Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Languages:
Diversity, Loss, and Conservation in Malakula, Vanuatu

Michael Gavin
School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington
Traditional Ecological Knowledge & Languages

• Conceptual linkage

• CBD linkage

• Cultural conservation linkage
What is TEK?
THE END IS NEAR!
TEK Conservation

Convention on Biological Diversity (article 8j)
Vanuatu: A Starting Point
Why Vanuatu?

• 106 languages, but only 187,000 people

• 80% of people:
  – On ancestral lands
  – Using traditional resource management
  – Speaking indigenous language

• Endemic biodiversity
The island of Malakula

- 2nd largest island (2034 km²)
  (Oahu = 1600 km²)

- 19,000 people speak 24 indigenous languages

- Ecological diversity
Participatory approach with community fieldworkers

Gather data via:
- Freelist:ing useful species
- TEK survey:
  - species identification
  - species use
  - ecological linkages
  - traditional management

Cultural consensus analysis
PAR Empowering *In situ* Conservation
Tankiu tumas!

- Vanuatu Cultural Centre:
  Numa Fred
  Ralph Regenvanu
  Francis Hickey
  Malakula Fieldworkers
- Jif Virambat
- Sam Chanel, Department of Forests
- Joe McCarter
- All participating communities