

The Republic of Vanuatu

This one-pager is part of a broader project¹ examining how gender considerations are reflected in fisheries governance. A systematic content analysis of fisheries governance documents from 20 countries assessed how gender is addressed across policy language, institutional arrangements, objectives, and strategies. Project findings are intended to strengthen recognition of women's contributions across the sector and support equitable access to marine resources, share of benefits, and participation in decision-making.

Each one-pager summarizes key findings for a focal country, analysing fisheries governance documents as a collective policy bundle to identify system-level patterns. The analysis draws on documents collected up to July 2025, and the findings inform both this one-pager and the governance section of the corresponding country fact sheet.²

Taken individually or collectively across the 20 countries, these one-pagers aim to inform decision-makers, civil society actors, funders, and researchers by providing insights on gender considerations in fisheries governance.

Area of Analysis	Country Findings
Total number of documents analysed	36
Number of documents with women/gender terms only	7
Number of documents with she/her pronouns only	12
Number of documents with both terms and pronouns	0
<i>Qualitative assessments are based only on documents with women/gender terms (7), she/her pronouns (12), or both (0).</i>	
Structural integration <i>Low / Medium / High</i>	High: Gender considerations are embedded across fisheries governance through sector-wide policies, quantified participation targets, institutional practices, and a gender action plan.
Objective of gender integration <i>Ecological / Economic / Social</i>	Economic and Social (primary): Gender equality measures aim to strengthen livelihoods, food security, and equitable participation across fisheries value chains and community-based institutions. Ecological (secondary): Inclusion of women in community-based fisheries management aims to support sustainable resource management and resilient coastal fisheries.
Approach to gender integration <i>Reach / Benefit / Empower / Transform</i>	Reach, Benefit, and Empower: Gender inclusion is operationalized through livelihood and capacity-building initiatives, participation targets, and measures to increase women's involvement in fisheries decision-making at community and sector levels.

Methodology Snapshot

Qualitative Assessment Framework

Qualitative assessments reflect how gender considerations are articulated within the reviewed documents. They are derived from content analysis of texts referencing women, gender, or feminine pronouns. The categories below outline the criteria guiding this framework.

Structural integration (extent of institutional embedding)

- *Low* – Gender considerations appear in governance texts without shaping policy goals or structures.
- *Medium* – Gender considerations inform policy goals or institutional commitments without binding mandates.
- *High* – Gender considerations are embedded in binding mandates, quantified targets, or formal representation.

Objective of gender integration (intended aim)

- *Ecological* – Linked to sustainability or natural resources management effectiveness.
- *Economic* – Linked to livelihoods, income generation, or value chains.
- *Social* – Linked to equity, participation, or women's rights.

Approach to gender integration (mode of operationalization)

- *Reach* – Women are recognized, referenced, or included in consultation or governance processes.
- *Benefit* – Targeted resources improve women's access or material outcomes.
- *Empower* – Women hold decision-making representation or influence within governance processes.
- *Transform* – Institutional or structural reforms address underlying norms, power imbalances, or inequalities.

Governance Document Selection Criteria and Content Search

Document selection criteria were established to identify fisheries-specific governance instruments addressing:

- fisheries management and regulations;
- fisheries production systems and value chains, including pre-harvest, harvest, processing, and trade activities;
- broader development and economic strategies explicitly linked to fisheries-sector activities.

Key gender-related terms – including “gender,” “women,” “girls,” “mothers,” “she,” and “her” – were systematically searched across the selected documents and analysed in context. For full methodology, see the accompanying metadata³ document.

Selected Fisheries Governance Documents for Analysis

Documents and key attributes are compiled in a project database⁴, with hyperlinks to original text where available.

MALFFB Gender Equality Action Plan 2023-2026.

Fisheries (Amendment) Act No. 38 of 2019.

Vanuatu National Roadmap for Coastal Fisheries 2019-2030.

Vanuatu National Sea Cucumber Fishery Management Plan 2019-2024.

Convention on the Conservation and the Management of High Sea Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (Ratification) Act No. 18 of 2016.

Vanuatu National Deep-Bottom Fish Fishery Management Plan 2016.

Vanuatu National Fisheries Sector Policy 2016-2031.

Vanuatu International Fishing Fleet Management Policy.

Vanuatu National Plan of Action To Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing 2015.

Agreement on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (Ratification) Act No. 23 of 2013.

Fisheries Act (No. 10 of 2014).

Fisheries Regulations (Amendment) Order 2014 (S.I. No. 11 of 2014).

Revised Tuna Fishery Management Plan: National Policy for the Management of Vanuatu Tuna Fisheries.

Vanuatu National Plan of Action on Sharks 2015 – 2018.

Fisheries Regulations (Amendment) Order 2013 (S.I. No. 26 of 2013).

Fisheries Regulations (Amendment) Order 2013 (S.I. No. 141 of 2013).

Conservation and Measurement Measure for Deep-Bottom Fish Fishery Order 2012 (No. 87 of 2012).

Fisheries Regulations (Amendment) Order 2012 (S.I. No. 88 of 2012).

Fisheries Regulations (Amendment) Order 2012 (S.I. No. 181 of 2012).

Fisheries Regulations (Amendment) Order 2012 (S.I. No. 182 of 2012).

Vanuatu National Coconut Crab Fishery Management Plan.

Foreign Fishing License Fees and Locally-Based Foreign Fishing Vessel License Fees Order 2011 (S.I. No. 220 of 2011).

Fisheries (Registration of Foreign Fishing Vessels) Order.

Fisheries Regulations Order, 2009.

Vanuatu National Marine Aquarium Trade Management Plan 2008.

Fisheries Act (Cap. 315).

General Conditions for Foreign Fishing Vessels and Locally Based Foreign Fishing Vessels (2) (Cap. 315).

General Conditions for Foreign Fishing Vessels and Locally Based Foreign Fishing Vessels (1) (Cap. 315).

Locally based Foreign Fishing Licence (Prescribed Forms) (Cap. 315).

Fisheries (Coconut Crabs) Regulations (Cap. 315).

Fisheries (Amendment) Act (No. 2 of 1989).

Fisheries (Consequential Repeals) Act No. 22 of 1983.

Fisheries (Registration of Foreign Fishing Vessels) Order (Cap. 315).

Fisheries Regulations (Cap. 315).

Fisheries Act 1982.

Night Under-water Fishing (Prohibition) Joint Regulation (No. 7 of 1963).

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the organisations listed above.



¹ Project website – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/>

² Country fact sheet – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/#the-republic-of-vanuatu>

³ Metadata document – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/#supplementary-material-for-country-fact-sheets>

⁴ Zenodo database – Cutting, A., Wabnitz, C.C.C., Woodhead, A.J., & Norström, A. (2025). Database of Fisheries Governance Documents for Gender Equity Analysis [Data set]. Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15098509>