


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Senior Biosecurity Adviser - Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2024)
Assignment Modality	Blended Modality
Assignment Number	42036
Country	Samoa
Location	Upolu Island - Apia
Partner Organisation	Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries - Biosecurity Division
Duration	2 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) is the principal organization charged by the Government of Samoa to provide the policies, regulation and technical support to agriculture and fisheries production. MAF approach is to work in partnership with stakeholders such as subsistence farmers, commercial farmers, importers, exporters and Argo-processors and in collaboration with their associated public agencies, NGOs and service providers. MAF's long term goals are food security, sustainable agriculture and commercial development.

The Biosecurity Division (BD) is part of the MAF, and the Biosecurity Act 2005 mandates our work, where we prevent or control the introduction and spread of pests and diseases that could cause significant damage to human beings, animals, plants and other aspects of the environment or economic activities. We are also responsible for assisting exporters of primary produce by providing market access opportunities and government-to-government certification for these products. The Registrar of Pesticides ensures that only registered pesticides are available and in use in Samoa, hence, all imported pesticides must be registered.

The BD operates a twenty-four-hour, seven-days-a-week service, maintaining a presence at key points for entry of biosecurity risk goods – airports, seaports, cargo depots and the mail centre at Apia. The BD works in tandem with other inspection agencies at the border (Immigration, Customs and Health) for a whole-of-government approach to border protection.

2. Assignment Overview

In October 2024, Samoa will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), the biggest event to take place locally. Hosting this event will add increasing pressure to Samoa's Biosecurity system due to the large number of international attendees traveling to Samoa for the meeting. In-country support is needed to build the capacity and confidence of Samoa's Biosecurity Officers to manage large groups of people and products arriving in Samoa in a condensed period.

Currently, there are limited training opportunities and resources available to meet the number of people and products that will need to be cleared in the lead-up to and during CHOGM, and to manage the increased pressure on officers from government officials implementing their protocols. Additionally, a significant number of very important persons (VIPs) are expected to travel to Samoa, for which a different approach and protocol is required. Most notable of the VIPs are King Charles & Queen Camilla.

A VSA Volunteer can support local staff in upskilling them and building their capacities to ensure the Biosecurity procedures are carried out effectively for CHOGM 2024. This volunteer assignment specifically will contribute to the achievement of the following;

- Provide training to prepare for the increased number of people and products that must be cleared.
- Allocate people and resources to efficiently clear people and products while maintaining biosecurity protocols.
- Provide support and advice during CHOGM as quick answers and solutions will be required. To be the support and neutral person to call on as there will be many government agencies offering staff potentially overwhelming officers. VSA can help to manage, advise and be the neutral support that will be required.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

A well-trained Biosecurity Team conducting clearance of people and products before and during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2024. The goal is to have:

- a stronger, skilled, and confident team of officers who can efficiently process people and conduct inspections in a fast-paced environment
- officers capable of working under pressure in a supportive environment to successfully manage CHOGM
- a toolbox containing procedures, posters, and fact sheets to assist with clearances during the CHOGM

Outcome 1

Increased capability and confidence of Biosecurity Staff on border control matters.

Virtual training:

VSA Volunteer will provide virtual training before CHOGM to refresh officers on operational protocols. Training will cover essential areas to handle the increased volume of passengers and products arriving in Samoa for CHOGM:

- International passenger clearance;
- Reviewing paperwork for risk goods;
- Inspection and clearance of imported vehicles,
- Biosecurity clearance of aircraft and seacraft;
- Health and safety;
- Managing biosecurity waste and garbage from aircraft and seacraft.

Face-to-face training:

Face-to-face training will ensure that staff can enforce protocols correctly and identify additional gaps or training opportunities. Where possible, the VSA volunteer will address these gaps with on-the-spot training or develop a training plan to address these gaps in the future.

Outcome 2

Assist with the development of processes and procedures to support efficient clearances during the CHOGM in line with the current Standard Operating Procedures.

Support the development of a Biosecurity Operational Plan for CHOGM alongside the local team;

- Checklists and protocols - Developing checklists and written protocols. These checklists and protocols will help manage the higher volume of VIPs, food, and garbage that are expected due to hosting the meeting.
- Rosters and site plans - Review staff rosters and site plans for key points of entry for biosecurity risk goods to ensure that these points are appropriately staffed to facilitate smooth and efficient biosecurity clearance of passengers and products.

Outcome 3

Implement processes and procedures to support efficient clearances during the CHOGM.

Support the implementation of a Biosecurity Operational Plan for CHOGM alongside the local team;

- Observing officers clearing imported products in the lead-up to CHOGM.
- Observing the staff in the lead-up to the CHOGM, the volunteer can identify gaps and provide immediate advice in the clearance processes that need to be addressed when non-compliances arise.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

Training will be provided by the VSA volunteer before the CHOGM, with workshops, online tasks, and on-site training for example, passenger clearances at the airport.

A training program will be developed before the CHOGM in collaboration with the VSA volunteer and senior biosecurity officers.

The volunteer will report directly to the Seumalo Afelē Faiilagi - ACEO of Biosecurity Division and will be accountable to the CEO of MAF - Dr. Seuseu Tauati.

On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with;

1. Ms. Nafanua Malele (Principal Officer - Operations) and three (3) other staff from the Operations (regulatory, seaports, airports) who conduct inspection and treatments.
2. Ms. Olive Alesana (Principal Officer - Technical Policy)
3. Tanumafili Seuao, and one (1) other staff member who provides technical advice on import requirements.

The volunteer and MAF Biosecurity Division will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager and Country Programme Coordinator 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

- Operational awareness and experience working in ports of arrival in Biosecurity
- Experience working with the import and export of animals and/or animal products and plants and plant products in relation to biosecurity
- Experience with Post Entry Quarantine protocols and Emergency Response procedures
- Strong understanding of Import Risk Analysis, Standard Operating Procedures and Import Health Standards
- Ability to train and mentor members of staff

Desirable

- Knowledge of international and foreign policy and customs (outside of Samoa)
- Knowledge and experience of international border regulations

Personal Specifications

- A high level of personal integrity, discretion and tact
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team

- Hands-on, solution-focused, adaptable and organized
- Strong interpersonal and intercultural skills
- Commitment to teamwork, coaching, and mentoring others
- Patience, tolerance and flexibility
- Cross-cultural awareness and ability to adapt to new environment
- A preparedness to work with limited resources within a challenging environment


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;

- 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
- Beautiful Samoa: [Uncover the History of Beautiful Samoa | Samoa Tourism](#)

8. Living and Working Situation

VSA Samoa team will source basic, comfortable and furnished accommodation that is within the budget of the programme, prior to the volunteer's arrival.

Primary work location;

The volunteer will be working at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Biosecurity Division Main Office, which is situated on Beach Road in Matautu. The office is located on Matautu Wharf and is close to other Samoan government agencies. There are eateries and shops near the office, and Apia CBD is approximately a 20-minute walk or a WS\$5.00 taxi ride away. There are two taxi stands within a two-minute walk from the office. The office is fenced, and its location on the Matautu Wharf means it is secured by the presence of Samoa Ports Authority Security. Both Vodafone and Digicel phone services work well in the Office.

Other work locations;

The volunteer will work at other sites, specifically the Biosecurity Offices located at Faleolo International Airport and Fagalii Airports, where international passengers traveling by air will arrive. Transport is provided between the Main Office and Airport offices.

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 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

The volunteer will receive the monthly e-volunteer allowance of \$90 NZD.

The volunteer will receive a daily living allowance of \$45 NZD when in-country.

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.