



MINISTRY OF TOURISM,  
TRADE, COMMERCE AND  
NI-VANUATU BUSINESS

# Vanuatu Electronic Single Window Project Monthly newsletter

ISSUE 27

31ST JANUARY 2023

## IN THIS EDITION:

- VeSW Concession module launched!
- The restoration of the VeSW system
- Testimony from a VeSW user
- Government approved support for Phase III of the VeSW Project

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN FEB

1. Restoration of the AW-CDS Post interface
2. Linking TRBR import permits to Customs clearance
3. VeSW email notification implementation
4. e-CITES work ongoing
5. ASYREC work ongoing

## VeSW Concession module launched!

On 26th January 2023, the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue (DCIR) and the VeSW Project team collaborated to launch the VeSW Concession module during the International Customs Day (ICD) celebrations in Port Vila.

The Concession module is the 6th and final module of Phase II of the VeSW Project. The first 5 modules were the Biosecurity, Energy, Environment, Certificate of Origin and TRBR modules. Initially, all these modules were scheduled to be completed in 2019-2020, however due to the pandemic, the Project had to be extended twice to 2021-2022, to complete its workplan. Furthermore, the concession module was supposed to be launched at

the end of 2022, however the recent outage in the Government systems delayed the launching to January 2023. The event was just fitting as it coincides with the Customs Day celebrations.

The Concession module will be used by all the Government department responsible for issuing concessions to certain importers as a form of the Government's assistance towards their contributions to the respective sectors of the economy. Concessions are legislated under schedule I, Part 3 of the Import Duties to exempt import duties for these approved importers.

The launching of the module was highlighted with the live submission of the first ever concession e-application by Vanuatu Brewing Ltd (Vanuatu Tusker) for the importation of manufacturing and packaging materials to be used for its production, duty free. The application was processed live by Industry Officials before it was approved in the system by the Acting Director Industry, and officially handed to the applicant by the Hon. Minister of Finance, MP John Salong.

The departments of Industry and tourism will be the first two agencies to use the module due to the high volume of concessions that they issue to their stakeholders.



2023 International Customs Day

BREJ Pacific  
General Distribution Limited

DCIR Executives, former DCIR Directors, UNCTAD representative and representative from the Private sector cutting cakes to commemorate the launching of the Concession module and the International Customs Day celebrations. Photo: BREJ

## VeSW Concession Module Launching in pictures



The concession module will greatly facilitate the submission and processing of import duty exemptions, online, in a paperless and transparent environment.



Live submission of first ever concession application in the module by Elian Kilman from Vanuatu Brewing. Photo: Daily Post



Acting Director Industry, Keith Antfalo approving the application for the industrial concession in the system. Photo: BREJ



Hon. Minister of Finance, MP. John Salong handing over the Concession Approval to the Applicant, Photo: BREJ



Hon. Minister acknowledging the assistance from UNCTAD expert, Mr. Karim Ben Romdhane. Photo: BREJ



The event was attended by both the Government and invited guests. It was also streamed live to a global audience. Photo: BREJ

# The restoration of the VeSW system



*Behind the scenes: The National Project Team (NPT) working with the ASYCUDA expert to restore the VeSW system*

Following the recent cyberattack on the Government systems, the VeSW system was offline since 6th of November 2022. It took over a month to bring the VeSW servers back online on 9th December, thanks to the hard working teams at the Project and OGCIO (Gov. ICT team). Another few weeks was required to open up secured communication lines between the users and the system, before users were able to connect to the system again on 1st of January 2023!

The outage meant that the VeSW system lost all its data and configuration as far back as June 2022. Two of the main missing configurations were the TRBR module and the AW-CDS Post interface.

Fortunately, thanks to the availability of remaining Project funds and the kind support of the Project Implementing Partner, UNCTAD, a system expert was mobilised to be on the ground on 31st of December to assist NPT to

restore the missing configurations of the system. The TRBR module was successfully restored on 11th January 2023, while the team is now working on bringing the AW-CDS interface back online. Hopefully this should be restored on the first week of February.

All the other configurations that were lost since June 2022 were all successfully restored, thanks to the assistance of the system expert.

## Testimony from a VeSW user

**By Richard Patterson** (National Ozone Unit Officer, Department of Environment):

The introduction of the ASYODS module in the Vanuatu electronic Single Window System has made the submission and processing of ODS applications very seamless, efficient and very timely. There are no more paper involved while every operation is conducted online in a very transparent environment. Having the operations conducted online meant that me and my colleagues can now check, and process submitted applications anywhere, anytime, with just a click of a button, with no pen, stamps nor paper involved. Payments of permits has also been more efficient and streamlined more than ever before, with the use of the module.

The module has also allowed us to restrict the issuance of permits if we have exceeded our allocated national ODS quota. A pro-

cess which we usually conduct manually prior to the introduction of the module.

Another major impact of the module is that having the ODS permits available in the same system as the Customs clearance meant that the control of the importation of refrigerants and appliances is now more effective than ever before. This is because these products cannot be cleared through Customs without a valid ODS permit existing in the system, or if the permit has been written off by a previous importation of the product by the importer.

Such electronic controls of issuing permits, and imports of ODS products at the border have immensely assisted with Vanuatu's obligations to comply with the Montreal Protocol to protect the earth's ozone layer.

Last but not least, the introduction of the ASY-ODS module has meant that the availability of online data 24/7, in real-time, with just a click

of a button, has tremendously assisted with our compliance efforts. The data that we are getting online from the system includes ODS permit data, up to date status of Vanuatu's ODS annual quota, and import data of ODS products at the border.



*Mr. Patterson is currently in Nauru to train the country's Customs Officials and Stakeholders on ODS related matters (and hopefully give them an insight into the Vanuatu ODS module).*

# Government approved support for Phase III of the Vanuatu electronic Single Window (VeSW) Project!

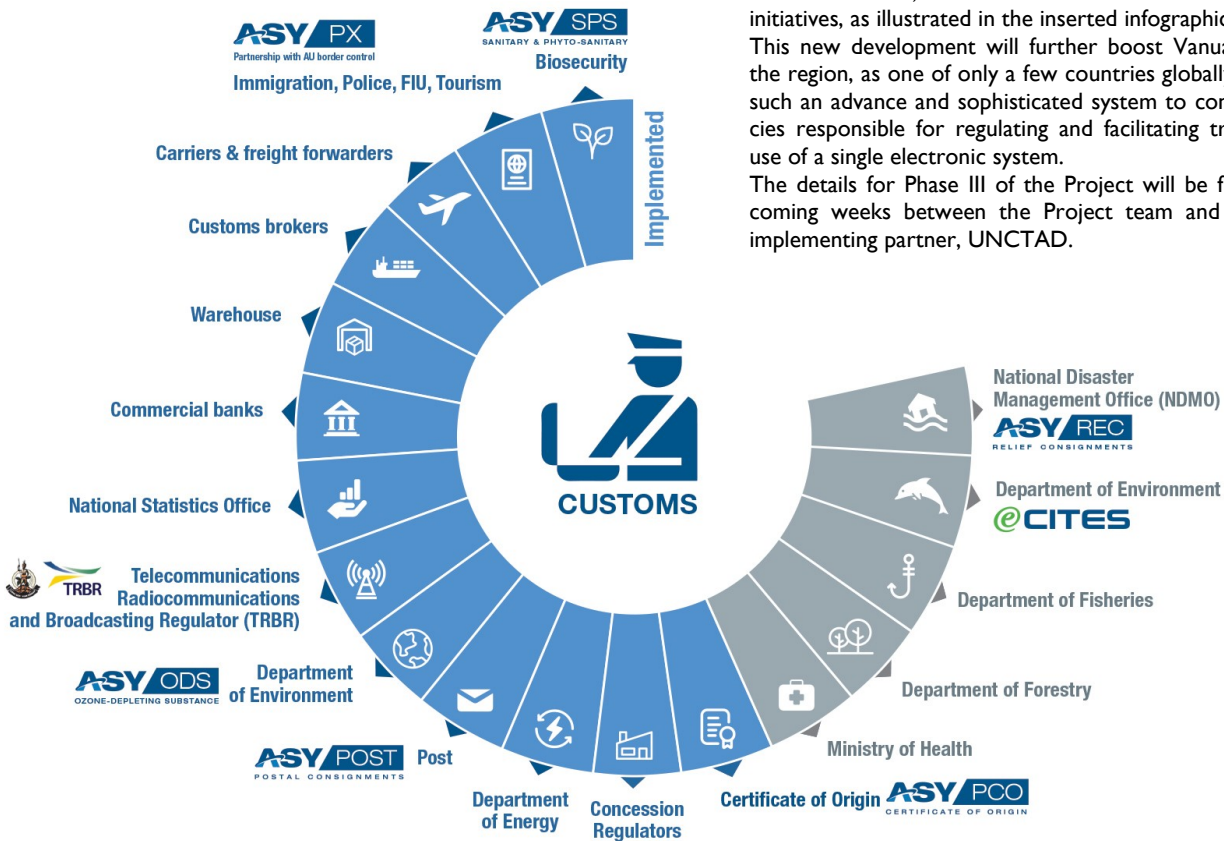
During the launching of the Concession module on 26th January, the Director General to the Minister of Finance and Economic Management, Mr. August Letlet, informed the audience of the Government’s approval to support Phase III of the VeSW Project. In its January sitting, the Ministerial Budget Committee (MBC) approved the proposal to seek funding from the Government to support Phase III of the Project. The budget proposal was submitted to the MBC by the Vanuatu Aid-for-trade Management Unit (VAMU), since the efforts by the Trade Facilitation Steering Committee (TFSC) to secure funding from donor partners were not successful.

The budget for phase III of the Project will be tabled at the National Parliament during its first extra ordinary sitting in February 2023.

The Government’s support for the VeSW Project is not new; in fact the Government funded Phase I of the VeSW Project back in 2016-2018. Such commitment by the Vanuatu Government is an indicator that the Government recognises the benefits of the system to facilitate trade, collect revenue and protect the borders of Vanuatu, its environment and its citizens. Phase III of the Project will focus on implementing the other trade facilitation, revenue collection and border protection initiatives, as illustrated in the inserted infographic.

This new development will further boost Vanuatu’s status in the region, as one of only a few countries globally who is using such an advance and sophisticated system to connect all agencies responsible for regulating and facilitating trade, with the use of a single electronic system.

The details for Phase III of the Project will be finalised in the coming weeks between the Project team and the Project’s implementing partner, UNCTAD.



## Vanuatu Electronic Single Window Project Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu Business

Private Mail Bag 9056  
Port Vila, Vanuatu  
Phone: (+678) 33093  
VOIP: 2363  
Email: [swnpt@vanuatu.gov.vu](mailto:swnpt@vanuatu.gov.vu)  
Website: <https://singlewindow.gov.vu>  
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The overall objective of the Vanuatu Electronic Single Window project is to expand Vanuatu’s GDP through increased exports. The project outcome is to increase Vanuatu’s competitiveness through the reduction of cost and time of trading across its borders. The Project is kindly funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and the Australian Government. The Vanuatu Government is also providing in-kind contribution towards the project, in terms of personnel and ICT support. The main implementing partner in the Project is United Nations for Trade and Development, UNCTAD.

