

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Operators' Tourism Development Adviser
Country	Solomon Islands
Location of Partner Organisation	Gizo
Partner Organisation	Western Provincial Government
Duration	12 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

41849

1. Partner organisation overview

The Western Province is the largest of the nine provinces of Solomon Islands and is renowned for its beautiful tropical islands and world class diving and snorkelling locations. Beautiful coral reefs, WWII wrecks, eco-tourism lodges and headhunting shrines are other attractions in the province that makes it the biggest tourist destination outside of Honiara.

The Western Provincial Government (WPG) has been operating since 1978 when the country became independent. The province has its own Provincial Government Administration head by a Clerk. The role of the WPG is to develop the province, particularly rural areas. Planning is an important part of the WPG's activities as this helps to ensure that development occurs in a considered manner.

The Western Province was identified by the Solomon Islands Government as an area of significant tourism growth. The New Zealand Government has invested significantly in an airport in Munda which was constructed to international standards.

Investment opportunities related to tourism have also been identified due to Western Province's unique placement within the Coral Triangle. The Coral Triangle is unique and important because it is home to the highest concentration of marine species on the planet. The Coral Triangle, often called "the Nursery of the seas", is home to 600 corals or 76% of the world's known coral species. It contains the highest reef fish diversity with 2,500 or 37% of the world's reef fish species. With a population of 365 million, and sustaining more than 130 million people living in coastal communities who rely directly on the marine ecosystems for their livelihoods and food, the marine habitats of the Coral Triangle also contribute an estimated US\$2.3 billion each year towards the economies of the region.

There are over 30 tourism operators in Western Province. Most of these are Solomon Islanders who own small resorts. Tourism operators, mostly offering accommodation and water-based activities such as fishing, diving and snorkelling are keen to improve on their tourism offerings. The challenge is they do not have sufficient knowledge on what they can do individually and collectively, and how to go about achieving this.



2. Assignment overview

A VSA volunteer based in Gizo, Western Province is being sought to work alongside tourism operators to develop strategies for development the tourism sector. The volunteer will support the small tourism operators by providing them with ideas on how they can improve the quality of what they are offering, and how they can market their offerings more effectively. The volunteer will also identify potential for development of other tourism products.

3. Goal/outcomes/outputs

Goal

Tourism operators in Western Province have increased income-generating avenues and are offering quality service to tourists.

Outcome 1

Tourism operators' aspirations and needs are understood by volunteers, advisers and government.

- Review Tourism Policy to get an understanding of what direction tourism is set to take over the next few years.
- Visit and spend time with tourism operators to get in-depth understanding of some of the successes and challenges they experience.
- Meet with the tourism operators to discuss how best the volunteer can support them and get agreement on key issues like areas of training required.

Outcome 2

Tourism operators have increased knowledge of operations and offer more activities for tourists.

- Conduction business and tourism training for tourism operators in Western Province.
- Visit and provide one-on-one coaching to operators on the creation and development of tourism products.
- Work with the Western Provincial Government staff team to ensure there is alignment with the Tourism Policy.

Outcome 3

Tourists are enjoying quality products from a wide range of operators.

- Work with tourism operators to market their services.
- Support tourism operators to develop marketing materials that provide information on their products and services.
- Work with the operators and WPG staff to ensure operators get the support they need form government.

4. Reporting and working relationships and capacity building

The volunteers will work with tourism operators to ensure there is understanding of the tourism policy, and how they can improve on the quality of their services and products to attract more tourists. The volunteers will also ensure that there is support for operators to market their products and services. Individuals will gain industry trend knowledge and build individual skills and lift personal profiles.



The volunteer will report directly to the Deputy Secretary and will be accountable to the Permanent Secretary. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with tourism operators.

The volunteer and WPG 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

- Significant experience in business management and/or marketing in the tourism industry
Experience in or knowledge of developing tourism products
- Experience training people in tourism and/or hospitality
- Experience developing and designing hardcopy and online promotional materials
- Experience developing and implementing marketing strategies, preferably in relation to tourism

Desirable

- Prior experience working in a Melanesian context
- Physically fit and able to swim 100m in open water
- Understanding of small nation tourism operations
- Experience working in remote areas
- Event and festival organising skills

Personal specification (personal)

Essential

- Willing and able to travel in outboard motor boats for up to 4-6 hours at a time
- Willing and able to travel by foot over-land for up to 2-3 hours at a time
- A willingness to learn and speak pijin
- Ability to cope with minimal services and facilities
- Friendly and easy going
- Flexible and adaptable to change
- Good problem-solving skills
- Ability to work with minimal resources



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

Honiara is the business centre of Solomon Islands and as such is a melting pot for people from all the island groups that make up the diverse nation. A hot and dusty place, Honiara offers most facilities albeit in a rudimentary form. The main international airport is in Honiara.

Gizo is the capital of Western Province and is the second largest town in Solomon Islands. It is located on Ghizo Island and is west-north-west of Honiara. It is a five-minute boat ride from Nusatupe where the airplane landing strip is located.

Gizo has a population of just over 7,000 residents. It is a tourism centre with diving and surfing being popular activities. There is a thriving market where you can buy fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood every day. You are strongly encouraged to build relationships in the local community and socialise with Solomon Islanders at every opportunity, as this will enrich your experience of living in Solomon Islands.

VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. You will have access to power (although power outages can occur), phone, internet, piped water, a few restaurants, a few shops and a few expatriates. Public transport is relatively cheap.

Most volunteers feel safe in Solomon Islands, but it is important to know the risks and take personal responsibility for your safety. As in many countries, foreigners tend to be the target of petty crime, so always be alert and take precautions. In general, there are no problems moving around in Gizo.

For more information, see <https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/>.

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 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\$1000 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 SBD 7,000.

Accommodation

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. For security purposes volunteers in Honiara should expect 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 prior to departure.

