

Vanuatu's Customary 'Tabu' Marine Closures — Village-Led Reef Recovery Under Kastom Law

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · Vanuatu

Quality score: 33/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

Summary

Ni-Vanuatu villages close reef areas under customary 'tabu' law, the country's most widespread community fisheries tool. Peer-reviewed studies at Takara and Emau found shellfish biomass up to 13-fold higher inside protected zones, though gains vary sharply by site and species.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced	0/3
Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced	2/3
Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control	0/3
Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced	0/3
Governance, certification & transferability	3/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-06

[Takara community \(North Efate\); Emau Island communities; Vanuatu Fisheries Department](#) — accessed 2026-09-06

[PLOS One 2017 — Takara trochus reserve study](#) — accessed 2026-09-06

[Environmental Conservation 2010 — Emau reef invertebrates](#) — accessed 2026-09-06

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