


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Environment Adviser
Assignment Modality	Standard In-country
Assignment Number	42192
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Gizo, Western province
Partner Organisation	Western Province Government
Duration	12-18 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

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 Environment Division works alongside other stakeholders who are part of an environment network. The division is working with communities to respond to the impacts of climate change. The 2023 ward profile survey indicated that communities across the province have observed changes in weather patterns, sea level rise, and other environmental changes that they attribute to climate change. A few communities have started to work on adaptation and mitigation measures but there remains a lot to be done in this area. Another key area is Environmental research. People come to the Western Province to study aspects of the natural environment, historical and modern cultural practices, and more. Their research often contributes valuable knowledge to their field of study and has sometimes been done alongside Solomon communities with the support of the Western Provincial Government. However, there are examples where researchers have had limited or no contact with affected communities prior to arrival, and where research has been done without any subsequent feedback to communities on the outcomes of the study.

2. Assignment Overview

A VSA volunteer is being sought to work alongside the Environment Officer to review the environmental and climate change data collected in the 2023 ward profile survey and to set up a programme to develop appropriate policy responses for sustainable resource management and climate change responses. The volunteer will also support the Environment Officer to review the existing ordinances relating to environment, research and culture and set up a system for regulatory requirements to be coordinated.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

The Environment Officer is equipped to deliver on the Division's Environment Annual Plans.

Outcome 1

The Environment and Conservation Division has policy responses in place that are based on environment, conservation and climate change data and community feedback.

Working alongside the Environment Officer:

- Analyse environment, conservation and climate change data collected in the ward profile surveys (both from 2023, and the planned survey in 2026);
- Visit communities in the Western Province to determine community views and priorities for environmental conservation and development; and
- Network with the environmental NGOs in Western Province to get input on policy.

Outcome 2

There is a clear and coordinated process for research undertaken in Western Province.

- Together with relevant officers, review the existing ordinances relating to the environment, research and culture, and set up a system for these regulatory requirements to be coordinated between the relevant divisions; and
- Ensure permits are reviewed and issued in a timely manner.

Outcome 3

Local communities are being supported in their desires to establish Protected Areas on their customary land and marine areas.

- Support communities wanting to protect areas under the Protected Areas Act by:
 - Raising awareness on the benefits of protected area status within communities;
 - Collaborate with NGOs involved in working with communities already going through the process to become protected areas; and
 - Supporting communities to go through the 12 steps to get protected area status;
- Work with NGOs to promote awareness in communities of the options to protect their land, reefs and marine areas.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will use a strengths-based approach to supporting the Environment Officer. The volunteer will support capacity development by using appropriate approaches and methods that may include training, mentoring and coaching. There will also be need for peer review of reports and presentations made.

The volunteer will report directly to the Environment Officer, WPG and will be accountable to the Provincial Secretary, WPG. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Environment Officer, WPG.

The volunteer and Western province government 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

- Undergraduate qualification in environmental science or related study
- At least two years' experience in policy development
- Excellent report writing skills

Desirable

- Familiarity with Solomon Islands environment sector
- Prior experience working in a Melanesian context or in the Pacific
- Experience working in local government

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak SI Pijin
- Ability to fit in well in a work environment where internet connectivity may not be always reliable
- Friendly and be able to relate to the local environment
- Be able cope with situations like long spell of dry weather, no water and other natural calamities
- Be willing and have the stamina to travel by boat and may involve travelling and sleeping rough

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. 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-northwest 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.

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/>
[Learn About the Solomon Islands \(solomons.gov.sb\)](https://solomons.gov.sb/)
[Welcome | Tourism Solomons \(visitsolomons.com.sb\)](https://visitsolomons.com.sb/)

8. Living and Working Situation

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.

Gizo is a small town where almost everybody recognizes or knows each other. The Western Provincial Government Office is located at the town centre. Gizo has daily fresh vegetables and fish although water can be a problem at times especially during long dry spells. There is a thriving market where you can buy fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood every day.

Gizo is generally very safe but is advisable to be cautious at night. You are 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.

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.