



# ANNUAL REPORT

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Right To Information Unit

## Right To Information Unit

Department of Strategic Planning, Policy & Aid Coordination  
Ministry of the Prime Minister  
Republic of Vanuatu

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Annual Report 2019

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# ABOUT US

The Government established the Right To Information Unit inside the Ministry of the Prime Minister under the Department of Strategic Planning, Policy and Aid Coordination.



## OBJECTIVE

To guarantee the public's right to access information.



## VISION

To provide open, accountable and participatory government for all the people of Vanuatu.



## MISSION

It is our mission to promote the recognition of the right to information as a universal right in Vanuatu, guide public officials, the media, civil society and the public by providing a clear framework for accessing and disseminating information and provide an opportunity for a structured, comprehensive approach to the development of an improved and sustainable information management system across the public sector.

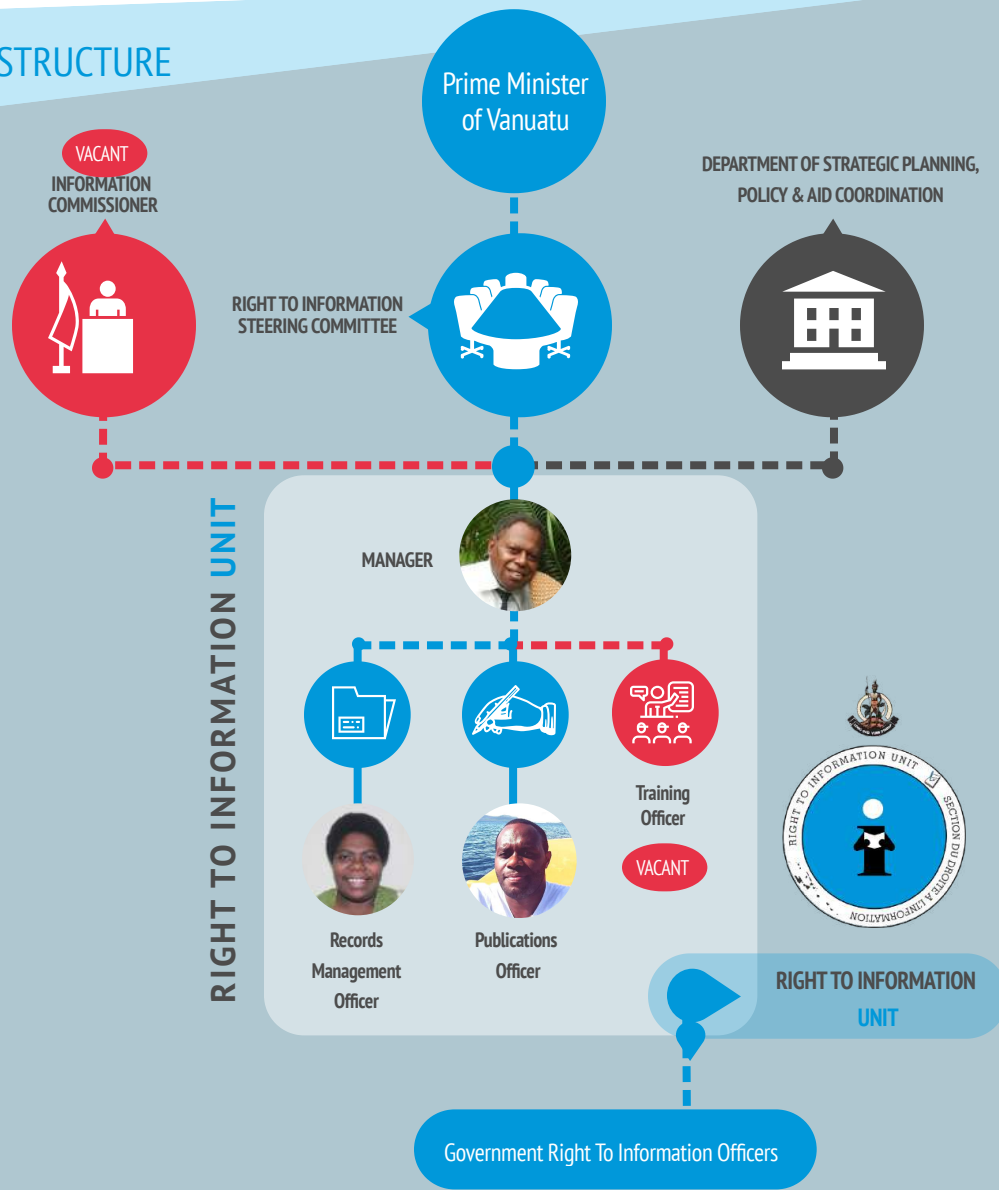
## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Right To Information Unit serves under the Department of Strategic Planning, Policy & Aid Coordination (DSPPAC).

The Unit reports directly to the Director of DSPPAC.

On the contrary, under the Right To Information Act, the Right To Information Steering Committee is legally required to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Right to Information Policy and the Act, among other tasks.

More info: [Role of the RTISC](#)



Government Right To Information Officers

# OVERVIEW OF 2019 ACTIVITIES

**Harold Obed**

Manager of the Right To Information Unit

The Vanuatu Government's accountability and transparency mechanisms are on the move, with an increase in proactive publication activities and a better understanding of the RTI law which gives the right of access to information held by government agencies.

Governments agencies and relevant private entities are taking up the challenge of opening up to the public, out the recognition that enlightenment ideas of a public right to scrutinise how power is being exercised in a democratic governance system. This can be attributed to the amount and quality of time for training and awareness carried out.

The Right To Information Unit has this year focused on the training of Right To Information Officers throughout the country. We were also heavily involved in developing educational resource for officials and the public.

Most of the 2019 RTI activities were made possible through a UNDP-PRAC Capacity Building allocation of VT2, 081,461. Bulk of the fund was used to conduct six trainings involving 94 nominated RTI officers from government and relevant private entities, in Port Vila, Luganville and the outer provinces. The trips to the provinces to conduct trainings also provided opportunities for community engagement with civil society to promote the use and understanding of the Act.

Senior Vanuatu Government officials have been presented this new RTI concept and were told that the success of the RTI implementation depends on a change in the mindset on how government information is perceived. Nevertheless, the difficulty to formalising positions for designated RTI Officers provides empirical evidence that the impact of the law remains scarce.

On the onset, improvements in RTI system only makes a difference if people can freely make use of the RTI law and if they can use the information they obtained to benefit them, including sharing it in public.



# RECORDS MANAGEMENT

**June Naviti**  
Records Management Officer

Several events happened in 2019 that highlighted the importance and the benefits of good record-keeping, we provided basic record-keeping workshops and training's along with the Right To Information Officers Training's in the 6 provinces of Vanuatu and we completed and published the Government Code of Practice on Records and Information Management fulfilling Section 72 of the Right to Information Act No 13 of 2016.

Furthermore, the RTI Unit collaborated with the National Archives to publish a brochure on Records and Information Management that promotes the benefit of keeping proper records and following the launch of the National Policy on Records and Information Management in 2018 this year the RTI Unit with partnership from the National Archives has conducted a Basic File Management Training with the Ministry of the Prime Minister to ensure the Ministry's compliance with this National Policy.

We acknowledge the continued support of the National Archives in collaborating with the RTI Unit in delivering Basic File Management Training in the Government and supporting the RTI Unit's activities.

The effective management of the Government's information allows government to create, find, use and re-use information for as long as it is required, ensuring those records of government business with permanent value are identified and preserved as Government archives for the benefit of the people of Vanuatu both now and in the future. Effective records management also allows efficient access to information in government through the Right to Information Act.



## PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES

The Archive Building for the SANMA Provincial Government renovated to accommodate provincial records.



# PROACTIVE PUBLICATION



The practice of delivering information to the public domain is a requirement under the Right To Information Act which obligates government agencies to do more proactive publication of their activities, news, plans and other categories of information outlined under Section 6 of the RTI Act.

This year we run an assessment of over 30 government-run websites to establish a baseline in order to identify what we can do to strengthen and improve government websites to the standard that is required by the RTI Act.

Our assessment identified that the combined government websites were 78% away from abiding with Section 6 of the RTI Act, which means that moving forward into 2020 we should be encouraging and supporting the administrators of these websites to achieve a higher score in the next website assessment.



**Kevin Henry**  
Publications Officer



● Complete ● Not Complete

We also published the Proactive Public Guide for Government Agencies that can be used to assist them stage of packaging information to publishing it. The document provides a series of requirements, tips, and steps to ensure that all publications are lawful.



## PROACTIVE PUBLICATION

Youth attending a proactive public workshop facilitated by the Right To Information Unit during the National Youth Week on the island of Santo.

# 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

## Activities

### SANTO

Act. 12 **AUGUST I** Right To Information Law public awareness during National Youth Week at Matevulu College.

### MOTALAVA

Act. 11 **JULY I** Right To Information Law Public Awareness.

### VANUALAVA

Act. 10 **JULY I** Right To Information Training for Government Agencies in TORBA Province.

### SANTO

Act. 7 **JUNE I** Right To Information Training for Government Agencies in SANMA Province.

### MALEKULA

Act. 9 **JULY I** Right To Information Training for Government Agencies in MALAMPA Province.

### EFATE

Act. 15 **DECEMBER I** Right To Information Law public awareness at Eton village.

Act. 16 **DECEMBER I** Right To Information Law public awareness at Epau village.

Act. 1 **APRIL I** Right To Information Law awareness for Secretary Generals of Provincial Governments.

### EFATE

Act. 2 **APRIL I** Right To Information Session at Induction Training for Director Generals.

Act. 4 **MAY I** Right To Information Session at Induction Training for Directors.

Act. 5 **MAY I** Right To Information Training for Government Agencies in SHEFA Province.

Act. 8 **JUNE I** Mobile Video Production Training for RTI Unit, Transparency Vanuatu, and an officer the Monitoring & Evaluation Unit.

Act. 3 **APRIL I** Right To Information Law awareness at the Presidential State House.

### TANNA

Act. 6 **MAY I** Right To Information Training for Government Agencies in TAFEA Province.

Act. 17 **DECEMBER I** Right To Information Law Public Awareness.

Act. 14 **SEPTEMBER I** Honourable Prime Minister Charlot Salwai signed the Third and final Right to Information Ministerial Order to enforce the RTI Law on all government agencies, relevant private entities and private entities.

Act. 13 **SEPTEMBER I** Basic Filling Workshop for the Ministry of the Prime Minister.

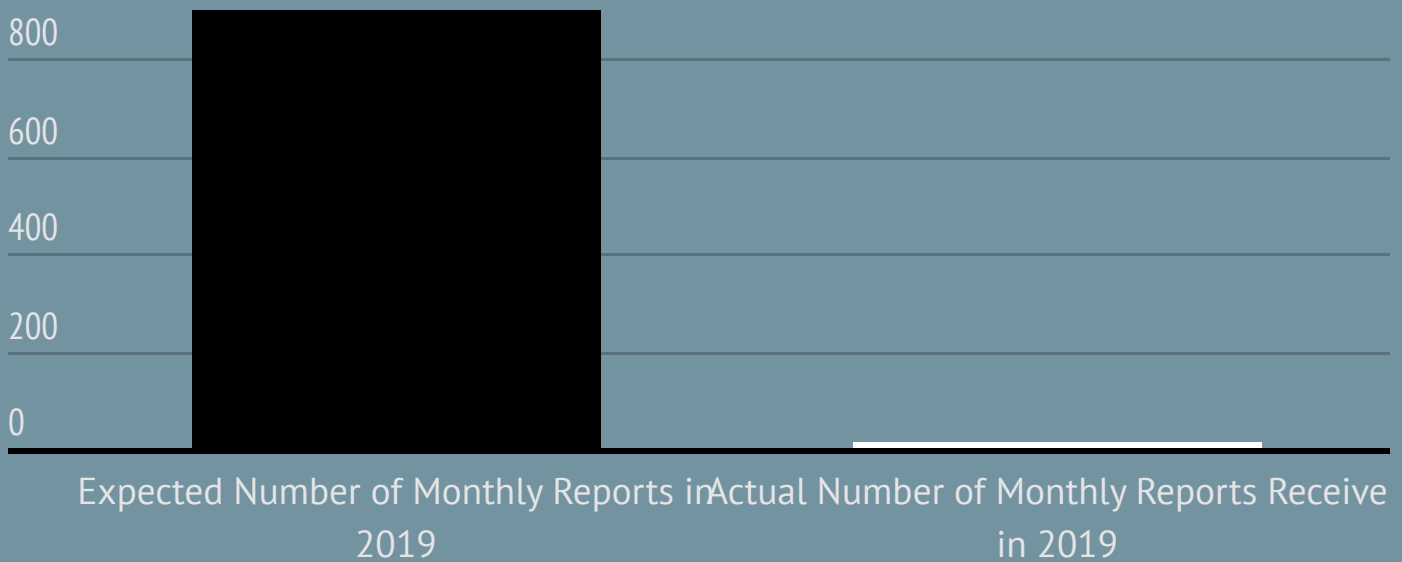
# RTI OFFICERS MONTHLY REPORT

Officers who were nominated by their agencies to attend the Right To Information Workshop were tasked with submitting a monthly report on the frequency and the nature of information requests from the public to their agencies.

In this report we can confirm that out of all 75 government agencies that are under the enforcement orders of the RTI Act only three submitted their RTI Monthly Reports to the Right To Information Unit, however they did not submit their monthly report on every month of 2019.

## Agencies That Submitted RTI Monthly Reports | Monthly Reports Received

Government Agency	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Department of Agriculture &amp; Rural Development</i>					✓	✓	✓					
<i>Department of Forestry</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
<i>Government Remuneration Tribunal</i>									✓			



The graph shows that **900** RTI monthly reports are expected to be received by the Right To Information Unit every year, in 2019 only **9** RTI monthly reports were received thus making a low **0.01%** score out of a hundred percent.



# BUDGET

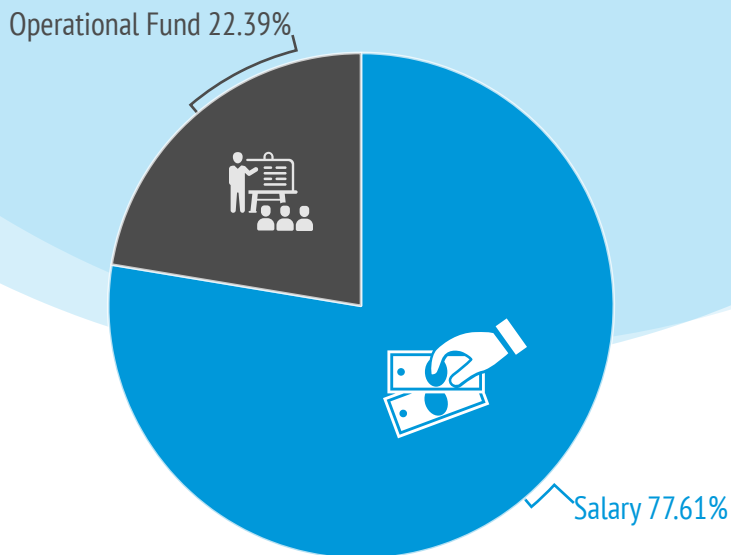
Appropriated by Parliament

In 2019 the Right To Information Unit was allocated a budget of 9,649,585 VT by the Parliament of Vanuatu.



**7,481,761 Vatu**  
78.61% of the RTI Unit 2019 budget was allocated as Salary.

**2,158,824 Vatu**  
22.39% of the RTI Unit 2019 budget was allocated to fund operations or activities.

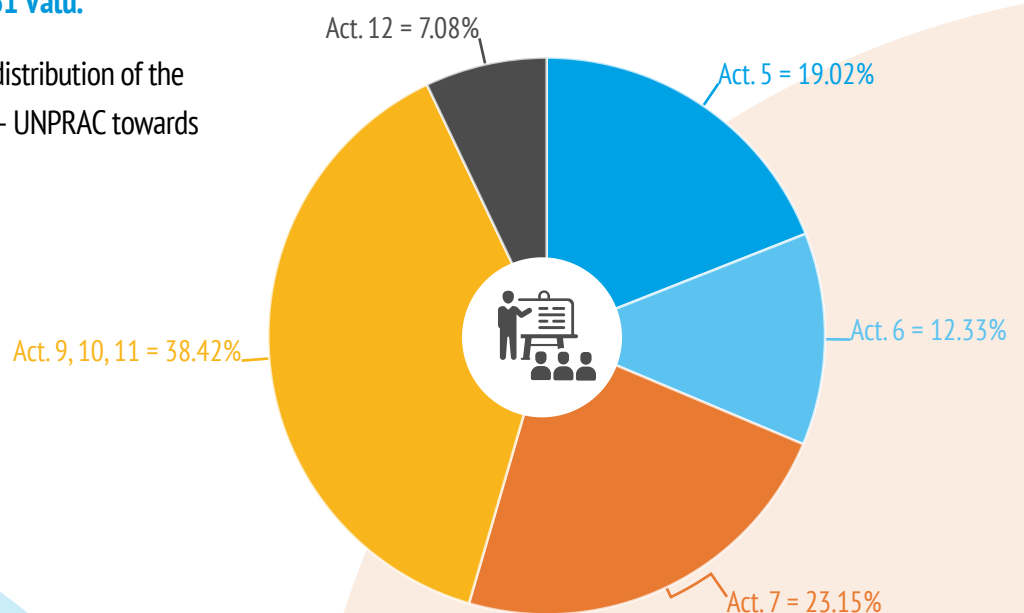


# UNDP - UNPRAC

Operation Fund Support

The UNDP - United National Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Office based in Fiji supported the Right To Information Unit with an operation support fund of **2,081,461 Vatu**.

The chart on the right displays the distribution of the operation fund support from UNDP - UNPRAC towards its allocated activities.



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