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Ecosystem services use by urban communities in Port Vila, Vanuatu

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Abstract:

The services that ecosystems provide are of particular importance to the people of Vanuatu (ni-Vanuatu) who rely on local natural resources for subsistence food and cash income, as well as benefiting from their social and cultural value. A recent Ecosystem and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping study presented findings of analysis into the priority ecosystem issues experienced by ten of the most vulnerable communities in Greater Port Vila, Vanuatu. Information derived from desk-top and GIS analysis, interviews, household surveys and community workshops highlighted the use of ecosystem services by communities and showed potential ecosystem-based adaptation interventions that might build resilience against future environmental change. Surveys targeting the initial objectives of understanding climate change drivers and its influence on ecosystem quality and the services they provide, also stressed a range of contemporary non climate related issues facing these communities: urban development, pollution, access to water, overharvesting and poor management of resources, sand mining, and climate impacts (including ongoing recovery from Tropical Cyclone Pam, March 2015). It is clear that the resilience challenges for these urban and peri-urban communities are already considerable but will be further amplified by future climate change in the years and decades to come.