

**Presentation for:
ITU & National Broadband Policy
Workshop**

**19 September 2014, Port Vila
Telecommunications/ICT
Consumer Protection and
Relations in Vanuatu**



The Government
of The Republic
of Vanuatu



TRR

Telecommunication &
Radiocommunication
Regulator

About Vanuatu

- Vanuatu is made up of 83 islands and 63 islands are inhabited. (Located in South Pacific)
- 234,000 population in the 2009 census
- Total Land Area 4720 square metres
- 80% Living in Rural Areas, 20% in Urban Areas
- Has six provinces, and two municipal councils
- In terms of Telecommunications Network it currently has just over 90% of population coverage mainly on voice (mobile)
- In terms of Internet, very few areas do have access – either through VSATs setting or 2.5G network (with smart phones); about 10 percent of population – but growing
- 3G & 3G+ available in 2 key cities



Types of Consumers for ICT/Telco Services/Products



Students/Teachers



Youth – Unemployed/Empl



Vulnerable consumers



Parents



Elite Consumers



Disable Consumers



Business Consumers



Government



Challenges faced

- Vanuatu is a country with one of the highest rate of illiterate citizens
- It is hard for developed countries to adapt to new technology some, e.g. RoK, Australia are proven quick adapters). In developing countries, this difficulty is magnified. Thus, TRR has a great challenge in terms of consumer protection against new and ever changing technologies, equipment & ICT applications.



Challenges faced

- In many cases in developing countries, there are challenges in utilizing new technology particularly in rural areas, & in utilizing products supplied in the market. (e.g, there are shops selling Iphone 5s in town, but there is no support provided for maintenance if the Iphone is damaged)
- The vast geographical and topography of Vanuatu makes it hard for provision of access to & utilization of ICT services; & thus for TRR, for the easy dissemination of information. Especially in rural areas for their development



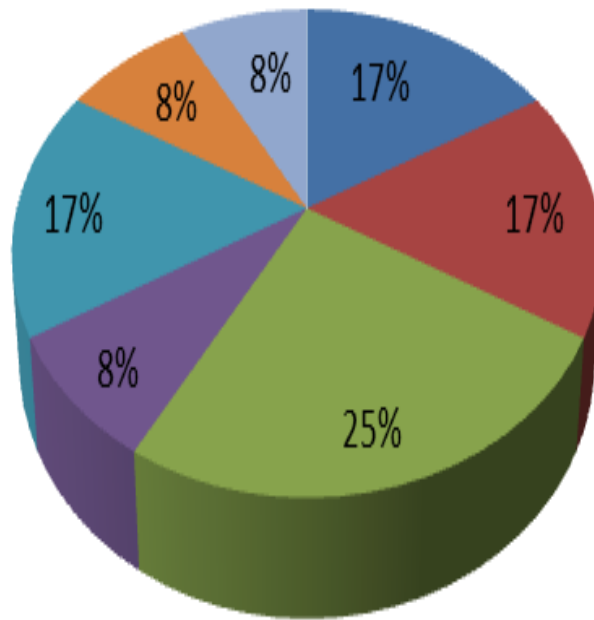
Challenges faced

- Usage of internet is centred in (basically 2) –Port Vila and Luganville urban areas –thus causing imbalance in share; in terms of information dissemination through internet & radio as Vanuatu 's population is made up of around 75% living in the rural communities.
- Quality of Service in many rural areas of Vanuatu is claimed by many customers to be poor & insufficient for their needs, causing frustration & disappointment. This holds back ICT use & adoption.
- Limited human resources to provide technical support in rural communities; hence consumers are less encouraged to purchase more ICT products for rural use.



Regulatory statistics on Complaints received in 2013

Types of Complaints 2013



- Infrastructure-tower
- Poor/Unreliable Service
- Domain name
- Misleading advert
- Data credit
- Call credit
- Fraudulent practice



What TRR is trying to achieve with its Consumer Activities

- At a national level – an informed citizen of Vanuatu leading to Vanuatu’s national vision “**a just healthy, educated and wealthy Ni-Vanuatu**” through positive use of ICT’s.
- As a key element of TRR’s implementation of one of the Vanuatu Government’s (GOV’s) top priorities of the National ICT policy – Building trust (mitigating risks & threats related to the ICT Development).



What TRR is trying to achieve with its Consumer Activities

- Consumer awareness & protection is a key element of the ICT Policy & the Telecommunications Act that TRR administers.
- Awareness of implementation of GOV's Universal Access Policy: 98% of the population will have access to telecommunications services by 1 January 2018
- Stimulation of a sustainable ICT/Telecommunications Market in Vanuatu and extension of these services in the rural areas: leading to bridging of Digital Divide



What TRR is trying to achieve with its Consumer Activities

- An aware, active, and (respectfully) vocal citizen - in a Vanuatu way - to ensure consumer rights are recognized and protected
- TRR recognizes & must assist & will play an active role through its education awareness campaigns; promoting Consumer empowerment, consumer safety, consumer enforcement procedures and appropriate redress



What TRR is trying to achieve with it's Consumer Activities

- Built positive working relationship with High-level and Strong Pacific consumer advocate Organisation/Personnel (Consumer Council of Fiji) which enhance our awareness & measures we can consider for Vanuatu.
- Most importantly for youth/vulnerable consumers in particular, to prevent “Consumer Digital shock” in a rapidly evolving Digital competitive market.



The END!

