

IE VALIDATION REPORT TITLE

This table should not be longer than one page.

Project Title:	Life and Land Project
Location:	Whitegrass and Middlebush, Tanna Island, and South River, Erromango Island Tafea Province, Republic of Vanuatu
Project scale	☐ Macroscale ☒ Microscale
Version of this validation report:	2
Project Coordinator/ Client	Olivia Bird - olivia@tearfund.org.nz Andrew Finlay - andrew@tearfund.org.nz Tearfund New Zealand
Project Participants:	118 Households with a total population of 649 individuals.
Independent Expert:	Catherine Lessa
Validation Date of Issue:	10 th July 2026
Project Period (crediting period):	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2054
Methodology:	PM001 Methodology
Expected Carbon Benefit:	180,213 Mg CO ₂ e (total over 30 years). 7,340 Mg CO ₂ e per annum (before risk buffer applied, but including achievement reserve).
Expected Ecosystem Benefit:	Climate change adaptation will improve ecosystem resilience, strengthening ecosystem service provision and improving biodiversity outcomes through a combination of improved land management, restoration, and forest protection mechanisms. By undertaking reforestation/conservation of indigenous forest (outputs 2 & 3), native tree biodiversity will be restored/protected, providing habitat for key species (native pigeons, bats, etc.) and allowing populations to recover. Restoring native forest will also help regulate ecosystem water cycling (flood management, water filtration, consistency of stream flow), restore soil health, increase resilience against tropical cyclones through a wind buffer effect, and assist in the suppression of pest species such as invasive vines.
Expected Livelihood Benefit:	Improved land management interventions include sustainable coffee farming, enhancement of cattle grazing and coconut plantation areas, agroforestry, and sustainable timber and fuelwood plantations. These will increase food and livelihood security, improve sustainable access to natural resources, and strengthen the resilience of local food systems to cyclones and flooding. This allows communities to be more self-sufficient while remaining able to use their land under changing climate conditions. Restoring and protecting forest and riparian areas (outputs 2 and 3) will also provide habitat for locally valued flora and fauna. Strengthening governance systems (output 4) will allow for resources and project

	benefits to be equitably shared, providing further buffers against climate-related disasters and the long-term impacts of climate change.
Approved by PV:	Elena Llorente

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Objective and Scope	3
1.2 Method and Criteria	3
1.3 Level of Assurance	4
1.4 Summary Description of the Project	4
2. VALIDATION PROCESS	5
1.5 Validation team, technical reviewers and approver	5
1.6 Document Review	5
1.7 Site visits and Interviews	5
1.8 Sampling approach	8
1.9 Resolution of Findings	9
1.10 Forward Action Requests	11
1.11 Public Comments	11
3. VALIDATION FINDINGS	11
GENERAL INFORMATION	11
3.1 Project Interventions	11
3.2 Management Rights	14
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	18
3.3 Stakeholder Analysis	18
3.4 Project Coordination and Project Participant	24
3.5 Participatory Design	24
3.6 Stakeholder Consultation	25
3.7 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)	28
PROJECT DESIGN	29
Baselines	29
3.8 Baseline Scenario	29
3.9 Carbon Baseline	31
3.10 Livelihood Baseline (initial status and expected change)	31
3.11 Ecosystem Baseline (initial and expected change)	33
Theory of Change	35
3.12 Project Logic	35
Technical Specification	38
3.13 Project Activities	38
3.14 Additionality	48

3.15	Carbon Benefits.....	53
	Risk Management.....	55
3.16	Environmental and Social Safeguards.....	55
3.17	Achievement of Carbon Benefits	65
3.18	Reversal of Carbon Benefits.....	65
3.19	Leakage	68
3.20	Double Counting	69
3.21	Key Agreements to validate	69
	MONITORING AND REPORTING.....	70
	Indicators	70
3.22	Carbon Indicators.....	70
3.23	Livelihood Indicators.....	71
3.24	Ecosystem Indicators	73
	Monitoring.....	75
3.25	Monitoring Plan, Process and Sharing results	75
3.26	Reporting and record keeping	75
	GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.....	75
3.27	Governance Structure and Legal Compliance.....	75
3.28	Financial Plan and Management.....	77
3.	VALIDATION OPINION	78
	Annexes	79
	Annex 1 – Documents reviewed or referenced.....	79
	Annex 2 – New information requests, corrective action requests and forward action requests	82

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objective and Scope

The purpose of the validation audit activity was to conduct an independent assessment of the project in order to determine whether the project complies with the validation criteria, as set out in the guidance documents listed in Section 1.2 of this report.

The scope of this audit includes a validation of the following issues:

- The project and its baseline scenarios.
- Activities, stakeholder engagement, and processes of the project.
- Management rights.
- The GHG sources, sinks and/or reservoirs those are applicable to the project intervention.
- The types of PVCs that are applicable to the project.
- Agreements, monitoring and reporting.
- The project crediting period.

1.2 Method and Criteria

The validation was performed through a combination of reviewing relevant documentations, conducting interviews with relevant personnel and local stakeholders on Tanna and Erromango as well as onsite visits, particularly to the sites of the project interventions.

The criteria of this audit included a validation of the project description document with special attention to the baseline, monitoring plan and projects calculated emission removals and compliance with the Project Description Document (PDD), delivered by Tearfund NZ, and the requirements of the PV Climate V.5 to confirm that such documentation is sound, reasonable and meets the set criteria.

The criterion for validation was the PV Climate V5.0, including the following documents:

- Project requirements version 5.7
- Methodology requirements version 1.2
- Procedures Manual version v3.9
- Validation and Verification Procedures Manual 1.4

Unless otherwise indicated, the assessment was performed against the most recent version of the relevant PV documents.

1.3 Level of Assurance

The assessment was conducted to provide reasonable assurance of conformance with the defined audit criteria and materiality thresholds within the audit scope. Based on the audit findings, the Validation Report v01 includes a positive evaluation statement, providing reasonable assurance that the project's GHG assertions are materially correct and present a fair representation of the GHG data and information.

1.4 Summary Description of the Project

The overall aim of the Life & Land project is to strengthen the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities against the impacts of climate change.

The project will utilise improved management, restoration, and protection interventions across three different sites, Middlebush (Site 1) and Whitegrass (Site 2) on Tanna, and South River (Site 3) on Erromango.

Improved management

Improved management interventions will be achieved through four different approaches: sustainable coffee production, sustainable timber and fuelwood production, agroforestry, and improved management of a cattle grazing/coconut plantation area. Sustainable coffee production includes (a) converting previously cleared land into coffee plantations while integrating a mix of shade trees, fruit, nut, and long-lived native canopy species along margins, as well as clearing/ongoing maintenance of vine overgrowth; and (b) planting the undergrowth of forest with coffee trees. Sustainable timber and fuelwood plantations involves the development of sustainable timber and fuelwood plantations by planting fast-growing species for harvest within the periphery margins of established gardens and along roadsides. The agroforestry approach involves integrating fruit, timber, and/or nut-producing trees around or existing gardens to increase community food security, and the clearance/ongoing maintenance of vine overgrowth to achieve this in agroforestry areas. For improved management of a coconut and cattle grazing area, coconut and native shade/fruit trees will be planted. This facilitates ecosystem recovery, improves livestock farming conditions by providing shade for cattle, increases livelihood security by protecting areas for cattle grazing and increasing coconut yield, and increases carbon sequestration as shade trees grow and mature.

Ecosystem restoration & rehabilitation

Restoration will be achieved through four different approaches: reforestation of riparian margins, enhancement of degraded forest areas, hillside planting for erosion control, and replanting of fallow garden areas. Riparian margin restoration will be achieved by planting indigenous canopy species, with integrated planting of species used in food systems by the local community. Planting river margins with indigenous canopy species will increase carbon sequestration and stabilise riverbanks, preventing erosion, and improve water quality. For hillside erosion control, native wild cane grasses will be planted to stabilise the hillside, preventing erosion and reducing landslide risk.

Protection

Land will be protected through avoided deforestation by establishing a CCA. This involves protecting existing mature forest from sporadic logging and clearance for garden development by establishing a CCA. This will decrease carbon emissions through halting ongoing logging and preserve biodiverse habitat for important species such as native pigeons, flying foxes, and fruit bats.

Each project site has an established project working committee and who is tasked to oversee the long-term implementation and management of the project activities. Communities are responsible for undertaking regular maintenance and monitoring survival rates of saplings, replanting any losses.

The crediting period for the project is 30 years; from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2054.

2. VALIDATION PROCESS

1.5 Validation team, technical reviewers and approver

Role	Name	Involvement in			
		Desk/document review	On-site visit	Interviews	Validation findings
Independent Expert	Catherine Lessa	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independent Trainee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Technical reviewer	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
PV Approver	Elena Llorente	✓	N/A	N/A	✓

1.6 Document Review

The Project Design Document, including annexes, submitted by the Project Coordinator was reviewed against the approved methodology and against Plan Vivo requirements, including PV PM001 Agriculture and Forestry Carbon Benefit Assessment Methodology and the PV Project Requirements. The annexes contained additional background documents related to the project design, baseline and additionality were also made available before and during the audit. The supporting documents that were reviewed are all listed in Annex 1 of this report. The IE cross checked and compared then with the relevant sections of the PDD.

1.7 Site visits and Interviews

Duration of the on-site inspection: 26/11/2025 to 08/12/2025					
Name	Role	Organization/Community	Site location	Date	Audit member

Tom Iotil	Chairman	Project Working Committee, Iwel	Site 1, Middle Bush	26/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Margaret	Vice-Chairman	Project Working Committee, Iwel	Site 1, Middle Bush	29/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Agnes Natiang	Secretary	Project Working Committee, Iwel	Site 1, Middle Bush	26/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Joseph Iokim	Vice-Secretary	Project Working Committee, Iwel	Site 1, Middle Bush	29/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Nako	Project Participant	Iwel	Site 1, Middle Bush	26/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Iokaihim Yaliten	Iaramara (Chief)	Louahao	Site 1, Middle Bush	26/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Nipiknam Mul	Project Participant	Louahao	Site 1, Middle Bush	29/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Andrew	Project Participant	Iwel	Site 1, Middle Bush	29/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Thomas Iaput	Project Participant	Lenaken	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Wari Biri	Project Participant	Lenaken	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Carol Iokim	Project Participant	Louahao	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Napat Harry	Project Participant	Lounahuru	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Roslyn	Project Participant	Lounahuru	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Iala Iokauto	Project Participant	Lounahuru	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Merelyn	Project Participant	Lounahuru	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Loti Joseph	Project Participant	Lounahuru	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Jimmy Iaput	Project Participant	Lenaken	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa

Iokaim lawel	Project Participant	Louahao	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Remy Iokaim	Project Participant	Louahao	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
May Isaiah	Project Participant	Louahao	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Kalkawa Iokaim	Project Participant	Louahao	Site 1, Middle Bush	1/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Peter Antnelo	Project Coordinator	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Chief Steven Boh Navanhak	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Selena	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Terry Malou	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Jessy	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Chief John	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Pastor James Lowo	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Freepon	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	27/11/2025	Catherine Lessa
Lisa Lessy	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	08/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
David Malou	Project Participant	South River	Site 3, South River	08/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Jack Mura	Vice-Chairman of Project working committee	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	02/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Marie Nam	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	04/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Nam Moli	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	04/12/2025	Catherine Lessa

Susan Willie	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	04/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Fred Johnny	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Celine Johnny	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Fred Iakar Iapiap	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Linda San	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Lily Tau	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Mikawa	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Naling	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Jimmy Iapiap	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa
Chief Sam Namoro	Project Participant	Lounamilo	Site 2, Whitegrass	05/12/2025	Catherine Lessa

1.8 Sampling approach

There were sampling methods adopted during the on-site visit to select the number of plots to visit and conduct field investigations.

Plot Sampling Method

The minimum number of plots visited per project site was the square root of the total number of current plots reduced by a factor 0.6, rounded up to the next whole number:

$$y = 0.6\sqrt{x}$$

y = number of plots to be visited

x = total number of plots.

$$y = 0.6\sqrt{43}$$

$$y = 4$$

Therefore, a sample of 4 plots were selected during the site visit by the IE. The IE visited one plot of 20 meters by 50 meters that was selected along the riparian strip at Site 1. A further three (3) plots, each measuring 10 meters by 10 meters, were inspected at Site 2. This site contains dense forest and was subject to ad-hoc logging. The site has already obtained agreement to be designated as a Community Conservation Area under project intervention 9.

For each plot, the following field investigations were undertaken;

- Measurement of DBH (Aboveground Woody Biomass)
- Use of GPS for point locations
- Five (5) minutes of bird count, assessment of flora and fauna biodiversity

-Measurement of Dead and Downed Woody Debris (DDWD)

Inside a plot, three (3) 1 meter by 1 meter transects were randomly selected to assess undergrowth of flora biodiversity. The purpose of this method was to gain a plot-wide understanding of seedling and sapling distribution and reduce the margin of error. To assess the number of seedlings and saplings within a given plot to assist in understanding of both floral diversity and natural regeneration rates/forest health.

Communities/local people to interview.

As a general criterion, the number of sampled individuals within communities should be at least the square root of the total number of individuals within communities, rounding up to the next whole number.

Therefore, the following sampling size was determined for each project site;

Site 1 (Middle Bush): 21 individuals

Site 2 (White Grass): 12 individuals

Site 3 (South River): 11 individuals

The required targets for all project site interviews were completed except for Site 3 (South River), where 10 people were sampled instead of 11. The main reasons for this were poor internet connectivity and unavailability of people who travelled to the north of the island to attend their children's end of year school assemblies.

1.9 Resolution of Findings

Areas of validation findings	No. of NIR	No. of CAR	No. of FAR
GENERAL INFORMATION			
Project Interventions	0	0	0
Management Rights	1	1	0
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT			
Stakeholder Analysis	2 3	2	0
Project Coordinator and Project Participant	0	0	0
Participatory Design	0	0	0
Stakeholder Consultation	0	0	0
Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)	0	3	0
PROJECT DESIGN			
Baseline Scenario	0	0	0

Carbon Baseline	0	0	0
Livelihood baseline	4 5	0	0
Ecosystem Baseline	6 7	0	0
Theory of change	0	0	0
Technical specification	0	4	0
Project activities	0	0	0
Additionality	8 9 10	0	0
Carbon Benefits	0	0	0
RISK MANAGEMENT			
Environmental and Social Safeguards	11	0	0
Achievement of Carbon Benefits	0	0	0
Reversal of Carbon Benefits	12 13	0	0
Leakage	0	0	0
Double Counting	0	5	0
AGREEMENTS			
Land Management Plans	0	0	0
Benefit Sharing Mechanism	0	0	0
Grievance Mechanism	0	0	0
Project Agreements	0	6	1
MONITORING AND REPORTING			
Carbon indicators	0	0	0
Livelihoods indicators	0	0	0
Ecosystem Indicators	0	0	0
Monitoring Plan	0	0	0
Reporting and record recording	0	0	0

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION			
Governance Structure and legal compliance	0	7	
Financial Plan and Management	14 15	0	1
Others (please specify)	0	0	0
Total	15	7	2

1.10 Forward Action Requests

The following 2 FARs have been raised as part of the validation process:

FAR 1- At the next verification, the project agreements need to ensure that the correct crediting period is stated. In addition, the expected annual carbon benefits stated in the project agreements must be consistent with those presented in the PDD.

FAR 2- At the next verification, please provide the annual audit of the Project finances conducted by an independent financial auditor certified by a nationally recognised regulatory body, ensuring that the audit has been completed within 12 months of the end of each financial year.

1.11 Public Comments

During the public consultation process at Plan vivo website there were no comments for this project activity, therefore the validation team considered this correct.

3. VALIDATION FINDINGS

GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Project Interventions

Intervention	Evidence of carbon benefit	Evidence of livelihood benefit	Evidence of ecosystem benefit
Improved management	There is evidence of carbon sequestration via agroforestry, through the intercropping of native tree saplings and coffee trees. Shade coffee plantations are carbon neutral (no change in canopy cover).	This conservation effort has brought a new paradigm shift of thinking towards conservation and restored values such as respect for the environment. The coffee plantations will increase income	This initiative encourages planting of tree species that are endangered such as the the <i>Caryota ophiopellis</i> or “Snekpam”. There is presence of mature shade trees in the coffee plantation that will act as a buffer protection

	Therefore, there is no loss of carbon. Coffee plantations in open areas are increasing biomass density & canopy cover, increasing carbon sequestration. Extractive pressure on long-lived native species will be mitigated by planting fast-growing timber species (e.g. Whitewood, <i>Endospermum medullosum</i>, and Mahogany, <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>) in a sustainable timber plantation. This approach avoids emissions from logging.	opportunities for community members, while integrating agroforestry will increase food security as well as income for the project participants. Livelihood security for coffee farmers will be increased through shade tree buffer protection of coffee plants against high wind damage and cyclones Planting of sustainable fuelwood such as Mahogany relieves pressure for the communities to harvest long-lived native species in protected areas. Mahogany is a fast-growing species and is an alternative source of fuelwood supply for the communities. This reduces collection time and cost. A coconut tree seedlings nursery has also been established. The coconut trees are of particular importance to the communities in terms of food, medicine, building materials. There is an established and well-maintained nursery of native tree seedlings and which has united project participants to equally	during strong wind activities or cyclone. Sustainable fuelwood such as Mahogany are planted as a means to protect native trees from being harvested by communities, protecting ecosystem integrity. Agroforestry will contribute to improving soil fertility and crop health by diversifying agricultural systems and using larger fruit trees as wind buffers/to assist in natural water management, and providing increased habitats for native biodiversity.
--	---	--	--

		engage in the call of conservation. Project participants also expressed that trees or plants used as traditional medicine will be returned as part of the project.	
Protection	Avoided emissions are immediate when forest area is protected through community bylaws Preservation of mature carbon stocks are evident	This conservation effort has brought a new paradigm shift of thinking towards conservation and restored values such as Respect for the environment. Non-timber resources are sustained such as medicinal plants, wild fruits and nuts, materials for handicrafts	Promoting a large scale of habitat protection Species restoration and conservation of key flora and fauna biodiversity, including those that are native to the island and to the country as a whole. Strengthening of ecosystem services
Restoration	The Riparian environment was restored which was evident through vegetation succession. There was no evidence of erosion activity taking place in all the sites of intervention as the carbon in trees is being sequestered and protected Fallow gardens cleared within the core CCA area will also be restored with tree species native to the area. This will	Better water quality for households as groundwater services is being recharged. Improving the quality and volume of natural resources and products derived from forests Restoration of productive land, including garden areas, through planting native tree and agroforestry species.	The Riparian environment was restored which was evident through vegetation succession. There was no evidence of erosion activity taking place in all the sites of intervention. Project participants also expressed believe for the return of trees or plants used as traditional medicine. Presence of native trees and fruit trees at the riparian margins prevent

	increase carbon sequestration by clearing vine overgrowth to increase ecosystem productivity and growth, and through replacing vines with higher-biomass, longer-lived tree species. Net sequestration is achieved as trees mature. Essentially, this increases soil carbon.	Restoration and protection of wild cane resources used by communities.	erosion, sedimentation and also stabilise riverbanks, include the buffer zones of 20 meters on either side. The buffer further provides protection from flooding. Restoration of habitats for native species. Improvement of water regulation as well as quality.
--	--	---	--

In conclusion, the project interventions identified and selected for the scope of the project are expected to provide long-term increases in carbon storage or reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and have positive impacts on local livelihoods and ecosystems.

3.2 Management Rights

3.2.1 Project Boundaries

The project intervention is located on Tanna Island and Erromango Island, in Tafea Province, south of Vanuatu. The validation team assessed the location of the project against the geospatial data files attached to Annex 1 of the PDD /3/ and consider the location of the project to be correct. In addition, drone footages were also captured to gain aerial perspectives of the project sites. The community workshops held in 2023 and 2024 /25//26/27/, particularly the mapping exercises are also evidence to support this.

During the visits to the project intervention sites, it was observed that project sign boards were installed that clearly illustrated demarcated boundary of project sites, including the different interventions that are going to be implemented. Information on the signboards also included by-laws for managing resources within sites of project interventions as well as contact details for raising any questions or grievances. The interviews held with project participants also supported evidence of boundaries where project activities will be implemented. Therefore the validation team considers the boundaries correct.

3.2.2 Land and Carbon Rights

Table 1. Land and Carbon Rights

Project Area	Ownership and user rights status	Carbon rights	Validation Assessment
South River	Ownership of land in Vanuatu is governed under the modern and traditional governance system. Land is owned and managed by customary landowners rather than the Vanuatu Government. This means that traditional governance mechanisms will be used to navigate carbon and land user rights. Community land use and tenure are usually managed collectively; households have hereditary access to certain parcels of land and disputes are mediated through chiefs on a village-to-village basis.	The Forestry Rights Registration and Timber Harvest Agreement Act 2000 only covers carbon rights for leased land. In the case of unleased land, as for this project, carbon rights to land are managed alongside ownership and use by custom.	The following were conducted to validate the ownership of rights over land and carbon; - reviewed the relevant legislation pertaining to ownership of land and carbon, - project agreements signed between Nasituan and the three project working committees/18/, - evidence of project launch by way of exchange of pigs and kava between Chiefs, members of the concerned communities and Nasituan - interviews conducted with residents of the three project sites - Custom ceremonies involving both chiefs and community members have been used to confirm community support for project plans (Chief's workshop in Middlebush, 8 Aug 2024; Kastom ceremony for both Site 1 and 2, 14 March 2024; South River kastom ceremony 3 April 2025. See Annex C, Appendix 4, Fig. 57-60 under 'Chief consultation' for photo evidence). In the modern context, the following laws of the land will mainly apply. They are;
Whitegrass			
Middlebush			

			1. <u>Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu</u> Chapter 12 of the constitution states that “73. Land belongs to custom owners - All land in the Republic of Vanuatu belongs to the indigenous custom owners and their descendants”, and; “74. Basis of ownership and use - The rules of custom shall form the basis of ownership and use of land in the Republic of Vanuatu.” 2. <u>Custom Land Management Act No.33 of 2013</u> The Act provides a legal basis for indigenous land ownership in Vanuatu and further reinforces the system by which land is governed, and in this case, under custom ownership. Amongst other things, the Act recognises custom as the basis of ownership. Part 1, Section 1, sub-section 1 and 2 states that; (1) The Parliament of Vanuatu has formalised the recognition of customary institutions termed ‘nakamals’ and ‘custom area land tribunals’ in this Act to determine the rules of custom which form the basis of ownership and use of land in Vanuatu. (2) The final decisions reached by these customary institutions, when appropriately recorded, become recorded interests in land which are
--	--	--	--

			binding in law and are not subject to appeal to, or judicial review by, any Court of law. The conclusions are; - Both statutes, provide legal basis which affirms that custom landowners are the primary decision-makers over land use. And carbon rights are therefore inseparable from land rights. - that there is no evidence of dispute over ownership of land and carbon on all the project sites. From the interviews held, the project is well received. - The ceremonies held and the project agreements signed are recognised and enforced by The Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu and The Custom Land Management Act No.33 of 2013. - The proposed governance structure of the three project sites. The project subcommittee for each project site comprises of community representatives, and who have been nominated from the different <i>Nakamals</i>. These Nakamals fall under the jurisdictions of Tribes that have their Chiefly rulership already instituted through custom, referred to as the Iani Niko/Iaramara Asul and Asuas. This traditional governance system is similar to the South River whereby the "Iani Niko/Iaramara Asul and Asuas" is replaced by the South River Council of Chiefs. The proposed Traditional Governance system for the project sites falls in alignment to The Constitution of the
--	--	--	--

			Republic of Vanuatu and The Custom Land Management Act No.33 of 2013. The latter recognises system of <i>Nakamals</i>
--	--	--	---

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

3.3 Stakeholder Analysis

During the site visit, the IE conducted interviews with local and secondary stakeholders concerning the project intervention areas, both on Tanna and Erromango. The local stakeholders were from the following nakamals or villages, namely Louahao, Lounahuru, Iwel, Lenaken, Lounamilo and South River.

Interviews were conducted with members of the project working committees and other project participants from each project area, including traditional leaders.

All the project participants are essentially the Indigenous Peoples who have full access and ownership of customary rights to land, including resources, within the project areas. They are identified according to the following tribal groups;

- Nawalamanik Tribe (Middlebush)
- Nalione Tribe (Middlebush)
- Kawaipne Tribe (Whitegrass)
- South River Tribe (South River)

The project intervention sites are located within the land boundaries of these tribes. The chiefs from each tribe basically form the Traditional governance structure and oversee decision-making within their respective jurisdiction. Nakamals or a villages together form a given tribe. The Nasituan employed staff from each tribe and who provided guidance on conducting the community consultations, in terms of ensuring that there was cultural appropriateness in the engagements. Through this approach, women, youth and people with disabilities became initially involved in the project and were consulted, both separately and in mixed groups. The formation and establishment of the project working committees were also guided by the chiefs and ensured that the marginalised were equally recognised and hold membership.

Regarding the disputes over land, there is a risk concerning a quarry operation at Mt Tangen (Whitegrass) and Tanna Coffee Lease. The PDD clearly documented steps to address any likelihood of overstepping the boundary of project intervention. It was further noted that efforts were also made by the project team to write formal communications to authorities concerned. Additionally, there was continuous discussions and interactions with project stakeholders about these two issues and it was clear how the risk of a dispute should be managed and mitigated. The traditional governance system that has always been established, even before commencement of the project, is intact and highly respected. This system provides absolute assurance that any dispute, concerning the project, can be dealt with appropriately.

Overall, the project has correctly identified the local stakeholder groups and stakeholder groups. The project has also recognised the indigenous peoples, including local communities, with full access and ownership of customary rights. The project has also fully recognised the rights and inclusion of marginalised groups in decision-making. Further, the project would rely on the traditional governance system approach to address land disputes cases.

Table 2. Stakeholder Analysis and Evaluation

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Type	Impact	Influence	Validation Assessment
Nasituan	Local	High positive impact	High positive influence	Heavily involved in project implementation. Reviewed Project coordinator's registration certificate /5/ and signed agreements with partner organization /6/, Attendance list, photographs, signed meeting minutes, Project Agreements, Letter of approval from the authorities, Annex C of the PDD "Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports. /25/26/27/ This was the main stakeholder consulted on Day 1 of the site visit. The IE was impressed by the extensive coverage of information and effort that was put into developing the project proposal for Life and Land Project
Tanna Gardens	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Tanna Gardens is owned by Nasituan. They are a separate business entity.
Tanna Coffee	Secondary	Low negative impact	Low negative influence	They are currently excluded from the project as they own the lease within site 2. They will only become involved in the event that they decide to sub-lease the land but which will have a great impact on the project participants who are currently using the land for their gardens.

				Reviewed the PDD, made site observations, Annex C – Evidence of Community Consultations.
Community Members (villages/ nakamals involved) Louahao, Lounahuru, Iwel, Lamnatu (Site 1), Lounamilo (Site 2), South River (Site 3)	Local	High positive impact	High positive influence	Heavily involved in project implementation. Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports. They are the project participants themselves. A representative sample of the community members were interviewed during the site visit.
Wider tribes involved Nawalamanik Tribe, Nalione Tribe (Site 1) Kawaipne Tribe (Site2)	Local/ Secondary	High positive impact	High positive influence	Heavily involved in project implementation. Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports. Both Nawalmanik and Nalioune tribes are involved at Middlebush. There will be members of Nalioune tribe who will have gardens on the eastern side of the Imanaka creek. The proposed traditional governance structure involves the two chiefs from both tribes and a subcommittee of community representatives, which will be nominated from both tribes.
Neighbouring tribes e.g. Iaune Tribe (site 1)	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	They could be potentially involved as the project implementation expands. Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports.
Chiefs in each site (Tupunis,	Local	High positive impact	High positive influence	They are heavily involved in project implementation. They constitute the traditional

Iani Niko, Iani Asul)				government over all the communities involved and not directly involved in the project implementation. Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports. Also participated in the interviews during the site visit.
Women	Local	High positive impact	Moderate positive influence	Involved with project implementation as community members Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports. Also participated in the interviews during the site visit.
Children and youth	Local	High positive impact	Moderate positive influence	Involved with project implementation as community members. Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports. Also participated in the interviews during the site visit.
People with disabilities	Local	High positive impact	Moderate positive influence	Involved with project implementation as community members Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports.
Church leaders	Local	Moderate positive impact	Moderate positive influence	Involved with project implementation as community members

				Reviewed Project Agreements, and Annex C of the PDD “Community Consultation – Evidence and Reports. Also participated in the interviews during the site visit.
Tearfund NZ	Secondary	High positive impact	High positive influence	Main donor Heavily involved and coordinating project implementation. Reviewed Project coordinator’s registration certificate and signed agreements with partner organization
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)	Secondary	Moderate positive impact	High positive influence	NZ funding provider Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
Plan Vivo	Secondary	Moderate positive impact	High positive influence	Certification provider Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan Virtual meetings held with Plan Vivo
Department of Forestry	Secondary	Low positive impact	Moderate positive influence	Involved in project implementation. Desktop review The team at the department were consulted as well during the site visit. They have a lot to offer in terms of policy advice in the area of carbon credit related initiatives
Department of Agriculture	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
Department of Environment	Secondary	Low positive impact	Moderate positive influence	Desktop review

				The team at the department were consulted as well during the site visit.
Secretary General of Tafea Province	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Desktop review The Secretary General was consulted during the site visit.
Central Tanna Area Council	Secondary	Low positive impact	Moderate positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
NZ-based ecologists	Secondary	Moderate positive impact	High positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan They were also part of the visits to the intervention sites.
VU based botanists (linked with dept. Forestry)	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
University of the South Pacific (USP)	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
Live and Learn	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low/medium positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
Women's crisis centre	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan
Vanuatu Society for Disabled People	Secondary	Low positive impact	Low positive influence	Desktop review and consultations held with Tearfund NZ and Nasituan

3.4 Project Coordination and Project Participant

The project only involves Type I participants and Type II participants included in the project. This is evident through community consultations conducted on the three project sites; Site 1 – Middle Bush, Site 2 – Whitegrass and Site 3 – South River. With reference to Annex C of the PDD, the three communities produced their own land use and project boundary maps, and which illustrated locations of important resources.

All the three (3) Communities further signed project agreements with Nasituan to demonstrate their partnership and commitment to implement the project but importantly to have a clear understanding of the project, the roles and responsibilities, benefits, and dispute or grievance mechanisms, including having in place a clear record of these.

The IE observed that the project coordinator was quite suitable and demonstrated utmost commitment towards the implementation of the project, even considering the remoteness of the project sites. He has built long lasting relationships with project participants from all the three project sites. This was evident through connecting project participants to conduct interviews.

The Nasituan is a non-profit organization registered under the laws of Vanuatu, with its principal office at Imanaka, Tanna Island, Vanuatu. Company registration certificate and partner agreement signed with Tearfund NZ are in Annex 2. Nasituan has a Code of Conduct and Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual (HRPP) in place. The HRPP clearly states that Nasituan “is non-discriminatory in its approach working with communities regardless of their religious affiliation or tribal background”. Further, it states that “No discrimination is tolerated on the basis of national or social origin, religion, color, gender, age, disability, political opinion, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, motherhood, or any other factor”

As an overall conclusion, the project coordination and Management and project participants are correctly justified for the project.

3.5 Participatory Design

There were six site visits conducted in May 2023, September 2023, March 2024, August 2024, September 2024 and March 2025. The main purpose for these visits was to consult communities and collect data. During these consultations, the communities would identify problems and matters of consideration, including presence of invasive species, stream health, areas to be retained for gardening, planting coffee, timber and cattle grazing. These discussions would further inform the design of the project interventions, including development of the by-laws, work plans and project agreements.

The consultation workshops involved focused group discussions, comprising of separate or mixed groups for women, youth and people with disabilities. Follow up discussions were also held on a one-to-one basis with project participants who were not able to attend. The consultations were delivered in both Bislama and local language to ensure that all the participants can clearly understand particularly scientific terms used in the project.

An attendance record was also maintained throughout all the consultation workshops held within project sites. The attendance record showed a mix of gender participation. For example, the workshop held in Middlebush, on September 2023, showed a mixed gender participation – 16 men, 15 women.

The workshop held at Whitegrass showed a gender participation of 9 men and 9 women and on South River – 15 men and 15 women. This was evident during the site visit conducted from November to December 2025 where there was equal participation of both men and women from all the three project sites. Members of the project working committees were keen and confident to perform in their respective roles as well and understood the value of the project.

The documentations referred to for the validation included Annex C – Evidence of Community Consultations, project agreements and the by-laws which are currently on the project signboards installed in each project site. Other materials referred to were the project management booklets for each project site, Annex D – Carbon Credit Briefing documents and Annex G – Carbon 101. Annex C contains the community consultation workshop reports, which also includes project participants attendance list and discussions held.

Based on the interviews held with selected project participants for each project site, it was evident that they were fully aware of the Life and Land project and understood the benefits to be generated from successfully implementing the project. There was no hesitation to avoid an interview and which signified that the initial meetings and consultations held in the early stages of the project clearly emphasized equal gender participation and inclusivity of those who normally be marginalized, especially due to cultural expectations.

In conclusion, the stakeholder involvement in the participatory design process is correctly justified and well documented for the project.

3.6 Stakeholder Consultation

During the design phase of the project, the project proponent conducted six site visits in May 2023, September 2023, March 2024, August 2024, September 2024 and March 2025. These visits involved community consultations and data collection.

The objectives of the community consultations were the following:

- Determine community interest in pursuing the project
- Assess land use, livelihood, and ecosystem baselines.
- Establish local land and carbon ownership, management, and rights.
- Produce land management plans
- Identify problems and opportunities, including possible project interventions.
- Establish project bylaws
- Assess environmental and social risks
- Establish a project work plan

Below is a summary of the community consultations conducted during the site visits, including dates, form of consultation and discussion notes.

Type of Stakeholder	Date of Site Visits/Consultations	Type of Meeting/ Consultation	Summary of Discussions
---------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------

Middlebush community (Site 1)	• March 2024 • August 2024 • March 2025	• One-day workshop • Mapping exercises • meetings held with the Chiefs • walkabouts for boundary marking	• Riparian buffer size • Developing species list • land-use mapping, concerns about coconut trees • employmentt and other governance matters.
Whitegrass community (Site 2)	• March 2024 • August 2024 • March 2025	• One-day workshop attended by both men and women, • mapping exercises	• Water source management • timber harvest placement • discussions on adjusting boundary markings and updating of maps accordingly.
South River community (Site 3)	• September 2024 • March 2025	• Workshop on roles/responsibilities • project agreement	• roles and responsibilities • formation of bylaws • traffic light system • benefit sharing.
Secondary stakeholders (including MFAT, government, Nasituan, Tafea Provincial government, technical consultants/experts)	Ongoing since initial design phase	• 6-monthly updates • semi-regular contact • technical outreach to universities and ecologists	• Input on referral mechanisms • species selection for carbon calculations - invasive species management.

Key stakeholder inputs received during the stakeholder consultation process was in relation to species preferences and planting distances. For example, the project participants at Middlebush identified 70 plant species. There was also feedback received regarding land use and boundary markings based on the mapping exercises. The communities requested to have more integrated approach for placement of gardens/time harvest areas. There were concerns raised around the size of riparian buffer margins, dispute mechanisms, and provisions for those with disabilities. Additional concerns were the need to

strengthen governance and which led to discussions on establishing bylaws and to develop project agreements.

The project proponent responded to these inputs by incorporating them into workshop reports that were presented back to the project participants. Their inputs on by-laws, land management plans and the overall design of the project interventions, including the project agreements, were discussed and agreed collaboratively and finalised by the project proponent. The grievance mechanism was also embedded in the agreement as an avenue to authenticate and account for stakeholder concerns during project implementation.

Concerning members of the communities who faced difficulty to participate in the consultation workshops, the staff from Nasituan made sure to follow up with them to have one-to-one discussions about workshop material.

The project has established avenues for continuous engagement and communication with stakeholders, as the following;

- Project working committees – Each project community has established a working committee which is responsible for the coordination of their specific project interventions and ensuring that all community stakeholders are fairly represented and their needs are considered. Each committee has a representation of chiefs, women, youth and people with disabilities.

-Grievance mechanism – all project agreements provide an avenue, including communication channels, for raising concerns.

-On-going meetings and workshops – Nasituan is responsible for organising and facilitating meetings and workshops which will continue throughout the project implementation period. These are mainly to build the capacity of project communities in terms of providing more detailed information on project components, carbon credit generation and benefit sharing, planting and work plans, governance and grievance mechanisms, gender and social inclusion.

-Government and donor engagements – The project proponent will provide report updates on regular basis to ensure that the project continues to be aligned with national government and funding policies and priorities.

Notwithstanding, the traditional governance system continues to remain enforced, particularly to compliment the formal grievance mechanism, as embedded in the project agreements.

Nasituan also have a Policies and Procedures Manual that states they will not discriminate based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion or social status, including disability, when employing staff, and that they will maintain a non-discriminatory approach irrespective of religion or tribal background when working with communities.

Overall, the project coordinator has attempted a structured and iterative process to address the concerns and feedback of the project participants and explored ways for these to be considered and integrated into the project design.

3.7 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

The legislations that were relevant to the project and considered in the design process were the following:

-Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu, 1980 /65/— national legal basis for customary land rights: The Constitution states that “All land in the Republic of Vanuatu belongs to the indigenous custom owners and their descendants” and that “the rules of custom shall form the basis of ownership and use of land.”

-United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) — Article 8.2 was specifically cited in the project document. One shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for: [...] (b) Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources; (c) Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights

-ILO Convention 169 — international legal standard on consultation, participation and the development of indigenous peoples’ institutions (Article 6.1 was specifically cited in the project document). In applying the provisions of this Convention, one shall: (a) consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly; (b) establish means by which these peoples can freely participate, to at least the same extent as other sectors of the population, at all levels of decision-making in elective institutions and administrative and other bodies responsible for policies and programmes which concern them; (c) establish means for the full development of these peoples' own institutions and initiatives, and in appropriate cases provide the resources necessary for this purpose.

In reference to the relevant legislations, the following FPIC process was deployed;

- Initial scoping and site visits – these involved informal discussions
- Identification of customary landowners and key stakeholders
- Community consultation workshops
- Meetings with Chiefs and other traditional leaders

The effectiveness of this process was demonstrated in the following;

- Information provided prior to decision making
- Decision-making process and timeline defined by the rights holders
- Stakeholder representatives involved and their selection
- Measures to ensure the involvement of women and marginalised vulnerable and/or disadvantaged people.

The documentations referred to for the validation were the following;

- Workshop reports and attendance records (Appendix 4 in Annex C).
- Trip report from NT staff to Erromango (Appendix 6 in Annex C).
- Draft bylaws, project agreements and Carbon Credit Consultation document (Annex D; Annexes 7 and 10).
- ESA workshop summaries (Annex 8).

An important point of consideration is that project participants from the three project sites, are governed by their uniquely established Traditional Governance System. Therefore, any decisions taken concerning the operations of the project would adhere to the Chiefly protocols established under the Traditional Governance system. The consultations conducted with the Nakamals and Representatives of the Tribes, consent/approvals of the project, including meeting minutes and project agreements, have essentially been recognized and approved by rule of custom. Furthermore, the current relevant legislation, recognizes these jurisdictions, any decision taken is final and is representative of everyone's voices in the community.

In conclusion, the FPIC identification and process is generally well documented and justified throughout. One of the statutes that also complimentary to the Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu, 1980 is the Custom Land Management Act No.33 of 2013. This was not mentioned in the PDD.

PROJECT DESIGN

Baselines

3.8 Baseline Scenario

As identified in the baseline scenario, the absence of project interventions on Tanna and Erromango comprises of continued ad hoc logging, uncontrollable cattle grazing preventing regeneration of saplings, no forest regeneration, shifting cultivation in garden areas with less time for fallowing, monoculture coffee plantations that are not well managed, continued vine infestation and smothering in forest tracts, lack of soil stabilisation and erosion control measures.

The selected baseline scenario is consistent with the Plan Vivo PM001 Agriculture and Forestry Carbon Benefit Assessment Methodology. Under this methodology, the specific modules and tools were applied:

- PU001 Estimation of Baseline and Project GHG Removals by Carbon Pools in Plan Vivo Projects, Version 1.1
- PU002 Estimation of Baseline and Project GHG Emissions from Carbon Pools in Plan Vivo Projects, Version 1.0

-PT002 Estimation of Climate Benefits from REDD in Community Managed Forest, Version 2.0

-AR-TOOL14 v4.2 “Estimation of carbon stocks and change in carbon stocks of trees and shrubs in A/R CDM project activities”

These tools were utilized to conduct the following assessments:

- Determine the baseline of carbon stock and projection overtime (changes)
- Justify zero-change assumptions in degraded systems
- Estimate deforestation and degradation rates
- Delineation of forest strata

The following procedures were undertaken to identify the baseline scenario have been correctly followed and the identified scenarios reasonably represents what would have occurred in the absence of the project:

- Identification and assessment of pre-project land use (Section 3.1 of the PDD, Table 7.4 of Annex 7)
- Stratification involving sampling within specific plot locations to determine the intervention types
- Field inventory and biomass assessment to determine status and level of carbon stock (Tier 3 IPCC level)

In-situ field surveys which documented, recorded, and spatially delineated the extent and drivers of deforestation and forest degradation within the Protection project area itself, (AR-TOOL14)

- Identification and definition of reference region and leakage area
- Utilisation of NDVI and Hansen datasets to understand landcover change over time.
- Cross-validation of ground-based assessments with remote sensing data
- Applied the AR-TOOL14 v4.2 to justify baseline carbon assumptions.

Key observations onsite to confirm the baseline scenario were the following:

- Small-scale logging of mature forest stands in one of the intervention sites in Whitegrass
- Quarry operation at Mt Tangen causing significant impacts to surrounding forest through edge effects and wind throw.
- Areas of vine smothering and cyclone damage in South River forest patches causing limited natural regeneration in heavily infested areas.
- Cattle tracks and grazing impacts inside garden areas

Key inputs from Interviews;

-Lack of respect for customary approaches to resource use have also led to overharvesting of several important natural resources, including timber, bats, native pigeons, crayfish, and coconut crabs

-loss of valuable trees, including those for medicinal use

-Lack of understanding on purpose and benefits of forest/biodiversity conservation

In conclusion, the baseline scenario is correctly justified for the project intervention. The project team have thoroughly identified the drivers that contribute significantly to forest degradation.

3.9 Carbon Baseline

The project estimates net baseline emissions from ongoing deforestation and forest degradation at approximately 5,776 Mg CO₂e per year, based on an annual forest loss of 3.88 ha. Baseline emissions are not estimated for the Restoration and Improved Management interventions, as this would require an assessment of current Net Primary Productivity; this conservative approach is justified in Annex 7.

The validation team considers this approach correct and in accordance with Annex 7.

3.10 Livelihood Baseline (initial status and expected change)

The project area includes:

Middlebush: 73 households (402 individuals), including 9 vulnerable households

Whitegrass: 29 households (160 individuals), including 4 vulnerable households

South River: 20 households (121 individuals), including 2 vulnerable households

From the project population, a sample baseline survey was conducted with 29 households to assess the livelihood status; 16 from Middlebush and 8 from Whitegrass and 5 on Erromango in South River. The following categories were assessed;

-Access to land and natural resources

-Livelihood activities and Income sources

-Household assets

-Food consumption

The following briefly describes the livelihood status of the communities under the pre-project condition and under the baseline scenario.

Pre-Project Condition

Access to land and natural resources within the project region is governed under a traditional governance system whereby land is traditionally distributed among families according to local customary practices and authority structures. In terms of livelihood activities, communities are heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture activities and there are limited engagements in other income earning activities. Despite this wide engagement, food security still remains a concern. They are not able to afford nutritious food. There is an increasing reliance on processed foods instead. Communities continue to use trees for fuel wood and clearing for planting crops, access food as well as for timber to construct shelter or houses. In fact, the main source of fuel for cooking food is wood. Communities always encounter difficulties to access water, even for drinking or for cooking. Notably, people with disabilities continue to be undermined and less considered to be engaged in community activities.

During the onsite visits, it was observed that awareness and understanding on the practice of conservation and sustainable use of resources was still minimal. An interviewee at Whitegrass questioned if there would be any timber trees available for them to construct houses. A logging activity unexpectedly took place within Whitegrass intervention site which was purely due to a misunderstanding and not an intentional act to disrespect the bylaws. The logging operation was of small-scale and not large or a commercial scale operation. The logger was in Port Vila for work during the time when the community consultations were being conducted and was unaware of the project boundaries. Part of the consultations involved demarcating project boundaries using flagging tapes/GPS points with the chiefs and landowners of the project site. Thereafter, a consensus was reached by all stakeholders on the project boundaries. There has been complete respect of these as well as compliance of the bylaws and which further allowed reforestation of the area to take place.

Baseline scenario

Across all the local stakeholder groups, the baseline scenario indicates deteriorating livelihood conditions whereby pressure on land and other natural resources will continue to increase. The level of income will continue to be low and dependency on subsistence agriculture will increase, which further increases pressure on sustainable management of land. Vulnerability on climate change will continue to increase as well. Food security and nutrition will become more challenged. There will be increasing inequality amongst people with disability and other marginalized groups. Traditional governance will continue to be compromised and which requires more effort by traditional leaders to educate, especially the youth, on the importance of maintaining morals and values within custom and culture.

Some limitations from the baseline survey are the following;

- A 16% margin of error from a sample size of 29 households is quite high. Therefore, accuracy and reliability of data is questionable.
- The livelihood data is not aggregated by gender, age, or vulnerability groups.

-It would be useful to have quantities of natural resources that are dependent on by the communities (for example, fisheries, what forest products)

In conclusion, the baseline scenario is expected to continue to remain vulnerable and deteriorate due to significant pressures that are closely connected. In the absence of the project interventions, the current livelihood challenges are expected to reduce agricultural productivity and livelihood status.

The overall validation conclusion regarding the expected livelihood change is correctly justified, accurate and complete for the project.

3.11 Ecosystem Baseline (initial and expected change)

Both Tanna and Erromango are volcanic, tropical and have cyclone-prone systems that are characterised by the following;

- High rainfall variability (windward vs leeward zones)
- Frequent disturbances from cyclones, droughts and flooding
- Fertile volcanic soils (andosols, cambisols)
- The climatic conditions have an effect on influencing vegetation patterns

Project Site	Initial ecological conditions	Expected baseline change
Middlebush (Site 1)	There are small scale community gardens from slash and burn shifting cultivation, volcanic ash soils and small coffee plots integrated with gardens. The ash fallout from Mt Yasur affects unshaded crops. The provision of macroinvertebrate baseline data indicates that the Imanaka stream is under threat. This shown by high count of mosquito larvae. Based on the bird count data provided, the bird diversity is mostly of invasive and least concern in terms of conservation status. This includes the Myna bird. The type of bird species indicates absence of a forest	Under the baseline conditions, agricultural productivity is expected to decline or remain unstable because of shortened fallow cycles, soil fertility loss, increased flooding and waterlogging and ash smothering. These pressures can increase vulnerability to pests and diseases. The flora diversity will continue to decline as population pressures increase to establish garden areas.

	environment and intensive land use, such as gardens that are quite close to each other. The area is heavily infested with invasive species and which is a consequent of lack of maintenance. During an interview with a paramount chief, he clearly made a statement that due to lack of awareness on the importance of conservation coupled with increase of population, a lot of their high valued trees, particularly for medicine, have long gone.	
Whitegrass (Site 2)	There are lowland rainforest of up to approximately 500 m), degraded/open forest patches, overgrown and less maintained coffee plantations, smallholder gardens, and approximately 38 hectares of erosion prone hillside grasslands used for cattle grazing. The presence of volcanic soil is due to proximity to the Yasur volcano. The vine and creeper dominated open forest patches, and coconut plantation at hill base. At least seven different bird species have already been recorded in the project areas in Whitegrass, including the near-threatened Vanuatu kingfisher, white eye, and imperial pigeon. These birds are endemic to Vanuatu. The bird count data provided also confirms this review. There are also cultural keystone species identified through community knowledge. During the site visit, edge effects was clearly evident with infestation of Blue Morning Glory. The ongoing quarry operation further exacerbates this issue.	Under the baseline condition, the decline in mature forest condition will continue due to sporadic logging, cyclone damage, and invasive vine proliferation that prevents regeneration such as the <i>Meremia peltata</i> and <i>Blue Morning Glory</i>. The lack of maintenance of open fallow gardens also exacerbates infestation of invasive species. Small forest patches are likely to be lost in severe wind events. Grassland erosion from ongoing cattle grazing is expected to continue; coconut regeneration at the hill base is suppressed by grazing. While there are intentions to plant seedlings, the concern as observed during the site visit is to deploy an effective way of guarding the coconut seedlings in a such a way to prevent the cattle from eating them. Recent cyclone events and on-going ash disturbance from Mt Yasur will continue to stress garden and plantation productivity.
South River	There are dense evergreen forest on windward slopes, degraded/open	Continued vulnerability to degradation from past logging, invasive plants, and

	forest and cloud forest at higher elevations, smallholder gardens and coffee plots near villages. Historical commercial logging has removed old growth kauri, sandalwood, and tamanu in parts of the island. The project site includes open forest composed of vine smothered sub canopy species. Coconut crab is present on Erromango and it is of cultural and conservation importance. Unmanaged grazing of cattle and roaming pigs, around the garden areas and river margin causes disturbances to gardens.	climate impacts (cyclones, changing rainfall). Forest recovery is likely to be slow where vines and invasive species prevent seedling establishment; small patches remain at high risk of complete loss during severe wind events. Pest presence (rats/mice) is reported and will continue to pressure native fauna and regeneration. This also includes unmanaged cattle grazing and unmanaged roaming pigs.
--	---	--

The ecosystem baseline was conducted using the following methodology;

1. Desktop Review
 - a. Literature on flora and fauna of conservation status in Vanuatu
 - b. Climate and soil data/types
2. Field Observations
 - a. Forest structure and degradation
 - b. Land use patterns – gardens, grazing, nakamals, plantations, residences
 - c. Presence of invasive species and patterns of infestations
 - d. Impact of natural disasters such as flooding, cyclones, volcanic ashfalls
3. Ecological survey tools
 - a. Bird count
 - b. Assessment of stream macroinvertebrate
 - c. Observations of species
4. Conduct community consultations
 - a. Identification of species and places of cultural significance
 - b. Local ecological knowledge

In conclusion, the expected ecosystem baseline is sufficient and correctly justified for the project.

Theory of Change

3.12 Project Logic

Aim

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities against the impacts of climate change.

Description		Assumptions/Risks	Validation Conclusions
Carbon Benefit	<i>The carbon sink function of cyclone-damaged and deforested forest areas, riparian margins, coffee plots, and community garden areas is improved (outputs 1, 2, & 3).</i>	Key assumptions and risks include: - Communities will be interested in maintaining project activities beyond the funding period. - PVC generation is sustained over the project's crediting period and is sufficient to ensure enough resourcing through reinvestment in project management to maintain activities (e.g. ongoing maintenance of replanted trees/ suppression of vine overgrowth). - Suitable buyers will be found for carbon credits generated through the project. - The price of forest carbon credits purchased on voluntary markets will increase from an average of ~USD \$8/ton to USD \$40/ton by the end of the decade to improve long-term financial viability. While plausible, there is high uncertainty around this assumption.	- During onsite interviews, project participants expressed their sincere support for the project and look forward for the forests to be fully restored. However, there was evidence of vine overgrowth on gardens (Intervention 1a) and along the riparian margins at Imanaka stream (Intervention 2) - By-laws are in place for the management of resources as evident on installed project sign boards. Project participants are fully aware on who to contact regarding any project matters. There is still a need for further awareness on the project, but especially on the scope of the project and how the carbon credit will be calculated and accessed. - Interventions 9a and 9b shows the forest is intact and healthy - A dedicated nursery has been established containing a collection of approximately 15000 of seedlings of native species. - There is also evidence of improvement of community gardens in terms of applying an agro-forestry approach. However, these need to be clearly demarcated.
Livelihood Benefit	<i>Livelihoods and food systems are resilient to the impacts of climate change.</i> Carbon credits will provide another avenue	Key assumptions and risks are that improved forest management, restoration, and forest protection through implementing project activities will	During onsite interviews, project participants expressed their sincere support and are quite hopeful for the expected outcomes of the project. Further, they look forward for their forests to be fully restored. However,

	stream for community members, strengthening livelihood security. Investing in agroforestry (output 1) by integrating food trees into existing garden systems strengthens the resilience of local food systems to cyclones and flooding. Coffee planting will diversify income streams for increased resilience. This allows communities to be more self-sufficient while remaining able to use their land under changing climate conditions. Strengthening governance systems (output 4) will allow for resources and project benefits to be equitably shared, providing further buffers against climate-related disasters and the long-term impacts of climate change. By building in mechanisms to represent and consider the most vulnerable, access to resources such as food, land, materials for making houses, and climate-resilient decision-making power will strengthen livelihoods.	tangibly benefit communities via: • Improving the quality and volume of natural resources and products derived from forests; • Buffering communities from the effects of extreme weather events; and • Improving soil fertility and crop health. Another key assumption is that there will be ongoing community commitment for a minimum of 30 years (project crediting period) and ideally for the next 100 years.	there was evidence of vine overgrowth on gardens (Intervention 1a) and along the riparian margins at Imanaka stream (Intervention 2). • The level of understanding by the Project participants, particularly in the agroforestry approaches gives them comfort that there are still resources that they can access provided that they adhere to the by-laws. For example, access to a tree for timber and the approach to replace it by planting 5 tree saplings. The application of agroforestry also provides food security for the communities.
Ecosystem Benefit	<i>Climate change adaptation improves ecosystem resilience, strengthening ecosystem service provision and improving biodiversity outcomes</i>	A key risk is the potential for setbacks from recurring natural disasters (e.g. tropical cyclones). The project will work with work committees to establish a contingency buffer reserve, factoring in the potential	There was evidence of no soil erosion in all project intervention sites. Evidence of flourishing protected area accommodating native tree biodiversity Evidence of presence of native bird species

	<i>through habitat security.</i> Climate change adaptation will improve ecosystem resilience, strengthening ecosystem service provision and improving biodiversity outcomes through a combination of improved land management, restoration, and forest protection mechanisms. By undertaking reforestation/conservation of indigenous forest (outputs 2 & 3), native tree biodiversity will be restored/protected, providing habitat for key species (native pigeons, bats, etc.) and allowing populations to recover. Restoring native forest will also help regulate ecosystem water cycling (flood management, water filtration, consistency of stream flow), restore soil health, increase resilience against tropical cyclones through a wind buffer effect, and assist in the suppression of pest species such as invasive vines.	for a natural disaster event every five years by setting aside financial resources for activities such as additional nursery propagation, replanting, vine clearance, and labour costs.	The presence of invasive species was evident in all sites of project interventions.
--	---	--	--

Technical Specification

3.13 Project Activities

Table 4 Project Activity Summary

Intervention	Project activities	Project location	Inputs to Resource Activities	Validation Assessment
--------------	--------------------	------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------

All	Activity 1.1: Develop management plan that addresses <i>Improved Land Management</i> interventions in conjunction with Activities 4.1 and 4.2.	Whitegrass, South River	Community consultations	There is already so much willingness by the communities to intercrop other tree plantings. The Management plans have already been developed for each site.
	Activity 1.2: Establish nurseries for coffee, shade, timber, fuelwood, and food producing trees (one at each project site).		Nursery materials, construction labour, seedling source, ongoing labour for nursery care	There were two nurseries visited. The nursery currently established at Iwel for the middle bush is promising and checked on regular basis. It was observed that seedlings of trees having an critically endangered status were also being raised at the nursery such as the <i>Caryota ophiopellis</i> or "Snekpam". The nursery is quite accessible and is also uniting different members of the communities, including young people, to invest their time and energy, as a way to contribute to the overall objective of the project. A committed planter residing within Middle Bush and who regularly checks in at the nursery, has continued beyond the scope of the project to plant trees along the banks of a water way below Iwel. Main reason for his initiative is towards

				the protection of the water source. During drought seasons causing scarcity of water on the usually visited locations, that water source was regularly visited by many people around Tanna. The coconut nursery at Whitegrass is located inside a private residence and not easily accessible by project participants and is not well maintained.
	Activity 1.3: Ongoing, regular maintenance of planted areas to prevent vine overgrowth/ensure tree survival.		Ongoing labour	On all the sites, there are records of some maintenance in Y1, but maintenance has been patchy- this will be addressed in Y2.
1. Sustainable coffee production through (a) conversion go existing gardens; (b) clearance of undergrowth.	Activity 1.4: Clearing vine overgrowth from existing gardens/preparation for coffee tree planting (intervention 1 [a]).	Whitegrass, South River	Ongoing labour	On all the sites, there are records of some maintenance in Y1, but maintenance has been patchy- this will be addressed in Y2.
	Activity 1.5: Clearing undergrowth within forest areas and preparation for coffee tree planting (intervention 1 [b]).		Labour	On all the sites, there are records of some maintenance in Y1, but maintenance has been patchy- this will be addressed in Y2.
	Activity 1.6: Planting coffee trees (interventions 1 [a] and [b]).		Labour, coffee seedlings	Coffee trees were planted on the intervention sites 1[a] and 1 [b].
	Activity 1.7: Planting native shade trees in		Labour, shade tree seedlings	Native shade trees were planted inside existing gardens.

	existing gardens that will be converted to coffee plantations.			
4. Development of sustainable timber and fuelwood plantations within existing gardens and along roadsides	Activity 1.8: Develop sustainable harvesting plan/by-laws for timber/fuelwood extraction upon maturity (~10-15 years).	Whitegrass, South River	Community consultations	Sustainable harvesting laws for timber/fuelwood is clearly printed on the project signboards that are installed in each project site.
	Activity 1.9: Identify/delineate suitable alternative areas for timber and fuelwood.		Community consultations, participatory mapping, GPS walkabout + mapping	Community consultations, involving participatory mapping, was undertaken to identify and delineate suitable areas for, amongst other things, grazing, gardens, and timber resources
	Activity 1.10: Clearing undergrowth/site preparation for timber/fuelwood tree planting.		Labour	Clearing of a few intervention sites had taken place to prepare for timber/fuelwood tree planting.
	Activity 1.11: Plant timber and fuelwood trees.		Labour, timber and fuelwood seedlings	Timber and fuelwood trees have already been planted.
5. Agroforestry incorporating the planting of fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees around or among gardens	Activity 1.12: Identify specific gardens for planting fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees.	South River	Community consultations, participatory mapping, GPS walkabout + mapping	Community consultations, involving participatory mapping, was undertaken to identify and delineate suitable areas for, amongst other things, grazing, gardens, and timber resources
	Activity 1.13: Clearing undergrowth/site preparation for planting fruit,		Labour	Clearing of a few intervention sites had taken place to prepare for planting of fruit,

	timber and/or nut producing trees.			timber and/or nut producing trees.
	Activity 1.14: Plant fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees.		Labour, fruit, timber, and/or nut-producing tree seedlings	Fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees have already been planted.
8. Enhancement of cattle grazing/cocunut plantation area by planting supplementary shade, fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees.	Activity 1.15: Identify/delineate specific sites within the cattle grazing area for planting supplementary shade, fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees.	Whitegrass	Community consultations, participatory mapping, GPS walkabout + mapping	Community consultations, involving participatory mapping, was undertaken to identify and delineate suitable areas for, amongst other things, grazing, gardens, and timber resources
	Activity 1.16: Site preparation for planting shade, fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees.		Labour, shade, fruit, timber, and/or nut-producing tree seedlings	Clearing of a few intervention sites had taken place to prepare for timber/fuelwood tree planting.
	Activity 1.17: Plant shade, fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees.			Fruit, timber and/or nut producing trees have already been planted.
All	Activity 2.1: Develop management plan that addresses <i>Restoration</i> interventions in conjunction with Activities 4.1 and 4.2.	Middlebush, South River, Whitegrass	Community consultations	Management Plans for each project site have been developed. (Annex L)
	Activity 2.2: Establish nurseries for raising native and agroforestry trees to be planted in restoration areas (one at each project site).		Nursery materials, construction labour, seedling source, ongoing labour for nursery care	There were two nurseries visited. The nursery currently established at Iwel for the middle bush is promising and checked on regular basis. It was observed that seedlings of trees having an critically endangered status were also being raised

				at the nursery such as the <i>Caryota ophiopellis</i> or “Snekpam”. The nursery is quite accessible and is also uniting different members of the communities, including young people, to invest their time and energy, as a way to contribute to the overall objective of the project. A committed planter residing within Middle Bush and who regularly checks in at the nursery, has continued beyond the scope of the project to plant trees along the banks of a water way below Iwel. Main reason for his initiative is towards the protection of the water source. During drought seasons causing scarcity of water on the usually visited locations, that water source was regularly visited by many people around Tanna. The coconut nursery at Whitegrass is located inside a private residence and not easily accessible by project participants and is not well maintained.
	Activity 2.3: Ongoing, regular		Ongoing labour	In all the sites visited, there was no regular

	maintenance of planted areas to prevent vine overgrowth/ensure native tree survival.			maintenance tree saplings.
2. Reforestation of riparian margins	Activity 2.4: Identify/delineate gardens and ownership rights along Middlebush stream, secure community agreement for restoration.	Middlebush, South River,	Community consultations, participatory mapping, GPS walkabout + mapping	Community consultations, involving participatory mapping, was undertaken to identify and delineate suitable areas for, amongst other things, restoration. Agreement has been secured and signed.
	Activity 2.5: Clearing undergrowth (Middlebush)/site preparation (Middlebush, South River) for planting native and agroforestry trees.		Labour	Clearing of a few intervention sites had taken place to prepare for timber/fuelwood tree planting.
	Activity 2.6: Plant native and agroforestry trees along riparian margins.		Labour, native and agroforestry tree seedlings	Plant native and agroforestry trees have already been planted.
3. Forest enhancement through active restoration	Activity 2.7: Clearing undergrowth/site preparation for planting native and trees.	South River	Labour	Clearing of undergrowth/site preparation for planting native and trees has happened.
	Activity 2.8: Plant native trees within forest enhancement area at a preliminary density of one tree per 100m ² (one tree within 10m * 10m grids).		Labour, native tree seedlings that are currently being grown in the nursery.	Seedlings are currently being raised in the nursery
7. Hillside erosion	Activity 2.9: Clearing	Whitegrass	Labour	This activity is planned for Year 2 due to

control via tree planting and protection of wild cane resources	undergrowth/site preparation (where needed) for planting native, erosion stabilizing trees.			workplan/iterative community consultation
	Activity 2.10: Adequately fence site as and where required to exclude cattle.		Fencing materials, labour	
	Activity 2.11: Plant native trees within hillside erosion control area at a preliminary density of one tree per 225m ² (one tree every 15m).		Labour, native tree seedlings	
6. Restoration of fallow gardens within the core CCA area.	Activity 2.12: Clearing undergrowth/site preparation within fallow gardens for planting native trees.	Whitegrass	Labour	Clearing of undergrowth was not maintained. There was evidence of fallow gardens being cleared.
	Activity 2.13: Plant native trees within fallow gardens.		Labour, native tree seedlings	Native trees within fallow gardens have been planted.
6. Avoided deforestation through establishment and designation of a Community Conservation Area (CCA) to protect existing mature forest	Activity 3.1: Develop management plan that addresses <i>Protection</i> interventions in conjunction with Activities 4.1 and 4.2.	Whitegrass	Community consultations	Management Plans for each project site have been developed. (Annex L)
	Activity 3.2: Community bylaws developed and endorsed by community and awareness activities held (e.g. community consensus session)		Consultations with community	Community bylaws have been agreed. They have been included in the project agreements and currently executed.

	Activity 3.3: Development/installation of signage showing agreed CCA by-laws and/or regulations.		Community consultations	The bylaws are also printed on signboards and which have been installed on each project site.
All interventions	Activity 4.1: Develop a management plan and framework for the implementation of project interventions at all communities (Middlebush, Whitegrass, South River). This includes close liaison and consultation with community members and ground truthing to: • Map existing gardens and clarify with individual community members what species they would like to see planted and where; • Develop a register of the number and species of nursery seedlings raised; • Spatially identify and record the location/species/number of trees subsequently planted;	All sites	Community consultations, participatory mapping, GPS walkabout + mapping, registry for tree species and labour, by-laws	1. Management Plans for each project site have been developed. (Annex L) 2. A project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has been developed and which contains a framework to monitoring implementation of project interventions at all communities. 3. Maps have already been produced based on walkabouts with owners of the existing gardens. 4. A register of the number and species of nursery seedlings raised has been developed 5. There is no spatial delineation of locations/species/number of trees undertaken yet 6. The extent of areas cleared/maintained of overgrowth (bad rope) for

	• Delineate the extent of areas cleared/maintained of overgrowth (bad rope) for forest enhancement/restoration activities; • Develop and maintain a register of community members employed to implement work, hourly wages paid, and hours associated with activity delivery; • Development of by-laws for managing the Community Conservation Area in Whitegrass.			forest enhancement/restoration activities has been delineated. This is on the signboard for the South River project. 7. The project working committee continue to maintain a register of community members employed to implement work 8. Community bylaws have been agreed. They have been included in the project agreements and currently executed for all project sites.
	Activity 4.2: Spatially delineate project boundaries using GIS platforms (e.g. Arc GIS linked to drone mapping imagery) and create shapefile overlays to show the extent, in hectares, of project activities at all project sites. This will also require ground truthing and liaison to ensure project boundaries are endorsed and		Community consultations, participatory mapping, GPS walkabout + mapping	Spatial delineation of project boundaries using GIS platforms has been achieved.

	supported by communities.			
	Activity 4.3: Project working committees established and >2 meetings per year held.		Committee meetings	Project working committees have been established. Members of the committees signed minutes of governance meetings to confirm their commitment to their respective roles.
	Activity 4.4: Community bylaws established for project interventions		Community consultations	Community bylaws have been agreed. They have been included in the project agreements and currently executed.
	Activity 4.5: Regular community engagement events held to showcase project activities		Community consultations	The first AGM was convened in January/February 2026 on site 1 and site 2 to discuss show casing of project activities.
	Activity 4.6: Print and display community noticeboards with maps, bylaws, grievance mechanism, and traffic light system		Printed noticeboards	The bylaws are also printed on signboards and which have been installed on each project site. The signboards also show maps, grievance mechanism, and traffic light system

As an overall conclusion, the project interventions are all correctly justified for the project.

3.14 Additionality

Step 0 – Preliminary screening

The validation team verified that the project start date is consistent with the Project Agreements (Annex 12)/18/ and confirmed that only preparatory activities, including project scoping and field reconnaissance surveys, had been undertaken prior to the official project start date. This was verified against the Project Agreements, the project timeline and supporting project documentation.

Step 1 – Identification of the baseline scenario

The validation team verified that the baseline scenarios for all project interventions were identified in accordance with the requirements of AR-TOOL02 and are consistent with applicable national legislation and policies in Vanuatu.

For the **Forest Protection** interventions, the baseline scenario is the continuation of deforestation and forest degradation driven primarily by logging, agricultural expansion and quarry-related impacts.

For the **Forest Restoration** and **Improved Forest Management** interventions, the baseline scenario is the continuation of existing land-use practices resulting in limited natural regeneration, continued forest degradation and the persistence of invasive vegetation, with no active restoration or improved forest management activities being implemented.

This assessment was verified against Section 3.7 of the PDD, Section 7.5 and Table 7.4 of the Technical Specifications, Table 5.3 /65/(Legal and Regulatory Compliance), the applicable Vanuatu legislation and policies, and observations made during the validation site visit.

Step 2 – Barrier analysis

The validation team verified that the proposed project activities would not be implemented in the absence of the project due to financial, technical, institutional and social barriers.

For the **Forest Protection** interventions, implementation depends upon long-term conservation agreements, community commitments, institutional arrangements and sustained project financing that would not occur under the business-as-usual scenario.

For the **Forest Restoration** and **Improved Forest Management** interventions, implementation requires substantial financial investment, specialised technical expertise in forest restoration, biodiversity and carbon assessment, nursery establishment, long-term forest management, and extensive community engagement. The validation team also confirmed that the current degraded condition of the project areas demonstrates that these activities have not previously been implemented despite ongoing degradation, supporting the conclusion that the identified barriers are real and prevent implementation without project financing.

The validation team further confirmed that continuation of the business-as-usual scenario requires no comparable investment, technical capacity, institutional coordination or changes to existing land-use practices and therefore remains the only credible baseline scenario.

This assessment was verified against the Financial Plan (Annex 16)/22/, Community Consultation records (Annex C)/26/, Project Agreements/18/, Technical Specifications, supporting photographs (Figures 7–13), interviews conducted with project proponents and community representatives, and observations made during the validation site visit.

Step 4 – Common practice analysis

The validation team verified that no similar Forest Protection, Forest Restoration or Improved Forest Management initiatives are currently being implemented within the vicinity of the project areas. Consequently, the proposed interventions cannot be considered common practice and satisfy the additionality requirements of AR-TOOL02.

This assessment was verified against the information presented in the PDD, supporting project documentation, interviews with project proponents and local stakeholders, and evidence collected during the validation process.

Based on the evidence reviewed, the validation team concluded that the baseline scenarios, barrier analysis and common practice assessment have been appropriately applied in accordance with AR-TOOL02. The proposed Forest Protection, Forest Restoration and Improved Forest Management interventions have therefore satisfactorily demonstrated additionality.

Table 5 Additionality Assessment Summary

Project Intervention	Main Barriers	Activities to Overcome Barriers	Validation Assessment
Improved Management	Technical: Technical expertise needed for integrated coffee/forest/food systems in the context of climate change. Financial/economic: Need for funding to continue to restoration activities (seedlings, nursery materials, equipment, labour, etc.) It was observed that a few project participants felt reluctant to continue maintaining the intervention sites as observed with vine overgrowth. Social/cultural: Need to formally designate which gardens and road margins will be planted in timber and fuelwood and develop sustainable harvesting regimes to minimise environmental impacts. Governance: Due to population pressures and accessibility to necessary resources to meet custom ceremonial requirements, there would be no control to	The project design encourages collaboration with communities, combining external technical knowledge of integrated forest systems in the context of climate change with local knowledge of tree species and land responses to climate conditions. The project will provide funding for training, seedlings, nursery materials, any equipment needed, and labour. Areas targeted for this intervention will be agreed upon by communities during the detailed project design phase. The project will also bring together community members for a unified approach to ensure timber harvest minimises impacts. The project will develop a workplan to regularly visit communities and remind them on the importance of maintaining Respect and enforcement of the bylaws, as stated on the	The approach used to validate these findings were: 1. Annex C – Evidence of Community Consultations 2. Project Agreements 3. Stakeholder grievance procedure Visits to project intervention sites and interviews with project participants.

	enter and harvest resources.	project signboards. Also, to raise grievances or questions following the communications channels that have already been set up by the project.	
Restoration	Technical: Technical expertise is needed for riparian margin restoration. Financial/economic: Need for funding to continue to restoration activities (seedlings, nursery materials, equipment, labour, etc.) It was observed that a few project participants felt reluctant to continue maintaining the intervention sites as observed with vine overgrowth. Social/cultural: Creation of community by-laws to ensure 'permeance' of restored forests. While restoration will contribute to enhancing carbon, community and biodiversity benefits, there is a risk of benefit reversal through activities such as garden creation. Social/ cultural: Need to specifically delineate which gardens within the core CCA area will be restored back to native forest (non-extractive use), and those that would be planted for resource use (e.g. fruit and nut trees). Governance:	The project will bring in external technical knowledge through environmental consultants who will collaboratively work with community members to establish a riparian restoration plan. The project will provide funding for seedlings, nursery materials, any equipment needed, and labour. The project will provide ongoing financial incentives to ensure restored forests remain in perpetuity whilst facilitating sustainable resource use through establishing a carbon credit scheme. The project will provide funding for seedlings, nursery materials, any equipment needed, and labour. There is also the potential for fencing to be included, though this may have to be considered for phase 2 due to budget constraints. The current mixed-use schematic shown in Figure 4 reflects outputs from community consultation to date (i.e.	The approach used to validate these findings were: 1. Annex C – Evidence of Community Consultations/32/ 2. Project Agreements/18/ 3. Stakeholder grievance procedure Visits to project intervention sites and interviews with project participants.

	Due to population pressures and accessibility to necessary resources to meet custom ceremonial requirements, there would be no control to enter and harvest resources.	general consensus of what activities will be conducted in which areas). This will be further refined to delineate specific activities for individual gardens during the detailed design phase. The project will provide ongoing financial incentive to restore fallow gardens within forest areas through establishing a carbon credit scheme. The project will develop a workplan to regularly visit communities and remind them on the importance of maintaining Respect and enforcement of the bylaws, as stated on the project signboards. Also, to raise grievances or questions following the communications channels that have already been set up by the project.	
Protection	Social/ cultural and Institutional: There is a risk that formal CCA designation and adoption of by-laws (e.g. enabling sustainable resource use) may not carry the necessary weight for enforcement to secure 'permeance' for protected forests. Traditional governance mechanisms that would usually assist in establishing and enforcing CCA areas are being eroded.	Project consultation to date with communities at Whitegrass has identified the core forest area that they want to protect. Ongoing consultative process will provide the opportunity for concerns and questions to be voiced, leading to project area adjustments and the creation of by-laws as and where necessary. For example, one of the suggested by-laws raised by the community was to ban	The approach used to validate these findings were: 4. Annex C – Evidence of Community Consultations 5. Project Agreements 6. Stakeholder grievance procedure Visits to project intervention sites and interviews with project participants.

	Governance: Due to population pressures and accessibility to necessary resources to meet custom ceremonial requirements, there would be no control to enter and harvest resources.	the creation of new gardens within the core CCA area. The project is designed to support and strengthen traditional governance mechanisms, reinforcing traditional governance roles while incorporating inclusive representation The project will develop a workplan to regularly visit communities and remind them on the importance of maintaining Respect and enforcement of the bylaws, as stated on the project signboards. Also, to raise grievances or questions following the communications channels that have already been set up by the project.	
--	--	---	--

3.15 Carbon Benefits

The project applies the Plan Vivo Agriculture and Forestry Carbon Benefit Assessment Methodology (PM001 v1.0), together with the associated technical modules (PU001, PU002 and PT002), to quantify carbon benefits over a 30-year crediting period (1 January 2025 to 1 January 2055). Carbon stock changes are estimated using a stock-change approach across the relevant carbon pools, including aboveground and belowground biomass, dead and downed woody debris, soil organic carbon and, where applicable, non-woody biomass. Leaf litter and wood products are conservatively excluded, while project-related greenhouse gas emissions from fertiliser use, biomass burning and fossil fuel consumption are considered de minimis and are therefore conservatively excluded from the carbon accounting.

Field inventories were undertaken using 38 systematically distributed sample plots established following a stratified random sampling design. Measurements included tree diameter, regeneration, dead wood and forest structural characteristics, enabling quantification of all relevant carbon pools in accordance with PU001, PU002 and AR-TOOL14. Aboveground biomass is estimated using the Chave et al. (2014) allometric equation, belowground biomass is derived using the Cairns et al. (1997) root-to-shoot ratio, and biomass is converted to carbon using the IPCC-recommended conversion factor of 0.464. Species-specific equations and correction factors are applied where appropriate. In addition, the project monitors ecosystem recovery using recognised ecological indicators, including the Revised Index of Structural Complexity (rCI), Shannon-Wiener Diversity Index and Pielou Evenness Index.

The methodology applies conservative assumptions for estimating carbon benefits and follows internationally recognised scientific approaches for biomass assessment, carbon stock estimation and long-term monitoring. Biomass accumulation and carbon stock changes will be monitored throughout the project and updated during subsequent verification periods.

For the **Forest Protection interventions**, carbon benefits are generated through the avoidance of deforestation and forest degradation. The baseline scenario is established using a combination of field-based assessments and spatial analysis, including reference regions, leakage areas and historical land-use change analysis supported by remote sensing. The principal baseline drivers include logging, agricultural expansion and quarry-related forest degradation, while project activities aim to prevent these activities through conservation agreements, community by-laws and improved forest management.

For the **Forest Restoration** and **Improved Forest Management** interventions, carbon benefits are generated through increased biomass accumulation and enhanced forest recovery. Both intervention types apply a conservative estimate of secondary forest recovery based on published scientific literature and quantify carbon removals using the stock-change approach prescribed under PM001 and AR-TOOL14. The baseline assumes that, in the absence of the project, existing land-use practices would continue to limit forest recovery, resulting in negligible changes in baseline carbon stocks. Project activities promote natural regeneration, enrichment planting and improved forest management practices that increase long-term carbon sequestration while maintaining existing mature trees and enhancing overall ecosystem condition.

Overall, the validation assessment concluded that the proposed carbon benefit assessment methodology is technically robust, applies conservative assumptions where appropriate, and provides an appropriate framework for quantifying and monitoring both avoided emissions from Forest Protection activities and carbon removals from Forest Restoration and Improved Forest Management interventions.

Table 6 Validated Carbon Benefits Summary in the crediting period

Project Intervention	Baseline Emissions (t CO ₂ e/ha)	Project Emissions (t CO ₂ e/ha)	Leakage Emissions (t CO ₂ e/ha)	Carbon Benefit (t CO ₂ e/ha)
Restoration	0	667	0	600
Improved management	0	232	0	209
Protection	7,257	0	0	6,531
Total	8,155	899	0	7,340

Risk Management

3.16 Environmental and Social Safeguards

3.16.1 Exclusion List

The exclusion list was reviewed prior to conducting any in-country interviews, field visits, and site observations. This is a small-scale project with a strong focus on Forest Restoration, Forest Management and Forest Protection. Therefore, the project interventions were designed to avoid to the extent possible any significant environmental risks, such as introduction of invasive species, disturbance to cultural heritage, impairment of areas worthy of protection and destruction of critical habitats or any forestry project area.

The project interventions were reviewed, including land management plans and community-based maps and they all clearly indicate that there are no activities around habitat destruction, logging or introduction of invasive species. All the annexes were reviewed to check whether there would be any excluded activities. The site visits also confirmed absence of any exclusion activities and that the focus and interest is around environmental restoration.

The FPIC process, including land ownership/rights, was reviewed to ensure that agreements are in place and have been signed by stakeholders concerned. The project boundaries have been agreed and consent has been obtained by the rightful owners. The benefit sharing mechanism and grievance mechanism was also reviewed to ensure transparency, accountability has been established.

Reviewed the risk management, including safeguards management approach, including the overall Governance System for the project and confirm that there is no evidence of exclusion listed items was found. They effectively prevent these to be introduced to the project.

3.16.2 Environmental and Social Screening

Table 8 Environmental and Social Risks

Risk Area	Significance (low, moderate, severe, high)	Validation Assessment
Vulnerable Groups	Low	Annex C: Evidence of Community Consultation/25/ and Annex 8 were reference documents /16/. Observations, meetings with the project team, onsite interviews confirmed that one of the main goals of the project is to build capacity of the vulnerable people. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.

Gender Equality	Moderate	Annex C: Evidence of Community Consultation and Annex 8 were reference documents. Observations and meetings about the project were inclusive of women as well. There were no challenges or hesitation for involving women in all the interviews conducted. Overall, the moderate risk significance rating is appropriate.
Human Rights	Low	Annex C: Evidence of Community Consultation and Annex 8 were reference documents. Observations and meetings about the project were inclusive. There was no evidence of human rights being undermined because of the project. Everyone was treated equally, fairly and their opinions considered during the community consultations as well as focused group discussions. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.
Community, Health, Safety & Security	Low	Annex C: Evidence of Community Consultation and Annex 8 were reference documents. Observations and meetings about the project were inclusive. This is a project that has a strong community focus. The project working committees established for each project also function to ensure health, safety, security and wellbeing of community members are maintained. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.
Labour and Working Conditions	Low	Annex C: Evidence of Community Consultation, Annex 8, Annex H, Annex I, Annex J, and Annex L were reference documents. There was no evidence of any labour issues such as discrimination presented during the site visit or interviews. Labour was inclusive. Annex L clearly outlines a labour protocol to manage any labour risks. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.

Resource Efficiency, Pollution, Wastes, Chemicals and GHG emissions	Low	Annex 8 was the reference document. This is project focused on offsetting GHG emissions. There was no evidence during onsite visits of such risk. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.
Access Restrictions and Livelihoods	Low	Annex 8 and Annex L were the reference documents. Bylaws are in place to allow communities to access intervention sites for fuelwood and timber resources. Alternate spaces have been allocated for gardening and food security. Therefore, communities are not affected by this risk. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.
Cultural Heritage	Low	Annex C – Evidence of Community Consultation and Annex 8 were the reference documents. There was a particular site within the Whitegrass intervention that was identified during the community consultations, particularly the during mapping exercise, to be a Tabu area. The community emphasised that it needs to be protected and which has been mapped for that purpose. Otherwise, there are no sites of culture heritage or cultural significance within the remaining project intervention sites. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.
Indigenous Peoples	Moderate	Annex C – Evidence of Community Consultations, Annex F, Annex L, Annex 8 and Annex 12 were the reference documents. FPIC principles have been thoroughly applied throughout the design and implementation phase of the project. The project does continue to emphasise and encourage on-going communications, including outreach about the project and one-to-one

		consultations with project participants who were not able to attend meetings. The project participants have been adequately engaged in negotiations in relation to land and resources agreements, governance arrangements, legal and financial arrangements, employment and contracting opportunities, culturally appropriate benefits sharing, processes and mechanisms for monitoring, grievances and dispute resolutions, amongst other things. Overall, the moderate risk significance rating is appropriate.
Biodiversity and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources	Low	Annex A, Annex C, Annex 7 and Annex 8 were reference documents. The adverse impacts on biodiversity, such as biodiversity loss, use of pesticide, construction or introduction of invasive species is low for this project. The goal of the project is to enhance biodiversity and restore functioning of ecosystems. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.
Land Tenure Conflicts	Moderate	Annex C, Annex L, Annex 8, Annex 11, Annex 12 were reference documents. Land ownership and use rights are managed through customary land ownership. The potential for any land tenure conflicts is low for the following reasons; 1. The heads of nakamals within each tribe where the project interventions are proposed have clarified and agreed on the boundaries of the project and individual land owners were consulted as well. In support of this, these land boundaries were mapped using a GPS and further refined until final agreement was reached. Thereafter, project agreements were discussed, agreed and then signed to that effect.

		2. There is a grievance mechanism that has been discussed and agreed. This is currently displayed on the project sign board installed on each project site and also stipulated in the project agreement. Overall, the moderate risk significance rating is appropriate.
Risk of Not Accounting for Climate Change	Moderate	Annex 9 and Annex 10 were reference documents. It is inevitable that Vanuatu has high exposure to natural hazards and increasing seasonal variability. The project will assume a major cyclone within the next 5 years which could cause setbacks to forest restoration timber and cash crops. Communities noted that project activity sites are prone to natural disasters such as tropical cyclones, flood, ash fall, dry season and wild fires. In the medium to long-term project interventions are designed to help mitigate the risks of exposure to extreme weather events and associated exposure to landslides droughts, erosion and wind damage. Mitigation measures have accounted for to address these within the designs of the interventions. Overall, the moderate risk significance rating is appropriate.
Other – e.g. Cumulative Impacts	Low	Annex 9 and Annex 10 were reference documents. The project site with existing environmental and social impacts is Site 1 with high population and limited land availability. Food security will be considered in riparian planting boundaries. Adjustments have been made to ensure that there are no negative impacts on food security. Other than that, all environmental and social risks have been covered under the scope of the project. Overall, the low risk significance rating is appropriate.

In conclusion, the environmental and social screening report is correctly justified and complete for all the project interventions.

3.16.3 Environmental and Social Assessment

The assessment of the potential environmental and social risks of the project was conducted across three communities, being Middle Bush and Whitegrass on Tanna and South River on Erromango Island.

The project spans three communities across two islands: Middlebush and Whitegrass on Tanna Island, and South River on Erromango Island. The project area in Middlebush covers a 8.5 ha stream transect in various states of degradation, lined by community housing areas and gardens. In Whitegrass, the project area is much larger (367.0 ha) and covers a variety of land types, including garden areas, cattle grazing areas, an erosion-prone hillside, and cyclone-damaged and logged forest. South River is a smaller project area (19.5 ha), and also covers a variety of land types and uses, including a riparian area bordering a large river, steep forested hillsides overgrown with lianas after cyclone damage, cattle grazing areas, and garden areas.

Due to the unique land types, uses, and proposed activities for the project, environmental and social risks had to be identified and considered in terms of management and mitigation.

There were a variety of methods to conduct the assessment of environmental and social risks for the project which was through taking note of any risk areas mentioned during community consultations, noting potential areas of risk identified by Nasituan staff, information gathered through literature reviews, and in-country experience of risks and vulnerabilities during scoping and project design.

This whole evaluation exercise was undertaken by Tearfund staff that have experience travelling in-country, including the Tearfund NZ Grants Manager, who has over 20 years of in-country experience living in and travelling to Vanuatu, and who has experience evaluating the environmental and social risks and creating safeguarding plans for projects as part of his role in the Tearfund team over the past 10 years.

In view of the above, the environment and social assessment report is correctly justified for the project activity.

3.16.4 Environmental and Social Management Plan

Mitigation measure	Key area of E&S risk being addressed	Description & effectiveness	Validation Assessment
Grievance mechanism	Gender equality, Indigenous peoples, Land Tenure Conflicts	The grievance mechanism has been established by community members and updated to include the community chief in the process (Figure 1). This strengthens local governance mechanism and communication channels,	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. The Grievance mechanism is currently outlined in the Project Agreements (refer to Annex L)/18/43/. There was funding required for this mechanism. This is currently displayed on

		enhancing access for women, youth, and those with disabilities.	project signboards, which have already been installed on each project site.
Community signage/ notice boards	Gender equality, Indigenous peoples, Land Tenure Conflicts	Signage/ notice boards within communities will ensure that participants have access to key project information such as: grievance mechanisms, important project updates, grievance mechanism and key contacts, and project activities and boundaries as necessary. This will enhance accessibility of project information for women, youth, and PWD, assist in community-wide engagement, and provide clarity and transparency to avoid confusion or conflicts.	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. Please see outline of the content of information of the community signage/notice board in on the respective project agreements [See Annex L and Annex 12]. There was funding required for this initiative and which has been completed.
Inclusive working committee	Gender equality, Indigenous peoples, Land Tenure Conflicts, Risk of not accounting for climate change	The establishment of inclusive working committees with representatives for women, youth, PWD, etc, form a critical part of ensuring representation and inclusive community participation and access to feedback mechanisms. These committees will act as a first point of contact for any feedback, or complaints, and be able to provide project information to their communities. They will also be able to monitor project progress and provide feedback to NT or TFNZ in the case of any unexpected disputes or climate impacts.	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See composition of the inclusive working committees established for each project in Annex K. There was funding required for this initiative and which has been completed.
Gender and social inclusion training	Gender equality	Gender and social inclusion training highlights the importance of using an inclusive approach and how this results in better outcomes for the project and community members overall. Training includes how to have ongoing consultation to	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See outline of gender and inclusion training as required under Annex K. Capacity building of project working committees has been an on-going activity

		improve involvement from vulnerable groups (women, youth, PWD) in project activities.	delivered by the project coordinator.
Disaggregated consultation focus groups	Gender equality	Using a gender disaggregated approach to group work where appropriate has ensured that women have a fair opportunity to input into project interventions and provide feedback	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See outline of gender and inclusion training as required under Annex K. Capacity building of project working committees has been an on-going activity delivered by the project coordinator.
Gender specialist staff member	Gender equality	The Nasituan gender specialist brings a gender-focused lens to the project. As they are a male, this allows them to hold conversations around social and gender inclusion with local leaders and community members in a culturally appropriate way.	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See outline of gender and inclusion training as required under Annex K. Capacity building of project working committees has been an on-going activity delivered by the project coordinator.
Nasituan PSEAH policies and Code of Conduct	Gender equality	These policies provide a framework for creating a safe and respectful project environment, empowering all genders to participate fully and equitably in programs without fear of exploitation or discrimination.	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. Nasituan PSEAH policies and Code of Conduct is found in Annex H. There was funding required for this and which is already established.
Paid labour being provided to communities as part of the project benefits, including neighbouring Antiok community in South River	Indigenous peoples	Paid labour opportunities will help ensure that indigenous peoples benefit from the project interventions. Opportunities for wider community involvement in the case of Antiok in South River will help increase regional buy-in and awareness of the project interventions.	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See outline of project activities that require paid labour engagement. See Activity Plan in Annex L. There was funding required for this a and which is ongoing.
GPS marking boundaries with land owners/community leaders	Land tenure conflicts	Meeting with individual land owners and community leaders as necessary to discuss boundaries and ensure there is complete	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See GPS coordinates in Annex 1. This illustrates boundaries for all project

		understanding of where they are, before precisely documenting them with a GPS will help establish accurate records of project boundaries and prevent conflicts.	interventions. There was funding required for this and which has been completed.
Planting timeframes account for cyclone season	Risk of not accounting for climate change	Not planting saplings during cyclone season will help mitigate the risks of climate-induced increases in storm frequency/intensity	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See planting timeframes in Annex 13 – Life and Land Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. There was funding required for this and which is ongoing.
Erosion pin monitoring at South River	Risk of not accounting for climate change	Placing pins at South River will help monitor erosion from sea level rise and climate-induced storm surges, providing valuable data in case project activities need to be adjusted to account for unforeseen changes in SLR & erosion rates.	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See planting timeframes in Annex 13 – Life and Land Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. There was funding required for this and which is ongoing.
Community survey on project interventions and effectiveness	Risk of not accounting for climate change	Community surveys will help identify areas where project interventions need to be adjusted in the case that new impacts of climate change emerge (e.g. making sure that crops and seedlings are being planted in appropriate locations for their water tolerance etc). As shown in the ESA workshop summary above, communities are aware of, and have been adjusting project activities as necessary.	Yes, this was cross-checked with plans/protocols. See planting timeframes in Annex 13 – Life and Land Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. There was funding required for this and which is ongoing.

3.16.5 Native Species

Table 9: Validated Non-Native Species Overview

Project Intervention	Non-Native Species Planted/ Introduced	Validation Assessment
Improved land management (1a, 1b: Sustainable coffee plantation)	Coffee, <i>Coffea arabica</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Coffee has been cultivated on Tanna since the 19th century and is particularly an important smallholder crop

		on Tanna, including other islands. It is generally cultivated rather than invasive. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts other than requiring monitoring and management.
Restoration (2. Reforestation of Riparian Margins, 6. Restoration of fallow gardens)	Bamboo, <i>Bambusa</i> spp.	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Bamboo has a long history of cultivation in Vanuatu. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry, 8. Enhancement of Cattle Grazing Area), Restoration (2. Reforestation of Riparian Margins, 3. Forest Enhancement)	Banana, <i>Musa</i> spp.	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry, 8. Enhancement of Cattle Grazing Area), Restoration (3. Forest Enhancement)	Breadfruit, <i>Artocarpus altilis</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry, 8. Enhancement of Cattle Grazing Area), Restoration (2. Reforestation of Riparian Margins, 6. Reforestation of Fallow Gardens)	Coconut, <i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry), Restoration (3. Forest Enhancement)	Lemon, <i>Citrus limon</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (Agroforestry)	Papaya, <i>Carica papaya</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site

		visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry), Restoration (2. Reforestation of Riparian Margins, 3. Forest Enhancement)	Mango, <i>Mangifera indica</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry, 8. Enhancement of Cattle Grazing Area), Restoration (2. Reforestation of Riparian Margins, 6. Reforestation of Fallow Gardens)	Orange, <i>Citrus sinensis</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry), Restoration (2. Reforestation of Riparian Margins, 6. Restoration of Fallow Gardens)	Passionfruit, <i>Passiflora foetida</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (5. Agroforestry, 8. Hillside erosion control), Restoration (2. Reforestation of Riparian Margins)	Avocado, <i>Persea americana</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.
Improved land management (4. Sustainable timber plantation)	Mahogany, <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Reference is made to Table 3.9.4 of the PDD. Currently, it is not listed amongst Vanuatu's invasive species. During the site visit, there was no evidence of it causing any ecological impacts.

3.17 Achievement of Carbon Benefits

The achievement of Carbon Benefits of the project is 10% . This is in accordance with PV requirements; therefore, the validation team considers this correct.

3.18 Reversal of Carbon Benefits

Table 10 Risk of Reversals

Risk Factor	Mitigation Measures*	Score	Validation assessment
Land tenure and/or rights to climate benefits are disputed	Community consultations and consensus reach on project areas, project agreements agreed upon and signed by relevant	4	The project agreements were developed and agreed and signed upon. This confirms that a consensus has been reached and is affirmed by relevant parties. Therefore, the likelihood of a dispute is low.

	stakeholders. (Activities 1.1, 2.1, & 3.1-4.6)		
Political or social instability	As high levels of political instability are the norm, usual levels of disruption associated with this are already accounted for within work plans.	3	There is already contingency made for this in the project work plans in terms of usual disruptions. The nature of political and social instability is non-violent; therefore, the risk score is reasonable.
Community support for the project is not maintained	Communities have agreed upon project activity plans, drafted project agreements, and have held launching celebrations in each project area (Activities 1.1, 2.1, & 3.1-4.6).	3	The project was designed with input from the communities with multiple opportunities for feedback and adjustment. The agreements state that the benefits will flow to the communities, including financial, ecological, and livelihood. The project agreements have been signed and custom launching of the project has taken place and which further amplifies the value and importance of the project. Therefore, the score is appropriate.
Insufficient finance secured to support project activities	MFAT contract signed, financial plan developed.	3	The MFAT contract has actually been signed and a financial plan has been developed to cater for long term funding and which will be derived from the carbon credit sales. The projected baseline income from the sale of carbon credits in Year 2 is USD 32,678. The upfront funding covers initial implementation of the project. The credit sales will materialise for the forecasted volumes/prices. The score is reasonable considering the initial funding but with some uncertainty in the long-term in the absence of a plan to cater for short-fall in credits sales.
Alternative land uses become more attractive to the local community	Conversations with communities to identify competing priorities are ongoing. In South River, the need to establish a road between communities means that the original forest enhancement area may need to be revised; an overall goal will be established for this activity to provide flexibility	4	The project agreements have been signed and clearly demonstrate commitment by relevant stakeholders. Additionally, flexibility is still provided to the project participants in terms of on-going dialogue to cater for competing priorities of land use. This lowers the likelihood of a reversal as the understanding between relevant parties continues. An example of this dialogue is at South River. There is no evidence provided on economic comparison of alternative land use returns. The score is acceptable but also reflects a risk of a reversal happening.

External parties carry out activities that reverse climate benefits	Conversations with communities are ongoing and working committees are in place to report back any external interest in the project areas. Project areas are also monitored, which would pick up any unauthorised external interference (Activities 1.1, 2.1, & 3.1-4.6, monitoring plan)	2	Project agreements have been signed and there are working committees established who are actively overseeing and monitoring implementation of project activities. The land upon which these interventions are been implemented are owned by the communities themselves too. Therefore, any unauthorized activities within the project sites can be easily detected. Therefore, the score is appropriate.
Fire	Fires will not be started within project areas or utilised within project interventions. Fire break trenches will be dug if necessary for dry season in Site 2 (Activities 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1)	1	Overall, Vanuatu is a low fire-risk area, including both the islands where the project is being implemented. The project signboard installed on each project site clearly states that no fire is allowed to be lit within project interventions. Mitigation measures are already in place in case a fire breaks, particularly in the dry season. Therefore, the score is reasonable.
Pest and disease attacks	Project interventions will utilise a diverse mix on native trees to encourage high ecosystem health and resilience against pests and disease, and biodiversity will be monitored. The unusual presence of any pests or diseases will be reported and an action plan to address the outbreak will be formed (Activities 1.1, 1.2, 1.6-1.8, 1.11, 1.15, 1.17, 2.1, 2.6, 2.8. 2.11, 2.13 & 3.1-4.6).	2	The project is not introducing any foreign species and places high emphasis on the planting of diverse mix of native species to improve and increase ecosystem health and resilience against pests and diseases. There is a biodiversity monitoring system in place as well. Therefore, in case of any outbreaks, there is already a response plan in place. In conclusion, the score is appropriate.
Extreme weather or geological events	The project aims to increase ecosystem resilience to extreme weather events by planting tree species that will be able to provide a buffer effect against high winds and stabilise soils (Activities 1.1, 1.2, 1.6-1.8, 1.11, 1.15, 1.17, 2.1, 2.6, 2.8. 2.11, 2.13 & 3.1-4.6).	6	Generally, Vanuatu is a disaster-prone area. But overtime, locals have become more resilient and have adapted overtime in terms of response and recovery. This includes accessing essential resources such as food and water and which locals have acquired and preserved traditional knowledge for them. The project has established mitigation measures to increase ecosystem resilience to extreme weather events by planting deep-rooted native tree species that will be able to provide a buffer effect against high winds and stabilise soils.

			This reduces damage severity and recovery time. Despite this mechanism in place, it cannot prevent any significant loss from a severe event, if it happens. Therefore, the score of 6 is acceptable. But to defend the mitigation measure, the project should have a post-recovery plan in place.
Capacity of the project coordinator to support the project is not maintained	Financial plan is developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of project coordination, capacity building of project coordinator is an ongoing focus.	3	There is already a financial plan in place to ensure project activities continue to be implemented by project participants with oversight by the project working committees. This also ensures that coordination by the project can continue. Capacity building of the project coordinator is also an on-going focus within the project. Presently, the project coordination is undertaken by a team who are qualified and highly experienced in coordinating multiple projects. Therefore, the score is reasonable.
Technical capacity to implement project activities is not maintained	Financial plan is developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of project technical support	3	A financial plan has been developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project's technical support. The current technical support being provided to the project is from well-established individuals/organisations that have a strong track record of being able to coordinate and support multiple projects reliably. Section 2.2 of the PDD provides details of the latter. Therefore, the score is appropriate.

The overall risk rating is considered acceptable and manageable, with most risks effectively mitigated through community agreements, financial planning, and ecosystem resilience measures. The primary risk stems from extreme weather events, but ongoing monitoring and implementing adaptive strategies will ensure the impact of reversals are kept minimal.

3.19 Leakage

The project has identified potential leakage risks associated with the displacement of forest clearance, agricultural land, timber harvesting, fuelwood production and cattle grazing resulting from the implementation of the project interventions. To mitigate these risks, project activities integrate agroforestry practices, sustainable timber and fuelwood plantations, household-level land-use planning, alternative grazing areas where required, and the use of previously degraded or unproductive land. Reforestation activities are designed to maintain food production through flexible buffer design and the incorporation of fruit and nut trees, while sustainable timber production reduces pressure on natural forests.

Overall, the project concludes that these measures are expected to minimise or prevent significant leakage outside the project area.

3.20 Double Counting

During the interviews, the project participants confirmed that there has never been any project, similar to Life and Land project, or at least a carbon credit related project, that has ever been implemented on Tanna and Erromango or within the Tafea Province as a whole.

The conclusion is that the Life and Land project is the first of its kind on Tanna and there is no double counting generated.

3.21 Key Agreements to validate

During community consultation meetings, Google Map screen grabs were used to provide an aerial view of the general community area for each site to provide context for mapping and land management plan discussions. Community members were then divided into focus groups as outlined in Section 2.4 and given butcher paper and permanent markers to draw their own site maps, which provided general boundaries for project/activity areas. Each focus group presented their maps for feedback and revision to the wider group. Annex 11 of the PDD confirms that this approach was applied by the communities to develop their respective land management plans.

The benefit sharing mechanism was developed between the local partner Nasituan who have an understanding on what is culturally/contextually appropriate, including Tearfund NZ, and was presented to communities for initial feedback and review. The dialogue continued to further refine the details and incorporated into the project agreements for signature.

Regarding the percentage allocation of income from the sale of Plan Vivo Certificates to different stakeholders, 40% of total funds will go to Nasituan while the remaining 60% will be distributed to communities. From the 60%, 20% will be allocated to each community (Middlebush, Whitegrass and South River) and 40% allocated proportionally based on PVCs generated by each community. This way, communities with less land will still get a substantial amount of income, while those managing more land will be recognised and rewarded. Each working committee for the three sites has its own bank account set up to assist with any labour or resource payments required. Payments for PVCs are directly linked to performance indicators, as outlined in the project agreement, and will be paid to the already established bank accounts. Payments will be made on an annual basis upon review of traffic light indicators in annual reporting and following issuance of PVCs.

Participating community members will have the opportunity to raise complaints and suggestions with the nominated working committee members for each community. There will also be the opportunity to raise complaints or suggestions at each annual meeting. All complaints and suggestions will be recorded by the nominated representatives, which will then be uploaded to the shared drive after each annual meeting. Where possible, remediating actions to address the complaints or suggestions will be implemented. The process for addressing grievances is also included in the project agreement. This grievance procedure, including contact details, is currently outlined on the project signboards installed on each project site.

FPIC principles were followed to develop the project agreements. There were multiple rounds of consultations, translation and feedback held on the drafting and finalisation of the project agreement. The communities themselves developed their own site-specific bylaws and which are currently displayed on their respective project signboards. The signed agreements in Annex L and Annex 12 states that the agreement is valid for 30 years and which is also aligned to the crediting period, being 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2054.

In reference to the respective project agreements, clause 3, paragraph 3, state the estimated carbon benefits that will be generated from each project site. Clause 3, paragraph 4, grants the project coordinator the right to sell the Plan Vivo Certificates on behalf of the project participants. Clause 3, paragraph 5, prevents the project participants to generate carbon credits from the same interventions. Clause 4 and 5, state provide detailed explanation on the benefit sharing mechanism. Clause 6 outlines the grievance mechanism. The details of the nominated carbon committee contact person should be pinned on a community notice board and visible to the public.

Under section 3.17 of the PDD, the project will install community noticeboards in appropriate and centrally accessible locations, including an anonymous submission box for each community to capture any feedback, questions, or issues community members want to raise anonymously. As this activity will not be implemented anymore, the project would provide further explanation on alternative arrangements to capture anonymous community grievances.

The validation teams see correct the land management plan, the benefit sharing mechanism, the grievance mechanism and the project agreements of the project activity, but a FAR can be issued regarding the PeS agreements.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Indicators

3.22 Carbon Indicators

Project Intervention	Carbon Indicator	Validation assessment
Improved Forest Management	C1: Projected net emissions <i>removals</i> due to project interventions ^[2] , Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 5.1 ha.	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.
	C2: Projected net emissions <i>removals</i> due to project interventions, Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 2.8 ha.	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.
	C3: Projected net emissions <i>removals</i> due to project	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the

	interventions, Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 24.2 ha.	methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.
Restoration	C4: Projected net emissions <i>removals</i> due to project interventions, Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 10.1 ha.	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.
	C5: Projected net emissions <i>removals</i> due to project interventions, Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 10 ha.	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.
	C6: Projected net emissions <i>removals</i> due to project interventions, Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 5.9 ha.	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.
	C7: Projected net emissions <i>removals</i> due to project interventions, Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 4.8 ha.	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.
Protection	C8: Projected net emissions <i>reductions</i> due to project interventions, Mg CO ₂ e year ⁻¹ , 3.88 ha avoided loss per year.	The validation teams assessed that these indicators are corrected against the methodology PM001, the technical specifications and excel spreadsheet.

3.23 Livelihood Indicators

Livelihood Indicator	Validation Assessment
<u>Improved management</u> L1: Coffee: % of project participants involved in coffee production reporting an increase in income. - Target: 80% reporting increase every 5 years (Baseline: 0%). L2: % of project participants reporting greater benefits of growing coffee under shade vs open-farmed coffee - Target: 80%. (Baseline: 0%).	The primary method for monitoring the indicators are from the KOBO survey that was used to conduct the baseline survey. This will be administered in 5-year cycles. L3 is specific indicator and will be monitored from annual counts of coffee volume and records of income from coffee sales. <u>Sources / Means of verification:</u> Community consultation and engagement notes; community feedback records; livelihood survey responses; quantity of

L3: Coffee: Volume (kg) and value (\$) of coffee bean produced from project areas. - Target: 12,350kg of parchment coffee produced in project areas, valued at 3,334,500 vatu. (Baseline: 0). L4: Timber and fuelwood: % of project participants reporting an increase in natural resource security/livelihood benefits due to timber and fuelwood plantations as they reach maturity and are available for extraction. - Target: 80% reporting increase every 5 years. (Baseline: 0%). L5: Agroforestry: % of project participants reporting an increase in food security/livelihood benefits due to agroforestry activities. - Target: 80% reporting increase every 5 years. (Baseline: 0%). L6: Cattle grazing/coconut plantation enhancement: % of project participants reporting an increase in food security/livelihood benefits due to agroforestry activities within cattle grazing area/coconut plantation. Target: 80% reporting increase every 5 years. (Baseline: 0%).	coffee produced and income gained from coffee sales. <u>Cross checking the indicators:</u> The increase in percentage figures will be cross checked against measured production volumes and sales income. The minutes of community consultations meetings and documentations from buyers will offset any potential bias.
<u>Restoration</u> L7: % of project participants reporting an increase in food security/livelihood benefits due to planting of agroforestry trees along riparian margins. Target: 80% reporting increase every 5 years. (Baseline: 0%). L8: % of project participants reporting an improvement in forest health, the abundance of high-value native species, and the ability to source non-timber forest products (NTFP)/resources within forest enhancement area. Target: 80% for forest health, 80% for abundance of high-value native species, and 80% for access to NTFP every 5 years. (Baseline: 0%).	The primary method for monitoring the indicators are from the KOBO survey that was used to conduct the baseline survey. This will be administered in 5-year cycles. (L7 and L8) <u>Sources / Means of verification:</u> community consultation and engagement notes; community feedback records; livelihood survey responses <u>Cross checking the indicators:</u> The project participant's perceptions will be cross referenced with minutes of community consultation meetings, including any available data/information from ecological monitoring regarding improvement in forest health, abundance of native species as well as NTFP.
<u>Protection</u>	The primary method for monitoring the indicators are from the KOBO survey that

L9: % of project participants reporting an improvement in forest health and greater ability to source non-timber forest products/resources within the CCA as a result of protection activities. Target: 80% reporting increase every 5 years. (Baseline: 0%).	was used to conduct the baseline survey. This will be administered in 5-year cycles. <u>Sources / Means of verification:</u> community consultation and engagement notes; community feedback records; livelihood survey responses <u>Cross checking the indicators:</u> There is qualitative evidence from community consultations that confirm that protection actions actually precede perceived benefits.
<u>Project management</u> L10: \$ value of carbon payments to communities. Target: USD 20,000 (Baseline: 0) L11: \$ value and # of community members paid for project labour. Target: Targets will be determined after Y2, once baseline data for implementing project activities has been completed.	Primary method for monitoring would be through administrative records and periodic review. <u>Sources / Means of verification:</u> PVC certificates, income from credit purchases by buyers, community consultation and feedback, livelihood survey, working committee records of labour payments. <u>Cross checking the indicators:</u> Financial records will be cross checked with PVC generated and income from its sales, payments to community members for delivering project activities. Feedback will also be captured from and livelihood surveys.

In conclusion, the indicators are well aligned and appropriate for each intervention. The perceptions from project participants, which are qualitative, are justified with approaches that are measurable. For example, livelihood survey and financial records.

3.24 Ecosystem Indicators

Ecosystem Indicator	Validation assessment
Improved management - N/A	N/A
Restoration	<u>Cross check / Validation:</u>

E1: Evidence of improved Imanaka Stream health using e.g. RAF, Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI). - Target: 20% increase relative to baseline. (Baseline: 0%) E2: Improvement in stream (Middlebush) and forest (all sites) RAF scores in comparison to reference stream and forests. - Target: 20% increase relative to baseline. (Baseline: 0%). E3: Improvement in forest structural complexity (species composition, diversity) relative to reference forest at 5 years using revised Index of Structural Complexity (rCI) and/or Shannon Diversity Index (H'). - Target: Based on rCI/H' results from reference forests: - Middlebush: 20% increase in riparian restoration area rCI/H' compared to Imanaka Stream tributary at Whitegrass. (Baseline: rCI 56.2, H' 3.38) - Whitegrass: 20% increase in CCA rCI/H' compared to Kauri Reserve. (Baseline: rCI 37.1, H' 3.14) - South River: 20% increase in forest enhancement area rCI/H' compared to Kauri Reserve. (Baseline: rCI 37.1, H' 3.14) E4: Decrease in invasive vine/ weed abundance/coverage (Middlebush and South River). - Target: 50% decrease. (Baseline: 72% canopy coverage in forested areas and 75% ground coverage in fallow gardens in South River, 50% ground coverage in Middlebush.) E5: Evidence of increased abundance and diversity of native priority birds and other fauna (as defined in Monitoring Methodology booklet).	- E1 and E2 – methods to validate stream health improvements (E1/E2) by cross checking RAF scores with MCI results is valid - E3 – using revised Index of Structural Complexity (rCI) and/or Shannon Diversity Index (H') and the same applied to reference forests is valid - E4 – No particular method is stated to measure the indicator. The infestation of invasive vines is quite prevalent in all project sites. - E5 – Proposed method of 5-minute bird count and on-going baseline monitoring is valid. During plot work at Middle Bush and Whitegrass, there was a list of native bird sounds recorded within 5 minutes. Provided that respect is maintained to observe the bylaws, there is an expectation that the number of birds captured in 5 minutes will increase by 15% in the next round of monitoring.
--	---

Target: 15% increase compared to baseline. (Baseline: Preliminary average is 3.1 birds seen or heard per 5-minute bird count survey, but ongoing baseline monitoring will continue)	
Protection E6: #ha reduction in deforestation (e.g. logging) and forest degradation (e.g. clearance of forest for gardens) rates/extent (ha) within CCA area Target: Prevent 3.88ha of deforestation occurring in CCA area per year (Baseline: 0 ha). Repeated indicator, links to P12 & P38.	<u>Cross check / Validation:</u> Counting and recording of trees planted/cut down in project area by working committee members, as well as GPS delineation of logged/degraded areas. This will occur every 5 years when project is verified. This method is valid.

Monitoring

3.25 Monitoring Plan, Process and Sharing results

The project has developed a monitoring framework, which is part of the overall Monitoring and Evaluation plan (Annex 13). There are currently 49 indicators in place to monitor project progress, carbon, livelihood and ecosystem across all the three (3) project sites. The targets for all livelihood/ecosystem indicators will be assessed on a 5-year basis. The results from the monitoring will be shared with communities during Annual General Meetings and work committee meetings. Copies of the monitoring reports will be emailed to relevant stakeholders as well. Verification will be conducted on 5 yearly basis, commencing in Year 2028.

In conclusion, the monitoring framework conforms to the requirements of the approved methodology.

3.26 Reporting and record keeping

The PDD defines an annual reporting period from 1 January to 31 December. Annual Reports will be prepared by Nasituan, submitted to Tearfund New Zealand by 1 February, and subsequently submitted to the Plan Vivo Secretariat by 1 March. Project agreements, land management plans, project area geospatial data, monitoring results and other project records will be maintained in a restricted-access shared database.

Based on the validation assessment, the proposed annual reporting schedule and record-keeping arrangements are considered adequate to support project implementation and future verification.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

3.27 Governance Structure and Legal Compliance

1. Governance Structure and Decision-Making

Reviewed relevant documents, including Annex C, Annex L and Annex 12 and verified that project working committees were established in a transparent manner and was inclusive. The nominations of members were open and pursued to a voting. The chiefly ranks under the established Traditional

Governance System of Iani Niko, Iani Asul, Tupunis, including women, youth, farmers, and people with disabilities were respectfully considered and integrated into the election of the committees.

Further verification was made that the working committees are formally registered under the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission which ensures that any dealings with the committees, including decisions on benefit distribution and finances, are legal and transparent.

2. Employment Procedures and Policies

Reviewed Nasituan's Policies and Procedures manual and Code of Conduct, which prohibit discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, or social status.

It is confirmed that there are paid labour opportunities. These opportunities are provided to locals within the communities to undertake work at the project intervention sites, including nurseries and planting. A grievance mechanism is in place to address issues encountered by local employees involving the project working committees as the first point of contact, with escalation to Nasituan and Tearfund NZ staff, as necessary. This is to prevent elite benefit capture and ensures that the local employees are treated fairly and not discriminated

3. Legal and regulatory Compliance

Reviewed Table 5.3 of the PDD and confirmed compliance with relevant national policies and laws. The project should, however, demonstrate how it will meet the requirements of the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act CAP 283 (2011).

Letter of Approval from the Authorities

Examined the "Letter of Endorsement for the Life and Land, Vanuatu" and confirm that the project aligns to the Government of Vanuatu's development goals and national strategies, particularly the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 to 2030. The Department of Forestry explicitly states that they are in full support of the project.

In conclusion, the project's governance structure, employment policies, and legal/regulatory compliance measures have been validated as robust, inclusive, and transparent. The project demonstrates full compliance and alignment with government with sectoral policies.

Policy, Law or Regulation	Relevance	Validation Assessment
Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2022-2030	Aligns with strategic priorities of traditional knowledge (7.3.2), community-based adaptation and disaster risk management (7.4.3), and ecosystem-based approaches (7.4.5)	Documentations referred to for Validation: Annex 2, Annex 12, Annex, Annex D and Annex L. The policy address low carbon development, reduce GHG emissions, ecosystem adaptation, remoteness of communities to be able to access information that they deserve. Site observations confirm the project's alignment to the requirements of the policy framework.
Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy	States "That any NGOs and other civil society groups doing	Documentations referred to for Validation: Annex 3, Annex 7,

	work to assist communities improve their livelihood through agriculture and horticulture will do so to fulfil the policy objectives of this Policy, the Overarching Productive Sector Policy and all other relevant productive sector policies promoting agriculture”	Annex 13, Annex J, Annex K and Annex L. Site observations confirm the project’s alignment to the requirements of the policy framework.
Environmental Protection and Conservation Act CAP 283 (2011) (EPC)	States that “Any persons wishing to harvest logs from a forest must enter into a Timber Rights Agreement (TRA) with the landowners and must obtain approval from the Forestry board of Vanuatu (FBV)”	Documentations referred to for Validation: Annex 8, Annex 9, Annex 10, Annex 13, Annex A and Annex C. The Environmental Protection and Conservation Act CAP 283 (2011) (EPC) is a relevant to the project. However, the project makes no connection to meet its requirements.

3.28 Financial Plan and Management

The validation team reviewed Sections 5.4 (Financial Plan) and 5.5 (Financial Management) of the PDD, together with the Financial Plan (Annex 16)/22/. The assessment confirmed that the project identifies the funding sources for project implementation, includes a detailed financial plan for the first crediting period, describes the financial management procedures for income and expenditure, and provides for independent financial audits. Also a FAR has been raised regarding the audit report for the first financial year.

Based on the validation assessment, the financial plan is considered adequate to support the implementation of the project interventions.

3. VALIDATION OPINION

The validation team has performed the validation of the “Life and Land Project” and has verified that the project is in compliance with the PV Climate V.5. without qualifications or limitations.

The validation process was performed on the basis of all issues and criteria of PV Climate V.5.

The conclusions of this report show that the project, as it was described in the project documentation, is in line with all criteria applicable for the validation. The review of the project design documentation and additional documents related to baseline and monitoring methodology; and the subsequent background investigation, follow-up interviews and review of comments by local stakeholders have provided the “IE” with sufficient evidence to validate the fulfilment of the stated criteria.

In detail the conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- The project is in line with all criteria of the PV Climate V.5.
- The project additionality is sufficiently justified in the PDD.
- The Monitoring Plan is transparent and adequate.
- The analysis of the baseline emission, project emissions and leakage has been carried out in a transparent and conservative manner.
- The project is likely to achieve estimated carbon storage or reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.



Elena LLORENTE PÉREZ

10/07/2026



Catherine LESSA

10/07/2026

Annexes

Annex 1 – Documents reviewed or referenced

No.	Author	Title and version	Provider
1	Tearfund NZ	Project Design Document (PDD) – Life & Land Project, Version 1.2 (20 July 2025)	Tearfund NZ
2	Plan Vivo Foundation	Plan Vivo PM001 Methodology (current version)	Plan Vivo Foundation
3	Tearfund NZ	Project Boundary Maps (Annex 1)	Tearfund NZ
4	Tearfund NZ	GIS Shapefiles – Project Boundaries (Annex 1)	Tearfund NZ
5	Tearfund NZ	Registration Certificate (Annex 2)	Tearfund NZ
6	Tearfund NZ	Partner Agreements (Annex 2)	Tearfund NZ
7	Tearfund NZ	Initial Project Areas (Annex 3)	Tearfund NZ
8	Tearfund NZ	Participatory Design Report (Annex 4)	Tearfund NZ
9	Tearfund NZ	Initial FPIC Documentation (Annex 5)	Tearfund NZ
10	Tearfund NZ	Carbon Calculations Spreadsheet (Annex 6)	Tearfund NZ
11	Tearfund NZ	Technical Specification – Forest Restoration (Annex 7)	Tearfund NZ
12	Tearfund NZ	Technical Specification – Forest Protection (Annex 7)	Tearfund NZ
13	Tearfund NZ	Technical Specification – Improved Forest Management (Annex 7)	Tearfund NZ
14	Tearfund NZ	Environmental and Social Assessment Report (Annex 8)	Tearfund NZ
15	Tearfund NZ	Environmental and Social Screening Report (Annex 8)	Tearfund NZ
16	Tearfund NZ	Exclusion List (Annex 8)	Tearfund NZ
17	Tearfund NZ	Land Management Plans (Annex 9)	Tearfund NZ
18	Tearfund NZ	Project Agreements (Annex 12)	Tearfund NZ
19	Tearfund NZ	Monitoring Plan (Annex 13)	Tearfund NZ

20	Tearfund NZ	Project Database (Annex 14)	Tearfund NZ
21	Tearfund NZ	Letter of Approval (Annex 15)	Tearfund NZ
22	Tearfund NZ	Financial Plan (Annex 16)	Tearfund NZ
23	Tearfund NZ	Erromango and Tanna Scoping Trip Report (Annex A)	Tearfund NZ
24	Tearfund NZ	Stakeholder Mapping Report (Annex B)	Tearfund NZ
25	Tearfund NZ	Community Consultation Report (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
26	Tearfund NZ	Community Consultation Attendance Sheets (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
27	Tearfund NZ	Community Consultation Meeting Minutes (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
28	Tearfund NZ	Participatory Resource Mapping Outputs (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
29	Tearfund NZ	Traditional Governance Workshop Report (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
30	Tearfund NZ	Chief Consultation Records (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
31	Tearfund NZ	Kastom Ceremony Records (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
32	Tearfund NZ	Photographic Evidence of Community Consultations (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
33	Tearfund NZ	GPS Mapping of Project Activities (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
34	Tearfund NZ	Nasituan Erromango Field Trip Report (Annex C)	Tearfund NZ
35	Tearfund NZ	Carbon Credit Consultation / Briefing Document (Annex D)	Tearfund NZ
36	Tearfund NZ	Gender Analysis (Annex E)	Tearfund NZ
37	Tearfund NZ	FPIC Framework (Annex F)	Tearfund NZ
38	Tearfund NZ	Carbon 101 Community Information Booklet (Annex G)	Tearfund NZ
39	Nasituan	Nasituan Code of Conduct (Annex H)	Nasituan
40	Nasituan	Nasituan Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual (Annex I)	Nasituan
41	Tearfund NZ	Annual Work Plans (Annex J)	Tearfund NZ
42	Tearfund NZ	Working Committee Documentation (Annex K)	Tearfund NZ
43	Tearfund NZ	Project Management Booklets (Annex L)	Tearfund NZ
44	Tearfund NZ	Community Bylaws (Annex L)	Tearfund NZ

45	Tearfund NZ	Community Noticeboards (Annex L)	Tearfund NZ
46	Tearfund NZ	Land Ownership Information (Project records)	Tearfund NZ
47	Tearfund NZ	Customary Land Rights Evidence (Project records)	Tearfund NZ
48	Tearfund NZ	Community Governance Structure Documentation	Tearfund NZ
49	Tearfund NZ	Stakeholder Engagement Records	Tearfund NZ
50	Tearfund NZ	Nursery Establishment Records	Tearfund NZ
51	Tearfund NZ	Nursery Cost Estimates	Tearfund NZ
52	Tearfund NZ	Seedling Production Records	Tearfund NZ
53	Tearfund NZ	Planting Records	Tearfund NZ
54	Tearfund NZ	Species Lists	Tearfund NZ
55	Tearfund NZ	Baseline Survey Data	Tearfund NZ
56	Tearfund NZ	Livelihood Baseline Survey	Tearfund NZ
57	Tearfund NZ	Ecosystem Baseline Survey	Tearfund NZ
58	Tearfund NZ	Biodiversity Assessment	Tearfund NZ
59	Tearfund NZ	Maps of Project Intervention Areas	Tearfund NZ
60	Tearfund NZ	Satellite Imagery	Tearfund NZ
61	Tearfund NZ	Photographic Monitoring Records	Tearfund NZ
62	Tearfund NZ	Financial Procedures	Tearfund NZ
63	Tearfund NZ	Financial Management Procedures	Tearfund NZ
64	Tearfund NZ	Annual Budget	Tearfund NZ
65	Government of Vanuatu	Relevant National Legislation (Vanuatu Constitution; Forestry Rights Registration and Timber Harvest Agreement Act 2000)	Government of Vanuatu
66	Tearfund NZ	Bird Count, excel file	Tearfund NZ
67	Tearfund NZ	Macroinvertebrate data, excel file	Tearfund NZ

Annex 2 – New information requests, corrective action requests and forward action requests

Table 1. NIRs from this validation

NIR ID	1	Section no.	1.2.1	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Please provide confirmation of the project boundary following the disturbance caused by logging activities.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
NIR 1 is addressed in Section 1.2.1 of the PDD with an updated project map, and also updated shapefiles in Annex 3. After consultation with the community, the misunderstanding with the landowner about the project area was cleared up, and the community has decided to expand the project on the Eastern boundary.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026
The date has been added to the PDD and therefore the validation teams considers it correct.				

NIR ID	2	Section no.	2.1.3	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
A contingency plan would be provided on how to manage the risk of attempts to sub-lease the coffee lease.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
The following explanations have been added to Section 2.1.3 of the PDD				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026

NIR ID	3	Section no.	2.1.3	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
A contingency plan would be provided on how to manage the risk of expansion of the quarry into the hillside restoration area.				

Project participant response	Date: 18/05/2026
Documentation provided by project participant	
IE/PV assessment	Date: 08/10/2026
The PDD has been updated with a new map and new documents have been provided. This NIR has been closed.	

NIR ID	4	Section no.	3.3.1	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Please provide ten completed surveys used for the livelihood baseline assessment.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
The full copy of the survey has already been provided.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
The survey documents have been provided and the documents are correct.				

NIR ID	5	Section no.	3.3.2	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Please provide supporting evidence demonstrating, for each stakeholder group identified in Section 2.1.1, how livelihood status and access to natural resources are expected to change under the project.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
Section 3.3.2 has been rewritten with additional evidence referenced from the literature				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
Section 3.3.2 has been updated and is considered correct. This NIR is closed.				

NIR ID	6	Section no.	3.4.1	Date: 20/03/2026
---------------	---	--------------------	-------	-------------------------

Description of NIR	
Please include the complete references for the information provided in Section 3.4.1 of the PDD.	
Project participant response	Date: 18/05/2026
References have been added.	
Documentation provided by project participant	
IE/PV assessment	Date: 08/10/2026
Section 3.4.1 has been updated and the information included is considered correct.	

NIR ID	7	Section no.	3.4.2	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Please provide evidence supporting the description of the initial ecological conditions for each project region.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
Section 3.4.2 has been restructured				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
Section 3.4.2 has been updated and the information included is considered correct.				

NIR ID	8	Section no.	3.7.2	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Appendix 7, Section 7.2: please provide supporting evidence for each additionality barrier identified in Steps 1, 2 and 4.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
The additionality steps have been reinforced with additional evidences.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
Steps 1 and 4 have been reinforced. Step 2 should also be supported with additional evidence.				

NIR ID	9	Section no.	3.7.2	Date: 20/03/2026
---------------	---	--------------------	-------	-------------------------

Description of NIR	
Please provide evidence supporting the project start date of 1 January 2025.	
Project participant response	Date: 18/05/2026
Evidence supporting the project start date has been added.	
Documentation provided by project participant	
IE/PV assessment	Date: 08/10/2026
The evidence of the project start date is considered correct. Please also state this evidence in Annex 7, Step 0.	

NIR ID	10	Section no.	Annex 7	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
For the carbon baseline for restoration and improved management, please provide evidence supporting the applicability conditions.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
This has now been addressed – documentary evidence is provided through site photographs				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
Documentary evidence has been provided and is considered correct. This NIR is closed.				

NIR ID	11	Section no.	3.9.4	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
For the native species listed in Table 3.9.4, please provide evidence that they pose no environmental risk or describe the mitigation measures in place.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
Table 3.9.4 has been updated to make it clear that all species listed				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 20/03/2026
Table 3.9.4 has been updated and the information included is considered correct.				

NIR ID	12	Section no.	3.11	Date: 08/12/2025
Description of NIR				
Please update Table 3.11 to describe and provide supporting evidence for the impact and likelihood of risks affecting the long-term maintenance of carbon benefits.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
Table 3.11 has been updated with evidence in both likelihood and impact.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
Documented evidence has been added and is considered correct. This NIR is closed.				

NIR ID	13	Section no.	3.11	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Description of NIR to be confirmed against the final review spreadsheet.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
The issue has been modified in the PDD.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
The issue has been modified in the PDD and is considered correct. This NIR is closed.				

NIR ID	14	Section no.	5.5	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Please provide evidence that annual project financial audits will be conducted by an independent financial auditor certified by a nationally recognised regulatory body within 12 months of the end of each financial year.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
As the annual audit is required within 12 months from the end of each financial year, we will have this at the end of this year.				
Documentation provided by project participant				

IE/PV assessment		Date: 08/10/2026
OK. A FAR will be raised regarding the annual financial audit		

NIR ID	15	Section no.	5.5	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of NIR				
Please provide evidence of the expected cost of the project, specialty project management, monitoring, interventions and project supports.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
<i>Column Q in the Financial Plan has been updated to show assumptions made for costs, as well as the agreed rate sheet under 'notes and assumptions' (rows 91-102)</i>				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/10/2026
More information has been added in the financial plan and it is considered correct.				

Table 2. CARs from this validation

CAR ID	1	Section no.	1.2.1	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of CAR				
Please include the date of the meeting where land ownership was confirmed in Table 1.2.2 of the PDD and update the appendix reference to Appendix 4.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
Awareness of land ownership systems in Vanuatu were already known as stated in the PDD.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026
The date has been added in the PDD and the number of the Appendix has been updated to Appendix 4.				

CAR ID	2	Section no.	2.5.2	Date: 20/03/2026
---------------	---	--------------------	-------	-------------------------

Description of CAR	
Please specify in Section 2.5.2 of the PDD the date on which the stakeholder engagement meeting took place.	
Project participant response	Date: 18/05/2026
Dates added to Section 2.5.2.	
Documentation provided by project participant	
IE/PV assessment	Date: 08/07/2026
The date has been added in the PDD. CAR 2 is considered closed.	

CAR ID	3	Section no.	2.6.2	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of CAR				
Please include the dates of the meetings where the FPIC process took place and provide evidence of the meeting held in May 2023. Also include the dates of the workshops in Annex C.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
The dates of the meetings were included in the PDD.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026
The correct dates have been stated therefore this CAR is resolved.				

CAR ID	4	Section no.	Annex 7	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of CAR				
For each project intervention, please complete the Technical Specification template in Annex 7. A single technical specification may include some variation, but substantially different interventions should have separate technical specifications.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
Separate Technical Specifications have been developed.				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026
Three Technical Specifications have been provided; therefore this CAR 4 is closed				

CAR ID	5	Section no.	3.13	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of CAR				
Section 3.13 of the PDD should be project-specific and provide evidence that the carbon benefits generated by the project will not be included in any other greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme or carbon accounting mechanism.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
Evidence is provided in the form of Annex 12, signed project agreements				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026
The explanation and evidence provided are considered satisfactory. CAR 5 is closed.				

CAR ID	6	Section no.	3.18.7	Date: 20/03/2026
Description of CAR				
The project agreement period ends on 1 January 2055, which is not consistent with the end of the crediting period. In addition, the expected annual carbon benefits are not consistent with the carbon calculations.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
The project agreement date was not aligned to the crediting period by oversight				
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026
OK. A FAR will be issued so that this issue can be checked during the first verification.				

CAR ID	7	Section no.	5.3	Date: 08/07/2026
Description of CAR				
The PDD refers to the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act CAP 283. Please demonstrate how the project will comply with the requirements of this Act.				
Project participant response				Date: 18/05/2026
We have received an email from the Compliance Officer under the Vanuatu authorities				
Documentation provided by project participant				

The required evidence has been provided in Annex 8. CAR 7 is considered closed.

IE/PV assessment

Date: 08/07/2026

Table 3. FARs from this validation

FAR ID	1	Section no.	5.3	Date: 08/07/2026
Description of FAR				
At the next verification, the project agreements need to ensure that the correct crediting period is stated. In addition, the expected annual carbon benefits stated in the project agreements must be consistent with those presented in the PDD.				
Project participant response				Date: DD/MM/YYYY
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: DD/MM/YYYY

FAR ID	2	Section no.	3.11	Date: 08/07/2026
Description of FAR				
At the next verification, please provide the annual audit of the Project finances conducted by an independent financial auditor certified by a nationally recognised regulatory body, ensuring that the audit has been completed within 12 months of the end of each financial year.				
Project participant response				Date: DD/MM/YYYY
Documentation provided by project participant				
IE/PV assessment				Date: 08/07/2026

