



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



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VANUATU

Waste Data Profile

June 2025



Vanuatu and PacWastePlus

Vanuatu is one of fifteen countries to participate in the SPREP implemented and European Union's Delegation to the Pacific funded PacWastePlus Programme. The PacWaste Plus Programme aimed to improve waste management activities across the islands and strengthen the capacity of governments, industries, and communities to manage waste and protect human health and the environment.

About Vanuatu

Vanuatu is a large island-nation in the Melanesian (southwest) Pacific Ocean, consisting of 83 islands spread across 682,220 km² (Figure 2). This volcanic and mountainous Y-shaped archipelago, with lush vegetation and narrow coastal plains, borders with Solomon Islands in the northwest, New Caledonia in the southwest and Fiji in the east.

The islands are divided into six provinces: Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Tafea. The largest city is the capital Port Vila (50,944 inhabitants), situated on the Island of Efate (province Shefa), followed by Luganville (15,865 inhabitants) on Espiritu Santo (province Sanma), the largest and most sparsely populated island in the north of the country. In 2016 census, Vanuatu's population was 266,555 inhabitants, 75% of which lived in rural areas (VNSO, 2020).

Government, Policies, Strategies, and Responsibilities

The National Waste Management and Pollution Control Strategy and Implementation Plan (2016–2020) sets objectives such as supporting enforceable legislation, establishing sustainable financing (including the polluter pays principle), developing skilled personnel, reducing landfill waste, improving collection and disposal systems, upgrading infrastructure, enhancing coordination, raising public awareness, and increasing community participation.

The *Waste Management Act No. 24 of 2014* declares that “Each Municipal Council or a Provincial Government Council must formulate, adopt and implement an annual Waste Management Plan.

In Vanuatu, the main agencies responsible for waste management and are responsible for data collection and reporting for the DCMR Framework are the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC), the Port Vila City Council (PVCC), Luganville Municipal Council (LMC), Shefa Provincial Council (SPC), Tafea Provincial Government (TPG).

Waste Practices

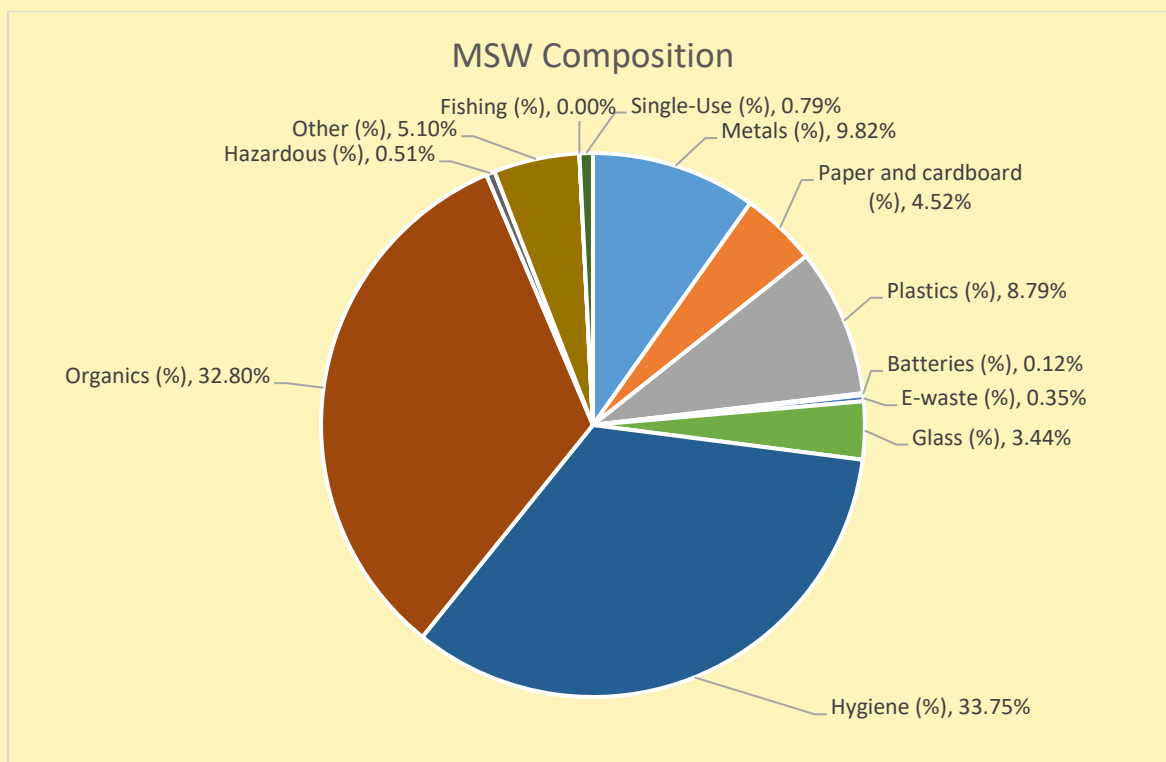
Vanuatu has four main waste disposal sites: Bouffa landfill (Port Vila), Luganville dumpsite, Lenakel dumpsite, and Lakatoro dumpsite. None meet the criteria for modern, regulated facilities. Bouffa landfill has some infrastructure but lacks functional leachate management and daily cover, while other sites are open dumps with minimal controls, posing environmental and health risks. Most rural areas lack formal waste services, leading to open burning and backyard disposal.

In more densely populated urban or peri-urban areas of Vanuatu, waste collection services are generally offered by Municipal or Provincial councils via a user-pays weekly bag collection service. The waste is collected by contracted waste collection waste collectors who are licensed by the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC).

In urban areas like Port Vila and Luganville, prepaid bag systems encourage waste minimization and separation at the source. Collection in provincial centers is infrequent, and rural areas often have no formal system. Recycling infrastructure is limited, with some aggregation and stockpiling of recyclables (e.g., PET bottles) led by the only recycler in the country, RecycleCorp.

Initiatives like pilot organics facilities and recyclable collection depots are diverting a significant portion of market organics and recyclables from landfill in Port Vila and other main ports. The Product Stewardship Scheme (PSS) is being developed to fund recycling and community clean-ups. Technology and youth engagement, such as recycling apps, are also being promoted.

Core KPIs	Result	Supplementary KPIs	Result
1. Count / capacity of modern waste facilities	1 / Unknown	1. Cost of disposal to landfill (\$/tonne/annum)	\$30.10
2. Count / capacity of unregulated waste facilities	5 / Projected capacity for Bouffa (423,000 m³)³	2. Weight of waste disposed (tonnes per annum)	21,346
3. National recovery rate (%)	12%	3. Weight of waste recovered (tonnes per annum)	656
4. Per capita waste generation rate (kg/capita/year)	124.38	4. Volume and type of stockpiled hazardous waste (m3)	Stockpiled hazardous waste: E-waste: 6.70 m3
5. Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) composition (%)	Error! Reference source not found. Next Page	5. Marine plastic pollution potential (tonnes per annum)	155.39
6. Household waste capture rate (%)	88%	6. Awareness and support of waste management services (%)	47%
7. Household collection service coverage (%)	75%	7. Proportion of strategic waste management initiatives implemented (%)	74%
8. Fulfilment of MEA reporting requirements (%)	42%	8. Commercial waste capture rate (%)	Insufficient data
		9. Commercial collection service coverage (%)	100%
		10. Total weight of disaster waste disposed (tonnes per annum)	No data



National Waste Analysis Snapshot

About the Data

The data used to inform the KPIs include the Vanuatu 2021 National Census, the APWC 2018 waste audits and surveys through the CLiP Project of Cefas, the APWC 2021 waste audits and surveys through the PWFI Project of IUCN, and Eunomia 2025 Waste Facility Register surveys. The most recent APWC audits undertaken include a compositional waste audit of 204 household samples and qualitative surveys involving 186 household and 67 commercial samples representing Port Vila, Shefa Rural, Ifira Island, Lelepa, and Luganville. The Waste Facility survey undertaken by Eunomia was undertaken in all disposal and recycling facilities in Vanuatu.

Data Collection Challenges

- There is not one Department or organisation that has an overall view of Vanuatu's waste profile. Due to the structure of the waste management systems being conducted independently there is no consistency to how waste is recorded or reported on a national level.
- DEPC and Municipal staff have many responsibilities and varied duties but it does not appear that it is anyone's direct responsibility to report on waste figures. Any figures collected are based on outright volume to weight conversion and there appears to be no system to regularly check on this conversion factor. Weigh bridges at the main disposal locations of Bouffa and Luganville could assist with this if they are operated correctly and the data collected is analysed to provide information to key decision makers with Government, DEPC or local councils.
- Private operators and recyclers are not required to provide figures on how much waste is collected, processed or recycled.
- Many of Vanuatu's Islands have no formal waste collection or dedicated disposal locations.

Highlights

- On the 1st February 2018, the Vanuatu Government signed three orders made under the Waste Management. These orders addressed three specific waste issues. The orders addressed: 1) the control of single use plastic bags, plastic straws and polystyrene takeaway boxes, 2) littering, and 3) the licensing of private waste operators.
- Order one has seen a visible decrease in the offering of these items from restaurants, “Mama’s market and retail sales outlets. In recent times there has been single use plastic replacement items coming back into the some of these establishments that could be questionable and DEPC will need to continue with Education for certain outlets and enforcement if required to ensure that the good work of removing these items is not undone.
- The main recycler in Vanuatu “Recycle Corp” continues to offer the only large-scale recycling available on the Island and operate in Port Vila on Efate and in Luganville in Espirito Sanot. They have introduced additional services to collect and process Mixed recycling including PET and Glass containers and Aluminium Cans. The PET and Aluminium are sorted and processed before being exported and the glass is crushed and used in cement locally.
- A private company called V Organic has started collecting and processing organic waste into mulch and compost at a DEPC site in Seaside Community, Efate. They are experimenting with options to produce organic fertilisers and soil improvement products to be sold locally.
- There has been a start-up of an e-waste repairer and recycler called MKV Recyclers. Most of their work concentrates on small scale repairs to phones, laptops and tablets but they are starting to expand to recovering e waste components
- DEPC has entered a Public Private Partnership (PPP) with Ocean Environmental Services (OES) to process waste oil in Port Vila. OES plans to process the waste oil through a pyrolysis process to convert it into fuel for their Tug Boat fleet. Many Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are currently keeping an eye on this project to see if it is successful as it could be a scalable model to adopt for other PIC.

Emerging Issues

- The growing urban population puts pressure on existing waste services and Infrastructure for the country. Increasing urbanisation and consumer economies will continue to create increased waste and options need to be considered by the key decision makers on how to manage and fund waste diversion and waste management.
- There have been recent studies completed in Vanuatu for Product Stewardship Schemes (PSS), and a Container Deposit Levy (CDL) that are currently in consideration for Vanuatu to assist with the management of certain materials. Implementation of these programs could help in assisting with funding activities to increase waste diversion away from the landfill.



Waste Management Practices and KPI Narrative

Waste Facilities and Waste Handled Each Year	<p>In Vanuatu there is 1 modern facility (RecycleCorp) and 5 facilities with unknown processing capacities as these are not recorded. Approximately, 21,000 tonnes of waste is disposed of annually, and an estimated 656 tonnes of waste is recovered each year. The cost spent on disposal to landfill is estimated at \$30.10.</p> <p>It is difficult to calculate how much airspace is available for the various landfills with the current level of waste disposal and operations. The current Luganville dumpsite is reported to reaching capacity.</p>	Hazardous Waste Stockpiles	E-waste is the only hazardous waste stockpiled in the waste facilities.
Household per Capita Waste Generation	The per capita waste generation rate is 124 kilograms per person per year.	Disaster Waste	The total weight of recent disaster waste disposed could not currently be calculated due to the ongoing demolition of damaged buildings in Port Vila from the December 17th 2024 earthquake.
Household Waste Statistics	The awareness and support of waste management services is 47%. The top three waste categories identified in household municipal waste are hygiene, organics and metals. The household waste capture rate is 88%, and the household collection service has a coverage of 75%.	Marine Waste	The marine plastic pollution potential was identified as 155 tonnes per year.
Commercial Waste Statistics	There was insufficient data to calculate a commercial waste capture rate and the commercial collection service coverage of 100% is recorded in Port Vila and Luganville.	Strategic Initiatives and MEA Reporting	<p>Vanuatu has committed to 3 Multilateral Environmental Agreements including Basel, Minamata, Stockholm Conventions, they have fulfilled 42% of the requirements to the various MEAs.</p> <p>Vanuatu has 19 waste management initiatives planned and have implemented 14, the proportion of strategic waste management initiatives implemented is 74%.</p>

