

Brief outcomes on Vanuatu Greenpreneurs Week to cultivate Local Green Businesses

Budding entrepreneurs and experienced sustainable business owners gathered in Port Vila for Vanuatu Greenpreneurs week from 25 to 26 September 2018 at Warwick Le Lagon. Jointly organized by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) and the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE), the event was aimed at cultivating development of local businesses that help address environmental or social issues as a core part of their business model. The week began with “Jumpstart Your Green Business” – a one-and-a-half-day workshop led by GGGI in partnership with the Pacific Green Business Centre and the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) which focused on supporting new and early stage green businesses in clarifying their business concepts and giving participants tools they need to take their business to the next level. Following this was a second one-and-a-half-day workshop on Entrepreneurship in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, led by PCREEE, which brought together new and established energy industry stakeholders to hear experiences from those that have worked in this sector and to pave the way for youth and others to start or improve their own businesses or find employment opportunities in both the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors.

An evening reception held midway during the week facilitated networking opportunities among participants and mentors in the two workshops and allowed local business support providers to offer information about their services for small businesses. The Acting Director of the Department of Energy, Mr David Gibson opened the reception, stating “As our

country transforms itself and prepares to face the future, we need new ideas and concepts. We need innovation and new technologies, we need new business models, new types of products, new ways of doing and new ways of thinking. And that is what Greenpreneurs Week is all about.”

Kristin Deason, GGI’s Pacific Regional officer, commented that GGGI recognize the important role played by the private sector in driving and implementing green growth, and this is why GGGI have organized this event. There are already many successful, impactful green businesses in Vanuatu, but they want there to be more, and believe there are many sectors and opportunities where this can happen.”

During the Jumpstart Your Green Business Workshop, over 20 participants received training on taking a lean business approach and learned about trends in waste, energy, and natural resource management from experts in each field, as well as understanding on government and tax requirements for setting up a business in Vanuatu, and participating in interactive activities designed to help develop their business concept. Participants were then each paired up with a mentor experienced in starting and running their own green business, and worked with mentors and peer to refine their business idea and identify next steps. The participants and mentors will continue to work together for the next four months as the new businesses continue to develop.

Participants and mentors at the Jumpstart your Green Business Workshop (see attached photo in the separate email)

The workshop in Entrepreneurship in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency covered topics including employment opportunities in the local energy sector, business registration and job application requirements, and training and support opportunities in the energy sector available to youth. In opening the workshop, PCREEE's Private Sector Expert, Mr Peceli Nakavulevu outlined that the private sector can play a greater role in greening our communities, addressing climate change, solving environmental and social problems, and nurturing healthy, inclusive communities." He further added that such workshops have the potential to build new entrepreneurs that can generate additional Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency investments in the PICTs and result in the engagement of more youths in green jobs in the region. The workshop provided a platform to introduce specific PCREEE initiatives through the launch of,

- I) The Sustainable Energy Research Support Fund,
- II) The Innovation Competition and
- III) The Sustainable Energy Business Development Support Facility.

This workshop is part of the regional Pacific Greenpreneurs program, along with similar workshops in Fiji on September 18-20 and in Kiribati on October 8-10.

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