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'Understanding volcanoes and society: the key for risk mitigation'



Development of a collaborative consistent volcano communication framework in Vanuatu: Hazard maps, education, alert levels, bulletins, signs and procedures.

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A consistent framework for volcanic hazards communication has been in development since 2012 across the active volcanoes of Vanuatu. This is a collaboration with Vanuatu Meteorological and Geo-hazards Department (VMGD), GNS Science and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and supported by the New Zealand Aid Programme. A significant part of this is background and safety hazard maps. Background hazard maps cover the myriad of volcanic hazards across each island from a long-term probabilistic perspective. These include safety messages in case an eruption were to suddenly occur, but such maps are intended to be applied in periods without significant new unrest or eruption. Safety maps are scenario-specific and include life-safety messages and access restrictions particular to an imminent or ongoing eruption situation. Safety maps have been developed for ongoing use at the currently active volcanoes on Tanna and Anbrym. Safety maps include danger zones, linked to signage on the ground at the volcanoes. The graphic design of maps, signage and information boards are in development with collaboration from the Vanuatu Red Cross Society. A new Vanuatu Volcanic Alert Level system has been put in place that includes two unrest levels, three eruption levels, and statements about hazard distance. Volcanic Alert Bulletin templates have been developed to link to the mapped danger zones, key safety messages, and new VVAL. Danger zones can be set as 'off-limits' and evacuated in NDMO messages within VABs. New harmonised Standard Operating Procedures are being written at NDMO and VMGD to trigger all of these activities in an event. Tourist safety sheets have been developed incorporating volcano facts, danger zones, signage, VVAL, and where to get the current alerts and danger zone exclusions. Messages need to be consistent with the other hazards too and for Port Vila and Luganville such additional work has recently been conducted.