

VSA Assignment Description - UniVol

Assignment Title	Social Media & Communications Assistant
Assignment Modality	UniVol
Assignment Number	42180
Country	Samoa
Location	Apia, Upolu Island
Partner Organisation	Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries
Duration	9-10 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) in Samoa was officially established in **1972** to manage the development of agriculture and fisheries. The key priorities of MAF are to improve food security, support farmers and fishers, and protect the environment (ocean and land). The ministry promotes the growing of more local food, which will reduce the reliance on imported food items from abroad. It also works to train farmers and fishers, provide better tools and knowledge, and encourage young people to join the sector and to uphold the value of sustainable farming and fishing if they learn the right skills.

MAF also works with other countries and organisations to bring in new ideas and technology to improve service delivery. The ministry plays an important role in making sure farming and fishing are safe, sustainable, and good for the environment. It helps farmers grow healthy crops and raise animals and supports fishing in a way that protects fish for the future. Through its work, MAF helps grow Samoa's economy and improve the lives of local communities.

2. Assignment Overview

Agriculture is the backbone of Samoa's economy, providing livelihoods for a significant portion of the population and contributing substantially to the nation's food and nutrition security and exports. However, the full potential of the agricultural sector remains untapped, particularly in terms of awareness and communication.

The Policy, Planning and Communication Division (PPCD) handles all communications, information, and awareness of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), but there are significant gaps in the extensive work that is vital for the Communications team to achieve the outcomes outlined below:

- There is a great need to expose more of what the ministry can offer and the services it provides to the public and its stakeholders using the variety of social media platforms available today. Our communication team facilitates and handles their work well, but there is a need to enhance their skills and knowledge to enable them to complete assigned tasks effectively and efficiently.
- The communication unit is also responsible for compiling, organizing, and distributing information from the ministry, but it is currently struggling with how to store and easily access important reports and documents.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will have a greater online presence on all social media platforms and a digital library.

Outcome 1

Increased online presence of MAF across all active media platforms, through improved media content and messaging.

Alongside the Policy, Planning and Communication Division (PPCD) the volunteer will:

- Assist in creating media content that communicates the intended messages, including press releases, terms of reference for media service providers, and media and communications concept notes.
- Provide support and assistance in promoting all MAF programmes, activities, and services on all media platforms.
- Assist the communications team in understanding the type of media equipment and best practices for its use for impactful content and materials.
- Develop a user-friendly system to centralize, catalogue, and retrieve photos and videos captured by the communications team during ministry events, such as career days, open days, and other special occasions. The system should ensure all media files are stored in a single accessible location, with standardized naming conventions to enable quick and easy retrieval whenever needed.
- Capacity building and sharing skills with the communications team, as well as other staff in PPCD.

Outcome 2

Establish an easy-to-maintain Digital Library.

Alongside the Policy, Planning and Communication Division (PPCD) the volunteer will:

- Research free digital library builders for designs and features for the MAF digital library.
- Create a user-friendly digital library that is easy to navigate through and maintain.
- Capacity building through training and sharing skills in this area with the communications team, as well as other staff of PPCD.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will greatly assist the PPCD Communications team to effectively address the immediate need for increased online presence on all media platforms to ensure greater online visibility, public awareness, and promote the services offered. The volunteer will report directly to the Assistant CEO of PPCD and will be accountable to the CEO. Daily, the volunteer will work directly with the Communications Team in PPCD, and the volunteer will work closely with the Senior Communications Officer and other relevant staff in the team. Capacity building and shared learning can be achieved through the following ways:

- Planned workshops and training sessions with the team.
- Mentorship and coaching of the Communications team.
- On-the-job training through hands-on experience and shared learning.
- Feedback and evaluation mechanisms to inform specific areas for training.
- Recommendations of online courses and e-learning opportunities in Communications.

The volunteer will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA local team who are available to support all parties involved.

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

- Qualification and proven experience in Media and Communications or a relevant field.
- Excellent communication skills (both written and verbal) – report writing skills.
- Ability to develop media software.
- Experience in communications and social media platforms.
- Ability to train and mentor in communications and the effective use of social media.
- Demonstrated proficiency in operating various types of media equipment, with a strong understanding of each device and best practices for their effective use.

Desirable

- Skills in graphic design.
- Skills in photography and videography

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Ability to be flexible and adaptable in a new working environment/context with limited resources.
- Mature and experienced working with people from different cultures.
- Easy to work with and open to constructive discussions of their work.
- Ability to work and communicate well with others.
- Willingness to learn and understand the Samoan way of life.

Desirable

- Patience and understanding.
- Willingness to learn the Samoan language.
- Friendly and inspiring.


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 Samoa, see [VSA in Samoa](#)

Refer also to the following links for greater context;

- Untold History of Samoa: [Untold Pacific History | Episode 3: Samoa - NZ's Colonisation of Samoa & the Mau Movement | RNZ - Bing video](#)
- New Zealand Aid Programme in Samoa: [MFAT NZ & Samoa-4YP.pdf](#)
- Samoa Government Website: [Government of Samoa \(samoagovt.ws\)](#)
- Samoa Tourism Authority: [Samoa Tourism Authority - Corporate Website](#)
- Pocket Guide of Samoa: [A Brief History of Samoa](#)  - [Samoa Pocket Guide](#)
- Samoa Pocket Guide: [Samoa Pocket Guide - Samoa's #1 Travel Guide](#)
- Beautiful Samoa: [Uncover the History of Beautiful Samoa | Samoa Tourism](#)

8. Living and Working Situation

The VSA Samoa office will source basic, safe, and comfortable furnished accommodation before the volunteer arrives in the country. On rare occasions, the volunteers may be asked to share accommodation. This can be discussed more when the volunteer has been selected and has initial contact with the Programme Manager and Country Coordinator.

The workplace is located at the Ground Floor, TATTE Building at Sogi, where the Policy, Planning and Communication Division is located on the ground floor. It is in the Apia township area and accessible to the main bus station, taxi services, restaurants, and supermarkets. It is a 5-minute drive to the hospital.

The volunteer will have a desk and chair in an air-conditioned office with internet access for work purposes.

Additional Information – UniVol Assignment

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

Partners or dependent children cannot accompany UniVols.

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 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. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SAT \$1900.

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 for 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.