

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Monitoring Evaluation Research and Learning (MERL) Advisor
Assignment Modality	Standard
Assignment Number	42052
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Honiara
Partner Organisation	Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs
Duration	12-18 months

Sustainable Development Goals



1. Partner Organisation Overview

The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs is responsible for the administration of justice and legal affairs. The Ministry oversees the review and updating of laws, and formation of legal policy to meet the needs of the people of Solomon Islands. The Ministry's headquarters are responsible for the administration of the nation's various justice legal agencies.

The Ministry provides leadership and corporate service support to the five justice agencies namely Attorney General's Chambers, Public Solicitor's Office, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Law Reform Commission, and Registrar General's Office.

The Ministry has about 20 staff members who work in human resources administration; finance; legal policy; policy, planning, monitoring and reporting; asset management; and information and communication units.

2. Assignment Overview

Data for use to inform evaluation of the work done in the justice sector is not readily available from the justice agencies. There is currently no monitoring and evaluation being done in the sector. The MJLA would like to know the impact the sector is having, identify the outcomes being achieved, ensure reporting is done consistently and to high standards, and identify how lessons learned are implemented by the organisation.

VSA is seeking a volunteer who has the skills and abilities to support the MJLA to achieve its aspirations of evaluating the work the sector does to make improvements. They volunteer will support with setting up a monitoring, evaluation, research and learning framework, and its implementation.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs is using a MERL framework that is contextually relevant. MJLA staff have increased capacity to perform MERL requirements.

Outcome 1

MJLA have increased capacity to understand the Justice Sector Strategic Framework and are working together to develop MERL approaches and tools.

Working alongside staff:

- Gain an understanding of the Justice Sector Strategic Framework 2024-2034;
- Review current MERL monitoring and evaluation practices and identify areas that need to be started, strengthened and/or continued; and
- Provide individual and group sessions to gain understanding of MERL aspirations and needs in the sector.

Outcome 2

MJLA staff have increased capacity to perform internal and external MERL requirements.

- Assess current tools used for MERL within the organisation;
- Develop inhouse tools for capacity development on different aspects of MERL;
- Provide capacity development opportunities for staff and agencies to develop MERL capacity and capabilities; and
- Develop MERL Framework, Theory of Change, and other key documents.

Outcome 3

MJLA staff are conducting MERL activities.

- Train staff in how to collect data and use data for reporting purposes;
- Train staff in conducting evaluation activities; and
- Identify lessons learned working alongside staff and determine how change will be implemented.

Outcome 4

MJLA is a learning sector.

- Support the Chief Strategic Planning Officer to strengthen a culture of strong MERL practices in the sector;
- Assess current practices around action, reflection and learning; and
- Provide ongoing mentoring and coaching to staff on MERL.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The VSA volunteer will provide capacity development opportunities for MERL staff and for the staff in the different agencies of the Ministry of Justice. The Advisor will support with training sessions that develop skills of officers in the Unit. The Advisor will also work alongside the Chief Strategic Planning Officer to develop his capacity.

The volunteer will report directly to the Chief Strategic Planning Officer and will be accountable to the Permanent Secretary of MJLA. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Chief Strategic Planning Officer and Office Managers in the Agencies.

The volunteer and Ministry of Justice and Legal affairs 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 Qualification and/or experience in Monitoring and evaluation or related field
- Knowledge of monitoring and evaluation and /or programme planning
- Knowledge of donor reporting requirements/systems
- Experience in communication and stakeholder engagement
- Excellent computer skills and ability knowledge of MS Excel & MS Word

Desirable

- Qualifications in international development and/or communications
- Experience working in a Melanesian context
- Experience working in a policy and planning Unit
- Experience working with results frameworks or logical frameworks
- Excellent written communication and editing skills

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak Pijin
- Excellent problem-solving abilities
- Great organisational and communication skills
- Ability to work in a high-pressure environment
- Friendly and open
- Transparent
- Easy to work with and allows constructive critique of their work
- Supportive and inspiring
- Flexible
- Mature and experience working with people from different cultures.

Desirable

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. 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 Solomons. However, entertainment options are few and far between so there is also a very active expatriate social scene. There are various clubs and social groups in Honiara, which you will get to know with time.

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 the majority of Honiara during the day, but it is not safe to walk or catch public transport alone in Honiara after dark.

For more information see: [https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/Learn-About-the-Solomon-Islands\(solomons.gov.sb>Welcome|TourismSolomons\(visitsolomons.com.sb\)\)](https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/Learn-About-the-Solomon-Islands(solomons.gov.sb>Welcome|TourismSolomons(visitsolomons.com.sb)))

8. Living and Working Situation

VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. In Honiara, you will have access to power (although power outages can occur), phone, internet, piped water, restaurants, a variety of shops and a large expatriate population. Public transport is very cheap within Honiara. The local bus service is provided by a plethora of vans, and some larger buses. A single fare of SBD3 applies, regardless of the length of the trip. Taxis charge a moderate fare (currently SBD10 per kilometre), but it is wise to establish a fare before commencing a journey.

The Office is a 5-minute walk from the main road and bus stop. It is close to most of the agencies that fall under the MJLA. The area is generally safe and there is no noise.

The office of the Chief Strategic Planning Officer will be used by the volunteer as well. Office is air conditioned and has internet access. There are two security guards during the day and two at night.

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. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment, and a location grant for rest and recuperation (R & R) purposes. These grants depend on the length and location of the assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
2. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SBD 7,500.

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.