welcomes the involvement of civil society organizations in voter awareness and information awareness and information for this snap election. The provincial electoral officer coordinates all voter awareness and information awareness and information activities in their provinces, in collaboration with the VEO's public outreach officer.

156. *Production of material.* All VEO voter awareness and information materials will be produced by the public outreach officer. They will include: posters, factsheets, flyers, PSAs and other radio broadcasts. A full list of public outreach materials and their messages will be annexed to the voter awareness and information plan which will be developed. Materials will be printed or procured by VEO officials responsible for procurement.

157. *Deployment.* The deputy PEO together with the public outreach officer will deploy voter awareness and information materials to provincial offices. Each provincial officer will have a rented vehicle at disposal and will deploy voter awareness and information materials from the provincial offices to the final destinations in the field.

158. *Training.* Once all Area Administrators are identified and 'recruited', a training cascade will be carried out in order to familiarize them with the voter awareness and information strategy, the voter awareness and information messages and materials.

159. *Area Administrator activities.* Area Administrators will distribute posters, flyers and other voter information education materials in their area of responsibility, and where possible hold meetings with chiefs, local female and male opinion leaders and conduct face-to-face voter information meetings with the general voter population.

160. *Provincial office voter awareness and information activities.* The Provincial Electoral Officer and Constituency Electoral Officer will coordinate the activities of the Area Administrators, as well as other organizations and institutions supporting voter awareness and information in the province. Provincial Electoral Officers also may conduct voter awareness and information activities for the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs and act as focal point for all substantive issues related to voter information education. The Provincial Electoral Officer and Constituency Electoral Officer are responsible for the information provided to voters in their provinces and ensure that voter awareness and information activities are well coordinated with the other aspects of the electoral process and receive adequate logistic, administrative and financial support.

POLLING AND COUNTING

161. *Setting up the polling centre and polling stations.* Polling staff will set up the basic configuration of the polling center/polling station as part of their training in the days before polling. In the majority of cases, polling materials will arrive at the station the day before polling. Sensitive material must be secured. Polling staff will arrive at the polling centre/station at 05:30am on Election Day, open the polling station boxes that hold the sensitive materials and will complete the setup then in line with the polling procedures. In some urban polling centres

close to storage facilities in Port Vila the sensitive material will be delivered on the morning of polling day.

162. *Security at polling centres/polling stations.* Each polling centre will have police outside the perimeter of the polling center. No security forces will be allowed to be present permanently inside the polling station. Specific arrangements will be provided based on the need and assessments by the police, in collaboration with the VEO.

163. *Polling Day.* Polling will take place in a single day starting at 07:30 and finish at 16:30 throughout the country.

164. *Polling procedure.* The VEO polling procedures will provide for a simple voting process designed to safeguard against impersonation and multiple voting while ensuring strict secrecy of the ballot. The voting compartment in the polling station will be arranged as to permit a voter to mark/select his or her vote in secrecy and will be in a position where a person can neither enter nor leave it without being seen by a polling official. Instruction will be clear to ensure that no other person shall, except in accordance with the VEO procedures, enter the voting compartment while a voter is in it for the purpose of recording his or her vote.

165. *Assistance to disabled voters.* Any person suffering from a physical disability may be granted permission by the polling station returning officer to be accompanied into a polling station by a person of his/her choice to assist him/her in voting. The granting of permission will be recorded in the polling station report maintained by the polling station returning officer.

166. Polling stations will have pre-printed electoral lists. Voters that arrive at a station, will be asked to identify themselves with their voter card. The card and the voter's details will be checked. The voter's left thumb finger should be stained with indelible ink after checking off their number and name in the electoral roll and being issued a ballot paper/ballot booklet.

167. *Ink application.* One of the main substances in the ink is an actual color component to help the polling staff see that ink covered the proper area. The stain color changes when the light reactive element takes effect and leaves a black or brown mark. Discoloration comes from a combination of the skin being lightly burned and the silver nitrate changing colors, which is accelerated with exposure to sunlight. Depending on the concentration, the discoloration remains on the skin for several days, and on the cuticle as it takes for the fingernail to grow anew. For this reason, the ink should not be exposed to direct sunlight before use. In the application of ink, the polling staff should ensure voters ink the left thumb and dip it until first joint.

168. As proxy voting is allowed, inking the fingers of a proxy is the left index finger.

169. *Contingency material procedures.* Contingency sensitive material must be accounted for at all times. For this reason, it is essential that a handover form follows the material from HQ to the Provincial Office to Area Administrators to Polling Station Returning Officers.

170. *Suspension of Poll.* The Polling Station Returning Officer may decide to suspend polling if the polling centre/polling station is threatened by riot, violence or any other event, including natural disasters which makes polling impossible or endangers the lives of polling staff and voters. The Polling Station Returning Officer must inform the area secretary after suspending polling, who in turn will inform the Constituency Electoral Officer who informs HQ. If the reason for suspension no longer applies the polling station can reopen and this should again be communicated up the line to the VEO HQ.

171. *Closing of Poll.* At 16:30 the Polling Station Returning Officer ensures that all remaining voters have joined the queue, will vote. Any voters arriving after this time will not be allowed to vote. Polling continues until all voters in the queue have voted. After the last voter has voted, the polling station returning officer will seal the slit of the ballot box, allowing the observers and representatives present to make a record of the seal number.

172. Party and candidate representatives, observers and media will be allowed to stay in polling stations to observe polling while adhering to their respective codes of conduct. The Polling Station Returning Officer have full authority to enforce procedures and codes of conduct in their stations and centers.

173. *Communication equipment.* Each Area Secretary and each Polling Station Returning Officer will have a means of communication on Election Day. Depending on local conditions this will be either a cell phone or a satellite phone. The area secretary will be monitoring and visiting all the polling stations under their supervision during polling.

174. *Communication plan.* In order for all arrangements to be in place and for the VEO HQ to be able to follow the progress with preparations for polling and counting and during the processes, Deputy PEO will develop a communication plan, which will clearly define all scheduled communications required during the process. The plan will cover the communications required, the schedule and the mode for each communication.

175. *Electoral Operations Update.* In order to manage polling day communications and in order to ensure quick responses and decision-making, VEO HQ and each Constituency Electoral Officer will have regular communication, all necessary communication equipment, as well as regular contact with representatives from police forces and perhaps other local institutions that participate in the electoral process. These regular updates will be exchanged on a daily basis starting with the commencement of the distribution of material to the polling stations, and last until all result sheets are retrieved at the national tally centre in Port Vila.

176. *Content.* Scheduled communications on and around polling day will focus on:

- Arrival of material to the Polling Station;
- Opening of Polling Stations;
- Mid-day report;
- Completion of Counting;
- Return of sensitive material to the Provincial Office after counting;
- The preliminary count results;
- Polling Station observations, comments and closing report.

177. *Post-Election Report on Release of Contingency Materials.* If the contingency sensitive material was used, to facilitate better planning for the next elections, the provincial electoral officer will submit a short report to the Deputy PEO stating the reasons of release of sensitive material, quantities, and to what polling station codes the material was released.

178. *External Relations on and around polling day.* The VEO public outreach officer will, in consultation with the PEO and Deputy PEO Operations, establish a schedule for official communications on the progress of polling. This could include communications on the material delivery, opening of the polls and estimates of turn-out figures. Any major incidents could be reported as well. The Deputy PEO will consolidate the information and pass them on to the public outreach officer. Meetings with media will be held by the PEO at the VEO HQ, and EC Chairman at the Electoral Commission.

179. *Counting overview.* Counting of ballots is a very important and sensitive process because it has a direct impact on the integrity and credibility of the electoral process.

180. Votes are counted in the polling station, immediately following the close of polls. Counting is conducted by the polling station staff, with the presiding officer being the head of the counting staff. Political party and candidate representatives, as well as electoral observers, are allowed to witness the counting inside the polling station; members of the public at large can follow the process from outside the polling station. Candidates are also allowed to be present at the count.

181. At the conclusion of voting, the polling station returning officer will seal the ballot box lid, record the seal numbers on the reconciliation form provided and polling staff will prepare the layout of the polling station for the count. The returning officer will inform party and candidate representatives and observers that if they leave the polling station before the counting is finished, they will not be allowed to come back inside. The Returning Officer will note in the Polling Station Report names and functions of the persons present in the polling station.

182. Before opening the ballot box, the Returning Officer will:

- count signatures of voters on the electoral roll and note total numbers of signatures on the Reconciliation & Results Form (RRF);
- count unused ballots/ballot booklets, and note remaining ballots/ballot booklets on the RRF;
- pack unused ballots/ballot booklets into an envelope and note the numbers on the envelope (later to be packed into the ballot box).

183. Following the official close of polls, the ballot box is opened and all envelopes are removed from the box. The Presiding Officer then takes the ballot papers from the envelopes and the ballots are sorted by candidate and invalid ("void"). When all ballot papers have been sorted, they are counted for each candidate. The Polling Clerks record the number of votes cast for each candidate, and all invalid votes, on two tally sheets provided for that purpose.

184. During the count, the Presiding Officer will declare a ballot paper invalid ("void") if: (a) any writing or mark in the ballot identifies the voter; (b) the ballot is not in an envelope or is in a non-official envelope; or (c) the ballot is in an envelope containing more than one ballot paper. Invalid votes are not counted.

185. The Presiding Officer instructs the Polling Clerks to count the number of checks (or the marginal signatures) in the electoral list. If the number of envelopes is found to be more or less than the marginal signatures or checks made on the list, the discrepancy is stated in the report.

186. On the close of counting, or on a recount, a candidate or his authorized agent may request the Presiding Officer to conduct a recount and further recounts, but the Presiding Officer may refuse to do so if in his opinion the request is unreasonable.

187. At the end of the count, the Presiding Officer declares counting of votes completed and formally announces the votes cast for each candidate in the polling station. All political entity representatives and observers present take note of the preliminary result.

188. Immediately after declaring the counting of votes completed, the Presiding Officer completes the official report on polling, including the following information: a) the number of registered voters; b) the number of voters who voted; c) the number of invalid ("void") ballot papers; d) the number of valid votes cast for each candidate; e) other matters required by the

rules, and such other matters as the PEO may decide. The report is made in duplicate in French, English or Bislama and is signed by the presiding officer and the polling clerks. It is also countersigned by any of the candidates or candidate representatives present at the count. After the report has been signed, it is placed in a sealed envelope; the Presiding Officer also seals in separate packets the counted and invalid ballots.

189. Both the report and the sealed packets (which are placed in the ballot boxes) are delivered to the registration officer responsible for the constituency. When a Registration Officer/Constituency has received the ballot boxes with reports from the constituency's polling stations, he/she ensures the ballot boxes are safely transferred to the EC headquarters in Port Vila. Tallying of results is done by the EC in Port Vila and, as soon as practicable, the EC announces the number of votes cast for each candidate in each constituency. The candidates with the highest number of votes win the corresponding seats and are declared elected.

190. *Packing results and material.* The Returning Officer will check all documentation from the polling station, in the case of mistakes or miscalculations make corrections to the documentation if necessary. The Returning Officer will then pack RRF along with the electoral lists with signatures, tally book, poll book, envelope with valid votes, envelope with unused ballots back, and indelible ink into the ballot box and seal it. Seal numbers are noted on the seal number form.

191. *Retrieval of results and materials from polling stations to provincial office/warehouse.* All ballot boxes and results will be collected from polling station returning officer by the relevant area secretary. Where possible the material will be collected from the polling station by the area secretary on the evening of polling day. If required, they will be collected the day after polling day.

192. In all cases the Polling Station Returning Officer will remain with the material at all times until they are handed over to the Area Administrator. The Area Administrator will be responsible until the hand-over to Constituency Electoral Officers/Provincial Officers. With the exception of polling stations that are very difficult to access, the retrieval of results to the Constituency Electoral Officer/Provincial Officer is expected to be completed by the day after polling.

193. Party and candidate representatives, as well as observers, will be permitted to remain with the ballot boxes until they are collected. Representatives and observers are also permitted to travel with the materials to the Provincial Electoral Office but not in VEO vehicle (or other mean of transportation). They will be required to make their own transportation arrangements.

194. *Provincial intake.* The intake process for ballot boxes (with results and other material packed securely inside) will take place at the provincial office/warehouse, under the management and supervision of the Constituency Electoral Officers/Provincial Electoral Officer. Ballot boxes will be checked for any evidence of tampering. The Constituency Electoral Officers/Provincial Electoral Officer will retain the ballot boxes, unopened, at the provincial electoral warehouse.

195. *Retrieval from provinces to national tally center.* The Constituency Electoral Officer/Provincial Electoral Officer will send ballot boxes, unopened, to the EC HQ for verification, with a designated VEO staff member, or bring it to Port Vila himself/herself. The Provincial Electoral Office will maintain careful records of all polling stations sent to the VEO HQs. The majority of results will have been delivered to the EC HQs three days after polling.

196. Adequate security provisions are critical to the success of the polling and counting operations. Security will be required for the movement of materials, VEO offices, warehouses,

for the polling stations, if necessary for VEO staff as well as for the other participants in the electoral process including naturally the voters.

197. *Movement of staff and material.* Movement planning, deployments and retrievals will be executed in close coordination with the Police. All movement of sensitive materials will require escorts.

198. *VEO HQ security.* During the period of the polling operation, security measures need to be provided to VEO HQ office and warehouse.

199. *Security in the field.* Security for the movement of Area Administrators, for their activities and meetings, as well as for Provincial Offices/warehouses, eventual district level storage and the polling stations will be coordinated with local police, chief's etc. by Constituency Electoral Officers/Provincial Officers at the provincial level.

200. *Security for stakeholders.* Police Forces will also be required to take measures in order to ensure the security and freedom of movement of representatives, observers and the media for the polling operation, and particularly for voters on polling day itself.

TALLY AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

201. *Objective.* The key objective of the verification conducted at EC HQs is to consolidate polling station results accurately and transparently, identify suspected cases of fraud and to release verified results systematically.

202. *Overview.* Results will be brought to the controlled environment of the HQ tally center unopened and will be checked and consolidated in a suggested new five-step process supervised directly by the management team. Results with possible problems are set aside for investigation. The entire process is open to observation by accredited political entity representatives, electoral observers, and the media.

PREPARATIONS

203. Preparations for tallying include the establishment of a procedure, production of forms, training of the relevant staff members, and setting up the verification process at the EC HQs.

204. *Tallying procedures.* The Electoral Commission with the PEO and Deputy PEO Operations will establish tallying procedures and forms, (including RRF) based on previous experience, as well as mid-way reconciliations, and particularly to ensure strict controls that allow to identify and deal with cases of fraud.

205. *Tally staff training.* The DPEO will organize training for tally staff latest three weeks before Election Day in the established procedure, and in order to allow timely address of potential issues emerging from the training discussions, testing etc.

206. The PEO and DPEO is responsible for setting up the process of verification of results. The general setup should be ready to receive, and process results one week ahead of Election Day.

207. EC/VEO HQ will be operational from 7:30 hours to 21:30 hours and the tallying process/validation of results is expected to take 5 days.

208. Only authorized staff and accredited candidate representatives, media representatives and observers will be granted access to the EC HQs during the verification process. No telephones or recording devices will be allowed into the tally center without prior authorization.

209. *Data back-ups.* To ensure integrity of the data entry process, routine data backups will be made daily during data entry operations and backup data will be kept on another different safe location.

210. *Reception of ballot boxes with results and material.* The intake process will commence on the evening of Election Day, from the polling stations nearest by and will continue until the last ballot box has arrived. It is critical for the election timeline that there are no delays in the shipments from the polling stations or provincial offices. The DPEO and Logistics Officer/Store man will assist with the tracking and progress of material and results.

211. *Data Entry Process.* All polling station reconciliation and results forms (RRF) will be entered into the national tally database and processed through a suggested five-step process:

Step 1: Intake. During the receipt and intake at the EC/ VEO HQ the Deputy PEO and Logistics Officer will be charged with ensuring that all material is properly received from the provincial offices. Ballot boxes are received, seals numbers checked and broken, and contents checked. Incomplete ballot boxes/broken seals/changed seal numbers will be set aside and investigated. DPEO will assist with these investigations. Once the content is confirmed, ballot boxes will be emptied and the RRF taken to HQs where it's logged as received for data entry. The Field Ops & Logistics Officer will maintain a record of the receipt of ballot boxes by polling center/polling station code.

Step 2: Data Entry of Result Forms. The VEO Data Entry team will be responsible for the data entry of the result forms into the national tally database.

Step 3: Forms Review and Correction. At this stage the national tally database entries will be compared with estimates and past results by Senior Management, and entries with inconsistencies will be marked. The forms will be reviewed again, indicative requirements for recounting considered, and/or correct the errors in accordance with the actual RRF sheet.

Step 4: Quality Control. This step is for Senior Management to review a percentage of randomly selected RRFs. This in effect a random manual audit of the boxes, and a random ballot box can be opened and counted/RRF checked.

Step 5: Archive. Once results have been entered into the national tally database, the RRFs, physical ballots and material will be archived in the HQ storage, and the inventory list updated.

212. *Tally Report to Senior Management.* At the end of each day the tally center will provide management with an extract of the status and progress. This brief report will include cumulative totals for the constituencies as they have been tallied and will include results broken-down by stations. It will also contain details of eventual inconsistencies in entries, recommended polling stations for recounting and the possible corrections made.

213. *Quarantined Ballot Boxes/Result forms.* At the end of each day senior Management will review any potential quarantined ballot boxes and result forms and make a decision on further action required.

214. *Verification process output.* The verification process staff will provide progressive results on a daily basis to:

- The VEO Senior Management (PEO and Deputy PEOs);
- EC Commissioners;
- The VEO Results Website, to give updates and display statistics

- The VEO Facebook page

215. Progressive results will be checked by Senior Management before being presented to the EC Commissioners. Management will advise the EC Commissioners as to whether the results should be certified. They will also advise the EC Commissioners if it appears any investigations need to be carried out. The results will be presented by constituency once the results for each constituency are complete.

216. *Certification.* The EC Commissioners will decide which results they certify, and which results are referred back to the VEO for investigation. Certified results will be prepared by the Tally Center for release. These prepared results will be provided to EC Commissioners, the PEO and the Public outreach officer only. No results will be official unless and until certified by EC Commissioners.

217. *Complaints.* Before the final results are announced, any complaints will be investigated and considered by the Supreme Court. If necessary, VEO HQ will instruct to conduct recounts, at HQ level.

218. Due to the limited size of the EC/VEO HQs, there will be limits to the number of observers, political party representatives and media representative allowed in the center at any one time. It is preferred to have no more than 2-3 visitors at any given time. In order to facilitate this the VEO public outreach officer will coordinate visits to the verification process.

219. *Announcement of results.* As soon as practicable after the election, the EC ensures the results are circulated in each constituency as appropriate and published in the official Gazette. The results and the turnout figures will be announced exclusively by the EC.

220. The EC will announce the number of votes cast for each candidate in each constituency as soon as practicable. The number of candidates counting down from the candidate who obtains the highest number of votes in order of the votes obtained that equals the number of seats allocated to that constituency will be declared elected.

221. *Declaration of oldest candidate elected.* Should two or more candidates in a constituency receive the same number of votes, the eldest must be declared elected.

222. Once the results have been compiled and announced, they will be distributed to the media, to political parties and other stakeholders. The EC does not announce or give out preliminary results, only final results. Following the release of results, the public outreach officer will ensure copies are provided to the relevant stakeholders and sent to each provincial office for public display.

223. *Website.* A webpage for the electoral results will be developed to the main EC/VEO website. The results will be published here, as soon as the final results have been announced by the EC.

224. *Provincial Offices.* When final results are certified by the EC, the results will be made available at the provincial offices.

225. *Public Information.* The Public outreach officer will organize a press conference and briefing to the media, political parties, candidates, and domestic and international observers once the tally center commences its operation. This event will focus on general update on the polling process, updates on retrieval of results from polling centers/polling stations, an outline of the tally center process, observation of data entry etc.

Date	Activity
	Training of tally center staff
	Database update and testing
	Set-up of the verification process at HQs
	Start of Tally Process
	Briefing to media, candidate and political party representatives and observers on tally and announcement of results process
	Completion of tally process
	Announcement of Final Results
	Results published and available at provincial offices and EC/VEO website
	Adjudication of complaints by Supreme Court

226. The EC has sole authority to determine the timing of announcement of results, and any complaints concerning the validity of the published certified results must be addressed to the Supreme Court.

227. *Security.* During the process of tallying and announcement of the results, security will need to be provided to the EC/VEO HQ where the national data center is located.

IV. POST-ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES

228. *Objective.* The post-electoral activities related to the electoral process are designed to collect and document the experience of the EC and VEO and other stakeholders of the process, ensure that lessons are learnt, useful recommendations are formulated and implemented as soon as possible. They also intend to consolidate the capacity of the VEO and reconfigure it in a manner that can be sustained for several years during which no election may take place.

229. *Overview.* The post-electoral activities consist primarily of conducting surveys and lessons learned workshops including with provincial electoral officers, archiving relevant documentation, consolidating reports and recommendations, identifying and programming the actions required to implement them and writing up a final report. Under the supervision of the PEO, the Deputy PEO will coordinate these activities. They will also be involved in the final retrieval, the closure of local level warehouses, perhaps the disposal of some assets, update of inventory lists etc. This will be directed by the PEO.

230. *Retrieval and disposal.* The Logistics Officer will plan the disposal of assets that are not worth retrieving, set up the necessary storage facilities and retrieve materials as necessary.

231. *Lessons Learned.* Within a month after the final certification of all results the Deputy PEO will arrange a Lessons-Learned Workshop with different stakeholders and VEO Provincial Electoral Officers on different electoral process topics, varying from administrative challenges to operational challenges – and lessons learned.

232. *Consolidation of reports.* The various plans and reports of the electoral process will be gathered by Deputy PEO in coordination with the legal Officer. The compiled information would be used for the final report in order to allow for monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of plans. The Admin/Finance Officer will also keep records of the recommendations and reports of different stakeholders, especially the observer groups, during all phases of election process.

233. *Final Report.* The *final report* will be ready not later than six months after final certification of results. This report will include details on the different electoral phases, their challenges, as well as recommendations for future elections and a plan and indicative timeline for their implementation.

ANNEX 1: Generic Electoral Timeline

NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS:

- Opening of process for proxy voting and issuance of duplicate electoral cards
- Opening of period of nomination of candidates
- Closing of period of nomination of candidates
- Closing of process for proxy voting and issuance of duplicate electoral cards
- Publication of lists of qualified candidates
- Opening of electoral campaign period
- Accreditation, opening and closing:
 - a) candidates and political party representatives
 - a) accreditation of electoral observers and
 - b) media
- Closing of accreditation of candidates and political party's representatives
- Closing of electoral campaign period
- Polling day
- Announcement of results

ANNEX 2: SNAP Parliamentary Election Timeline

(as established by Vanuatu Electoral Commission for this snap election)

2022 Snap Election Timeline

- **Proxy & Duplicate Cards Open**
08 September 2022
- **Candidature Open**
12 September 2022
- **Candidature Close (5pm)**
21 September 2022
- **All Proxy & Duplicate Card Application Close (5pm)**
29 September 2022
- **Publication of Qualified Candidates**
01 October 2022
- **Campaign Open**
01 October 2022
- **Accreditation of Party and Candidate Agents Open**
03 October 2022
- **Accreditation of Party and Candidate Agents Close (5pm)**
07 October 2022
- **Campaign Close (Midnight)**
10 October 2022
- **Polling Day**
13 October 2022



Annex 4: Risk Mitigation Matrix

RISK ASSUMPTIONS & MITIGATION STRATEGIES

There is urgency to assist the electoral authorities in developing a detailed electoral operational plan, an electoral awareness plan, an electoral procurement plan against current inventory etc.

Strategy 1:

- a. Court decision overturns dissolution which will trigger foreseen scenario of holding Vanuatu's first ever event of Malekula concurrent elections on 28 September. This will require significant awareness campaigns, and thorough training of polling and counting staff to ensure clear procedures on E-day and the successful results of both elections.

The focus would then return to the electoral reform process; the project just received a first **draft** of the Electoral Bill from the Office of Attorney General/State Law. We are still on track for November Parliament sitting. Refocus on national ID Cards coverage, inclusion and data accuracy, registration of remaining 15% of population, verification and validation of electoral lists and digital transformation of the electoral sector. Aiming for Digital ID launch end November/early December. Establishing data sharing agreement across departments within the Ministry, and later across Government.

Strategy 2

- b. If Dissolution holds:

All efforts will focus on the selection, merging data and getting voter lists printed for all 352 polling stations in 18 constituencies. Comprehensive outreach plan to work closely with MoIA, with Chiefs, churches, youth councils, schools, area administrators, to meet the people where they live to validate their data. Develop an application to accommodate offline registration and validation for each area of responsibility. Support massive data flows and follow ups between the field and Port Vila. Support ongoing data analysis at HQ through a boosted data centre.

Focus is to establish a robust electoral process, legally compliant, accountable, and accepted by all. Keep analysing political considerations. The Malampa provincial by-election would roll over to be held concurrently with the snap election and this too would require significant awareness campaign and polling staff training.

All other project activities would be put on hold till after election of new Parliament.

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
Legislative Reform is disturbed	Very concerning is possibility of disengagement with Single Harmonised Reform Bill through Attorney General review may fail to be presented in a delayed and foreshortened November Sitting. This sitting is held for Budget approval but often a small raft of Bills might be considered. If it's a new Coalition (following dismissal of the Dissolution) and successful Motion of No Confidence, we may have new Minister's needing to support the Bill's passage.	VEEP to continue to support final review of the Bill, and start translation, in hope it may yet be presented to Parliament. If not passed in November – VEEP will keep being active to make it tabled for April 2023 Parliament held for Supplementary Budget with once again perhaps a small raft of legislation considered.
Malekula General by-election and Malampa Provincial Council Election on hold would have to be resumed with more time pressure	Two elections are now tentatively on hold although preparations are still ongoing - Malekula General by-election and Malampa Provincial Council Election for Malekula Constituency. Support preparations in case Dissolution is disallowed and we move back to 2024 for General Election. If no dissolution, by-elections will proceed on 28 September. The current uncertainty is creating tremendous operational pressure to prepare in very short timelines.	VEEP commitment to support awareness material (posters and social media posts), and polling staff training material videos and booklets for holding first ever concurrent elections. If dissolution is upheld, the by-elections will roll over and be held concurrently with Snap General Election (and provincial council by-election).
Inaccurate Voter Register	This has been an on-going activity area for VEEP with significant improvements. The goal of validated accurate National	VEEP identification of UNDP funds to pay contracts of 19 VEEP trained Data Verification Officers (DVOs) On-going VEEP support through TA Chahine Hamila and Kathleen

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
	<p>Voter Registry was scheduled to be achieved well before 2024 General Election. Priority however was to have the Electoral Bill pass in parliament. Without this, it is still allowed to vote with both electoral cards and National ID cards, so data will be messy and open to challenge politically and in courts.</p>	<p>Preissing to support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new inter-operable Central Civil Register (RV5) Database • Development of Electoral Features in RV5 for the possibility of extracting the voter lists from the civil register • Preliminary Voter Lists (with mixed methodology – electoral cards and ID cards) • Training for CRIM staff and DVOs • Training for VEO staff • Training of Polling Station staff through video material and printing of updated polling station manuals. • Activation of all ‘inactive national ID cards, and voters above 18. <p>Updates, validation and verification must be accelerated as much as possible and voter lists (covering both electoral cards and ID cards) urgently sent out for inspection by the electorate through support of area administrators.</p> <p>This includes trying to get as many ID Cards as possible updated, checked for place residence as residence is basis for Polling Station Voter Lists.</p> <p>VEEP has also been supporting and raising awareness with national decision makers on the importance of exhibiting preliminary vote lists for public inspection and to build consensus for the first time in four years.</p>
Tight Time Frame for Candidate Lists	Candidate nomination, payment screening then lists to be prepared for Ballot Papers. E.g., up to 67 candidates	<p>VEEP support as needed Some DVOs will be seconded to support candidate screening.</p>

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
	presented for 1 Constituency in the past.	
Ballot Papers	VERY short time frame, with high operational and political pressure.	Budget to come from GoV.
Inaccurate Polling Station Voter Lists - 352 Polling stations – lots to do in such a short time frame	This is an on-going, historical issue causing Electoral Disputes.	<p>Purchase 2 tablets per polling station (352) with digital Voter Lists loaded. Online and offline voter identification for voters coming with national ID card.</p> <p>Remaining voters still to be verified with electoral cards on printed voter lists.</p> <p>Area Administrators & Area administrators = 72 Area Councils x 2 officers = 114</p> <p>Total procurement of tablets: qty 818</p> <p>VEEP is supporting on the development of appropriate SOPs to mitigate the procedural inefficiencies.</p>
Preliminary Voter Lists prepared & provided for validation	Urgent need supported by DG MOIA as a priority but being resisted by EC – supposedly cases of political groups using the lists to intimidate or bribe voters	Assuage fears of officials and send out Preliminary lists as soon as possible. Would be fantastic to have these on tablets but time frame is so tight.
Polling Lists close 6 weeks BEFORE announced Election date, not giving enough time to potential voters to register	Gives VERY LIMITED time to update and validate ID Card information on voter residency and linkage to polling stations/Voter Lists	<p>VEEP identification of UNDP funds to pay contracts of 19 VEEP trained Data Verification Officers (DVOs)</p> <p>Awareness campaign on the need to register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 weeks for registration - 1 week for inspection

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
		<p>If my understanding is correct, we should split this risk in two:</p> <p>1- close of registration: disenfranchisement</p> <p>2- inspection: lists are not accurate enough</p>
<p>SOPs for new processes will not be ready in time for the snap election</p>	<p>Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for new central civil register (RV5) needed as well as SOPs for polling & logistics aimed at having a solid, cleaned up and fully compliant (with the legal framework and international best standards) voter registry. In all likelihood, many SOPs will not be ready or implemented for the snap election.</p>	<p>VEEP to support on the implementation of politically acceptable mitigation measures. An example of such measures is the push to exhibit preliminary lists, a legal obligation that hasn't been implemented in four years. The use of electoral ink is another mitigation measure.</p>
<p>Still using old Voter Books which contain many irregularities.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the legislation to end the transitional phase and support the intent to no longer allow the use of the old easily copied Electoral Cards from Jan 2023 will now be subverted and both can be used for voting purposes. This will mean greater possibility of corrupted voter lists with mixed ID cards and electoral cards, and greater risk of electoral irregularities. The old voter cards increased potential for voter fraud (no photo, no ID number) etc</p>	<p>Continue to move ahead with National ID Card issuance, and verification of voter's residency and allocated polling station. Implementation of politically acceptable mitigation measures such as the exhibition of preliminary lists or use of electoral ink.</p>

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
Snap General Election unbudgeted in 2022 Appropriations Bill for GoV 2023 Budget cannot be secured by Caretaker Government	The burden of gratuity payments to all staff of each Minister (the Cabinet) will be considerable. Gratuities will be guesstimated 1.3 billion vatu – mostly unbudgeted. Ministers x 51 = 227 million + 130 million COM Paper Election Costs request	GoV may seek to recoup some costs from operational & salaries budgets of the 13 Ministries
Snap General Election unbudgeted in 2022 Appropriations Bill for GoV 2023 Budget	VEO EC and CRIM do not have approved operational or salaries budget to deal with extra activities	VEEP to support if possible (in line with VEEP Project mandate outputs and resources as per DG directions)
Snap General Election unbudgeted in 2022 Appropriations Bill for GoV 2023 Budget	Insufficient funds	VEEP to respond to Development Partner inquiries re projected shortfalls with suggestions of support type & resources needed.
Delay to November Parliament Sitting (Budget Sitting)	Delays may impact negatively on holding of the November Parliament Sitting (usually held in first week of November annually) that very importantly reviews the Appropriations Bill to be approved	VEEP will keep raising awareness among national stakeholders on the importance of prioritizing public budgeting.

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
	for the GoV's 2023 Budget. A delay like this occurred previously with the very dangerous result of a lack of funds to pay Public Servants and to cover the costs of Government operations.	
Purchase of 2,500 bottles of Ink	Special ink for inking thumbs usually ordered in Europe – not enough time to order and be delivered	Utilise UNDP ink orders for Fiji elections for additional purchase for Vanuatu
Voter Awareness Committee	Calling of Committee on Friday 26 th August derailed by announcement of Public Servants Public Holiday	Hold in ensuing week Continue VEEP support for Tony Tarivonda Voter Awareness & Outreach Officer
Public outreach Budget	Tony Tarivonda Voter Awareness & Outreach Officer too prepare budget.COM Paper proposes 130 million for Snap Election, but severe paucity of detail means it is impossible to determine if public outreach budget is enough Need posters Candidate handbooks (LIST)	VEEP budget to be secured/identified May need addition UNDP support or from other Development Partners i.e. DFAT, GfG
Polling Equipment & consumables	Will need private sector contracts to deliver voting boxes ballot papers etc. Can contracts be written in Caretaker Government?	Gaps in funding presented to other Development Partners Logistics SOP MUST be written ASAP
Inter –island transport – Vanuatu's Patrol not operating & Air	MV <i>Vanuatu's patrol boat</i> RVS Takuare remains docked at the SinoVan wharf in Port Vila where it has been since the second week of June because of	Support VEO as possible. They have enormous experience in doing this. May need funds for ballot boxes and printing

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
Vanuatu domestic flights limited	mechanical issues. Lack of pilot hours and service issues sees domestic flight schedule cut.	
Polling Officer Training	Cascade Training for polling staff – usually done well in advance by travel/programs through each of 6 provinces. Whilst some Presiding officers are very experienced, there are changes	New or updated video zoomed if possible.
Need for specific Malekula Election Training	On Malekula –Malekula by Election & General Election voting on same day but different coloured	VEEP to support with posters being designed by Wade Taylor
Zoom Training	Only Provincial capitals have Zoom equipment capacity	
Public outreach		
MoIA detailed Electoral Operational Plan identifying priority activity	DG MoIA feels there is an urgent need to develop a detailed Electoral Operational Plan identifying priority activity. will hold Executive Meeting to emphasise it is now a Caretaker Government and that all discussion with Deputy Prime Minister must go through her office otherwise it could be construed as insubordination	This would assist by focussing activities. VEEP to support if possible (in line with VEEP Project mandate outputs and resources as per DG directions

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation/Treatment activity description
Electoral violence	<p>Disruption of campaign period</p> <p>Election day/count</p> <p>Announcement of results</p>	<p>Media/hate speech monitoring, EC/security committee monitoring. Signing of codes of conduct. Ensuring political party/candidate adherence to codes or conduct. PP and candidate briefings. Hot spot analysis. Local coordination with tribal leaders/mediation efforts.</p> <p>Security monitoring. Codes of conduct. Police sensitization and familiarization of election day procedures/responsibilities. Hot spot monitoring. Observer, candidate and agent briefings. Local leader mediation role?</p> <p>Security monitoring. Codes of conduct. EC, international and UN messaging. Transparent and well publicized EDR mechanisms.</p>
Acceptance of results	Non-acceptance of results leading to violence or conflict	EDR. Mediation efforts of EC or others. UN/RC advocacy (others?).
EDR	Confusing, hard to access, timely decision making	EC codification and publication of process. EC outreach. Training of party and candidate representatives. Observer access. Coordination between EC & Supreme Court. EC & Supreme Court take timely decisions.
Confusion as to identification requirements	Possible manipulation or perception of manipulation	EC and partner NGO public outreach. Observer, candidate and party representative presence/access to polling facilities. Use of indelible Ink.
Time taken to count & openness and accuracy of tally/tabulation	Possible manipulation or perception of manipulation	EC codification and publication of procedures. Candidate and agent training. Access for observers, candidate and representatives. UN/RC messaging.

