



WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY
VANUATU CANDIDATE 2027

KAKAE VANUATU

Remembering
the past,
Regenerating
the future.



WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY
VANUATU CANDIDATE 2027



A protecting of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The assemblage of this document was directed by the Vanuas within the six Provinces of Vanuatu: Malampa, Penama, Torpa, Shefa, Sanma and Tafea. This knowledge has been gathered with utmost respect for the custodianship of Elders past, present and emerging, for the continuation of these traditions and practices.

Government and cultural protocols have been strictly followed and observed by the relevant government ministries, along with the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs, the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (Vanuatu Cultural Centre) and the Vanuas involved to ensure they are represented in a way which is self-determined and sovereign.

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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

FROM REGENERATIVE VANUA –
LEADING PARTNER OF IGCAT CANDIDACY

Vanua: our home, our life

Vanua is a holistic term for place used in Pacific countries (with regional linguistic variations) and refers to the relationship between custodians of the land and the land itself, to the energetic aspect of this relationship which creates a sense of belonging to place.

Vanua is the relational principle referring to life in all its various manifestations – land, waterways, oceans, air, flora, fauna, weather, people, language, song, dance, stories and so on. Vanua extends across time – it is informed by ancestral knowledge and embodies the needs of the future generations. It is dynamic and evolves to enable harmony and balance. In the Pacific, we understand that the role of being a custodian involves taking care of and stewarding Vanua, so that its full potential – environmentally, socially and spiritually – can be actualised.

Vanua is a term which is felt and understood across Oceania by Indigenous communities, however evades adequate translation into English and is difficult to understand from a Western perspective. Regenerative Vanua's use of the Indigenous term Vanua is a deliberate and empowering acknowledgement of the Pasifika worldview within which Regenerative Vanua operates. The term will be used throughout our candidacy as World Region of Gastronomy 2027 — because there can be no conversation about food culture and tradition without an acknowledgement of our Vanuas, of the relationship we have as custodians and stewards of ourselves, our ancestors, each other, and our home. A plate (or banana leaf) of food is a plate of spirit, of peace, of responsibility. As is often the case in our increasingly uncertain future, we are faced with a choice.



Regenerative Vanua makes clear what a regenerative choice encompasses:

- Choosing regenerative means choosing pluriversality, dynamic opinion, and intercultural dialogue.
- Choosing regenerative means actively decolonising by repatriating land, unsettling current development models, and challenging systems of resettlement and reoccupation.
- Choosing regenerative means choosing local produce and nature positive farming practices, investing in food security and health.
- Choosing regenerative is choosing an inclusive, inspired, equitable and empowered future based on justice.

Ultimately, choosing regenerative is a commitment to transforming systems in ways that honor land, culture, and community—cultivating a future rooted in justice, resilience, and collective wellbeing.





OPENING LETTER FROM OUR AMBASSADORS

VANUATU'S INDIGENOUS NI VANUATU FOOD AMBASSADORS

Opening Message from Votausi Mackenzie-Reur, Chair of Regenerative Vanua Board & recipient of the Honorary Ambassador Award from the Institute of Gastronomy Culture, Arts and Tourism for 2027

The nomination of Vanuatu as World Region of Gastronomy 2027 brings long overdue attention to Vanuatu's food culture and gastronomic expertise. The World Region of Gastronomy Platform is a network of coordinators, stakeholders, and experts from awarded and candidate regions, working together to share knowledge and develop joint projects that boost international visibility.

I have dedicated much of my life to advocating for the protection of our local food supply and preserving the nutrients of our local food culture in contemporary diets. On Natamambo, in the Sanma Province of Vanuatu where I grew up, the land is seen by my community as our source of food, medicine, culture, history, and shelter.

Vanuatu has been bountifully blessed with its natural and organic resources from the mountains and rivers to the expansive ocean surrounding our islands. This has sustained the lives of our ancestors – who were once warriors of this land and who have lived to be 100 while still maintaining their mental and physical capabilities.

Vanuatu is covered with luxuriant vegetation, which thrives on the very rich soil, wet tropical climate and abundant and regular rainfall. Most of the area is covered with dense forest from the shore to the top of the highest mountains. Tropical food crops such as manioc, taro, yam, kumala and island cabbage are abundant throughout the year. Vegetables such as tomatoes, beans and eggplants can be grown during cooler months. Tropical fruit trees bear fruit for much of the year. Coconuts are an abundant food source. Cyclones often cause food crop damage, but local foods can be re-grown as early as 3-6 months after cyclone damage.

Vanuatu has enough food grown out of subsistence agriculture, gardening, fishing, and raising poultry and livestock to feed her people. For me and my fellow ambassadors, the World Region of Gastronomy Candidacy is an opportunity to remind our people and to show the world that our islands have been blessed with plentiful resources to sustain our health and wellbeing into the future - so long as we are capable of remembering our past, and regenerating our future.

- Votausi Mackenzie-Reur

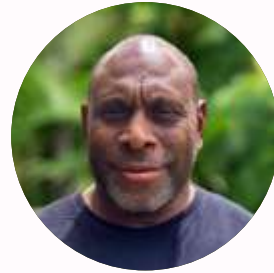
Ambassadors

VANUATU'S NI VANUATU FOOD AMBASSADORS



Knox Taleo

Chef, Skills adviser for Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC)



Alick Abel

Regenerative Gastronomy Chef



Dr Basil Leodoro

Co-founder of Sanma Food Revolution



Leila Jacobé

Bio-logic Regenerative Farming, President of RAGAA



Robert Nidithhawae

Aneityum Island Chef



Ashianna Carcasses

Romarin Farm



Charlie Lengtehi

Sanma Agrifood Trade Association



Lynette Kalfau

Founder of Vanua Breakfast



Christopher Bulememe

Chris' Catering Services



Gordon Garae

Ta Vai Peri-Urban Backyard



Patricia Maximo

Vanua Cafe and Farmacy



Alain Jacobe

Vanuatu Farmers Association



Louis Tiome

Founder Chez Louis, Santo



Ureur Takau

Founder Co-Founder Mummy Lil & Takau's Kitchen



Lilon Takau

Co-Founder Mummy Lil & Takau's Kitchen

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

VANUATU GOVERNMENT

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, we proudly and wholeheartedly endorse the nation’s nomination for the World Region of Gastronomy 2027, presented by the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT).

This nomination affirms our national commitment to placing agriculture and traditional food systems at the heart of our identity, economy, and future. At the core of our regenerative agritourism and gastronomy vision is a simple truth: it begins with the land. We believe that strong, resilient agricultural systems — grounded in traditional knowledge and local food production — are the foundation for any meaningful visitor experience.

Regenerative agritourism and gastronomy in Vanuatu is not about creating experiences for visitors first; it is about revitalising our food systems, empowering our farmers, and protecting the wisdom of our elders and ancestors.

Only then can we invite the world to engage with our food culture in a way that is authentic, respectful, and enriching for all.

This nomination is a celebration of our diverse culinary heritage, our cultural pride, and the values that enrich our communities. It offers a unique opportunity to uplift local producers, connect young people to their roots, and amplify the voices and knowledge of our people on the global stage.

Our ministries are united in our support. We commit to working collaboratively with stakeholders across the islands — from the gardens to the kitchens, from the markets to the schools — to ensure the success of this bid and the long-term legacy it will create.

With pride, unity, and purpose, we stand behind this vision and pledge our full support to realising Vanuatu’s place as the first Regenerative Gastronomy Region and as the World Region of Gastronomy 2027.



Hon. Ian Wilson Toagalana
Minister for Agriculture, livestock, Fisheries, Forestry and Biosecurity



Hon. Samsan Samson
Minister for Trades & Commerce



Hon. Ralph Regenvanu
Minister for Climate Change Adaptation, Energy, Environment, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards and Disaster Management



Hon. John Still Quetu Tari
Minister for Health



Hon. Johnny Koanapo Rasu
Minister for Finance and Economic Management



Hon. Ati Marc
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Hon. Andrew Solomon Napuat
Minister of Internal Affairs



INTRODUCTION

Vanuatu's food culture is more than a source of sustenance; it is a cornerstone of identity, health, and environmental harmony. While colonialism, tourism, globalisation, and climate change have posed significant challenges, they also underscore the importance of reclaiming food sovereignty. By fostering pride in traditional food practices and empowering communities to control their food systems, Vanuatu can address modern challenges while honoring its rich heritage. Food sovereignty is not just a path to resilience but a celebration of what makes Vanuatu unique—a vibrant culture sustained by the land, sea, and the wisdom of its people.

Vanuatu's food culture is deeply rooted in its natural abundance, Indigenous knowledge, and traditional practices. This Melanesian archipelago, with over 80 islands, has cultivated a food heritage that reflects its diverse geography, with lush tropical forests, fertile volcanic soils, and rich marine ecosystems.



Historically, the people of Vanuatu have sustained themselves through a balanced, subsistence-based food system rooted in agriculture, fishing, and traditional preservation methods. Among these techniques is the practice of underground cooking and preservation, where food is buried and cooked in an earth oven.

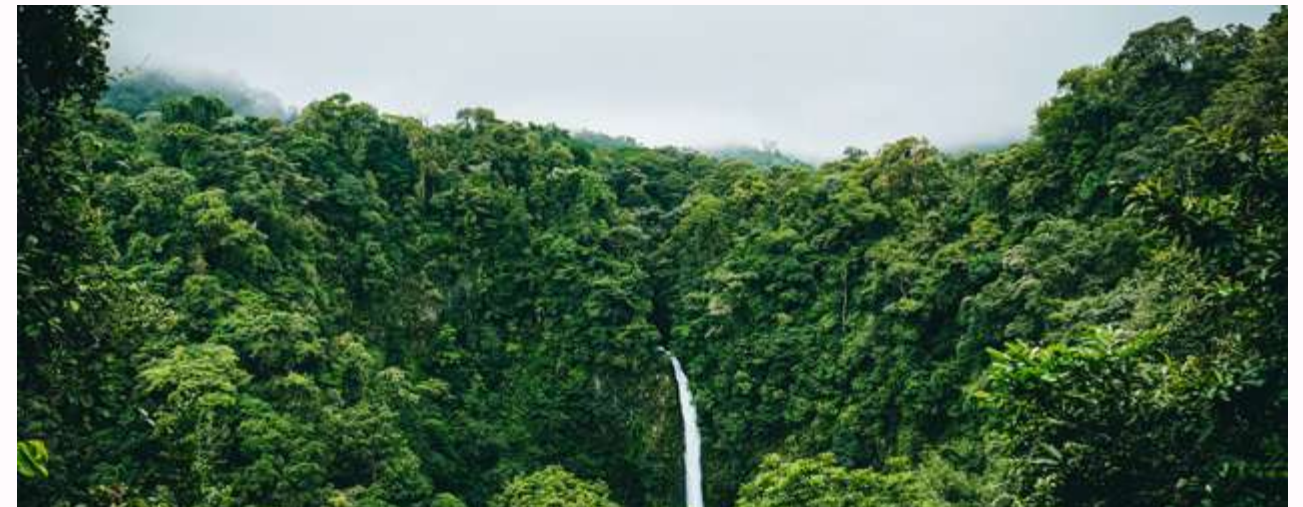
This method not only utilises natural heat but also minimises exposure to air and pests, effectively extending the shelf life of various foods while preserving their nutritional value. Staple crops like taro, yam, cassava and bananas, alongside coconut, island cabbage, and various greens have always been central to Vanuatu diets, and fishing provides a crucial protein source. However, as Vanuatu's society has evolved, it's food culture has faced significant challenges that demand a re-centering of food sovereignty and pride in its culinary heritage.

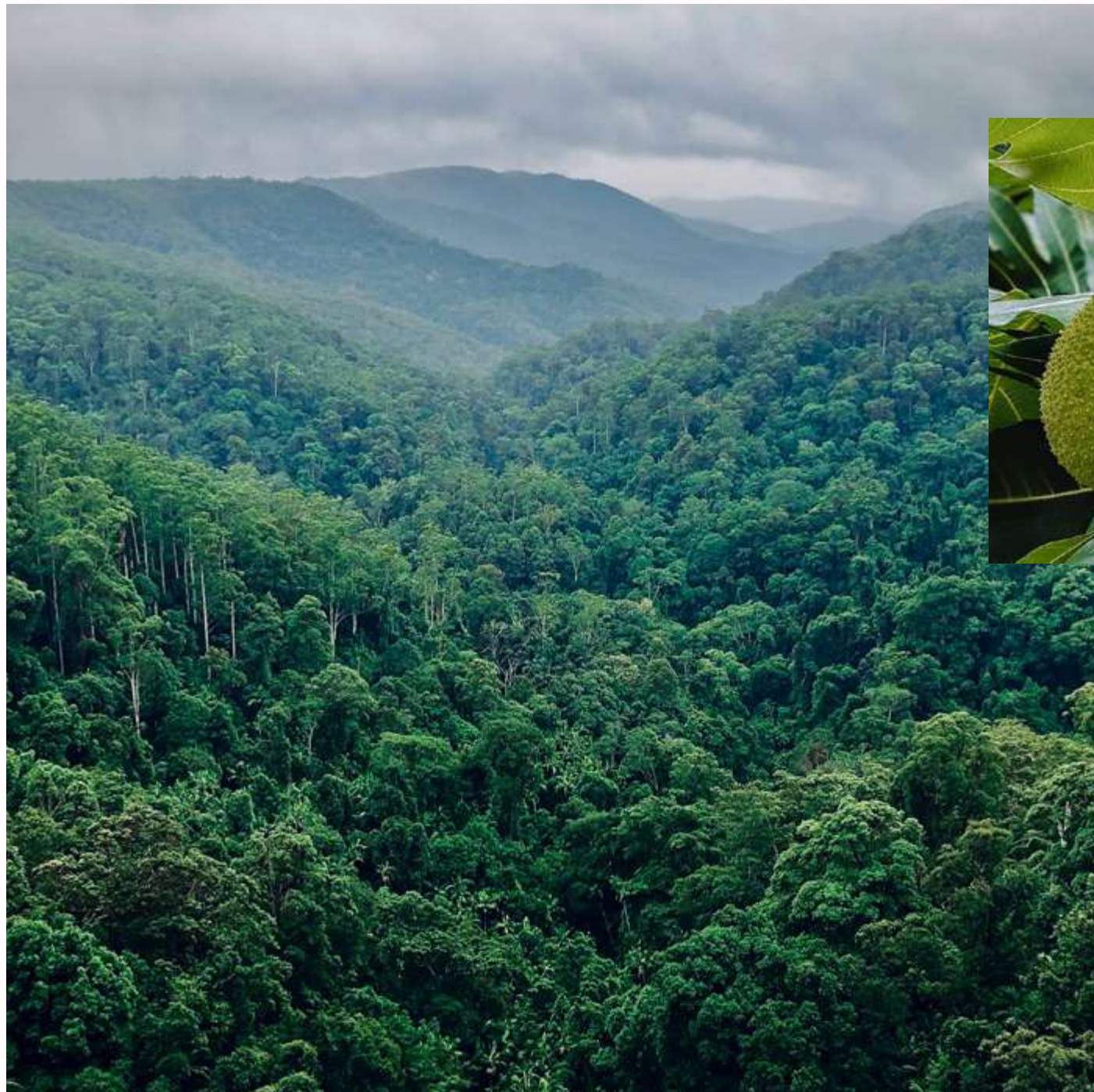
COLONIAL INFLUENCE & THE DISPLACEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

The arrival of colonial powers in the 19th century significantly disrupted Vanuatu's food systems. Colonial administrations introduced cash crops like copra and cocoa for export, marginalising traditional agriculture and food production. Imported foods like rice, tinned meat, instant noodles and flour became status symbols, gradually replacing traditional staples. These imported goods were not only less nutritious but also created dependency on external markets. This disconnection from traditional food practices weakened the resilience of local food systems and eroded cultural pride in Indigenous food.

THE IMPACT OF TOURISM & GLOBALISATION

In contemporary times, tourism and globalisation have further impacted Vanuatu's food culture. While tourism has provided economic opportunities, it has often prioritised Western culinary tastes over local food. Many resorts and restaurants cater to international tourists, sidelining traditional dishes in favor of global cuisines. This has created a perception among some locals that traditional foods are less desirable or "old-fashioned." Moreover, the proliferation of processed and imported foods has exacerbated health challenges, contributing to the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes and hypertension, which now pose significant public health concerns.





FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AS A TOOL FOR RESILIENCE

In the face of these challenges, food sovereignty—the right of people to define their own food systems—is a powerful tool for resilience. By reclaiming control over local food systems, Vanuatu can strengthen its cultural identity, improve public health, and enhance regeneration.

Encouraging traditional farming methods, such as agroforestry, aligns with regenerative practices and climate adaptation. These methods not only boost biodiversity, but also reduce dependency on imported foods, fostering greater self-reliance.

The revival of pride in traditional dishes, such as laplap—a baked pudding made from taro, yam, banana, or manioc combined with rich coconut cream—and simboro, which features rolled island cabbage leaves filled with grated root vegetables and cooked in coconut milk or water, plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage. These dishes embody the essence of Vanuatu’s culinary traditions and serve as a cornerstone for fostering a deeper connection to ancestral practices, community identity, and regenerative food systems. Initiatives to incorporate local foods into tourism offerings, school programs, and community events can inspire the younger generation to value their heritage. Celebrating traditional food not only reinforces cultural identity but also provides an opportunity to educate about its health benefits, addressing the growing burden of NCDs.

CLIMATE CHANGE & FOOD SECURITY

As one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, Vanuatu faces growing threats to its food security. Rising sea levels, increased cyclones, and shifting weather patterns disrupt agricultural productivity and marine resources. Traditional crops and fishing practices are under stress, making it imperative to adapt and innovate while preserving traditional knowledge. Climate change not only threatens the physical availability of food but also undermines the cultural practices tied to food production and preparation.



EDUCATING OUR FUTURE

Ensuring access to good food for everyone begins with recognising the importance of local, sovereign, healthy, and regenerative food systems. In Vanuatu, initiatives such as the partnership with APTC (Australian Pacific Training Coalition) play a pivotal role in educating communities on responsible food production, preparation, and consumption. APTC's culinary programs equip students with skills to preserve traditional cooking methods while integrating these practices into their careers. These programs not only nourish local communities but also foster a deep sense of pride in Vanuatu's rich food heritage.

The Cultural Centre Slow Food movement also plays a key role in promoting regional gastronomy. By collaborating with local producers, chefs, and communities, Slow Food advocates for farming practices based on Indigenous knowledge systems and the promotion of Indigenous ingredients,

such as manioc, taro, and coconut, which contribute to a nutritious, well-balanced diet. The movement emphasises education, raising awareness about the health benefits of locally sourced foods, while reducing dependency on imported and processed items.

APTC further enhances these efforts by conducting masterclasses for chefs and cooks across Vanuatu. In Port Vila, APTC hosts culinary sessions focused on regenerative cooking, while in Santo, pastry and cookery masterclasses emphasise the use of local produce. In Tanna, APTC collaborates with local restaurant owners, chefs, caterers, and community vendors to teach cooking skills, while working with the Vanuatu Institute of Technology to develop menus using Indigenous ingredients, helping future chefs embrace local food systems. These initiatives are vital for fostering healthy food practices, and empowering communities to embrace their food culture.



REGENERATIVE VANUA STEWARDSHIP FRAMEWORK

In marketing and selling places as destinations in the Pacific region to global consumers, tourism has impacted the accessibility that Indigenous peoples have to their Vanua – to their own land, farming systems, waters, food and culture, either directly (blocking off access or over-developing leased land) or indirectly (pricing out of areas, gentrification). To counter the negative impacts of tourism on Vanua, Regenerative Vanua developed the Regenerative Vanua Stewardship Framework which reframes tourism as ‘regenerative intercultural hosting’ based on the stewardship of Vanua (place, self, others and nature). The Regenerative Vanua Stewardship Framework supports Indigenous peoples to share cultural knowledge and deep connection to Vanua with visitors through regenerative intercultural and transformational experiences based on regenerative land and food management practices.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION & POLICY

Education and policy play crucial roles in supporting food sovereignty. Community-based programs that teach traditional farming, fishing, and cooking methods can empower individuals to reconnect with their heritage. Meanwhile, policies that promote local food procurement, support organic farming, and protect marine ecosystems are vital for regeneration. Collaboration between government, non-profits, and local communities can amplify these efforts, ensuring a multi-faceted approach to food resilience.

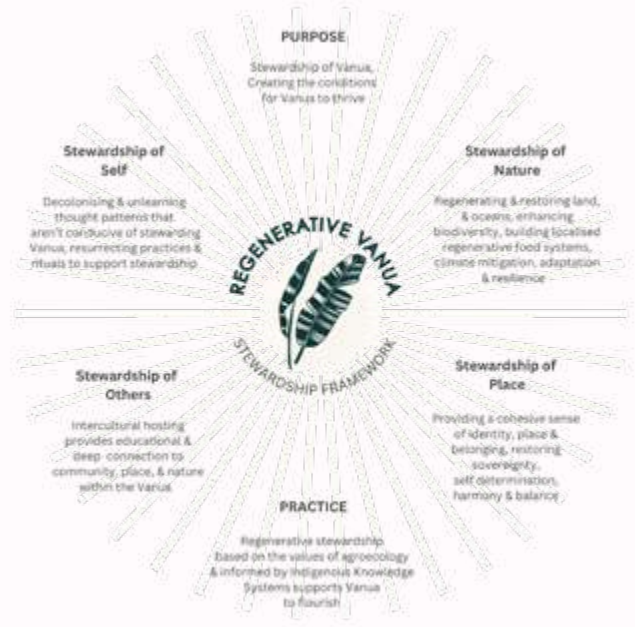


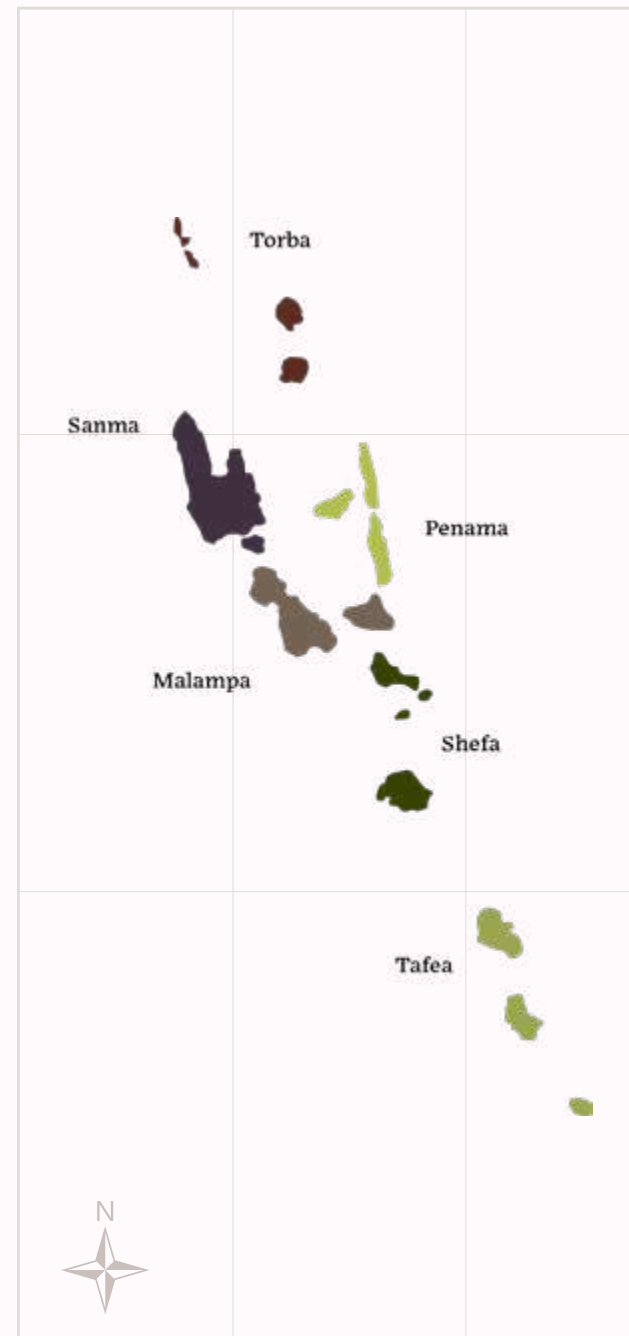
Figure 1: Regenerative Vanua Stewardship Framework



Vanuatu Food Culture

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SIX PROVINCES

Vanuatu is made up of six diverse and culturally rich provinces, each offering its own unique landscapes, traditions, and languages. Spread across more than 80 islands in the South Pacific, these provinces reflect the country's deep connection to land, sea, and ancestral heritage. From the volcanic soils of Tafea in the south to the vibrant traditions of Torba in the north, each province plays a vital role in shaping the nation's identity, food systems, and way of life. Together, they form the heart of Vanuatu—resilient, resourceful, and deeply rooted in Kastom (Bislama word for custom) and community.



Torba



Torba Province is the northernmost province of Vanuatu, made up of the Banks Islands and the Torres Islands. Comprising approximately 15 islands in total with a population of about 9,500 people, the Torba province foodscape reflects its deep-rooted connection to the land and sea through its traditional dishes, unique ingredients, and time-honored preparation methods. Torba Province is the most isolated of the provinces and is therefore largely self-reliant – many households continue to utilise traditional practices and produce a majority of their own goods such as locally made soap, salt and cooking oil.

Coconut crab – a sweet and buttery Torba delicacy – is a special part of the provincial cuisine and a valued export product. Once plentiful throughout much of the tropical Indo-Pacific region, Coconut Crabs have been subject to over-harvesting and are now in such limited supply that they are considered endangered. Vanuatu remains one of the only countries in the region where consistent harvesting is still possible – a testament to the use of traditional, regenerative harvesting practices as well as modern conservation efforts.

Nalot, a sweet delicacy traditionally made with breadfruit, is another culinary highlight of the Torba province. Breadfruit is baked in an earth oven, then pounded and mixed with coconut, resulting in a smooth, rich, textured base, which is topped with reduced coconut cream for a delightful sweetness. Breadfruit is an incredible and resilient staple crop, versatile in its preparation—roasted, boiled, or mashed—and can also be paired with fish, lobsters, or crab. Traditional and regenerative fishing methods like netting, spearing, and handlining provide a fresh supply of fish, which are prepared by boiling, roasting on sticks or rocks, or steaming in banana leaves, retaining their natural flavours.

Other significant crops include taro, manioc, and banana, which are incorporated into a variety of dishes. Traditionally cooked on hot rocks, these ingredients are now also boiled, stewed, fried, grilled, steamed, or baked, showcasing a blend of ancient techniques and contemporary methods. Torba's culinary practices beautifully preserve its heritage while embracing evolving tastes.





Penama



Penama Province is known for its unique and deeply rooted food culture, shaped by fertile volcanic soils, traditional knowledge, and strong community values. Made up of the islands of Pentecost, Ambae, and Maewo, the province's cuisine highlights the importance of local crops, simple preparation methods, and the close relationship between people and land.

A well-known dish from Penama is simboro, which, while enjoyed across Vanuatu, holds special meaning here. It's made by wrapping grated root vegetables like banana, taro, or manioc in island cabbage leaves and simmering them in coconut milk. It's a simple, wholesome dish that brings families together, often prepared for both everyday meals and community gatherings.

Another important dish is kworu sala, a version of laplap made on Ambae island for traditional marriage ceremonies. This

rich dish includes whole local chickens wrapped in banana leaves and further encased in coconut leaves before being slow-cooked. It's a ceremonial food that speaks to the province's respect for kastom and celebration.

Baked taro is also a local favorite. Sometimes it's grated and placed in bamboo, then roasted over hot stones, giving it a soft texture and slightly smoky flavor. This method, passed down over generations, is just one example of how local knowledge shapes everyday cooking.

The agricultural landscape of Penama supports a wide range of staple crops, including water taro, manioc, and bananas, which form the foundation of the local diet. These ingredients, prepared with care and creativity, continue to nourish communities and reflect the strong ties between culture, land, and food.



Sanma



Sanma Province, home to the islands of Espiritu Santo and Malo, offers a rich and diverse culinary landscape shaped by its fertile soil, varied climate, and long-standing traditions. From lush river valleys to dry inland plains, the province's food culture reflects its geography and deep connection to land and sea. Santo, the largest island in Vanuatu, is particularly known for its organic, grass-fed beef—considered among the best in the Pacific. For many locals, beef isn't just a food product, but a point of pride.

The province's food traditions vary across its regions. In the wetter southern and northwestern parts of Santo, water taro is a staple crop. It's often prepared in a dish similar to nalot, where boiled taro is pounded, mixed with rich coconut milk, and shared communally. This simple but nourishing dish is a familiar sight at family gatherings and community events.

In contrast, the drier regions of Santo rely more on kumala (sweet potato) and yam. A local specialty from Hog Harbour involves

wrapping yams or kumala in banana leaves and baking them over hot stones. This method, passed down through generations, enhances the natural sweetness of the roots and brings out a smoky, earthy flavor.

On nearby Malo Island, food traditions lean toward the sea. Fresh seafood, caught daily, is often cooked over charcoal or wrapped in banana leaves and steamed, bringing out delicate flavors without the need for added seasoning. Malo also contributes to the province's economy through the production of copra and cocoa, supporting both local use and export.

Across Sanma, fresh greens—like watercress, island cabbage, and other leafy vegetables—complement meals and reflect the province's agricultural richness. Together, these ingredients form a food culture that is practical, regenerative, and deeply rooted in the rhythms of nature. In Sanma, food is not only a source of nourishment but a reflection of history, resilience, and everyday life.





Malampa



Malampa's foodscape reflects the province's natural abundance and strong cultural traditions. Across the islands of Malakula, Ambrym, and Paama, local food practices are shaped by fertile gardens, coastal waters, and deep ancestral knowledge passed through generations.

A signature dish of the province is sorsor, made with banana or yam—two key crops in the region. Depending on availability, sorsor can also include manioc or taro. These ingredients are mixed with coconut milk and wrapped in banana leaves, then steamed or boiled to create a savoury, satisfying dish. It's a staple that brings people together for both everyday meals and community gatherings, showcasing traditional techniques that value simplicity and flavor.

Bananas and yams are commonly eaten across the province, prepared in many ways—boiled, roasted on hot stones, or baked in earth ovens. These root crops form the foundation of the local diet, providing sustenance year-round.

Malampa's coastal communities benefit from rich fishing grounds. Fish is caught using traditional methods and often roasted

over open flames or gently boiled in coconut milk or seawater, which enhances its natural taste. Pigs are raised and reserved for feasts and ceremonies, while cows and local chickens also play a role in the region's diverse food culture.

A unique delicacy in Malampa is the flying fox (fruit bat), considered a special food for ceremonial occasions. Prized for its distinct flavor, it reflects the province's respect for traditional foods and cultural diversity.

Cooking methods such as hot-stone roasting and steaming in banana leaves remain widely used throughout Malampa. These techniques are not only practical and regenerative—they also reflect the province's enduring relationship with its environment.

With its abundance of local ingredients, time-honored preparation methods, and close connection to kastom, Malampa Province continues to nourish its people and preserve a food culture that is deeply rooted in island life.

Shefa



Shefa Province is home to a rich and diverse food culture, shaped by its fertile lands, abundant coastline, and strong ties to traditional knowledge. From inland gardens to the shores of Efate and its surrounding islands, Shefa's cuisine reflects a balance between agriculture and the sea.

One of Shefa's most iconic dishes is tuluk, made from grated manioc (cassava) and stuffed with shredded, braised pork. The mixture is wrapped in banana leaves and slow-cooked in an earth oven, giving it a soft, smoky texture. Tuluk is not only a local favourite—it's also a proud symbol of the province's culinary identity, often served during gatherings and special events.

Another popular dish is kapu fis, a layered laplap made with manioc, island cabbage, and coconut milk. Kapu fis brings together local ingredients in a comforting, layered format that reflects the province's creativity in using traditional crops.

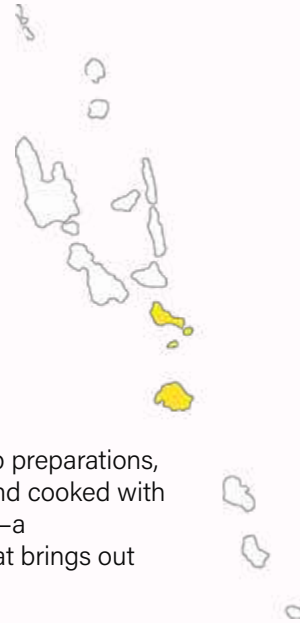
Across Shefa, manioc, banana, and dryland taro are staple root crops, forming the base of many meals. These ingredients

are used in a variety of laplap preparations, wrapped in banana leaves and cooked with hot stones or in earth ovens—a time-honoured technique that brings out their natural flavors.

The province also benefits from a wide range of protein sources. Cattle, pigs, and local chickens are raised across the islands, while fish and seafood—especially in coastal areas—remain vital to daily diets. Fishing is not just a livelihood but a way of life, sustaining families with fresh, healthy food from the sea.

Dishes like raparap poch (small laplap parcels) and bunia (a communal dish of meats and vegetables cooked on hot rocks) showcase Shefa's love for shared meals and traditional cooking methods that bring people together.

Shefa's food culture is a celebration of what the land and sea provide—prepared with care, cooked with tradition, and shared with pride. It is a living expression of island life, where food connects people to place, history, and each other.





Tafea



Tafea Province, home to the islands of Tanna, Aneityum, Futuna, Erromango, and Aniwa, is a place where food is deeply tied to both land and sea. The region's food culture, shaped by its agricultural traditions and the bounty of the surrounding waters, is a reflection of the resilience, resourcefulness, and warmth of the communities that call these islands home.

At the heart of Tafea's foodscape is manioc (cassava), the province's signature crop. One of the standout dishes made from manioc is nalwal, a type of laplap that blends grated manioc with island cabbage and is wrapped in banana leaves. Cooked in an earth oven or over hot rocks, nalwal offers a savory and hearty flavor, symbolizing the province's deep connection to traditional cooking methods and the land.

Another beloved dish, particularly from Tanna Island, is Tanna soup—a rich, hearty soup made with root crops like manioc and taro, alongside local meats such as chicken. Traditionally prepared for large gatherings, this soup is known for its filling nature, leaving everyone nourished and satisfied. If meat is unavailable, coconut milk is added to bring richness and depth of flavor. This dish is a beautiful expression of Tafea's communal spirit, where food is shared and enjoyed by all.



Bunia is another favorite in Tafea, made by baking a combination of root crops, island greens, and meats like pigs, chickens, and goats. The ingredients are slow-cooked to perfection in an earth oven, imparting deep, smoky flavors. It's a dish that celebrates both the natural abundance of Tafea and the importance of gathering around the fire to share a meal with family and friends.

The islands of Tafea each bring their own unique flavors to the province's culinary landscape. The people of Tafea rely on time-honored cooking methods such as roasting over hot stones, steaming in banana leaves, and baking in earth ovens. These methods not only highlight the local ingredients but also demonstrate the regenerative, low-impact approach to food that has been passed down through generations.

Tafea's food culture is a celebration of the simple, powerful connection between people and the land. Whether it's a steaming plate of nalwal, a hearty bowl of Tanna soup, or the comforting taste of bunia, the food of Tafea reflects a shared heritage of community, tradition, and respect for the earth and its gifts.





Hero Crops



COCONUT: THE LIFEBLOOD OF VANUATU

Coconut is arguably the most important crop in Vanuatu, playing a central role in both the diet and cultural practices of the people. The coconut tree is often referred to as the “tree of life” due to its multifunctionality. Its water is a refreshing drink, while the meat of the fruit is used in a wide range of dishes. Coconut oil is another key product, used in cooking and in the creation of traditional cosmetics and soaps. The leaves and husks are utilised for construction materials, mats, and ceremonial items. Coconut holds immense cultural significance, often being used in traditional ceremonies, exchanges, and as a form of currency in some communities. The resilience of coconut palms in Vanuatu’s tropical climate makes them an essential crop that contributes to food security and local economic activity.



YAM: SYMBOL OF PROSPERITY AND TRADITION

Yam holds a revered status in Vanuatu, often called “the king of tubers” for its cultural and nutritional significance. This crop is not just an important food source but also a symbol of prosperity, used in various cultural rituals and exchanges. Yams are commonly prepared in traditional dishes such as laplap, a dish made from grated yam mixed with coconut milk and sometimes meat or fish. Yams are rich in carbohydrates and fiber, offering essential energy and sustenance. They are also central to ceremonial life, often being exchanged between communities as part of social and cultural practices. The widespread cultivation of yam across Vanuatu ensures its continued importance in both the cultural and economic fabric of the nation.



TARO: A NUTRIENT-RICH STAPLE

Taro is another critical crop in Vanuatu, valued for its nutritional benefits and its role in local food systems. Taro is high in potassium, fiber, and vitamins, contributing to a balanced diet. It is commonly boiled or steamed and used in a variety of traditional dishes, often combined with coconut milk or served alongside fish. Taro also plays a significant role in Vanuatu's cultural and social life, as it is used in feasts and traditional ceremonies. The crop is a staple for many households and is cultivated extensively throughout the islands. Its ability to grow in diverse soil conditions makes it a reliable food source, contributing to food security across the country.



KUMALA (SWEET POTATO): A NUTRITIOUS AND VERSATILE CROP

Kumala is another important crop in Vanuatu, known for its high nutritional value and versatility in the kitchen. Rich in vitamins A and C, sweet potatoes help support immune function and overall health. They are commonly consumed in boiled, roasted, or baked forms and are often served with coconut milk. Kumala are a staple in many households and are typically grown alongside other crops, contributing to food diversity and security. Its ease of cultivation in the fertile volcanic soil of Vanuatu ensures that kumala remain an accessible and reliable food source.



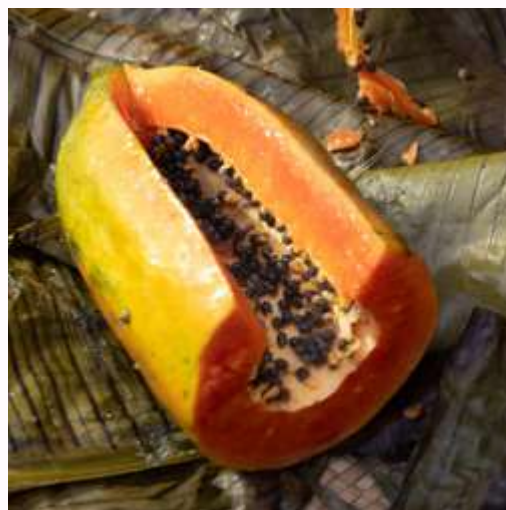
BANANA: A SOURCE OF ENERGY AND TRADITION

Bananas are another popular and versatile crop in Vanuatu. They are consumed as both a snack and an essential ingredient in many dishes, including desserts, stews, and salads. Bananas are rich in potassium, which supports heart health and helps maintain proper muscle function. Beyond their nutritional benefits, bananas have a cultural significance in Vanuatu, often exchanged during ceremonies and social gatherings. Banana plants are easy to grow and thrive in the tropical climate, making them an abundant and reliable crop for local farmers. The role of bananas in Vanuatu's agricultural system cannot be overstated, as they are a fundamental part of the local diet and economy.



MANIOC (CASSAVA): A STAPLE OF SUBSISTENCE FARMING

Manioc is a staple crop in Vanuatu, valued for its ability to provide sustenance in times of food scarcity. The roots of the manioc plant are rich in carbohydrates and can be processed in various ways, including boiling, baking, or turning into flour. Manioc is often used to make tapioca and manioc cake, both of which are popular in local cuisine. It is also an essential part of subsistence farming in Vanuatu, where farmers rely on it for sustenance during dry seasons or when other crops fail. Cassava's resilience and ease of cultivation make it a vital crop in the islands' agricultural landscape, contributing significantly to food security.



PAPAYA-PAWPAW: A NUTRITIONAL POWERHOUSE

Papaya is a tropical fruit that grows abundantly in Vanuatu's gardens. It is rich in vitamins A and C, which support immune health, skin health, and digestion. Papayas are often consumed fresh, added to fruit salads, or used in cooking to complement savory dishes. The fruit is also utilised in traditional medicine for its digestive benefits. Papaya trees are relatively easy to grow and provide a consistent harvest, making the fruit a reliable source of nutrition. Its widespread cultivation in both rural and urban areas helps ensure its availability as a regular food source for the population.



KAVA: A CROP OF SOCIAL AND CEREMONIAL IMPORTANCE

Kava is perhaps the most culturally significant crop in Vanuatu. The root of the kava plant is used to make a traditional beverage that has calming and numbing effects. Kava is consumed during social gatherings, ceremonies, and rituals, where it plays a role in promoting relaxation and fostering community bonding. The consumption of kava is deeply rooted in Vanuatu's cultural identity, and its use is integral to traditional ceremonies, including those that mark significant life events such as births, marriages, and funerals. Kava's importance goes beyond its role in ceremonies; it is also a key economic crop, with increasing demand for kava-based products on the international market.





Bee Keeping

Vanuatu is actively nurturing a vibrant beekeeping and apiculture sector through a range of innovative programs that promote regenerative livelihoods and environmental stewardship.

Since 2011, the ACTIV Association has pioneered beekeeping development by installing demonstration hives and experimenting with cutting-edge technologies like Flow Hives, supported by funding from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Embassy. Complementing these efforts, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has championed beekeepers' capacity building, providing training and mentorship to develop value-added products such as beeswax candles, soaps, and balms, thereby enhancing local agribusiness opportunities.

In parallel, PHAMA Plus funded a critical bee disease survey to inform quarantine policies and expand market access, ensuring the health of local honey bee

populations. Additionally, JICA's Small and Medium-sized Enterprise/SDGs Business Support Project has embraced beekeeping through the SUGI Bee Garden initiative. Beyond production, beekeeping is gaining prominence within Vanuatu's agritourism landscape, offering farmers new income diversification pathways and visitors immersive educational experiences that celebrate the intimate relationship between people, plants, and pollinators.

Together, these initiatives showcase Vanuatu's growing commitment to fostering resilient, environmentally conscious, and economically empowering beekeeping practices that strengthen Vanuas and enrich the islands' unique biodiversity.



CEREMONY AND HEALING

AMBASSADOR VOTAUSI MACKENZIE REUR SHARES
A DETAILED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD AND ITS
POWER TO HEAL THROUGH ALL LIFE STAGES

Every food that we grow in our garden has meaning - there are special dishes for different ceremonies throughout a person's whole life. On Natamambo (Sanma Province) where I grew up, the forest is seen by my community as our source of food, medicine and shelter. When clearing the bush for gardens or to build a house, each plant is analysed carefully to ensure that medicinal plants are not destroyed. These plants are conserved, and everyone in the community knows what they are so that when ailments occur in the family, everyone has knowledge and access to traditional medicines to alleviate symptoms.

The medicinal plants are prepared in various methods. Some plants are collected for their seeds, which one might chew and/or swallow. With other medicinal plants, the leaves are rubbed together in the palm of the hand and the liquid is

squeezed out onto the cut for a topical application. Leaves are also collected, boiled in a saucepan and when cooled, serve in a teaspoon or cup to drink.

As Vanuatu is so rich in its diverse cultures, there are many local plant medicines which are only known by magic and kastom men and women, which have physical and spiritual effects and are sacred. The following medicinal plants presented here are plants that I have used, and that have been taught to me by my family members and relations over the years and that I have permission to share. Our relationship to food has so much story and tradition behind it – and I have dedicated my life to restoring pride in this tradition and to sharing our food stories with the world. That is why this nomination means so much to me and to my fellow ambassadors – because this is our life's work, passion and purpose.



WILD GINGER

Reduces High Blood Pressure

Harvest the roots and pick about five centimetres off the roots. Grate this and place in a cup, mix with a cup of water, strain, and drink once a fortnight.

NANGAI/ CANARIUM NUT

Anti-inflammatory Properties -
Particularly for Arthritis

Oils from the kernals and nuts are used topically on the body to soothe and reduce inflammation.

RAMOS RATIKE

(Malo Language) Reduce Cough

Make sure that the leaves collected do not have any holes in them and are intact. Pick them in even numbers: 4 or 6. Get a 1/2 cup of water dip the leaves inside and wet them and squeeze the juice from the leaves into the cup and drink the liquid mix.

RAMOSNAHO

Reduce Fish Poisoning Symptoms

Harvest plenty of leaves, boil, cool and drink. Boil three times per day and drink all the juices.



MEN AND WOMEN’S CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP TO FOOD THROUGHOUT LIFE

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

When I was growing up on Natambo, the birth of a child was a special time for the family and the community at large. Before a child is born, the father has to make sure that the garden is planted with various varieties of yams and island cabbage. When a woman gives birth, the mother of the husband normally attends to the woman and the mother in law will spend 10 days caring for the young mother who will breastfeed the child: feeding the young mother with white laplap yam with coconut milk and island cabbage.

This food is believed to aid the flow of milk for the newborn. Relations from the communities will come to visit the newborn baby, bringing with them laplap, yam, coconut milk, island cabbage and chicken for the mother to nourish her. This will continue until the child is about a month old.

MARRIAGE

When preparing for marriage, the boy must ensure that he has some pigs, yams and money to put forward before the rest of the family and relations contribute for the dowry of the bride. This is the whole community affair - but the boy must be seen to be mature and have the necessary items in place before he is married. This system is reciprocal in that the boy will take note of the vatú or items that is given to him for the dowry by individuals in the communities and he will return this gift to those who will be married later and during death ceremonies.

Once a girl agrees to marry a boy, the girls family will notify those family members and relations who will participate in receiving the dowry, mats, yams, pigs and now calicos or island dresses. In Natamabo culture, on the morning of custom marriage, a breakfast is provided for the bride. Normally a laplap white yam and coconut milk, no meat. This is shared by the sisters, mothers, aunties and this is when an aunty will present advice to the bride to ensure that she respects and cares for her new family.

The girl is dressed in beads, ropes and leaves and a special basket which is woven by the mother is filled with a king yam and a sprouting coconut as these are signs of wealth that the bride is bringing into the family.



DEATH CEREMONY

Death ceremony in our culture differs between communities, islands and Provinces. When a person dies, the mourning days range from 5 days to 100 days. Depending on the status of the person, the ceremony will be carried out accordingly. For example, on my island during my mother's death, we had ten days of mourning where every day we went to her grave and paid our respect. As a part of our mourning ritual, we wear the same clothes and the men do not shave until the 10 days are over. Close or immediate family members eat together and comfort one another. Our relations bring us food and cook all our meals while we mourn.

On the ninth day, we have a special ceremony where custom stories are told and there is a singing of hymns and choruses until the break of day to remember her. At dawn, we sing the last song and everyone gathers around the grave to pay their last respects. On the 10th day, everyone will eat breakfast and lunch and partake in the sharing of food with buluk and pig. Before the families and relations collect their food, a pig killing ceremony will take place by her grandsons to remember her for the last time. The relations will collect their food and say goodbye to all the families and leave her compound before night falls. The immediate family will remain for a couple of days before leaving to go to their various homes. Each family will have a burial space, but normally the family member is buried near the house as we believe that their spirits will continue to protect the family into the future.





REMEMBERING THE PAST REGENERATING THE FUTURE

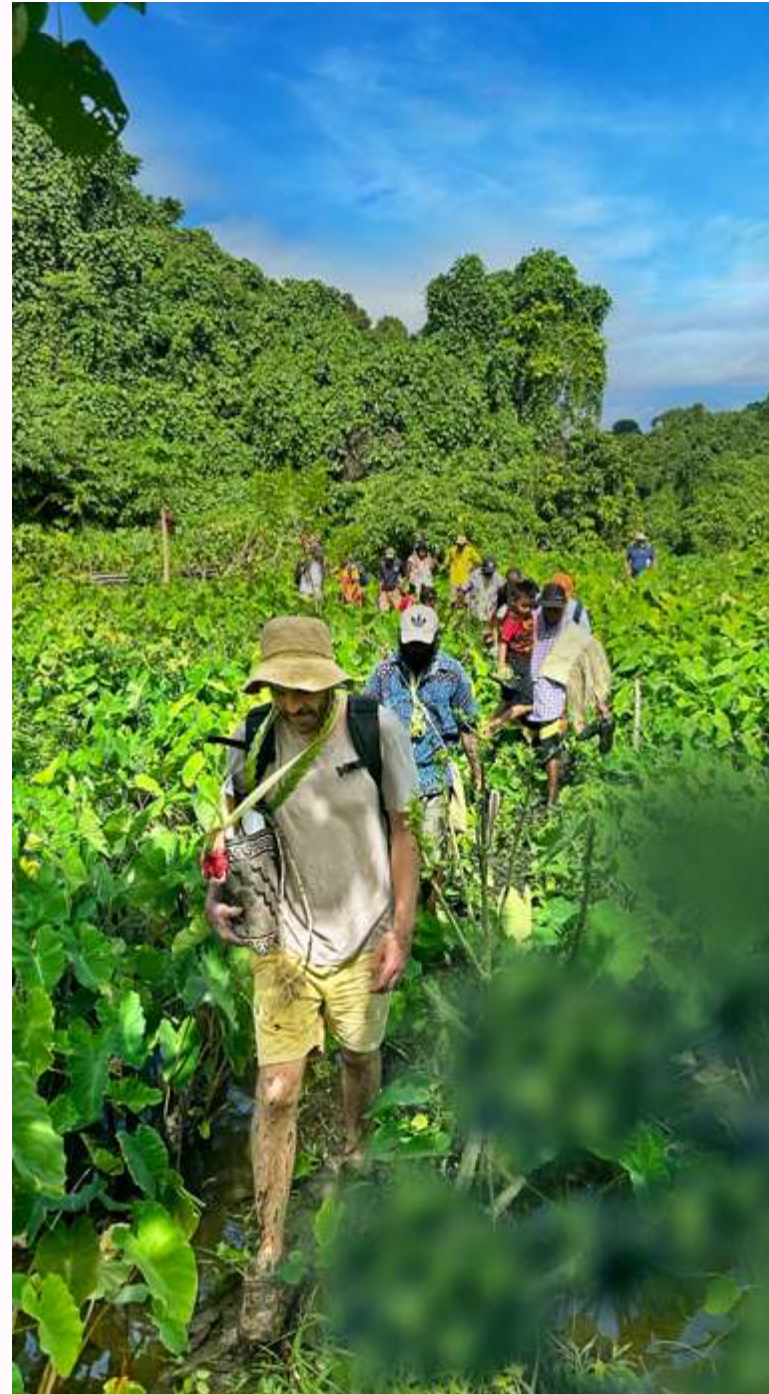
“Food culture plays a significant role in the tourism industry globally. It represents an exciting and interactive way to meaningfully connect with the cultural identity of place. The preparation, ritual and ceremony surrounding local food not only informs but also involves visitors in the cultural landscape of a place and fosters pride in traditional food systems. The Vanuatu International Visitor Survey in July–September 2019, carried out by the Auckland University of Technology and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) (2019), showed Vanuatu’s food was rated the least appealing factor to a visitor’s holiday from respondents in key source markets, with suggestions that Vanuatu’s cuisine is often overpriced and consisted of poor-quality food that was mostly imported. While Vanuatu has had many ‘plans and strategies’ to better link the agricultural and tourism sectors prior to the COVID-19 pandemic border closures, there had been no meaningful advancements. Local suppliers understood that tourism businesses would always choose a lower price over a commitment to buying local produce and value-added products, even if the quality of local goods was higher.

The cheaper, processed alternatives to local food have become more appealing to consumers in Vanuatu after years of successful marketing from large foreign import companies. This experience is not unique to Vanuatu. There has been a concerning global trend for decades towards a more Americanised, Western diet, incorporating fast and processed foods which are now widely preferred over locally grown and prepared cuisine. Consequently, many traditions related to community harvesting, food preparation, communal dining, and celebratory gatherings are being replaced with cheap unhealthy imported food, contributing to neglect of farmland and a diminishing sense of unity, inspiration, and strength within communities. The impact of this changing relationship to food culture means that simply targeting the tourism sector to promote local food is ineffective because consumers (both tourists and locals) are not actively seeking out locally grown food. Until recently, there has been a declining level of pride among Indigenous people regarding their local cuisine and traditional culinary practices in Vanuatu. It has become clear that this feedback loop which has been created in Vanuatu – where locals lose touch with traditional farming and food practices, tourists are uninterested in the local cuisine, and tourism businesses are, therefore, reluctant to serve or provide local food – has been designed by a colonial, capitalist worldview”

Regenerative Vanua, CABI Case Study 2024

Innovation, Creativity and Job Opportunities through Regenerative Agriculture, Agritourism and Gastronomy

Vanuatu's approach to food is not only rooted in tradition but is also a powerful engine for innovation, creativity, and job creation. By embracing regenerative agriculture, agritourism and gastronomy, Vanuatu is cultivating a new generation of farmers, producers, chefs, and entrepreneurs who combine Indigenous knowledge with regenerative practices to restore ecosystems and build local economies. Regenerative agritourism and gastronomy in the South Pacific focuses on directing visitors to the rich cultural history embedded in local food systems and kastom. There is a focus as well on restoring pride in Indigenous culture for locals. After being told for so long that tourists do not want or are not interested in what their communities have to offer, now there is a significant call to shift this neo-colonial narrative. It is not about relying on tourists or adapting to trends, it is about sharing culture and starting conversations about how to change the future of tourism in the context of our increasingly uncertain future.



"Regenerative agritourism embodies an environmentally and socially inclusive approach to tourism, taking place on genuine working farms committed to regenerative agriculture. Through educational, interactive, and transformative activities, visitors engage with the principles of regenerative agroecosystems, fostering climate resilience and contributing positively to the destination rather than only extracting something from it. Instead of focusing on attracting solely international tourists, or seeing tourism as their primary focus, operators serve as ambassadors for regeneration in their country, customising experiences to promote their unique regenerative farming practices to both local, regional and international visitors. The purpose of regenerative agritourism is to inspire positive behavioural change, while fostering connections between locals, domestic visitors, international tourists and the intricacies of local farming and food systems"

Regenerative Vanua, CABI Case Study 2024

Linking regenerative agritourism and gastronomy crucially focuses on providing an educational and immersive experience within each Vanua, delving into their unique food culture and farming systems. The visitor is invited as a guest for the benefit of the host destination and the tourism component is additional to other regenerative livelihood activities. Crucially, regenerative agritourism and

gastronomy aim to protect, restore and regenerate Indigenous knowledge systems as a primary defence against and key adaptation to climate change.

Initiatives such as a national food festival in partnership with Slow Food, a weekly TV series spotlighting regenerative producers, and regional culinary competitions are designed to showcase creative approaches to food production, processing, and storytelling. These platforms encourage innovation—from developing value-added products to designing nature-based food experiences for visitors. Regenerative practices also open pathways for youth employment and entrepreneurship in farming, agritourism, media, and culinary arts. By grounding economic opportunity in cultural pride and ecological care, Vanuatu is creating a food future that is as economically vibrant as it is regenerative.

Vanuatu is placing regenerative agriculture at the heart of its commitment to land and food sovereignty, regeneration, and cultural resilience. Rooted in the concept of Vanua—the interconnectedness of land, people, and culture—this approach seeks not only to preserve traditional food practices, but to actively restore ecosystems, biodiversity, and local knowledge.

Public awareness campaigns will highlight the importance of maintaining food variety, traditional farming methods, and the essential role of pollinators. Communities will be supported in moving toward greater food self-sufficiency, with programmes designed to reduce food waste and revive climate-resilient agricultural practices. Education efforts will also address the environmental and ecological risks of pesticides, especially their impact on bees and soil health. Long-term planning will focus on preventing the loss of local plant and animal varieties and rebuilding the natural fertility of the land through organic, regenerative methods. These commitments will be brought to life through initiatives such as a weekly television series featuring farmers and producers leading the way in regenerative agriculture, with stories capturing their hopes for Vanuatu's World Region of Gastronomy 2027 bid. A flagship food festival in Port Vila—developed in partnership with the Slow Food movement—will provide a platform for island communities to share regenerative food systems and products. Additional events, including regional competitions, food celebrations, and symposiums will further strengthen public engagement and highlight Vanuatu's role as a global model for regenerative island agriculture.



VANUATU IS COMMITTED TO:

- Promote opportunities for the emergence of quality and creative food experiences devoted to surprise visitors, as well as meet the Regenerative Vanua Stewardship Framework and educational goals.
- Increase and extend the variety of local foods in existing festivals, public events, kastom ceremonies, restaurants and hotels.
- Encourage chefs in restaurants and hotels to use and promote local products, innovate on traditional recipes
- Train serving staff to share stories about the region and promote regional products.
- Consider policies in visitor arrivals that prioritise meeting quality rather than quantity targets and thus aim to ensure a balanced approach.
- Increase the sale of local food and food-related gifts by encouraging innovative and locally designed products such as kitchenware, ceramics, and recipe books.

ACTIONS:

1. Develop a regenerative food journey for visitors to experience and buy food products from locals
2. Design the market area to manage flow of local customers and visitors so as not to allow tourists to interfere with local use of the market.
3. Help contribute to the restoration of the Port Vila market after the destruction from the earthquake in 2024, by engaging artists to paint expressive and informative information about the crops that can be found in Vanuatu.
4. Create a local selection process and participate in the World Food Gift Challenge each year (possibly offer to host the World Food Gift Challenge in 2027)
5. Create a coordination post to ensure that food gifts are available in all hotels with information about the producers. Increase also the use of local food products in the breakfasts.



Linking Urban and Rural

Regenerative Vanua's principles and practices for Regenerative Intercultural Hosting extends the scope of food production to address goals of well-being and health and issues such as food and nutrition security, community engagement in decision-making, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, social cohesion, cultural diversity and vitality of rural areas and social justice.

Regenerative Intercultural Hosting based on the concept of regenerative agritourism and gastronomy has the potential to be an application of Indigenous knowledge, a redistribution of wealth, and a supplementary income for subsistence agriculture – creating greater opportunities for rural farmers while supporting a greater connection for those in urban areas that have been disconnected from their localised food systems. Regenerative Agritourism, when implemented authentically, becomes a diversification strategy for disenfranchised smallholder farmers to support their livelihoods against this backdrop of increasing commercialisation and takeover of smallholder farming to big agribusiness and large-scale tourism developments.



VANUATU IS COMMITTED TO

1. Carry out programmes to demonstrate and educate urban citizens on where their food comes from.
2. Development of Regenerative Vanua Management Plans to increase the amount of land dedicated to regenerative and traditional farming.
3. Provide opportunities for urban gardening programmes and projects.
4. Support the development of infrastructure and connectivity needed to encourage urban dwellers and visitors to explore Vanuas in the outer islands that are proving regenerative agritourism and gastronomy intercultural hosting experiences.
5. Encourage private and public initiatives to become energy independent by using their own energy management systems.
6. Support seed bank schemes to protect endemic and endangered plant species.

ACTIONS

- Work directly with Vanuas to develop their Regenerative Vanua Management Plans through Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR)
- Support institutions such as the Vanuatu Agriculture Research and Technical Centre to roll out their seed bank schemes specifically focusing on key endemic and endangered plant species
- Host competitions like the laplap, tuluk, and others to celebrate local culinary diversity and entrepreneurship.
- Convene and host a Pacific Regenerative Vanua Symposium to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration among stakeholders that advances the development of a regenerative, resilient, healthy Vanua's based on nutritious, regenerative food production, distribution and consumption

Zero Waste

PROMOTING TRADITIONAL AND REGENERATIVE METHODS

Traditional cooking techniques in Vanuatu are deeply intertwined with the natural environment, utilising locally available materials and methods passed down through generations. One of the most distinctive practices is the use of sea shells as graters, particularly for preparing laplap, a staple dish made from root crops like banana or taro. The shells are expertly used to grate the ingredients into a fine, soft consistency, allowing the dish to achieve its signature texture. This method of grating not only highlights the resourcefulness of the Vanuatu people but also enhances the flavor and smoothness of the laplap. In some areas, the back of the natangura plant or black palm is used to make a traditional grating tool, with the palm branches doubled and secured with sticks, creating a surface for grating that ensures the dish is finely processed and easily cooked.

The practice of plating and serving food is equally rooted in tradition. Laplap and other dishes are often presented on banana leaves, which serve as both a natural plate and a symbol of regeneration. That is why it is featured in the Regenerative Vanua and Vanuatu's World Region of Gastronomy

logo, because of this symbology. The leaves provide an aromatic and eco-friendly alternative to modern tableware, enhancing the flavor and experience of the food.

Additionally, woven baskets or plates made from local plants are commonly used for serving, offering a connection to Vanuatu's rich craft traditions. These baskets, woven with care and skill, are not only functional but also serve as a cultural expression of artistry and community. Eating rituals often include sharing meals communally, reinforcing bonds within families and villages, and fostering a sense of togetherness. These methods of cooking, plating, and eating are not only practical but also hold significant cultural meaning, preserving the island's rich culinary heritage. As a part of Vanuatu's World Region of Gastronomy 2027 bid, we are committed to exclusively using these traditional plating, serving and cooking methods at our events, to ensure these events are zero waste and promote regenerative practices.







MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

This strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to managing the media, public relations, and communication efforts surrounding the nomination process for the World Region of Gastronomy title. It will engage local, regional, national, and international audiences through strategic content, key messaging, media partnerships, and digital engagement. The goals of the media strategy are as follows:

- **Raise Awareness:** Highlight the region's unique culinary traditions, regenerative practices, and innovation in gastronomy.
- **Generate Support:** Build local, regional, and international support from stakeholders, including local Indigenous run businesses, chefs, agritourism operators, and Government Ministries.
- **Attract Media Attention:** Secure coverage in both traditional and digital media channels around the nomination and showcase the region's gastronomic achievements.
- **Promote Regeneration and Innovation:** Emphasise the region's commitment to regenerative practices, local sourcing, and innovation within the food industry.

Strategy Components

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Website & Microsite

- Create a dedicated, easy-to-navigate microsite to provide information about the region's culinary traditions, regenerative initiatives, and the benefits of the "World Region of Gastronomy" nomination.
- Include regional success stories, chef interviews, and regenerative food practices.

Social Media Campaigns

- Content Calendar: Regularly share stories about local chefs, food artisans, recipes, behind-the-scenes footage, and farm tours, and regenerative living efforts. Leverage platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Linked In.

Email Newsletters

- Regular email updates to keep stakeholders and the public informed about progress, events, and milestones in the nomination process.
- Highlight success stories, behind-the-scenes preparation, and major announcements

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Issue a series of press releases to announce the region's candidacy, highlight key events, and provide updates throughout the nomination process.
- Include interviews with local chefs, food industry leaders, and IGCAT representatives to strengthen the narrative.
- Develop in-depth feature stories and interviews.
- Collaborate with culinary podcasts or video series that focus on food culture, regeneration, and innovation.
- Host virtual or physical press conferences to formally announce the nomination and share the vision behind the region's candidacy.
- Engage regional leaders, chefs, food advocates, and IGCAT representatives in these briefings.

AUDIO-VISUAL STRATEGY

- Develop video content that shares the stories of young farmers, fishers, and food producers from across Vanuatu. These stories will be submitted to the IGCAT Food Film Menu, helping to share our local food culture with a wider audience.
- Showcase the strong connection between our land and food through videos - highlighting Vanuatu's landscapes, traditional foods, and regenerative practices.
- We have already been working with Damon Gameau from Regen Studios and with Native Nations to document agritourism experiences across Vanuatu. This content will support our nomination by promoting Vanuatu's unique food culture both locally and internationally.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Local Events

- Organise public events such as food festivals, cooking competitions, farm-to-table experiences, and regenerative culinary workshops.
- Host the Regenerative Awards in June 2025, 2026 and 2027
- Create a series of "taste and talk" sessions in partnership with APTC and the Cultural Centre where chefs, farmers, and food innovators discuss regenerative practices, local products, and culinary history.

Ambassadors Program

- Use the regional gastronomic ambassadors to help spread the message and engage with the public.





Evaluation & KPIs

To ensure the success of this media and communication strategy, it is essential to evaluate its effectiveness regularly. Some key performance indicators (KPIs) include:

- **Media Coverage:** Monitor the volume and quality of media coverage (both local and international), including print, broadcast, and online outlets.
- **Social Media Metrics:** Track engagement rates, hashtag performance, follower growth, and reach on platforms.
- **Website Traffic:** Measure the number of visitors to the nomination website, time spent on pages, and conversion rates for newsletter sign-ups.
- **Event Attendance:** Analyse attendance numbers at events such as press trips, food festivals, and local cooking classes.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Collect feedback from local businesses, chefs, and community leaders on the effectiveness of communication efforts through the Vanuatu Regenerative Gastronomy Organising Committee.





MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

REGENERATIVE GASTRONOMY VERIFICATION

Regenerative Vanua's Regenerative Verification Program is guided by the Regenerative Vanua Stewardship Framework which supports regenerative stewardship in the Pacific, with a focus on regenerating Vanuas and building regenerative socio-economic markets.

Regenerative Verification addresses goals of well-being and health, as well as engaging with food security, community participation, self determination, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, social cohesion, cultural diversity and vitality and social justice. Most importantly, regenerative principles are positioned as a mindset shift from those of sustainability, which rely on western mindset based on reducing negative impacts caused from industrial tourism and agriculture. Therefore, sustainability and regeneration cannot and should not be used interchangeably.

Vanuatu is committed to a regenerative mindset shift – which for our people means remembering our past, to regenerate our future.

The Regenerative Verification Program supports this shift in thinking through the Regenerative Vanua Stewardship Framework by providing indicators and measurement tools that demonstrate continuous improvement through regenerative practices and principles based on agroecology and Indigenous Knowledge Systems rather than a fixed certified state. This is achieved through the Regenerative Verification of regenerative management plans for regenerative agriculture, regenerative agritourism, regenerative gastronomy and regenerative value chains.

Regenerative Vanua's Regenerative Verification is a recognised program under the Pacific Islands Forum.

All businesses involved in Vanuatu's nomination for Regenerative Gastronomy will be part of the Regenerative Verification Program. A Regenerative Verification report will be submitted by Regenerative Vanua prior to the IGCAT jury visit and again in 2027 to show progress against meeting criteria and indicators within the Regenerative Verification.

SUSTAINABILITY

Industrial, Individual

THE NEEDS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY
OUTWAY THE NEEDS OF VANUA



Industrial Western Mindset, Minimise Impact of Industrial Tourism Model, Aspirational

Many tourism players operating in the industrial model of tourism aim to control the entire tourism value chain and cut off access to Vanuas under the umbrella of sustainability.

REGENERATIVE

Place Based, Collectivism

VANUAS ARE NOT DESTINATIONS



Indigenous World View, Reconnecting and Regenerating Vanua

If the visitor does not leave the mass industrial model - they have not participated in or been exposed to regenerative systems



Budget 2025-2027

Contributor	Contribution Details	Amount (VUV)	Type of Contribution
Ministry of Agriculture	Monetary contribution to support small-scale farmers to transition to regenerative agricultural practices.	11,750,000	Monetary Contribution
Ministry of Trades, Tourism & Commerce	Monetary contribution to support regenerative value-addition and trade of local, regenerative products.	11,750,000	Monetary Contribution
Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Energy, Environment, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards and Disaster Management	Monetary contribution to support regenerative climate resilience and nature positive food systems. Further support to lead in the preparation of the hosting of the 2027 World Gastronomy Summit.	15,000,000	Monetary Contribution
Ministry of Finance	Monetary contribution to invest in resilient, traditional economies.	11,750,000	Monetary Contribution
Ministry of Education & Ministry of Health	Monetary contribution to support the promotion of nutritious, local, seasonal, organic and regenerative food to reduce NCDs and promote healthy, regenerative living, particularly amongst young people. Support the facilitation of school visits to regenerative farms and local restaurants.	11,750,000	Monetary Contribution
Vanuatu Regenerative Agritourism, Gastronomy and Agribusiness Association (RAGAA)	Facilitating and supporting the connection between regenerative agriculture, agritourism, gastronomy and agribusiness.	500,000	In-Kind Contribution
Vanuatu National University	Facilitating and incorporating regenerative gastronomy sessions into academic programs	700,000	In-Kind Contribution
Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta	Promoting Vanuatu's 2027 Gastronomy nomination and coordinating local gastronomy programs with VBTC	500,000	In-Kind Contribution
Orion Media and Entertainment	Facilitating weekly and monthly gastronomy awareness and educational programs through media platforms	2,000,000	In-Kind Contribution
Total		65,700,000	



Oversight Body

VANUATU REGENERATIVE AGRITOURISM & GASTRONOMY COMMITTEE

The Vanuatu Regenerative Agritourism and Gastronomy Committee provides overarching strategic guidance and decision-making authority for all initiatives related to the World Region of Gastronomy nomination and campaign.

Committee Composition

The committee includes representation from:

- Signatories of the Protocol Agreement
- Government Ministries & Agencies
- Development Partners
- Academic Institutions
- Private Sector Stakeholders
- Civil Society Organisations

VANUATU REGENERATIVE AGRITOURISM AND GASTRONOMY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Level	Entity	Role
National Oversight	Vanuatu Regenerative Agritourism and Gastronomy Committee	Strategic leadership, final decision-making, oversight of national initiatives
Coordination	Project Coordinator	Ensures alignment between all sub-committees, supports implementation, facilitates communication
Implementation & Advisory	Sub-Committees	Focus areas: Marketing & Promotions, Capacity Building and Training
Stakeholder Engagement	Advisory Groups	Drives collaboration across sectors, ensures visibility and engagement from grassroots to global levels

OPERATIONAL RHYTHM

Monthly: National Committee Meetings

Quarterly: Public awareness events to maintain national momentum

Weekly/Monthly: Gastronomy media programs (e.g., cooking shows, talkback shows, promotional campaigns), coordinated with relevant sub-committees and media partners

Ongoing: Planning and implementation of cross-sector events (education, arts, culture, environment) supporting the 2027 campaign

STRATEGIC IMPACT AND VISION

The Regenerative Agritourism and Gastronomy Committee are committed to:

- Achieving international recognition in 2027
- Building visibility at local, national, and international levels
- Involving and uniting farmers, chefs, schools, cultural leaders, and agritourism operators
- Promoting a food system that is regenerative, and culturally rich



VANUATU WORLD REGION OF REGENERATIVE GASTRONOMY 2027 GOVERNANCE & PARTNERS

SIGNATORY STAKEHOLDERS TO THE CANDIDACY OF VANUATU FOR WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

Signing of the Protocol Agreement for Vanuatu's nomination for the World Region of Gastronomy Award in 2027:



During the Regenerative Agritourism Symposium 2024, IGCAT announced that Vanuatu had been nominated for the prestigious World Region of Gastronomy Award in 2027. This nomination, was officially signed in a protocol agreement by Jerry Spooner, Executive Director Regenerative Vanua, Votausi Mackenzie-Reur owner Lapita Café, Dr Cherise Addinsall Senior Research Fellow, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australian Centre for Pacific Islands Research, and Robert Oliver Chair and Executive Director for Pacific Island Food Revolution.

The nomination acknowledged Vanuatu's commitment to preserving food traditions, protecting plant diversity, and promoting local cuisine which was showcased during the Regenerative Agritourism Symposium. If successful, Vanuatu would become the first Pacific region to receive this esteemed accolade, and the first region globally to be verified as Regenerative Gastronomy Region solidifying its place on the global culinary stage.

The Regenerative Gastronomy Stakeholder Committee includes representatives from the Protocol Agreement signatories as well as key Government, academic, Non Government organisations and private industry stakeholders who are all committed to working with the Vanuatu Government to ensure Vanuatu holds the World Region of Gastronomy title in 2027.

Together, they will ensure international, national, and local visibility, develop events across multiple sectors (arts, education, environment etc) to promote the campaign and involve and unite local stakeholders such as food producers, educational institutions, and cultural organisations in the shared goal of protecting and promoting Vanuatu's unique food culture. During discussions and planning sessions over the last 12 months, the team have been amazed by the progress already underway within the region – highlighted at the Global Regenerative Agritourism Symposium 2024.

VANUATU REGENERATIVE
AGRITOURISM & GASTRONOMY
COMMITTEE

Responsible for the ongoing governance of the Implementation Plan of Vanuatu's candidacy for the World Region of Gastronomy 2027. The Committee is made up of the following stakeholders:



Jerry Spooner
Executive Director Regenerative Vanua



Antoine Bourdier
President Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce



Lenny Samuel Tafau
Vanuatu Cultural Center Representative



Timothy Tumukon
Director General, Ministry of Agriculture



Joe Ligo
Director General, Ministry of Trade



Gaelle Roussel
Owner Matevulu Lodge



Ruth Amos
National Coordinator Vanuatu Regenerative Verification Program



Noah Kouback
Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Anne Sophie
Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & National University Of Vanuatu



Maukeha Sham-Koua
Manager, Noa Noa Vanuatu



Wade Evans
Principle, Vanuatu Institute of Technology



Lucie Verut
Operations Manager, 83 Islands Distillery

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Implementation Team is responsible for the delivery and management of the Implementation Plan for Vanuatu's candidacy for the World Region of Gastronomy 2027. This team brings together operational experts and partners who will ensure the agreed actions are carried out effectively and on schedule. The Implementation Team is made up of the following stakeholders:



Kehana Andrews

Operations Manager, Regenerative Vanua



Eva Addinsall

Advisor Regenerative Strategy and Intercultural Communication



Sarah Miller

Regenerative Gastronomy Auditor, Regenerative Vanua



Michel Raikatalau

Regenerative Waste Management & Soil health



Votausi Mackenzie-Reur

Owner of Lapita Cafe, Chair of Regenerative Vanua Board



Dr Cherise Addinsall

IGCAT Expert Representing Pacific/ Australia; Regenerative Research & Verification



Morris Kaloran

Kastom and Cultural Coordinator



Pepe Fassos

IGCAT Expert Representing Australia, Regenerative Gastronomy Auditor, Regenerative Vanua



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS, PROMOTIONS AND AWARENESS





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WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY
VANUATU CANDIDATE 2027

