


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Policy Advisor
Assignment Modality	In-Country
Assignment Number	42054
Country	Papua New Guinea
Location	Kerevat, East New Britain
Partner Organisation	University of Natural Resources and Environment (UNRE)
Duration	4 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

The Papua New Guinea University of Natural Resources and Environment (UNRE) is a public university in East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea. It started as the Vudal Agricultural College in 1965, became the Vudal University College, and gained university status in 1996. UNRE focuses on education and research in agriculture including animal science, forestry, fisheries, tourism, environmental science, and related fields. It offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs that emphasise sustainable resource management, conservation, and environmental protection. The university is committed to sustainable development in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific region. Its research tackles local and regional environmental challenges such as deforestation, biodiversity loss, and climate change. UNRE also works with local communities, government agencies, and non-profits to promote sustainable practices. The University operates through the Kairak Centre for Sustainable Rural Development - Vudal Resource Training Centre, a facility established for information dissemination, farmer training, and community development. It plays a vital role in advancing knowledge in natural resource management and environmental science in Papua New Guinea, contributing to the country's sustainable development and conservation efforts.

2. Assignment Overview

One of the key pillars of the university's commitment to excellence is its continuous improvement initiative. Central to this initiative is the policy transformation project, which plays a critical role in ensuring that university policies remain consistently effective, responsive to stakeholder needs, and aligned with the university's overarching mission and objectives. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the University is actively working to enhance efficiency, improve the student experience, optimise decision-making, strengthen employee engagement and retention, adapt to a changing environment, satisfy stakeholders, and achieve recognition for innovation and excellence in teaching, learning, and research.

For this assignment, UNRE is collaborating with VSA to engage an experienced policy advisor. The advisor will offer expert guidance and support for the transformative policy project under the direction of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Planning & Development. As such, UNRE seeks a Policy Advisor (Volunteer) to strengthen its policy management capacity and capabilities. UNRE is dedicated to ensuring that its policies remain effective, relevant, and aligned with its mission, goals, and regulatory requirements.

The volunteer will closely collaborate with the Policy and Governance team to review existing policies, develop new ones as necessary, and refine policy development and review processes. The volunteer will also support the university's engagements and coordination with various stakeholders to ensure policies are well-defined, relevant, meet legislative and regulatory requirements, are accessible, and are aligned with the university's strategic goals and values.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

UNRE strengthens its capacity and capability for policy development and management to ensure the provision of quality advice and support, as well as improved capability for informing, influencing, reviewing, creating, revising, and repealing university policies.

Outcome 1

UNRE conducts thorough reviews of existing policies, identifies areas for improvement, develops new policies as necessary to address emerging issues or gaps, and provides expert advice and guidance to key stakeholders, ensuring that all policies are effective, relevant, and compliant with regulatory requirements.

- Collaborate with university leadership, faculty, and key stakeholders to oversee the review of existing policies, evaluating their content, effectiveness, and relevance, and identifying areas for improvement.
- Take the lead in developing new policies, providing expert guidance to inform and influence these policies, and ensuring that emerging issues or gaps are effectively addressed.
- Assist in facilitating consultation workshops with key stakeholders and subject matter experts to develop effective, situationally appropriate, and evidence-based policy solutions, from leading workshops to drafting policies for consultation and reviewing feedback.
- Assist in ensuring that policy documents are clear and easily understandable, and collaborate with the leadership team to consistently implement these policies, making sure they are accessible and well-communicated to the campus community.

Outcome 2

UNRE strengthens policy development and management to ensure processes are robust, responsive, and aligned with the university's needs, enhancing decision-making, effectiveness, compliance, and accountability.

- Work closely with the Policy and Governance team to develop a plan for improving UNRE's policy management capabilities, including benchmarking, analysis, and recommendations for process improvements.
- Provide training, support, and mentoring to staff involved in policy development and management, as well as to Policy Owners, to enhance processes and procedures for developing, reviewing, disseminating, maintaining, and removing policies.
- Assist in improving or developing policy delegations to ensure that the authority expressed in the policy delegations register is clear, consistent, and effective.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The capacity and capability building and strengthening will take place through a variety of activities, including training, hands-on experience, mentoring, coaching, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the sharing of experiences, best practices, and lessons learned.

The volunteer will report directly to the person appointed by the Vice Chancellor to oversee this assignment and will be accountable to the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Planning and Development. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will work with the Policy Advisory Team and other key stakeholders.

The volunteer and UNRE 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

- Relevant tertiary qualification with 3 years of experience in policy development and management, preferably in a higher education institution or similar setting.
- Strong understanding of regulatory requirements and best practices related to policy development.
- Strong analytical and research skills, with the ability to identify issues and develop practical solutions.
- Demonstrated expertise in analysing and reviewing policies, with the ability to identify issues and develop practical solutions.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to effectively engage with stakeholders at all levels.

Desirable

- Experience working in developing countries with some knowledge of government systems.

Personal Specifications

Essential

- A positive can-do attitude.
- Supportive and understanding.
- Resourceful and sound problem-solving skills.
- Excellent relationship management skills (ability to relate well to people from different backgrounds and cultures).
- Ability to work collegially and collaboratively, particularly in the multicultural settings of Papua New Guinea.
- Patient and flexible.

6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and 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

Country Context

For more information about Papua New Guinea, see <https://vsa.org.nz/our-work/countryregion/papua-new-guinea/>

Living and Working Situation

The Vudal UNRE campus is generally a safe working environment with security provided 24/7 and even if there are security issues, measures are taken ASAP. Transport is provided according to daily transport requests and other amenities, like groceries, are available at the Kerevat township, which is a 10-15mins drive from campus. The clinic provides basic healthcare services or referrals to the Nonga hospital for specialist attention.

An air-conditioned office space, desk, and internet access will be provided. Please note that ongoing upgrades to the internet system may cause occasional disruptions to the connection.

Shortages of suitable housing continue to pose a challenge. If suitable housing is unavailable, the volunteer will commute from Kokopo to Kerevat.

Additional Information

ST1 assignment (fewer than 6 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 is unable to support partners to accompany volunteers on assignments shorter than 6 months.

Fundraising

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers 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 will receive a daily living allowance of NZD37 or PGK80.

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.