


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Horticulture Trainer/Advisor (Vegetable Production)
Assignment Modality	In-Country
Assignment Number	42070
Country	Papua New Guinea
Location	Kokopo, East New Britain
Partner Organisation	Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL)
Duration	6-9 Months
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

Papua New Guinea's (PNG) agriculture sector plays a crucial role in driving economic growth, enhancing food security, and supporting rural livelihoods. However, despite its potential, the sector faces several challenges, including low productivity, limited access to quality inputs, and insufficient knowledge of best practices, all of which prevent farmers from fully capitalising on the country's fertile land and diverse climate. Vegetables such as tomatoes, cabbages, carrots, lettuce, and onions are dietary staples in PNG. Yet, the sector struggles to meet local demand, resulting in significant imports. In 2022, for example, PNG imported ¹USD 37.6 million worth of fresh vegetables from Australia, many of which could be grown locally.

Recently, VSA and the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) entered into a partnership agreement and are working collaboratively with other stakeholders to promote sustainable agricultural practices that not only enhance productivity but also strengthen food security and economic resilience in farming communities. The VSA Programme has supported PNG farmers through initiatives such as IRISE - Improving Rural Income through Sustainable Enterprises, which aims to boost agricultural productivity, quality, profitability, and sustainability.

¹ <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/png/partner/aus?productSectionSelector=sectionID2>

As part of the ongoing partnership between VSA and the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL), this assignment seeks to strengthen local horticultural capacity, with a specific focus on small-scale and semi-commercial vegetable farming.

The objective is to increase productivity, improve post-harvest practices, and reduce reliance on imports while promoting sustainable, climate-resilient practices. To further this aim, DAL is seeking the expertise of a Horticulture Trainer/Advisor to provide training and technical support designed to enhance the quality of locally produced vegetables, while improving the productivity and competitiveness of small-scale and semi-commercial vegetable production.

This role is crucial for assessing the current state of small-scale vegetable farming, identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement, and delivering tailored technical guidance to meet the specific needs of vegetable farming communities. By emphasising education, hands-on training, effective extension services, value chain optimisation, and improved post-harvest practices, this initiative will significantly contribute to the development of PNG's horticulture and vegetable crop sectors.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

The goal of this assignment is to enhance the capacity and capability of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) to support the vegetable farming sector, resulting in improved productivity and quality of locally produced vegetables. This will foster a more efficient, profitable, and sustainable agricultural sector that enhances food security, economic resilience, and livelihoods for vegetable farming communities.

Outcome 1 (Assessment & Analysis)

The Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) strengthens its capacity and capabilities to provide technical guidance, extension services, and support to current and prospective vegetable farmers. This enables farmers to enhance their knowledge and skills in sustainable vegetable production, improve vegetable cropping practices, and enhance post-harvest management.

Work collaboratively with DAL staff, communities and associated stakeholders to:

- Review the existing vegetable production systems in the participating geographical regions of East New Britain, including Gazelle, Rabaul, Kokopo, and Pomio while identifying their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis).
- Assess vegetable farming practices, and the availability and utilisation of inputs (including seed varieties), and identify knowledge and skill gaps, providing recommendations for improvement.
- Identify and address gaps in the vegetable value chain, including input supply, production techniques, post-harvest management, and market access.
- Evaluate the impact of climate change on vegetable farming and recommend climate-smart practices to mitigate these effects.

Outcome 2 (Capacity Strengthening and Technical Support)

DAL strengthens its capacity and capabilities to deliver more effective training and extension services that support vegetable growers in enhancing their practical knowledge and skills in sustainable vegetable cropping practices, while promoting the adoption of efficient farming techniques and technologies, ultimately leading to improved crop yields and quality.

In collaboration with DAL, farmers, and stakeholders:

- Assess the current extension services, including the knowledge and skill gaps of extension workers, develop and implement targeted training and upskilling programmes for them, and recommend strategies to enhance the sharing of technical knowledge and services with farmers.
- Conduct hands-on demonstrations and field training to enhance yields, and crop quality, and promote knowledge transfer in critical areas like soil health, pest and disease management, and irrigation techniques.
- Support the development of guidelines for efficient and sustainable vegetable farming systems, and offer technical advice on improving access to quality seeds and other inputs, prioritising enhancements in quality, sustainability, productivity, and profitability.

Outcome 3 (Post-Harvest and Value Chain Improvement)

Post-harvest practices and the efficiency of the vegetable production value chain are enhanced to ensure improved shelf life, marketability, and profitability for farmers.

- Evaluate current post-harvest practices to pinpoint opportunities for improvement, aiming to reduce losses, preserve crop quality, and support the identification of pest and disease control systems that enhance plant resilience.
- Assist in enhancing post-harvest handling, storage methods, and packaging techniques to extend the shelf life and improve the marketability of vegetables, while identifying opportunities to strengthen connections within the vegetable value chain.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will participate in capacity-building activities throughout their assignment, including:

- Capacity strengthening through upskilling, training, and mentoring.
- Training sessions (including demonstrations) designed to inform and enhance the skills of current and potential vegetable farmers.
- Development of training and learning resources.
- Transfer of knowledge and skills in improved vegetable farming 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, vegetable farmers, and participating communities. Additionally, the volunteer will establish occasional working relationships with the East New Britain Provincial Government, the East New Britain Market Authority, and other key stakeholders in the region. The volunteer may also undertake travel to DAL's other regional centres as needed and may be asked to provide upskilling, training, and mentoring support to relevant staff, such as extension workers.

The volunteer and DAL 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 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 Horticulture, Agronomy, Agricultural Science, or a related field.
- Proven experience in horticultural production, particularly in vegetable farming and post-harvest management.
- Expertise in sustainable farming techniques, crop management, pest and disease control, and climate-smart agriculture.
- Capacity-building skills, with experience in designing and delivering technical training to farmers and agricultural stakeholders.
- Ability to conduct assessments and provide actionable recommendations.
- Proficiency in mentoring, coaching, and supporting the professional development of others.

Desirable

- Familiarity with the challenges faced by farmers in developing countries or other Pacific Island nations, along with experience working in similar contexts, is desirable.

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.