


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment title	Veterinarian		
Country	Tonga		
Location	Tokomololo		
Partner organisation	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF)		Sustainable Development Goals
Duration	3 months – 2 years		

41244

1. Assignment goal

Veterinary staff are skilled and confident in their provision of services¹ for the wellbeing of animals in Tonga, with opportunities for young staff to be trained and mentored in Tonga.

2. Assignment outcomes

Outcome 1

Local capacity and knowledge of current MAFF Livestock Division staff is strengthened.

Outputs

- Train and mentor current staff in the areas of animal welfare and surgery
- Work with local staff to develop a veterinary succession plan to assist with the training and retention of local staff

Outcome 2

MAFF Livestock Division staff have improved access to, and knowledge of, essential drugs required for surgery and animal welfare.

Outputs

- Work with local staff to develop a sustainable plan to ensure necessary drugs for animal surgery and the treatment of animal ailments

Outcome 3

Owners and community members have increased awareness and knowledge of key animal welfare principles.

Outputs

Work with staff to develop owner awareness programmes which:

- Educate owners about food, care and exercise for their animals
- Demonstrate the use of cheap, well designed kennels for housing dogs within their properties

¹ Including the provision of support to animal owners and livestock staff about appropriate care of animals.



- Empower owners to seek medical care when animals are sick or wounded, so that suffering is minimised

As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the assignment description on arrival and during the assignment in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA programme manager.

3. Reporting and working relationships

The volunteer will report directly to, and be accountable to, the Head of the Livestock Division. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the field staff within the Livestock Division and also with local animal and livestock owners.

The volunteer and the Ministry of Agriculture, Foods and Forestry (MAFF), Tonga 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 alongside local Tongan staff - a veterinary nurse, (trained in New Zealand) a recent Masters of Agricultural Science graduate (studied in Japan) and a Bachelor of Agricultural Science graduate from the University of South Pacific.

The volunteer will build their knowledge and capacity in the areas of animal welfare, animal illnesses, and surgery. They will work alongside the staff to train and educate local animal and livestock owners during animal welfare visits and owner education programmes.

They will also work at times alongside students at the Tonga Institute of Higher Education who are studying towards a Diploma in Agriculture, when those students visit the clinic as part of their studies.

5. Person specifications (professional)

Essential

- Qualified and licenced veterinarian
- Certified to order and administer drugs
- Experience in training and mentoring
- Ability to provide technical advice
- Dedication, compassion and love of animals

6. Person specifications (personal)

Essential

- Approachable, straight forward and kind
- Clear and concise presentation of advice
- Interested in Tongan culture and willing to learn about different cultural practices



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 Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF), TONGA

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, for up to a maximum of 24 months.
4. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of \$1065 TOP

- **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: Tonga



Appendix 1: Background to the Assignment

Assignment focus

The volunteer will provide much needed support to the Livestock Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Foods and Forestry, at the only Veterinary Clinic in Tonga. The role will focus on:

- Building the capacity of staff to improve their knowledge in the areas of animal welfare, animal sickness, and surgery
- Educating local animal and livestock owners during animal welfare visits and owner education programmes

Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry

MAFF's Livestock Division is responsible for the care of all animals and livestock within Tonga. There is a close relationship between the Livestock Division and animal owners in the communities.

Alongside the veterinary clinic, the Livestock Division's responsibilities include:

- A de-sexing programme for dogs in order to maintain the numbers at a manageable level
- Quarantine, management and care of animals imported from overseas, ensuring that animals are free from zoonotic diseases
- Visiting the outlying islands yearly or when needed, to train staff and owners on animal care and management
- Setting up a local organization to protect and prevent cruelty to animals.
- Seeking funding from overseas organizations (and from the government) to help with care of animals
- Helping to enforce animal legislations so that animal owners are responsible for any damage done by their animals to properties and gardens.

Working situation

The volunteer will be based at the Tokomololo Livestock Division. It is a 10-minute drive from the capital, Nuku'alofa. The premises are fully fenced and the volunteer will be issued with keys for easy access. Office hours are 8:30am to 4:30pm with an hour break for lunch from 12:30pm to 1:30pm. Hours are flexible depending on tasks needing to be done, and a glide time system can be considered if the need arises.

The office building houses the Head of the Division, an office to be shared between the volunteer and the Livestock Consultant, a conference room, a toilet, a clinic and a storeroom where drugs medicines are stored securely. The offices are air conditioned. An artesian well supplies running water.

Internet is available at the clinic and a laptop will be provided by the Ministry. The clinic is suitable for single operations, and when the SPAW team visits, they have been able to run two operations simultaneously. There is adequate room for staff during operations, demonstrations and trainings.

SPAW (South Pacific Animal Welfare), a volunteer organization, comprising of vets, nurses and other people with the same interests, visit Tonga 3-4 times a year. They will work alongside the volunteer when they are in Tonga.

The Vet will work across all the communities on Tongatapu, with possible occasional visits to the outer islands to tend to cases and conduct trainings for staff.



Appendix 2: Living Situation

Nuku'alofa

Nuku'alofa is the capital of the Kingdom of Tonga. It has a population of around 23,500 and is located on the north coast of the island of Tongatapu. Tongatapu is far enough from the equator to enjoy a mild and comfortable climate. Winter (July to September) temperatures tend to be around 18°C --27°C and Summer (December to April) temperatures are around 22°C -- 35°C but cooler nights are not unusual. Tonga lies in the southern hemisphere's storm belt and experiences frequent cyclone activity.

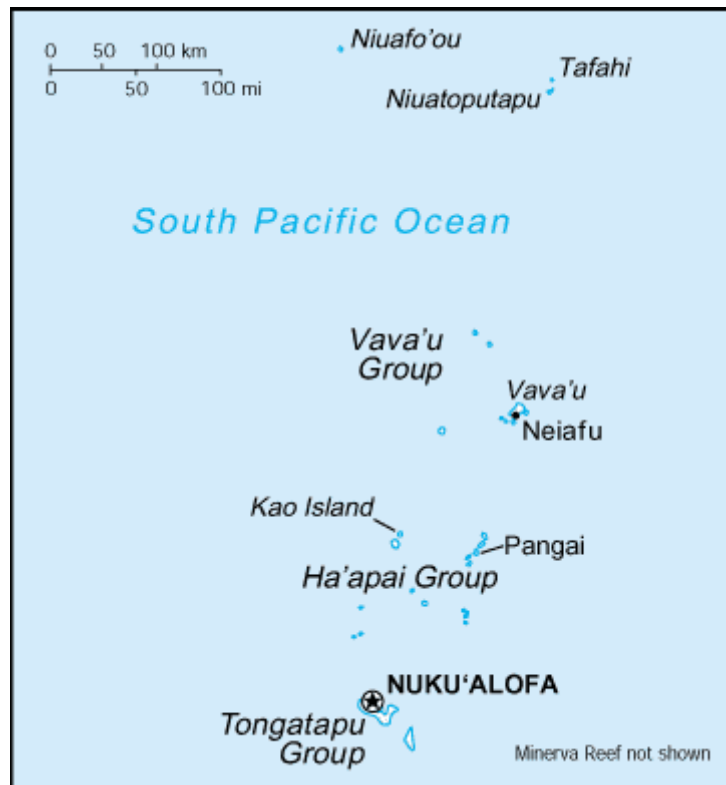
A reasonable variety of imported and local food are available in Nuku'alofa. The central market has a good assortment of locally grown foods, including fresh fruit and vegetables. Grocery stores supply imported goods but luxuries items can be expensive. Nuku'alofa has a number of foreign exchange outlets such as Western Union as well as two banks, the Bank South Pacific (BSP) and ANZ. The Tongan currency is the Pa'anga. Nuku'alofa is served by Vaiola Hospital (Tonga's main hospital) a 10-minute drive from Nuku'alofa as well as a number of pharmacies. Hospital staff are well trained, however the equipment and facilities are limited. Local buses and taxis run on Tongatapu but many volunteers prefer to get around by walking or by bicycle.

Internet is widely available in internet cafes throughout Tongatapu, but it is expensive to have internet access installed in one's home. Tonga has two mobile network providers, TCC (the local Tongan telecom provider) and Digicel. Both service providers run good deals and have good signal around Nuku'alofa.

Religion is an important part of life and Tongans attend church regularly and bless each meal, meeting and event with a prayer. Almost all Tongans belong to one of the 20 or so denominations in Tonga including Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon). Laws concerning the Sabbath are strictly upheld in Tonga, and virtually everything closes on Sundays, except for emergency facilities, bakeries and some tourist facilities.



Appendix 3: Tonga



(Map courtesy of wikipedia.org)

The Kingdom of Tonga consists of 176 islands in four major groups, Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u, and the Niuas, which form a narrow archipelago extending north from the Tropic of Capricorn. Tonga has a population of around 104,000, 97% of whom are Polynesian, with 70% living on the main island of Tongatapu.

Tonga is a Hereditary Constitutional Monarchy which has a government composed of a Sovereign, Privy Council, Cabinet (the Prime Minister, Ministers of the Crown) and a parliamentary legislature. The head of state is King Tupou VI.

The Kingdom of Tonga is the only South Pacific country never to have been colonised by a foreign power, and the kingship has been passed down through many generations, beginning in the 10th century. Tongan culture is strongly stratified and has a three-tiered class system made up of royalty, nobles and commoners determined by heredity. This system determines the roles and responsibilities for the different groups.

Tongans have a well-developed sense of community based on a close-knit extended family unit and a close affiliation to their church. Members of Tongan families take care of one another almost unconditionally. One's immediate family includes grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. In many cases, the entire family works together to plant, harvest, cook, and fish. Children typically live with parents or grandparents after marriage.

The Tongan economy is primarily agrarian, supplemented by fishing, tourism, and remittances from Tongans living and working in other countries. Significant exports are made to Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America, including coconut products, vanilla, squash, kava, peppers, tomatoes, watermelons and limes. Tonga is heavily dependent on aid programmes.

Tonga has significant development challenges:

- Economic: Tonga's small domestic market, skill shortages, high cost of power and variable domestic transport services, low savings rates, the high costs of doing business, and high youth unemployment.



- Education: despite universal access to basic education, inequities exist in the quality of education. This is particularly prevalent in the secondary system where there is a distinct disparity between government and non-government providers.
- Natural disasters: Tonga lies in the southern hemisphere's storm belt and experiences frequent cyclone activity. In March 2000, tropical cyclone Mona caused an estimated \$US3 million damage to houses and infrastructure and a similar amount in agricultural losses. The impact of cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis on small island nations like Tonga can be greatly amplified as disruptions to infrastructure, agriculture and ecosystems (estuaries etc.) can affect the livelihoods of individuals and the nation for many years.

For more information on Tonga, see

- Tongan government website: <http://www.tongaportal.gov.to/>
- Economic overview: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/tonga>
- New Zealand Aid Programme in Tonga: <https://www.aid.govt.nz/where-we-work/pacific/tonga>

VSA in Tonga

VSA's programme in the Kingdom of Tonga dates back to 1965 with initial volunteers working largely in education. VSA complete its work in education in 2005 and in 2012 began sending volunteers with a primary focus on economic development but also in other targeted areas. The programme is managed by in-country Programme Manager, Tina Mackie.

General Security

Tonga has very minimal security concerns in comparison to other parts of the Pacific. However, volunteers are required to be security conscious and adhere to the advice of their partner organisations, VSA and the NZ Embassy in Nuku'alofa 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 staff Wellington. Volunteers will go through the ground security measures on arrival in-country and develop an individual safety and security plan.

