


# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	HR Policy Advisor
<b>Country</b>	Cook Islands
<b>Location of Partner Organisation</b>	Rarotonga
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Office of the Public Service Commissioner
<b>Duration</b>	12 months
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	

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## 1. Partner organisation overview

### The Office of the Public Service Commissioner

The Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC) is responsible for supporting the Public Service Commissioner to deliver his mandated functions as outlined in the Public Service Act 2009.

These functions include:

- The provision of policy advice to government
- The appointment and performance management of heads of public service departments
- The employment and Human Resource Management of the Public Service
- Changes to the structure of government departments
- Establishing operating policies and standards
- Supporting the capability development of public servants
- The values and Code of Conduct of the Public Service, and duties to act as a good employer.

## 2. Assignment overview

The Cook Islands Economic Recovery Roadmap Plan 2021 identified improved public sector efficiency as one of the eight focus areas that will be key to driving and facilitating recovery.

Due to the challenges faced by a small country, the Public Sector plays a proportionally larger role in the economy than that of a larger nation with more economic diversity, making improving the efficiency of the sector even more important.

The most pressing challenge that OPSC are facing is in the area of HR policies, systems and processes. The Government has more than 20 HR policies and a number of these need an urgent review, in light of a changing environment generally, and including the changing environment which COVID-19 has created for Ministries and their staff.

A VSA volunteer will assist in the review, development and implementation of robust HR processes and practices, promoting transparency and accountability in the way OPSC operates.

## 3. Goal/outcomes/outputs

### Goal

Clear, relevant, and responsive HR policies and procedures support the effective and efficient operations and sound decision making for Government Ministries, promoting a productive, motivated workforce that understands its rights and obligations, and operates within mandates and set government standards.



### Outcome 1

OPSC and Ministry staff and management have clear HR policies in place that enable them to facilitate positive and effective relationships between themselves and Ministry employees.

Alongside OPSC staff:

- Review and assess current HR policies, with a particular focus on those policies relating to performance, remuneration, recruitment and employee engagement
- Conduct a needs assessment of the OPSC and Ministries to determine the HR requirements for logical and effective operations
- Identify gaps in existing policies
- Develop and document policies and procedures in line with identified need and HR best practice

### Outcome 2

HR policies and procedures are implemented, and staff understand and use the policies and procedures in carrying out their roles.

Alongside OPSC and Ministry staff:

- Build understanding of new policies among OPSC and Ministry HR staff and management to support their leadership responsibilities
- Raise awareness amongst general staff to new HR policy so that employees are aware of their rights and obligations
- Work with staff to implement the policies and procedures
- Train and mentor staff in the use of the policies and procedures as required

### Outcome 3

A mechanism is in place for HR policies and procedures to be periodically reviewed and updated as required.

Alongside OPSC staff,

- Develop an appropriate periodic review process, including a checklist, for HR policies and procedures
- Develop a mechanism for identifying, developing, reviewing new and existing policies

## 4. Reporting and working relationships and capacity building

The volunteer will report directly to and will be accountable to the Chief Executive Officer.

On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Policy and Planning Manager, the Policy and Planning Advisor, and the HR Advisors.

Capacity will be built amongst OPSC staff, and Ministry staff and employees.

The volunteer and the Office of the Public Service Commissioner will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA programme manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice, and personal support.

**As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically review and reflect on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.**



## 5. Selection criteria/position requirements

### Person specifications (professional)

#### Essential

- Proven experience to a senior level across broad spectrum HR practices related to performance, remuneration, and recruitment
- Knowledge in the development of sound HR policies, processes, and procedures
- Experience in train the trainer/and or mentoring other HR professionals

#### Desirable

- A recognised qualification in Human Resources or Employment Law
- Practical applications on HR policy development and delivery

### Personal specification (personal)

#### Essential

- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent writing skills
- Community-minded with a willingness to respect Cook Island values and traditions
- Strong relationship management skills
- Ability to work with minimum supervision
- Willingness to teach and pass on skills

## 6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange

## 7. Country Context

For more information about the Cook Islands see <https://vsa.org.nz/about-vsa/countryregion/cook-islands>

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### Additional information

#### Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.



**Pre-departure briefing**

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

**Final appointment**

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

**Family status**

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However, volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

**Fundraising**

Volunteers are encouraged to fundraise at least \$1000 with the support of VSA's fundraising team. Accompanying partners are encouraged to raise the same amount. All funds raised will help VSA keep its programmes in action and support future volunteers.

**Vaccination requirements**

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be inoculated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

**Children's Act**

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

**Volunteer package**

The volunteer's package includes the following:

*Reimbursements and grants*

1. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$750 to help them set up in their country of assignment. For volunteers with an accompanying partner (whether or not that partner is also a VSA volunteer), VSA will pay an establishment grant of NZ\$1,100 per couple.
2. For two-year assignments, the volunteer will receive a rest and respite grant of NZ\$1,000 on completion of the first year.
3. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
4. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of NZD \$1,055

*Accommodation*

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. In some circumstances volunteers may be asked to share accommodation.

*Airfares and baggage allowance*

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

*Insurance*

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

#### *Utilities*

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

**Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract.**

