

Energy storage regulations vanuatu

5 Energy mix in Vanuatu Figure 3: Energy Mix in Vanuatu Source: UNELCO, VUI & URA Regulatory Reports 2016 Figure 3 illustrates the consolidated energy mix in Vanuatu for all electricity service areas. Energy from thermal source continued to lead the share of the energy mix in 2021, similarly to past years.

Vanuatu's National Energy Road Map (NERM) was considered and endorsed by the Council of Ministers in 2013. The NERM is the policy framework for developing the energy sector in Vanuatu. The NERM identified five priorities for the energy sector: access, petroleum supply, affordability, energy security, and climate change.

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The development of a National Energy Policy Framework for Vanuatu is of high priority. Given the high dependence of Vanuatu on imported petroleum fuels and their associated escalating prices, it is imperative for the Government to put in place a national energy policy framework that not only address the adverse impacts of such high prices on the economy and the people but also provides a long term development plan for the energy sector. The ultimate goal is the provision of reliable and affordable energy services to all people in Vanuatu.

Vanuatu comprises of 80 islands with a total land area of 12,190 square kilometres. The islands are scattered over 710,000 square kilometres of ocean. The islands are divided into six provinces each having a provincial administrative centre where development programmes are administered. The capital administrative centre, Port Vila is located in Efate. There is wide disparity in the services available in administrative centres and rural communities. The disparity is also evident between the provincial centres and Port Vila where the services are of higher standard. It is estimated that about 51% of the population live below the poverty line of \$1 per day[1].

The main driver for economic growth in Vanuatu is the agricultural sector with manufacturing and the services

sector playing a complimentary role. While the above sectors have been seen as providing the opportunity for Vanuatu to improve its economic growth, Government under the Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP) and the Prioritised Action Agenda (PAA) programmes has identified five priority policy areas to focus on and these include:

The provision of high quality, reliable and affordable energy services is key to achieving the objectives of the above key policy areas. Vanuatu is highly dependent on imported fossil fuels to support its economy. However, the escalating prices of imported fuel, has placed considerable burden on Government to meet its economic growth goals. This together with uncertain policy environment as a result of political instability exacerbates government's inability to provide the right environment for economic growth.

Currently there is no National Energy Policy Framework that guides and directs energy sector development in Vanuatu. Energy sector planning that is supported by appropriate regulations appears to be focusing only on the supply of electricity in urban centres through UNELCO and the importation of petroleum fuels. Other areas such as the promotion of energy efficiency and conservation measures, promotion of renewable energy sources, the provision of electricity to rural and remote areas, etc only receive token attention and this is usually on an ad hoc basis.

The Energy Unit lacks the capacity to carry out proper planning due to staff shortage. The Unit has lost a number senior staff over the past years through migration and resignation. This trend ought to be addressed through appropriate policy incentives and an organisation structure that promotes a clear and transparent career path to its staff.

As highlighted above, the heavy reliance of the country on imported petroleum fuels is taxing the economy and a major contributing factor to increasing inflation. The associated increase in the price of basic food items and services especially in the rural areas have put a lot of pressure on the Government to put in place measures that will reduce hardships faced by the ordinary people. The small business operators are also trying to make ends meet as they are burdened with debts and high interest rates prompted by increasing fuel prices.

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