

**REPUBLIC OF VANUATU**

Ripablik blong Vanuatu

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# THE VANUATU NATIONAL BUREAU

## A Handbook for Members of Parliament

Understanding the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026 - the Bureau, the programmes, the safeguards, and the national-interest case

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### Parliamentary Briefing Pack

Prepared for the Members of Parliament of the Republic of Vanuatu. Established under Council of Ministers Decision No. 273 of 6 October 2025.

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For the information of Members of Parliament

# Contents

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*A guide to the sections of this handbook.*

How to use this handbook.....	3
Executive summary — the case in one page.....	4
<b>Part 1 — Why this, and why now.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Part 2 — What the Bureau is, in plain language.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Part 3 — This is not citizenship.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Part 4 — The economic case: real money into Vanuatu, with a clear Treasury line .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Part 4A — The National Development Fund and the SBD route.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Part 5 — Sovereignty and control: who is really in charge.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Part 6 — Integrity and safeguards.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Part 7 — Governance and Parliament’s continuing role.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Part 8 — How the law is built (what you are voting on).....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Part 9 — Answering the hard questions.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Part 10 — What your support means, and next steps.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Glossary.....	28
Appendix A — At a glance.....	30
Appendix B — The draft Bill in outline.....	31
Appendix C — The full draft Bill (for reference).....	32

## How to use this handbook

*A short guide written for Members — not for lawyers.*

The Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026 is a substantial piece of legislation. This handbook exists so that every Member of Parliament can understand what it does, why it matters for Vanuatu, and how to answer the questions constituents and colleagues will ask — **without needing to read the Bill clause by clause.**

It is written in plain language and in the national interest. Where a technical or legal term is unavoidable, it is explained in the **Glossary** at the back. Wherever the handbook describes a safeguard or a number, it points to where that safeguard lives in the Bill, so any Member can verify it.

### If you read nothing else, read these three things

- **It is not citizenship.** Nothing in this Bill grants Ni-Vanuatu citizenship, nationality, the right to vote, or the right to own custom land. Those remain protected by the Constitution. (Part 3.)
- **The money goes to the Treasury.** The programmes create a new, lawful, non-tax revenue stream paid into Government accounts through separate, audited channels — at no upfront cost to the taxpayer. (Part 4.)
- **Vanuatu stays in control.** Every final decision — to approve, refuse, suspend or revoke — stays with the Government. The technology partner builds and runs the system; it never holds sovereign power. (Part 5.)

*This handbook is a briefing document. It summarises and explains the Bill; in any case of doubt, the text of the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026 as presented to Parliament governs.*

## Executive summary — the case in one page

**The proposal.** The Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026 establishes a single Government body — the Vanuatu National Bureau (the “Bureau”) — to run two core programmes that sell Vanuatu’s administrative services to the world: a National Status — which comes with its own Non-Citizen travel document — and a Digital Residency. Together they turn Vanuatu’s sovereignty and its trusted name into a durable source of national income.

**An official mandate.** This is not speculative. The programme was established by the **Council of Ministers in Decision N°273 of 6 October 2025**, which approved the digital-residency and national-status (non-citizen travel-document) programmes, the Bureau, and the partnership to deliver them, and appointed a Task Force — under the Prime Minister’s authority — to implement it. It is also a deliberate course-correction: a pivot away from the contested “sale of passports” of the past toward a **residency-first, high-integrity model** that sells services, never citizenship.

**The problem it answers.** Vanuatu raises almost all of its revenue from VAT, import duties, and a narrow set of fees, and leans heavily on tourism — an industry exposed to cyclones, pandemics, and global shocks. The country has no broad income tax. When tourism falls, the budget falls with it. Vanuatu needs revenue that does not depend on visitors arriving or on borrowing.

**Why it is safe.** The Bill draws a bright line around citizenship, builds international anti-money-laundering and identity standards into the law itself, keeps every sovereign decision in Government hands, and places the programmes under a public Board that reports to Parliament every year. The substance of each programme can be changed only by an Act of Parliament — so Parliament keeps the final say, this year and in every year to come.

**Why now.** Estonia, Palau and a growing list of states have shown that small, well-run nations can earn real income by issuing trusted digital identities and residencies to a global market. The Pacific is largely open. The first credible Pacific programme will hold an advantage that later entrants cannot easily take back.

**What is being asked of Parliament.** To consider, and ultimately to support on a cross-party basis, the passage of the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026 — so that the programme rests on a national foundation that survives changes of government and earns the confidence of international partners.

### The proposition in one sentence

***A new national institution that earns money for Vanuatu by selling trusted services — never citizenship — under full sovereign control and full parliamentary oversight.***

## Part 1 — Why this, and why now

*The national-interest case, before any technology.*

### 1.1 Vanuatu's revenue challenge

Vanuatu is one of the most tourism-dependent economies in the world, and one of the most exposed to natural disaster. The country has built an admirable open economy with no personal or corporate income tax — but that means the Government must fund schools, clinics, roads and the public service largely from VAT, import duties, licence fees, and a small number of established programmes.

This model works in good years. It is fragile in bad ones. A single severe cyclone, or a global downturn in travel, can remove a large share of national income in a matter of weeks. Each shock pushes the country toward borrowing or toward external assistance, both of which carry their own costs to sovereignty. **Vanuatu needs additional revenue that is lawful, internationally respectable, and not tied to the number of tourists who arrive.**

### 1.2 What the world now buys from small states

Over the last decade, identity and residency have become services that can be delivered digitally and sold across borders. Individuals and businesses will pay a sovereign government for a trusted digital identity, a recognised place to incorporate a company, and a lawful status that lets them operate internationally. They are not buying the right to live in, vote in, or belong to the country — they are buying access to well-run, credible administration.

This is the same insight that built Vanuatu's existing financial-services and investment programmes, brought up to date for a digital era. The Bill simply gives Vanuatu a single, modern, well-governed vehicle to offer these services properly.

### 1.3 The Pacific opportunity — and the cost of waiting

Estonia pioneered “e-Residency” in 2014 and has since issued digital identities to tens of thousands of people from more than 170 countries, generating tens of millions of euros and thousands of new companies. Palau launched a Pacific digital-residency programme in 2022. The field of credible, well-regulated sovereign programmes is still small, and the Pacific is largely uncontested.

#### **First-mover advantage is real — and perishable**

In identity and residency, trust compounds. The first Pacific nation to run a credible, internationally compliant programme becomes the recognised name that partners, banks and applicants default to. A country that waits inherits a harder, more crowded market. Vanuatu is positioned to be first; that position is an asset that depreciates every year it is left unused.

### 1.4 What the Bill does, in one paragraph

The Bill creates the Vanuatu National Bureau as a Government statutory body; gives it two programmes to administer; wraps both in one common set of anti-money-laundering, data-

protection and oversight rules; funds the build through a long-term partnership with a specialist technology provider at no upfront cost to Government; and routes the resulting revenue to the Treasury through separate, audited channels. Everything else in this handbook explains a piece of that sentence.

## 1.5 An official mandate — and a deliberate pivot

This is not a proposal arriving from nowhere. The programme was established by the **Council of Ministers in Decision N°273 of 6 October 2025**, which approved the digital residency and non-citizen travel-document programmes, the Vanuatu National Bureau, and the public-private partnership to deliver them — and appointed a Task Force, under the authority of the Prime Minister, to carry it out. What this handbook describes is the implementation of a decision the Government has already taken.

It is also a deliberate correction of course. Vanuatu’s earlier reliance on selling citizenship and passports drew sustained domestic and international criticism — in effect, the commoditisation of the nation’s sovereignty. This programme is the opposite: a **pivot from “passport-as-commodity” to a residency-first, high-integrity model**. It does not sell citizenship or nationality; it offers vetted, compliant, non-citizen status and services, built to international standards and kept under Government oversight.

### Aligned with the National Sustainable Development Plan 2030

- **ECO 1.2** — improve Government revenue generation.
- **ECO 1.3** — keep public debt sustainable, directing finance to projects with positive returns.
- **ECO 1.7** — diversify the economy to spread benefits and increase stability.
- **ECO 2.9** — expand access to online Government services.
- **ECO 4** — create jobs and business opportunities for entrepreneurs across Vanuatu.

And it asks nothing of the Treasury to begin. The Council of Ministers paper records expressly that there is **no financial implication for Government**: under the partnership, the private partner funds the entire platform and build.

## Part 2 — What the Bureau is, in plain language

*One institution, two programmes, one rulebook.*

### 2.1 The Vanuatu National Bureau

At the centre of the Bill is a new Government body: the **Vanuatu National Bureau**. It is a statutory body corporate — like the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu or the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission — established by, and accountable under, an Act of Parliament. It sits under the responsible Minister and the relevant State Ministry, with the Department of Immigration and the Civil Status Department in their established roles.

The Bureau receives and decides applications, issues the relevant documents, keeps the registers, performs the security and background checks, and reports to the Council of Ministers and to Parliament. **It is the sovereign authority for the programmes. It is staffed and led under Government control.** A specialist operator — a locally registered company — builds and operates the technology behind it (explained in Part 5), but the Bureau holds the legal power.

### 2.2 The two programmes

The Bill consolidates two programmes — previously drafted as separate bills — into one instrument. Each is summarised below in everyday terms. The first, the National Status, comes with its own travel document; the Bill sets that document out in its own Schedule for legal precision, but it belongs to the National Status programme and is not a separate status.

#### Programme 1 — Vanuatu National Status (with its travel document)

**What it is:** a recognised legal status granted to a non-citizen, with clearly defined rights and obligations set out in the law. **What it is not:** it is not citizenship and confers no nationality, no vote, and no political rights. **What Vanuatu gets:** application and renewal fees, and a vetted, screened population of status-holders connected to Vanuatu under strict conditions.

**Its travel document — the Non-Citizen Passport.** A holder of National Status is issued an ICAO-compliant machine-readable travel document, **legally distinct from the Ni-Vanuatu citizen passport.** It follows the same international standard (ICAO Doc 9303) used for passports worldwide, so it is recognisable and verifiable at borders, but it is a separate document on its face and in law. The Bill sets it out in its own Schedule — because it amends the Passports Act and must meet ICAO standards — but it is the travel document of the National Status, not a programme of its own. **What Vanuatu gets:** issuance and renewal revenue, within a document framework that protects the integrity of the citizen passport.

#### Programme 2 — Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency)

**What it is:** a digital residency — a secure online identity and a permit to access defined Vanuatu services (such as incorporating and running a company) from anywhere in the world. This is the Estonia-style “e-Residency” model. **What it is not:** it does not give the holder the right to physically reside in, enter, or settle in Vanuatu, and it is not a visa or a path to citizenship. **What Vanuatu gets:** issuance fees, annual renewals, and the digital-economy activity it brings to Vanuatu.

**The two programmes at a glance:**

Programme	In plain terms	Confers citizenship?	Main revenue
<b>National Status (+ its travel document)</b>	A defined legal status for vetted non-citizens, with an ICAO-standard Non-Citizen travel document	No	Application, renewal + document fees
<b>Digital Residency</b>	An online identity + permit to use Vanuatu e-services	No	Issuance + annual fees

**Note the common thread**

Across both programmes the answer to “does this confer citizenship?” is the same: **No**. That is not an accident of drafting — it is a deliberate firewall built into the Bill, and it is the subject of the next Part.

**How many programmes — two, three, or four?**

A Member reading the full Bill (Appendix C) will see it built around **four programme Schedules** — National Status (Schedule 1), the Non-Citizen Passport (Schedule 2), Digital Residency (Schedule 3) and the Digital Corporate Registry (Schedule 4) — and will notice that the Bill’s defined term “Programme” covers each of them. That is the legal scaffolding, not the policy count. In plain terms there are **two core programmes Parliament is asked to launch now**: National Status — whose travel document is the Non-Citizen Passport (Schedule 2) — and Digital Residency. The Digital Corporate Registry (Schedule 4) is enacted as an enabling framework for a **later phase** (2.3). So “two”, “three” and “four” all describe the same thing at different levels: **two core programmes — one of which carries a travel document — delivered through four legal Schedules**.

**2.3 Looking ahead — a digital-economy growth path**

These two programmes are the foundation, not the ceiling. The Digital Residency in particular opens a clear path to further, recurring national income: once a digital resident can operate from Vanuatu, the natural next step is to let them **incorporate and run a company** through a modern, fully compliant **digital corporate registry** — earning incorporation and annual fees, and routing genuine business activity through Vanuatu’s digital economy.

The Bill includes this registry as **Schedule 4**, so its legal foundation is enacted alongside the core programmes — but it is deliberately positioned as a **later phase**: to be built out and brought into operation on its own merits, once National Status and Digital Residency are proven, rather than as part of the initial launch. The point for Members is that the framework being enacted now is designed to grow — it can turn a single digital-identity programme into a widening, durable digital-economy revenue base for the nation.

## Part 3 — This is not citizenship

*The single most important point in this handbook.*

Every Member will be asked some version of one question: “**Are we selling our citizenship?**” The answer is no — clearly, deliberately, and in the text of the law. This Part sets out exactly how the Bill guarantees it, so that any Member can give that answer with confidence.

### 3.1 What the Bill actually says

The Bill does not leave the citizenship question to interpretation. It addresses it head-on, in its objects and in its operative provisions:

- **In its objects**, the Bill states that one of its purposes is to “preserve the constitutional distinction between citizenship under the Citizenship Act and the lawful statuses created by this Act, none of which confer citizenship, nationality, or political rights.”
- **In its relationship to other laws**, the Bill provides that “nothing in this Act confers citizenship or nationality of the Republic of Vanuatu, which is governed exclusively by the Constitution and the Citizenship Act.”
- **In each programme Schedule**, the status, document or residency is defined as belonging to a non-citizen, with no political rights attached.

### 3.2 The firewall, in five guarantees

What is protected	The guarantee in the Bill
<b>Citizenship</b>	Untouched. Remains governed exclusively by the Constitution and the Citizenship Act [CAP 112].
<b>The vote &amp; political rights</b>	Not conferred by any status, document or residency created under the Bill.
<b>The citizen passport</b>	Protected. The Non-Citizen document is a separate instrument, distinct in law and on its face.
<b>Custom land</b>	Unaffected. Land rights flow from citizenship and custom, which the Bill does not alter.
<b>Parliament’s control</b>	The substance of each programme can be changed only by an Act of Parliament, not by regulation.

### What you are voting on is not citizenship

The line is written into the Bill itself — in its objects and its operative provisions.

<p><b>WHAT THE LAW CREATES</b></p> <p><b>A lawful non-citizen status</b> a service sold to foreigners — not a nationality</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A registered National Status</li> <li>• A Non-Citizen travel document</li> <li>• A digital business identity</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>and it behaves like a service:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• granted — and revocable — by the Bureau</li> <li>• recorded on a separate, non-citizen register</li> <li>• the statutory fees go to the Treasury</li> </ul>	<p>.....THE CITIZENSHIP FIREWALL.....</p>	<p><b>WHAT IT CAN NEVER TOUCH</b> protected by the Constitution &amp; the Citizenship Act [CAP 112]</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Citizenship</b> untouched — governed only by the Constitution</li> <li>✓ <b>The vote &amp; political rights</b> never conferred by any status or document</li> <li>✓ <b>The citizen passport</b> a separate instrument, distinct in law</li> <li>✓ <b>Custom land</b> unaffected — land flows from citizenship &amp; custom</li> <li>✓ <b>Parliament's final say</b> the substance changes only by an Act</li> </ul>
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**You cannot buy the right to be Ni-Vanuatu, to vote, or to own custom land.**  
Those belong to our people — and the Constitution protects them.

*What the law creates — and the line it can never cross.*

### 3.3 Why this protects Vanuatu's name

Drawing this line is not only constitutionally correct — it is commercially and diplomatically wise. Programmes that blur citizenship attract scrutiny from international partners and can damage a country's standing. By placing the citizenship firewall in primary legislation, Vanuatu signals to ICAO, to financial-integrity bodies, and to partner states that this is a serious, disciplined programme — a non-citizen services framework, not a shortcut to a passport of nationality.

**How to answer the question at a community meeting**

“This law earns money for Vanuatu by selling services — a registration, a travel document, an online business identity — to foreigners who want to deal with our country. It does **not** sell our citizenship. You cannot buy the right to be Ni-Vanuatu, to vote, or to own custom land through this law. Those belong to our people and are protected by the Constitution. Parliament keeps the final say over every part of it.”

## Part 4 — The economic case: real money into Vanuatu, with a clear Treasury line

*Who pays, where it goes, and who benefits.*

### 4.1 Two separate money streams

The Bill is built on a simple, transparent revenue model with **two distinct streams** that never mix:

1. **Statutory fees — paid to the Government.** These are the public revenue of the programme. They are set by regulation, paid into Government accounts, and belong to the Republic of Vanuatu.
2. **Administrative fees — paid to the operator.** These cover the cost of building and running the technology and the service. They are how the partner recovers its investment, so that Government pays nothing upfront.

The two streams are routed through **separate, traceable, audited payment channels**. This separation is deliberate: it lets the Auditor and Parliament see exactly what the Republic earned, distinct from what the operator was paid for delivery.

### 4.2 No upfront cost to the taxpayer

A central feature of the model is that the Government does not fund the build. Under the partnership (Part 5), the technology partner finances the infrastructure, staffing and operating costs, and is repaid out of the administrative-fee stream over the life of the arrangement. **Vanuatu contributes its sovereignty and oversight, not its cash.** There is no capital outlay from the national budget to start the programme.

### 4.3 Where the money goes — and stays visible

Three features of the Bill are designed specifically to ensure the public revenue reaches the public purse and can be seen to do so:

- **Separate audited channels** — Government statutory revenue flows through its own traceable accounts, not through the operator.
- **Independent audit** — the programmes and the partnership are subject to independent financial audit.
- **Annual report to Parliament** — the Bureau reports transparently each year, so every Member can see the revenue, the volumes, and the costs.

#### Guarding against elite capture

Because statutory revenue is paid into Government accounts through audited channels, and because the Bureau must report to Parliament annually, the model is built to resist the risk that benefits are diverted to a few hands. **Transparency is not left to good intentions — it is written into the law**, through the audit, reporting and separate-channel requirements. Members should hold the programme to exactly this standard every year.

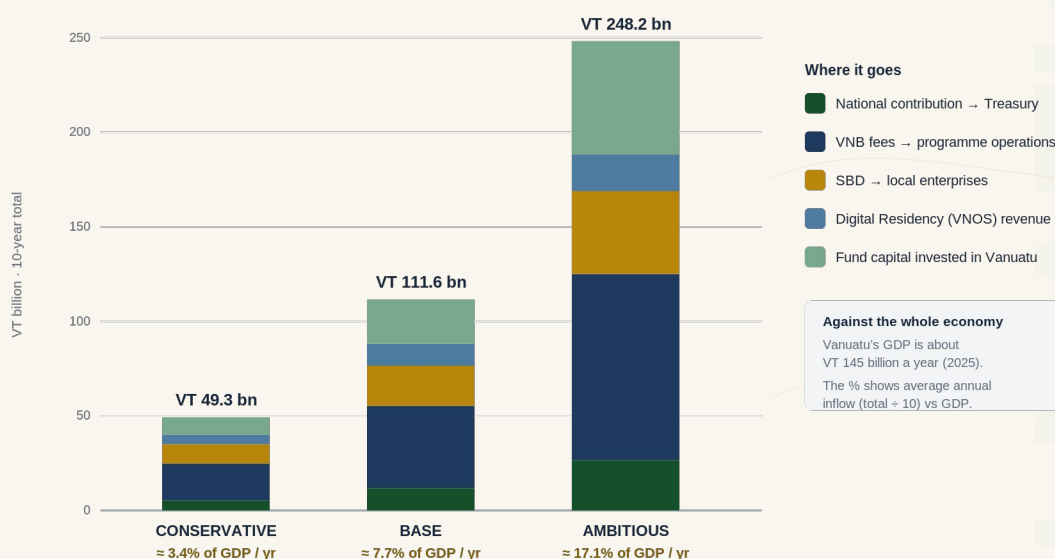
### 4.4 An illustrative sense of scale

Contribution and fee levels are set by regulation and refined with advisers; the figures below are **illustrative only** and deliberately conservative — not a forecast. They come from the programme’s own economic models and show what it brings into the Vanuatu economy over ten years — across both **National Status (VNS)** and **Digital Residency (VNOS)**. They are national totals shown **before any split between the State and the operating partner**: how the revenue is shared is a separate PPP decision and does not change these figures. Here “inflow to Vanuatu” means money flowing into the Vanuatu economy — to the Treasury, to local enterprises, and to the locally registered operator’s operations — not money that all reaches the Treasury.

Where it goes (10-year total, VT billion)	Conservative	Base	Ambitious
National contribution → the Treasury	5.3	11.8	26.6
VNB fees — programme operations	19.5	43.5	98.4
SBD → local enterprises	10.3	21.2	43.9
Digital Residency (VNOS) revenue	5.0	11.6	19.4
Fund capital invested in Vanuatu	9.2	23.5	59.9
<b>Total inflow to Vanuatu</b>	49.3 ≈ 3.4% of GDP / yr	111.6 ≈ 7.7% of GDP / yr	248.2 ≈ 17.1% of GDP / yr

#### What the programme brings into Vanuatu over ten years

National totals in VT billion, before any State-operator split. Illustrative — not a forecast.



From the VNS Economic Model (v0.3) and VNOS Revenue Model (v0.2). 10-year totals; national figures, independent of the State-operator split.

Ten-year inflow to Vanuatu, and what it is against the size of the economy.

Illustrative, from the VNS Economic Model (v0.3) and the VNOS Revenue Model (v0.2) — not a forecast; all figures are 10-year totals in VT billion. VNS assumes 300 / 500 / 800 applicants in Year 1 (then 12% / 18% / 25% growth); VNOS assumes 1,000 / 1,500 / 2,000 new digital residents in Year 1. These are national totals and do not depend on the State-operator revenue split. The GDP comparison sets the programme’s average annual inflow (each 10-year total ÷ 10) against

Vanuatu's 2025 GDP of about VT 145 billion a year. The two fee streams in 4.1 appear here combined as “VNB fees — programme operations” (the statutory share to Government plus the administrative share to the operator); only the “national contribution” line goes wholly to the Treasury. “Fund capital invested” is shown gross, as it enters — it is at-risk and redeemed to investors after the lock-up, not a permanent transfer.

### What Parliament approves — and what is set later

These are modelling figures, not amounts fixed in the Bill. In the attached draft (Appendix C), **Schedule 6 — Fees** deliberately shows every amount as “VT [to be confirmed]”. That is by design: Parliament is asked to approve the **framework**; the actual contribution and fee amounts are then set **by regulation — by the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Finance** — so they can be tuned to the market and to advice without reopening the Act.

### These figures are a floor, not a ceiling

Everything above rests on the programme's **basic structure** — National Status and the core digital-residency subscription. It does not yet count the larger value the same verified-identity layer unlocks: a **digital-company ecosystem** that compounds as the company base grows, and value-added services — above all a **digital-payment infrastructure** built on residents' verified identity. As those layers come on stream, revenue and the wider economic impact move to another scale altogether. The numbers above are a deliberate, conservative starting point — a floor, not a limit.

## 4.5 What the programme means for the wider economy

Revenue to the Treasury is only the most visible benefit. A programme of this kind works mainly through the **real economy** — it draws capital, activity and capability into Vanuatu, and, by design, most of that value is created and kept locally, under sovereign control. The principal channels are these.

**Direct capital into Ni-Vanuatu businesses.** The Strategic Business Development (SBD) contribution channels applicant money straight into investment-committee-approved local enterprises — in agriculture, fisheries, tourism, manufacturing and services. Across the scenarios in the previous section that is on the order of **VT 10 to 44 billion of new enterprise capital over ten years**, directed to where the country most needs growth rather than to consumption or imports.

**Jobs — direct and indirect.** The Bureau and its operator employ Ni-Vanuatu in compliance, technology, vetting, registry and customer service — skilled, year-round roles. The enterprises the SBD funds, and the professional services the programme relies on — legal, accounting, banking and audit — generate further employment. On an illustrative basis of one job supported for roughly every VT 1.5 million of enterprise capital, the SBD stream alone could support in the order of **7,000 to 29,000 local jobs** over the decade — a material addition in an economy of Vanuatu's size (NSDP ECO 4).

**Development finance from within — without new external debt.** The National Development Fund invests in Vanuatu. A large share is held in government securities — a stable, domestic source of financing for the State that reduces reliance on external borrowing — and a further share funds strategic national projects and infrastructure. The programme therefore helps

finance the country's own development, rather than adding to the public debt the National Sustainable Development Plan cautions against (NSDP ECO 1.3).

**Building the digital economy.** At its core the programme installs national digital infrastructure: a verified digital-identity system, online government services, digital company formation and, in time, digital-payment rails. This is the backbone of a modern digital economy — it lowers the cost of doing business, brings more activity into the formal, recorded sector, and establishes Vanuatu as a credible digital-first jurisdiction in the Pacific. The capabilities it builds — in cybersecurity, data protection, compliance and financial technology — are retained in the country and in its people (NSDP ECO 2.9).

**Diversification and resilience.** Vanuatu's economy is heavily exposed to tourism and to climate and external shocks. This programme adds an income stream that does not depend on visitor numbers, on the weather, or on any single sector — a counter-cyclical source of revenue and capital that strengthens the country precisely when traditional sectors come under strain (NSDP ECO 1.7).

#### **A programme that builds, not just earns**

Stripped to its essence, this is not a fee paid for a document. It is foreign capital, local jobs, domestic development finance and a digital-economy backbone — most of it created and kept in Vanuatu, under sovereign control. The fiscal revenue is welcome; the lasting benefit is a stronger, more diversified and more capable national economy.

## Part 4A — The National Development Fund and the SBD route

*How an applicant's capital — whether invested or contributed — becomes national development, without adding national debt or burdening the central bank.*

Part 4 explained how the programmes earn fees for the Treasury. This Part explains the other half of the economic case: the larger sum each National Status applicant commits to Vanuatu, the **two routes** by which they can commit it, and how the law turns that money into national development while keeping Vanuatu protected.

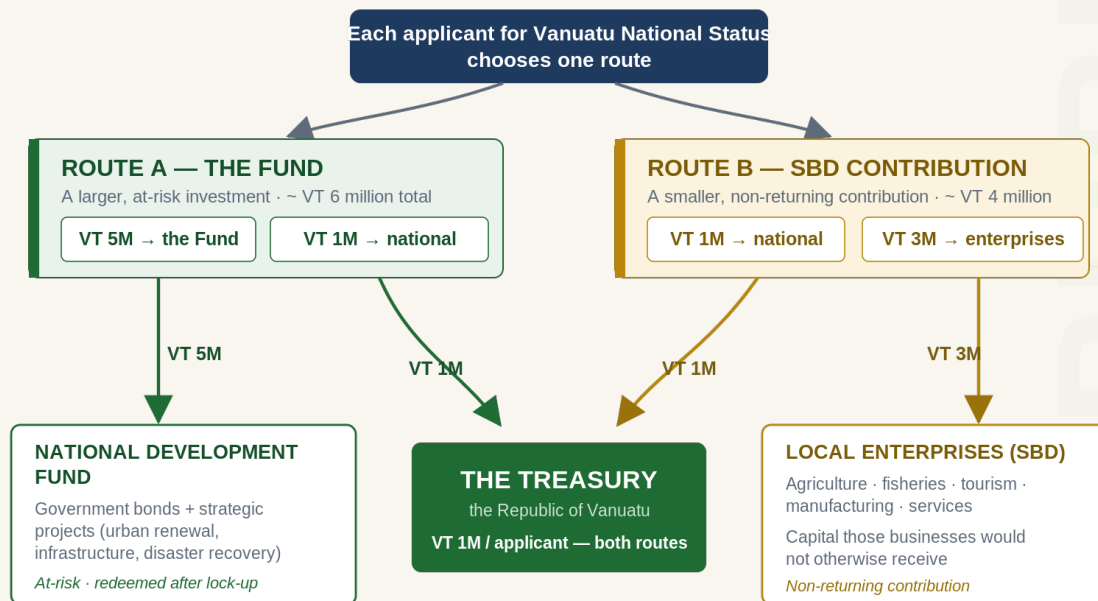
### 4A.1 Two routes — invest, or contribute

To qualify for Vanuatu National Status an applicant makes a substantial financial commitment to the country — and the Bill gives them a **choice of two routes**. An applicant takes one or the other:

- **Route A — the National Development Fund.** A larger, at-risk investment into an independent Fund that is pooled and put to work for the nation. The capital is redeemed after a fixed lock-up period and, like any investment, may rise or fall in value.
- **Route B — the Strategic Business Development (SBD) contribution.** A smaller, non-returning contribution paid directly to investment-committee-approved local enterprises. It is not returned; it is a contribution to the local economy.

On either route the applicant also pays a **national contribution that goes straight to the Treasury**, plus the operating fees in Part 4. Amounts are set by regulation; indicative levels are shown below.

	Route A — the Fund	Route B — the SBD contribution
<b>What the applicant does</b>	Invests a larger sum into the independent National Development Fund	Contributes a smaller sum directly to approved local enterprises
<b>Indicative amount</b>	~ VT 5 million + a VT 1 million national contribution	~ VT 3 million + a VT 1 million national contribution
<b>Returned to the applicant?</b>	Yes — at-risk; redeemed after a lock-up, may rise or fall	No — a non-returning contribution
<b>Where the money goes</b>	Government bonds and strategic national projects	Straight to approved local enterprises
<b>To the Treasury</b>	VT 1 million national contribution	VT 1 million national contribution



On both routes the applicant also pays VNB operating fees (Part 4). Status depends only on the law and the background checks — never on the money: it is decoupled from how an investment performs.

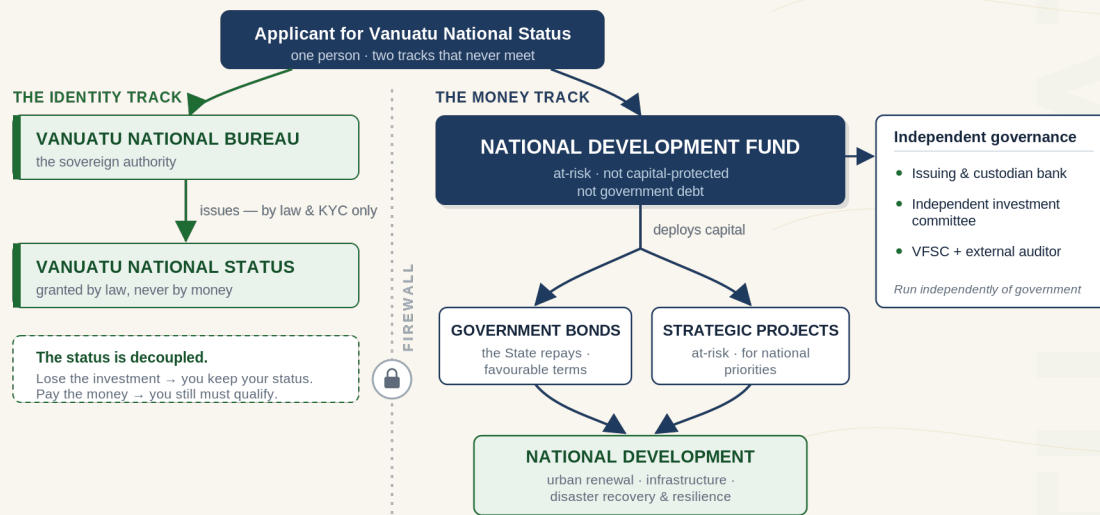
Where an applicant’s money goes — both routes, and what reaches the Treasury.

### 4A.2 Route A — the National Development Fund

On Route A, the applicant’s investment goes — not into a private pocket, but into an independent **National Development Fund**. The Fund pools that capital and channels it into two things: **government bonds** (lending to the Republic on favourable terms) and approved **strategic projects** — urban renewal, infrastructure, and disaster recovery and resilience.

#### How the National Development Fund works

One applicant, two separate tracks — and the money can never buy the status.



No money reaches any individual. Every vatu is invested or repaid — overseen by the bodies above and disclosed publicly.

- Identity / sovereign track
- Money / investment track
- National benefit
- Firewall — status is never bought or sold

*Inside the Fund: independent governance, and where the invested capital goes.*

### 4A.3 Route A is an investment — not government debt

This is the point Members should hold onto. The investment is **at-risk** — it is not a guaranteed bond and the State does not promise to pay each investor their money back. Because of that:

- **It does not add a fixed debt to the budget.** There is no dated, guaranteed repayment the country must find in seven years; the investor shares the risk of the projects.
- **It does not run through, or burden, the Reserve Bank.** The Fund is a ring-fenced vehicle issued by a regulated local financial institution — it does not draw on the central bank or on monetary policy.
- **It brings in patient capital, not hot money.** The capital is committed to national development for the medium term, not free to flee at the first tremor in tourism.

### 4A.4 Who manages the money

The money is deliberately kept out of any single pair of hands. Three roles are separated:

Role	Who	What they do
<b>Investment decisions</b>	An independent investment management committee	Decides how the Fund invests, under a fixed mandate
<b>Issue &amp; safekeeping</b>	A regulated local development financing institution	Issues and holds the Fund; provides financial credibility
<b>Oversight</b>	The financial-services regulator + an external auditor	Supervises, audits, and requires public disclosure

Notably, the politicians of the day do not control the money, and the institution that holds it does not, by itself, decide where it is invested. That separation is what protects the Fund from capture. The same independent committee also vets and approves the local enterprises that receive Route B (SBD) contributions, so both routes run under one arm's-length governance.

### 4A.5 Who benefits

On Route A, the capital is put to work for the nation: bonds bought from the Republic give the Government favourable medium-term funding, and project investment flows into visible national priorities. Separately, a **non-refundable fee** on each applicant goes straight to the Treasury (Part 4). The Fund exists to serve national strategic projects — that purpose is built into its mandate, not left to goodwill. On Route B, the SBD contribution does the same job more directly: it flows straight into investment-committee-approved local enterprises (its wider economic effect is set out in 4.5).

### 4A.6 Status stays separate

Granting of status follows the law and the background checks — and nothing else. It is **decoupled from the money, on either route**: an applicant whose Fund investment (Route A) loses value does not lose their status, and the size of a contribution earns no one extra rights — and certainly no step toward citizenship. Money and status travel on separate tracks and never cross.

## 4A.7 The safeguards, in short

- **Regulated** by the financial-services regulator as an investment fund.
- **Independent** investment committee, separate from both the bank and the Government.
- **Audited** by an external auditor, with public disclosure.
- **Clean money** — anti-money-laundering, know-your-customer and source-of-funds checks on every applicant, on both routes.
- **Visible to Parliament** — the arrangement is laid before this House so Members can see it.

## 4A.8 Answering the hard questions

### Q. Is this government debt by another name?

**A.** No. It is an at-risk investment fund, not a guaranteed bond. The State does not promise to repay each investor, so there is no fixed liability added to the budget. To the extent the Fund chooses to lend to the Government by buying bonds, that portion is ordinary, transparent borrowing on favourable terms — tracked by the Ministry of Finance like any other.

### Q. Who controls the money — could it be captured by a few people?

**A.** The structure is built to prevent exactly that. An independent investment committee makes the decisions, a regulated financial institution holds the money, and the regulator and an external auditor watch over both. No minister and no single official controls the Fund, and every year it is disclosed and audited.

### Q. What if the Fund loses money — does the taxpayer pay?

**A.** No. The investors bear the investment risk — that is the nature of an at-risk fund, and it is disclosed to them clearly before they invest. The taxpayer is not the backstop. This is precisely why the structure is safer for Vanuatu than a guaranteed bond would be.

### Q. Does the Reserve Bank carry the risk?

**A.** No. The Fund is a separate, ring-fenced vehicle issued by a regulated local financial institution. It does not run through the central bank, does not touch monetary policy, and does not put the Reserve Bank's balance sheet at risk.

### The bottom line on the Fund

The National Development Fund turns foreign investment into Vanuatu's own infrastructure and resilience — independently managed, regulated and audited — **without adding guaranteed debt, without burdening the Reserve Bank, and without ever linking a person's status to their money.**

## Part 5 — Sovereignty and control: who is really in charge

*An honest account of the partnership — and why Vanuatu keeps the power.*

### 5.1 Who builds it, and who they are

A programme like this needs technology that Vanuatu does not currently build in-house: secure identity systems, registries, and compliance infrastructure. The Bill therefore provides for a **public-private partnership** with a specialist operator — the **Future Citizen Bureau (FCB)**, a locally registered company that has carried the legislative, policy and design work to this point at its own cost. The handbook names the partner openly because Members are entitled to know who stands behind the build.

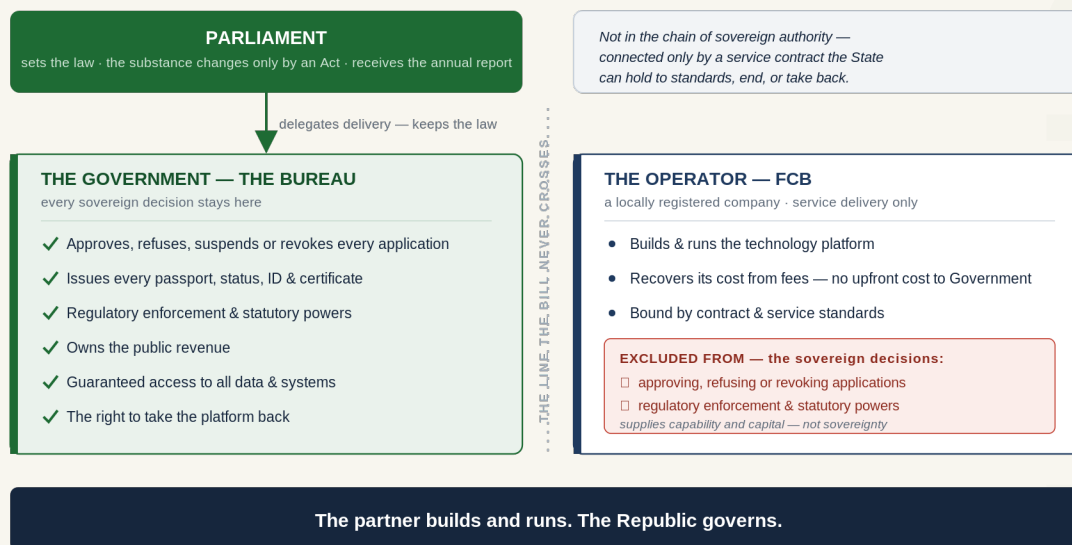
Even so, it is reasonable for Members to ask whether relying on any single operator means handing over control. The Bill is constructed so that the answer is no. The distinction it draws — and holds — is between **sovereign power, which never leaves Government**, and **service delivery, which the operator provides**.

### 5.2 The line the Bill never crosses

Decision or asset	Who holds it
Approve, refuse, suspend or revoke any application	Government (the Bureau) — always
Issue passports, statuses, IDs, certificates	Government (the Bureau)
Regulatory enforcement and statutory powers	Government — partner representatives are excluded from these decisions
Set the law and the programme substance	Parliament (by Act) and the Minister (by regulation)
Build & operate the technology platform	The partner, under contract and service standards
Government access to data & systems for sovereign purposes	Guaranteed to Government in the Bill

### Who is really in charge

Sovereign power never leaves Government. The partner only delivers the service.



*The partner builds and runs; the Republic governs every sovereign decision.*

## 5.3 Data sovereignty and the “what if it goes wrong” protections

The Bill and its supporting framework provide the safeguards a sovereign state should insist on before relying on any partner:

- **Source-code custody and transition rights** — arrangements so the State can take the system over on expiry or termination; the country is not locked in.
- **Government access rights** — guaranteed access to data and systems for sovereign, statutory and security purposes.
- **Step-in safeguards** — the Bill provides at high level for step-in, with detailed performance grounds, cure periods and compensation in the contract.
- **Termination grounds** — the partnership can be ended for material breach, on defined terms.

The safeguards hold whoever the operator is: it supplies capability and capital, but **the data, the decisions, and the route back to full Government operation remain with Vanuatu.**

## 5.4 Why the partnership is long-term — and why that is normal

The partnership runs for an initial term of 25 years, renewable for a further 15. A long term is standard for sovereign infrastructure partnerships worldwide: a partner asked to invest substantial capital upfront, and recover it from fees over time, needs the assurance of duration — just as a builder of a road, port or power station does. In return, the State secures a programme that is built and run at no upfront cost and is designed to outlast any single electoral cycle.

Two terms in the partnership clause (Bill, section 11) deserve a plain word, because a careful reader of Appendix C will see them. **On renewal:** a renewal “shall not be unreasonably withheld” — but it still requires Council of Ministers approval and may be refused on defined grounds such as poor performance or breach. It stops a partner that has performed and sunk its capital from being dropped arbitrarily; it is not an automatic or perpetual lock. **On exit:** if the State ends the

arrangement early for reasons that are not the partner's fault, the partner is repaid only its **unrecovered capital** — the build cost it has not yet earned back — and not lost future profit; if the partner is in material breach, even that protection falls away. These are the ordinary terms of an **infrastructure concession** — the same balance struck for a port, a power plant or a fibre network financed by a private builder — and they are matched by the State's rights to terminate for breach, to step in, to take the platform back on expiry, and by Parliament's continuing power over the programmes' substance.

### Sovereignty, stated plainly

Vanuatu does not give up control by partnering. It keeps every sovereign decision, owns the public revenue, guarantees its own access to the data and systems, and holds the right to take the platform back. This is an **infrastructure concession — a long licence to build and operate — not a transfer of sovereignty**. The partner builds and runs; **the Republic governs**.

## 5.5 The Board and the sovereign balance

The Bureau is governed by a Board on which the public side and the partner side are balanced, with the Chairperson appointed by the Prime Minister and ex-officio members from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Crucially, the partner's representatives are **excluded from voting on regulatory enforcement and on individual application decisions** — the precise areas where sovereign neutrality matters most — while contributing their expertise to the design and operation of the programmes. Final regulatory power rests with the State.

## Part 6 — Integrity and safeguards

### *How the Bill protects Vanuatu's reputation and its financial system.*

A programme that issues identities and travel documents must be beyond reproach on integrity. The Bill builds international standards into the law rather than leaving them to administrative practice.

- **AML / CFT / KYC in the statute** — anti-money-laundering, counter-terrorism-financing, and know-your-customer due diligence are common regulatory requirements applied across both programmes.
- **Sanctions and source-of-funds screening** — applications are screened against sanctions lists and, where applicable, source-of-funds checks, with a defined “good character” standard.
- **International document standards** — the travel document follows ICAO Doc 9303, the same machine-readable standard used by passports worldwide.
- **Data protection** — a common data-protection and confidentiality framework, with lawful-disclosure rules and cybersecurity standards.
- **Independent audit and international cooperation** — the Bill provides for audit and for cooperation with international bodies.

### **How this differs from past concerns**

Vanuatu has learned from earlier programmes that drew international criticism. This Bill responds directly: it keeps citizenship entirely separate; it writes financial-integrity checks into primary law; it adopts recognised international standards; and it makes the Bureau report publicly each year. The design goal is a programme that **strengthens** Vanuatu's standing with partners such as ICAO and financial-integrity bodies, rather than risking it.

## Part 7 — Governance and Parliament’s continuing role

*Why Parliament keeps the final say — not just at first reading, but every year.*

### 7.1 The Board

The Bureau is run by a Board chaired by an appointee of the Prime Minister, with senior Government ministries represented, a Director-General as chief executive appointed by the Board with the Prime Minister’s approval, and partner and industry-expert members contributing technical depth. Conflicts of interest are managed through a register of interests and through the exclusion of partner representatives from regulatory and individual-application decisions.

### 7.2 Three ways Parliament stays in control

1. **The substance is locked to primary law.** The programme Schedules have the force of an Act and can be amended only by an Act of Parliament — not by regulation or ministerial order. Parliament, not officials, controls what the programmes are.
2. **Annual transparency.** The Bureau must publish an annual report and submit to independent audit, giving Parliament a yearly opportunity to examine revenue, volumes and conduct.
3. **A built-in review.** The Bill provides for review of the Act itself, so Parliament can revisit and refine the framework in light of experience.

#### Supporting the Bill is not a blank cheque

A Member who supports this Bill is not surrendering oversight. The opposite is true: the Bill **pulls the programmes into the open** — into statute, audit, and an annual report to this House — and keeps the power to change their substance in Parliament’s hands alone. Oversight is the design, not an afterthought.

## Part 8 — How the law is built (what you are voting on)

*The structure of the Bill, explained without legal jargon.*

The Bill uses a “framework” design: a main body that sets up the institution and the rules, plus Schedules that carry the detail of each programme. This is a standard, respected drafting approach used in Australia, New Zealand and Scotland, and it was chosen for good reasons — it keeps the law tidy, avoids contradictions between separate bills, and presents **one defensible instrument** to international reviewers.

Layer	What it contains	How it can be changed
<b>Master Bill (Parts 1-7)</b>	The institution, the regulatory rulebook, governance, revenue, offences, appeals	Act of Parliament
<b>Schedules</b>	The substance of the programmes	Act of Parliament only
<b>Schedule 5</b>	Consequential amendments to existing laws	Act of Parliament
<b>Schedules 6-7</b>	Fee schedule and prescribed forms	Regulation (for administrative flexibility)

The key point for Members: the things that matter most — what the programmes are, the citizenship firewall, the safeguards — sit at the level of **primary legislation**, which only Parliament can alter. Only routine matters like fee amounts and form layouts can be adjusted by regulation, and even those follow a consultation process.

### 8.1 The arrangement of the Bill

The Bill is arranged in seven Parts followed by seven Schedules — set out in full in Appendix B. A Member who wishes to verify any statement in this handbook can find the relevant provision under those headings.

## Part 9 — Answering the hard questions

*Straight answers to the questions Members will be asked.*

### **Q. Are we selling Vanuatu citizenship?**

**A.** No. The Bill states in its objects and operative provisions that nothing in it confers citizenship, nationality, or political rights, and that citizenship remains governed exclusively by the Constitution and the Citizenship Act. It sells services to non-citizens, not membership of the nation.

### **Q. Can someone use this to get the right to vote, or to own custom land?**

**A.** No. None of the statuses, documents or residencies carry political rights, and the Bill does not touch land law. Custom land and the vote flow from citizenship and custom, which are untouched.

### **Q. Isn't a non-citizen passport just a citizen passport by another name?**

**A.** No. The Non-Citizen travel document is a separate instrument in law and on its face, issued only to non-citizens. It uses the international ICAO standard so it works at borders, but it is deliberately distinct from the Ni-Vanuatu citizen passport, whose integrity the Bill protects.

### **Q. An outside operator builds this. Are we handing over control of our identity systems?**

**A.** No. The operator is a locally registered company, and even so it never holds sovereign power. Every decision to approve, refuse, suspend or revoke stays with the Government, the operator's representatives are barred from voting on regulatory and individual-application matters, and the Bill guarantees Government access to the data and systems and a route to take the platform back.

### **Q. Who owns the operator — is it foreign-controlled?**

**A.** No. The Future Citizen Bureau is a company registered in Vanuatu, with no foreign parent. And regardless of who operates it, the Bill keeps data sovereignty with Vanuatu through Government access rights, source-code custody, transition rights and step-in safeguards.

### **Q. Why a 25-year partnership? That binds future governments.**

**A.** A long term is normal for infrastructure that a partner must fund upfront and recover over time — like a port or power station. In exchange, Vanuatu gets the system built at no upfront cost. The Bill balances this with termination grounds, performance standards, and Parliament's continuing power over the programme's substance. The renewal and capital-compensation terms in section 11 are ordinary concession protections for the money the partner sinks upfront — not a transfer of control; sovereignty stays with Vanuatu.

### **Q. Will the money actually reach the Treasury, or disappear?**

**A.** Government statutory fees are paid into Government accounts through separate, traceable, audited channels, kept distinct from what the operator is paid. The Bureau must report to Parliament annually and submit to independent audit. The transparency is written into the law.

### **Q. What does it cost the Government to start?**

**A.** Nothing upfront. The partner finances the build and operating costs and recovers them from the administrative-fee stream over time. Vanuatu contributes sovereignty and oversight, not capital.

**Q. Could this damage Vanuatu's reputation like past programmes?**

**A.** The Bill is designed to do the opposite. It separates citizenship entirely, writes AML/CFT/KYC and sanctions screening into primary law, adopts ICAO and international standards, and requires public annual reporting — the features international partners look for in a credible programme.

**Q. How is this different from our existing investment and financial-services programmes?**

**A.** It complements them. The programme is designed to sit alongside Vanuatu's existing investment and financial-services regime, not to replace it or create a regulatory overlap. The Bill works through the established framework and amends only the specific laws set out in Schedule 5 (the Passports Act, the Immigration Act and the International Companies Act).

**Q. What stops a future minister from quietly changing the rules?**

**A.** The substance of the programmes sits in Schedules with the force of an Act, amendable only by Parliament. A minister cannot rewrite what the programmes are by regulation; only fee amounts and forms can be adjusted administratively, and even then after consultation.

**Q. Why should this have cross-party support rather than be a single-government project?**

**A.** Because international credibility depends on continuity. Partners, banks and applicants need confidence the framework will outlast one electoral term. Cross-party endorsement makes the programme more durable, more credible abroad, and ultimately more valuable to Vanuatu — whoever is in government.

**Q. What exactly is Parliament being asked to do?**

**A.** To consider and support the passage of the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026, so the programme rests on a sound, transparent, sovereign-controlled legal foundation.

## Part 10 — What your support means, and next steps

*A clear ask, and where to get answers.*

### 10.1 The ask

Members are asked to engage with the Bill, to test it against the concerns in this handbook, and ultimately to **support its passage on a cross-party basis**. Cross-party endorsement is not a formality: it is the single most effective way to give the programme the durability and international credibility on which its revenue depends.

### 10.2 What support secures for Vanuatu

- **A new, lawful, non-tax revenue stream** that does not rise and fall with tourism.
- **A modern sovereign institution** built and operated at no upfront cost to the budget.
- **First-mover standing** in Pacific digital governance, before the window narrows.
- **A programme under full parliamentary oversight**, with the citizenship firewall and integrity standards locked into primary law.

### 10.3 Getting answers

Members with questions — technical, legal, financial or constitutional — can request a briefing from the COM-approved Task Force for the Vanuatu National Bureau Programme. The Bill, this handbook, and supporting material are available for review, and officials and advisers are available to brief Members and committees on request.

#### The bottom line for Members

This Bill lets Vanuatu earn from its sovereignty without ever selling it. It creates income, not obligation; a sovereign institution, not a dependency; and it keeps the citizenship of Ni-Vanuatu, and the final word of this Parliament, fully protected. **It deserves the considered, cross-party support of this House.**

## Glossary

*Plain definitions of the terms used in this handbook and the Bill.*

### **AML / CFT**

Anti-Money-Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism — international rules to stop criminal or terrorist money. Built into the Bill for both programmes.

### **At-risk / capital-protected**

An at-risk investment can rise or fall in value and is not guaranteed; a capital-protected product promises the money back. The National Development Fund is at-risk — not capital-protected.

### **The Bureau**

The Vanuatu National Bureau — the new Government statutory body created by the Bill to run the two core programmes.

### **CBI**

Citizenship by Investment — a separate, pre-existing concept. This Bill is deliberately not a CBI programme; it confers no citizenship.

### **COM Decision N°273**

The Council of Ministers decision of 6 October 2025 that established this programme (the residency and non-citizen travel-document programmes, the Bureau, and the partnership) and appointed the implementing Task Force.

### **Digital Residency**

An online identity and permit (Estonia-style “e-Residency”) letting a non-citizen use defined Vanuatu services from abroad. Not a right to live in Vanuatu.

### **FCB (Future Citizen Bureau)**

A locally registered company — the founding and technology partner that designs and operates the platform under the partnership. Holds no sovereign power.

### **Framework statute**

A drafting style: a main Bill plus Schedules carrying programme detail. Keeps the law consistent and defensible.

### **ICAO Doc 9303**

The international standard for machine-readable travel documents, used by passports worldwide. The Non-Citizen travel document follows it.

### **KYC**

Know-Your-Customer — verifying who an applicant really is before issuing anything.

### **NSDP 2030**

Vanuatu’s National Sustainable Development Plan to 2030 — the national plan this programme is aligned with (revenue generation, debt sustainability, economic diversification, online services, jobs).

### **National Development Fund**

An independent, at-risk investment fund into which applicants invest to qualify for National Status; it finances government bonds and strategic national projects. Separate from the granting of status, which is decoupled from how the investment performs.

### **Non-Citizen Passport**

An ICAO-standard travel document issued to Vanuatu National Status holders, legally distinct from the Ni-Vanuatu citizen passport. It is part of the National Status programme, set out in its own Bill Schedule.

### **PPP (Public-Private Partnership)**

An arrangement where a private partner funds and operates infrastructure for a public body over a long term. Here: 25 years + 15-year renewal.

**SBD (Strategic Business Development)**

The non-returning contribution route to Vanuatu National Status (Route B): money paid directly to investment-committee-approved local enterprises, as an alternative to investing in the National Development Fund.

**Schedule**

A part of the Bill carrying detailed content. Schedules 1–5 have the force of an Act and can be changed only by Parliament.

**Statutory vs administrative fees**

Statutory fees are public revenue paid to Government; administrative fees pay the operator to deliver the service. Kept in separate, audited channels.

**VFSC**

The Vanuatu Financial Services Commission — the financial-services regulator that would supervise the National Development Fund as a regulated investment fund.

## Appendix A — At a glance

*A one-look fact sheet for quick reference.*

Item	Summary
<b>The Bill</b>	Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026 — a framework statute
<b>Creates</b>	The Vanuatu National Bureau (a Government statutory body)
<b>Programmes</b>	(1) National Status — with its Non-Citizen travel document (2) Digital Residency
<b>Looking ahead</b>	A digital corporate registry — a potential future revenue direction once digital residency is proven
<b>Confers citizenship?</b>	No — and the Bill says so expressly, in primary law
<b>Cost to Government to start</b>	None upfront — the partner finances the build
<b>Revenue model</b>	Statutory fees to Treasury + administrative fees to operator, in separate audited channels
<b>Who decides applications</b>	The Government (the Bureau) — always
<b>Technology partner</b>	Future Citizen Bureau (FCB) — a locally registered company, under a public-private partnership
<b>Partnership term</b>	25 years, renewable for 15 — with termination & step-in safeguards
<b>Data &amp; systems</b>	Government access rights, source-code custody, transition rights guaranteed
<b>Integrity</b>	AML / CFT / KYC, sanctions screening, ICAO Doc 9303, independent audit
<b>Parliamentary control</b>	Programme substance changeable only by Act; annual report + audit to Parliament
<b>The ask</b>	Cross-party support for passage of the Bill

## Appendix B — The draft Bill in outline

### A working draft — for understanding only

This outline lets Members see the shape of the Bill. It summarises a **working draft** — the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026 — that is still being finalised with Parliamentary Counsel. The wording will change, and the **final enacted text will govern**. It is provided to convey the basic elements only; it is not the legal text.

### The main Act — Parts 1 to 7.

Part	What it covers
<b>Part 1 — Preliminary</b>	Short title, commencement, definitions, and the objects of the Act.
<b>Part 2 — The Vanuatu National Bureau</b>	Establishes the Bureau as a statutory body — its functions, its Board and governance, and its accountability to the Council of Ministers and to Parliament.
<b>Part 3 — Common Regulatory Framework</b>	The rules that apply across every programme: anti-money-laundering and due diligence, data protection, cybersecurity and record-keeping.
<b>Part 4 — The Programmes</b>	How each programme is established, who is eligible, and how applications are decided and documents issued.
<b>Part 5 — Offences and Penalties</b>	The offences — fraud, misuse, false documents — and the penalties that protect the integrity of the system.
<b>Part 6 — Review, Appeals and Regulations</b>	How decisions can be reviewed and appealed, and the power to make regulations.
<b>Part 7 — Miscellaneous</b>	The public-private partnership, fees, transitional provisions and other general matters.

### The Schedules — the programme and technical detail.

Schedule	What it covers
<b>Schedule 1 — National Status</b>	The detailed rules for National Status: eligibility and the contribution or qualifying activity. Its travel document is set out in Schedule 2.
<b>Schedule 2 — Non-Citizen Passport</b>	The Non-Citizen travel document (certificate of identity) issued to National Status holders; in its own Schedule as it amends the Passports Act and meets ICAO standards.
<b>Schedule 3 — Digital Residency</b>	The online digital-identity and digital-services programme.
<b>Schedule 4 — Digital Corporate Registry</b>	A digital company registry — enacted as the enabling framework but, as a later phase (Part 2.3), brought into operation once the core programmes are proven.
<b>Schedule 5 — Amendments to Existing Laws</b>	Consequential amendments to the Passports Act [CAP 20], the Immigration Act [CAP 66] and the International Companies Act [CAP 222].
<b>Schedule 6 — Prescribed Fees</b>	The schedule of fees for each programme, set and adjusted by regulation.
<b>Schedule 7 — Forms</b>	The application and other forms used under the Act.

## Appendix C — The full draft Bill

*Optional reading — the complete working text, for Members who want it.*

### **A working draft — read it only if you wish**

The pages that follow reproduce the **full working draft** of the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026, so the complete text is available to any Member who wishes to read it. **You do not need to read it to understand the programme** — Parts 1 to 10 and Appendices A and B give the complete picture. It is a working draft, still being finalised with Parliamentary Counsel; the wording will change, and the final enacted text will govern.

### **Reading the full Bill — three things to keep in mind**

- 1. “Programme” is a drafting term.** The Bill’s defined term “Programme” covers four Schedules; in policy terms there are two core programmes — National Status (with its travel document) and Digital Residency — plus the later-phase Digital Corporate Registry (see the box in Part 2.2).
- 2. Section 11 is an infrastructure concession.** The 25 + 15-year term, the “renewal not unreasonably withheld” wording and the unrecovered-capital compensation are commercial terms for the capital the partner fronts — balanced by termination-for-breach, step-in, hand-back and Parliament’s control (Part 5). Sovereignty does not move.
- 3. Schedule 6 fees read “VT [to be confirmed]”.** That is intentional: Parliament approves the framework, and the amounts are set afterwards by regulation, by the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Finance (Part 4.4). The figures in Part 4 are modelling assumptions, not amounts in the Bill.

*The full draft Bill is reproduced on the pages that follow.*

Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026 — Master Bill — First Complete Draft (v1.6)

## THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

## VANUATU NATIONAL BUREAU BILL 2026

## A BILL

*Framework Bill — First Complete Draft**Consolidating the Vanuatu National Status, Non-Citizen Passport, Digital Residency, and Digital Corporate Registry Programmes*

Prepared for the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu

Version 1.6 | Complete first draft for State Law Office and Parliamentary Counsel review

June 2026

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

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This document is the first complete draft of the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill 2026, the proposed Act that, on enactment, will establish the Vanuatu National Bureau and the related Programmes. It is intended for review by the State Law Office, parliamentary counsel, and the Office of the Delegated Minister, and is ready for Cabinet endorsement following such review.

The Bill is designed as a framework statute consolidating the five existing predecessor drafts — the Vanuatu National Status Bill, the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport Bill, the Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency) Bill, the Vanuatu National Bureau Bill, and the Digital Corporate Registry Bill — into a single instrument supported by Schedules carrying the substantive programme content. The framework approach preserves Westminster drafting convention, reduces cross-referencing errors, harmonises compliance and revenue arrangements, and presents a single defensible instrument to international reviewers.

The structure proceeds in three layers:

- Master Bill (Parts 1–7) — institutional, regulatory, and authorising provisions.
- Schedules 1–4 — substantive programme content for the National Status, Non-Citizen Passport, Digital Residency, and Digital Corporate Registry programmes; amendable only by Act of Parliament.
- Schedules 5–7 — amendments to existing laws, the harmonised schedule of prescribed fees, and the list of prescribed forms.

Operative text is provided throughout. Drafting notes appear in italics where the policy rationale, comparator precedent, or onward drafting workstream warrants explanation for reviewers.

## LONG TITLE

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### **A BILL**

#### *For an Act*

to establish the Vanuatu National Bureau as a statutory body responsible for the administration and regulation of new national identity, residency, mobility, and digital economy programmes; to establish the Vanuatu National Status, the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport, the Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency), and the Digital Corporate Registry; to provide for governance through a public-private partnership; to harmonise compliance, data protection, and revenue arrangements across the said programmes; to amend the Passports Act [CAP 20], the Immigration Act [CAP 66], and the International Companies Act [CAP 222]; and for related purposes.

## ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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### PART 1 PRELIMINARY

1. Short title and commencement
2. Interpretation
3. Objects of the Act
4. Relationship with other laws
5. Schedules have force of law

### PART 2 THE VANUATU NATIONAL BUREAU

6. Establishment and legal status of the Bureau
7. Objectives of the Bureau
8. Functions and powers of the Bureau
9. The Board of the Bureau
10. Director-General and staff
11. Public-Private Partnership with the Future Citizen Bureau
12. Revenue and revenue-sharing arrangements
13. Transparency, audit, and annual reporting

### PART 3 COMMON REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

14. Anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism financing, and KYC standards
15. Data protection and privacy
16. Confidentiality and lawful disclosure
17. Cybersecurity and digital identity standards
18. International cooperation

### PART 4 THE PROGRAMMES

19. Vanuatu National Status Programme
20. Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport Programme
21. Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency) Programme
22. Digital Corporate Registry

### PART 5 OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

23. General offences
24. Penalties

### PART 6 REVIEW, APPEALS AND REGULATIONS

25. Administrative review
26. Appeals to the Supreme Court
27. Regulations
28. Fee schedule and adjustment mechanism

**PART 7 MISCELLANEOUS**

- 29. Review of the Act
- 30. Amendments to existing laws
- 31. Protection from personal liability

**SCHEDULES**

- Schedule 1 National Status Programme
- Schedule 2 Non-Citizen Passport Programme
- Schedule 3 Digital Residency Programme
- Schedule 4 Digital Corporate Registry
- Schedule 5 Amendments to Existing Laws
- Schedule 6 Schedule of Prescribed Fees
- Schedule 7 Forms

APPENDIX C

## PART 1 — PRELIMINARY

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### 1. Short title and commencement

(1) This Act may be cited as the Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026.

(2) This Act comes into force on a date appointed by the Minister by Order published in the Gazette, and the Minister may appoint different dates for different provisions.

### 2. Interpretation

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —

“**AML**” — anti-money laundering.

“**authorised person**” — in relation to a Digital Company, a person permitted under Schedule 4 to make filings or perform registry actions on behalf of the Digital Company.

“**authorised service provider**” — an entity licensed by the Bureau under Schedule 3 to provide one or more categories of authorised digital services.

“**Board**” — the Board of the Vanuatu National Bureau established under section 9.

“**Bureau**” — the Vanuatu National Bureau established under section 6.

“**CFT**” — countering the financing of terrorism.

“**Council of Ministers**” — the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Vanuatu.

“**dependant**” — in relation to a Status Holder, has the meaning given in Schedule 1.

“**Digital Company**” — a company incorporated or registered under section 22 and Schedule 4 and entered on the Digital Corporate Register.

“**Digital Corporate Register**” — the register established under Schedule 4.

“**Digital Corporate Registry**” — the registry established under section 22 and Schedule 4.

“**Digital ID**” — a digital identity credential issued by the Bureau under Schedule 3.

“**Digital Resident**” — a person granted Vanuatu National Overseas Status under section 21 and Schedule 3.

“**FCB**” — the Future Citizen Bureau, the Founding partner under section 11.

“**good character**” — the standard of personal integrity prescribed under Schedule 1, including the absence of any conviction for a serious criminal offence and the absence of adverse findings on AML, CFT, or sanctions screening.

“**ICAO Doc 9303**” — the document of the International Civil Aviation Organization setting machine-readable travel document standards, as amended from time to time.

“**KYC**” — know-your-customer due diligence.

**“Minister”** — the Minister to whom responsibility for this Act is for the time being assigned by the Prime Minister.

**“Non-Citizen Passport”** — the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport issued under section 20 and Schedule 2.

**“PPP”** — the Public-Private Partnership arrangement under section 11.

**“Programme”** — any of the Programmes established under Part 4, being the Vanuatu National Status Programme, the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport Programme, the Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency) Programme, and the Digital Corporate Registry; and “the Programmes” means all of those programmes collectively.

**“Registrar”** — the Registrar of Digital Companies appointed under Schedule 4.

**“Schedule”** — a Schedule to this Act.

**“serious criminal offence”** — an offence which, if committed in the Republic of Vanuatu, would be punishable on indictment by a term of imprisonment of twelve (12) months or more, or an offence prescribed by Regulation as a serious criminal offence for the purposes of this Act.

**“Status”** — Vanuatu National Status established under section 19 and Schedule 1.

**“Status Holder”** — a person granted Vanuatu National Status.

**“VDEA Unit”** — the Digital Economy Administration Unit within the Bureau, responsible for the administration of Schedule 4.

### 3. Objects of the Act

The objects of this Act are to —

- (a) establish a unified statutory and regulatory framework for the following Programmes administered by the Bureau: (i) the Vanuatu National Status Programme established under section 19 and Schedule 1; (ii) the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport Programme established under section 20 and Schedule 2; (iii) the Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency) Programme established under section 21 and Schedule 3; and (iv) the Digital Corporate Registry established under section 22 and Schedule 4;
- (b) provide for the establishment, governance, and operation of the Vanuatu National Bureau as the competent authority responsible for the administration of the Programmes;
- (c) generate sustainable non-tax revenue for the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu through structured, transparent, and internationally compliant Programmes;
- (d) harmonise compliance with international standards on anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism financing, data protection, and digital identity;

- (e) preserve the constitutional distinction between citizenship under the Citizenship Act [CAP 112] and the lawful statuses created by this Act, none of which confer citizenship, nationality, or political rights in the Republic of Vanuatu;
- (f) position Vanuatu as a leader in sovereign digital governance within the Pacific region; and
- (g) provide a flexible framework capable of accommodating future Programmes by amendment of this Act.

#### 4. Relationship with other laws

- (1) This Act operates in addition to all other written laws of the Republic of Vanuatu.
- (2) Nothing in this Act confers citizenship or nationality of the Republic of Vanuatu, which is governed exclusively by the Constitution and the Citizenship Act [CAP 112].
- (3) Where any inconsistency arises between this Act and the Immigration Act [CAP 66], the Passports Act [CAP 20], or the International Companies Act [CAP 222], this Act prevails to the extent of the inconsistency in respect of the Programmes.
- (4) Amendments to the Acts referred to in subsection (3) are set out in Schedule 5.

#### 5. Schedules have force of law

- (1) Every Schedule to this Act forms part of this Act and has the same force and effect as the operative provisions of this Act.
- (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, a Schedule may be amended only by an Act of Parliament and not by Regulation, Order, or any other form of subsidiary legislation.
- (3) Subsection (2) does not apply to Schedule 6 (Prescribed Fees) and Schedule 7 (Forms), which may be amended by Regulation made by the Minister on the recommendation of the Bureau and following consultation under section 27.

## PART 2 — THE VANUATU NATIONAL BUREAU

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### 6. Establishment and legal status of the Bureau

- (1) There is established a statutory body to be known as the Vanuatu National Bureau.
- (2) The Bureau is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal, and may —
  - (a) sue and be sued in its corporate name;
  - (b) enter into contracts;
  - (c) acquire, hold, dispose of, and deal with movable and immovable property; and
  - (d) do all other things necessary for the proper discharge of its functions under this Act.

### 7. Objectives of the Bureau

The objectives of the Bureau are to —

- (a) implement and administer each of the Programmes established under Part 4 of this Act;
- (b) ensure integrity, transparency, and compliance across the Programmes;
- (c) advance the policy objectives set out in section 3;
- (d) support innovation in digital identity, residency, mobility, and corporate services consistent with national and international standards; and
- (e) generate sustainable non-tax revenue for the Republic of Vanuatu.

### 8. Functions and powers of the Bureau

- (1) The Bureau shall —
  - (a) receive, assess, and determine applications under the Programmes;
  - (b) issue authorisations, certificates, passports, Digital IDs, certificates of incorporation, and other instruments provided for under this Act;
  - (c) maintain the registers required under the Schedules;
  - (d) conduct due diligence, KYC, AML, CFT, and security checks;
  - (e) ensure compliance with this Act, the Schedules, and international obligations;
  - (f) manage information systems, registries, and biometric databases used in connection with the Programmes;
  - (g) submit periodic reports to the Council of Ministers; and
  - (h) perform any other function conferred by this Act or any other law.
- (2) The Bureau may —

- (a) make policies, guidelines, and codes of practice consistent with this Act;
- (b) charge and collect prescribed fees and service charges;
- (c) establish and operate technical platforms, registries, and secure databases;
- (d) engage contractors, consultants, and agents; and
- (e) enter into arrangements and agreements within its scheme of delegation.

## 9. The Board of the Bureau

- (1) There is a Board of the Bureau consisting of eight (8) members.
- (2) The Board comprises —
  - (a) a Chairperson appointed by the Prime Minister;
  - (b) two (2) industry-expert members appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the founding PPP partner, being persons with demonstrable expertise in digital identity, financial technology, sovereign governance, or technology infrastructure;
  - (c) ex-officio representatives, one each, from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs; and
  - (d) two (2) representatives nominated by the founding PPP partner under section 11 (being the Future Citizen Bureau), one of whom shall be designated Vice-Chairperson of the Board.
- (3) Members appointed under subsection (2)(a) and (b) hold office for a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed once. Members nominated under subsection (2)(d) hold office in accordance with the PPP arrangement, but in no case for a term shorter than that applicable to the Chairperson.
- (4) A member appointed under subsection (2)(d) shall not participate in a Board decision concerning — (a) a regulatory enforcement action against the PPP partner, or (b) the determination of an individual application in which the PPP partner has, or may reasonably be perceived to have, a direct material conflict of interest. For the avoidance of doubt, matters concerning the design, operation, economics, or strategic direction of the Programmes are not, of themselves, conflicts requiring recusal. The Board shall maintain a register of declared interests.
- (5) The Minister may remove a member on grounds of misconduct, incapacity, or material neglect of duty, following procedural fairness; the removal of a member nominated under subsection (2)(d) requires consultation with the PPP partner.
- (6) The Board shall meet at least twice (2) per annum, and may meet more frequently as the Chairperson considers necessary. A quorum is the Chairperson (or, in the Chairperson's absence, the Vice-Chairperson) and four (4) other members.
- (7) Reserved matters — the Board shall not pass a resolution on any of the following matters unless at least one (1) member appointed under subsection (2)(d) is present and votes in favour —

- (a) approval, amendment, suspension, or termination of the PPP arrangement under section 11;
- (b) approval or amendment of the revenue-sharing formula under section 12;
- (c) decisions concerning intellectual property, source code, or technological infrastructure of the Programmes;
- (d) any proposed dissolution, restructuring, or material reorganisation of the Bureau; and
- (e) recommendations to the Minister to make Regulations that would materially alter the operational basis of the PPP arrangement.

**(8)** On any matter not falling within subsection (7), and in the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson (or, in the Chairperson's absence, the Vice-Chairperson) has a second or casting vote. Subsection (7) is not subject to a casting vote and requires the affirmative vote of at least one member appointed under subsection (2)(d).

## **10. Director-General and staff**

- (1)** The Bureau shall have a Director-General appointed by the Board with the approval of the Prime Minister.
- (2)** The Director-General is the chief executive officer of the Bureau and is responsible for day-to-day management.
- (3)** The Director-General is Secretary to the Board but is not a voting member.
- (4)** The Bureau may employ such officers and staff as are necessary to discharge its functions, on terms determined by the Board.

## **11. Public-Private Partnership with the Future Citizen Bureau**

- (1)** The Programmes shall be administered, funded, and operationally supported under a Public-Private Partnership arrangement entered into by the Bureau with the Future Citizen Bureau as founding partner.
- (2)** The PPP arrangement shall have an initial term of twenty-five (25) years from the date of its commencement. The arrangement is renewable for further terms of not less than fifteen (15) years by mutual agreement of the Bureau and the founding partner, with the approval of the Council of Ministers. Renewal shall not be unreasonably withheld and may be denied only on grounds of —
  - (a) material breach by the founding partner that remains unresolved following the cure period prescribed in the PPP arrangement;
  - (b) demonstrable failure to meet the service-level standards under subsection (3)(c) over a sustained period; or
  - (c) formally substantiated public-interest grounds communicated in writing to the founding partner.

**(3)** The PPP arrangement shall provide for —

- (a) funding of technological infrastructure, staffing, and operational expenses;
- (b) the revenue-sharing formula contemplated under section 12;
- (c) service-level standards and performance indicators;
- (d) independent audit and financial reporting;
- (e) intellectual property arrangements, source-code custody, and transition rights upon expiry or termination;
- (f) compensation for unrecovered capital investment by the founding partner upon any termination not attributable to its material breach; and
- (g) compliance obligations on the founding partner consistent with Part 3.

**(4)** The PPP arrangement may be terminated only by —

- (a) mutual written agreement of the parties;
- (b) the Bureau, on grounds of material breach by the founding partner that remains unresolved for the period prescribed in the PPP arrangement; or
- (c) the founding partner, on grounds of material breach by the Bureau or sustained failure of the Government to perform its obligations under the arrangement.

**(5)** Upon expiry or termination, the PPP arrangement shall provide for orderly transition and continuity of the Programmes, including the transfer or licensing of essential operational systems on terms that protect the founding partner's investment as provided under subsection (3)(f).

**(6)** Any amendment, suspension, or termination of the PPP arrangement shall be approved by the Board in accordance with section 9(7)(a). Where the amendment relates to (i) the term, (ii) the revenue-sharing formula, (iii) intellectual property arrangements, (iv) the grounds or consequences of termination, or (v) any other matter prescribed by Regulation as material, it shall additionally be approved by the Council of Ministers.

**(7)** A joint performance review of the operational implementation of the PPP arrangement may be undertaken by the Bureau and the founding partner at intervals of not less than five (5) years. The findings of any such review are advisory and may be presented to the Council of Ministers; the review shall not, of itself, constitute grounds for termination, amendment of commercial terms, or modification of the term of the PPP arrangement, any of which remain subject to section 9(7)(a) and section 11(6).

## **12. Revenue and revenue-sharing arrangements**

**(1)** All fees, charges, and contributions payable under this Act and the Schedules shall be collected by the Bureau.

(2) Revenue shall be apportioned between the Government and the PPP partner in accordance with the revenue-sharing formula set out in the PPP arrangement.

(3) The Bureau shall maintain separate accounts for each Programme and shall include them in its annual report under section 13.

### **13. Transparency, audit, and annual reporting**

(1) The Bureau shall maintain proper accounts and records and shall prepare annual financial statements audited by the Auditor-General.

(2) The Board shall submit an annual report to the Council of Ministers within three (3) months after the end of each financial year.

(3) The Bureau shall publish, and keep updated, programme guidelines and applicant information on its official website.

## PART 3 — COMMON REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

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### 14. Anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism financing, and KYC standards

- (1) The Bureau shall adopt and apply procedures consistent with the international standards established by the Financial Action Task Force, and with the AML/CFT framework approved by the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu.
- (2) Every applicant under any Programme shall be subject to KYC and due-diligence verification prescribed by Regulation, including identity verification, source-of-funds verification where applicable, and sanctions screening.
- (3) The Bureau may, in cooperation with the Financial Intelligence Unit, file suspicious-transaction reports and exchange information consistent with applicable law.

### 15. Data protection and privacy

- (1) The Bureau shall process personal data in accordance with —
- (a) the Data Protection Policy issued under Regulation and maintained in conformity with international best practice, including the standards set out in the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) as adapted to the Republic of Vanuatu;
  - (b) the purpose, lawful basis, data-minimisation, retention, and security principles prescribed by that Policy; and
  - (c) the rights of data subjects, including the rights of access, rectification, and erasure where applicable.
- (2) Personal data shall not be disclosed except as required by law, with the consent of the data subject, or as expressly authorised under this Act.

### 16. Confidentiality and lawful disclosure

- (1) Information held by the Bureau in connection with the Programmes is confidential and may be disclosed only —
- (a) with the written consent of the person to whom it relates;
  - (b) to authorised officers of the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu for lawful purposes;
  - (c) in response to a lawful request from a competent authority, including foreign authorities under treaty or mutual legal assistance arrangements; or
  - (d) where required by an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

### 17. Cybersecurity and digital identity standards

The Bureau shall ensure that all digital systems used to administer the Programmes —

- (a) comply with applicable international standards on cybersecurity, including the standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO/IEC 27001);
- (b) comply with ICAO Doc 9303 (machine-readable travel documents) in respect of the Non-Citizen Passport;
- (c) support verifiable audit trails and tamper-evident records, including by use of permissioned distributed-ledger technology where appropriate; and
- (d) incorporate access controls, identity verification, and logging consistent with risk-based standards prescribed by Regulation.

## **18. International cooperation**

- (1)** The Bureau may, with the approval of the Minister, enter into administrative arrangements with foreign authorities and international organisations for —
- (a) the exchange of information relevant to the integrity of the Programmes;
  - (b) the mutual recognition of Digital IDs and electronic signatures;
  - (c) the recognition and validation of the Non-Citizen Passport at international borders; and
  - (d) cooperation on AML, CFT, and cybersecurity matters.

## PART 4 — THE PROGRAMMES

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### 19. Vanuatu National Status Programme

- (1) There is established a class of permanent residency to be known as Vanuatu National Status.
- (2) The Vanuatu National Status is a lawful immigration status for non-citizens that grants the right to reside indefinitely in the Republic of Vanuatu, subject to this Act.
- (3) The Vanuatu National Status does not confer citizenship, nationality, or political rights.
- (4) Schedule 1 has effect with respect to eligibility, application, rights, limitations, revocation, the National Register, and certificates of Vanuatu National Status.

### 20. Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport Programme

- (1) There is established a programme to be known as the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport Programme, under which the Bureau may, on behalf of the Republic of Vanuatu, issue the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport to holders of Vanuatu National Status.
- (2) The Non-Citizen Passport is a sovereign national travel document of the Republic of Vanuatu, distinct from the citizen passport issued under the Passports Act [CAP 20], and shall comply with ICAO Doc 9303.
- (3) The Non-Citizen Passport does not entitle its holder to citizenship, voting rights, or other rights reserved for citizens of Vanuatu.
- (4) Schedule 2 has effect with respect to eligibility, application, form and security features, validity, renewal, revocation, and international recognition of the Non-Citizen Passport.
- (5) The amendments to the Passports Act [CAP 20] in Schedule 5 give effect to this section.

### 21. Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency) Programme

- (1) There is established a programme to be known as the Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency) Programme.
- (2) Under the Programme, the Bureau may issue to qualifying non-citizens a Digital ID and a certificate of Vanuatu National Overseas Status, valid for one (1), five (5), or ten (10) years, renewable in accordance with Schedule 3.
- (3) Vanuatu National Overseas Status does not confer citizenship, physical residency rights, or political rights, and is independent of the Vanuatu National Status established under section 19.
- (4) Schedule 3 has effect with respect to eligibility, application, categories of Digital Residency, Digital ID, authorised digital services, obligations of Digital Residents, and revocation.

### 22. Digital Corporate Registry

- (1)** There is established the Digital Corporate Registry, administered by the Bureau through its Digital Economy Administration Unit.
- (2)** The Digital Corporate Registry provides for the digital-first incorporation, registration, and lifecycle administration of digital companies in accordance with Schedule 4.
- (3)** A digital company registered under this Act is, to the extent that it does not carry on business in Vanuatu, treated for tax purposes consistently with the regime applicable to international companies under the laws of Vanuatu.
- (4)** Schedule 4 has effect with respect to incorporation, name requirements, lifecycle administration, authorised users, integrity and compliance, and the tax-neutral non-tax revenue model.

APPENDIX C

## PART 5 — OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

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### 23. General offences

A person commits an offence who —

- (a) falsely claims to hold any status, certificate, passport, or Digital ID issued under this Act;
- (b) forges, alters, defaces, or misuses any such instrument;
- (c) knowingly provides false or misleading information to the Bureau in connection with an application, renewal, or other matter under this Act;
- (d) without authorisation, accesses or interferes with the digital systems, registers, or audit logs maintained by the Bureau; or
- (e) discloses confidential information held by the Bureau otherwise than as permitted by this Act.

### 24. Penalties

- (1) A person convicted of an offence under section 23 is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding VT 5,000,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five (5) years, or both.
- (2) A Schedule may prescribe additional offences and penalties specific to a Programme, provided that no Schedule-prescribed penalty may exceed the maximum in subsection (1).
- (3) Where an offence under this Act is committed by a body corporate, every director, officer, or employee of the body corporate who knowingly authorised, permitted, or acquiesced in the commission of the offence is also liable for the offence.

## PART 6 — REVIEW, APPEALS AND REGULATIONS

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### 25. Administrative review

(1) A person aggrieved by a decision of the Bureau under this Act or a Schedule may, within twenty-eight (28) days of being notified of the decision, request internal review.

(2) An internal review shall be conducted by an officer of the Bureau not involved in the original decision, and shall be determined within sixty (60) days of the request.

### 26. Appeals to the Supreme Court

(1) A person dissatisfied with the outcome of an internal review under section 25 may, within sixty (60) days, appeal to the Supreme Court of Vanuatu.

(2) On an appeal under this section the Supreme Court may —

- (a) affirm, vary, or set aside the decision of the Bureau;
- (b) remit the matter to the Bureau with directions; or
- (c) make such order as to costs and consequential matters as it considers just.

### 27. Regulations

(1) The Minister may, on the recommendation of the Bureau, make Regulations for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), Regulations may prescribe —

- (a) application, renewal, revocation, and review procedures;
- (b) due-diligence and AML/CFT standards;
- (c) technical standards for digital identity, cybersecurity, and audit trails;
- (d) the form and content of certificates, passports, Digital IDs, and registry entries;
- (e) fees, charges, late fees, and refund mechanisms, subject to section 28; and
- (f) transitional and consequential matters.

(3) Regulations under this section may not amend the substantive content of Schedules 1 to 5, consistent with section 5(2).

### 28. Fee schedule and adjustment mechanism

(1) Fees payable under this Act and the Schedules are set out in Schedule 6.

(2) The Minister may, by Regulation made under section 27 and on the recommendation of the Bureau, amend Schedule 6, provided that any amendment is published in the Gazette and laid before Parliament.

Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026 — Master Bill — First Complete Draft (v1.6)

# APPENDIX C

## PART 7 — MISCELLANEOUS

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### 29. Review of the Act

(1) The Minister shall cause a comprehensive review of this Act and the effectiveness of each of the Programmes to be conducted at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year after commencement, and thereafter at intervals of not less than five (5) years.

(2) A report of each review shall be laid before Parliament.

### 30. Amendments to existing laws

The Acts specified in Schedule 5 are amended in the manner set out in that Schedule.

### 31. Protection from personal liability

No member of the Board, Director-General, officer, or employee of the Bureau is personally liable for any act done or omitted in good faith in the discharge of functions under this Act.

Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026 — Master Bill — First Complete Draft (v1.6)

APPENDIX C

# SCHEDULE 1

## *National Status Programme*

(Section 19)

### 1. Interpretation

In this Schedule, unless the context otherwise requires —

**“approved investment”** — an investment in the Republic of Vanuatu of a class, type, or minimum amount prescribed by Regulation.

**“dependant”** — in relation to a Status Holder, means the spouse or civil partner of the Status Holder, a dependent child under twenty-one (21) years of age, an unmarried child under twenty-five (25) years in full-time education and financially dependent on the Status Holder, and a dependent parent ordinarily residing with the Status Holder.

**“good character”** — the standard of personal integrity prescribed by the Bureau, including the absence of any conviction for a serious criminal offence and the absence of adverse findings on AML, CFT, or sanctions screening.

### 2. Eligibility for Vanuatu National Status

A person may apply for Vanuatu National Status if the person —

- (a) is not a citizen of the Republic of Vanuatu;
- (b) is of good character and has no conviction for a serious criminal offence in any jurisdiction;
- (c) demonstrates a commitment to contribute to the economic, social, or strategic development of the Republic through investment, expertise, or other means approved by the Bureau;
- (d) satisfies the due-diligence, KYC, AML, and CFT verification prescribed under section 14 of this Act; and
- (e) pays the prescribed application fee, contribution amount, and due-diligence fee under Schedule 6.

### 3. Application procedure

(1) An application for Vanuatu National Status shall be made to the Bureau in the form prescribed in Schedule 7.

(2) The Bureau may require the applicant to provide —

- (a) proof of identity, including biometric data prescribed by Regulation;

- (b) police clearances from each jurisdiction in which the applicant has resided for six (6) months or more in the preceding ten (10) years;
- (c) evidence of source of funds and source of wealth, where applicable;
- (d) evidence of the approved investment, contribution, or qualifying activity; and
- (e) any further information reasonably necessary for the Bureau to determine the application.

(3) The Bureau shall determine each application within ninety (90) days of receipt of a complete application, save where additional verification is required, in which case the Bureau shall notify the applicant of the expected timetable.

#### 4. Grant of Status and Certificate

(1) On approval of an application, the Bureau shall —

- (a) enter the applicant in the National Register under paragraph 11;
- (b) issue a Certificate of Vanuatu National Status in the form prescribed in Schedule 7; and
- (c) notify the Department of Immigration and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

(2) The Certificate of Vanuatu National Status is conclusive evidence, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that the named person holds Vanuatu National Status.

#### 5. Validity and administrative renewal

(1) Vanuatu National Status is valid indefinitely, subject to this Schedule.

(2) A Status Holder shall apply for administrative revalidation every ten (10) years from the date of grant, for the purpose of —

- (a) verifying that the Status Holder continues to satisfy the eligibility requirements;
- (b) renewing biometric and identity records;
- (c) re-running AML, CFT, and sanctions screening; and
- (d) updating contact and registered-address details.

(3) Failure to apply for administrative revalidation within twelve (12) months of the prescribed date is a ground for suspension under paragraph 9.

#### 6. Rights and privileges of a Status Holder

Subject to this Schedule, a Status Holder is entitled to —

- (a) reside permanently in the Republic of Vanuatu;
- (b) work, invest, conduct business, or engage in any lawful occupation in the Republic;
- (c) access public services and programmes designated by the Minister by Order;

- (d) apply for and hold the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport under Schedule 2;
- (e) sponsor dependants for residency under paragraph 8; and
- (f) enjoy the protection of the laws of the Republic of Vanuatu on the same basis as any other lawful resident.

## 7. Limitations on Vanuatu National Status

(1) Vanuatu National Status does not confer the citizenship or nationality of the Republic of Vanuatu.

(2) A Status Holder shall not —

- (a) vote in any national, provincial, or municipal election;
- (b) stand for or hold elective public office;
- (c) be appointed to a judicial or military office of the Republic;
- (d) hold diplomatic or consular office of the Republic;
- (e) acquire custom-owned land otherwise than in accordance with the Land Reform Act [CAP 123]; or
- (f) exercise any right reserved by the Constitution or any other law exclusively to citizens of the Republic.

## 8. Sponsorship of dependants

(1) A Status Holder may sponsor a dependant for residency in the Republic of Vanuatu, in the form prescribed in Schedule 7.

(2) A sponsored dependant —

- (a) is subject to the same good-character and AML/CFT verification as the Status Holder;
- (b) holds residency dependent on the continued Status of the sponsor;
- (c) may apply for Vanuatu National Status in their own right upon reaching the age of twenty-one (21), subject to paragraph 2; and
- (d) may not vote, hold public office, or exercise any right reserved to citizens.

## 9. Revocation and suspension

(1) The Bureau may revoke or suspend the Vanuatu National Status of a Status Holder if the Status Holder —

- (a) obtained the Status by fraud, deception, or material misrepresentation;
- (b) is convicted of a serious criminal offence in any jurisdiction;

(c) engages in conduct prejudicial to the national security, public order, or international reputation of the Republic of Vanuatu;

(d) ceases to satisfy the good-character requirement; or

(e) fails to apply for administrative revalidation under paragraph 5 within the prescribed period.

(2) Before revocation or suspension, the Bureau shall give the Status Holder written notice of the proposed action, the grounds for it, and an opportunity to make written representations within thirty (30) days.

(3) Revocation of Vanuatu National Status automatically cancels any Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport issued to that person, and the person shall surrender the passport to the Bureau within thirty (30) days.

(4) A person whose Status is revoked may appeal under section 26 of this Act.

## 10. Renunciation

A Status Holder may renounce Vanuatu National Status at any time by written notice to the Bureau. Renunciation takes effect on the date of receipt of the notice and operates to cancel any associated Non-Citizen Passport.

## 11. The National Register

(1) The Bureau shall maintain a National Register of Vanuatu National Status containing, in respect of each Status Holder —

(a) full legal name, nationality of origin, and date of birth;

(b) Status certificate number and date of grant;

(c) biometric reference;

(d) registered service address;

(e) the date of any administrative revalidation, suspension, revocation, or renunciation; and

(f) any other particulars prescribed by Regulation.

(2) The National Register is confidential, but may be searched by an authorised officer of a government agency for a lawful purpose, and entries may be verified electronically by an authorised foreign authority in accordance with section 18 of this Act.

## 12. Certificate of Vanuatu National Status

A Certificate of Vanuatu National Status shall bear —

(a) the holder's full legal name and nationality of origin;

(b) the unique Status certificate number and date of grant;

- (c) the digital verification features prescribed by Regulation, including a QR code linked to the National Register;
- (d) the embossed seal of the Bureau and the signature of the Director-General or an authorised officer; and
- (e) a statement that the certificate evidences lawful permanent residency in the Republic of Vanuatu and does not confer citizenship.

APPENDIX C

## SCHEDULE 2

### *Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport Programme*

(Section 20)

#### 1. Interpretation

In this Schedule —

**“ICAO Doc 9303”** — the document of the International Civil Aviation Organization setting machine-readable travel document standards, as amended from time to time.

**“Non-Citizen Passport”** — the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport issued under section 20 of this Act and this Schedule.

#### 2. Eligibility

A person is eligible to apply for a Non-Citizen Passport if the person —

- (a) holds valid Vanuatu National Status under Schedule 1;
- (b) has not had that Status suspended, revoked, or renounced;
- (c) is not subject to a current order of a court of competent jurisdiction prohibiting the issue of a travel document; and
- (d) satisfies any further criteria prescribed by Regulation.

#### 3. Application procedure

(1) An application for a Non-Citizen Passport shall be made to the Bureau in the form prescribed in Schedule 7.

(2) The Bureau shall verify the applicant's Vanuatu National Status against the National Register before authorising issuance of a Non-Citizen Passport.

(3) On approval, the Bureau shall arrange production and personalisation of the Non-Citizen Passport in accordance with paragraph 4.

#### 4. Form and security features

The Non-Citizen Passport shall —

- (a) be titled “Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport” in English, French, and Bislama;
- (b) comply with ICAO Doc 9303 for machine-readable and electronic travel documents;
- (c) incorporate a polycarbonate data page with laser-engraved biographic data;

- (d) incorporate a contactless integrated-circuit chip containing biographic and biometric data and supporting active and passive authentication;
- (e) bear the national coat of arms of the Republic of Vanuatu, the digital signature of the issuing authority, and security printing consistent with international travel document standards;
- (f) use a machine-readable zone prefix consistent with the national passport code (P<VUT...);
- (g) incorporate a QR code linked to the Bureau's verification registry; and
- (h) include such further physical and electronic anti-forgery features as the Bureau prescribes by Regulation.

## 5. Validity and renewal

- (1) A Non-Citizen Passport is valid for ten (10) years from the date of issue, unless earlier revoked, suspended, or surrendered.
- (2) A holder may apply for renewal on confirmation of continued Vanuatu National Status and payment of the prescribed fee.
- (3) Lost or damaged Non-Citizen Passports may be replaced in accordance with procedures prescribed by Regulation, including a higher prescribed fee.

## 6. Rights of the holder

A holder of the Non-Citizen Passport is entitled to —

- (a) use the passport as an official national travel document of the Republic of Vanuatu;
- (b) travel internationally, subject to the entry requirements of the destination State;
- (c) request consular assistance from the Republic of Vanuatu, limited to identity verification, emergency documentation, and humanitarian assistance, in accordance with prescribed procedures; and
- (d) renew or replace the passport in accordance with paragraph 5.

## 7. Limitations

The holder of a Non-Citizen Passport shall not —

- (a) claim citizenship, nationality, voting rights, or political privileges by virtue of the passport;
- (b) obtain a citizen passport under the Passports Act [CAP 20] unless granted citizenship under law; or
- (c) assert any entitlement beyond lawful permanent residence and the travel rights described in paragraph 6.

## 8. Revocation, suspension and surrender

- (1) The Bureau may revoke or suspend a Non-Citizen Passport if the holder —
- (a) ceases to hold valid Vanuatu National Status;
  - (b) obtained the passport by fraud or material misrepresentation;
  - (c) is convicted of a serious criminal offence in any jurisdiction; or
  - (d) engages in conduct prejudicial to the national security, public order, or international reputation of the Republic of Vanuatu.
- (2) Before revocation, the Bureau shall give the holder written notice and an opportunity to make representations within thirty (30) days.
- (3) Upon revocation or expiry, the holder shall surrender the passport to the Bureau or to a designated diplomatic or consular post within thirty (30) days.

## 9. International recognition

- (1) The Non-Citizen Passport is an official passport of the Republic of Vanuatu issued under this Act, and is presented to other States accordingly.
- (2) The sovereign right of any other State to determine entry, visa, or recognition policy in respect of the holders of the Non-Citizen Passport remains unaffected.
- (3) The Bureau may, with the approval of the Minister, enter into administrative arrangements under section 18 of this Act with foreign authorities concerning the recognition and validation of the Non-Citizen Passport at international borders.

## 10. ICAO compliance

The Bureau shall ensure that the design, issuance, personalisation, and data-security features of the Non-Citizen Passport conform to ICAO Doc 9303 and any subsequent revisions, and shall procure and maintain such testing, certification, and inter-State key-management arrangements as are required for international recognition.

## 11. Record-keeping

The Bureau shall maintain a secure registry of all Non-Citizen Passports issued, renewed, suspended, revoked, lost, or surrendered, and shall include aggregate statistics in its annual report to the Council of Ministers.

## SCHEDULE 3

### *Vanuatu National Overseas Status (Digital Residency) Programme*

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(Section 21)

#### 1. Interpretation

In this Schedule —

**“Digital ID”** — the secure electronic identification credential issued by the Bureau under this Schedule.

**“Digital Resident”** — a person granted Vanuatu National Overseas Status under section 21 of this Act and this Schedule.

**“authorised service provider”** — an entity licensed by the Bureau under paragraph 10 to provide one or more categories of authorised digital services.

#### 2. Eligibility

A person is eligible for Digital Residency if the person —

- (a) is not a citizen of the Republic of Vanuatu;
- (b) has attained the age of eighteen (18) years;
- (c) has no conviction for a serious criminal offence in any jurisdiction;
- (d) satisfies the KYC, AML, and CFT verification prescribed under section 14 of this Act;
- (e) pays the prescribed contribution or membership fee under Schedule 6; and
- (f) satisfies any further criteria prescribed by Regulation.

#### 3. Application procedure

(1) An application for Digital Residency shall be made to the Bureau in the form prescribed in Schedule 7, and may be made and processed entirely through the Bureau's digital platform.

(2) The Bureau may require the applicant to provide biometric data, passport data, and remote-identity-verification artefacts in accordance with prescribed standards.

(3) On approval, the Bureau shall issue —

- (a) a Digital Residency Certificate; and
- (b) a Digital ID, valid for the period selected by the applicant under paragraph 4.

#### 4. Categories of Digital Residency

The Programme provides the following categories —

- (a) One-Year Digital Residency, renewable annually;
- (b) Five-Year Digital Residency, renewable upon expiry; and
- (c) Ten-Year Digital Residency, renewable upon expiry.

The applicable contribution and renewal fees are prescribed in Schedule 6.

## 5. Digital ID issuance

(1) Upon approval, the Bureau shall issue to the Digital Resident a Digital ID containing —

- (a) the holder's full legal name, nationality of origin, and unique Digital ID number;
- (b) the period of validity;
- (c) a cryptographic signature of the Bureau, supporting both authentication and electronic signing;
- (d) a biometric reference; and
- (e) such further security features as the Bureau prescribes by Regulation.

(2) The Digital ID is the property of the Republic of Vanuatu and is provided to the Digital Resident for use in accordance with this Schedule.

## 6. Authentication and legal recognition

(1) The Digital ID and the electronic signature issued under this Schedule are recognised within the Republic of Vanuatu as a valid form of identification and signature in any administrative or commercial transaction, on the conditions prescribed by Regulation.

(2) The sovereign right of any other State to determine the acceptance of the Digital ID and electronic signature as legitimate forms of identification remains unaffected.

## 7. Rights of a Digital Resident

A Digital Resident is entitled to —

- (a) receive and use the Digital ID and electronic signature in accordance with this Schedule;
- (b) access authorised online government and financial services;
- (c) participate in the digital economy of the Republic of Vanuatu within permitted frameworks;
- (d) obtain official certification, electronic-signature, and document-verification services through the Bureau or an authorised service provider; and
- (e) renew or upgrade the Digital Residency status in accordance with paragraph 4.

Digital Residency does not confer citizenship, political rights, or any entitlement to physical residence in the Republic of Vanuatu.

## 8. Obligations of a Digital Resident

A Digital Resident shall —

- (a) use the Digital ID lawfully and personally, and not permit any other person to use it;
- (b) notify the Bureau of any change in personal data, contact details, or supporting documentation within thirty (30) days;
- (c) comply with the laws of the Republic of Vanuatu, with AML/CFT obligations, and with data-use standards prescribed by Regulation; and
- (d) refrain from any conduct that may bring disrepute to the Republic of Vanuatu or the Digital Residency Programme.

## 9. Scope of authorised digital services

Digital Residents may be granted access to the following categories of services, subject to Regulation —

- (a) Identity and trust services, including digital notarisation, certification, and timestamping;
- (b) Business and enterprise services, including the digital incorporation of companies under Schedule 4 and ongoing compliance filings;
- (c) Financial and digital-banking services, through licensed institutions and approved fintech sandboxes;
- (d) Communications and administrative services, including allocation of a digital mailing address and access to secure communication platforms; and
- (e) Innovation and technology services, including digital wallet provision, blockchain-based identity, and self-sovereign identity systems.

## 10. Authorised service providers

- (1) The Bureau may license a person or entity as an authorised service provider to deliver one or more categories of authorised digital services.
- (2) A licensed service provider shall comply with —
  - (a) the licence conditions imposed by the Bureau;
  - (b) the AML, CFT, and KYC obligations under section 14 of this Act;
  - (c) the cybersecurity and data-protection standards under sections 15 and 17; and
  - (d) such reporting and audit requirements as the Bureau prescribes.

## 11. Revocation and suspension

- (1) The Bureau may revoke or suspend Digital Residency if the Digital Resident —

- (a) obtained the status by fraud or material misrepresentation;
- (b) has been convicted of a serious offence in any jurisdiction; or
- (c) is in material breach of this Schedule or the Regulations.

**(2)** The Bureau shall give written notice and provide opportunity to respond within thirty (30) days before revocation takes effect.

**(3)** Revocation operates to cancel the Digital ID and electronic signature, and the Digital Resident shall thereafter cease to access authorised digital services.

APPENDIX C

## SCHEDULE 4

### *Digital Corporate Registry*

(Section 22)

#### 1. Interpretation

In this Schedule —

**“Digital Company”** — a company incorporated or registered under this Schedule and entered on the Digital Corporate Register.

**“Digital Corporate Register”** — the register established under paragraph 2.

**“Registrar”** — the Registrar of Digital Companies appointed under paragraph 4.

**“VDEA Unit”** — the Digital Economy Administration Unit within the Bureau.

**“authorised person”** — a person permitted to make filings or perform registry actions for a Digital Company under paragraph 17.

#### 2. Establishment of the Digital Corporate Register

(1) The Bureau shall establish and maintain a register to be known as the Digital Corporate Register.

(2) The Digital Corporate Register shall contain the prescribed particulars of each Digital Company and such other information as is required under this Schedule or by Regulation.

#### 3. Administration by VDEA Unit

(1) The Bureau shall administer this Schedule through the VDEA Unit, subject to the oversight and policy direction of the Board.

(2) The Bureau may issue operational instruments, service standards, and technical standards for the administration of the Digital Corporate Register.

#### 4. Registrar of Digital Companies and authorised officers

(1) The Bureau shall appoint a Registrar of Digital Companies and such other authorised officers as are necessary.

(2) The Registrar shall perform the functions conferred by this Schedule in accordance with directions issued by the Bureau and prescribed procedures.

#### 5. Digital systems, records, and audit trails

(1) The Digital Corporate Register shall be maintained in digital form.

(2) The Bureau shall implement appropriate security controls, access management, data governance, record retention, and verifiable audit-trail technology.

(3) The Bureau may leverage permissioned distributed-ledger or other tamper-evident technology to improve transparency, prevent unauthorised alteration, and enhance the credibility of the register.

## 6. Legal effect of register and registry outputs

(1) An entry in the Digital Corporate Register is prima facie evidence of the matters recorded.

(2) A certificate or extract issued by the Registrar is evidence of its contents unless proved otherwise.

## 7. Inspection, extracts, and certifications

(1) The Registrar may provide registry searches, extracts, and certificates in the form prescribed in Schedule 7.

(2) The Bureau may prescribe by Regulation which information is publicly searchable and which is restricted, subject to lawful access rules.

## 8. Incorporation and registration

(1) A person may apply to incorporate a Digital Company by submitting a digital filing in the prescribed form and paying the prescribed fees.

(2) The Registrar shall incorporate the company if satisfied that the application complies with this Schedule and the Regulations.

## 9. Name requirements

(1) A Digital Company shall have a name approved under prescribed rules.

(2) The Registrar may refuse a name that is misleading, undesirable, infringing on intellectual property rights, or otherwise inconsistent with prescribed naming rules.

## 10. Incorporation application

An incorporation application shall include —

- (a) the proposed name of the company;
- (b) the registered contact details for service;
- (c) the particulars of directors, controllers, and beneficial owners;
- (d) the share structure or member structure, where applicable;
- (e) the authorised person or persons for filings; and
- (f) the required declarations and prescribed supporting documents.

## 11. Constitution and default rules

(1) A Digital Company may adopt a constitution in the form prescribed by Regulation.

(2) Where no constitution is adopted, the prescribed default rules apply.

## 12. Certificate of incorporation

(1) Upon incorporation, the Registrar shall issue a digital certificate of incorporation.

(2) A certificate of incorporation may include verifiable features enabling digital validation, including a QR code linked to the Digital Corporate Register.

(3) The Registrar shall assign a unique identifier to each Digital Company and shall record the company's status as active, suspended, or struck off.

## 13. Annual return

(1) A Digital Company shall file an annual return and pay the prescribed annual fee within the time prescribed by Regulation.

(2) Regulations may prescribe late fees, grace periods, and the consequences of non-compliance.

## 14. Changes to particulars

A Digital Company shall notify and file the prescribed changes in respect of —

(a) directors, controllers, and beneficial owners;

(b) authorised persons;

(c) registered contact details for service; and

(d) any other prescribed matter.

## 15. Suspension, strike-off, and reinstatement

(1) The Registrar may suspend or strike off a Digital Company for failure to comply with prescribed obligations.

(2) Suspension or strike-off shall follow prescribed notice and procedural fairness.

(3) The Registrar may reinstate a company in the prescribed circumstances, including upon payment of fees and filing of outstanding returns.

(4) The Registrar may correct clerical errors and rectify the register in prescribed circumstances.

## 16. Direct digital model

(1) A Digital Company is not required to appoint a registered agent under this Schedule.

(2) Filings and registry actions are completed through the digital registry system by authorised persons using identity-based permissions.

## 17. Authorised persons and permissions

- (1) A Digital Company shall designate one or more authorised persons for registry actions.
- (2) The Bureau shall maintain rules for permissions, including role-based access and limits on actions.
- (3) The Bureau may require identity verification for authorised persons using approved digital-identity methods, including the Digital ID under Schedule 3.

## 18. Identity and access controls

The Bureau may apply risk-based access controls, authentication requirements, logging, and prescribed cybersecurity standards consistent with section 17 of this Act.

## 19. Declarations and accuracy of filings

- (1) A person submitting a filing shall ensure that the filing is accurate and complete, and shall make the prescribed declarations.
- (2) A person shall not knowingly submit a filing that is false or misleading in a material particular; the offences and penalties under Part 5 of this Act apply.

## 20. Confidentiality and lawful disclosure

Restricted information held by the Bureau in connection with the Digital Corporate Register shall be protected in accordance with section 16 of this Act and the Regulations made under it. Disclosure may occur only where authorised by law, including in response to lawful requests by competent authorities.

## 21. Administrative sanctions

The Registrar may impose administrative sanctions prescribed by Regulation, including warnings, suspensions of filing privileges, and status restrictions, subject to procedural fairness and the right of review and appeal under sections 25 and 26 of this Act.

## 22. Tax treatment and fee-based revenue model

- (1) A Digital Company, to the extent that it does not carry on business in the Republic of Vanuatu, is treated for tax purposes consistently with the regime applicable to international companies under the laws of Vanuatu.
- (2) A Digital Company is taken to carry on business in Vanuatu if it conducts substantial trading, commercial, or revenue-generating activities within Vanuatu, maintains a place of business in Vanuatu, or otherwise satisfies criteria prescribed by Regulation.
- (3) Nothing in this Schedule limits the application of indirect taxes, duties, or any other domestic legal obligation in respect of an entity that carries on business in Vanuatu.

**(4)** Government revenue associated with Digital Companies is derived primarily from prescribed registration and service fees set out in Schedule 6.

APPENDIX C

## SCHEDULE 5

### Amendments to Existing Laws

(Section 30)

#### Part 1 — Amendment to the Passports Act [CAP 20]

The Passports Act [CAP 20] is amended as follows —

In section 8 (Issue of passports), after subsection (3) insert —

*“(4) The Minister may, under the Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026, authorise the issuance of the Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport to holders of Vanuatu National Status granted under that Act.*

*(5) The Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport authorised under subsection (4) is a national passport of the Republic of Vanuatu, distinct in legal status from passports issued to citizens under this Act, and the provisions of the Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026 and Schedule 2 to that Act govern its eligibility, form, validity, and revocation.”*

#### Part 2 — Amendment to the Immigration Act [CAP 66]

The Immigration Act [CAP 66] is amended as follows —

In the interpretation provision, insert in alphabetical order —

*“‘Vanuatu National Status’ means the class of permanent residency established under the Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026 and held by a person entered in the National Register maintained under Schedule 1 to that Act;”*

After the existing residency provisions, insert —

*“A person who holds Vanuatu National Status is a lawful resident of the Republic of Vanuatu for all purposes of this Act, and the conditions, limitations, and revocation grounds applicable to that person are those set out in the Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026 and Schedule 1 to that Act, which prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.”*

#### Part 3 — Amendment to the International Companies Act [CAP 222]

The International Companies Act [CAP 222] is amended as follows —

After the existing provisions on company classification, insert —

*“Where a company is registered as a Digital Company under the Vanuatu National Bureau Act 2026, the provisions of that Act and Schedule 4 to that Act apply in respect of that company, and to the extent that the Digital Company does not carry on business in the Republic of Vanuatu it is*

*treated for tax purposes consistently with the regime applicable to international companies under this Act.”*

## SCHEDULE 6

### Schedule of Prescribed Fees

(Sections 5(3) and 28)

*The fees set out in this Schedule are payable to the Bureau in respect of the matters specified. Amounts are stated in Vatu (VT) and may be amended by Regulation made by the Minister on the recommendation of the Bureau, in accordance with sections 5(3) and 28 of this Act..*

Schedule 1 — National Status Programme	
Application fee	VT [TBC] — non-refundable on submission
Contribution amount	VT [TBC] — payable on grant; non-refundable
Due-diligence fee	VT [TBC] — at cost or capped per applicant
Administrative revalidation (10-year)	VT [TBC]
Certificate replacement	VT [TBC]
Sponsorship of dependant	VT [TBC] per dependant
Schedule 2 — Non-Citizen Passport Programme	
Passport issuance (standard, 10-year)	VT [TBC]
Passport renewal	VT [TBC]
Lost or damaged passport (replacement)	VT [TBC]
Expedited service surcharge	VT [TBC]
Schedule 3 — Digital Residency Programme	
One-Year Digital Residency	VT [TBC]
Five-Year Digital Residency	VT [TBC]
Ten-Year Digital Residency	VT [TBC]
Renewal (each category)	VT [TBC]
Digital ID replacement	VT [TBC]
Authorised service provider — annual licence	VT [TBC]

Schedule 4 — Digital Corporate Registry	
Incorporation of Digital Company	VT [TBC]
Annual return	VT [TBC]
Late filing surcharge	VT [TBC]
Change of particulars filing	VT [TBC]
Reinstatement of struck-off company	VT [TBC]
Search of register	VT [TBC]
Certified extract or certificate	VT [TBC]
Expedited service surcharge	VT [TBC]

## SCHEDULE 7

### Forms

(Section 5(3))

The forms listed in this Schedule are prescribed for the purposes of the Act and may be amended by Regulation made by the Minister on the recommendation of the Bureau, in accordance with section 5(3) of this Act.

*Specimen designs, technical specifications, and machine-readable templates are to be published by the Bureau and updated from time to time as required by ICAO Doc 9303 (in respect of the Non-Citizen Passport), the technical standards prescribed under section 17, and operational requirements.*

<b>Form 1</b>	Application for Vanuatu National Status (Schedule 1)
<b>Form 2</b>	Certificate of Vanuatu National Status (Schedule 1)
<b>Form 3</b>	Application for Vanuatu National (Non-Citizen) Passport (Schedule 2)
<b>Form 4</b>	Application for Vanuatu National Overseas Status — Digital Residency (Schedule 3)
<b>Form 5</b>	Digital ID specimen and technical specification (Schedule 3)
<b>Form 6</b>	Application for licence as authorised service provider (Schedule 3)
<b>Form 7</b>	Application for Incorporation of Digital Company (Schedule 4)
<b>Form 8</b>	Annual Return of Digital Company (Schedule 4)
<b>Form 9</b>	Notice of Change of Particulars — Digital Company (Schedule 4)
<b>Form 10</b>	Declaration of Authorised Person (Schedule 4)
<b>Form 11</b>	Application for Administrative Review (section 25)
<b>Form 12</b>	Notice of Surrender of Passport, Certificate, or Digital ID

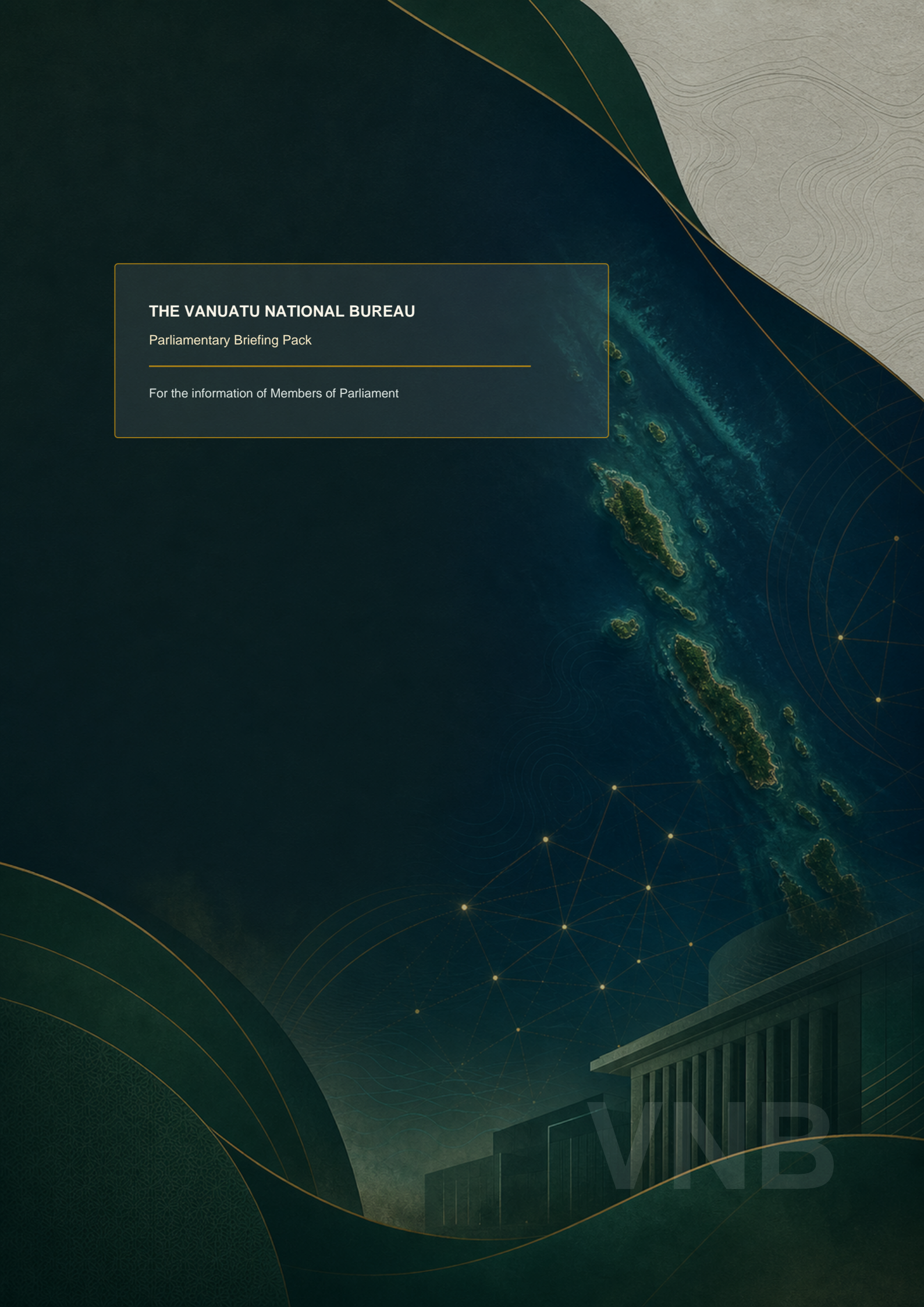
## Next steps

1. Provide this complete first draft to the State Law Office, the parliamentary counsel, and the Office of the Delegated Minister for review, with specific attention to section 5 (Schedules have force of law) and section 11 (PPP arrangement) as the load-bearing constitutional provisions of the framework.
2. Finalise prescribed fee amounts in Schedule 6 with the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Finance, having regard to international comparator programmes and revenue projections.
3. Complete technical specifications for prescribed forms in Schedule 7, including ICAO-conformant designs for the Non-Citizen Passport and security designs for the Digital ID and certificates.
4. Cabinet endorsement of the consolidated Bill.
5. Submission for First Reading at the next available parliamentary sitting.

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*Modern Governance for a Borderless Future*



**THE VANUATU NATIONAL BUREAU**

Parliamentary Briefing Pack

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