



PRODUKTIF TURISM BLONG YUMI INITIATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

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Overview

The Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team funded by the European Development Fund (EDF 11) conducted field work, training and awareness in all 6 Provinces of Vanuatu to meet the following activities within the Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2021-2025). These activities took place under the leadership of the Director of Tourism and National Agritourism Coordinator in collaboration with advisors from the Pacific Agribusiness Research and Development Initiative (PARDI 2) and the “Development of a third party verified voluntary sustainable certification program for beef and other key commodities in Vanuatu”



project under the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, (ACIAR), GEF 5 Integrated Sustainable Land and Coastal Management Project, and supported by the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

3.1 Slow Food Education and Support Program

3.1.2 Undertake educational campaigns and community awareness to encourage eating local food and healthy eating habits

3.1.3 Develop training to ensure quality of assurance of food served to tourists

3.2 Traditional Cuisine Revival Program

3.2.1 Undertake anthropological research and cultural verification of traditional gardening and traditional cuisine in each Province

3.2.2 Identify traditional agricultural systems in each Province that can be recognised as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)

3.2.3 Develop a Traditional cuisine cooking classes product development and support program

3.4 Agritourism Product Development and Business Support

3.4.1 Develop a support program for wellness Agritourism home stays and tours product development (wellness, traditional, medicine, traditional sustainable farming)

3.4.3 Develop an agribusiness tours support program to increase the number and quality of local agribusinesses

3.4.4 Develop standards with VBS to ensure agritourism businesses are high quality and competitive


3.4.5 Develop tailored training for Agritourism Entrepreneurs and implement in all 6 Provinces

Background

Prior to COVID 19 an increasing number of rural communities in Vanuatu were partaking or expressing interest in locally owned sustainable tourism development, yet in Vanuatu, for example, over the last decade locally owned businesses have continued to receive less than 10% of the overall tourism expenditure (Stefanova, 2008; Vanuatu Department of Tourism HRD Plan, 2020). Addinsall et al., (2016) highlighted the potential for the development of policies and programmes that strengthen opportunities for diversified tourism offerings which adhere to sustainability principles and facilitate stronger integration of smallholder farmers and their communities into the tourism economy.

While attempts have been made to prioritise the need for growth in rural areas, prior to 2019 there was little evidence of any substantive planning or implementation of policies or programmes to support this (Scheyvens & Russell, 2010; 2013; 2019). In response to the lack of meaningful local involvement in tourism in Vanuatu (particularly outside of Port Vila) the Vanuatu Department of Tourism developed the Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Policy (2019-2030) which is a “call to industry, community and Government to transform our tourism industry from dependence to resilience, to be more aligned to our traditional values, an industry that is ethical, inclusive, cares for all our people, regenerates and protects our environment, kastom and culture, offers us resilience in the face of climate change and external threats such as COVID-19 and gives us the opportunity to have meaningful encounters with others” (Spooner, 2019).


The VSTP has now informed the Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2021-2025) which incorporates key activities to meet the goals and objectives of the VSTP while also addressing the tourism dependency in Vanuatu which has been brought to light from the impacts of COVID 19. Prior to COVID 19 the tourism industry in Vanuatu was concentrated in the two main capital cities/towns; had a high level of foreign ownership and control; drives rural to urban migration; perpetuates non-inclusive development and economic inequalities as it is highly concentrated (few people benefiting) and encourages tourism silos (enhanced



through cruise ships); has a high level of leakage out of the local economy; has a high reliance on imported foods; contributes to the dispossession of land and restricts access to coastal areas; increases land disputes within communities; is responsible for large scale destruction through vegetation clearance and dredging of mangroves and estuaries (thereby threatening species and accelerating a loss of biodiversity); contributes to coastal pollution; and is largely unregulated, unsupervised and resource intensive (Loehr, Addinsall, & Weiler, 2019).

Vanuatu's dependence on tourism has also undermined subsistence capacities leaving many communities and households, particularly in urban settings, becoming dependent and vulnerable (Addinsall, 2017). With the absence of formal safety nets in Vanuatu, informal community and culturally based social protection systems (brought about through the traditional economy) are vital (Fingleton, 2005; Fontenay, 2010; Regenvanu, 2010; Simo, 2010; Anderson, 2011). The Vanuatu Government recognises the importance of the traditional economy as being essential in increasing the diversity, resilience and wellbeing of local communities suggesting "our traditional economy will be instrumental in the future protection from external threats such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather events and other impacts brought about from climate change" (Hon. James Bule, 2020). Scheyvens & Movono's (2020) research investigating the impact of COVID-19 in mostly COVID-free Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands highlights that although 73 percent of households had experienced a 'major decline' in income, there were significant improvements found in many participants mental, social and physical wellbeing, as a result of accessing customary land, customary systems and increased engagement in their communities.

Scheyvens & Movono (2020) concluded "although COVID-19 has had far-reaching socio-economic consequences, Pacific peoples do not see themselves as victims – rather, they are engaged in a dynamic process of reflection and adaptation, thus decision-makers should support them and be receptive to ideas they have for future development". In response to this the VSTS has key themes aimed at supporting wellbeing of the host destination, supporting resilience and diversification through agritourism to lessen dependency, and



applying sustainability and regenerative principles to ensure tourism contributes to enhancing Vanuatu's environment, culture and society.

The Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative of the Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2021-2025) specifically aims to support in the development of Agritourism Experiences that support the Slow Food Movement. The Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team are now working with the Vanuatu Agritourism Association and the Vanuatu Bureau of Standards to develop criteria for membership and standards for Agritourism businesses that are aligned to the Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Policy (2019-2030) objectives, Global Sustainable Tourism Council, Regenerative Organic Agriculture, and POETCom Pasifika Organic.

Definition of Agritourism for Vanuatu

Tourism is not your primary business, it is a form of commercial enterprise to attract visitors onto a farm, or agribusiness for the purpose of educating and facilitating a deeper connection to Vanuatu's productive sector. Agritourism experiences can consist of:

- Educational and immersive tours of sustainable, regenerative and traditional farming;
- Cooking demonstrations or classes in traditional or local cuisine;
- Educational and immersive tours of value addition in local and organic sustainable produce.

The criteria for entry into the Vanuatu Agritourism Association is to support the Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Policy (2019-2030) and Slow Food Principles in your business, community and households.



Agritourism Businesses will support the Slow Food Movement¹ by:

- Supporting a sustainable, organic and regenerative productive sector;
- Purchase produce locally where possible and in season;
- Ensure food production does not impact negatively on the environment;
- Protect the rights of animals and sustainably harvest;
- Support nutritional diversity, innovation and creativity in local cuisine²;
- Protect and promote traditional³ cultural heritage in farming and food preparation;
- Ensure that all actors in Vanuatu's productive sector are paid and treated fairly;
- Support in the decolonisation of Vanuatu's productive and tourism sectors

Project Activities


Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Awareness Workshops, Training and Field Work

The Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team developed and implemented interactive and informative training and awareness workshops with a strong focus on more meaningful participation from our agricultural communities in tourism through the development of Agritourism experiences, while still ensuring ongoing support of the Slow Food movement through increased representation of local, organic, healthy and seasonal food and traditional cuisine in the businesses and homes throughout Vanuatu.

¹ The goal of the Slow Food Movement in Vanuatu is to support food security and decrease the amount of imported packaged foods

² Local Cuisine is based on traditional knowledge, however allows for innovation and creativity to increase nutritional density, increase convenience and appeal to a wider audience.

³ Traditional Cuisine is based on traditional knowledge passed down generations, the goal is to protect and promote this knowledge.



With support from Technical Advisors from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), through the Pacific Agribusiness Research for Development Initiative (PARDI2) and GEF 5 Integrated Sustainable Land and Coastal Management Project, awareness also integrated the importance of protecting traditional gardening systems and the potential to develop agritourism experiences around these systems. In 2002, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) started the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) initiative to establish recognition for the conservation and adaptive management of traditional agricultural systems (FAO, 2009).

The key messages from the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative and at the core of understanding agritourism for Vanuatu, is that tourism is not your primary source of income, agritourism is a farm stay and/or educational tour of your farm, agribusiness or demonstration of traditional cuisine or slow food. Agritourism for Vanuatu has the potential to rejuvenate sustainable traditional food and farming systems through greater connection between tourists (local and international), school groups etc. with our primary producers and our value-adders.

The best way we can support Vanuatu and our people is to buy local and have pride in our local food. This will take everyone to help change the story from preferring imported and unhealthy foods for the health of our nation and economy going forward. The slow food movement is much more than just preparing food slowly and eating slowly for a long life. The National Coordinator Votausi Mackenzie-Reur suggests, “slow food means to eat local, eat in season, eat organic, it doesn’t have to take a long time to prepare, it’s about the distance the food travelled from the farm to the plate and trying to limit imported and processed foods. Leonid Vusilai our Traditional Cuisine Revival Technical Advisor stated “My tradition is always with me when I prepare local cuisine, I also use my creativity and

innovation to adapt these meals to be nutritionally diverse quick to prepare and able to compete with any international cuisine, this is what I want to see more of in Vanuatu, in our homes, restaurants and tourism businesses”.

Victoria Witias from Selmolo village stated “I’ve been planting and planting local food and I sell it to other bungalows but I actually don’t know how to cook it properly and I did not know it could taste so good, I’m so grateful to Leonid Vusali and the agritourism team for coming to our community”. Daniel Quarang from Hanare Custom Village stated, “this is the first time I have had support for agritourism from the Government and I’m so grateful, our community has a clear plan and understanding now of how to go forward in developing agritourism experiences”. The team conducted awareness in communities on nAmbae, Maewo, West Coast Santo, East Coast Santo, Luganville, Port Vila, Gaua, Vanua Lava, Mota Lava, Tanna, Aneityum, Malekula, and Maskelyns.



Figure 1. Madame Votausi Presentation at Maewo Workshop



Figure 2. Attendee's at Agritourism Workshop in Motalava

Prior to the commencement of field work, training and awareness an Expression of Interest form for participation in the Agritourism Product Development and Business Support Program as part of the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative was uploaded onto the Department of Tourism Website and sent out to all Provincial Tourism managers. Applicants were analysed based on set criteria and 27 operators were approved from all 6 Provinces for

entry into the pilot program based on meeting criteria (see Agritourism Support Week summary report).

Field work, training and awareness activities were conducted in the following locations between February and September 2021.

Date	Province	Location	Activity
7/2/21- 12/2/21	TAFEA	Tanna	Site Visit assessments of Agritourism Operators
7/3/21-11/3/21	SANMA	Santo/Malo	Site Visit assessments of Agritourism Operators
12/3/21-15/3/21	SHEFA	Efate	Site Visit assessments of Agritourism Operators
18/4/21 - 23/4/21	SHEFA	Port Vila	Agritourism Business Support Week (see summary report)
5/5/21 - 8/5/21	SANMA	Santo/Malo	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators
25/5/21	SHEFA	Port Vila	Produktif Turism Blong Yumi training with Provincial Tourism Managers
15/6/21-17/7/21	SHEFA	Tongoa	SHEFA Mini Agriculture Show
7/7/21 - 9/7/21	PENAMA	Ambae	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit
9/7/21- 11/7/21	PENAMA	Maewo	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit
11/7/21- 13/7/21	SANMA	West Coast Santo	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit

13/7/21 - 14/7/21	TORBA	Gaua	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit
14/7/21 - 15/7/21	TORBA	Mota Lava	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness,
15/7/21 - 16/7/21	TORBA	Vanua Lava	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit
17/7/21 - 20/7/21	SANMA	East Coast Santo	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Vanuatu Agritourism Association Meeting Port Orly
21/7/21 - 22/7/21	SANMA	Luganville	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness,
22/7/21 - 24/7/21	MALAMPA	Lamap	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit
25/7/21 - 29/7/21	MALAMPA	Maskelyns	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness,
4/8/21 - 6/8/21	TAFEA	Aneityum	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit
7/8/21 - 8/8/21	TAFEA	Tanna	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators, Produktif Turism Blong Yumi and GIAHS awareness, Water Taro site visit
22/8/21 - 25/8/21	TORBA	Vanua Lava	Lantarr Slow Food Festival
25/8/21 - 27/8/21	TORBA	Mota Lava	Product Development site visits with

			Agritourism Operators,
29/8/21 - 3/9/21	TAFEFA	Tanna	Tanna Week of Agriculture
4/9/21 - 8/9/21	TAFEFA	Tanna	Product Development Site Visits with Agritourism operators
10/9/21 - 15/9/21	SANMA	Santo/Malo	Product Development site visits with Agritourism Operators
15/9/21	SHEFA	Port Vila	Local Cuisine Cooking demonstration for ABC documentary
15/9/21 - 17/9/21	SHEFA	Port Vila & Moso	Interviews with Votausi, Cherise and Leo for the ABC documentary
17/9/21	SHEFA	Moso	Planning workshop for Agritourism Association meeting in October
22/9/21 - 27/8/21	SHEFA	Efate	Product Development Site Visits with Agritourism operators

Progress Against Milestones

3.1 Slow Food Education and Support Program

3.1.2 Undertake educational campaigns and community awareness to encourage eating local food and healthy eating habits

3.1.3 Develop training to ensure quality of assurance of food served to tourists

Slow Food Cooking Demonstrations

The Technical Advisor for the Traditional Cuisine Revival Program also undertook educational campaigns and community awareness to encourage the support of the Slow

Food Movement to encourage eating local food and healthy eating habits alongside the protection of Traditional Knowledge. These cooking demonstrations took place in Ambae, Maewo, Gaua, Mota Lava, Vanua Lava, Tanna, Santo, Malekula, Maskelyns, and Port Vila. The cooking demonstrations took place alongside a wider awareness around agritourism and how agritourism experiences can support the Slow Food movement by better connecting locals and visitors to Vanuatu's productive sector.


All cooking demonstrations took into consideration the traditional dishes that each community and agritourism operators have, that are unique to their community or island. For most of the demonstrations, dishes were created from local produce that were brought in by the community. The aim of the cooking demonstrations were to bring back pride to our food culture and show the community that our local food can also compete with the dominant food cultures being a drawcard in its own right. Participants were really interested and requested further training.



Figure 3. Leo Vusilai presenting cooking demonstrations Figure 4. Lamap cooking demonstration

SHEFA Mini Agriculture Show Tongoa June 2021

The three day SHEFA Mini Agriculture Show (SMAS) on Tongoa from 15 – 17 June 2021 provided a platform that demonstrated Vanuatu can boost business operations using what



is available locally supporting the concept of a circular economy and the Slow Food movement. The display of products from agritourism operators in our booths highlighted the essence of this when products were selected for ingredients in the cooking demonstration prepared on Tuesday the 16th of June. Products from farmers' and agribusiness stalls were selected to substitute the imported products in a recipe that was used by the chef in the cooking demonstrations. During the three days, it was our aim to help everyone to understand the definitions under the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative.

The team described agritourism not as a strategy to supply fresh produce to hotels but more as an educational and immersive experience to better connect both locals and visitors to Vanuatu's primary producers and agribusinesses.

'Slow food' is a term we've been very familiar with and the team emphasized the fact that it is our local products that are used to substitute the imported products with the same nutritional content in a recipe. This got the farmers and students who came by curious and were asking to know and understand more. We've explained that it is a movement to get farmers' products valued and used in the hotels, restaurants and in supermarkets for what they are worth and substituting imported products of their equal. This allows money to go straight to the farmers and focuses on improving quality and packaging including other post-harvest processes. Farmers were excited to know that it is a real business initiative, and that quality and standards will guarantee long term business relationships.

Canoe Race on Maskelyne Island July 2021

The team travelled to Maskylnes on Saturday 24 July, 2021. A welcome ceremony was performed in the early evening by the Chief and Chairman of the Committee for the canoe race and their members. It was also Childrens' Day and the community planned a Church Service the following day for all the children on the island. The Committee Chairman asked the team to do a presentation to the children on Sunday afternoon to mark Childrens' day.

On the Sunday afternoon the National Agritourism Coordinator and Communication Officer did a short presentation to over 50 school children at Pesakrus Community Hall. The presentation was to wish all the children a very happy childrens' day and to thank all the parents and teachers and community members to make this a special day for the children on the island.

The National Agritourism Coordinator's presentation made a point to all the students that she also grew up on a small island. She explained how she is from Malo Island in SANMA Province and is now a successful businesswoman in Vanuatu. There is no secret in her success. Her success was based on the importance of education as a female on her island. She had a big dream to become someone to help her country one day. She emphasized on the code of conduct for all students in schools in particular, being obedient, respectful and honest to their parents, teachers and most of all in their everyday lives.

The presentation also included nutrition and health but mostly focusing on being proud of our local foods as it is the way to be proud of our Vanuatu identity and to help our country to fight against the NCD crisis that is facing our country today. The pride in our local food has to start in our homes then to our schools and then it has to happen in all communities of Vanuatu. The teachers and children were very grateful for the 1-hour presentation.



Figure 5. Village school students at Maskelyne awareness workshop Figure 6. Younger Children gathered at Pescarus Hall



The opening of the Canoe Race on Maskelyne Island was a real experience for the team. There were also visitors from VTO, Air Vanuatu, VBTC, Cultural Centre and some tourist operators and holiday local tourists. There were chartered flights for the visitors early in the morning. The day began with a canoe parade with the Director of Department of Tourism, Mr. Jerry Spooner, leading the parade on a canoe with a white sail depicting the Agritourism logo. The Director was dressed as a Chief of the island with a weapon in his hand. It was a great symbol of the concept of Agritourism to revive our culture, traditional lifestyle and to have pride in our local food.

The parade was a colourful scene on the water with all the visitors in the canoes. It was a very proud moment to witness this traditional ceremony and the importance of the canoe to the livelihood of the people on Maskelyne islands. After the parade everyone assembled at the Peskarus Community Hall lawn for the official opening of the canoe race. Speeches from the dignitaries starting with the Director of the Department of tourism, VTO CEO, Chairman of Malampa tourism council and finally the Secretary General of MALAMPA who officially declared the Canoe Race on open.

After the official opening, lunch was served with the assistance of the Traditional Cuisine Revival Technical Advisor Leonid Vusilai. Leonid provided capacity building for different groups of mamas from different denominations on food preparation, as well as a food presentation during the Canoe Race event. This support was provided in an effort to identify available local produce, potential training needs as well as support the revival of traditional cuisine.



Figure 7. Department of Tourism race canoe




Figure 8. Director Jerry Spooner, Canoe Race Opening

Lantarr Slow Food Festival, West Vanua Lava, TORBA Province, August 2021

The Lantarr Slow Food Festival was held on West Vanua Lava Island, TORBA Province from 22nd till the 24th of August. The organising committee Siloa Slow Food Association are valuable partners in the Prodaktif Turism Blong Yumi initiative. The theme of the festival was “Protectem ol Kastom Fasin Tru Long Kastom Kakai Blong Gat Wan Helti Vanuatu” which is in line with the Department of Tourism’s Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2021 to 2025 under 3.1. Slow Food Education and Support Program. The festival was attended by the Director of Tourism, Mr. Jerry Spooner, National Agritourism coordinator and the Traditional and Local Cuisine Technical Advisor.

The activities carried out during the Lantarr Slow Food Festival were centered around protecting Vanuatu’s traditional knowledge through gardening systems, food preparation, food services and food consumption. The aim is to improve the livelihood of Vanuatu people in a holistic manner, by promoting local foods to maintain good health and prosperity for all people of Vanuatu.




Traditional Cuisine is referred to as dishes that are handed down from generations. We as locals are no longer serving our local dishes with pride and consequently rate our traditional food very poorly. The team's presence at this event allowed us to communicate with Government representatives, farmers and agribusiness about the importance of reconnecting to our local food and traditional food heritage. In order to do that, we need to develop more agritourism experiences that enable visitors to feel a behind the scene connection to Vanuatu's food culture. When we tell our local/traditional food stories, we revive our culture and thus bring back that pride to the dishes that were once valued very highly by our ancestors, in other words, we connect with our past through our food culture and decolonise our food system. The team was very grateful for all the support and collaboration throughout the event.

Tanna National Week of Agriculture September 2021

The Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team held an information booth under the Department of Tourism tent at the National Week of Agriculture in Tanna from the 30th till the 3rd of Sept. The team used the week to provide awareness in the development of 'agritourism experiences' as a tool to support the slow food movement by providing better connection to our local primary produce, our value-added products and our traditional cultural food and farming heritage.

The Vanuatu Agritourism Association ambassadors from Tanna also supported the team by providing real life examples of how agritourism experiences can help businesses to diversify and survive during border restrictions. Daniel Ben from Blue Cave and Fishing Tours stated "I know I had a good tourism product but when the borders closed, I felt like giving up. But since working with the team I can now see how I can survive this difficult time. I've diversified to planting over 2000 Yams and with their support I'm diversifying my product into an agritourism experience". Another agritourism ambassador Kelson Hosea from Jungle Oasis stated "It was such an honour to have the Director of Tourism, CEO of VTO, National




Agritourism Coordinator and the team visit my agritourism business. Before I started with the agritourism program I really didn't know what agritourism was and how I could be involved. But since doing this training and being part of the Vanuatu Agritourism Association I can't sleep! I have so many ideas and I know that I will be providing a better experience for my guests through my new farm stay. I've also set up an association with my family to manage the farm and we have now planted over 1000 taro with varieties from all over Vanuatu".

Benson Samuels from Tanna Coffee and Bee Hilton tours and President of the Vanuatu Agritourism Association stated "I've always had so many ideas but wasn't sure where to start and how to develop them further, being part of the Vanuatu Agritourism Association and going through all the training has given me the tools to develop my agritourism experience and support others in the association to develop theirs. The Vanuatu Agritourism Association is not only providing a supporting network within Vanuatu it's also linked us up with other regional countries and I was very excited to present my agritourism product in an agritourism experiences talanoa webinar with Dr Cherise Addinsall during the NWA.

Patricia Bibi stated "This webinar series is a collaboration between the Pacific Agribusiness Research for Development Initiative (PARDI 2) under the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the South Pacific Tourism Office (SPTO), the Secretariat of the South Pacific (SPC) and POET Com which aims to share experiences between agritourism operators in the Pacific region and support each other to grow this critical segment of the market. As part of the work we are doing through the PARDI 2 project we are supporting the establishment and strengthening of Agritourism Associations in Fiji and Vanuatu to provide locally led platforms for agritourism operators to advocate and connect to Government and donors. We are particularly impressed with the progress from the Vanuatu Government in both policy and implementation to support agritourism experiences".

Mrs Mackenzie-Reur stated "We had so much interest at our information stand and our team have enjoyed sharing stories with so many people as we talk about the opportunities that



agritourism experiences can bring to building Vanuatu as a food and farming destination. I've had many people express to me this week that they prepare rice and imported food for their families as it's quick and easy. But what we are showing through our local cuisine revival program as part of the slow food movement is that using local food doesn't have to take a long time to prepare and it can taste even more delicious than imported packaged food and rice. The highlight of the week for us was our local cuisine cooking demonstration on Thursday with our chef Leonid Vusilai and winner of the Pacific Island Food Revolution and our world class chefs and barista Alick Abel, Mark Leo and Jack John from Holiday Inn, Iririki, and Warrick le Lagoon. This demonstration showed our people and businesses that our local food can be quick and easy to prepare while also being of a world class standard in cuisine".


Leonid stated "We felt so privileged to showcase our creative talents to our Honourable Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and we were humbled by the large crowds that gathered to watch our demonstration. I would like to thank the Department of Tourism under the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative for providing us the space and creative freedom to showcase what we can do when we mix our authentic traditional food culture, fresh local Tanna produce and our innovation and creativity. I'm also grateful for the opportunity to work with the Agritourism ambassadors to further develop their agritourism experiences to enable greater connection to our food and cultural heritage. It's an exciting time for chefs in Vanuatu".



Figure 9. Cooking Demonstration, Lamenu Stadium, Tanna

Small World Stories Documentary

The Produktif Turism Blong Yumi (PTBY) team held a local cuisine cooking demonstration at the Port Vila Handicraft Markethouse on Tuesday the 21st of September for a documentary to be aired by the Australian Broadcasting Commission as part of the Smallworldstories.org production group. PTBY team members were also interviewed about how our National Agritourism Coordinator Mrs Votausi Mackenzie-Reur supported by the PTBY team and multiple organisations and Departments in Vanuatu are working to create positive social



change with the goal of leading to positive market change. Votausi Mackenzie-Reur stated in her interview “In Vanuatu we need to change our approach to developing markets that positively impact on our wellbeing, not responding to market demands. We are doing this by supporting the development of agritourism experiences and creating ambassadors for the Slow Food movement”.

Our Local chef Leonid Vusilai from Island Kaikai and winner of the Pacific Island Food Revolution and local chefs Alick Abel and Mark Leo from Holiday Inn, Iririki, and Warrick le Lagoon showed how by using your traditional knowledge you can prepare local food quickly and easily in a commercial setting or in your home while also being highly nutritional and of a world class standard in cuisine.

The live streamed session of the cooking demonstration drew in a large crowd whilst simultaneously generating thousands of views online, through the Vanuatu Agritourism Association Facebook Page. The Director of Tourism recently presented to key international donor agencies stating that “the Government does not see agritourism as a niche form of tourism, we see it as a sustainable management and behaviour change strategy to better connect our people and visitors to our productive sector through agritourism experiences. It’s a social revolution to support the slow food movement with the ultimate goal of protecting our traditional knowledge while also supporting innovation and creativity. This can lead to improving the wellbeing of our people based on our core values of land, custom, culture, family, community, food, and time to spend connecting to these”.

Capacity building Agritourism operators to increase quality and representation of local food served to tourists

Despite the wide variety of local and organic produce available in our islands or Vanuatu as a whole, our food practices or culture can be described as monotonous or uninteresting, given food practices are more or less similar in all the different provinces. Often with the visits of tourists or local and international guests, the traditional cuisine is usually presented

or served just once or twice, while the rest of the meals will consist of imported food, as most of their guests complain that 'it's too heavy'. As per observations, there is an abundance of root crops such as Yam, Kumala, Taro, Banana, Manioc (Cassava), fruits and local vegetables. However, the use of vegetables and fruits is not really a priority in a lot of the cooking or food preparation observed.

The Technical Advisor for the Traditional Cuisine Revival Program has attempted to gather information and stories around the unique traditional stories behind each food culture as well as the style and technique of cooking, including common or unique techniques from each community and operator. As part of this drive to restore our traditional cuisine, we can protect or build from these techniques as the foundational food culture on which innovative and beneficial recipes will be developed. The TA is now supporting each of the 27 agritourism operators to develop their meal plans aligning with the theme of their Agritourism business whether it be a restaurant, cultural or farm tour or others and supporting the slow food movement.



Figure 10. Leo Vusilai Operators Session, Hideaway Figure 11. Back-kitchen preparation tutorials

3.2 Traditional Cuisine Revival Program

3.2.1 Undertake anthropological research and cultural verification of traditional gardening and traditional cuisine in each Province

3.2.2 Identify traditional agricultural systems in each Province that can be recognised as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)

Recognising Taro Water Gardens as GIAHS

The Integrated Sustainable Land and Coastal Management (ISLCM) project is a five-year project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Vanuatu Government. FAO is the Implementing Agency (IA) and is providing the technical support to the Vanuatu Government in implementing the project. The Ministry of Climate Change, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and Ministry of Agriculture, Quarantine, Forestry and Fisheries are the Executing Agencies and national counterparts for the project. The project is closely with other partners within the public and private sectors as well as with members of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). The overall goal of the project is to test and implement sustainable and integrated management of forest, land and marine resources to achieve effective ridge-to-reef (R2R) conservation in selected priority watersheds in Vanuatu.

In 2002, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) started the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) initiative to establish recognition for the conservation and adaptive management of traditional agricultural systems (FAO, 2009). Addinsall et al., (2016) conducted research as part of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations project [grant number GCP/RAS/262/ GFF] which demonstrated that many smallholders were still implementing traditional farming practices

such as irrigated water taro which is a staple food that has been cultivated in Vanuatu since ancient times (Walter & Lebot, 2007).

Raising the profile on these traditional agricultural farming systems through GIAHS recognition and agritourism development can help encourage tourists to seek them out for their cultural significance (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). This provides opportunities for rural Ni-Vanuatu smallholders to develop interpretive-based products, both passive and active, of the cultural significance and uniqueness of their farming systems. The GIAHS Initiative promotes public understanding, awareness, national and international recognition of Agricultural Heritage systems. Looking to safeguard the social, cultural, economic and environmental goods and services these provide to family farmers, smallholders, Indigenous peoples and local communities, the initiative fosters an integrated approach combining sustainable agriculture and rural development.

How GIAHS Can Support Agritourism in Vanuatu

- The shift from traditional gardening systems to cash cropping monocultures is conflicting with tourism and conservation goals as tourism relies heavily on environment and culture.
- Agritourism in Vanuatu can integrate positive conservation, food security and livelihood outcomes for rural smallholders.
- Agritourism in Vanuatu is defined as having a primary focus on the interpretation of local agribusinesses, traditional cuisine, and sustainable traditional agroecosystems which exhibit cultural and heritage significance.
- By developing Agritourism experiences in Vanuatu we can further support traditional practices, enhance the preservation of cultural knowledge and promote sustainable farming practices.
- By registering Taro Water Gardens as GIAHS we can further raise the profile of these systems globally as an Agritourism attraction.

For example watch Waimarke Forest Farm Fiji – Preserving Fiji’s traditional knowledge and genetic material <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpv10TUee8w>


Key activities within the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative are specifically designed around supporting product development for agritourism experiences. Agritourism can be an effective strategy for protecting traditional knowledge in farming systems and local cuisine and increasing the pride and status of Vanuatu's local food and cultural heritage, therefore addressing the severe health consequences that are being experienced in Vanuatu as people leave their traditional diets for imported packaged foods. There is a large role tourism can play in changing mindsets through agritourism and slow food. Through agritourism we can change the perceptions of tourists to expect and seek out Vanuatu's traditional local cuisine and venture out into our rural agricultural communities, thereby enhancing the livelihoods of rural communities.

Slow Food Presidia

The Slow Food movement seeks to address important issues such as the:

- Decreasing high imports of unhealthy food;
- Decreasing the rates of our people dying too young from preventable disease;
- Better protection of our traditional recipes and traditional farming knowledge;
- Ensuring our food systems are sustainable and ethical; and
- Better supporting rural livelihoods in Vanuatu

While GIAHS focuses mainly on the agro-ecosystems that have a positive impact on biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation, Slow Food Presidia spotlights the actual products that result from these food production systems, as such becoming a tool that enables consumers and chefs to select food products that help maintain local and sustainable ecosystems and traditional knowledge. As Vanuatu is further opening up export markets for Water Taro the Slow Food Presidia offers opportunities to raise the profile of water taro as a sustainable, organic product that supports the protection of traditional knowledge. Through certification we could raise the value of Water Taro for export.



There is a need to build the understanding of agritourism product development and capacity build in sustainable farming and protection of traditional knowledge. Considering the potential agritourism and GIAHS brings for supporting and preserving traditional agricultural systems the ISLCM project agreed to facilitate training and awareness for rural smallholders in collaboration with the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team, to give knowledge and understanding to support in the development of agritourism based on traditional farming systems and traditional cuisine. The GIAHS awareness and site visits of Taro Water Gardens was facilitated by Norah Rihai, Dr Cherise Addinsall, Elena Silas and Willie Missack.

In rolling out the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative, the Department of Tourism is seeking to develop agritourism experiences that can better connect people to Vanuatu's primary producers, value added products, and traditional knowledge systems around food and farming.

To support the submission of a GIAHS application for Taro Water Gardens site visits and workshops were conducted in the following locations:

- Maewo
- South Pentecost
- South West Bay, Malekula
- West Coast Santo
- Aneityum
- Vanua Lava

The following primary and secondary data were collected on Taro Water Gardens contribution to:

- Food and Livelihood security
- Agro-biodiversity
- Local and Traditional Knowledge systems
- Cultures, Value systems and social organisations
- Landscape and Seascape features




Food and Livelihood Security

Taro water gardens play a significant role in both the traditional and formal market economies.

Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands are among the last remaining countries in the world where the traditional economy outweighs the cash economy in terms of providing for livelihoods. Strengthening the traditional economy and sustaining and enhancing the natural resource base through customary land is central to enhancing livelihoods of rural traditional landholders and is outlined in the National Sustainable Development Plan (2016-2030). A fundamental part of the traditional economy is access to resources provided from custom land. Taro Water Gardens are predominantly held on customary land as the gardens are passed down generations alongside the traditional knowledge of maintaining these systems. Where Taro Water Gardens are located there are fewer land disputes. For example, in Maewo the water taro gardens are allocated to sons when they are born, the transfer of this traditional knowledge starts from birth, the permanency of the gardens reinforces their birthright to the garden.

As identified by participants, Taro Water Gardens contribute to reducing the clearing of forests for new gardens. This is because the same Taro water garden can be used for over 20 years. Harvests are often used for traditional ceremonies including circumcision, deaths, marriages etc. While Vanuatu is well endowed with considerable land-based resources, some areas are facing depletion due to a transition to poor land management practices. Agriculture is one of the most productive sectors, providing for over 25% of the country's GDP. Kava, copra and cocoa are of the cash crops produced, with subsistence and traditional economy emphasis placed on root crops like taro and yam. However, this is changing with the introduction of new export markets for Water Taro.

Water taro is also becoming one of the most sought after root crops in local markets, with islands such as Maewo, South Pentecost and Malekula producing excess water taro for Luganville and Port Vila markets. The difference between estimates of production from Taro



Water Gardens compared to household consumption each year shows that a lot of water taro is harvested in surplus for the traditional economy and for sale in local produce markets.

In South Pentecost for example there are households that pay school fees in taro produced from Taro Water Gardens. Water Taro is also highly sought after for custom ceremonies (weddings, funerals, births etc.). When there is a need to grow surplus water taro, households push back the boundaries of existing Taro Water Gardens or re-open old ones, where ancestors had formerly made canals and planted taro.

Nutritionally Water taro is richer in fibre, calcium, potassium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, and vitamin C than dryland taro. The quality of the diet of Ni Vanuatu has generally decreased as the consumption of local food has been replaced by other sources of carbohydrates such as white bread, rice and noodles.

Vanuatu has been ranked as the number one country in the World Risk Index 2016, published by the United Nations University. The report uses exposure to natural disasters and vulnerability (which is a measure of adaptation, coping mechanisms and susceptibility) to calculate the risk. Vanuatu is also number one in exposure to natural hazards (cyclones, drought, earthquake, flood, and sea level rises). Taro Water gardens are resilient to natural disasters and large rain events since the basins do not have drainage, the walls of the terraces separating them are not very high so that the taro will not be drowned in case of heavy rain.

Taro, and other relatives of the aroid family are often the first crops grown in islands and atolls which have been hit by natural disasters. The fast recovery of aroids in areas affected by hurricanes or high tides is a sign of their adaptability to flooding, and also to salty irrigation water.

There is evidence of intercropping within the pondfield walls and internal sub-basin dikes in many Taro Water garden systems. The purposes for Intercropping are cultural (plants used in custom), pest management and food security. Some of these plants are edible while others protect the taro from the beetle Papuana, with their odour or preventing attacks by the fungus Pythium.

The most commonly used plants are:

- cordylines or dagarē (*Cordyline fruticosa* (L.) A. Chev.), one variety of which is called dagarē tañsar,
- crotons (*Codiaeum variegatum* (L.) A. Juss.), whose generic name is kirkiar and the varieties of which are kirkiar meter, kirkiar qere qō, kirkiar qet, kirkiar sas qōñ and kirkiar mamegin (for a full list, see Caillon and Lanouguère-Bruneau 2005)


These plants not only brighten the Taro Water Gardens with their diversity of colour and form, protecting the taro against disease, but also strengthen the walls by retaining the soil without spreading, due to their shallow roots.

Breadfruit trees and citrus trees are also intercropped with Water Taro as can be seen in West Coast Santo to provide shade to the taro as humidity levels in these areas can become low in dry seasons. Kava, Island cabbages, sugarcanes and bananas are also intercropped alongside the taro pond fields and gardens for supplementary food production and making good use of the space. Watercress is found in the ponds and rivers with the taro.

There are other living organisms that are an important part of the water taro ecosystem which included but not limited to:

- Prawns
- Fish, (S. Pentecost in particular conserves a fish species that is found only in a river within this area)
- Eels
- Fresh water shells

Local and Traditional Knowledge Systems



Irrigated taro pondfield systems require constant work based on knowledge transmitted from generation to generation. The traditional practices in Taro Water Gardens are remarkably diverse and complex. Along with practices dedicated to the plant, farmers need to master the intricate irrigation technology by building and repairing channels, dams, aqueducts and terraces. One can acquire the knowledge required only by practicing the skills from childhood.

In terms of technical achievement, Taro Water gardens represent high quality Vanuatu Traditional science. The technological sophistication shows a detailed understanding of engineering and water control principles and an effective response to the dangers of erosion. The permanent infrastructure means that these systems can be brought back into productive use at any time lessening any future labour. In some parts of Maewo for example the original coastline populations died out due to introduced disease, yet Ni Vanuatu have brought these systems back into production in the last 60 years.

Every family, or rather every individual, always has their own secrets that they share with caution. Often this knowledge will be passed down to a single son, one who has shown a particular aptitude for growing taro and for the well-being of the father of the family. According to the farmers questioned, the soil of pondfields never becomes depleted, the pondfields are on average planted and replanted for seven years, and then are left to fallow for one or two years. The period of fallow depends on the availability of land, the quality of the soil, and the position of the pondfield within the Taro Water garden.

The water taro cultivation is a system that has been passed down from generations. The quality of the taro comb on consumption depends on the techniques used and the taboos they observed. This means that there are spiritual connections to the taro, the people and the techniques used. The bond field productivity depends on the traditional practice which many are very secretive about. For example, the leaf that is squeezed at the water source into their gardens, and the song that is sung to the garden and the timing of these practices. This knowledge is passed down to a trusted selected member of the family which according

to many participants are mostly men. The art of using the system is practiced by the communities and is valued in the use of the taro produced through this system in very high-ranking traditional ceremonies such as obtaining chiefly titles in two of the islands visited.

South Pentecost Custom Story

In South Pentecost Water Taro is said to be first brought in from Maewoby, a man who went ashore at Beumo. A lady met him and took him in. During the night the taro that they have planted started singing its name which is milomilo and that is being referred to locally as tamaevo. It starts producing flowers which started out the pool of cultivars that they have in South Pentecost. Water taro to this day has a very significant role in the traditional circumcision ceremonies of young males of the Bunlap community. It also contributes traditionally to the Nagol in the laplap prepared for the jumpers to share after their act of bravery.

Vanua Lava Custom Story

The first taro water-gardens on Vanua Lava were created by the founding hero, a vu spirit named Lakakēris. They have a sacred character associated with the origin myth of taro, and even agriculture in which Lakakēris is the principal actor. Following is a limited version of the story, told by John-Elizabeth Kōkōr in Vētuboso (2001).

*“Lakakēris lived in a place named Beut, at the extreme southeast end of Vanua Lava. When his brothers stole his wife, he decided to leave Beut and begin his search for women. At the time, the people of the island ate wild wōbōw [aerial yam, *Dioscorea bulbifera* L.] taken from the forest. Women had to wash the roots in rivers before cooking them [i.e., to detoxify them]. Lakakēris brought with him everything he needed (pondfields, water, and taro) to make irrigated gardens. He visited a number of places, and wherever women agreed to have sexual relations with him, he installed irrigated pondfields. The largest area, comprising the taro water-gardens of Ōt, Vetmowor, Teñtur and Nēlum above the village of Vētuboso, was created through the union of Lakakēris and Ro vōnōlav.” (Caillon and Lanouguère-Bruneau 2005)*

Maewo Custom Story

According to the chief at Hanare custom village, the first taro was born in a small area by the hill further down west of Narea after the sun and the moon having watching over whole island noticed that the first two people that lived were starving because they are only living off a tree root called Saqwa so the sun asked the moon to break of a little piece of itself and throw it down to them to eat and so it did and the little piece emerged as the first giant taro called the Navia, the navia grew and beared flower, the flower fell to the ground and emerged as the first Taro plant which they called it Waka.

From that one variety a few more new varieties or cultivars emerged until there was a dispute between two spirit beings regarded as birds in the island of Maewo One called Manware and the other called Wangole. They both fought for power to rule over the land. One had the taro one had none. They both argued and fought amongst them that they both had the taro until the other one with the taro lost and fled for the banks islands and landed in Gaua. After sometime, the land was barren, no more food left so the bird that caused the problem saw what was happening so he gathered a few items and flew down to Gaua to apologized to the other bird that he was in argument with saying that the other birds on the island are dying from starvation and hunger. The apology was accepted after a custom ceremony and they returned home. From Gaua, they landed at that particular spot which the garden until today is being protected and still maintained and to this day. There is over one hundred new varieties that have emerged and are being traditionally protected.

A man lived in the mountains of Westcoast of Santo and everyday he would go out hunting. One day he saw a bird he thought he could catch for his wife for the evening meal. He took a good aim and shot the bird. Instead of falling dead it flew off with the arrow still attached to it. So the hunter decided to go in search of his arrow in the direction where the bird flew. This led him further into the mountain and saw that the bird had entered a cave. He saw his arrow stuck onto a rock in the cave. He walked straight to it and pulled it out and out came water from the rock. At first it was only little but then it grew large and flowed out of the cave and made its way through the plain towards the sea. The man was surprised and excited he placed his arrow in the river at a spot that is being used to this day at a community called Olboe.

He went home to his wife and the following morning went back to see the water and there he saw a taro plant in the water and with each passing day with suckers growing he planted a garden. He had other things that also along the river bank such as sugarcane and island cabbage. The garden took a while but he tended it with compassion for this new crop. When the taro was ready to harvest, he started bringing home taro for his wife to cook. His wife wondered where all this came from and he kept saying that he got lucky some travelers gave him taro. Out of curiosity and persistence the wife managed to agree to show him where those taros came from.

They came to this water and the garden he planted and from then on taro remained to date the one thing that had them through very challenging times of cyclones etc. in prolonged droughts, everywhere else will be out of food, Olboe is one community that will be supplying taro to other communities along the west coast of Santo since they believe that the spirits are always blessing them as long as they keep the different cultivars they have. Continuing the practice, they have honored the connection they have with the spirits that will continue to bless their garden and so the whole community have been farming the plains ever since. It is often equally shared amongst the community members and as the population increases, taro gardens began extending as well.




Figure 13. Water taro Kastom Storian Hanare Cultural Tours

Cultures, Value Systems and Social Organizations

The pondfield systems require ecological knowledge about the use of plants that keep pests away, as well as social knowledge that may include the use of customary practices, and taboos. The principles of Customary land in Vanuatu help in understanding the precise function and social value of Taro Water gardens. The permanency of Taro Water Gardens means that there are fewer land disputes where they are located. A farmer inherits his horticultural knowledge according to his kinship ties, knowledge being passed down along cognatic lines. Thus, taro embedded in its pondfield is socially valued as the carrier of the memory of the ancestors and a window into the knowledge of individuals. The genetical material is transmitted from generation to generation, due to its capacity for identical reproduction year after year. Taro thus holds the memory of the village.

The 'culture' of taro with alternating irrigation is based on knowledge and exceptional practices that lead to a sustainable and intensive agriculture. Despite a lower yield compared to rivers and swamps, cultivation in pondfields irrigated in alternation, possibly unique within



Vanuatu and the Pacific generally, is the most socially valorised technique. Both women and men work in Taro Water gardens, although there is a general gendering of work where women seem to do most of the weeding, and men most of the planting and of the preparation of new pondfields that have been abandoned for a long time.


Taro is sensitive to its environment and a bad choice might have grave consequences. Some believe that if taro is not planted in its proper place, curses will fall on the family that eats it. The different cultural rituals and customs places social value on the product emphasizing the importance of water taro cultivation as means also of maintaining respect within family ties. Therefore, cultivars of cultural importance are preserved and passed down through generations where both men and women play their cultural roles to uphold the practice.

Landscape and Seascape Features

There are three distinct Taro Water garden systems practiced in Vanuatu which are influenced by the geographical landscape, and ancestral knowledge that is practiced in that location (Spriggs 1981; Kahn 1984; Yen 1990; Vargo and Ferentinos 1991; Kirch 1994). The island of Vanua Lava and Maewo appear to be the only locations where all three systems are applied. However, this needs to be verified.

1. Taro in irrigated pondfield systems managed with man made water canals that irrigate pondfields structured in terraces grown in basins or rectangular plots (alternating or continuing irrigation) 'hillslope terraces' requiring more complex and fastidious technology than 'channel bottom terraces'⁴.

⁴ *While the two other systems of cultivation need no maintenance, irrigated taro pondfield systems require constant work based on knowledge transmitted from generation to generation.*

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2. Taro grown in rivers or streams, between the rocks of a naturally inundated environment, the taro is planted amongst small rocks and the riverbed is covered with large rocks.
 3. Taro planted in swampy areas or in the mud near rivers, these systems are usually planted for convivence and have a high yield, however they do not produce

Individual pondfields have an average surface area of 87 m² (from a sample of 57 basins). They are separated by walls made from a mixture of stones, earth, and plant debris. Taro Water gardens are permanent in space, despite a crossed system of transmission of land: a swampy area or a river is never exhausted, and a pondfield can be cultivated between 7 and 15 years.

In irrigated taro pondfield systems on Maewo, South Pentecost, Aneityum, Malekula and West Coast Santo taro develops in water throughout its cultivation cycle, from planting to harvesting. In those agroecosystems, the main rule is that water should always flow to prevent any increase in temperature. Contrary to this practice of continuous immersion, the farmers in Vanua Lava plant their taro in dry soil, then alternate wet and dry phases until finally harvesting the taro when the soil is dry.



Figure 14. West Coast Santo Water Taro Farm

Site Characteristics

Vanua Lava

Unlike in systems where the water circulates throughout its cultivations cycle, In Vanua Lava circulation is artificially reconstituted by alternating the wet and dry periods. The water enters the pondfield at a single point, and is not allowed to flow out again, which is in contrast to the practice on other islands such as Maewo where pondfields have an outlet as well as an inlet (Caillon, 2012). In this system the nutrients brought by the irrigation water and the soil of each pondfield do not escape into the next field situated below. Since less water is used for planting than on other islands, a greater number of individual pondfields can be cultivated. The swampy areas do not have known customary stories associated with them. The colour and muddy taste of the taro grown in these places is not well liked. Only women,

or a family living too far away from the village and the taro water-gardens to use the pondfields, cultivate them a lot.

In the Vanua Lava pondfields, taro is planted less densely (2.0 plants/m²; with observation in 57 basins) than on the west coast of Santo (2.5plants/m²) (Caillon, 2012). Compared with rainfed agriculture, alternating irrigated gardens can be said to be intensive and sustainable because taro growth occurs more rapidly, the fallow periods are shorter and burning is limited.



Figure 15. West Coast Santo Water Taro Farm

South Pentecost

The cultivation of taro was mostly found around the rivers. Firstly the field is prepared and channels dug out, then they plant the suckers. The following day the water is then diverted into the newly planted taro plot. The flow of water is channelled in a way that it continues to maturity. Upon harvesting of taro, the suckers can then be planted in the same planting hole for the following year, replating in the same area for up to 20 years.

The difference between the Taro Water gardens on South Pentecost and Maewo is that South Pentecost does not do terracing therefore it does not construct terraces that could change the landscape. The large pond fields are shared amongst taro farmers within the communities and this system is said to reduce large number of land dispute cases.

There is a symbiotic relationship amongst the prawns and fish, and the taro as the prawns hide under the taro roots that have trapped dirt and are feeding off it. The waste produced by the fish and prawns then become the source of organic fertiliser to enhance taro productivity in the water.



Figure 16. South Pentecost Water Taro

Maewo

Maewo have a custom Taro Water garden that acts as a tuber bank with over 100 different varieties of taro. The Taro Water garden is said to have been in the community for generations. Nangarai is intercropped in the custom Taro Water garden and is used for


cultural ceremonies. Maewo and Anietyum both have inlet and outlet points so the water is continuously running, as these islands both have high rainfalls they use terracing down steep hillslopes to try and slow down the currents of the water so that not too much nutrients are lost. The yields of water taro on Maewo are some of the highest ever recorded, comparable to commercial farmers in Hawaii using heavy fertiliser supplements.



Figure 17. Maewo Custom Water Taro

Aneityum

The Taro Water gardens in Aneityum are very sacred and contribute significantly to their culture during the attainment of chiefly titles of the highest ranks. Aneityum uses both the swamp cultivation as well as terracing. On the coastal plains the difficulty with water was solved by leading the canals along the top of the earth embankments before letting the water down to the flattest areas which would otherwise not be irrigated. Some of the



embankments or aqueducts are up to 4 meters tall and hundreds of meters long. The technological sophistication of these systems shows a detailed understanding of engineering and water-control principles and effective response to the dangers of erosion on steep hillsides. However, there is evidence of this knowledge not being passed down to next generations.

West Coast Santo

West Coast Santo have a custom Taro Water garden that stores all the taro varieties that exist in West Coast. The Taro Water garden has been in the community for generations. There are other crops such as breadfruit and citrus etc. that is intercropped along with taro to provide shade. West Coast Santo and South Pentecost have both not changed landscape to cultivate taro as all is planted on existing plains and flatlands. The other crops intercropped in the gardens included kava, banana, sugarcane etc. but are planted on the sides and not in the water.

South Malekula

The Taro Water gardens in Lamap are cultivated in swamps. These are naturally large swamps that also have shells termed Serewok, crabs and eels living in them especially those ones closer to the sea. Three main varieties perform well in the swamp. Water taro has a very significant role in the traditional wedding ceremonies as well as economically. Special pole used for planting that determines the size of the taro. Lamap swamp planting reduces occurrences and incidences of land disputes. Prolong drought periods are impacting on the productivity.



Figure 18. Lamap Water Taro

Key Impacts, Threats, Opportunities


Irrigated pondfield terracing is a system of cultivation that has declined throughout much of Oceania or has even been abandoned. In Some areas of Vanuatu there has been a substantial decrease or even total abandonment of taro water gardens.

Colonisation

When Vanuatu was colonised, many ancient Water Taro gardens were turned into coconut plantations, while others were used as mixed gardens, or as areas for the intensive production of kava.

Climate Change

Many sites that were planting Taro Water gardens are experiencing a significant decrease in annual rainfall with longer dry periods, Vanuatu has uniquely fragile water resources due to



its small size, lack of storage and limited freshwater lens. Reduced access to water during El Niño-driven droughts are becoming increasingly common on smaller and more remote southern atolls that rely primarily on rainwater and have limited harvesting capacity. Increased sea levels come with the threat of salt-water intrusion in the shallow fresh water lens, particularly in coastal areas and in areas where recharge rates are on the decline. Already, some of the country's freshwater lens has been contaminated with brine (World Bank, 2011).

Export

The Department of Industry has opened up new export markets for water taro as there are opportunities to increase the value of water taro with certification in organics, slow food, regenerative farming. The Slow Food Presidium designation can have a positive impact on a GIAHS territory by adding value and promoting economic, social and environmental development.

Next Steps for GIAHS Submission of Taro Water Gardens

- National Inception Meeting for a formulation of a National GIAHS program with National Stakeholders
- Stakeholder Consultation Workshop to verify the data collected through field work of Taro Water Gardens
- Site selection, mapping and GPS
- Develop a full GIAHS proposal
- Work with Vanuatu Bureau of Standards to enlist water taro in the Slow Food Presidium

3.4 Agritourism Product Development and Business Support

3.4.1 Develop a support program for wellness Agritourism home stays and tours product development (wellness, traditional, medicine, traditional sustainable farming)

3.4.3 Develop an agribusiness tours support program to increase the number and quality of local agribusinesses

3.4.4 Develop standards with VBS to ensure agritourism businesses are high quality and competitive

3.4.5 Develop tailored training for Agritourism Entrepreneurs and implement in all 6 Provinces

Agritourism Business Support Week April 2021

The Agritourism Business Support Week held at Breakas Beach Resort from the 19th to the 23rd of April was designed to capacity build 27 agritourism operators that have met the criteria from the Department of Tourism. Site visits were conducted with all 27 operators after completion of Expression in Interest Forms. The program for the week was based on capacity building the agritourism operators to diversify their businesses. Discussions were also held to ensure that going forward Vanuatu had one agreed understanding of what agritourism is to guide ongoing research and development in Vanuatu (see Agritourism Business Support Week Summary Report for more detail).

Agritourism Product Development Support

The PARIDI 2 project through Dr Cherise Addinsall has been supporting the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team to undertake product development support with all 27 Agritourism operators to support the operators to apply the skills and knowledge they have obtained during the Agritourism Business Support Week. Through site visits the Produktif Turism

Blong Yumi team have visited agritourism operators in all 6 provinces to support in the development of short to long term product development plans with the aim to be market ready by the end of 2021 (See Agritourism Product Development Report for more detail).

Site Visits with Agritourism Operators

Site visits were conducted by the Produktif Tursim Blong Yumi team supported by the ACIAR PARDI 2 project with all 27 agritourism operators after completion of Expression of Interest forms for the Agritourism Product Development and Business Support Program. The objective of the site visits were to work with the 27 Vanuatu Agritourism Association members to support in the development of their business plans, product development plans and ensure their EDF 11 grant applications align to these documents. The aim is for all 27 operators to be determined market ready by the VTO by the end of 2021 (see Agritourism Product Development Report for more information).



Figure 19. Nusumetu Agritourism Map Display Tanna



Figure 20. Nusumetu Agritour Staff members and Department of Tourism Team



Figure 21. Coordinator Votausi Mackenzie, Dr Cherise Addinsall, and Aore Coffee Production Owner Susan Garae, Aore Santo



Figure 22. Site Visit at Aore Coffee Factory

Formation of the National Agritourism Committee


The National Agritourism Committee was formed in April 2021 and represents the following members:

NATIONAL AGRITOURISM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Jerry Spooner – Chairman- Director of Tourism
2. Antoine Ravo – Vice Chairman – Director of Agriculture
3. Jimmy Rantes – Director of Industry
4. Adela Aru – CEO of Vanuatu Tourism Office
5. Ruth Amos – CEO of Vanuatu Bureau of Standards
6. Tekon Timothy Tumukon - CEO OF Vanuatu Primary Producers Authority
7. Len Tarivonda – Director of Public Health
8. William Naviti – Director of Fisheries
9. Edson Willie – Slow Food Officer – Cultural Centre
10. Benson Samuel – Chairman of Association (Tanna Coffee)
11. Jenny Jones- Member of Association (Secret Garden Tour)
12. Sandrine Wallez – Member of Association (ACTIV)
13. Michel Raikatalaum – Member of Association (Vorganic)

A key priority for the newly formed National Agritourism Committee is to act as an advisory body to the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team and ensure that the activities within the Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy Theme 3 Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative are met.

The National Agritourism Committee unanimously agreed on the Bislama term: Produktif turism blong yumi, produktif meaning all productive sectors (Agriculture, fisheries, livestock) and turism blong yumi meaning it's based on tourism activities that provide an educational




experience into the local farming systems, local produce and value-added products of Vanuatu.

The National Agritourism Committee met on Friday the 21st of May to appoint Kalo Nathaniel- Interim President of Vanuatu Agritourism Association (now Benson Samuels President of the Vanuatu Agritourism Association); Michel Jacobe, V Organic; Jenny Neil Jones, Secret Garden Mele and Sandrine Wallez, ACTIV/Aelan Chocolate Makers as new committee members to represent private industry representatives in the Agritourism space. Acting Director General of the Ministry of Trades, Tourism, Cooperatives, and Ni Vanuatu Business Mr Jimmy Rantis formally appointed the new committee members on behalf of the Honourable Minister Mr James Bule and stated “I can see the Produktif Turism Blo Yumi initiative is responding to the policy shifts in Vanuatu, it’s a solid plan with clear direction going forward supported by a locally driven highly experienced team, As Acting DG I fully support the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi initiative”.

CEO of the Vanuatu Primary Producers Authority (VPPA) stated “the participation at the Agritourism Business Support Week was commendable, I commend the Agritourism team for adapting and responding to the policy shift in Agritourism and encourage them to ensure everyone in Vanuatu comes on this journey.” Ruth Amos CEO of the Vanuatu Bureau of Standards stated, “Previously there was a very big gap between the small agritourism operators and the larger tourism industry, I’m sure the 30 agritourism ambassadors that attended the Agritourism Business Support Week now feel noticed and are realising they have something wonderful to share with Vanuatu and the world.”

The National Agritourism committee discussed the new direction that the committee is taking in the Agritourism space expanding wider than the Slow Food movement. Mia Rimon from Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), stated “we have been with Vanuatu on their Agritourism journey and it is so refreshing to see a refocusing on what agritourism actually is and not the way it was interpreted a few years ago. I can now see a strong focus on more meaningful participation from our agricultural communities in tourism through the



development of Agritourism experiences, while still ensuring ongoing support of the Slow Food movement, SPC are keen to support particularly in the area of resilience of these agritourism operators". The next National Agritourism Committee meeting is set for October 7th where new members from World Vision, and INAC will be appointed.

Formation of the Vanuatu Agritourism Association

The Vanuatu Agritourism Association was tentatively formed during the Agritourism Business Support Week where a constitution was drafted and an interim executive committee was elected. The Vanuatu Agritourism Association was formalised during their first meeting held at Hideaway Paradise Beach Bungalows, East Coast Santo where a new executive committee was voted in on 20th July. The role of the Vanuatu Agritourism Association is to better coordinate and empower the Agritourism operators and to help drive the Produktif Turism Blong Yumi Initiative. The Vanuatu Agritourism Association will act as the Agritourism industry voice and provide an encouraging environment to support resilience and act as champions in sustainability practices in the Agritourism industry.

The Director of Tourism stated "I'm really impressed with the agritourism ambassadors from Tanna and the new executive team under the leadership of the president of the Vanuatu Agritourism Association Benson Samuels. Government has been working with the association to empower them to develop standards for membership, ensure members deliver high quality agritourism experiences and enable the executive team to manage the recruitment of new members and disciplining of their members to align to their constitution. This is what the Government is focused on supporting collaborative business networks and enabling them to manage themselves while guided by policy".

Development of Agritourism Standards and Criteria for Membership

Agritourism Standards

The Produktif Turism Blong Yumi team in collaboration with the Vanuatu Bureau of Standards, the ACIAR project LS/2020/155 “Development of a third party verified voluntary sustainable certification program for beef and other key commodities in Vanuatu” and Norah Rihai’s PhD “A Sustainable and Regenerative model of Agritourism for Vanuatu” have been conducting Participatory Action Research to develop standards for agritourism in Vanuatu aligned to the following global and regional standards:

- Global Sustainable Tourism Standards
- Regenerative Organic Certification
- POETCom’s Organica Pasifika
- Slow Food Presidia

Participatory Action Research tools such as the Agritourism Dimensions Framework and storian sessions were applied to evaluate communities, industry, and Government values, perceptions and recommendations for agritourism. These findings were then analysed and cross referenced with regional and global standards for sustainable agriculture and tourism.

The Agritourism Dimensions Framework was developed by Addinsall et al., (2016) in response to the deficiency in agritourism frameworks in capturing the broader considerations of sustainable tourism and agriculture, particularly in a developing country context, as well as consideration of the tourism experience. In order to progress the sustainability and regenerative discourse, the Agritourism Dimensions Framework allows for contextual approaches that privilege sustainability and regenerative practices, smallholder benefits, community wellbeing, cultural protection and enhancement and the facilitation of quality visitor experiences. The Agritourism Dimensions Framework “explicitly addresses five dimensional themes: reason for being; world view; sustainability contexts (social, cultural, economic and environmental); agricultural approach and visitor experience. Within these

themes, individual dimensions facilitate stakeholder assessment along spectra which contrast knowledge systems, governance and smallholder livelihood impact, scale in regard to both farming and tourism, authenticity and quality of visitor experience, interpretation and interaction between host and visitor and the drivers for tourism.

The Agritourism Dimensions Framework encompasses a holistic approach to understanding agritourism that does not seek to categorise activities, instead recognising the grey areas that exist within the dimensions of agritourism (Addinsall et al., 2016, pg. 54)". The situation in Vanuatu with how agritourism has been approached in the past illustrates the need for the re-conceptualisation of agritourism drawing upon the five themes and subthemes of the Agritourism Dimensions Framework. Agritourism standards are now being drafted and will be presented at the next National Agritourism Committee and the VBS in October 2021.



Criteria for membership in the Vanuatu Agritourism Association

The Vanuatu Agritourism Association met in Santo at Hideaway Paradise Beach Bungalows from the 19th till the 21st of July. During this meeting a participatory focus group session was facilitated by Norah Rihai and Dr Cherise Addinsall with the association members to develop criteria for membership into the association. The following topics were discussed:

- Do we insist that Agritourism operators must meet the agreed definition to join?
- Why do you think there is a need for the agritourism association to have criteria for membership?
 - a. Ensure quality for the association
 - b. To draw boundary to control the standards
- What happens if there is no criteria?
 - a. How do you control the quality and how to promote the businesses?
 - b. Example in Australia – Ecotourism – tourism based in conservation of natural resources as a criteria to provide educational tour
 - i. Environment friendly
 - ii. Sustainable
- What is agritourism for Vanuatu? Link with Norah's PhD
- What standards do we want for Vanuatu
- What criteria can ensure agritourism businesses are supporting the local industry to promote local products?
 - Put a certain percentage on how much to be spent on Vanuatu made products. (Comment: what you have in country or in island. If in Gaua, what is available in the island. Notice what Leo demonstrate, he used no imported product)
 - If put minimum standard, 100 percent, is it achievable?
 - We are importing packaging products for value adding
 - To say 100 percent, it is not achievable. We cannot stop anything imported from other countries.

- Must acknowledge that we are in a global society, we need to come up with something achievable. (VMR)
- Need more awareness. Too hard to adapt and need more time. Need to progress slowly to using more local products with a set goal but needs commitment from everyone.
- Suggest, to start with a commitment of 50 percent
- Suggest to identify an achievable goal
- Note, not to make it too harsh on the business if considering percentages and timeframe, may be hard for some businesses to achieve
- Audience, have different products. To consider different products based on different operators. While in the local tours, they would want to go local while operators in Vila, will depend on prices of products.
- One participant suggested “When talking about using 100 percent, consider solar systems (not made in Vanuatu)” this shows the need to specifically state (only where there is a local alternative available when developing criteria
- We should use the agritourism value chain to guide the criteria
- Base more on what services to provide
- With the new normal, we are trying to shift from dependent on tourism to traditional systems in order to empower the communities and villages
- Must consider, we want to inject new money in the community, injecting new economy in the village, but need to focus on the services provided
- We want to promote the use of traditional and organic products
- Need to take note on the cost of local transport
- Recommend – how to make our products more accessible perhaps have a mandate to promote each other’s businesses
- Can organize a credit from each other
- When it comes to agritourism, we are not here for competition, agritourism is helping each other
- How to work together and build relationship

- This will form the basis of Vanuatu standards in agritourism
- When we have a criteria in place, it will give credibility to your product and will set standard
- The Core of Agritourism – educational and entertaining experience

Data is now being collated to draft the criteria for membership and will be presented at the next Agritourism Association meeting in October 2021. Agreed criteria will be drafted into the amended constitution and put forward in the Tourism Council Act review.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Vanuatu Agritourism Association members

Criteria

Promotional development is an essential aspect in the Agritourism Program Criteria. Social media and brand formalisation, being the significant driving forces in Marketing today are where requirements in this section is centred around. Requirements involve Operators posting on selected social media platforms and conducting happiness index surveys (See Table below) Since this incentive is currently a pilot program, the Promotional Development criteria also provides a foundation for the operators to further prove themselves as ambassadors, adapt their businesses to Agritourism principles and promote their experience and identity as an agritourism business.

Instagram Business Page	Facebook Business Page	Vanuatu Agritourism Association Page	Happiness Index Survey
<p>Minimum of 15 posts until 30th of August. Time frame after this date includes another 15 more until October 17th</p> <p>Content must be Contain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Imagery • Agritourism Related Activity • Correct Effective Captioning and Hashtags 	<p>Minimum of 15 posts until 30th of August. Time frame after this date includes another 15 more until October 17th</p> <p>Content must be Contain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Imagery • Agritourism Related Activity • Correct Effective Captioning and Hashtags 	<p>Minimum of 15 posts until 30th of August. Time frame after this date includes another 15 more until October 17th</p> <p>Content must be focused on Agritourism Related Topics and Must also include growth in diversification into Agritourism Services and Products as well as impact on local surrounding communities</p> <p>Content must be Contain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Imagery • Agritourism Related Activity • Correct Effective Captioning and Hashtags 	<p>Happiness Index Surveys are to be undertaken with locals in the community or associates.</p> <p>Minimum of 15 expected until August 30th. 15 More until October 17th.</p> <p>Result of each survey must be screenshotted or downloaded and forwarded to the Agritourism Team.</p>

Monitoring and evaluation of operators and their performance to these criteria occurred regularly, with weekly updates to each business informing and updating their overall consistency at a given point in time. This is further explained in the next subtopic.

Operators Performance

The skills and willingness to perform towards criteria standards of our operators were initially shown to vary. As a result of their isolated location, business size, and or a lack of network coverage many operators faced difficulties in regards to adapting into more competitive posting patterns over the given time period. However as monthly evaluations (see comparison of Figure 23 with 24 below) have highlighted, there is a general high growth from business and their consistency posting. Agritourism operators have now recognized the importance of this segment of standards and requirements and hence a greater majority of the ambassadors have made allowances to commit to promoting their agritourism story and diversification.

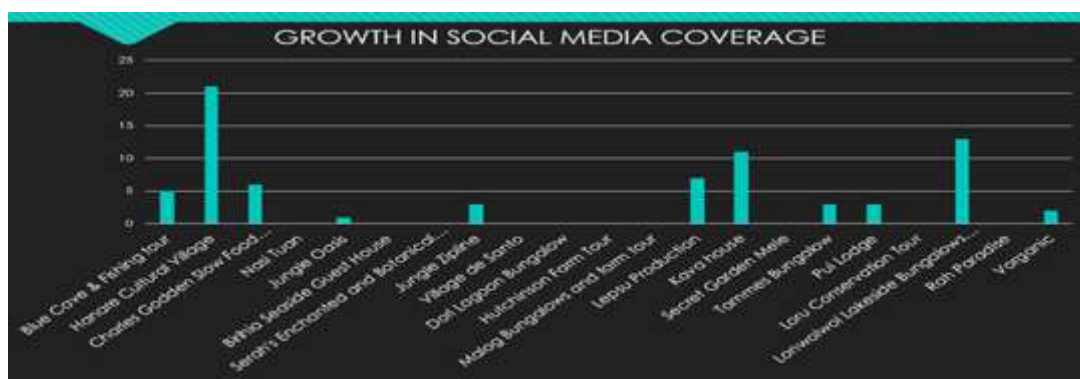


Figure 23. Chart Progress of Operators in Early August 19th

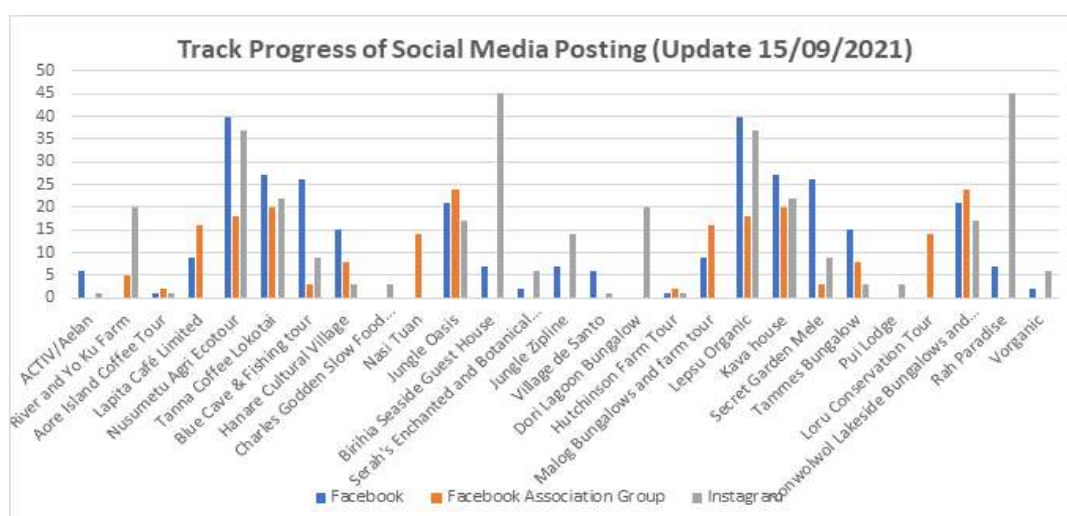


Figure 24. Chart Progress of Operators Social Media Presence Mid September

Development of Resources and Training Implementation

A wide segment of the program ambassadors resided in rural regions throughout Vanuatu. To polish any possible gaps in their social media marketing skills and knowledge, and to therefore further strengthen their ability to perform towards the promotional requirements to meet criteria, support was given during training workshops and site visits (See Figure 25 Below). Sessions on Business social media marketing, and Happiness Index Survey guides were undertaken to operators who attended the meetings.



Figure 25. Communications Officer Richard Kaltongga undertaking Social Media Marketing sessions with Operators at Luganville Wharf

The development of online training materials and resources also complemented workshops to further provide operators with basic guides, including Bislama and French versions to counteract English Language Barriers. Agritourism criteria in promotions have further encouraged operators to solidify their branding online in both Facebook and Instagram. Training guides generated involved simplified step-by step methods in operating apps and programs relevant to the criteria. Happiness Index Surveys as well as Instagram Posting Manual guides were all developed and shared to all operators with provided links for convenience (See Figure 26 and 27).

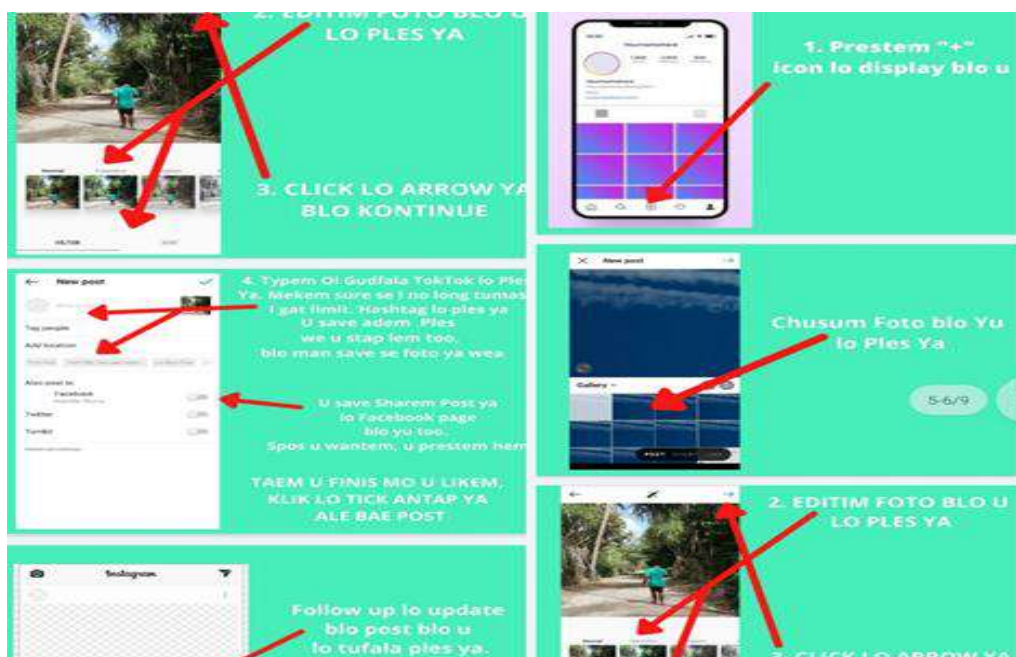


Figure 26. Instagram Posting Manual in Bislama for Local Operators

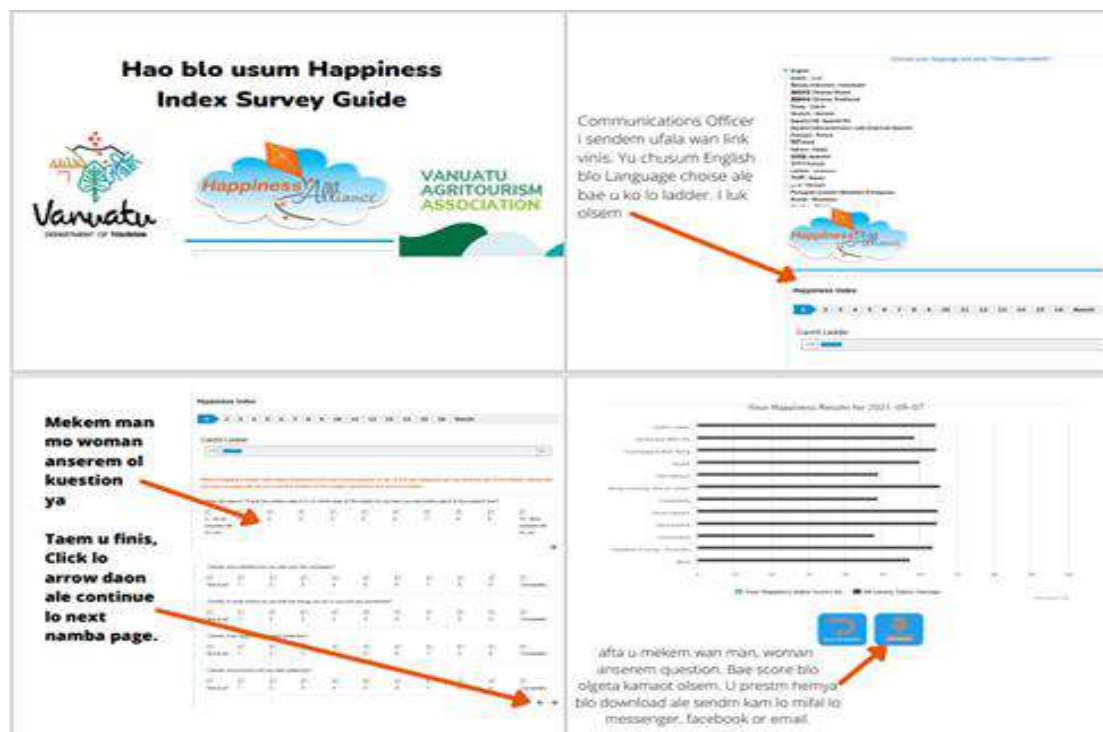


Figure 27. Happiness Index Survey Guides developed for Local Operators

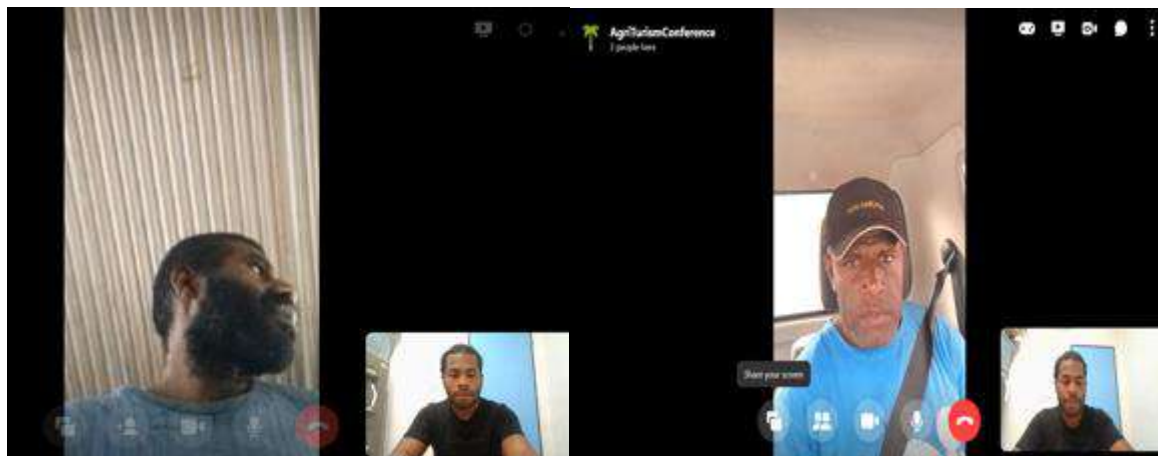
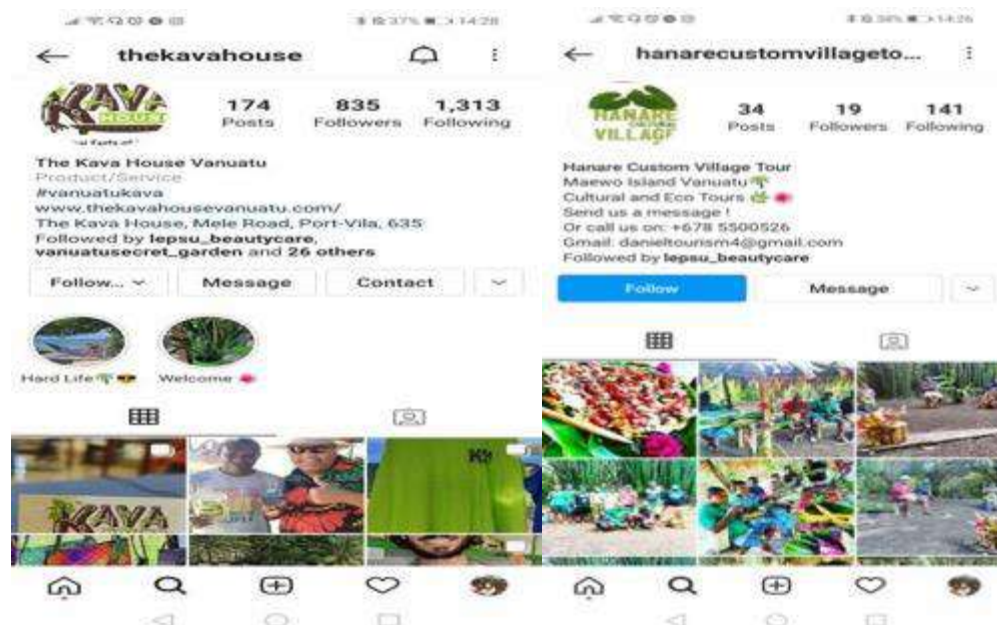


Figure 28. Online Video Meetings with Individual Operators

Virtual Online Meetings through subconference groups developed (**Figure 28**) also presented opportunities for many operators to present queries, concerns to the team for individual support, review and feedback. This proved significant in allowing many operators to further overcome certain gaps in social media marketing knowledge and hence progress their posting as previous statistics dictated (**Refer to Figure 24**). Many operators who successfully implemented training materials have developed outstanding content further formalizing their agritourism brands, (**See Figure 29 Below**).



Figure

29. Hanare and Kava House Vanuatu Instagram Business Pages

Social Media Impact of Agritourism

The Vanuatu Agritourism Association Group on Facebook has shown accelerating growth towards views, visitors and participation. This signifies the impact of Agritourism towards social media discussions in Vanuatu's communities. Over 5000 members have joined the group, with the current rate continually increasing (Figure 30 and 31).

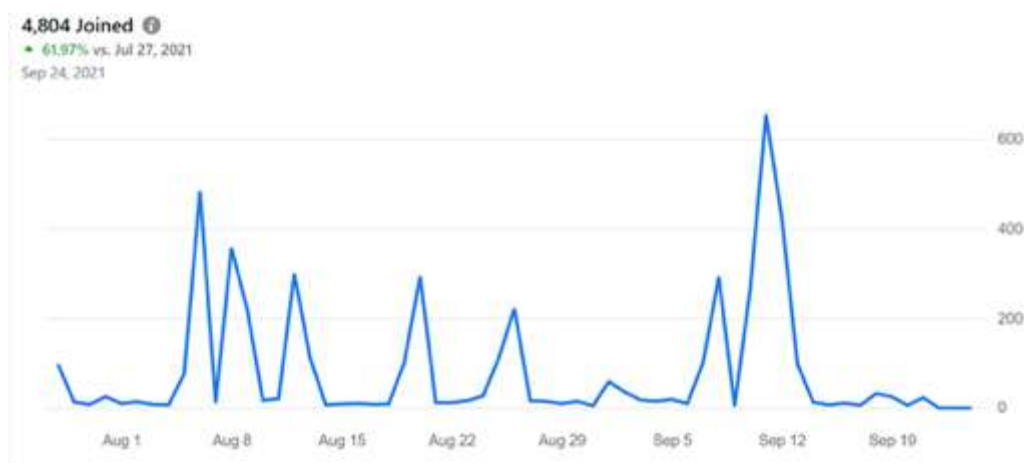


Figure 30. Growth Chart on Membership and Public Members Joined

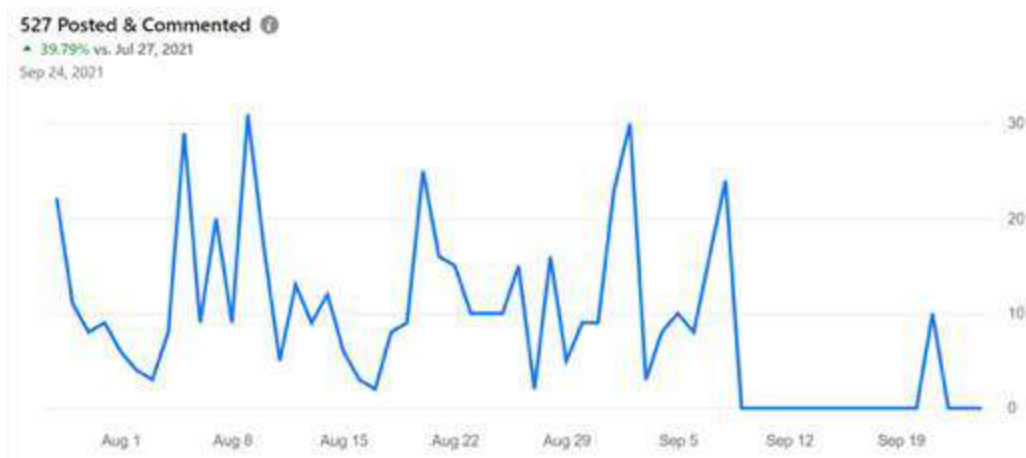


Figure 31. Growth Chart on Activity on Association Page (Representing Posts & Commenting)

The Agritourism Association Group on Facebook has also shown accelerating growth in views, visitors and participation. This signifies the impact of Agritourism towards social media discussions in Vanuatu's communities. Growth in viewers have peaked on several occasions during multiple evaluation periods (**See Figure 32 below**) and spiked on several occasions in response to content published by Agritourism Operators and the PTBY team. Consistent content, relevant hashtags along with successful cooking demonstrations in which were livestreamed have all contributed to the spike in viewership and visitor growth.

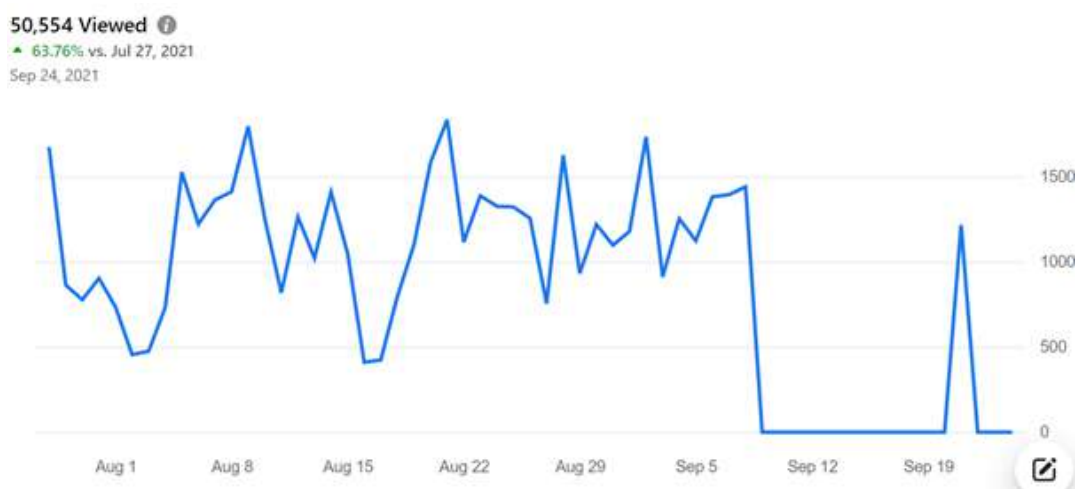



Figure 32. Growth Chart on Viewer Rate



An estimated growth rate of just over 60% has occurred since the 27th of July and this overall projects similar peak consistency across the time period, evidently proving the impacts our singular live streamed events, activities and discussions have in the communities and online.

Recommendations

1. We need to ensure that the 27 agritourism operators continue to be ambassadors for this program and provide a good example for agritourism operators entering into the program in 2022. The development of criteria for membership will further support this, as the program is in pilot stage this year the team or the association hasn't had the ability to address behaviour that does not reflect well on the program.
2. The inclusion of Agritourism Diversification Funds in the Tourism Business Support Program has been problematic and causing confusion. We recommend that this section is removed from the TBSP program for 2022. Reason being we need to ensure all businesses claiming to be agritourism in Vanuatu meet the agreed standards and criteria and have been through the Agritourism Product Development and Support Program. The TBSP are not equipped to make this analysis.
3. It's a continual struggle to ensure the program is inclusive while only taking on the number of operators that can be trained and supported effectively. More awareness workshops in 2022 will help to further support inclusiveness.
4. A number of Departments and Agencies within the National Agritourism Committee are not working in collaboration with the National Agritourism Coordinator or meeting their outputs within the endorsed Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2021-2025). For example the VTO agreed to develop content for the agritourism operators for the Agritourism Business Support Week Report (also a key Strategy Action under the VSTS 3.3.6) however emails from the National Coordinator to the VTO Manager Nick Howlett were

repeatedly ignored. The content then had to be developed by the Department of Tourism staff which is VTO's has made clear is their role. **It is recommended that Departments and Agencies within the National Agritourism Committee directly collaborate with the National Agritourism Coordinator to meet their outputs within the endorsed Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2021-2025).**

5. We need to clearly explain what Agritourism or Prodakif Turism Blong Yumi means and spend time discussing this so that the community fully understands explanations. For example, how does one become an Agritourism Operator?

6. We need to make sure that the language we use during the awareness is simple and easy for the communities to understand.

7. Using videos to summarize the concept of tourism is an excellent medium for all in the communities as they not only enjoy this but are able to relate to this especially at the beginning when clear explanations are given by the team and how they relate to the communities.

8. We need to further support research activities such as the development of Agritourism standards, the GIAHS submission for Taro Water garden systems and how this can further support the unique selling point for Vanuatu's destination marketing.

9. Effective Collaborations with Provincial Managers and PTBY Team going forward.

(We had major disruptions in logistics in PENAMA due to the ineffective planning and management from the PENAMA Provincial Manager, for example accommodation, transport etc were not organised.)

10. Organising logistics for the travel to Maewo was not done efficiently resulting in the team being significantly late for our workshop.

11. Transportation from one site to the next is a challenge due to drivers in each province having their own transport arrangements and this needs to be considered in planning future programs.

12. We need to keep supporting collaboration among Departments and Agencies and address the continued silo culture in Vanuatu. For the program to be successful, information delivered must be consistent and Departments and agencies should refer back to their responsibilities under the endorsed Vanuatu Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2021-2025).

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