



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

A communications environment that enriches the social, cultural, customs and commercial fabric of Vanuatu.



The Telecommunications Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulation Act No. 30 of 2009 as amended, (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") mandates the Regulator to provide the Minister responsible for Telecommunications with a summary of regulatory activities performed throughout the year.

11 Annual report

- (1) The Regulator must provide to the Minister an annual report including, but not limited to:
 - (a) a summary of the activities of the Regulator, and
 - (b) such financial statements and auditor's reports as are required by this Act or other law; and
 - (c) a list of all entries and deletions to the Register in the preceding year; and
 - (d) a summary of material litigation involving the Regulator; and
 - (e) a list of consultants and advisors retained by the Regulator and a description of the matters in relation to which they have consulted or advised.
- (2) A contravention of subsection (1) is deemed to be a serious breach of duty by the Regulator.
- (3) The annual report provided to the Minister pursuant to subsection (1) must be made available to the public on the website.

This 2024 Annual Report is provided to fulfill the obligations in the Act, and to provide transparency to Vanuatu citizens. The report also provides information to TRBR's key stakeholders and other interested individuals on activities that were undertaken by the institution, including decisions made throughout the year 2024.

The Honorable Prime Minister,
Mr. Jotham Napat (MP)
Minister Responsible for Telecommunications & Broadcasting,
PMB 9057, Port Vila

Dear Honorable Prime Minister,

Pursuant to Section 11 of the amended Act, it states that:

- (1) The Regulator must provide to the Minister an annual report including, but not limited to:

 - (a) a summary of the activities of the Regulator, and
 - (b) such financial statements and auditor's reports as are required by this Act or other law; and
 - (c) a list of all entries and deletions to the Register in the preceding year; and
 - (d) a summary of material litigation involving the Regulator; and
 - (e) a list of consultants and advisors retained by the Regulator and a description of the matters in relation to which they have consulted or advised.

As such, it is both a privilege and an honor to present to you, the Honorable Prime Minister and Minister responsible for the Telecommunications, Radiocommunications, and Broadcasting, the Annual Report for the year 2024 from the Office of the Telecommunications, Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR).

This report serves the purpose of fulfilling TRBR's mandate under section 11 of the Act, and presents a comprehensive account of the Regulator's work, including audited financial statements, a summary of the auditor's report, an updated register of active and revoked licenses, an overview of legal proceedings involving TRBR, and a record of consultants and advisors engaged during the year 2024.

I also wish to inform you that in 2024, TRBR has:

- Granted a 15-year Telecommunications License to Starlink for the provision of satellite services in Vanuatu;
- Granted a 15-year Internet Service Provider License to Pacific Networks, a locally owned company;
- Granted a 15-year Telecommunications License to Prima Limited to provide submarine cable capacity services within Vanuatu and for international connectivity; and
- Renewed Wantok's Telecommunications License for another 15 years.

Further, the telecommunications data collected in 2024 included in its sector report which can be viewed at <https://www.trbr.vu/public-register/reports/telecommunications-sector-report/2025>, shows some important developments, and some of the key highlights are listed below:

- Gross market revenue increased by 7%
- Mobile subscription increased by 7%
- Mobile penetration increases to 96.13%
- Mobile data revenue increased by 12%
- Mobile data traffic (MB) declined by 11%

These 2024 trends indicate continued growth and resilience in Vanuatu's telecommunications and ICT sector. The increase in market revenue, mobile subscriptions, and data-related income reflects the population's growing reliance on digital services and connectivity. The decline in mobile data traffic was largely due to the temporary disruptions caused by the 7.3 magnitude earthquake in December 2024, which affected network availability and usage patterns. These insights will help guide the Telecommunications, Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR) and its stakeholders in strengthening the sector's contribution to national development goals and building greater resilience against future challenges.

Overall, the telecom sector in Vanuatu has shown remarkable progress over recent years, playing a critical role in connecting communities across the islands and fostering economic growth. Despite other challenges such as geographic dispersion and limited infrastructure, the sector has managed to expand mobile coverage and internet accessibility, contributing to social inclusion and enabling access to essential services such as financial services, health services, educational services and so on. This progress underscores the sector's importance as a backbone for communication and economic development in Vanuatu.

To drive future progress, investment in more resilient infrastructure, including submarine cable, terrestrial optical fibre networks, and satellite technologies-is crucial. Promoting stronger competition among service providers could stimulate innovation, improve quality of service, and lower costs for consumers. At the same time, regulatory frameworks must adapt to balance industry growth with consumer protection, ensuring fair access and supporting sustainable development.

Furthermore, the government and private sector partnership remains essential in addressing these challenges and capitalizing on emerging opportunities. Such collaboration can accelerate digital transformation initiatives, expand digital literacy initiatives, and support inclusive policies that drive services to rural and underserved communities. Strengthening this cooperation will be a key to unlocking the full socio-economic benefits of telecommunications for all citizens, residence and visitors.

Finally, TRBR extends its sincere appreciation to the Government for its continued efforts and support towards a robust regulatory regime in Vanuatu. It's ongoing support is vital to enable TRBR to effectively carry out its mandate as outlined in the Act, as amended.

I firmly believe that TRBR stands as a capable and credible institution, with its effectiveness demonstrated through what it has achieved over the years, and further, it is essential for the Regulator to remain independent, free from external influence, so that it can make sound, impartial decisions that advance the telecommunications and broadcasting sector while ensuring that consumers benefit from fair competition and quality services.

Looking ahead, TRBR reaffirms its commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities and to effectively regulate the telecommunications, radiocommunications, and broadcasting markets, and continue to support the government policies, and keep the Government updated on market developments and stand ready to provide support in advancing national ICT goals.

Yours faithfully,



Jesse Benjamin
Telecommunications, Radiocommunications & Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR)

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Message from The Regulator



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The telecom sector has shown remarkable progress over recent years, playing a critical role in connecting communities across the islands and fostering economic growth.

Jesse Benjamin

Regulator

Section 11(1) of the Telecommunications Radio-communications and Broadcasting Regulations Act No. 30 of 2009, as amended (referred to hereinafter as “the Act”) states that:

Section 11(3) also mandates the Regulator to make the annual report publicly accessible through the TRBR website. Since its establishment in 2008, formally known as TRR, TRBR has consistently met this important statutory obligation.

This report presents the regulatory activities and key achievements of TRBR for the 2024 financial year as in the TRBR 2024 external and internal work plan. It provides a comprehensive account of the Regulator’s work, including audited financial statements, a summary of the auditor’s report, an updated register of active and revoked licenses, an overview of legal proceedings involving TRBR, and a record of consultants and advisors engaged during the year. These reflects TRBR’s continued commitment to delivering on its mandate in full compliance with the statutory functions and responsibilities set out under Section 7(12) of the Act.

- (1) The Regulator must provide to the Minister an annual report including, but not limited to:
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 - (c) a list of all entries and deletions to the Register in the preceding year; and
 - (d) a summary of material litigation involving the Regulator; and
 - (e) a list of consultants and advisors retained by the Regulator and a description of the matters in relation to which they have consulted or advised.
- (2) A contravention of subsection (1) is deemed to be serious breach of duty by the Regulator.
- (3) The annual report provided to the Minister pursuant to subsection (1) must be made available to the public on the website.

Each year, Vanuatu faces natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, which are growing in intensity as a result of climate change. In 2024, Port Vila was struck by a devastating 7.3 magnitude earthquake that severely impacted the downtown area, forcing many businesses to temporarily relocate while reconstruction efforts are ongoing. Adding to these challenges, Air Vanuatu entered liquidation in the same year, limiting flight services to the outer islands and creating additional setbacks for the telecommunications and broadcasting sector development.

Despite these difficult circumstances, I am pleased to report that TRBR successfully delivered key obligation as set out in the Act:

- Published the 2024 Annual report in line with section 11 of the Act; and
- Completed TRBR's financial audit and provided a copy of the auditor's report and financial statements to the Minister responsible for Telecommunications and Broadcasting, as per section 57 of the Act.

Furthermore, TRBR has recorded significant progress on other key objectives outlined in the *TRBR 2024 and Onwards Work Plan*, including:

- Advancing the implementation of the Universal Access Policy in partnership with mobile service providers;
- Delivered a series of successful consumer awareness programs despite logistical challenges;
- Awarded the 2024 CTG recipients and completing the installation of their respective facilities;
- Published the 2024 Sector Report; and
- Carried out coverage and quality of service audits across selected islands of Vanuatu.

In 2024, TRBR also undertook key activities relating to the granting, renewal, and revocation of licenses, including:

- Granting a 15-year Telecommunications License to Starlink for the provision of satellite services; in Vanuatu;

- Granting a 15-year Internet Service Provider License to Pacific Networks, a locally owned company;
- Granting a 15-year Telecommunications License to Prima Limited to provide submarine cable capacity services within Vanuatu and for international connectivity; and
- Renewing Wantok's Telecommunications License for another 15 years.

Broadcasting Sector

In the broadcasting sector, TRBR recognizes the valuable collaboration of stakeholders—including the Government, operators, and the civil society—who has contributed to several key achievements in 2024. These includes:

- The development and launching of the technical standards and the Quality of Service Standard for Broadcasting in Vanuatu;
- The launching of the Broadcast Media Advertising Guideline; and
- The launching of the Anti-Siphoning Rules for Broadcasting.

More details on these milestones, along with other highlights, achievements, challenges, and activities, are presented in this Annual Report.

Telecommunication Sector

The telecom sector has shown remarkable progress over recent years, playing a critical role in connecting communities across the islands and fostering economic growth. Despite challenges such as geographic dispersion and limited infrastructure, the sector has managed to expand mobile coverage and internet accessibility, contributing to social inclusion and enabling access to essential services such as financial services, health services, educational services and so on.

Data related to the telecom sector collected in 2024 and analyzed by TRBR

revealed that the sector has experienced significant growth. The growing use of mobile services and the widespread adoption of smartphones have also led to an increase in access to data services.

Some key positive trends in 2024 includes:

- Gross market revenue increased by 7%;
- Mobile subscription increased by 7%;
- Mobile penetration increased to 96.13%;
- Mobile data revenue increased by 12%;
- International bandwidth acquired increased by 20%;
- Fixed internet revenue increased by 3%; and
- SMS revenue increased by 17%.

However, the sector has also experienced some setbacks includes;

- Fixed telephony subscription declined by 4%;
- Fixed telephony revenue has drop by 18%;
- Fixed internet subscription declined by 4%;
- SMS volume decreased by 6%;
- International outbound call revenue dropped by 7%; and
- International inbound roaming revenue declined by 50%.

On both regional and international space, TRBR continues to strengthen its collaborations with donor partners and esteemed organizations such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT), Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), APTLD, ICANN and other affiliates.

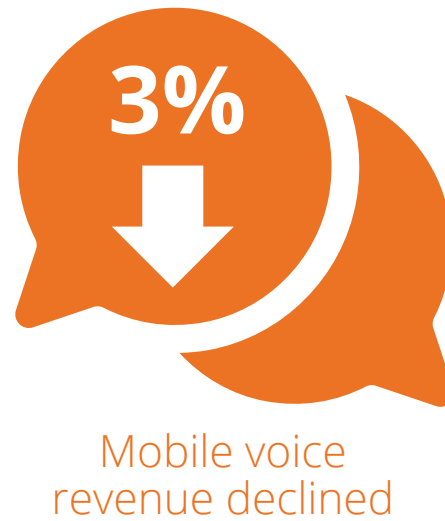
TRBR remains unwavering in its commitment to fulfilling its mandated responsibilities by making independent, fair, and well-informed decisions. This dedication is critical for fostering a sustainable and competitive market environment while empowering consumers with timely and reliable information to make informed choices. Furthermore, TRBR will continue to carry out its mandate in full compliance with the TRBR Act, as amended.

Finally, I am firmly convinced that regulatory institutions like TRBR must operate with complete independence. This independence is critical due to the unique and demanding nature of its responsibilities as mandated by the Act. Protecting TRBR from external political influence in its decision-making processes is also vital to ensuring its continued success. Such autonomy fosters trust and promotes healthy competition in Vanuatu's markets, creating a sustainable, robust environment that encourages investment and economic growth.

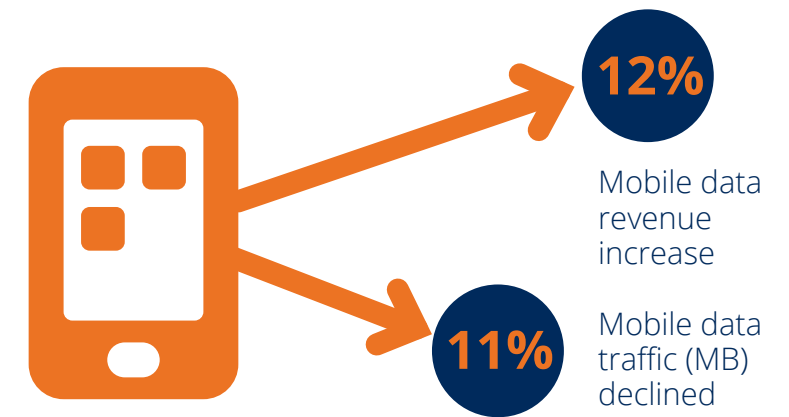
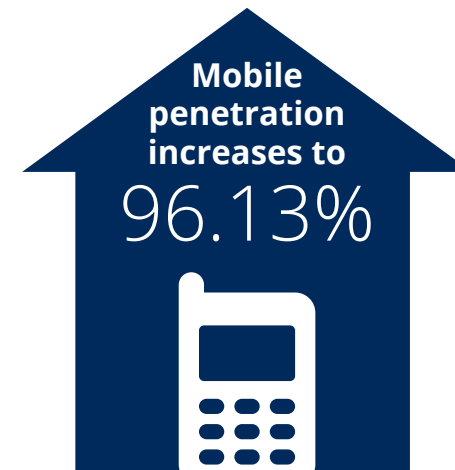
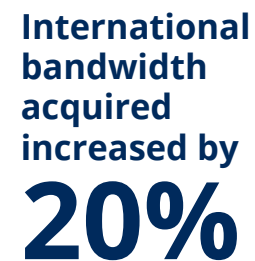
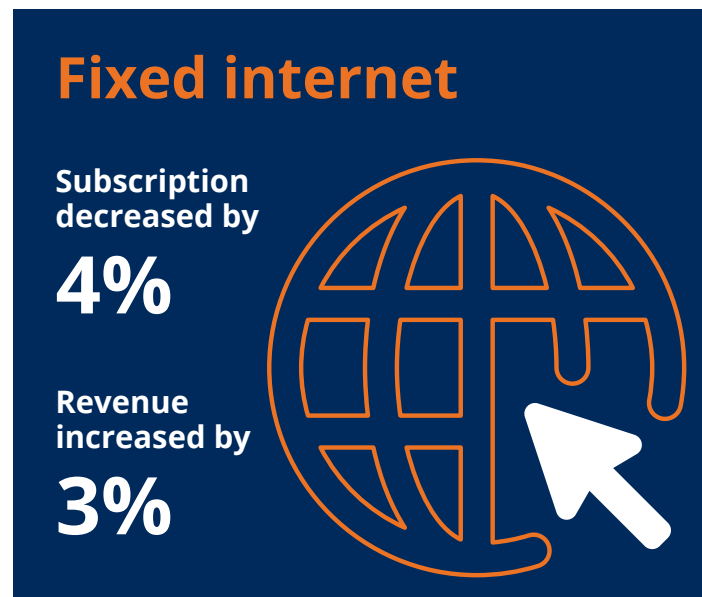
1 Regulatory Highlights

1.1 Telecommunications Sector Report

Key observation trends that TRBR has been able to capture for the year ending in 2024.



Fixed telephony



1.2 ICT Day Celebrations

The 2024 Vanuatu National ICT Day celebration took place on May 16-17, 2024, at the National Convention Centre in Port Vila, with the theme "Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development". The two-day event featured discussions, interactive sessions, and networking to explore how digital technology can support Vanuatu's sustainable development goals. This annual event is part of Vanuatu's participation in the global initiative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to observe International Telecommunication Union Days.



1.3 Starlink License

The Telecommunications, Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR) has granted a Telecommunication License to Starlink to legally operate in Vanuatu. This significant milestone was officially announced by the Hon. Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimasmass, alongside representatives from the department of Communications and Digital transformation, formally known as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and the TRBR team. The license approval followed a lengthy negotiation process that began in 2021. Extensive discussions with the licensee, as well as thorough consultations with the industry and the government entities, ensured that all legal processes and requirements under Vanuatu's laws were fully met. This development marked a major step forward in enhancing connectivity in the rural areas and is expected to contribute significantly to Vanuatu's economic growth.



1.4 PACNET License

Pacific Network, owned by a ni-Vanuatu, has been officially granted a Telecom License on August 23, 2024. The Telecommunications, Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR) proudly presented the license during a brief handing-over ceremony held at the TRBR office. Mr. Peter Namak, the proud owner of Pacific Network, is now authorized to provide ICT and Internet services to the people of Vanuatu. With this license, Pacific Network joins other ICT and Internet companies in offering vital services that will enhance connectivity and access to digital resources throughout the country. This significant milestone reflects Vanuatu's ongoing commitment to digital development and increasing access to communication technology for all its citizens. The TRBR office was delighted to support the growth of the ICT sector in Vanuatu and looks forward to the positive impact that Pacific Network will bring to the nation's telecommunications landscape.



1.5 Prima License

On the 22nd of March 2024 the Regulator has granted a 15 years wholesale telecommunications license to Prima Limited to build and operate the TAMTAM submarine cable network from New Caledonia to Vanuatu, for the provision of submarine cable capacity services. The TAMTAM Cable will be the second international cable for Vanuatu and will provide backup capacity for international connections. The Cable will also be equipped with Smart functionality, the first of its kind in the Pacific Region, that will provide real time data to the Meteorology Department for monitoring of seismic activities and climate related activities including earthquakes and Tsunami within the Vanuatu Exclusive Economic zone and especially near the New Hebrides Trench. This license is for a period of 15 years and was officially handed by the Regulator of TRBR, Mr. Brian Winji Molitaviti to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Prima limited, Mr. Simon Fletcher during a short ceremony held at the TRBR office on the 22nd of March 2024.



1.6 Grant Awardees for 2024 CTG

The South River School on the South of Erromango, the Punamalah Community on the North of Erromango and the Makira School on Markira Island were the selected recipients for the TRBR 2024 Community Telecommunications Grant (CTG). These three (3) CTG recipients were awarded the project of Internet and ICT facility, in which the cost of each project totaled up to over a million vatu each. The South River School and the Punamalah Community are located in the areas with no mobile coverage. The Satellite technology will

provide internet via a Wifi system in the three schools and their surrounding communities. The “Very Small Aperture Terminal” or VSAT is considered the best broadband technology for the last mile areas (areas where population is less than 200). The three Schools and their surrounding communities will also benefit from a solar system with a capacity of 1313Wh (where they can also charge their phones and laptops), a multifunction printer and laptops. The installation of the facility equipment at the three sites will commence in July 2024.



Hellen Naupa (left) – a women leader in the Punamalah Community, Johnnah Nahwo (center) – Project Coordinator for South River School and Leimala John (right) – the Headmistress of Makira School, receiving their Project award letter from the CTG Project Coordinator

1.7 Starlink equipment - imported as at Dec 2024

Starlink Vanuatu, was granted a Telecom License to legally Operate in Vanuatu in October 2024. As with any ICT devices imported into the Country, a TRBR type approval permit is required. In 2024, Starlink terminal equipment models imported into the country included the Latest Gen 3 Starlink kit, Standard Starlink kit, Mini Starlink, Gen 2 2 Starlink and flat high kit, which are for personal usage and the Starlink Enterprise which is for business use. TRBR records obtained from the Single Window Portal, <https://singlewindow.gov.vu/reports>, shows that from the Month of October 2024 to December 31st 2024, a total of 645 Starlink kits have been imported into the country for both personal and business use. Table below provides a summary of the number of the different Starlink models that are being imported into the Country in 2024.

Table 1: Number of Starlink Models imported from October 2024 to December 2024.

Starlink Model	Number Imported
Gen 3 Starlink Kit	573
Gen 2 Starlink Kit (UTA 232/222)	66
Starlink Mini	4
Flat High Starlink	1
Enterprise Kit	1
Total	645



1.8 TRBR Retreat

The TRBR team concluded 2024 with a vibrant and productive retreat at Coco Beach in Pango. The gathering provided an opportunity to reflect on the year’s achievements, celebrate key milestones, and set a clear strategic direction for 2025 and beyond.

A key outcome of the retreat was the development of the 2025 Work Plan, along with the formulation of an internal plan. The event also created space for knowledge-sharing, skill-building, and meaningful discussions that allowed staff to better understand each other’s roles and responsibilities. This exchange not only strengthened bonds among colleagues but also enhanced collaboration across departments.

In addition to the strategic sessions, the retreat fostered a relaxed and supportive environment where team connections could be deepened. The event concluded on a high note with a festive Christmas lunch, during which the team celebrated their collective efforts with laughter, gratitude, and a renewed sense of purpose before heading into the holiday season.



1.9 .vu domain Registration update

Godaddy, the Registry of .vu cctlid have recorded a total of 2201 domain name in its registry. 74% of which are first level domain. 43% of the total domain are registered by the international registrars followed by Vodafone at 41% and the rest by other local registrars. Further, in 2024, a total of 18 new domain names were added to the registry.

Table 2: New registered domain

TLD Extension	Dec 24	Dec 23	YoY % Difference	YTD Units
.vu	13	14	-7%	172
.com.vu	1	0		24
.net.vu	0	0		0
.org.vu	1	0		5
.edu.vu	0	0		6
.gov.vu	3	0		21

Total Domain of 2201, Under Management by 2024

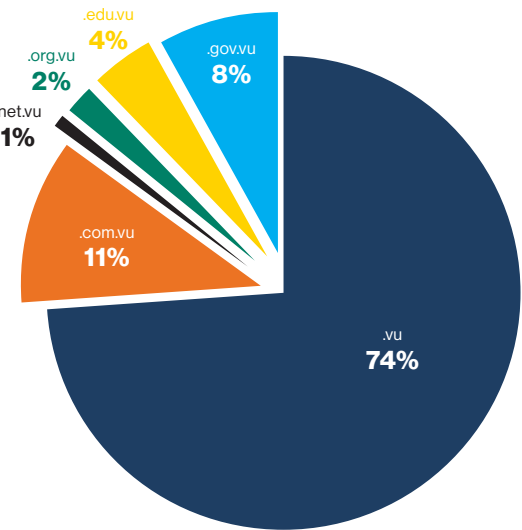


Figure 1: Total Domain registered in 2024

Registration by Registrars

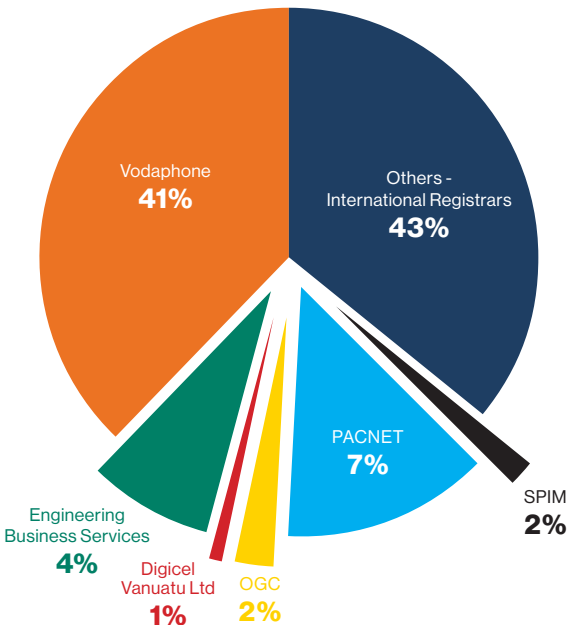


Figure 2: Domain Registered by Registrars

1.10 Consumer Rights Day 2024

In 2024, Vanuatu celebrated World Consumer Rights Day under the theme “Fair and Responsible AI for Consumers.” The event, held in Port Vila at Feiawa Park, was organised by the Price Monitoring & Consumer Affairs, together with other key stakeholder institutions including TRBR (the Telecommunications, Radiocommunications & Broadcasting Regulator), the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (RBV), and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) now known as the Department of Communications and Digital Transformation (DCDT).

The choice of the theme highlighted the growing relevance and concern around artificial intelligence: how AI is increasingly being used by businesses globally,

including Vanuatu, and how consumer rights must be safeguarded as these technologies become more common.

Several schools including Lycée Louis Antoine de Bougainville, Malapoa College, and the National University of Vanuatu were involved, with student debates or other participatory activities. This helped extend awareness to younger audiences.

TRBR was one of the key stakeholders in the discussions around consumer protection in telecommunications, broadcasting, and radiocommunications sectors, and also joined panels to explore how AI regulation should align with consumer rights: issues like fairness, transparency, privacy, safety, and redress.

1.11 Regulatory Internet Forum

In November 2024, the TTRBR successfully hosted the Internet Regulatory Forum at the Melanesian Hotel in Port Vila. The event brought together government representatives, industry stakeholders, consumer groups, and international partners to discuss pressing issues surrounding internet regulation, governance, and development in Vanuatu.

The forum provided an important platform for dialogue on the challenges and opportunities arising from the rapid growth of internet usage across the country. Key discussions focused on strengthening the regulatory environment to ensure affordable, reliable, and secure internet services for all communities, including those in remote islands.

A major highlight of the forum was the emphasis on digital transformation and the importance of building legal and policy frameworks to guide this process. Another highlight of the forum was the signing of an MOA between VFSC and TRBR to work together on ensuring businesses in Vanuatu register a .vu domain name to advance digital transformation. Another highlight was

the launching of the Broadcasting anti-siphoning rules for Vanuatu, the Technical and Quality of Service Standard for Broadcasting in Vanuatu, and the EMF guideline for Vanuatu.

The outcomes of the event will contribute to shaping future policies and initiatives that promote connectivity, empower consumers, and support Vanuatu’s broader digital transformation journey.



2 About TRBR

2.1 TRBR's Roles and Functions

At the beginning of each year, TRBR develops in consultation with stakeholders, and publishes its annual work plan on the TRBR Website. The 2024 work plan was also developed in line with the TRBR's six-year 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan and also published on the TRBR website. For a detailed overview of TRBR's anticipated deliverables in 2024, please visit the TRBR website: https://www.trbr.vu/attachments/article/919/trbr_2024_and_onwards_external_work_plan.pdf.

The core functions of the TRBR are mandated by the Act and the other laws of Vanuatu. Further, It is crucial that the TRBR maintains its independence and impartiality, as stipulated in Section 7(12)(a) to (d) of the Act. The Regulator's decisions and actions must remain uninfluenced by political pressures, ensuring ongoing credibility, integrity, and positive stakeholder relationships. This commitment has earned the TRBR a strong reputation within Vanuatu, and among its peers as one of the leading Regulator in the Pacific Region. TRBR's goal in this regard, is to sustain this recognition and continue improving its performance.

With Vanuatu experiencing natural disasters annually, a key focus for 2024 was to maintain its role while supporting operators and the government during the cyclone season. This effort involved advancing the Universal Access Policy (UAP) rollout to reach unserved and underserved areas, with the goal of 98% of Vanuatu's population to be served with mobile broadband and narrowband services.

In 2024, Vanuatu had gone through a few disasters, including the shutdown of the national airline making it difficult, to travel within the country, and further a devastating earthquake with a magnitude of about 7.3 on the Richter Scale, that caused significant damage to the Port Vila City central business area. The closing of the business center, led to TRBR relocating its office temporarily until advised to relocate back to the office. Despite these challenges, TRBR keeps its focus on its 2024 workplan, its vision and mission to this country, Vanuatu.

2.2 Vision, Mission and Values

The Vision, Mission, and Values of the TRBR are set out below. They articulate the view TRBR holds and aspires to maintain and promote in its daily operations.



Vision

A communications environment that enriches the social, cultural, customs, and commercial fabric of Vanuatu.



Mission

To foster a conducive environment for the growth of telecommunications, broadcasting, and ICT services, and at the same time ensure that consumer interests are protected.



Values

Inspiring
Our imagination, clarity of thought and clear leadership stimulates innovative thinking that meets the needs of tomorrow.

Commitment
Our drive and determination to achieve excellence, our discipline in the execution of our duties, our focus on the development of our team, and our sense of responsibility instill a passion for the development of Vanuatu.

Respect
Our respect for each other is ensured by listening, collaborating, and having consideration for each other, the public and licensees we work for, the rule of law, confidentiality, intellectual property, customs, the environment, and future generations.

Balanced
Our evidence-based approach to decision-making, and our adaptability to ensure that we remain proportionate, consistent, fair, and just.

Collaboration
A collaborative approach that enriches our partnership with government and stakeholders to drive the passion for communication across all sectors.

The TRBR team norms and pledges for this year 2024 remains the same as previous years and are as follows:



TRBR Team Norms:

1. Be proactive.

2. Respect each other.

3. Co-operate and help each other.

4. Be resilient and adapt to new challenges.

5. Believe in yourself.
6. Be an engaged team member.

7. Be responsive (to all stakeholders and staff); and

8. Do not be afraid to be wrong – give it a go!



TRBR Team Pledges:

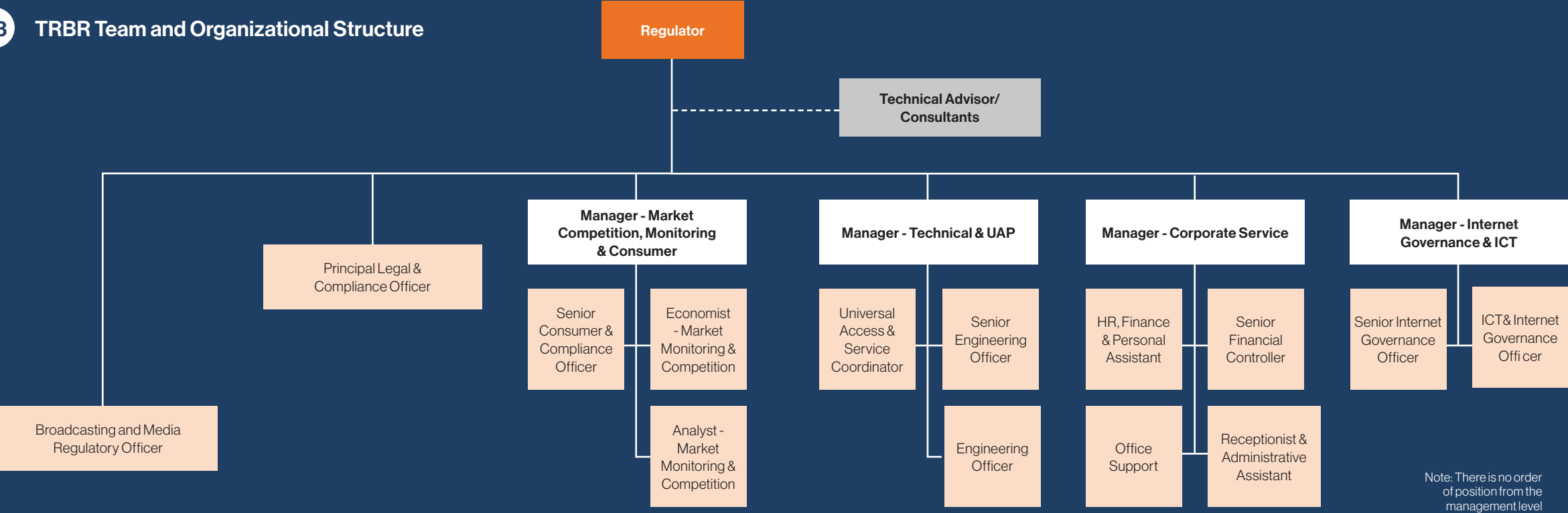
1. Be considerate and trust each other.

2. Be a committed and active team player.

3. Support our leaders and each other in achieving outcomes.
4. Be loyal and respectful; and

5. Have open, honest dialogues.

2.3 TRBR Team and Organizational Structure



2.4 TRBR’s 2024 and Onwards Work Plan and Priority Deliverables

During the 2-day TRBR Staff Annual Workshop held on 10th and 11th January 2024 at the TRBR Conference room, the 2024 Work Plan was finalized. In developing this plan, TRBR took into account a range of factors, including the following:

- a) Legislative frameworks administered by TRBR.

b) The Broadcasting and Media Regulatory functions that have been transferred to TRBR from 2018-2021, and the relevant regulatory framework;

c) The continued positive progress made in the Sector since the creation of the Office of the TRR (now TRBR) in 2008;

d) Challenges which are of concern to the industry and the stakeholders through a series of discussions and meetings throughout the previous year(s);

e) The global Telecommunications/ICT sector market trends and common issues and challenges impacting the industry;

f) The National Universal Access Policy which was extended to January 1st, 2024; through a Council of Minister’s (COM) Decision.

g) Technology convergence and Innovation;

h) The People’s Plan – Vanuatu 2030, and use of telecommunications/ICT services or devices to enable the successful implementation of the Government’s National Sustainable Development Goals;
- i) The External and internal pressures, including technological advancements, government requirements and mandates, donor agency objectives, the national economy, demographic trends, cross-sectoral policies, the telecommunications/ICT industry, consumers of ICT services and products, as well as available financial and human resources;

j) The Government’s National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy, its Universal Access Policy (UAP), and its Cybersecurity Policy;

k) TRBR’s newly developed 2022 - 2026 five-year Strategic Plan;

l) Ongoing projects in the TRBR’s 2023 external and internal workplan.

m) TRBR’s Vision, Mission, and Values;

n) Whether the existing Regulatory instruments are still fit for purpose, and/or whether new Regulatory instruments are required;
- The 2024 yearly work plan can be accessed at https://www.trbr.vu/attachments/article/919/trbr_2024_and_onwards_external_work_plan.pdf.

Training /workshops	Date	Description
PITA CFO Finance Conference	5 – 9th August 2025. Fiji	The PITA CFO Finance Conference focused on telecommunications finance, operations, and development. It provided a platform for industry professionals to explore financial management in the telecom sector, including trends, risks, and opportunities. Through sessions and workshops, participants gain insights into strategy, regulation, and innovation, the forum promotes collaboration and networking among CFOs, supporting the growth and sustainability of telecom enterprises in the PITA region
Record Management & Developing an information management strategy workshop	17 – 23rd August SUVA Fiji	A training on Record Management and Developing an information Management strategy which provides strategic framework for Records, Archives, Library and information management programs of Work
APT Training Course on 5G Evolution: A consideration of Technology Spectrum Management, Licensing and Security Implications	26 – 30th August, Manilla, Malaysia	5G Evolution course, provided insights in the fundamentals of 5G technology. The comparisons of the underlying technology from the 2G,3G,4G and 5G systems are also discussed. The IMPT-2020 or the 5G standard and also the 5G spectrum were also emphasized. The course also highlighted the 5G radio access networks core networks, 5G multiple access and 5G backhaul were also discussed
19th Asia Media Summit	1st September 2024 To 5th September 2024	During the summit, national ICT and Broadcasting situation and operations were the centre of discussions. Including Legal and Regulatory frameworks governing the broadcasting services. use of broadcasting in the Early Warnings for dissemination of vital information.

Pacific Internet Governance Forum 2024	2nd – 3rd September 2024 Wellington, New Zealand	The Pacific IGF Pioneers' discussions were a forum highlight, offering inspiring insights into internet trends and digital development. Keith Davidson emphasized how telecommunications regulation enabled market competition and reduced internet costs, with smartphones and mobile apps marking further milestones in digital progress. Ian Thompson highlighted the Pacific Digital Strategy, stressing that successful transformation must precede technological adoption. This perspective resonates particularly with Vanuatu, where outdated ICT policies need revision to align with modern trends. The Smart Island project by ITU remains underutilized, pointing to the need for more localized, self-driven initiatives tailored to local needs and capacities, rather than relying solely on external advice.
Telecommunications, Radiocommunications training programme (TRTP)	Date:25th -27th November 2024 Melbourne, Australia	The three days training focused on Mobile technology and spectrum planning, regulatory challenges for Artificial Intelligence (AI), emphasis on Infrastructure sharing implement Infrastructure sharing to advance connectivity, general spectrum management including Spectrum planning, licensing and allocation,
Spectrum Management System for Developing Countries (SMS4DC) Training for Pacific	30 April - 02 May 2024 (3 days), Warwick Le Lagon, Port Vila, Vanuatu	The training workshop focused on building human capacity and skills of participants in order for them to be able to effectively use the SMS4DC tool to automate national spectrum management in their respective organizations. exercises-based sessions.
ITU Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR)- 2024	1-4 July 2024, Kampala, Uganda	GSR-24 featured thematic sessions bringing together regulators, policy makers and digital stakeholders from around the world and providing a global platform for knowledge exchange around the topic "Regulation for impact".
The 24th APT Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF-24)	16 July 2024 - 18 July 2024 Chiang Mai, Thailand (Hybrid)	APT PRF provides an opportunity to share and address the key issues and concerns of APT Members and to facilitate intra-regional collaboration on policy and regulatory issues as required. Industry leaders and other key stakeholders also share their views on major issues the sector currently faces.

17th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-17)	September 2024 - 5 September 2024, Nuku'alofa, Tonga	PRFP-17 organized its session based on the priority areas of the "Lagatoi Declaration" adopted at the 4th Pacific Ministerial Dialogue (28-29 August 2023, Papua New Guinea) as in previous year. These priority areas include Digital Transformation, Digital Innovation, Digital Infrastructure, Security and Trust, Digital Capacity Building and Skills and Disaster Management, which are also strategic pillars of the APT's Strategic Plan for 2024-2026. Through this forum, APT aims to support the development of telecommunications and ICT policies in Pacific countries, share policy and regulatory trends, and enhance the capacity to address emerging opportunities and challenges.
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3 Relations with the Government of Australia-GfG Program

TRBR highly values its strong and collaborative partnership with the Australian Governance for Growth (GfG) program. This partnership has been instrumental in providing grant support for three specialist consultants—including legal consultant, broadcasting consultant, and market competition and economics expert consultant—enabling TRBR to advance key regulatory priorities. The most recent grant cycle concluded in September 2024.

Further, TRBR sincerely acknowledges and appreciates GfG's confidence in entrusting it with the administration of this grant to support its advisors and related programs, and providing quarterly reports to GfG. In this spirit, TRBR remains committed to fostering a positive and productive relationship with the GfG team and looks forward to further collaboration.

4 Relations with Government & Communities

4.1 General Working Relations with Government Ministries

TRBR has continued to foster a strong and productive working relationship with the Government, particularly with the Department of Communications and Digital Transformation (DCDT), by providing technical advice and guidance on key regulatory and policy matters.

In addition, TRBR has actively engaged with a wide range of Government Ministries, including the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Climate Change through the National Disaster Management Office; the Ministry of Trades; the Ministry of Infrastructure; the Ministry of Lands; and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) through the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue and the Department of Finance and Treasury. TRBR has also worked closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, as well as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to deliver expert guidance on regulatory and policy issues, and to contribute to cross-sectoral public consultations on initiatives such as the national e-commerce strategy and the cybersecurity roadmap.

TRBR remains an active member of the National Trade Development Committee (NTDC), which convenes quarterly under the Ministry of Trades. Through this platform, TRBR contributes to advancing market competition, supporting Vanuatu's digital transformation agenda, and providing regular updates on telecommunications matters, including the implementation of the Government's Universal Access Policy (UAP).

Furthermore, TRBR collaborates closely with Government Ministries, Departments, and operators on projects aimed at addressing network coverage challenges in underserved areas. For example, in 2024, working with the Office of the Prime Minister and mobile operators, TRBR conducted a coverage and quality of service benchmarking exercise at the Vila Central Hospital. This initiative resulted in significant improvements in coverage by both mobile operators, Digicel and Vodafone.

4.2 Relations with Government Entities and State-Owned Enterprise.

Throughout 2024, TRBR continued to strengthen its partnerships with key Regulatory institution, including the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, the Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA), the Office of the Maritime Regulator (OMR), and the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission (VFSC). These collaborations are rooted in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in previous years, which established a framework for closer cooperation between government regulators. The arrangement has provided an effective platform for sharing information, coordinating regulatory approaches, and discussing issues of mutual interest, particularly in relation to business startups and cross-sectoral developments.

A major highlight of 2024 was the TRBR Annual Internet Forum, held on November 27 at the Melanesian Hotel in Port Vila. During this event, a significant milestone was reached with the signing of an MOA between TRBR Regulator Mr. Brian Winji Molitaviti and VFSC Commissioner Mr. Branan Karae. This agreement reinforces the strong working relationship between TRBR and VFSC and their joint commitment to advancing the .vu domain space in Vanuatu. Through this collaboration, both institutions aim to work together to ensure the domain continues to play a key role in supporting Vanuatu's digital growth and broader economic development through engaging businesses including small and medium enterprises to choose .vu as their primary domain.



Signing of the MOU between TRBR Regulator, Mr. Brian Winji Molitaviti and VFSC Commissioner, Mr. Branan Karae, 27 November 2024

4.3 TRBR Social responsibility

4.3.1 Sponsorship of the Smart Sista's Camp, Luganville

TRBR has proudly continued its role as a Gold Sponsor of both the Sistas Girls in ICT Camp and Team Vanuatu's First Global Robotics Challenge since 2017.

In 2024, the Sistas Girls in ICT Camp was hosted in Luganville, Santo, from 6th to 10th May. TRBR staff member Mr. Molivurae joined the team in Santo to facilitate sessions on Goals and Mentorship, while later in the week, another TRBR staff member, Mr. Jean Luke Boas, also contributed by leading sessions on Motivating Engineering.

As part of the week-long program, participants visited the TRBR Luganville office, where they were welcomed by Mrs. Antoinette Nase and Mr. Andrew Molivurae. During the visit, the students learned about the vital role of TRBR as the Telecommunications and Broadcasting Regulator in Vanuatu.



Mrs. Antoinette Nase handing over TRBR sponsorship cheque to Sistas Girls in ICT Camp representative.



Mrs. Antoinette Nase and Mr. Andrew Molivurae explaining the role of the TRBR to the participants.

4.3.2 Sponsorship towards the 2024 Consumer Rights Day

March 15 of every year marks the annual commemoration of World Consumer Rights Day, a global observance emphasizing the significance of informed consumerism and the protection of consumer rights. This day serves as a poignant reminder of the pivotal aspects encompassing the quantity, quality, purity, potency, price, and standards of goods, while championing the cause of safeguarding consumer rights. World Consumer Rights Day endeavors to enlighten consumers about their entitlements and obligations within the marketplace, advocating for fair and ethical business conduct and holding accountable those who infringe upon consumer rights.

In Vanuatu, TRBR is a key stakeholder in organizing the annual event, and contributed resources including financial resources towards the organization of the event every year. In 2024, TRBR's "sponsorship" is not only financial but also involves providing institutional support: co-organizing parts of the event; helping with outreach; ensuring that regulatory voices are present in panels.



TRBR ICT and Internet governance Manager, Mr. Norman Warput handing over TRBR Sponsorship to the Consumer Rights Day 2024 committee member.

5 Regulations, Rules, Orders, Decisions & Litigations

5.1 General Rules and Regulations

The Legal Section of the Telecommunications Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator is established under section 7(5) the TRBR Act No 30 of 2009 as amended. The mandate of the legal department is to:

- a) provide Legal Advice to the Regulator;
- b) deal with any Litigation;
- c) assist the Regulator in any legal affairs of the institution as mandated by the Act as amended.
- d) represent the Regulator in any panels related to drafting of policies and legislation as approved by the Regulator.

5.2 Legal Advice

The TRBR legal Unit is established by the TRBR ACT and as such it assists the Regulator not only on the internal legal advice but also external advice that the Regulator either provides to the Minister in charge of telecommunications and broadcasting or any other leaders that require advice on the Telecom or Broadcasting sector.

On other occasions the legal section of TRBR have collaborated with the Department of communications and digital transformation as the representative for TRBR to assist in the drafting of the Council of Ministers Papers and legislative drafting of new legislations including the Digital harmful communication Act, the Data Protection and Privacy Act, and the DCDT Act.

5.3 Litigation- Civil Case No. 23/3055 SC/CIVL

The Telecommunications Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator in 2024 have no legal proceedings either in Court, except the supreme court Civil Case No. 23/3055 SC/CIVL between EDWARD RORY MCGUIRE (Claimant) AND: THE

REPUBLIC OF VANUATU (First Defendant) AND: TELECOMMUNICATION RADIO BROADCASTING REGULATOR (TRBR) as the Second Defendant.

On 14 March 2023, the police seized a Starlink satellite dish, cable and router from the residence of Cainton Milroy, having earlier obtained a search warrant. Mr McGuire purchased the Starlink devices and loaned them to Mr Milroy.

The Claimant Edward McGuire has filed a claim and an application for an order that a Starlink satellite dish, cable and router be returned to him. The Defendant opposes the application and has applied to strike out the claim. Both applications were heard together.

On the 6th day of June, 2024, Justice W. K. Hastings handed down the court decision in favor of the defendants, that the application to release the Starlink devices is declined, and the claim is struck out.

5.4 Advancing ICT and the digital technology in Vanuatu

In 2024, the TRBR through its Legal Unit, actively contributed to a panel established by the Department of Communications and Digital Transformation. The purpose of this panel was to assist in developing comprehensive legal framework to advance digital transformation and ensure digital safety in Vanuatu.

The panel's mandate covered several critical areas. Firstly, the formulation of a Digital Transformation Masterplan for Vanuatu, intended to serve as a strategic roadmap for modernizing government services, improving digital infrastructure, and promoting innovation across sectors. This plan aims to ensure that all communities, including those in remote islands, benefit from the opportunities created by digital technologies.

Second, the panel was tasked with developing a Harmful Digital Communications Act, designed to address challenges such as the misuse of digital platforms. This law seeks to provide safeguards for citizens while encouraging responsible digital engagement.

Additionally, work was done on a Data Protection and Privacy Act, which will regulate the handling of personal data and reinforce public trust in digital systems. The panel also worked on the Department of Communications and Digital Transformation Act, specifically to establish a dedicated authority for overseeing ICT policies and their implementation.

5.5 Memorandum of Understanding with VMSA

In early 2024, the TRBR and the Vanuatu Maritime Services Authority (VMSA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen cooperation in regulating radiocommunications and improving maritime safety in Vanuatu.

The agreement focuses on enhancing collaboration and information sharing between the two institutions, recognizing that effective communication systems are vital for maritime operations. A key provision of the MOU enables TRBR and VMSA to conduct joint inspections of vessels, ensuring that all radio equipment installed on board is properly licensed and compliant with both local and international technical standards. This joint effort supports maritime safety by ensuring vessels can communicate reliably in emergencies and operate without causing interference to other networks.

Another major achievement of the partnership has been the alignment of vessel registries maintained by TRBR and VMSA. Previously, separate records created gaps and inconsistencies; harmonizing these databases now provides a comprehensive and accurate record of vessels operating within Vanuatu’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This development strengthens regulatory oversight, enhances maritime governance, and improves national compliance with international obligations.

6 Telecommunication Market and Trends

6.1 Sim Card Registration and Monitoring

In 2024, the TRBR continued to actively implement and monitor the national SIM card registration process in accordance with the SIM Card Registration Regulation Order No. 105 of 2022. On the 12th November 2024, TRBR issued a formal extension notice of the registration deadline from 31st December 2024 to 30th June 2025. This decision was made following formal requests from mobile network operators, who cited a range of challenges hindering full compliance. These included the geographical complexity of Vanuatu’s scattered islands, which makes outreach to rural and remote communities difficult, as well as the rising cost of land and sea transport. Additionally, the ongoing rollout of the national ID program has delayed registrations in areas where customers still lack valid identification. The recent Air Vanuatu liquidation has also further disrupted logistical operations, especially in reaching outer islands.

Despite these significant challenges, both Digicel Vanuatu and Vodafone Vanuatu have made significant progress in ensuring SIM card registrations. By the end of 2024, each operator had successfully registered over 70% of their active subscribers.

6.2 New Licensees

Pursuant to Sections 7 and 12 of the TRBR Act, as amended, the TRBR has granted new Telecommunications license to three companies in 2024: Pacific Networks, Prima Limited, and Starlink Vanuatu Limited. Pacific Networks has been licensed as an Internet Service Provider, while Starlink Vanuatu Limited is authorized to operate as both a wholesale and retail provider of satellite-based broadband services. Prima Limited, on the other hand, is licensed as a wholesaler of international bandwidth via submarine cable infrastructure.

These new entities are expected to strengthen competition in the telecommunications sector, enhance service diversity, and improve accessibility and affordability of internet services throughout Vanuatu.

Given the significant amount of capital investment committed into the sector, consumers will expect improved service delivery, increased innovation, and more competitive pricing, all of which are essential to supporting national digital development goals and will also be beneficial to the consumers.

In 2024, TRBR also renewed Wantok’s license for an additional 15 years. As part of the renewed license, Wantok is required to meet certain coverage obligations as a mobile service provider. With this extension, Wantok is expected to enhance competition and provide a strong challenge to the two incumbent mobile operators.



Left: Regulator, Mr. Brian Winji Molitaviti handing over license to Prima CEO, Mr. Simon Fletcher.



Right: Pacific Networks CEO, Mr. Peter Namak receiving PacNet License from the Regulator.

6.3 Special Terms and Conditions for Satellite License

In 2024, the TRBR initiated a public consultation process on the proposed special standard and specific terms and conditions targeting all satellite telecommunication providers opertaing LEO and GEO with in Vanuatu. This initiative focuses particularly on licences for satellite services offered on both wholesale and retail bases in Vanuatu. The consultation was conducted pursuant to the powers set out in Sections 12, 13, 14, and 15 of the TRBR Act, as amended.

Through this consultation, TRBR seeks inputs from key stakeholders to assess whether the Vanuatu market should benefit from the introduction of modern satellite-based services, including the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite services, and to determine how the regulatory framework could be adapted to support

these advancements. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback on how to maximize the benefits of such services while minimizing any unintended impacts on market competition and service delivery.

The outcome of the consultation was positive, with stakeholders expressing strong support for satellite-based innovations. Based on the feedback received, TRBR has successfully developed and finalized a set of additional special terms and conditions tailored to satellite service providers. These conditions have now been formally incorporated into satellite telecommunications licences, marking a significant step forward in aligning Vanuatu's regulatory framework with international best practices while supporting the country's digital transformation goals.

6.4 Telecommunications Licensees-2024

In 2024, TRBR continue to strengthen its market monitoring and compliance to ensure that all licensees continue to adhere to their obligations stipulated under the TRBR Act and the terms and conditions of their license. The Table below shows two levels of market segments; the whole sale market and the retail market and the list of licensees within these two markets.

License Categories	License Name	Status	Type of Telecom Service offered
Wholesale (upstream)	Interchange Limited (ICL)	ACTIVE	Internet Capacity
	Fertility Corp Communication (FCC)	ACTIVE	Internet Capacity
	Kacific Vanuatu Limited	ACTIVE	Internet Capacity
	Starlink Vanuatu Limited	ACTIVE	Internet Capacity
	Prima Limited	ACTIVE	Internet Capacity
Retail (Downstream)	Vodafone Vanuatu	ACTIVE	Internet and Mobile
	Digicel Vanuatu	ACTIVE	Internet and Mobile
	Wantok Network Limited	ACTIVE	Internet and Mobile
	Pacific Networks	ACTIVE	Internet
	Pacific Link Limited	ACTIVE	Internet
	3-Link	ACTIVE	Internet
	Aelan Internet	ACTIVE	Internet

Table 3: List of 2024 licensees

6.5 Telecommunication Market

Mobile connectivity in Vanuatu today is more than just a way for people to stay in touch — it has become a vital tool for government, communities, and development partners to drive social and economic growth, support vulnerable populations, and create innovative solutions to improve the wellbeing of Vanuatu residents. Mobile connectivity has played a key role in disaster response and recovery efforts across the islands, helping communities stay connected during natural disasters and emergencies. With the expansion of 4G — and the growing potential of satellite services—these technologies are forming the foundation for smarter solutions in areas like agriculture, health, education, and local business development.

The Vanuatu's telecommunications market is primarily served by two major operators Digicel Vanuatu and Vodafone Vanuatu followed by few Internet Service Providers (Aelan Internet, Wantok, Pacific Link, Pacific Networks, Kacific, 3Link and Starlink). The growing use of digital tools and services continue to boost the rollout of advanced mobile and fixed technologies that provide faster speeds, lower delays and greater capacity. This has improved customer experience, especially for streaming entertainment.

The Vanuatu international connectivity has been boosted by the Interchange Cable Network built in 2014, which currently links Vanuatu to Fiji via the submarine fiber-optic cable. This has led to on-going significant growth of internet services in Vanuatu for the past several years. Though challenges remain for the remote areas, satellite connections proved to be very important means of bridging the gap, coupled with the expansion of mobile services to the underserved areas under the implementation of the UAP, to ensuring broader national broadband coverage.

The TRBR oversees the telecommunications, radiocommunications and broadcasting sectors as mandated under the TRBR Act to promote fair competition, safeguarding consumer rights and ensuring service quality across Vanuatu. The TRBR also plays a crucial role in shaping the country's digital landscape by monitoring market performance, regulating service providers and fostering an environment that encourages investment and innovation. The key initiative includes facilitating the development and expansion of ICT



infrastructure such as the rollout of 4G - ensuring affordable and reliable access to services especially in the unserved and underserved areas.

Through collaborative efforts with the Government, private sector and the internal partners, TRBR continues to play a pivotal role in driving the country's digital transformation, ensuring that all citizens can benefit from the social and economic opportunities brought by modern telecommunication services.



6.6 Telecommunications Data Collection Framework

The TRBR data collection framework is a crucial tool that serves as a key source of operator’s data, market analysis and forecasting. With the data collected through the framework, TRBR is able to produce and publish in-depth insights into the status and on-going development of Vanuatu’s telecommunications Sector.

This data collection process and submission is stipulated under Section 8 of the TRBR Act and applies to all licensed telecommunications operators in Vanuatu. The TRBR has been actively utilizing this framework to gathered market data from service providers to monitor industry performance and identify development trends.

The findings continued to be published annually in the Telecommunications Sector Report, which provides a vital source of information for the Government, International Agencies, Services Providers and other key stakeholders.

6.7 Market Trends

Vanuatu’s telecommunications market continues to evolve, driven by growing demand for mobile data, digital services, and improved connectivity. Mobile broadband adoption is expanding rapidly as operators shift towards data-centric service models, supported by declining data prices and network upgrades and expansion. Voice and SMS usage show a gradual decline, reflecting a global shifts toward internet-based communications. Competition between operators remains strong, with new licenses and regulatory oversight aimed at improving service quality and expanding coverage. Government initiatives, such as the UAP, reinforce efforts to address connectivity gaps in the remote areas, positioning telecom as a key enabler of Vanuatu’s digital transformation.

6.7.1 Telecommunication Gross Revenue

The Vanuatu’s telecommunications sector has this year witnessed growth in the gross revenue. Data collected by the TRBR illustrated in Figure 3 shows that the total telecommunications gross revenue has increased by 6.67% recording over VUV6.2 billion in 2024. This upward trend marks a positive path for the industry, reflecting sustained growth in demand for telecommunications and digital services across the country.

The growth has been driven by several important factors. Firstly, the continuous implementation of the UAP has continued to improve and expand mobile and internet coverage, supported by infrastructure investments and initiatives. This has allowed operators to reach new markets, particularly in rural and previously underserved areas leading to growth in subscriber base and high levels of data consumption.

Secondly, the growing consumer dependence on digital tools for communication, education, business and entertainment has boost revenue growth. The increased use of smartphones, online streaming platforms, mobile money services and cloud-based applications has significantly contributed to rising revenue per user.

Furthermore, service providers have continued to introduce innovative and attractive bundling offerings and value-added services at affordable and reasonable prices that have encouraged multi-service usage and enhanced customer engagement, further boosting revenue.

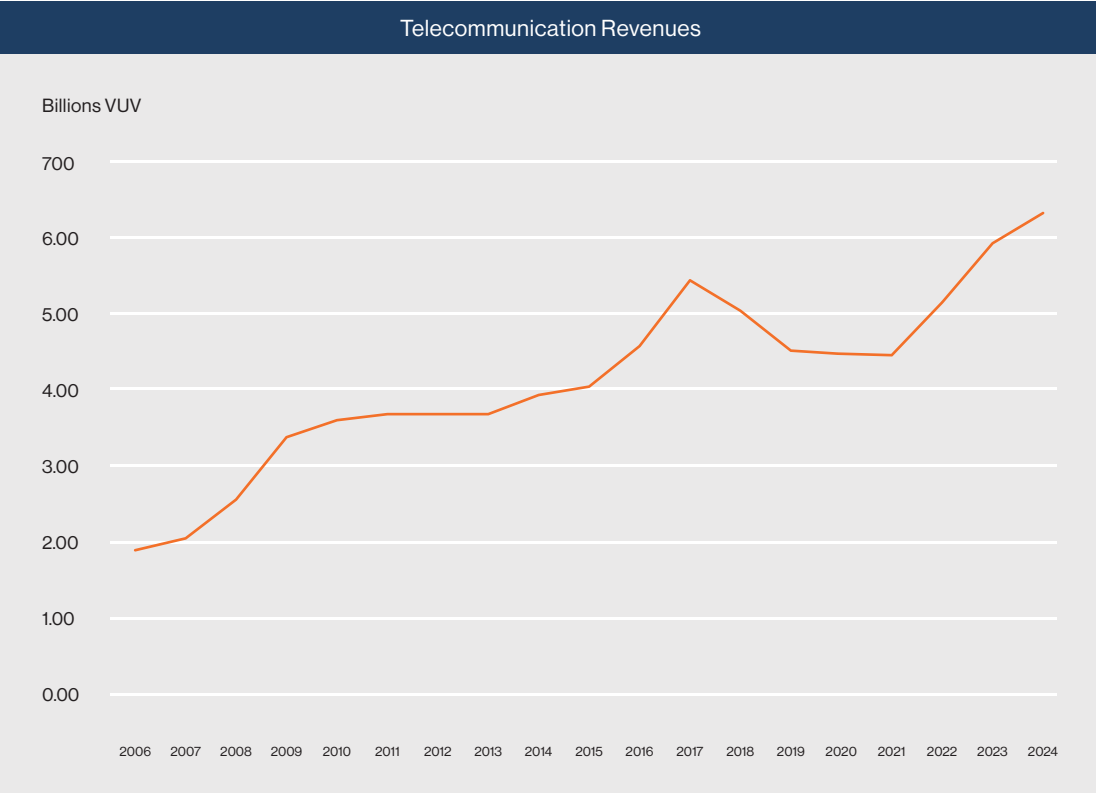


Figure 3: Gross Revenue



6.7.2 Mobile Subscribers

Mobile connectivity plays a crucial role in enabling social and economic development across Vanuatu. It serves as a key driver of digital inclusion, bridging communications gaps between communities and providing access to essential services such as education, health care, financial services and emergency responses. In a geographically dispersed nation like Vanuatu, mobile networks are the primary means of communication for many citizens particularly in remote and underserved areas. The expansion and enhancement of mobile connectivity is therefore very crucial to improving livelihoods, strengthening community resilience, and supporting national development objectives.

The mobile telecommunications market in Vanuatu continues to show significant growth, underpinned by strong consumer demand of mobile services and on-going expansion of network coverage. As of 2024, the total number of mobile subscribers has increased by 7% recording over 306,000. This upward trend reflects the growing reliance on mobile connectivity for everyday communication, digital access, and essential services in both rural and urban areas in Vanuatu.

Furthermore, the growing availability of mobile prepaid plans and flexible top-up options has further stimulated mobile subscription growth. These flexible payment models allow users to manage their consumptions and

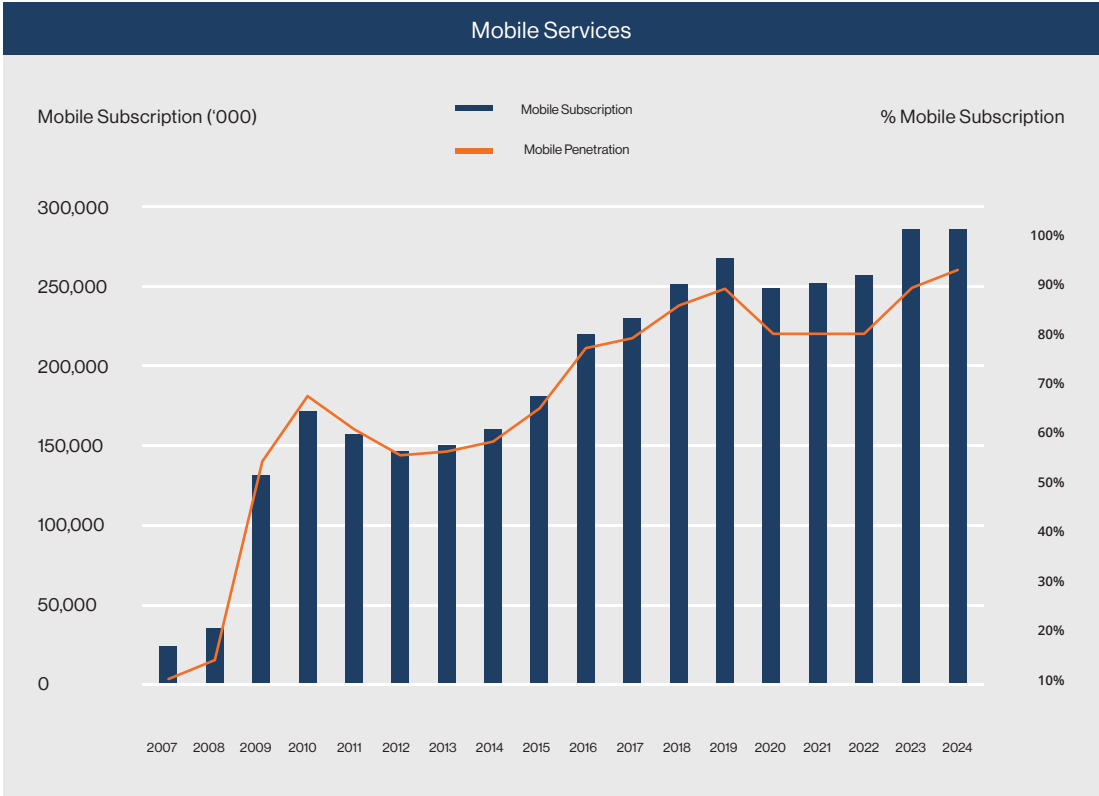


Figure 4: Mobile Subscriber

spending according to their income level, making mobile services more accessible to a wider demographic. Mobile operators have also invested in community outreach and marketing campaigns to raise awareness of their service offerings, while improving customer support in both urban and rural areas. Together, these efforts have not only boosted mobile adoption but also contributed to greater digital inclusion across the country.

As Vanuatu continues to advance its mobile network technologies, mobile penetration has increased by 5%, reaching a historic high of 96.13% in 2024 as illustrated in figure 4. This milestone reflects a strong national uptake of mobile connectivity, which has significantly

boosted the demand for mobile services. The growing reliance on mobile networks is stimulating the growth of digital services, broadening market opportunities, and driving innovation within the sector. In turn, this growth is contributing to economic development and enhancing the quality of life for individuals and communities across the country.



6.7.3 Fixed Telephone Line

The fixed telephony market continued its downward trend in 2024, with a 4% decline in fixed-line subscription, falling to a new lower point of just 3,036 subscribers as shown in figure 5. This downward trend reflects the rapid expansion and adoption of mobile telecommunications services. The widespread availability of 4G networks, coupled by affordable smartphone devices and competitive pricing, has made mobile service more accessible and appealing to the population. As a result, many consumers have transitioned from traditional landline services to mobile phones with greater flexibility and convenience. The shift is evident in the significant increase in the mobile subscription and data usage across the country.

Moreover, the growth of Internet based Communication such as Over-the-Top (OTT) communication platform is playing a major role in the continued decline of fixed telephone subscription. Services such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Microsoft teams, and other VoIP-based applications allow users to make voice and video calls using internet connectivity, often at little to no cost. These platforms also offer enhanced features – like instant messaging, file transfers, and real-time discussion – that go far beyond the capabilities of traditional fixed-lined telephony.

With both individuals and businesses increasingly favoring the flexibility and affordability of these digital tools, the shift away from traditional fixed telephone services is expected to accelerate as digital transformation continues across all sectors.

6.7.4 Mobile Broadband Services

Mobile data services continue to drive growth and innovation in Vanuatu's telecommunications sector serving as the primary mode of internet access for most of the population. With the on-going rollout and improvement 4G coverage across both urban and rural areas, data usage has surged rapidly in recent years. This trend reflects not only the increasing smartphone penetration but also a growing reliance on mobile connectivity for everyday communication, business operations, education and to access digital services. As the demand for faster, more reliable internet grows, mobile data remains at the forefront of Vanuatu's digital transformation.

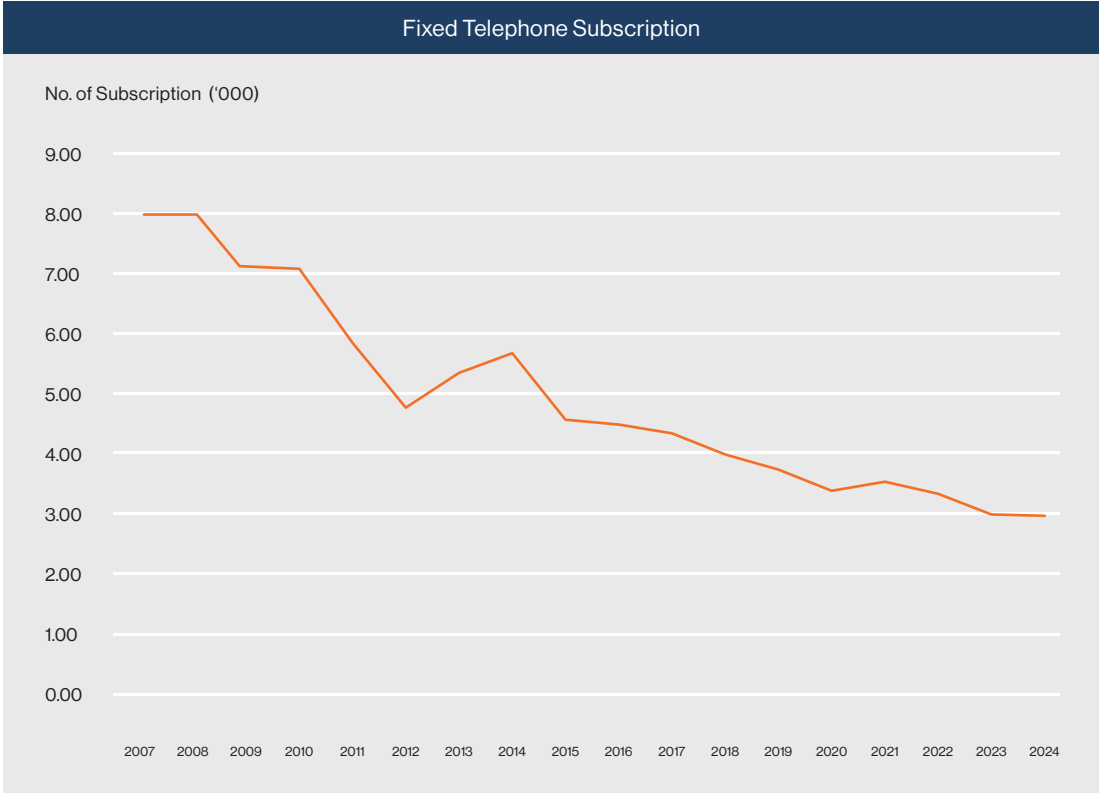


Figure 5: Fixed Telephone Subscription

6.7.5 Mobile Data Download

The mobile broadband market experienced a slight decline in mobile data download traffic this year. As illustrated in the graph below, total mobile data download has dropped by 11% recording a lower peak of only 22,000 terabytes in 2024. The downturn is largely attributed to the significant disruption caused by 7.3 magnitude earthquake that struck Port Vila, Vanuatu, on the 17th of December 2024. The earthquake caused extensive damage to critical infrastructure, including telecommunications facilities, which directly impacted network performance and service availability through Vanuatu.

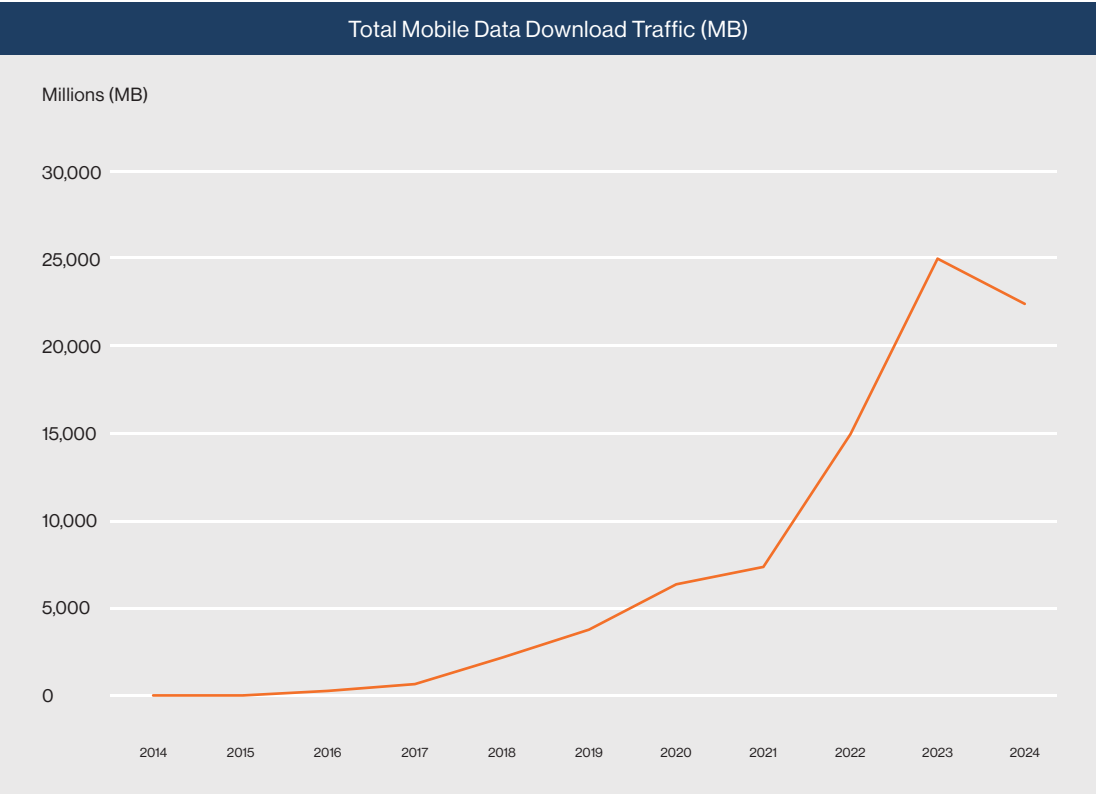


Figure 6: Mobile Data Download Traffic

6.7.6 Mobile Data Average Pricing

The decline in mobile data average prices in 2024 has been driven by increasing competition among mobile network operators. As both operators vie for a relatively small but growing customer base, particularly in a market where mobile internet is the primary mode of connectivity, operators are forced to offer competitive pricing and better value for money. This has led to the introduction of larger data bundles, promotional offers, and more affordable prepaid and postpaid plans. The ease with which customers can switch between providers thanks to the widespread access to SIM cards and dual SIM mobile devices – further intensifies the need for competitive pricing. As a result, operators are constantly adjusting their pricing strategies to attract new users and retain existing ones especially within the price-sensitive segments such as youth and rural population.

This competitive environment continues to play a vital role in driving down mobile data costs while expanding access to internet across the country.

Furthermore, on-going investment in 4G rollout have improved network capacity and efficiency, reducing the cost per MB of data delivered. Economies of scale and more efficient use of spectrum and infrastructure has boost and allow operators to offer data services at lower prices while maintaining service quality.

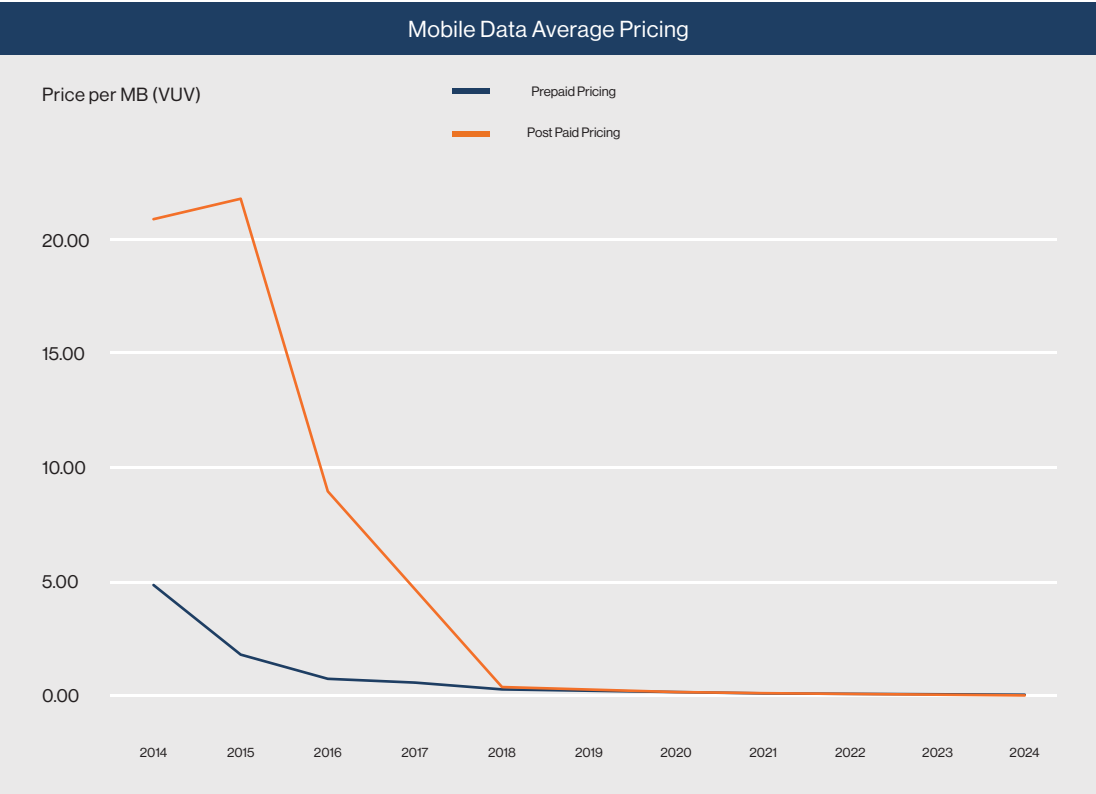


Figure 7: Mobile Data Average Pricing

6.7.7 International Bandwidth

Vanuatu's connection to the global digital ecosystem continues to be made possible through blend of international infrastructure including Kacific Satellite, Starlink low-earth orbit services and the Interchange Submarine Cable. These diverse pathways have become the backbone of Vanuatu's internet connectivity, bridging the vast distance between islands and linking Vanuatu to the rest of the world. The reliable international access has not only improved the quality and speed of internet services but has also laid the foundation for transformative change - boosting digital innovation, enable new business opportunities and supporting critical sector such as tourism, education, healthcare, and government services. For a nation like Vanuatu, international connectivity is more than just a technical asset—it is a powerful enabler of economic growth, social inclusion and national resilience

This year 2024, the Vanuatu telecom sector has witnessed a significant increase in total amount of

international bandwidth sold and utilized. Data illustrated in the graph below shows that total international bandwidth sold has increased by 20% recording over 17,600 Mbps in 2024.

The increasing uptake of international bandwidth sales and utilization is driven by rapid growth in internet usage across the country. More and more people are accessing high-speed internet for activities such as streaming, video conferencing, online education and e-commerce, all of which require large data capacity.

Additionally, businesses and government services are increasingly digitizing their operations, boosting demand for reliable and faster connections. Infrastructure improvements such as enhanced submarine cable capacity and expanded satellite services such Starlink – have made it possible to cater for the growing demand on international connections.

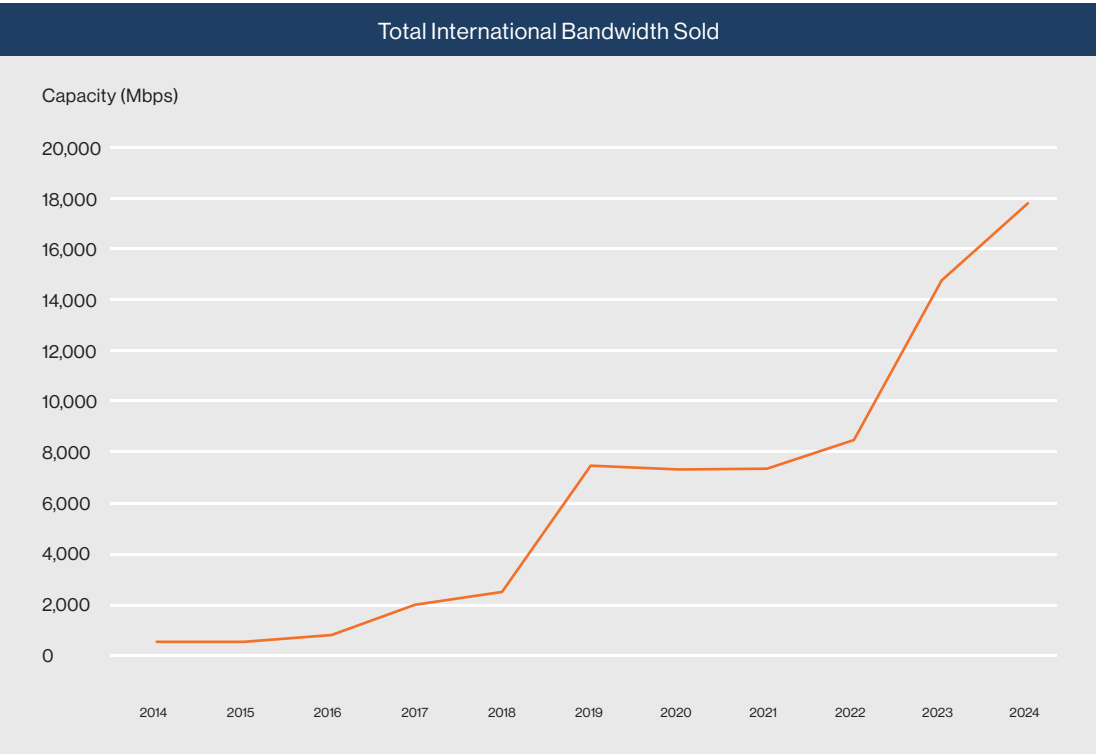
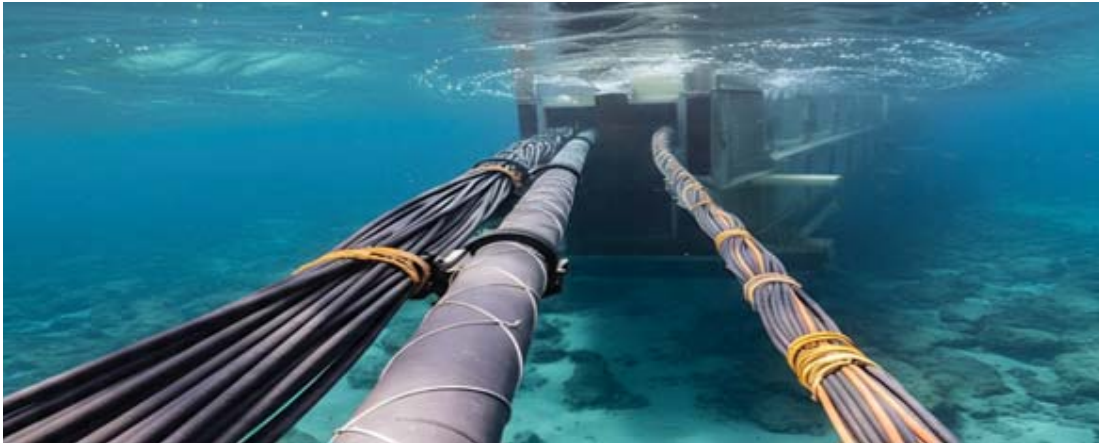


Figure 8: International Bandwidth Sold



6.7.8 Subsea Bandwidth Wholesale Price Mbps/Month

In 2024, the subsea international bandwidth market experienced a decline in bandwidth pricing. As illustrated in the graph below, the average cost of international bandwidth has dropped from USD45.00 per Mbps per month in 2023 to USD39.00 per Mbps per month in 2024 as shown in figure 9. This represents an annual decrease of 13%.

The decline in international bandwidth priced in 2024 has been triggered by the increased supply and demand of bandwidth from the retail level.

The expansion of submarine cable system, along with the growing availability of satellite services such as Kacific and Starlink has significantly boosted international capacity and introduce more competition. The increased supply has forced the wholesale prices per Mbps down resulting in lower prices for the retail telecommunications operators. As a result, customers are now able to enjoy more affordable and accessible internet services.

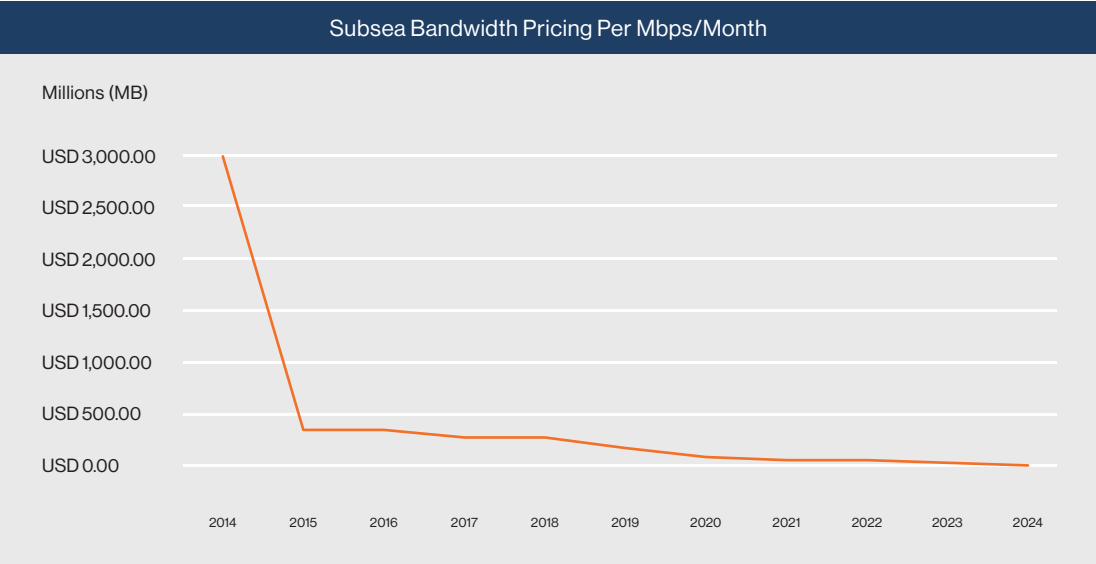


Figure 9: Subsea Bandwidth pricing MBPS/Month



6.7.9 Satellite Broadband

Satellite broadband has become an essential component of Vanuatu’s national telecommunications infrastructure and is playing an important role in bridging the digital divide across the country. Given Vanuatu’s unique geographical challenges, with difficult terrains and dispersed islands, fibre optic cable and mobile towers remain limited or economically unfeasible in many remote areas. To address these gaps, satellite services provided by Kacific Broadband Satellite and the recently licensed Starlin are offering practical and reliable connectivity solutions. These technologies are enabling -speed internet access in underserved communities, ensuring that even the most isolated areas can remain connected to important services such as education, healthcare, government platforms and economic opportunities.

With the uptake in the demand and usage of satellite services, data collected by TRBR shows that total satellite subscription reported by both Kacific and Starlink in 2024 has spiked by 219% recording over 1500 subscribers. This reflects the increasing reliance on satellite broadband to meet connectivity needs particularly in the remote and underserved areas where terrestrial infrastructure remains limited.

7 Engineering and Technical Compliance

7.1 National Numbering Management Plan and Procedures

TRBR continues to provide oversight for compliance with the National Numbering Plan and Procedures (NNPP) to prevent any misuse of numbers. The NNPP outlines the management, administration, and governance of numbers in Vanuatu, serving as a vital resource and guideline for both TRBR and all service providers in the country.

In 2024, there were no new allocations of numbers. However, the Technical Team commenced work on developing a centralized database to support the proper management of the National Numbering Plan and number allocations. This initiative aims to enhance the tracking, monitoring, and future planning of number usage in Vanuatu.

As part of ongoing monitoring efforts, TRBR has continued to request operators to submit reports on the utilization of the numbers allocated to them. The data collected indicates a consistent and active utilization of numbering resources. The numbers currently reserved and allocated to operators are assessed to be sufficient for their present operations and are anticipated to accommodate population growth over the next decade.

SIM card registration has also had a positive impact on mobile number usage. The implementation of mandatory registration requirements has reduced the occurrence of fake or inactive numbers. As unused numbers are reclaimed, they become available for reassignment, leading to more efficient and effective use of mobile numbering resources.

7.2 Radio Spectrum Management

7.2.1 General

One of TRBR’s primary responsibilities is to ensure the proper management and administration of the radio spectrum at a national level, aligning with the ITU-Radio Regulations. This involves continuous updates to the National Frequency Allocation Table and monitoring of spectrum usage once ranges are assigned. The radio spectrum, being a finite and immensely valuable national resource, requires a careful management and administration. Without this, there could be significant challenges in ensuring the safe and effective use of telecommunications, radiocommunications, and broadcasting services throughout Vanuatu.

A critical aspect of this management is to guarantee sufficient bandwidth for ongoing network development, expanding coverage, and enhancing capacity in densely populated areas. In accordance with the Act, TRBR is mandated to oversee the radio spectrum to foster national, social, and economic development. In addition, the Act empowers TRBR to formulate radio spectrum plans, including frequency band plans specific to Vanuatu, while considering global and regional harmonization efforts. Figure 10 below illustrate the TRBR Spectrum management life cycle.

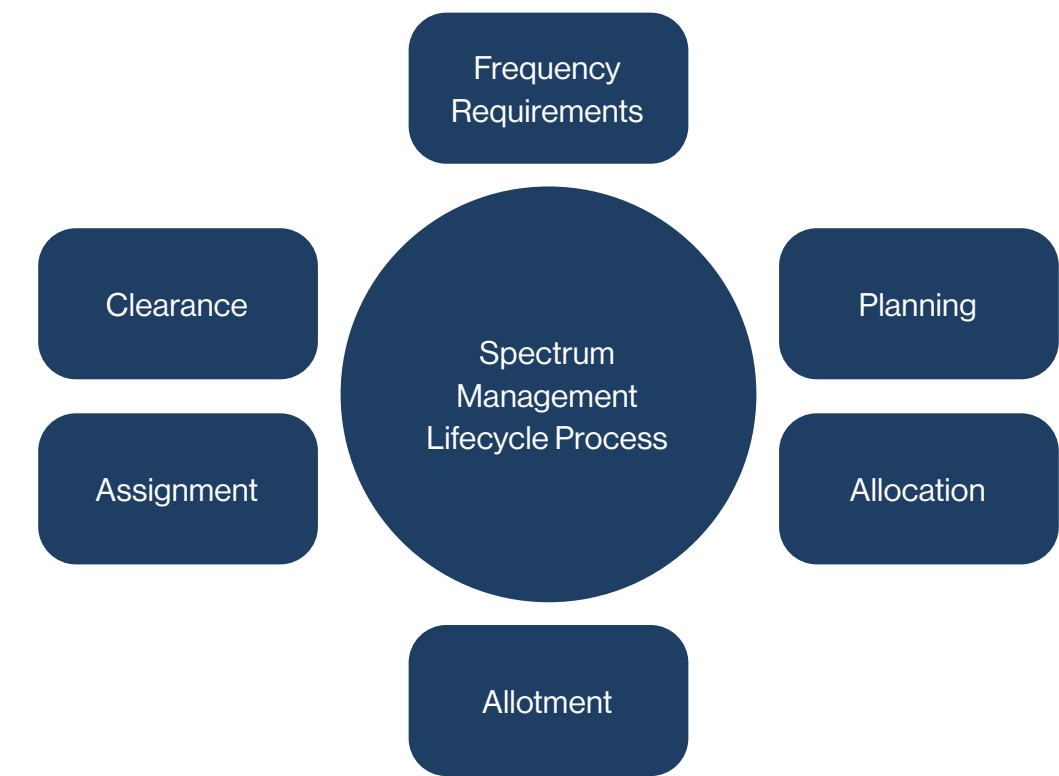


Figure 10: TRBR Spectrum Management Life Cycle

7.3 Spectrum Monitoring and Interference resolution

7.3.1 Interference Resolution

In 2024, no interference issues were observed for mobile services. However, interference issues persisted within the FM broadcasting sector. Specifically, instances were reported where FM signals dropped, resulting in the dominance of stronger FM stations in areas with weaker signals due to signal overlap.

To address this, TRBR has advised FM licensees to increase their signal strength in regions experiencing low coverage. Furthermore, broadcasters have been reminded of the importance of using appropriate filtering equipment to prevent signal leakage and minimize the likelihood of interference with other stations.

In support of long-term solutions, TRBR continues to strengthen its type approval certification procedures to ensure that all Radio and Telecommunications Terminal Equipment (RTTEE) entering Vanuatu complies with international and local standards. This proactive measure aims to reduce the risk of future interference and enhance overall spectrum integrity.

Additionally, TRBR responded to several public concerns regarding radiation from mobile sites. These concerns were thoroughly investigated, and consultations were held with the affected parties. Through comprehensive technical explanations provided by TRBR, most of the concerns were successfully resolved, fostering mutual understanding and public confidence.

7.4 Radio Spectrum and Radio Apparatus Licensing

7.4.1 Spectrum for 5G or IMT2020 in Vanuatu

Over the past three decades, the mobile industry has transformed society through the evolution of 2G, 3G, and 4G networks. The advent of 5G—also known as IMT-2020—is expected to further build upon these advancements, enabling significant improvements in mobile connectivity, service delivery, and innovation across various sectors including education, health, transport, agriculture, and retail.

5G introduces a new network architecture offering speeds exceeding 10 Gbps, ultra-low latency under 4 milliseconds, and support for massive device connectivity. These capabilities will enable the development of new services, applications, and economic opportunities in both urban and rural environments.

TRBR, through stakeholder consultations, identified suitable spectrum bands and issued Decision 1 of 2022 on Spectrum Identified for IMT-2020 (5G) in

Vanuatu. This decision laid the foundation for future 5G deployment and spectrum planning.

In 2024, TRBR received significant interest from operators seeking access to the identified spectrum bands. Due to high demand exceeding available spectrum, TRBR initiated the development of a proposed framework to ensure fair and efficient spectrum allocation.

TRBR assigned spectrum to operators within the bands identified in Decision 1 of 2022. To prevent spectrum warehousing, TRBR also advised operators to request only the spectrum they can effectively deploy and utilize. As a further incentive to encourage the adoption and rollout of 5G services—particularly in urban areas with growing data demands—the assigned spectrum remains temporarily exempt from regulatory fees until such time 5G services are in service.

7.4.2 Radio Apparatus Licenses and their obligations (ongoing)

Annually, TRBR issues new licenses and renews existing ones in compliance with the Radio Apparatus License (Fees) Regulation Order No. 153 of 2012. At the commencement of Quarter 1 and the conclusion of Quarter 4 each year, TRBR releases public notices to remind all Radio Apparatus License Holders to either renew their license or ensure that they are legally operating their radio apparatus for the upcoming calendar year.

In 2024, TRBR observed a rise in the number of radio apparatus holders, decreasing from 712 to 675. This figure encompasses those who are also exempt from Radio Apparatus License fees. TRBR remains committed to raising awareness and actively encouraging Radio Apparatus holders to apply for the necessary licenses.

Table below shows the total number of Apparatus Licenses issued in 2024.

Land Mobile	56
Amateur	2
Amateur Visitor	15
Marine	34
Fixed Links	430
Aeronautical & Aircraft	22
VSAT	100+
Satellite Earth Station	2
Broadcasting	14
Total Radio Apparatus Licenses	675+

Table 4: Total number of Apparatus Licenses issued in 2024

7.5 Technical Compliance and Enforcement

Despite a challenging year due to logistical challenges and setbacks caused by the December earthquake, TRBR continued its strong focus on regulatory compliance within the telecommunications sector. Building upon previous efforts, TRBR engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including broadcasters, mobile network operators, land mobile users, amateurs, satellite users, satellite service providers, to ensure that all radio communication apparatus and operations remain properly licensed and compliant with national regulations.

Key compliance activities undertaken in 2024 included:

1. Issuance of Renewal Notices

TRBR issued renewal notices for Radio Apparatus Licenses across multiple user categories, including maritime vessels, aeronautical stations, aircraft, amateur radio, land mobile stations, land base stations, and microwave fixed links.

2. Starlink Advisory and Monitoring

As of early 2024, Starlink had not been issued a license to operate in Vanuatu yet, and the TRBR have issued continuous reminders to the public and relevant users advising against the use of Starlink terminals until such a license is officially granted. This measure ensures that all satellite communication services operate within the legal framework and do not interfere with authorized services.

3. Microwave Fixed Link Data Verification

Mobile operators were requested to review and update their microwave fixed link data. This step is critical to maintaining accurate records for licensing and interference management, and to ensure that all transmission sites are properly authorized and aligned with TRBR's spectrum management framework.

These activities reflect TRBR's ongoing commitment to technical enforcement and its role in maintaining the integrity and reliability of Vanuatu's telecommunications infrastructure.

7.6 Type Approval and Conformity Standard Regulation

The Telecommunications, Radiocommunications, and Broadcasting Type Approval and Conformity to Technical Standards Regulation was officially gazette in 2018. This regulation primarily aims to ensure that any telecommunications, radiocommunications, and broadcasting devices and equipment imported into the country for sale or use have undergone type approval and comply with the necessary technical standards.

7.6.1 TRBR Module Integrated in Vanuatu Electronic Single Window System

TRBR type approval module for processing import permit and Registration Certificate has been integrated into the Vanuatu electronic Sing Window System (VeSW) since September 2022, this year 2024 marks the second year that import permits are being processed online via the Single Window System, starting from Submitting of an application, to review and acceptance of application, to approval and processing payment and receipt for the permits. Through awareness and consultation with TRBR stakeholders and the VeSW team, more clients are using the system to apply for import permit for RTTE, broadcasting and satellite devices that are imported into the country.

Through awareness which TRBR has been conducting in collaboration with the Labor Department under the PALM Scheme, lots of returning workers have been using the single window to process import. They have engaged with recognized Customs Brokers who have access to TRBR single Window Module to process their import permits, which resulted in their devices not being detained by Customs Officers at the Ports of entry.

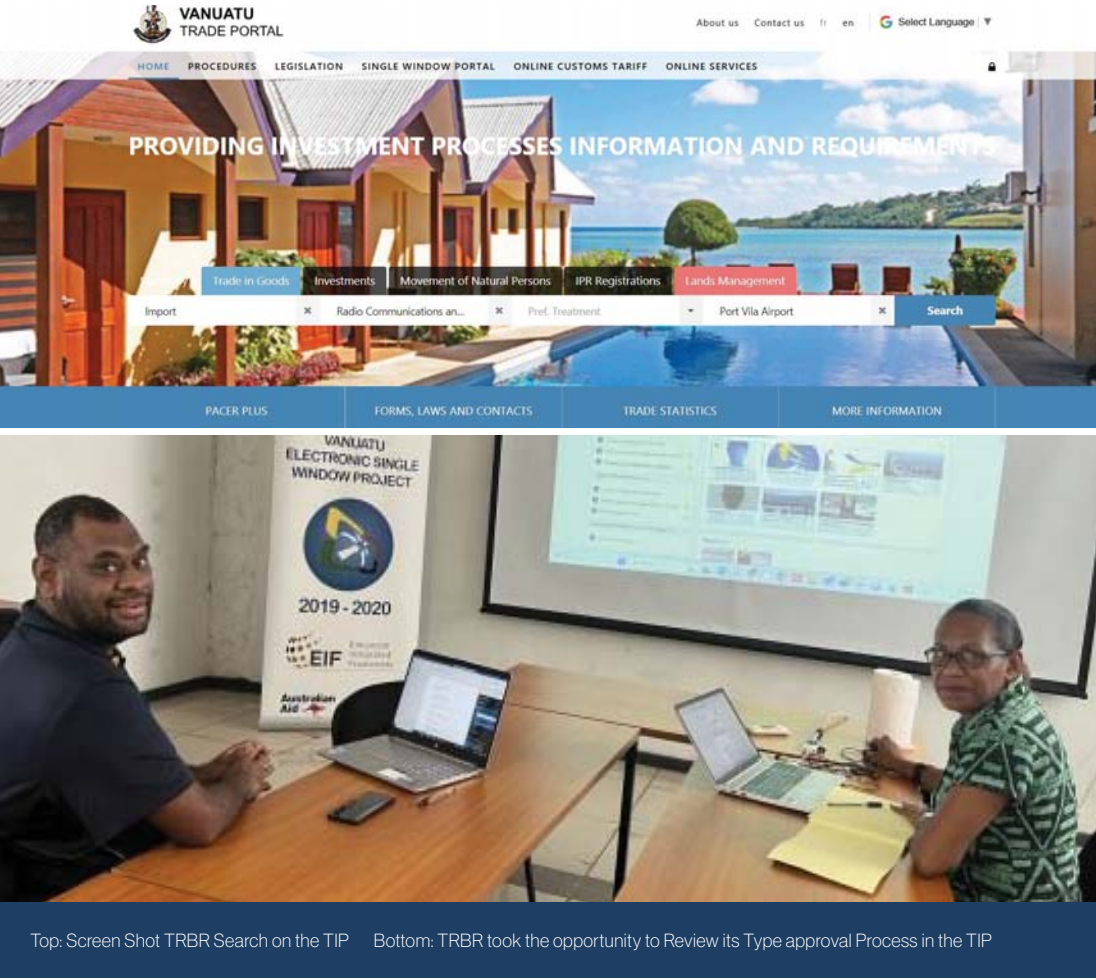
7.6.2 TRBR Technical Departments participates in Single Window and Communications Working Group, (SWCWG)

On August 14th 2024, the technical department was fortunate to participate on a half day meeting with the Single Window and Communications group, which was held in the Single Window Office Opposite the Ecole Coladeau. The SWCWG was established under the Trade Facilitation Steering Committee (TFSC) and the purpose of this working group is to provide support to both the Vanuatu electronic Single Window (VeSW) Project and the Vanuatu Trade Information Portal (TIP).

One of the main items on the meeting agenda was the length of time taken by agencies to process applications and clearance in the system. The agencies were urged

to make the effort to ensure expedite processing times, and to further ensure that their required processing times are published on the TIP.

The meeting also took the opportunity to remind the agencies to review their processes on the TIP and make sure that the information are updated. Subsequently, TRBR has taken this opportunity to review its type approval process in the TIP. As of August 2024, TRBR Type approval process has been published in the TIP. The Vanuatu Trade Portal is accessible here: <https://tradeportal.gov.vu>.



Top: Screen Shot TRBR Search on the TIP Bottom: TRBR took the opportunity to Review its Type approval Process in the TIP

7.6.3 TRBR Type Approval Clients Single Window and Overseas Manufacturer

To date there are 168 local clients who are using the Single Window system to apply for an import permit or a registration certificate. These include some of the biggest importers of ICT devices in the country such as Computer World, Computer City, SPIM, Wilco, and Pacific Retailing to name a few in Port Vila and LCM and Island Duty Free in Luganville. The ISP providers have also been using the VeSW to import their devices, such as Pacific Network, Engineering Business Services Limited, ODC, PCS. Vodafone, Digicel and Wantok, the teleco operators in the country also have been using the system to import telecommunication equipment into the country for the purpose of extending their coverage and

also to upgrade and maintain their networks. Individuals who are importing ICT or RTTE devices from overseas either for personal or commercial purpose and also have been using the Single Window system to facilities the importation of their devices. This has demonstrated a shift from manual processing to online processing as this will save time and reduce the use of paper to print permits, thus keeping the environment safe.

The number of new Overseas Manufacturers Client this year have also increased slight to 2 new clients who have applied to TRBR, which gives a total of 131 Manufacturers client in 2024.

7.6.4 Type Approval Applications.

Application for importer permits and registration certificate using the single window system has continue to increase each year. This year TRBR processed 471 import permits, from 471 permit applications, 28 applications were processed by TRBR office in Luganville Santo and 308 registration certificates of which 16 Certificate were processed in Lugainville. Import permits attract a fee of 1000 vatu per model and the registration certificate attracts a fee of 6000 vatu

per model. Overseas manufacturers continue to apply to for Manufacturers Certificate for their devices to be imported into Vanuatu. This year TRBR have received about 77 Manufacturers Certificate applications compared to 108 applications in 2023.

A total of 856 applications were processed this year, which include Local Import Permits, Local Registration Certificate and Overseas Manufacturers Certificate.

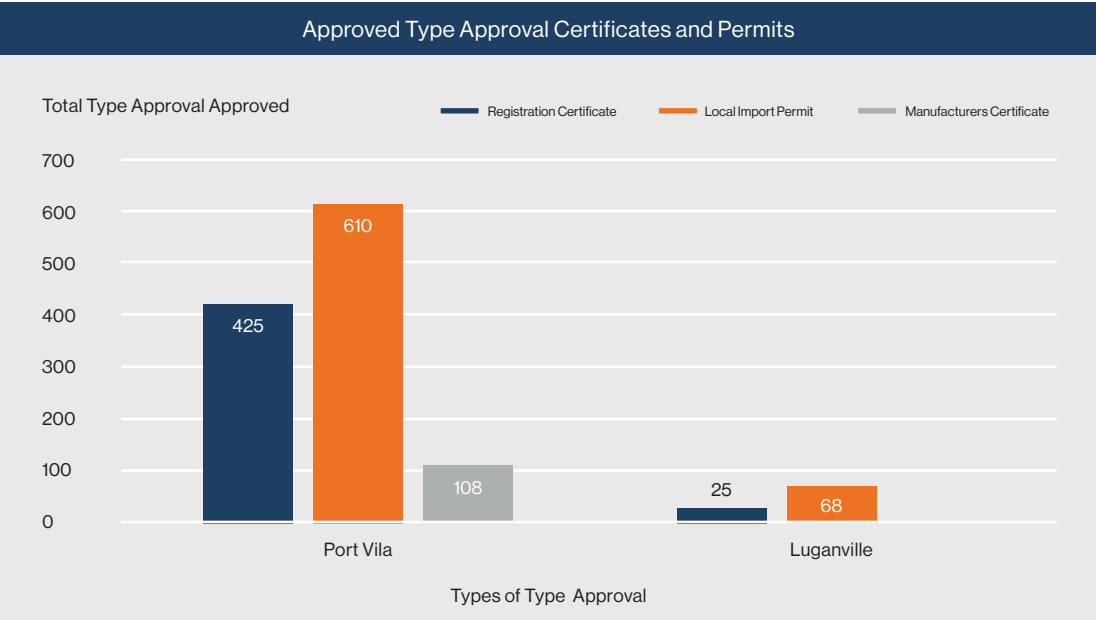


Figure 11: Total number of Certificate and Import Permit

Type	Port Vila	Luganville	Total
Import Permit	443	28	471
Registration Certificate	289	16	308
Manufacturers Certificate	77		77
Total			856

Table 5: Approved Type Approval certificate and Permits.

7.7 QOS Status for Vanuatu Telecommunications Services

TRBR's monitoring of Quality of Service (QoS) is a vital exercise to ensure that telecommunications service providers adhere to established performance standards. This monitoring helps to benchmark service quality and identify areas for improvement to enhance the overall user experience.

In 2024, TRBR conducted comprehensive QoS and coverage audits across several islands, with support from an external consultant specializing in network performance evaluation. These audits were based on the parameters outlined in the 2021 QoS Guidelines, ensuring consistency and reliability in the evaluation process.

The TRBR Technical Team carried out QoS and coverage audits on the following islands:

1. Efate (including Emau, Nguna, Moso, and Lelepa)
2. Tanna
3. Malakula
4. Santo (including Malo and Aore)

Detailed reports were produced for each audited location, and TRBR facilitated face-to-face meetings with the concerned operators to present the findings, share performance data, and discuss corrective actions. This collaborative effort promotes accountability and continuous improvement in service quality across Vanuatu.

7.8 TRBR Online Services

The implementation of online services established in 2021, within the technical unit of TRBR aims to improve client services through greater flexibility, cost saving, faster delivery of service, and increase professionalism and transparency. In 2023, the TRBR have recorded 92 online applications including online payment through the payment portal. Most of the client who uses this online platform for application and payment are international customers.

Type of Online Application.	Total number of Application received online
Type Approval for Manufacturers.	1548
Radio Apparatus License.	53

Table 6: Online Application

7.9 Electromagnetic Radiation (EMF)

Radio Frequency (RF) is an essential part of the electromagnetic spectrum, ranging from 3 kHz to 300 GHz, and is widely used by devices such as televisions, mobile phones, Wi-Fi routers, and radars for communication and broadcasting purposes. RF fields are categorized into non-ionizing and ionizing radiation. Non-ionizing radiation, which includes RF emissions, operates at frequencies below the ultraviolet (UV) band and is generally considered to pose minimal health risks. In contrast, ionizing radiation—found above the UV band—has the potential to alter cellular structures and is associated with increased health risks, including cancer.

The growing presence of wireless communication technologies has led to increased public concern over potential health effects from prolonged exposure to RF radiation, especially from infrastructure such as mobile base stations. In response to these concerns, the TRBR initiated the development of an Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Radiation Guideline.

In 2024, TRBR launched a public consultation process to inform and involve stakeholders in the development of this EMF Guideline. The consultation is in line with TRBR's mandate under the TRBR Act amended, which empowers the Regulator to establish regulations and guidelines in support of public safety and industry compliance.

The objectives of the EMF Guideline are to:

- Establish clear and scientifically grounded exposure limits for RF-based EMF radiation;
- Ensure that exposure remains within internationally recognized safety thresholds;
- Provide a framework for compliance and enforcement, applicable to manufacturers, importers, suppliers, and operators dealing with RF-emitting equipment;
- Address public concerns by promoting transparency and regulatory oversight;
- Ensure that equipment used in Vanuatu does not pose undue risk to health and safety.

TRBR's public consultation included the release of a draft document outlining the proposed EMF limits, compliance mechanisms, and enforcement provisions. Stakeholders were invited to submit feedback and recommendations, helping shape the final version of the guideline.

This initiative reflects TRBR's proactive role in safeguarding public health while supporting the responsible and sustainable growth of Vanuatu's telecommunications and broadcasting infrastructure.

7.10 Local Roaming

In 2024, TRBR conducted a public consultation on the implementation of national roaming for emergency numbers to improve public safety during emergencies and natural disasters. The initiative focuses on ensuring that calls to emergency numbers (911, 112, and 000) are successfully routed, even when a user's home mobile network is unavailable.

Both mobile operators acknowledged the feasibility of the proposal but cited financial constraints as a barrier to implementation. In response, TRBR proposed cost-effective alternatives, including the use of existing infrastructure to reroute emergency calls, and the introduction of load balancing and backup routing mechanisms. These solutions aim to improve emergency call connectivity without requiring major investments.

To ensure long-term implementation, TRBR is considering an amendment to the TRBR Act to mandate national

roaming for emergency numbers. This amendment would provide a legal framework for enforcing compliance and clarifying operator responsibilities regarding emergency service access.

TRBR also plans to work with the government to explore funding support and to establish a Central Emergency Response Centre, which would streamline communication between the public and key emergency services such as the police, hospitals, and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

This initiative underscores TRBR's ongoing commitment to enhancing national emergency preparedness and ensuring uninterrupted access to critical communication services during disasters.

7.11 Technical Guidelines for Terrestrial Broadcasters

TRBR has observed steady growth in the broadcasting sector and continues to address interference complaints from licensed broadcasters. Investigations have confirmed coverage gaps and weak signal areas in sound broadcasting, reinforcing the need for a unified technical standard.

To address this, TRBR initiated the development of a Technical Guideline for Terrestrial Broadcasting Services in Vanuatu, as outlined in its 2022 and Beyond Work Plan. Following the public consultation launched on January 26, 2024, input was gathered from broadcasters and government stakeholders. An in-person consultation was also held on March 1, 2024, at Chantilly's on the Bay.

The guideline has been structured into eight parts, scheduled for monthly release from March to October 2024. Throughout the consultation period, eight comments were received. Feedback from UCB (FM 102.5) on Parts 1 and 2, and from VBTC on Part 6, were reviewed and incorporated into the final guideline.

This structured rollout aims to enhance signal quality, ensure consistent technical standards across all broadcasters, and address ongoing coverage challenges across Vanuatu.

8 Implementation of the Universal Access Policy(UAP)

8.1 General

The implementation of the Vanuatu Government's UAP has had a significant impact on the people's lives, particularly in the remote rural areas of the country, connecting the underserved and unserved population. Vodafone Vanuatu and Digicel Vanuatu remained committed to the UAP implementation. The implementation timeframe of the UAP came to an end on the 1st of January 2024. Although the policy timeframe has ended, the engagement of telcos in the UAP commitment continues, based on the undertaking agreement phases that TRBR had with the two mobile operators.

8.2 Government Universal Access Policy (UAP) Objective

The objective of the UAP is that 98% of the total population should have access to telecommunications services by 1st of January 2024. Telecommunications services include:

- Voice;
- Narrowband data services, including text messaging; and
- Broadband Internet services that shall enable a download speed of at least 2Mbps and upload speed of at least 1 Mbps.

8.2.1 UAP Implementation

UAP implementation continues to make steady progress, with Vodafone and Digicel maintaining their commitment as the major players. As the implementation of the UAP continues to extend to the remote areas with significantly smaller populations, the telcos are exploring cost effective technology for the last mile connectivity. The traditional mobile towers have proven to be very costly for deployment into the rural areas with lesser population. As such, the return on investment could be very challenging to achieve. VSAT technology has emerged as the favored choice for last-mile connectivity due to its cost effectiveness in comparison to terrestrial mobile towers.

The UAP objective is that a 98% of the Vanuatu Population will have access to narrowband and broadband connectivity. TRBR will be able to confirm the population percentage in the UAP closure report, scheduled for release towards the end of 2026. However, Satellite broadband connectivity is 100% geographically covered. With a Kacific VSAT equipment or Starlink standard kit, one may connect from anywhere in the country.

A secondary objective of the UAP was to ensure that all Government offices and schools had the ability to access broadband data and internet services and those services offered outside Port Vila and Luganville were of comparable cost as that available in Port Vila and Luganville.

Leveraging satellite connections, and with the aid of wifi extension equipment, its signal can cover distances of up to 100 meters in radius.

The rollout of the UAP sites was undertaken in phases, and from 2015 to 2024, TRBR had engaged the telcos in a total of 4 Phases (UAP01 to UAP04). With the implementation of UAP01 to UAP04, 50 UAP towers have been built throughout the country, with 13 towers in progress. In areas with a population of less than 200, VSAT technology is utilized, with a total of 6 VSATs installed in very remote locations.

		Area	Technology	Build Status
UAP 2nd Undertaking Agreement-2021-2022				
1	VOD	Malekula North West- Potovro, wowo, Tanmial)	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
		Malo-South	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
2	VOD	Malekula South-Forum, Ahkam, Malfakal	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
3	VOD	Pamma-Tavie, Tavie Airport	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
4	VOD	Epi-South	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
5	VOD	Mataso	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
6	VOD	Efate South East-ETON, Pangpang 1&2 Elkress	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
7	VOD	Efate North East-Epau	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
8	VOD	Efate North West- Tamate-Maugaliliu	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
9	VOD	Nguna-Utanglang	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
10	VOD	Tanna East	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
11	VOD	Tanna South	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
12	VOD	Tanna White Sands Area- near Volcanoe	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
13	VOD	Futuna-Matangi	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
		Futuna-Mission Bay	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
14	VOD	Aneityum-Port Patrick	VSAT with WIFI	COMPLETED
15	DIGI	Malo North West	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
16	DIGI	Santo Big Bay	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
17	DIGI	Epi North West	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
18	DIGI	Paama South	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
19	DIGI	Tanna North West	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
UAP 3rd Under Taking Agreement 2022-2023				
20	VOD	Malekula-North West A	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
21	VOD	Malekula North West B	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
22	VOD	Ambrym South West	Mobile Site	COMPLETED

		Area	Technology	Build Status
23	VOD	Santo North West- Valpei, Petani, Molboe	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
24	VOD	Santo -Sara, Kole, Tokar	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
25	VOD	Penetecost East	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
26	VOD	Aniwa	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
27	DIGI	Santo-Palon, Turtle Bay	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
28	DIGI	Santo-South	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
29	DIGI	Malekula North West B	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
30	DIGI	Emao-Mapua, Marow	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
31	DIGI	Efate-Dark Bush	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
UAP-4th Undertaling Agreement 2023-2024				
32	VOD	Ambae South - Lolovele	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
33	VOD	Ambae West- Walakesa	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
34	VOD	Malekula Central	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
35	VOD	Aneityum-Port Patrick (upgrade)	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
36	VOD	Santo north-Pesena	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
37	VOD	Malekula-North West inland-East Coastal Area	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
38	VOD	Emae -Tongamea	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
39	VOD	Vanualava-Wasaka	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
40	VOD	Efat- Eratap Point	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
41	VOD	Paama South	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
42	DIGI	Akam Island-Malfakal to Hokai	Mobile Site	IN PROGRESS
43	DIGI	Santo West Coast	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
44	DIGI	Malekula-Central- Unua, Rensary	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
45	DIGI	Santo-Bombua Area, East Malo. Aore East/Tutupa/Bokisa	Mobile Site	COMPLETED
46	DIGI	Efate-Eton, Dry greek, Banana Bay	Mobile Site	COMPLETED

Table 7: Sites under UAP Agreement 1 to Agreement 4

8.2.2 Telecommunication Grants and Government Initiative

The Community Telecommunications Grant (CTG) is an annual initiative designed to facilitate communities' access to internet and ICT services. Its primary objective is to establish connectivity in regions where mobile terrestrial networks are absent or deficient. Since its inception in 2018, a total of 28 recipients have been beneficiaries of the grant. The grant supports projects with a budget of up to one million, five hundred thousand vatu (1,500,000 VUV). It encompasses provisions of a

VSAT with wifi extension equipment, laptops, printers, solar systems, and covers internet expenses for three months. In cases where there are no applications specifically requesting coverage improvement, the grant may be allocated to other areas, such as supporting ICT literacy training, upgrading database systems (e.g., enhancing storage capacity), and establishing organizational websites.

		Area	Technology	Implementatti on Status
TELECOMMUNICATION GRANTS-2019				
47	TRBR	Tongariki-Erata Community	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
48	TRBR	Pentecost Contral-Metsisi College	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
TELECOMMUNICATION GRANTS-2020				
49	TRBR	Malo-Kitacu primary School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
50	TRBR	Malo-Atariboae Clinic	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
51	TRBR	Pentecost Central-Bwatnapne	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
TELECOMMUNICATION GRANTS/School Initiative-2021				
52	TRBR	Aneityum South-Umej school	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
53	TRBR	Malekula South East-Mekken School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
54	RBR/MC	Toga Torres-Bakavegug School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
55	RBR/MC	Urepaparapara-Shelili School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
56	RBR/MC	Motalava-Telvet School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
57	RBR/MC	Motalava-Tehlei School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
58	RBR/MC	Mota island-Pasalele School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
59	RBR/MC	Vanualava-Baldwin Lonsdale memorial School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
60	RBR/MC	Gaua-Santa Maria School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED

		Area	Technology	Implementatti on Status
61	RBR/MC	South Gaua-Saranta school	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
62	RBR/MC	Gaua-Silver Memorial School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
63	RBR/MC	Merelava-Nergar School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
64	RBR/MC	Merelava-Vaes School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
TELECOMMUNICATION GRANTS-2022				
64	TRBR	Pele Island-Tangovawia School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
65	TRBR	Malekula Central-Hatbol Community	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
66	TRBR	North Ambae-Lolopuepue Health Center	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
TELECOMMUNICATION GRANTS-2023				
67	TRBR	North Ambae-Simon School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
68	TRBR	South Ambae-Talairoroi School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
69	TRBR	North Tanna-Loanpaket School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
70	TRBR	South Malekula-Ahkam Island Community	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
TELECOMMUNICATION GRANTS-2024				
71	TRBR	North Erromango-Punamalah Community	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
72	TRBR	South Erromango-South River School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED
73	TRBR	Makira-Makira School	VSAT with WIFI Access	COMPLETED

Table 8: Sites Under Telecommunication Grant Project since 2019

8.2.3 UAP Implementation. Cost and Subsidization

The combined expenditure for implementing the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Undertaking obligations along with the UAP other program amounts to approximately VUV816,998,092. Over the span of three years, the UAP levy foregone totals up to VUV445,754,158 which is about 55% of the total cost. TRBR has subsidized 10% of this total amount, contributing VUV79,927,125 from both the UAP fund and TRBR Voluntary contribution. Operator contributions

make up the remaining 291,316,182vt which is about 35% of the total cost of establishing the sites. Anticipated annual operational costs for the UAP sites stand at VUV86,704,578, with an expected yearly revenue of VUV60,049,252 generated from these locations, and which generally means these sites are unprofitable.

8.3 Community Telecommunications Grant

TRBR is reaching out to the very last mile areas of the Country with its Community Telecommunications Grant, connecting people with their loved ones and the world, and positively impacting the lives of the people both socially and economically. In 2024, the CTG was awarded to 2 schools and a community; these include Punamalah community in the far North of Erromango, South River School in the South of Erromango, and Makira School on the Island of Makira. The projects for these 3 beneficiaries include: VSAT (a satellite broadband equipment), a wifi extension equipment with a coverage range of more than 200 meters, a vouching system which enable access to the members of the community through sale of vouchers, paid internet subscription for a 3 months period, SD-WAN Firewall that filters content for security purposes, Wall mount 4RU Rack for securing internet/ ICT indoor equipment from dust, a multifunction printer

(copier/Printer/Scanner), and a Solar AC System with a capacity of 1313Wh with a 3 days autonomy. The total cost of the project was 3,495,740 VUV.

For the Punamalah community and South River Community, the VSAT equipment is their only means of communication. Prior to the installation of the Equipment, the members of both communities have to work distance to access a mobile network.

A statement from a member of the South River Community which says "On Sunday 12th of September 2024 at 2pm, I was able to receive a first historical video call which lasted around 15 minutes through Facebook Messenger App, with my younger brother in South River Erromango, and I was able to speak to my family members including women, men and the children".



VSAT, Printer and Solar Panel at South River School, South Erromango



VSAT, Wifi Extension Equipment, Solar Battery, and Wall Mount 4RU Rack at Punamalah Community, North Erromango

8.4 CTG Internet and ICT Facility Basic ICT training

In ensuring continuity in the operations of the Internet and ICT facilities established under the TRBR Community Telecommunications Grant and other TRBR initiatives, our ICT and Internet Governance team has conducted basic technical training for the facility coordinators. The training covers the following topics: internal network, troubleshooting, and understanding how to connect the correct cables to printers, laptops, and internet modems and routers. The schools that benefited from the training in 2024 include:

- Loanpakel School, North Tanna
- Simon School, North Ambae
- Talairoroi Leleo School, South Ambae

TRBR ICT and Internet Governance Officer, and Headmaster of Simon Primary School North Ambae.



TRBR ICT and Internet Governance Officer, and Headmaster of Simon Primary School North Ambae.

9 ICT & Internet Governance Activities

The Internet Governance and ICT section within TRBR is responsible for two key functions.

First, it manages the corporate network by providing ICT support across the organization, as well as maintaining TRBR's public image through its website and social media platforms. The ICT team also supports the Universal Access Policy (UAP) and technical teams, particularly in training and the implementation of remote internet sites.

Second, it oversees the Internet Governance mandate, specifically the management of the .vu top-level domain. As part of the global internet infrastructure, .vu management plays a critical role in ensuring that this national digital resource remains available 24/7 and secure for use in email and online services.

Beyond its operational responsibilities, the IG and ICT team actively participates in international industry forums, training programs, and contributes to local initiatives that promote ICT awareness among the public.

In 2024, the team delivered several major projects, including a Dispute Resolution Service, developing a Reserved Names Policy, conducting training sessions for CLICC users and administrators, and supporting a range of community-based ICT initiatives.

9.1 Dispute Resolution Service

A dispute resolution service is a critical component of any domain name registry, including the .vu domain space. ICANN, the governing body of the Domain Name System (DNS), provides a Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) that top-level domain registries and registrars can adopt.

For the .vu country code top-level domain (ccTLD), TRBR has been working over the years— with support from InternetNZ (the New Zealand ccTLD)— to develop a tailored dispute resolution framework. In 2024, a final draft was completed, and it is scheduled for public consultation in 2025 before being officially finalized.

9.2 .vu ccTLD Marketing Drive

As part of its strategy to grow the .vu ccTLD, TRBR has been actively engaging with the local community and collaborating with stakeholders interested in promoting .vu as a trusted brand for online presence, trade, and business activities. To strengthen this effort, two Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were signed with the Vanuatu Intellectual Property Office (VanIPO) and the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission (VFSC) to foster closer cooperation.

As a direct outcome of these partnerships, the VFSC has expressed interest in becoming a local registrar for the .vu ccTLD, as such the MOU between TRBR and VFSC has been revised during the internet forum held at the Melanesian hotel on the 27th November, 2024. This marks a significant step forward for the .vu namespace, as VFSC is the regulator for business names and companies in Vanuatu.

9.3 Reserved Names

Since the transition of the .vu ccTLD from Telecom Vanuatu Ltd (TVL) to TRBR in 2020 a list of reserved and restricted names was compiled by TVL and was kept with the registry. This year a names management policy was developed and will go into consultation in 2025. This policy will determine criteria for names reservations, restrictions and approval process. TRBR is currently working with local stakeholders, including chiefs and local authorities, to finalize this policy that will be in harmony with cultural and geographical requirements.

9.4 Registered Domains

As at December 2024, GoDaddy recorded a total of 2201 domain registered domain names. 74% of these domains are first level domain as in the pie chart below. In the same year, Godday also recorded a total of 18 new registered domain, 96 domain being renewed, and 5 domain name being transferred among registrars as recorded in the table below.

TLD Extension	New Create	Renew	Transfer	Restored
.vu	13	80	5	0
.com.vu	1	7	0	0
.net.vu	0	0	0	0
.org.vu	1	0	0	0
.edu.vu	0	3	0	0
.gov.vu	3	6	0	0

Table 9: Record of registered domain

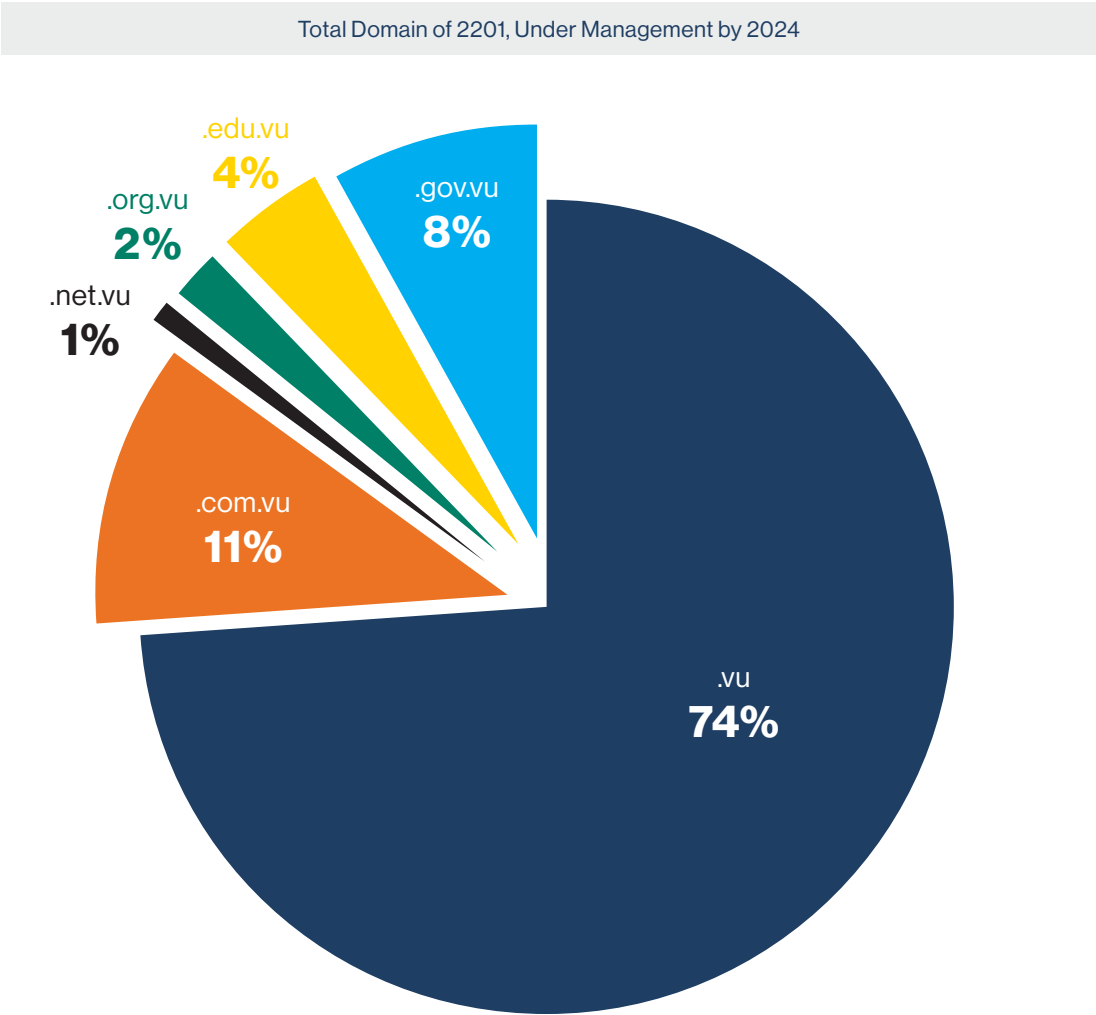


Figure 12: First and Second Level domain administered in 2024

9.5 Training for CLICC Sites

TRBR is the implementer of the Vanuatu Government Universal Access Policy (UAP). As part of this responsibility, TRBR has, over the years, financially supported small remote sites with internet access, power, and in some cases, computer labs. As an ongoing assistance to these sites, a training for these sites has been developed to help with their management and sustainability. This training includes the following topics.

- Introduction to Internet technologies
- What is Bandwidth?
- Different ways of delivering the internet
- Site setup
- Troubleshooting internet connection
- Site continuity
- Disaster and Risk Management Plan

9.6 Regulatory Internet Forum

The Internet Regulatory Forum was first initiated in 2015 and the rationale behind is it to create a platform to engage with stakeholders of the internet. very similar to a Multi-stakeholder Internet Governance Forum. The annual event brings about discussions and consultations on various topics and regulatory matters. The first forum set the stage for the consultation on the .vu ccTLD regulation which was later finalized in 2016. The public forum ended in 2018 when the Vanuatu Internet Governance Forum was set up and became a closed annual training session for the .vu ccTLD local Registrars. The public forum was introduced again in 2023 and this year it is the second after 2018. The 2024 forum focused on the theme “Accommodating Change” which implies that whenever there is a technology change, the regulatory environment to accommodate these changes. The main topics covered were

1. Regulatory updates from TRBR on new regulations
2. National Digital Strategy of Vanuatu presented by the Department of Digital Transformation and Communications
3. Artificial Intelligence focusing on the European AI Regulation presented by Karolina Iwanska of the European Center for Non-Profit Law.

The forum was attended by representatives of the local internet community, including TRBR licensees, government representatives, civil society representatives, and the general ICT business community.

9.7 Highlights from community engagements

Apart from its regular projects as outlined in the 2024 work plan, the IG and ICT sector also had some engagement with the community. Apart from TRBR contributions, officers from the sections have been engaged in supporting these local initiatives. A few of these engagements are highlighted in the sub-sections below.

9.7.1 SMART SISTAS Girls ICT Camp 2024

The SMART Sista's Girls Camp initiative has been an ongoing annual event since 2016, supported by Peace Corps Vanuatu, TRBR, and DCDT (formerly known as OGCIO), as well as other local sponsors. The main objective behind this initiative is to introduce girls at the

young ages of 11 to 16 years to be introduced to computer programming, basic media and music production and basic robotics. This knowledge would then empower these young minds to look at engineering and ICT as a career pathway for them. Even this year there is very less females that have completed tertiary studies in the field of ICT. Even this year during the ICT Days celebrations, the DG of the Prime Minister of Vanuatu MS Cherol Ala said during her interview with Daily post Vanuatu that it is important for a country like Vanuatu for women to be as equally involved in the ICT sector such as men. And said "And that is a challenge of which I encourage girls in secondary schools to think about a career in ICT because that is the future for Vanuatu, and even for the world".

The 2024 camp was held in Luganville, Santo at the Luganville Municipal Council conference room with the attendance of 12 students mostly from around Sanma province.



9.7.2 Global Robotic Challenge

"FIRST Global is a US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity established by the founder of FIRST® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), Dean Kamen. OUR MISSION is to inspire leadership and innovation in youth from all nations by empowering them through education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics — also known as STEM.

By nurturing cross-cultural communication and cooperation among high-school students around the world through STEM, we empower them to collectively tackle the world's most pressing challenges and come up with solutions that improve quality of life for all. The FIRST Global Challenge is our mechanism for doing so. By bringing these future STEM leaders together in an engaging and collaborative competition that drives home the importance, excitement, and applicability of STEM education, FIRST Global is using robots to build kids that have the self-confidence, skill sets, imagination, courage, and vision to do important things".

The SMART SISTAS program was privileged in 2017 to be invited to participate in the inaugural of FIRST Global Robotics in Washington, DC. Since then, the Committee has sent a team each year until this year, 2024. The event this year was held in Athens, Greece with the Theme: "Sustainable Food Systems". First Global, TRBR and other local partners supported Team Vanuatu which made up of 5 selected students (after a call for expressions of interests) and a mentor,

to participate in the competition. During the competition, the students learn to team up with other students from other countries to work together on their robots. They have 12 matches in total over a period of 4 days and in each match, they team up with two different allies from different countries to compete. The competition has no barrier and was designed for each youth team to engage with other colleagues around the world, despite global geopolitics. The team arrived back in Vanuatu inspired, and most have indicated they would consider STEM as a career option.



9.8 2024 ICT Days Celebration

2024 National ICT Days marks the 12th anniversary of the celebrations after the first one in 2012 at the seafront stage in Port Vila. The celebrations are derived from the ITU World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) that falls on 17th May each year. “World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) is an international day celebrated annually on May 17th. The purpose of this day is to raise global awareness of how digital technologies, and the internet can benefit societies and economies, while

also highlighting ways to bridge the digital divide. The theme for Vanuatu's 2024 National ICT Days was “Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development”. This event, held in May 2024, explored how digital technology can be leveraged to achieve sustainable development goals and fostered collaboration within the ICT sector to discuss digital advancements and strategies”. The event was led by the ICT Days Committee comprised of team members from the TRBR and DCDT.



Group photo of the ICT Days Stakeholders



Cutting of the ICT Day cake by the Hon. Charlot Salwai, Prime Minister of Vanuatu.

Hon. Prime Minister Salwai visiting the SMART Island booth



Evelyn Toa of TRBR was the Master of Ceremony for the 2024 ICT Days celebrations.

Remarks from the co-host, Brian Winji Molitaviti, Regulator of TRBR



Pacific IGF 2024

The Pacific Island Chapter of Internet Society (PICISOC) is the host organization for the Pacific IGF since 2018 after the Pacific IGF in Port Vila Vanuatu, and the Pacific IGF has established itself as a prominent regional platform for multi-stakeholder engagement, discussions, exchanging ideas, and proposing solutions regarding the future of the internet and its governance in the Pacific Islands. The Pacific IGF is regarded as a sub-regional IGF with links to the APriGF and the Global IGF. The Wellington Forum was hosted in Partnership with Asia Pacific Network Information Center (APNIC), a long-time partner of PICISOC. TRBR has been a supporter of Internet Governance initiatives at the national and regional levels for a few years. In 2017 TRBR hosted the Pacific IGF in Port Vila. At this Pacific IGF TRBR was represented by Senior Internet Governance Officer Andrew Molivurae, who is the current Chair of Pacific IGF, and Hanson Waki, who was a fellow at the event.

The discussions in Wellington focused on the topic on “Strengthening Digital Governance and Resilience in the Pacific Islands” with the intention to bring to the table

ideas about how emerging technologies can impact the regulatory landscape of the Pacific islands. One clear example is the now widespread use of Artificial Intelligence in a very short time by internet users across the globe. Many nation-states including the Pacific islands have yet to think about their regulatory framework. Pacific IGF 2024 was able to hear first-hand about the European Artificial Intelligence Regulation presented by Karolina Iwańska who is from the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, This European regulation can be found on this link <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20230601STO93804/eu-ai-act-first-regulation-on-artificial-intelligence>. The second part of the theme focused on how the islands can recover quickly after disasters using technology. The Pacific islands are prone to natural disasters like cyclones, volcanoes, earthquakes, flooding and many others that usually disrupt communications. This introduction of cheaper satellite communications on the islands is being seen as solution for emergency communications.

9.9 Participation at the Pacific ccTLD Forum

The first Pacific ccTLD Forum convened in Wellington this year alongside the Pacific Islands Internet Governance Forum (Pacific IGF). After some discussions within some Pacific ccTLDs, ICANN, and auDA during ICANN and APTLD meetings, there was some consensus to have a smaller group from the Pacific Islands meet annually. This first forum was supported by the Australian Domain Name Authority, auDA.

The two main objectives of this forum are as follows: -

- 1. to bring the discussions around ccTLDs closer to the Pacific since not all ccTLDs in the Pacific are represented at ICANN and APTLD due to financial constraints.

- 2. To provide a platform where stronger ccTLDs in terms of security and expertise will be able to provide advice and assistance to those who may need it.

In this forum, more than 10 ccTLDs were represented, and the open forum allowed each one to present the status of their TLD and network with other ccTLD representatives. The exchange of information was very useful, and one of the key recommendations was to engage in this community regularly. TRBR was represented and shared a presentation on the transition of the .vu ccTLD management and administration from the incumbent provider Telecom Vanuatu Ltd to TRBR.



Andrew Molivurae of TRBR speaking at the Global IGF in Riyadh 2024

9.10 Participation at the Global IGF

The Global Internet Governance Forum was instituted by the United Nations after the World Summit on Information Society of 2005. The objective of the platform is to create a dialogue for different stakeholders of the Internet for better governance of the Internet that includes vendors, service providers, governments, civil societies and others. This internet multi-stakeholder policy dialogue has been convened once annually since its inauguration in October 2006.

Through the support of international partners, TRBR was able to be represented for the first time at the 2024 Global Internet Governance Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 15—19 December 2024. The theme of the forum this year is “Building Our Multistakeholder Digital Future”. The summary report of this forum can be accessed on this link https://intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/305/28529

10 Regulatory Broadcasting and Media Activities

10.1 General information

Guided by its mandate under the TRBR Act, TRBR continues to develop legal frameworks and rules that foster an enabling environment for broadcasting and media organizations to thrive. In 2024, TRBR focused on key initiatives outlined in its annual work plan, including the Broadcasting Regulatory Roadmap, the transition from analogue to digital television, the development of terrestrial television services, the establishment of OTT regulatory guidelines, the introduction of anti-siphoning rules, and the formulation of broadcast advertising guidelines.

Recognizing the vital role advertising plays in modern business, the guideline—introduced in 2024—sets out key principles for the promotion of media and broadcasting services. While compliance is voluntary, the industry is strongly encouraged to follow these principles to promote transparency and accountability.

Importantly, these guidelines do not exempt any broadcaster from adhering to the conditions of its license or the requirements of the Broadcasting Act.

The Guideline can be accessed at <https://www.trbr.vu/public-register/guidelines/advertising-guidelines>.

10.2 Anti siphoning rules

The Anti-Siphoning Rules, introduced in 2024, were established to safeguard public access to events of cultural, social, and national significance by ensuring their availability on free-to-air (FTA) platforms. These rules aim to prevent exclusive broadcasting rights for such events from being secured solely by subscription-based services, thereby guaranteeing that all citizens—regardless of financial means—can share in moments of national pride, cultural importance, and broad public interest.

At the same time, the rapidly evolving media landscape, shaped by shifting consumer preferences, emerging technologies, and diverse content distribution models, highlights the importance of continuously reviewing and updating these rules. This ensures they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with international best practices and are fit for purpose.

10.4 Broadcasting Compliance

In line with the TRBR Act, Section 16E(1) provides that, subject to subsection (2), the Regulator may: (a) vary or revoke any existing conditions; or (b) impose additional conditions on a broadcasting license.

Furthermore, Section 16F(1) states that, subject to subsection (2), the Regulator may, by written notice to the licensee, suspend or revoke a broadcasting license if satisfied that the licensee no longer possesses the financial, technical, or managerial capacity necessary to operate broadcasting services, or if such action is in the public interest.

In 2024, Telsat Pacific Ltd, a broadcast licensee operating terrestrial and satellite television services, voluntarily surrendered its broadcasting license. Following Telsat’s request and the submission of relevant information, TRBR conducted an analysis and subsequently revoked the license.

Similarly, Servicom, another broadcast licensee providing satellite television services, is in the process of winding down operations due to financial challenges. The company is working with TRBR to finalize the closure of its business entity and the revocation of its license.

Additionally, Buzz FM 96.3 has ceased broadcasting on its assigned FM frequency and now operates solely through its digital streaming platform.

10.3 Advertisement guideline

Broadcasting service providers now have an advertising guideline developed to support advertisers, agencies, media outlets, influencers, and other stakeholders, as well as the wider community, in understanding the steps required to ensure that television and radio advertising is clearly identified, in accordance with the Vanuatu Broadcasting Advertising Standards.

10.5 List of Broadcast Licensees in 2024

License Category	License Name	Status	Radio	TV
Radio/TV	VBTC	Active	FM Radio Broadcast	Terrestrial TV
			MW Radio Broadcast	
			SW Radio Broadcast	
Buzz 96.3 FM	Daily Post	Active	FM Radio Broadcast	Streaming online
Capital FM 107	Multimedia	Active	FM Radio Broadcast	
Telsat	Telsat Pacific Ltd	revoked		Terrestrial and Satellite TV (close)
Digicel	Digicel Vanuatu Ltd	Active		Satellite and Mobile TV
Servicom	Video Ezy	Active		Satellite TV (close)x
Hope Channel	SDA	Active	FM Radio Broadcast	Terrestrial TV
United Christian Broadcaster Vanuatu Committee	Vanuatu Christian Council	Active	FM Radio Broadcast	
Trinity Broadcasting Network	TBN	Active	FM Radio Broadcast	

Table 10: List of Broadcasting Licensees

11 Consumer Protection and Awareness

11.1 Overview

The Consumer Affairs Program successfully implemented three key initiatives aligned with its core mandate for the year ended 2024:

- finalization of the 2024 Consumer Survey Report;
- delivery of consumer education and awareness campaigns; and
- resolution of consumer complaints.

The unit’s primary objective is to ensure that all users of telecommunications, radiocommunications, and broadcasting services in Vanuatu are well-informed and empowered to make sound and informed decisions. These initiatives contributed to the broader goal of promoting consumer protection and supporting fair and transparent service delivery across the sector.

11.2 Consumer Survey Report

The Consumer Experience Survey, conducted in 2022 and completed in September 2024, provided valuable insights into consumer interactions with telecommunications, radiocommunications, and broadcasting services. The survey aims to

- Assess consumer experience and satisfaction levels with telecommunications, radiocommunications and broadcasting products and service providers
- Monitor the quality of services offered by telecommunications companies, radio stations and broadcasters from a consumer perspective
- Identify and explore both current and emerging challenges affecting the overall telecommunications, radio and broadcasting experience, with focus on areas of improvement for regulatory intervention.

The targeted population for this survey was the residents of Vanuatu aged 15 years and over who are users of any telecommunications, radiocommunications and broadcasting services.

- a) Telecom Services Consumers – This includes individuals and businesses who are currently using mobile phones services, landline services, internet services or any other telecommunications services offered by the telecom services providers.
- b) Radio Listeners – The target population includes individuals who listen to any radio stations whether through FM/AM or digital platforms like online radio.
- c) Broadcasting services - These are individuals who watch television or consume broadcasting content through various platforms, including cable TV, satellite TV, digital TV, streaming services, and over-the-air broadcasting.

11.2.1 Key Findings

The survey focused on 220 customer experiences with services covering calls, SMS, mobile and fixed internet services, as well as radio and broadcasting services. Feedback was gathered from a sample population of

220 people, representing the overall service experience. Participants' ages ranged from 26 to 75 years, with the majority falling between 26 and 30 years old (figure 13), from all six provinces of Vanuatu.

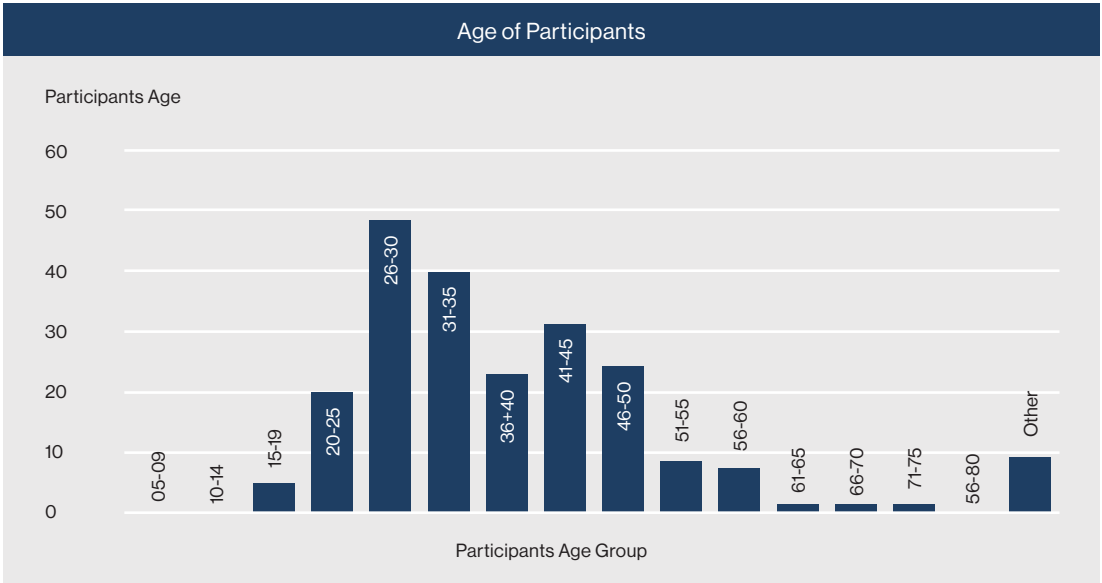


Figure 13: Age of participants participated in the survey

(a) Mostly used Telecom Service

The survey indicates that most consumers use telecom services daily, primarily for mobile voice followed by data, SMS, and fixed internet (figure 14). Digicel has the highest percentage at 48% of the participants who uses their network, followed by Vodafone at 43%, with Wantok being minimally used and others (Figure 15).

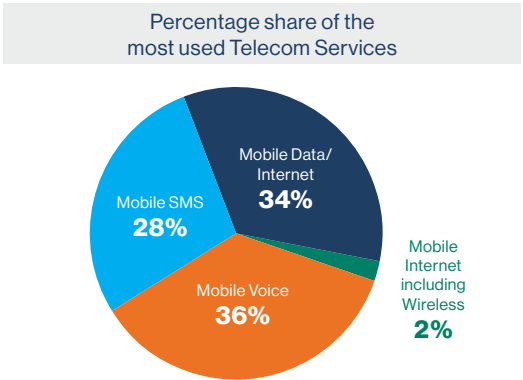


Figure 14: Most used telecom services

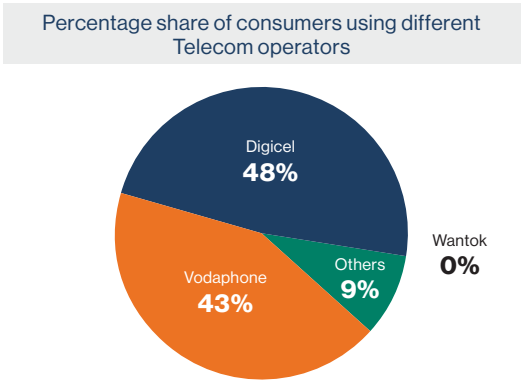


Figure 15: Consumers of different Telecom operators

(b) Frequency of using telecom services

In terms of telecom service usage frequency, 80% of respondents indicated that they use the services daily, 15% weekly, and 4% seasonally or occasionally depending on the varying consumer's needs.

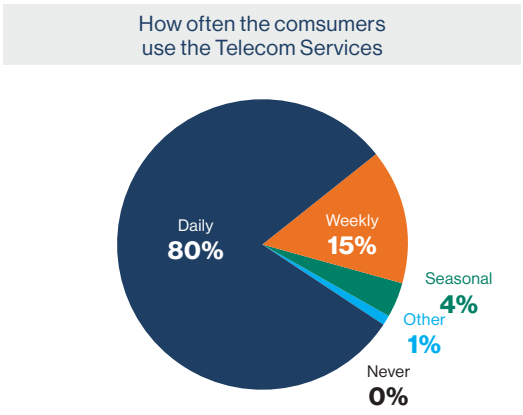


Figure 16: How often consumers use telecom services

(c) Radio and television Users,

The survey findings indicated that a significant portion of participants have access to television, while a slightly smaller group does not. The gap between viewers and non-viewers is relatively narrow, primarily due to factors such as limited access to electricity, geographic constraints impacting TV signal reception, and differences in purchasing power, access to electricity.

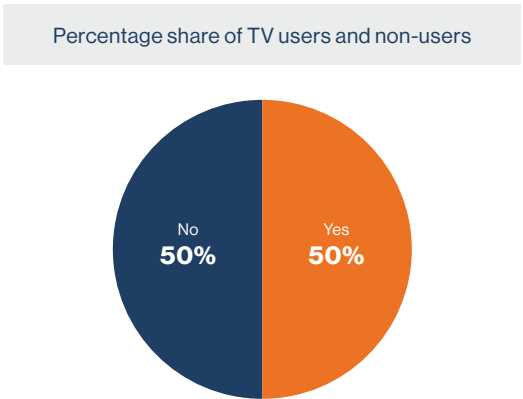


Figure 17: Percentage of TV users and non-users

Unlike television, radio usage displays a much contrast. 66% of participants use or listen to the radio, 34% do not. This significant gap could be due to factors such as digital illiteracy, limited network coverage in certain areas that hinders access to mobile applications for information and news updates, lack of electricity, or simply personal preferences for more convenient options.

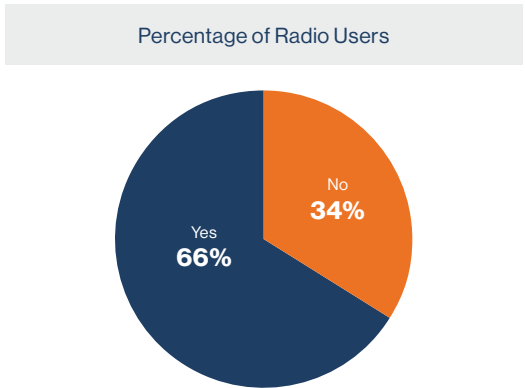


Figure 18: Percentage of Radio Users and non-users

(d) Importance of using Broadcasting/Media Services

Furthermore, most participants utilize radio services primarily to access news bulletins. Given the geographical dispersion of the islands, the lack of network accessibility in many parts of Vanuatu and limited digital literacy, as such radio remains a conventional and crucial method for receiving information and announcements. Following news updates, 31% of respondents use radio for this purpose. Music entertainment follows at 22%, then awareness programs at 17%, talkback shows at 15%, and weather updates also at 15% (figure 19).

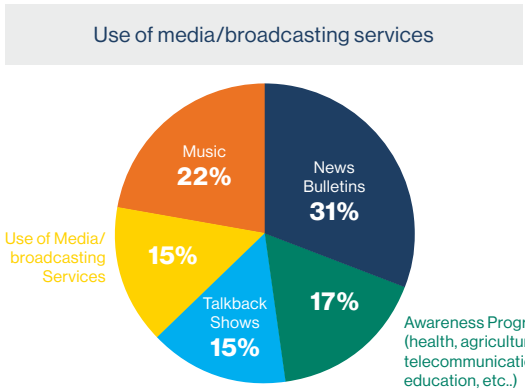


Figure 19: Use of media/broadcasting service

11.3 Consumer Education and Awareness

Between July and December 2024, the Consumer Affairs Unit of the Telecommunications, Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR) successfully carried out consumer awareness initiatives at three major national events: Sanma Day in Nagingo Point, South Santo (24 September) and Tafea Day in Imlau, Tanna (8 October) and Malampa day at lakatoro on 10th October 2024. These outreach programs were designed to strengthen public understanding of consumer rights and the role of TRBR as mandated by the TRBR Act in ensuring fair practices across the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors.

Key areas of focus included consumer rights and protection principles, to ensure that citizens are aware of their rights as consumers of telecommunications and Broadcasting services, and how to address grievances. Participants were also educated on the TRBR's complaint

handling procedures, enabling them to understand the process of addressing their concerns or complaints and how to ensure they get a satisfactory response from their service provider. The sessions also emphasized the importance of SIM registration in line with the Sim Card Registration Regulation Order No. 105 of 2022, as well as online safety and cyber security, as the use of internet has increase, and as a platform for accessing digital services. In addition, the events provided clarity on TRBR's role as the Telecommunications and Broadcasting Regulator mandated by the TRBR Act.

To foster engagement, the programs integrated interactive quizzes and the distribution of branded merchandise, which encouraged active community participation and supported long-term knowledge retention.



11.4 Consumer Complaint and Resolution

The TRBR provides a structured complaint handling process to ensure consumer concerns are addressed fairly and efficiently. Consumers are firstly encouraged to lodge complaints directly with their service provider. If unresolved within a timeframe of five working days, they may escalate the issue to TRBR. Upon receiving a complaint, TRBR assesses its validity, gathers relevant information, and engages with the operator to seek resolution. The process emphasizes transparency,

accountability, and timely feedback, ensuring consumer rights are protected while promoting improved service standards across the telecommunications, radiocommunications, and broadcasting sectors in Vanuatu.

The TRBR complaint handling process is illustrated in the flow chart in figure 20 below.

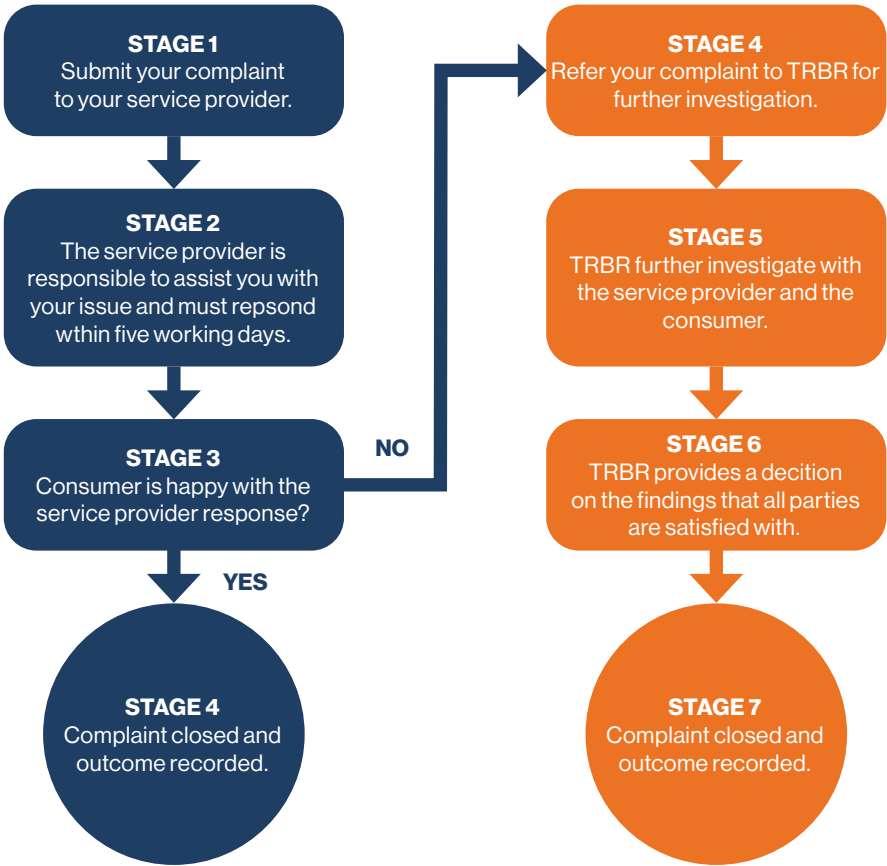


Figure 20: Flow Chart of TRBR's Consumer Complaint Handling Process

Between July and December 2024, the Consumer Affairs unit resolved three formal consumer complaints, all related to telecommunications services.

- Two cases were addressed promptly without mediation,
- One case involved a formal resolution process between the consumer and service provider. The issue was resolved amicably, with the service provider committing to eliminate unfair practices and introduce corrective measures to prevent recurrence.

11.5 Monthly Newsletter

Since July 2024, TRBR has been consistently publishing a monthly newsletter via its official website, highlighting key developments and achievements during the previous month.

The purpose of TRBR publishing a monthly newsletter is to keep stakeholders, consumers, and the general public informed and engaged on developments within the telecommunications, radiocommunications, and broadcasting sectors. The newsletter serves as a platform to:

- Share updates on regulatory activities, policies, and initiatives.
- Raise awareness about consumer rights, complaint procedures, and market trends.
- Provide education on issues such as online safety, cyber security, and SIM registration.
- Promote transparency and accountability by reporting TRBR's work and sector progress.
- Encourage engagement through outreach highlights, upcoming events, and opportunities for feedback.

In short, it strengthens communication, builds trust, and supports informed participation in the telecommunications and Broadcasting ecosystem. The Newsletters can be accessed at <https://www.trbr.vu/archives>.

12 Relations with Key regional and international Stakeholders

The TRBR actively engages in a wide range of regional and international events and maintains strong relationships with organizations abroad through government-led membership affiliations. These includes the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO). In addition, TRBR collaborates with the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), through both memberships and Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs).

Representing Vanuatu, the Regulator served as one of the Vice-Chairs of the APT Policy and Regulation Forum (PRF) from 2019 to 2024. He was first elected during the PRF-19 in Bhutan (2019) and re-elected for a second term at the PRF-21 in Bangkok, Thailand, before completing his tenure in 2024.

TRBR also maintains membership with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a global non-profit organization responsible for managing Internet Protocol (IP) address allocations, protocol identifier assignments, and the administration of both generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) and country code Top-Level Domains (ccTLDs). Furthermore, TRBR is a member of the Asia Pacific Top-Level Domain (APTLD) Association, which supports ccTLD registries across the Asia-Pacific region.

13 2024 Financial Statements

13.1 2024 Income Statements

Income Statement		
For year ended 31 December 2024		
Expressed in VATU	2024	2023
Operating Revenue	205,674,445	190,523,799
Operating Expenses	(186,755,857)	(189,351,791)
Operating Surplus before payment to Universal Access Fund	18,918,588	1,172,008
Universal Access Fund	-	-
Operating Surplus/(deficit) after payment to Universal Access Fund	18,918,588	1,172,008

13.2 2024 Statement of Financial Position

Statement Of Financial Position		
As at 31 December 2023		
Expressed in VATU	2024	2023
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	88,178,070	110,412,953
Receivables	39,958,140	37,009,825
Other Assets	4,373,186	3,265,695
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Plant and Equipment	27,161,114	29,213,191
Total Assets	159,670,510	179,901,664
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and accruals	3,415,516	27,364,946
Provisions	1,530,836	1,209,547
Lease Liability – Right Of Use	5,688,870	5,801,002
GFG Grant - Current	506,294	5,141,770
	11,141,516	39,517,265
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	4,731,504	13,506,814
Lease Liability – Right Of Use	7,982,901	9,981,584
GFG Grant – Non Current	-	-
Total liabilities		
	23,855,921	63,005,663
Net Assets		
	135,814,589	116,896,001
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)		
	135,814,589	116,896,001

14 Register of Consultants in 2024

Name	Position Held	Area of Expertise or Project Responsibilities
Hamilton Locke Pty Ltd (Eric Braun)	Legal Specialist	Eric offers legal advice and specialist assistance and guidance to TRBR on legal, regulatory, and policy matters, and works closely with the Legal team.
Incite Consulting Ltd	Telecoms Competition and Economic Regulatory Expert	Incite Consulting provides general, wide-ranging expert telecommunication regulation guidance; including analysis and determination of relevant markets, a strategic measure of addressing anti-competitive actions, and relevant economic and competition assistance to the TRBR team.
Dr. Amal Punchihewa	Broadcasting and Media Advisor	The Broadcasting and Media Advisor supports TRBR in fulfilling its duties and functions under the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulations Act No. 30 of 2009, as amended, with a focus on the development of broadcasting Regulatory including policies, guidelines, Regulations and other regulatory instruments.

