


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Marine Conservation Adviser
Assignment Modality	Standard In-country
Assignment Number	42176
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Kolombangara Island, Western Province
Partner Organisation	Kolombangara Islands Biodiversity Conservation Association
Duration	18 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA) was formed in December 2008 and was then formally registered as a community-based organisation in May 2009. Landowners wanted to ensure that Kolombangara Island's rich marine and forest biodiversity are conserved; and to educate, promote and encourage sustainable management of natural resources through viable economic and social ventures.

The land was divided into three areas - the lower belt (coastal areas), middle belt (resource areas), and the upper belt (400m above sea level and higher protected by law). A quarter of the Island's land is customary land. The customary land is classified as a protected area. Eight tribes reside on the land and The communities are keen to ensure that all natural resources, including plants, birds and other forest and seas creatures, are sustainably managed and improve the wellbeing of the people. The goals of KIBCA include protecting the upland forest; ensuring that all landowners are fully aware of the importance of conservation and establishing alternate sustainable livelihood programs; and to safeguard and document cultural heritage and history of Kolombangara Island.

2. Assignment Overview

KIBCA has a conservation awareness campaign 'ridge to reef', focused on the interconnected parts of the environment and the impact unsustainable use of one resource/area of the environment can have on others. KIBCA needs support to building their own and communities understanding of reef/marine conservation as part of this holistic approach to conservation for Kolombangara, to support the work already underway on creating designated land protected areas.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

Communities on Kolombangara Island understand the sustainable use of marine resources, and how they can fulfil their conservation role as stewards of traditional tribal marine areas.

Outcome 1

Kolombangara communities and KIBCA understand principles for sustainable use of marine resources and are making decisions on how to protect their marine life.

Working alongside KIBCA staff and community leaders:

- Gain an understanding of the current state of Kolombangara Island communities' marine practices, including visiting and observing use of marine resources in Kolombangara Island tribal areas;
- Identify and put together resources on marine life surrounding Kolombangara Island and nearby waters, and Western Province in general;
- Conduct research on current needs and aspirations of communities and how these align with the Solomon Islands Government protected area for Marine Life Guide; and
- Compile report to share with KIBCA and communities with recommendations for next steps.

Outcome 2

Kolombangara communities and KIBCA are being trained on marine life conservation practices and are taking steps to attain protected area status.

- Alongside KIBCA staff, create training materials to introduce and create awareness in communities on the SIG Protected Areas Toolkit: A Step-by-step Guide to Creating Protected Areas in Solomon Islands for marine areas.
- Work with and educate Kolombangara Island communities to understand marine conversation principles and develop sustainable marine resource use practices; and
- Identify resources required for communities to gain protected area status for marine areas.

Outcome 3

KIBCA staff are providing on-going support and monitoring of communities as they work towards attaining protected area status.

- Support KIBCA staff to gain the skills and confidence to work with communities towards attaining protected area status; and
- Provide ongoing mentoring and coaching to KIBCA staff on how to work effectively with communities to achieve their goals.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will work with KIBCA staff and support capacity development of communities, guided by the Solomon Islands Government Protected Areas Toolkit process. Where appropriate the volunteer will conduct training sessions and use other capacity development tools to achieve the desired outcomes.

The volunteer will report directly to the KIBCA Programme Coordinator and will be accountable to the Board. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Programme Coordinator and rangers.

The volunteer and KIBCA 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

- Degree in Marine Biology, Environmental Science, or a related field or the equivalent in work experience
- Experience in policy development
- Prior experience in facilitating workshops/trainings
- Strong understanding of marine ecosystems and biodiversity
- Strong communication and report writing skills

Desirable

- Prior experience working in a Melanesian context or the Pacific
- Project management skills
- Have mentoring and coaching skills
- Have network with environmental groups, stakeholders, donors and other project initiatives to do with environment, conservation and climate change
- Knowledgeable on environmental legal matters

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Willing to learn and speak Solomon Islands Pidgin
- Ability to live and work in an environment where internet services may not always be reliable.
- Friendly and be able to adapt with living in rural areas
- Be willing to travel by fibreglass boats with outboard motors
- Be able to cope with the SI weather
- Flexible and patient
- Ability to find no- to low-cost solutions
- Results-oriented with excellent analytical and problem-solving skills
- Creative

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 volunteer will be based in Western Province.

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-north-west of Honiara. It is a five-minute boat ride from Nusatupe where the airplane landing strip is located. Kolombangara is a 45-minute boat-ride from Gizo. It is also close to Noro (25 minutes by boat) and about an hour away from Munda.

Kolombangara, a circular extinct stratovolcano 15 km in diameter and 1770 m high. Eight tribes reside on Kolombangara's coastal areas. Kolombangara Forest Products Ltd (KFPL) is Solomon Island's largest sustainably managed Forestry Company that operates a Forest Stewardship Council certified plantation. It has been operating on Kolombangara since 1989 has approximately 200 fulltime staff and 1,800 contractors. It has a 75-year lease over two-thirds of the islands. KFPL will provide the volunteer with transport to Gizo and Noro where basic goods can be bought.

VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. You will have access to power (during the day), internet, piped water, a few shops and one or two expatriates. Public transport is relatively cheap.

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/>.

8. Living and Working Situation

KIBCA office is airconditioned with desks for staff. The office benefits from 24/7 security around the station. Internet access via cell phone hotspotting.

There are currently three office employees at KIBCA with intention to recruit another 1-2 staff in the next few months (budget allowing). There are also currently three rangers, with intention of increasing this back to six. The rangers work in their communities.

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.