


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Small-scale Food Processing Technology Advisor
Assignment Modality	In-Country
Assignment Number	42084
Country	Papua New Guinea
Location	Kokopo, East New Britain
Partner Organisation	Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL)
Duration	9 Months (option to extend)
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

The Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the national institution responsible for the oversight and development of the country's agriculture and livestock sectors. As the backbone of PNG's economy, agriculture supports the livelihoods of a significant portion of the population and is critical to the nation's goals for inclusive, sustainable economic growth and food security. DAL plays a pivotal role in shaping the sector's future by providing policy advice, technical and administrative support, and strategic leadership. Its core responsibilities include coordinating national agricultural programs, promoting investment, and fostering partnerships with stakeholders to drive competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability. Furthermore, DAL leads capacity-building initiatives, such as extension services and training, to enhance support for farmers and livestock producers, ensuring long-term resilience and growth within the sector.

2. Assignment Overview

The agricultural sector supports the livelihoods of most people in Papua New Guinea. However, post-harvest losses (PHL) – particularly in horticultural and staple crops – remain a significant issue, affecting both food security and the economic stability of farmers and their communities. These losses reduce the availability of nutritious food and lower farmers' incomes, contributing to cycles of poverty and food insecurity.

With adequate investment and support, the agriculture and agribusiness sectors have the potential to generate employment, improve livelihoods, and raise living standards. To this end, the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) has recently increased its focus on developing small-scale agro-industries to expand and strengthen the downstream processing of agricultural products, particularly food items. Small-scale processing of local foods can create employment, bolster food security, minimise post-harvest losses, and contribute to sustainable economic growth – thereby addressing poverty, hunger, and enhancing food security and nutrition. Recognising the importance of post-harvest management and downstream processing, the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) has prioritised the development of small-scale agro-industries. These efforts aim to bolster food security, reduce post-harvest losses, create local employment, and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

Expanding local food processing capabilities will also mitigate dependence on imports, stabilise local food prices, and help meet rising food demands in the face of climate change and population growth. This assignment will equip and support current and potential food processors and communities with essential skills and knowledge to transform raw agricultural produce into safe, marketable products. Therefore, DAL is seeking the assistance of a Small-scale Food Processing Technology Advisor to provide technical expertise and support. This advisor will support these objectives by strengthening food safety standards and developing safe, efficient, and sustainable practices in small-scale food processing. This role is essential in assessing the current state of small-scale food processing technology, identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement, and delivering targeted technical guidance to meet the specific needs of small-scale food processors, ultimately helping to strengthen standards for food safety.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

The primary objective of this assignment is to assist the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL), food processors, and other key stakeholders, including the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), in strengthening the capacity and capabilities of both current and potential food processors. This will be achieved through the provision of technical assistance and support, the adoption of appropriate technology, the development and implementation of food safety standards, and the delivery of training and mentorship.

Outcome 1 (Assessment and Analysis)

DAL's capacity and capability to provide technical guidance and support to the agro-processing sector are strengthened, enabling current and prospective food processors to improve their food processing practices and quality standards through enhanced skills, knowledge, resources, and technology.

Work collaboratively with DAL staff, relevant personnel from NARI, communities, and associated stakeholders to:

- Lead the assessment of the current small-scale food processing environment to identify critical capacity and capability gaps. This includes evaluating food processing practices, infrastructure and technology, knowledge and skills deficiencies, training needs, and specific areas for improvement.
- Evaluate the agro-processing landscape in the province to identify opportunities for high growth potential in sustainable agricultural products, such as nuts, fruits, spices, fresh produce, and vegetables.
- Facilitate efforts to identify and assess challenges while assisting food processors in recognising opportunities and overcoming barriers, enabling them to leverage these opportunities and contribute to a more diverse and resilient food processing sector.

Outcome 2 (Technical Advisory and Capacity Building and Training)

Small-scale food processors are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to implement effective food safety measures and sustainable food processing practices, leading to improved product quality, enhanced consumer trust, greater market access, and increased operational capabilities.

In collaboration with DAL, NARI, local food processors, and other relevant industry stakeholders:

- Design and deliver targeted training programmes for small-scale processors to enhance their knowledge of safe food processing techniques and ensure compliance with food safety standards.
- Provide technical guidance and support to small-scale processors, addressing their specific needs in food processing, packaging, and post-harvest loss reduction.
- Facilitate the introduction of suitable food processing technologies, equipment, and innovations that are affordable, efficient, and sustainable.
- Develop contextually appropriate learning resources and conduct workshops and hands-on training sessions focused on technology adoption, food safety practices, and productivity improvements.

Outcome 3 (Food Safety Standard Framework)

Food processors learn and apply enhanced food safety standards and practices to ensure safety across all production stages—including sanitation, packaging, storage, and transportation—resulting in increased productivity, improved product quality, and greater compliance with food safety regulations, contributing to broader market access and sustainability within the agro-processing sector.

- Contribute to the development and enhancement of food safety standards specifically designed for small-scale food processing enterprises, ensuring alignment with PNG's food safety and regulatory framework, as well as internationally harmonised food safety management systems and practices.
- Assist in developing guidelines on best practices for maintaining food safety, covering areas such as sanitation, packaging, storage, and transportation.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will be engaged in capacity-building activities for the duration of their assignment, including:

- Capacity strengthening through upskilling, training, and mentoring.
- Training (including demonstrations) to inform and upskill current and potential agro-processors.
- Transfer of knowledge, skills, and appropriate technology in improved food processing practices

The volunteer will report directly and be accountable to the Regional Director. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will work closely with DAL staff in East New Britain, food processors, personnel from NARI, relevant officers from the East New Britain Provincial Government, and participating communities. The role will also involve establishing periodic working relationships with farmers, the East New Britain Market Authority, local businesses, and other key stakeholders in the region. As required, the volunteer may travel to DAL's other regional centres and provide upskilling, training, and mentoring support to relevant staff.

Additionally, the volunteer and DAL will maintain an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager for 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 reviews and reflects on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.

5. Selection Criteria/Position Requirements

Professional Specifications

Essential

- A tertiary qualification in food science, food technology, or a related field.
- Proven expertise and experience in small-scale food processing technology, with knowledge of equipment, processing techniques, and quality control measures.
- Strong knowledge of food safety regulations and standards.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting assessments, developing technical guidance, and providing capacity-strengthening support.
- Ability to mentor, coach, and support the professional development of others.

Desirable

- Previous work experience in any of the Pacific Island nations.

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Excellent relationship management skills (ability to relate well to people from different backgrounds and cultures) combined with a respectful and culturally sensitive demeanour.
- Ability to work independently, possibly remotely, and be self-motivated.
- Solution-oriented.
- Ability to work collegially and collaboratively.
- Patience, flexibility, and tolerance when working in a multicultural context.
- Willingness to learn and use Tok Pisin.

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 Papua New Guinea, see [VSA in Papua New Guinea](#)

8. Living and Working Situation

The office space at the Department of Agriculture and Livestock is modern, air-conditioned and within walking distance to the Market, bus stops, shops and Kokopo Village Resort. The volunteer will need to bring his or her own laptop for work.

A furnished house will be provided to the volunteer. The house is located in the suburbs of Kokopo. The distance between the office and the volunteer's house is about 5-10-minutes by bus. Volunteers may be asked to share accommodation depending on the situation.

Additional Information

ST2 Assignment (6-11 months)

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

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers and accompanying partners to fundraise to help cover the cost of sending volunteers throughout the Pacific and beyond. Fundraising can be as simple as doing something you enjoy with a group or friends, and our Fundraising team is available to help you every step of the way.

Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be vaccinated, 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. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment, and a rest and respite grant after a specified period of active service in-country to encourage the volunteer to take a break away from the immediate assignment location. These grants depend on the length and location of the assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
2. 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.
3. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of PGK2,100.

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.