

GOUVERNEMENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU VANUATU

Autorité de Régulation des Services Publics
Ministère des Finances et de la Gestion Economique

B.P. 9093
Port Vila
VANUATU

Téléphone : (678) 29795 / 23335 / 23521
Télécopie : (678) 27426



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

Utilities Regulatory Authority
Ministry of Finance and Economic Management

PMB 9093
Port Vila
VANUATU

Tel: (678) 29795 / 23335 / 23521
Fax: (678) 27426

Website: www.ura.gov.vu

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Amendments to the URA Act

The Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA), an initiative of the Government of Vanuatu, was set up under the *Utilities Regulatory Authority Act No. 11 of 2007*. It acts independently of the Government and its primary purpose is to increase access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity and water services, and to protect the long term interests of consumers throughout Vanuatu.

In the electricity sector, the URA monitors the concessions operated by UNELCO in Malekula, Port Vila and Tanna; and Vanuatu Utilities and Infrastructure Ltd (VUI) in Luganville. In addition, the URA manages consumer disputes and advises the Government on matters related to electricity and water. It also renegotiates tariffs under the rules of the Concessions Agreements and relevant legislation.

The Government of Vanuatu has been revising its policy documents with the objective to increase electrification in the country and meet the Millennium Development Goals. On January 24, it issued a series of amendments to the *URA Act No. 11*.

One of them reinforces the role of the URA to “promote the long-term interests of the consumers” in Vanuatu.

Another amendment stated the public utilities’ obligation to “furnish the Authority with specified information or documents (...) relating to a regulated service or to the corporate structure accounts of finances of the utility.” It emphasizes the necessity for both parties to “confer” about “anything incidental to any of [the URA’s] powers.”

The third major amendment relates to the section about how to manage and administer the Investment Support Fund for the purpose of electricity network extensions or reduction of rates in the electricity sector as required under the relevant Concession Agreements. From now on, the Central Government Cashier at the Department of Finance and Economic Management will manage these funds, instead of the utilities.

The URA acknowledges these changes and will continue to work towards its goals: to increase access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity and water services in the country, as well as to protect the long-term interests of the people in Vanuatu.

The Act and its recent amendments are accessible on the home page of the URA's website – www.ura.gov.vu. If you have any question, please contact the URA at (678) 23335.

Contact Information

Website: www.ura.gov.vu

Phone: (678) 23335 Fax: (678) 23087

Address: Vanuatu National Provident Fund Building, Ground Floor

Postal address: PMB 9093 Port Vila VANUATU

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Notes to the Editor

About VUI

Vanuatu Utilities and Infrastructure Limited (VUI) is a subsidiary of Pernix Group, Inc. Pernix Group's Power Operations and Management Services (O&M) division provides an integrated scope of services to maintain and manage all aspects of power operations. VUI has operated Santo's electricity concession since 1st January 2011.

About UNELCO

Union Electrique du Vanuatu Limited (UNELCO) is a subsidiary of GDF Suez. It operates the electricity concessions for Port Vila, Malekula and Tanna. It has operated in Vanuatu since 1939.