

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment title	Finance Specialist
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Honiara
Partner organisation	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
Duration	12 – 18 months



Sustainable Development Goals

41278

1. Assignment goal

The Ministry of Finance and Treasury has improved business processes enabling it to monitor and report on SIG finances more effectively.

2. Assignment outcomes

Outcome 1

Treasury staff develop and implement improved work plans and finance reporting.

Outputs

- Develop and document payroll edit reporting to improve the accuracy and control over each of the fortnightly payrolls
- Development of monthly, quarterly annual timetables and work plans.
- Assist Assistant Accountant General-Management to reissue finance circulars, Standing Orders and to reinforce control processes

Outcome 2

The Ministry develops improved processes and systems for monitoring 'other revenue' across the Solomon Islands Government.

Outputs

- Conduct risk analysis of SIG Ministries where revenue shortfalls are common
- Document revenue opportunities
- Develop processes to monitor future progress

Outcome 3

Treasury senior management staff are mentored and supported to deal with key internal and external stakeholder issues.

Outputs

- Enhance monthly financial reporting to MoFT senior leadership team, Minister of Finance, and more broadly to senior leaders in MoFT
- Mentor Treasury management staff to build their capacity and expertise to support the Accountant General



- Provide ongoing support to staff dealing with Office of Auditor General to close out audit management letter issues and ongoing risk issues

Outcome 4

Budget management unit support.

Outputs

- Enhance Treasury Budget compliance and develop processes to enhance budget discipline

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.

3. Reporting and working relationships

The volunteer will report to the Accountant General and work closely with the Treasury Management team.

The volunteer and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA programme manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

4. Capacity building

The volunteer will work closely with Accountant General and provide ongoing mentoring and training to key Treasury staff to ensure they are able to implement necessary system and process improvements.

5. Person specifications (professional)

Essential

- Finance professional such as a senior accountant
- Previous work experience in a finance team within either the public or private sector
- A completed qualification in finance
- Previous experience in management and/or mentoring

Desirable

- 5-10 years professional experience
- Experience in more than one finance discipline
- Experience working in a large public or private sector finance team

6. Person specifications (personal)

Essential

- Empathy
- Easy to work with, relaxed
- Sense of humour



Desirable

- Previous work in either a large government Ministry or a medium size private sector finance team
- Have an understanding of the Pacific culture

Additional information

Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

Partner organisation

The volunteer's partner organisation will be the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.

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.

Vulnerable Children 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 Vulnerable Children 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. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$750 to help them set up in their country of assignment. For volunteers with an accompanying partner (whether or not that partner is also a VSA volunteer), VSA will pay an establishment grant of NZ\$1,100 per couple.
2. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
3. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SBD 6,285.



- **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 prior to departure.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Background to the assignment

Appendix 2: Living situation

Appendix 3: Solomon Islands



Appendix 1: Background to the Assignment

Assignment focus

The Ministry of Finance and Treasury has multifaceted needs that cover payroll management, payroll edit reports, payment processing re-engineering, bank reconciliations, SIG Ministry revenue collection oversight, and fraud detection, among others.

MOFT requires an experienced senior accountant, preferably at the Finance Manager level, to contribute to improving business processes, reducing leakage from financial systems, training, supporting knowledge transfer and to support control processes.

Ministry of Finance and Treasury

This Ministry of Finance and Treasury was established in 1978 to serve the people of Solomon Islands in financial and economic decision-making process and the implementation of good governance practices. It is one of the key central agencies of the Solomon Islands Government and operates on behalf of the Government to provide the financial principals under its Public Financial Management Act 2013 relating to fiscal and monetary policies and the use of the Government resources.

The Treasury Division is responsible for maintaining the accounting records of the Solomon Islands Government, monthly and annual financial reporting, processing of payments to suppliers and SIG payroll on behalf of Ministries and managing the consolidated fund bank accounts and maintaining the financial instructions and PFM regulations. Treasury staff are responsible for facilitating payment for imprest requests, payroll administration for SIG staff, procurement of goods & services and payments on behalf of SIG. Treasury is also responsible for the Central Tender Board and all key SIG procurement and tender activities.

Working situation

The Ministry of Finance & Treasury is located in the Government Business sector. The office building is accessible to public transport and most local hotels. There is a car park for staff and a 24-hour security service is available around the clock.

The Treasury Division has 73 staff altogether, with 66 staff currently employed, 30 Female and 36 Male staff.

operates on two levels of the MOFT Building in the Honiara CBD. The workspace is open with all the necessary office equipment in a fully air-conditioned and modern building.



Appendix 2: Living Situation

Honiara

VSA will provide the volunteer with basic, furnished accommodation in Honiara. Houses are on town (mains) power and water, which are subject to cuts every now and then.

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 fairly rudimentary form.

The Central Market is an excellent place to buy fresh produce and there are numerous supermarkets where most western food items can be obtained, although expensive. There is also an abundance of trade stores which are owned and operated by local Chinese traders.

Transport is very cheap within Honiara. The local bus service is provided by a plethora of vans, and some larger buses, which run a set route along the main street and further routes into suburban areas. 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.

Phone and e-mail connections are available in Honiara, as they are in most provincial centres. Cell phone and data network communication has expanded rapidly over the last few years and there is now 2G and 3G mobile coverage in all provincial centres and 4G in parts of Honiara. There are two mobile phone providers, Telekom and Bemobile. The Coral Sea Cable, a submarine fibre optic cable, which should bring faster, cheaper and more reliable communications infrastructure to the Solomons is expected to be in place by early 2020. The cable system will connect Honiara, Auki, Noro and Taro Islands.

There are numerous local radio stations. Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) offers an MW service to the whole country and is one of the main sources of news and also acts as a community notice board. There are three FM stations. Both the ABC and the BBC rebroadcast their services on a local FM service, but only in Honiara. A good quality shortwave radio is often considered to be an essential survival tool by most volunteers if located outside Honiara. TV is available and consists of a mix of the BBC world service programme, Australian Network, France 24 and German DW. TV is free to air and gives better coverage of the Super 15, Australian Rugby league and AFL than free to air coverage in New Zealand.

Two local daily newspapers, [Solomon Star](#) and The Island Sun (SBD5), are a good source of local news, along with [SIBC Online](#). Overseas newspapers, when available, are expensive.

Malaria is a problem in Solomon Islands and the use of appropriate prophylaxis is mandatory for the duration of the assignment. In addition, infections can be quick to develop and serious in consequence. Care needs to be taken with even small and superficial wounds such as grazes, coral cuts or insect bites.

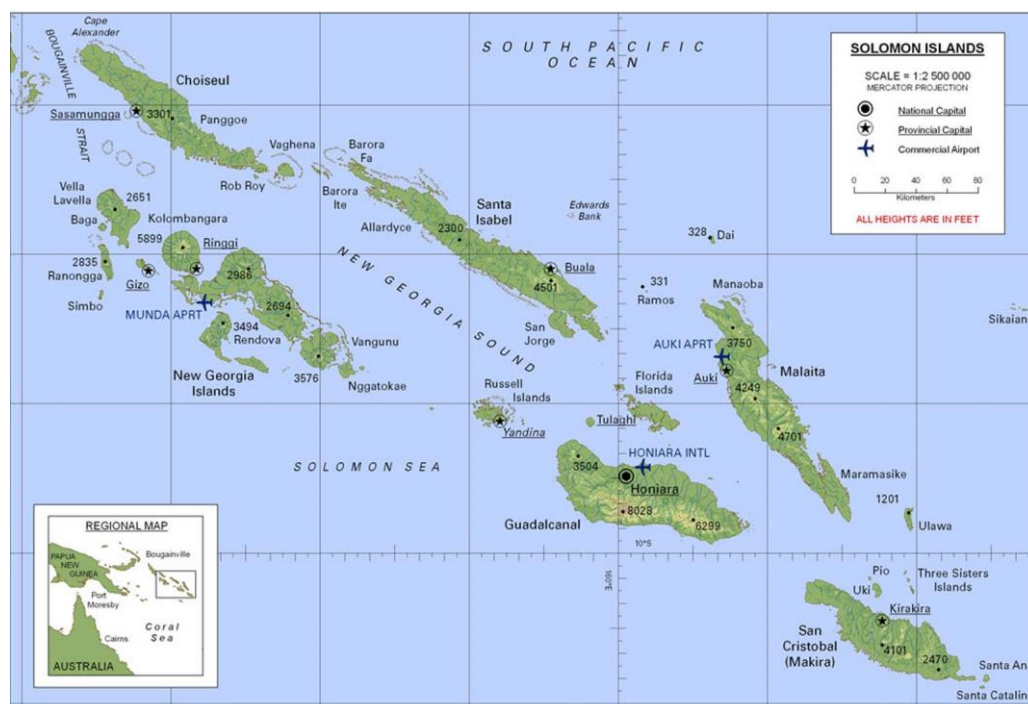
For visitors, hotels are expensive but there are a number of comfortable and affordable guest houses in Honiara.

Guadalcanal Province

Guadalcanal is divided into two distinct regions. Divided by a steep mountain range that runs the length of the island, the northern side of the island is relatively well served by road as well as shipping, and is the location of the capital, Honiara. The Weather Coast, as the southern part of the island is known, is isolated and is only accessed by sea and three airfields. Heavy seas often make sea access difficult. The name Weather Coast is well deserved for it is this part of the island that bears the brunt of incoming storms.



Appendix 3: Solomon Islands



Situated in the South West Pacific, the Solomon Islands are made up of over 922 islands, islets, atolls and cays, which stretch for 1.35 million sq. km of sea, from Papua New Guinea in the north to Vanuatu in the south. The weather is hot and humid all year round (averaging between 27 to 30C) with heavy rainfall on the larger islands. Cyclone season is November to April.

Solomon Islands became independent in 1978 and is a parliamentary democracy. The 2009 census recorded the population of Solomon Islands as 515,870, approximately 20% of whom live in the capital, Honiara. The population of Honiara is fast growing due to high urban drift from the rural areas and is therefore beginning to develop the usual social problems associated with urban centres. This has been exacerbated by the recent ethnic tensions on Guadalcanal.

The majority of Solomon Islands inhabitants are Melanesian with a small proportion of Polynesian and Micronesians. With 74 indigenous languages and dialects, traditions and cultures vary from island to island – even from village to village on the same island in some cases. Pidgin English is the lingua franca. In Solomon Islands 88% of the land is owned under customary tenure.

For more information on Solomon Islands, see:

- Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance and Treasury official website: <http://www.mof.gov.sb/>
- Economic overview: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/solomon-islands>
- New Zealand Aid Programme in Solomon Islands: <https://aid.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-work-in-the-pacific/solomon-islands/>

VSA in Solomon Islands

VSA has been in Solomon Islands since 1965. We are currently working in Honiara, Isabel Province, and Western Province but have worked in most of the nine provinces in the past. VSA has a field office in Honiara, staffed by a Programme Manager and a Country Programme Officer.

General security

Volunteers are required to be security conscious and adhere to the advice of their partner organisations, VSA and the NZ Embassy in Honiara on security matters. If there is a major emergency or should security deteriorate, VSA has established evacuation procedures and volunteers will be fully supported by the field staff in Honiara.



The VSA field staff will go through the ground security measures with the volunteer on arrival in country and develop an individual security plan. It remains good practice to secure belongings and valuables out of sight, not move about by foot at night and avoid demonstrations, street rallies and public gatherings.

