

# VSA Assignment Description

Assignment title	Financial Systems Mentor
Country	Timor-Leste
Location	Dili
Partner organisation	Belun
Duration	2 years



Sustainable Development Goals

41227

## 1. Assignment goal

Belun's financial and reporting systems are strengthened and compliant, additional income streams are achieved and staff have the confidence and skills to work independently.

## 2. Assignment outcomes

### Outcome 1

Belun have strong financial systems in place and staff effectively and efficiently complete financial administration duties.

#### Outputs

Together with the Belun team:

- Review the financial system and make recommendations for improvement
- Implement appropriate and responsive system improvements that meet both internal and external accountabilities
- Implement a summary sheet process of key contract clauses for compliance
- Implement monthly budget monitoring processes and ensure finance officers understand project budgeting and reporting requirements
- Ensure understanding of direct costs, support costs and core costs
- Prepare acquittal reports which match financial expenditure

### Outcome 2

Belun staff have sound understanding of the legal and financial aspects of income generation, enabling the organisation to meet shortfalls in funding and sustain their programmes in the future

#### Outputs

Together with the Belun team:

- Collate and compare what other NGO's are doing about income generation
- Together with the Belun team ensure that the reporting/accountability requirements for potential grant or donor funding are built into regular financial data collection



- Support the creation of a proposal that documents the legal processes and financial accountabilities that need to be in place to comply with requirements, processes and investment that would be required to generate additional income through grants or donor funding<sup>1</sup>

### Outcome 3

Belun's financial department understands and implements robust bookkeeping systems and the international accounting needs of the organisation.

#### **Outputs**

Together with Belun Finance Manager, provide mentoring and training to Belun's financial and administrative staff:

- Implement Daily Cash Book count and reconciliation processes
- Implement processes that strengthen internal controls
- Implement appropriate supporting documentation processes and filing processes
- Maintain and balance records when using excel or computerised accounting systems
- Ensure Grants/Contracts financial requirement handled independently
- Reports/acquittals completed correctly and on time

### Outcome 4

Belun is compliant with the Timor-Leste Taxes and Duties Act 2008, The Labour Code 2012, and other relevant business/NGO operational laws and legislation.

#### **Outputs**

Together with Belun staff, provide mentoring and training to enable them to:

- Understand the core principles of the Labour Code
- Understand the Decree Law 2005 for the registration of Associations/NGOs
- Understand rent tax and wages tax
- Prepare and submit monthly Tax Returns
- Prepare and submit Annual Tax Returns, including wages reconciliation and the completion and submission of the Wages Reconciliation form.

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**

Belun provides training in conflict prevention and gender sensitive conflict transformation. There is a high level of awareness about workplace conduct and respect for colleagues. The volunteer will work with the Director, Finance officer and senior managers to improve financial competencies. The volunteer will report to the Director or Belun and work most closely with the Financial Manager.

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

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<sup>1</sup> It is anticipated that you will work with the Organisational Development volunteer if they are recruited at the same time.



## 4. Capacity building

The volunteer will build the individual capacity while working with the Director, Financial Manager and financial/administrative staff. Financial capacity will be built through staff training, improving systems, implementing the strategic plan, developing action plans, improving financial reporting, facilitating workshops and mentoring.

## 5. Person specifications (professional)

### Essential

- Qualified accountant
- A minimum of 5 years in a financial management role
- Experience developing and implementing finance and office administrative systems and processes
- Knowledge or experience of accounting software systems other than MYOB such as Quickbooks Online (QBOL) accounting software
- Proven ability to work alongside staff to provide practical and appropriate training and mentoring

### Desirable

- Driving skills, to be able to move easily between partner NGOs
- Experience in the private/for profit sector
- Ability to write policy and procedures
- Basic-intermediate IT skills to resolve the all-too-common computer problems we face

## 6. Person specifications (personal)

### Essential

- Patience
- Excellent communication skills, able to easily build trusting working relationships
- Self-motivated, able to prioritise tasks and work independently
- Flexibility and understanding and ability to accept that things change often
- Robust physical health and good level of fitness
- A willingness to learn and speak Tetun

### Desirable

- Motorbike license
- A sense of humour

## Additional information

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### 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 Belun.

### 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. For two year assignments, the volunteer will receive a rest and respite grant of NZ\$1000 on completion of the first year.
3. 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.
4. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of USD\$935.

- **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: Timor-Leste



## Appendix 1: Background to the Assignment

### Assignment focus

Improving the organisational ability and that of relevant managers will contribute to improving donor confidence in Belun's organisational management systems and a willingness by potential donors to continue to support the organization's mission.

Improving the capacity of the administrative and management team to create and implement a strategic plan will assist with more efficient and effective operations.

### Partner organisation

Belun, a local NGO, was established in 2004 to bolster civil society in Timor-Leste and reduce underlying tensions that may lead to violent conflict. Belun's mandate is to serve communities within Timor-Leste, develop the organizational capacity of its partners, reduce tensions and prevent conflict in Timor-Leste. Belun means 'friend' or 'partner' in the local language, Tetun.

Belun's highest-profile programme is the Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) conflict monitoring programme. Over 80 volunteer monitors across Timor-Leste gather information on incidents of violence and conflict. They are used to identify areas of particular concern and to develop recommendations for policy reform and intervention both nationally and locally.

Young people are key to achieving sustainable development. It is essential that all young people receive equal access to quality education, justice, health services, employment opportunities, chances to participate in society, and to be protected from violence. Through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 and the approval of the new National Youth Policy in 2016 by the VI Government, Timor-Leste has committed to leave no youth behind. In support of this national effort, the United Nations (UN) in Timor-Leste and the NGO Belun are, in a collaborative effort, launching a new policy series titled "Leaving no Youth Behind in Timor-Leste".

For more information on Belun, visit [www.belun.tl](http://www.belun.tl)

### Working situation

Belun has an office in Farol, central Dili. It is a short walk to the waterfront area and many places to eat. Many Embassies have their residencies in this area. Belun is opposite the Farol school and there are many local and some international NGO's in the area. Farol is a secure area with easy access to local transport (Microlets) and taxis. Belun provides good office accommodation, computer and office internet and printing. The office is well equipped with good lighting and air-conditioning.

If transport is required for work Belun has dedicated drivers and vehicles



## Appendix 2: Living Situation

### Dili

Dili is a long, narrow city bordered by the sea to its north and a line of hills to its south. Dili has a tropical climate and a wet and dry season. The weather is warm to hot year-round with a very high daily humidity level. Dili is a busy, vibrant, noisy, fast-paced city, with evidence of expanding development alongside traditional ways of life, increasing wealth and decreasing evidence of the Indonesian occupation. Contrastingly, ongoing poverty and rising inequality is also evident throughout the city.

A variety of consumer goods and food supplies can be found in the fresh markets and supermarkets however supplies can be intermittent. Restaurants and cafes are plentiful, prices are reasonable, representing a wide culturally diverse population. There are many local eating places (warungs) that offer cheap meals and takeaways. Local markets are a good source for abundant, fresh, local, cheap, mostly organic, fruit and vegetables. New clothing is available, but generally limited to smaller sizes.

Cotton/linen loose modest clothing is suggested as the climate is hot and at times humid. Workplaces generally require professional dress, as in a business setting in New Zealand. There are many street stalls selling second-hand clothes and dress makers and tailors can be found around Dili.

The use of mobile phones is the predominant and preferred mode of communication. There are three telecommunication providers for mobile phones/internet in Timor-Leste. Internet is via 4G hotspot or modem. Phone calls into Timor-Leste from New Zealand are expensive but calls out of Timor-Leste to New Zealand are much cheaper. WhatsApp, Facetime, Skype or other internet based calling apps are the cheapest way to communicate. There is no sea-cable for internet and so all connections are via satellite which can occasionally be very slow.

Volunteers are assisted to purchase SIM cards upon arrival to facilitate ease of regular communications within and outside of Timor-Leste. Pre-pay refill cards (pulsa) are widely available for purchase. VSA has a postbox for incoming mail but since the Singapore flight stopped operating the mail service has been problematic, we do not recommend posting anything. DHL or Fedex are more reliable methods of sending and receiving packages.

Transport by taxi or minibus (microlet) is relatively cheap and easily accessible. Many volunteers choose to buy a bicycle, scooter or motorbike during the course of their assignment. Good quality helmets are not easily available, so bring a NZ safety face protecting helmet. There are many reliable second-hand cars to purchase.

VSA use a private medical company in Dili (Stamford Medical) to provide general consultations, referrals. The Dili National Hospital provides emergency trauma care with support from international NGO, St John of God. VSA's insurance cover provides for treatment of health care including medical conditions, serious illnesses and medical evacuations outside the country, usually to a hospital in Darwin or back to NZ.

Accommodation will be provided by VSA within the community, with basic furnishing including a fridge and gas cooking rings. Kitchenware and general household items are readily available in Dili and can be purchased by the volunteer from their establishment grant. Air conditioning is provided, although the electricity supply experiences fairly regular outages (two to four hours at a time), supply has vastly improved in recent years. The planned increase in volunteers located in Districts mean you may be required to offer any spare bedroom to fellow volunteers visiting Dili.

Tetun (with over 30 dialects) and Portuguese are Timor-Leste's languages. Bahasa Indonesia is widely spoken. English is becoming very popular to learn, especially amongst young people who are very keen to practise. Volunteers are required to learn basic Tetun for community integration and workplace effectiveness. You will attend 2-3 weeks of Tetun classes as part of your in-country orientation.

## Appendix 3: Timor-Leste



Timor-Leste, a tropical island nation of great natural beauty, provides volunteers with exciting opportunities to work alongside Timorese people in government, the private sector and with local urban and rural NGOs to support the economic, social and environmental development of this new country. VSA was one of the first volunteer programmes to establish a presence in Timor-Leste in 2003 and the New Zealand Aid Programme works with Timor-Leste to support the development of a sustainable and growing economy through private sector development, education and training, and security and justice.

If selected, it is recommended that you familiarise yourself with Timor-Leste's history. Very briefly, in the 16th century, Timor-Leste was colonized by Portugal and known as Portuguese Timor. During World War II, it was occupied by the Japanese and many Timorese died in the struggle to defeat the Japanese by Allied forces. Portugal effectively abandoned its colony in 1974, and Timor-Leste declared independence in 1975 but was invaded and occupied by Indonesia. The Indonesian occupation was marked by violence and up to one third of the population was lost. In 1999, Indonesia relinquished control of the territory and Timor-Leste established independence in 2002.

Today Timor-Leste is one of the world's youngest nation. Timor-Leste is transitioning from a post conflict fragile state to developing nation. Timor-Leste is focused on building its governance and public service delivery, improving and rebuilding infrastructure, reversing economic hardship and poverty, along with improving education and health. However, many Timorese suffer from post-trauma as a result of the 25-year occupation and conflict. As a volunteer you will hear many upsetting stories from the occupation.

New Zealand has a positive and supportive relationship with Timor-Leste. The NZ Defence Force supported various stability and security operations in Timor-Leste from 1999 until December 2012. Two NZDF personnel are deployed with the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-leste (F-FDTL, Timor-Leste Defence Force) providing strategic and logistics advice to the Timorese military. Two police officers based there long-term under the bilateral Timor-Leste Community Policing Programme, and police mentors from New Zealand visit Timor-Leste several times a year. Unfortunately, the majority of New Zealander's only know about Timor-Leste's struggle for independence and our military involvement, there is much more to learn. Timor is also a strikingly beautiful island with some of the world's best scuba diving. Tropical beaches, fresh coconuts and impressive mountains (the highest is almost 3000m) mean weekends can be filled with hiking, mountain biking or enjoying the spectacular sunsets over the ocean.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and National Strategic Plan 2030 inform Timor's development objectives. The ratification of a significant number of UN Conventions is enhancing the development of laws and policy. Timor is striving to improve its human rights awareness, the wellbeing of women and children and is starting to deliberate on climate change and environmental sustainability, three cross cutting issues VSA supports.

Poverty rates have dropped from 49.9 percent in 2007 to 41.8 percent in 2014 according to the World Bank. According to the first Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Analysis Report released in January 2019, approximately 430,000 people (36 percent) are chronically food insecure, out of which 15 percent are experiencing severe chronic food insecurity (IPC Level 4). The major contributing factors are low agricultural productivity, poor quality and quantity of food consumption, and low value livelihood strategies combined with high dependency on single livelihoods.

The people of Timor-Leste are predominantly mixed Malayo-Polynesian and Melanesian/Papuan descent. There is also a large population of people of mixed East Timorese and Portuguese origin called mesticos, and a small Chinese minority. There are numerous ethno-linguistic groups, but the most commonly spoken language is Tetum. In 2019, the estimated population of Timor-Leste is 1.29 million, which ranks 156th in the world. The population is mostly concentrated around Dili, with a population of 234,000. The population of 1.29 million is substantially higher than the 2000 population of just 853,000.

Timor-Leste has a young population (62% under 25) meaning there can often be a lack of experience in key positions in all sectors of the workforce, VSA volunteers are in a good position to work alongside and up-skill these dedicated, optimistic and driven young professionals who are working to rebuild their nation.

## VSA in Timor-Leste





VSA commenced its programme in Timor-Leste in 2003. Volunteers were placed to help build individual and organisational capacity in the agriculture, health and education sectors. At the outbreak of conflict in April 2006, VSA, along with other international development and humanitarian agencies, suspended its programme recalling its volunteers to New Zealand.

VSA returned to Timor-Leste in November 2008 with a focus on strengthening the capacity of Timorese public, private and civil society organisations. This focus supports the wider New Zealand government's Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) objective of supporting sustainable economic growth, human development, law and justice and resilience in developing countries, through MFAT.

Currently, VSA volunteers work with a variety of public, private and civil society organisations based in Dili and will be expanding the area of support into the municipalities. VSA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Timorese government, which outlines our relationship of supporting capacity building in Timor-Leste.

## General Security

As in other countries, volunteers are required to be security conscious and adhere to the advice of their partner organisations, the VSA Programme Manager and the NZ Embassy in Dili 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 Dili and the NZ Embassy. On arrival in country, the VSA field staff in Dili will go through the ground security measures with volunteers and develop individual security plans.

It remains good practice to secure belongings and valuables out of sight, not to flaunt perceived 'wealth', and to dress appropriately, as sexual harassment can be a risk. Moving about alone at night, or during demonstrations, street rallies and public gatherings should be avoided.

Building relationships and friendships with your Timorese neighbours, local community, and colleagues, all help with having an enjoyable, constructive and safe time in Timor. A smile and attempts at greeting in Tetun go a very long way. Timorese people are extremely welcoming and friendly.

For more information on Timor-Leste refer to:

- Timor-Leste government website <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?lang=en>
- Economic overview <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/timor-leste/overview>
- Development overview [http://www.tl.undp.org/content/timor\\_leste/en/home/countryinfo/](http://www.tl.undp.org/content/timor_leste/en/home/countryinfo/)
- New Zealand Aid Programme in Timor-Leste <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-work-in-asia/aid-relationship-with-timor-leste/>
- Timor-Leste's official tourism website <http://www.timorleste.tl>



Map courtesy of [ezilon.com](http://ezilon.com)

