

HOW TVET CHANGE HAPPENS: SOLOMON ISLANDS STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

SOLOMON ISLANDS JULY 2019



FOREWORD



This report is the outcome of an intensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders in Solomon Islands from Government, Training providers, Industry representatives and Disabled people's organisations on how TVET change will come about.

The human capital model places skills development at the centre of social and economic prosperity. TVET is a vital component of education systems that contributes to such prosperity. As policy, strategies and financial investments continue to be developed to enable a vibrant TVET system, the key question to ask is how change will come about to realise the gains sought from skills development in the Pacific Island economies.

This document captures Solomon Islands stakeholder views and perspectives on drivers for change, barriers, opportunities and strategies that will lead to effective TVET outcomes. It represents a milestone for Solomon Islands TVET system strengthening and reform having brought the stakeholders together to understand the local TVET landscape and what locally led approaches will be appropriate to realise change. The Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) is indebted to the stakeholders

for sharing the ideas captured herein. Achieving the change captured in this document will require sustained collective effort from all stakeholders. APTC is only one of them and is pleased that there was an opportunity to catalyse this discussion.

Many stakeholders represented in the meetings and colleagues they spoke to after the event are using these findings to inform their work. It is particularly encouraging to hear that each organisation has committed to identify how they will contribute to change where they best add value. With all of our efforts, we can contribute to a prosperous Nation and Pacific region.

Finally, APTC commits to continue supporting Solomon Islands TVET stakeholders to regularly reflect on the progress we are jointly making on these strategies. We look forward to discussing and sharing with you, as custodians of the change in Solomon Islands how we all are progressing toward ensuring the people of the Pacific have the skills, knowledge and attributes necessary to drive National and Regional development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lori Banks Dutta'.

Lori Banks Dutta
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Australia Pacific Training Coalition



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) wishes to express its deepest appreciation to the following stakeholders for their invaluable participation in the workshops and post workshop discussions, which have shaped this document:

- 1 Advisor for the Justice Program
- 2 APTC alumni representative
- 3 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- 4 Learning and Professional Development Adviser, Solomon Islands Justice Program
- 5 Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration
- 6 Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
- 7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade
- 8 Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination
- 9 Skills for Economic Growth, Solomon Islands
- 10 Solomon Islands Association of Vocational Rural Training Centers
- 11 Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- 12 Solomon Islands National University
- 13 Solomon Islands Police Development Program, Australian Federal Police
- 14 Solomon Islands Seasonal Worker Program
- 15 Solomon Power
- 16 Tourism industry representative.
- 17 University of the South Pacific - Pacific TAFE

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INTRODUCTION

The Solomon Islands consists of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands to the east of Papua New Guinea and northwest of Vanuatu. It is home to around 685,000 people, around three-quarters of whom live in rural areas. Steady growth over the last few decades has seen the economy start to build, although the Solomon Islands faces considerable development challenges.

Youth are a significant cohort of the population, with 7 out of 10 Solomon Islanders under 30 years old. This presents challenges for education and employment, with limited student places in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions. In response to this, the government has developed national plans and frameworks which include a focus on youth, employment and education and training. These aim to improve the quality and relevance of TVET, increase access for underrepresented groups and build TVET capacity, particularly in rural areas. The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, the Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration all have a central role to play in achieving TVET outcomes, as does the newly established Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority and industry. National TVET providers, such as Solomon Islands National University and Don Bosco Technical Institute, supported by regional providers like the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), are another key stakeholder.

The Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) commenced in 2007 with a focus on delivery of quality TVET services to support positive employment outcomes for graduates. In the third phase of the program, the focus has expanded to consider the long-term sustainability and quality of TVET services in the Pacific region. This expanded approach proposes more considered work at country level in line with the country context. It proposes that partnerships and coalitions with in-country TVET providers and other stakeholders will lay the foundation for increased country investment in and development of TVET resources. It assumes that support to build the quality of in-country TVET providers will assist in sustaining the sector and increasing its value to industry.

The new phase of the program recognises that this approach will lead to different implementation strategies in each Pacific country. Those strategies will be best developed in response to current opportunities, as identified by local stakeholders. In response to this, APTC has invested in in-country stakeholder consultation to develop country specific theory of change, implementation approaches and accompanying monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

PROCESS

This document was developed in consultation with a range of Solomon Islands stakeholders. Recognising that in Solomon Islands change is not a simple 'linear' process, the consultation work was designed to draw from local knowledge to identify the factors most likely to block or enable positive

change in the TVET sector in Solomon Islands. That is, the best ideas about how change happens or the 'theory of change' for TVET in Solomon Islands.

Building on this assessment, stakeholders identified the opportunities for APTC to best contribute

¹ A TOC workshop was conducted in the Solomon Islands on 30-31 July 2019 with TVET, government and non-government stakeholders. Attendance at this workshop was lower than expected, based on the number of invitees who accepted the workshop invitation, and less than for other country TOC workshops. Workshop participants and facilitators discussed this in the opening and closing sessions of the workshop. It was agreed that input from other key TVET stakeholders would be sought through follow-up consultations and these were conducted by APTC staff with the following stakeholders: **Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Solomon Islands National University, Solomon Power and a member of the APTC alumni and representative of the tourism industry.**

to progressive change in TVET, including in collaboration with other actors in the TVET sector. These opportunities were framed within the broad objectives of APTC Phase 3 and provide the APTC Solomon Islands 'program approach'.

This document summarises the outcomes of this process. It outlines the current situation, including identifying key drivers of change and what might block that change. The document is intended to communicate the understanding by stakeholders about what needs to change in the Solomon Islands in order to achieve the outcomes sought by APTC and its partners. It also grounds the objectives of APTC in the Solomon Island context, with

reference to current challenges and opportunities. It outlines proposed strategies for the whole of the stakeholder group, accompanying principles and areas for ongoing assessment. It serves as the basis for the APTC in country to develop its specific contribution, through a detailed strategy, going forward.

The APTC Solomon Islands approach to change will evolve as evidence and experience about what works becomes available. This document will therefore be reviewed annually with stakeholders. That review will include ongoing assessment of the value of APTC work and recommendations for its further improvements.

TVET IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

CURRENT SITUATION

Solomon Islands TVET stakeholders are diverse and have different levels of involvement, interest and influence. These include those directly involved in the sector such as: Rural Training Centres (RTCs), the Solomon Islands National University (SINU), the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Don Bosco Technical Institute (DBTI); relevant government ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD), the Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT), the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI) and the Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination (MNDPC)²; the newly established Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority (SITESA), which

under legislation passed in 2017 is the national authority responsible for the promotion, planning, development and coordination of the tertiary skills sector; and, the Solomon Islands Association of Vocational Rural Training Centres (SIAVRTC).

It also includes those serviced by the sector such as current and future students with their families and communities, TVET alumni, Industry and non-government organisations. Other stakeholders include those who support the sector directly such as International donors including DFAT, NZAID, Taiwan Aid, ODA Japan, the World Bank, European Union, International Finance Corporation and indirectly, faith-based, women's and disability organisations plus the media.

² Formerly the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC).

TVET DELIVERY

The delivery of TVET training in the Solomon Islands is limited with RTCs and TVET centres having fewer than 2,500 places available³. A 2014 review by the Asian Development Bank identified that the two main tertiary institutions, SINU and USP, together deliver over 70% of all post-secondary programs⁴. This review highlights a significant issue with education and training programs delivered by the largest providers being supply driven. RTC's, of which there are over 30, deliver 24% of student places, largely in the form of non-accredited low-level programs. While APTC and Don Bosco together deliver 5.9%.

In the absence of a national accreditation and quality assurance body, MEHRD has had responsibility for the quality of TVET provision, but has largely limited its focus to funding TVET provision via grants and teachers wages⁵. Regulation and systematic quality assurance of TVET in the Solomon Islands is currently being introduced with the establishment of the national authority SITESA. The absence of a regulatory authority up until now is contributing to the delivery of low-quality courses, particularly by RTCs, which in turn has led to an oversupply of low capacity graduates in the labour market.

Since 2016, the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) has put in place a number of national plans and frameworks linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which include a focus on improving TVET quality and workforce outcomes. The National Development Plan (NDP) 2016-2035 is the first long-term plan set by SIG to guide socioeconomic development⁶. Ensuring Solomon Islanders have access to quality health and education, including improved access to technical and vocational education and training, is one of five key NDP objectives. Medium-term strategies for achieving TVET improvements in the NDP include:

- Equitable access for women, young people and those living with a disability to quality assured skills;
- Delivery of a new system for managing national and international scholarships that provide equitable access, and coherence with national education and labour market priorities; and,
- A new institutional and governance system is set up to ensure quality TVET and higher education are delivered and develop partnerships with the private sector and labour market.

The Education Strategic Framework 2016-2030 (ESF) is another recent SIG policy document. It aims to consolidate the establishment of a comprehensive, integrated tertiary education system which provides quality education and relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. This includes reducing gender disparity, increasing access for underrepresented target groups, extending adult literacy, and introducing lifelong learning approaches for education and training⁷.

The National Education Action Plan 2016-2020 translates the ESF's objectives into a five-year implementation plan. Specific strategies for improving TVET delivery include: establishing a new organisational structure to manage the tertiary skills sector (the new SITESA); use this new authority to manage national and international scholarships based on equitable access and labour market studies that identify industry priorities; introduce a National Qualifications Framework system through the work of the new authority; and, build TVET capacity, particularly of RTCs in the provinces, through the DFAT funded Skills 4 Economic Development⁸. The National Youth Policy for 2017-2030, developed by the Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs outlines six priority policy outcomes including employment and entrepreneurship, and education and training. This is complemented by a Strategic Framework for Youth Development and Empowerment which aims to create an institutional framework for youth development programs and promote a more unified approach to planning, programming, financing, implementation, coordination, governance and performance assessment.

³ World Bank. 2017. Solomon Islands. Systematic Country Diagnostics Priorities for Supporting Poverty Reduction and Promoting Shared Prosperity.

⁴ Asia Development Bank. 2014. Final Report USP Solomon Islands, Sector Assessment (Summary): Tertiary Education. Higher Education in the Pacific Investment Program. Accessed online at <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/204946/42291-026-sd-01.pdf> on 14/10/19.

⁵ Annex 7 Solomon Islands Skills for Economic Growth Component Design Document, July 2014.

⁶ Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination. 2016. Solomon Islands Government National Development Strategy 2016-2035. Solomon Islands Government, Honiara.

⁷ Ministry of Education Human Resource Development, Education Strategic Framework 2016-2030, Solomon Islands Government.

⁸ Information on progress in implementing this plan is not yet available.

TVET DEMAND

There is a recognised need to build demand for quality TVET both among potential students and through increased labour market demand.

The Solomon Islands has a very large and growing youth population and high rates of youth unemployment, but comparatively low levels of demand for TVET training compared to higher education. In 2017, only 26% of RTC and TVET enrolments were female highlighting there is a specific need to build demand from (and access for) women. Another issue is that participation by young people in tertiary courses appears to be more affected by the perceived status of the institution offering the program than the relevance and quality of the skills and qualification received⁹. There is a need to transform the image of TVET so it is valued alongside higher education and to build demand from prospective students for quality courses that are likely to translate into employment outcomes, rather than based on the status of the institution.

Demand for quality TVET among industry and employers is also an issue. A 2013 World Bank report identified industry's low regard for the quality of graduate from local tertiary providers¹⁰. This was reiterated more recently in consultations for Phase Three of APTC with large Solomon Islands employers who were open about their refusal to use domestic TVET systems to meet their training needs, preferring instead to send their staff offshore for training or to import qualified staff¹¹. Consultations suggest that there is also a problem with some employers preferring to engage cheap labour, with limited regard for qualifications or skill level. The general lack of standards and regulation of industries in the Solomon Islands appears to be feeding into this and will need to be addressed in order to build industry demand for quality TVET.

At the same time some employers and senior officials have recognised the need for a more capable Solomon Islander workforce and to reduce Solomon Island's reliance on foreign workers by ensuring employers have access to domestic graduates of at least equal quality¹². There are also signs that some parts of industry, particularly large employers, wish to employ qualified Solomon Islanders with sound skills. For example, consultations with the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority identified that it is looking to develop and sustain its human capital base by training a least 70 electricians by 2021. This provides an opportunity to set up an employment-based training pathway for selected school-leavers that will result in guaranteed employment.

⁹ Asia Development Bank. 2014. Final Report USP Solomon Islands, Sector Assessment (Summary): Tertiary Education. Higher Education in the Pacific Investment Program. Accessed online at <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/204946/42291-026-sd-01.pdf> on 14/10/19.

¹⁰ World Bank. (2013). Skills for Solomon Islanders. World Bank.

¹¹ From the APTC3 Investment Design Document. Accessed online at <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/Documents/aptc3-design-document.pdf> on 13/9/19.

¹² From the APTC3 Investment Design Document. Accessed online at <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/Documents/aptc3-design-document.pdf> on 13/9/19.

KEY DRIVERS/ ENABLERS OF CHANGE

Within this context the key drivers of TVET change appear to include:

Strengthening government planning, policy and systems: The need for stronger development and education and training policy with longer timeframes has been recognised. The National Development Plan together with the National Youth Policy and framework, and Education Strategic Framework are new long-term plans that identify and elevate the role of TVET and set a clear direction for TVET reform. These plans highlight the need for stronger management systems within Government Ministries and decision-making based on better information on the factors that are limiting training quality and relevance.

Civil society: Provincial and church authorities are actively working in many rural areas, including delivering training. Building on their existing capacity these stakeholders could be supported to deliver higher quality and accredited training in the many remote areas they operate in.

Large youth population: There is a large and growing youth population with changing aspirations, particularly in Honiara and provincial towns. People are looking for options for their youth, including those that keep them in the provinces. Combine this with a high degree of self-reliance among most populations in the Solomon Islands and it creates a real opportunity to develop locally tailored solutions.

Skilled Solomon Islander professionals: There is a cohort of returned and returning early level professionals who have studied overseas on scholarships and are looking for employment. Many will go into private sector, but there is an emerging group of young people wanting to work for some changes in their country, including increased self-reliance. Potentially they are a group who could contribute to areas of TVET training and reform of the sector more generally.

Provincial level development: There is renewed interest and support for the strengthening of the provincial government in SI. Associated with this is some attention to development more tailored to provincial challenges and needs. Potentially provincial level interest and energy could provide a driver for locally tailored TVET training.

Donor support and resourcing: DFAT and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have played significant roles in policy, planning, financial management and financing education and training over the last decade, and numerous other donors and NGOs are involved in particular aspects of the sector - (Refer to Annex One)¹³.

¹³ Conversely, it has been suggested that the number of international donors and organisations operating in the Solomon Islands may mean that there is an issue with over-consultation and local views not always being heard and solutions being driven by outsiders.

BARRIERS TO CHANGE

At the same time the context in Solomon Islands is particularly challenging and there are a number of barriers that could limit action for change including:

Geography: The population is relatively small and highly dispersed with 80% of the population living in rural areas in highly autonomous and very small villages (approximately 5,000). The costs of public service delivery are high and most rural areas have poor transport, logistics and communication systems. TVET in the provinces is mainly delivered by small, under-resourced RTCs.

Economic and political challenges: Solomon Islands is facing significant economic challenges due to limited industry and a reliance on extractive industries to generate economic growth. Logging has been a key source of revenue over the last decade, but it has not been managed sustainably and is now in decline. 75% of the labour force is engaged in subsistence farming, agriculture and fishing, and the economy is heavily reliant on external donor support. This may have fostered some dependency on foreign countries, which is undermining the primary role of SIG and its members in addressing the nation's development challenges who are instead focusing on local priorities.

Level and focus areas for Government investment: The SIG has limited funding for education and training, and of this, the amount directed to TVET is inadequate given the technical skills shortage in the country. This lack of investment translates into under resourced TVET providers, too few qualified trainers and not enough trainers who have practical industry experience, and poor training facilities and equipment (particularly in the provinces). The level of funding means Solomon Islander access to TVET is amongst the lowest in the Pacific and in the world¹⁴. There is also an issue with Members of Parliament increasing the amount of tertiary funds for scholarships from 9.4% for 2009-11 to 23.5% for 2015-17. While the government has an established system for identifying the areas they should be allocated to, MPs are able to personally allocate them and there is an issue with some being allocated irrespective of the merit of the student or area of study.

Limited standards and regulation of the TVET sector: The SIG is in the process of establishing the SI Tertiary Education and Skills Authority, which means that it is only just starting to work on agreed competency standards, curriculum and TVET qualifications (national or provider based), TVET standards and regulation. There is a risk of insufficient funding and resources to achieve the intended reform, as well as practical barriers such as lack of qualified trainers engagement by many training institutions.

Capacity and management limitations: Significant capacity restrictions and management gaps in MEHRD, together with a lack of resources, are identified as the reason MEHRD made minimal progress in the ESF 2007-2015 TVET goals. SIG's assessment of its performance under the 2011-2020 National Development Strategy concluded that there was slow performance in education, including declining public satisfaction, and no improvement in employment outcomes plus signs that the workforce is aging. Training providers, particularly Rural Training Centres, also lack the necessary infrastructure, human resources, and management capacity needed to deliver quality training.

Lack of coordination between TVET stakeholders: There is very limited coordination of the TVET sector across Government ministries, between government and TVET providers and among TVET providers. Oversight is weak with no lead coordinating body. There is also inadequate collaboration and communication between the TVET providers and industry, which means training isn't generally meeting their needs.

Poor perception of TVET: This is an issue both with families and communities, as well as industry and employers. TVET is considered a second option behind an academic pathway for those who cannot get a place at university. Similarly, as outlined above, there is a perception among large Solomon Island businesses that SI TVET qualifications are of low quality.

¹⁴ Asia Development Bank. 2014. Final Report USP Solomon Islands, Sector Assessment (Summary): Tertiary Education. Higher Education in the Pacific Investment Program. Accessed online at <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/204946/42291-026-sd-01.pdf> on 14/10/19.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

In this context of both enabling and inhibiting factors for change, the following contextual opportunities have been identified as particularly open to engagement by APTC and other collaborating organisations:

Labour mobility: Solomon Islanders have traditionally had limited access to international labour markets, but this situation is changing with Australia's Seasonal Worker Program (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme, and New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer program. These regional initiatives have the potential to improve employment and labour mobility outcomes, particularly for men who are much more likely to participate in these programs. Consultations for APTC3 indicated strong support from Solomon Islanders for skilled work opportunities in Australia and New Zealand.

Establishment of SITESA and course accreditation: The successful establishment of this dedicated regulatory authority to provide systematic quality assurance of TVET has the potential to make a significant difference to the sector and TVET outcomes. To date, the courses and qualifications within the National Skills Packages, including those under the draft Solomon Islands Apprenticeship and Traineeship Policy 2017, has been given interim recognition under SITESA. Progress has also been made with 15 qualifications contained within five National Skills Packages and three Accredited Courses submitted to the SITESA for "Recognition as Foreign Qualifications". These qualifications cover the primary labour demand and skills shortage industry sectors in the Solomon Islands. Standards are still being developed as part of the APTC engagement with SITESA.

Major projects and industry demand: There are several planned major construction projects, which might create opportunities to tailor and deliver TVET courses that result in employment outcomes. These include the construction of the Tina-Hydro Project, the airport development project and infrastructure for the 2023 Pacific Games. More projects are likely to arise through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific and an additional \$250m in grants funding for a bilateral program for key national and economic infrastructure. The SINU is working to leverage some of these major project opportunities by setting up TVET training in civil construction. There is also current demand from the power industry for qualified local graduates with the right mix of technical and soft skills¹⁵.

Improved ICT: The undersea fibre optic cable that is currently being built from Australia to the Solomon Islands will improve internet services, which will provide the potential for more online learning and promotion of the value of TVET through social media. It may also create demand for more employees with ICT skills.

Improved allocation of scholarships: The National Development Plan identifies the need to improve the provision of national and international scholarships so there is better alignment with labour market demands. The current scholarships model will be revisited by relevant stakeholders to ensure independence of selection and alignment with national resource development priorities.

Emerging relationships: The Solomon Islands has recently strengthened its ties with China. This new relationship, which is not based on the traditional aid donor model, will open the door for further developments and new ways of working. In particular it will open up new economic development opportunities that will need to be resourced, including with qualified workers.

¹⁵ From the APTC3 Investment Design Document. Accessed online at <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/Documents/aptc3-design-document.pdf> on 13/9/19.

APTC SOLOMON ISLANDS PROGRAM STRATEGY

APTC OBJECTIVES IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

In line with the overall purpose of APTC¹⁶, there are three end of program outcomes expected by the end of the third phase:

1. Students will take up training confident in their chosen career pathway. They will graduate with high quality skills and be seen as productive workers who will be in demand nationally and regionally by employers who will remunerate them accordingly. Graduates will also have entrepreneurial skills to set up business in the rural areas and will include women and people living with a disability.

Underpinning this outcome is the assumption that the pathways through training and between training and employment will be viable and understood. Also, that training will focus on teaching the necessary skills to the required standard so that graduates can move straight into jobs or set up their own businesses. There is an assumption that SI graduates will be sought after by employers nationally and regionally, and salary levels will increase. Implicit in this outcome is an assumption that there will be the political and economic change necessary to generate economic development pathways. Finally, the TVET system and workplaces will better understand and cater to the needs of women and people living with a disability.

2. Families and students will invest in TVET training at the same levels as for university courses. The Government will invest more in demand driven areas through more scholarships and funding to the TVET sector. Industry will be willing to contribute to TVET based on its identified training needs, including by providing more apprenticeships. Non-Government Organisations and civil society groups working on development projects, such as climate change and community development, will also invest in training their staff.

Achieving this outcome assumes that sufficient improvements can be demonstrated in TVET quality so that families and employers see it as a high-quality option. It also assumes that it is possible to influence government to allocate more resources to TVET and to influence MPs so that scholarships are increasingly provided on merit and in areas of labour market demand. Another assumption is that the priorities of industry, as well as NGOs and civil society groups, will be understood so that effective strategies that incentivise employers to engage and invest in local people can be designed.

3. TVET delivery by providers will be at a consistently high standard, enabling students to move between provincial and Honiara based providers and courses. TVET providers will be well resourced and managed. They will employ quality trainers who have the skills and practical industry experience to deliver courses to professional standards. TVET providers will be supported by industry to design and delivery quality training.

Achieving this outcome assumes that SITESA will be successfully established and able to implement a national accreditation system and that TVET providers will be willing to work within this system and to national standards. It also assumes there will be adequate resources for providers, including to strengthen their management capacity, and they will have access to a pool of sufficiently qualified and competent trainers. Finally, achieving this outcome assumes collaboration between the TVET sector and industry based on a commitment to producing skilled graduates, which industry is willing to employ at appropriate levels.

¹⁶ The APTC Phase 3 purpose is - The skills and attributes available to employers from TVET systems align with labour market requirements.

APTC APPROACH

Taking into account the complex Solomon Island context, APTC will work with a range of stakeholders to bring about change towards its intended outcomes. It will recognise the current drivers and work with others to address the key barriers and take advantage of key opportunities. APTC will be one player within the wider system and seek to leverage broader change through its relationships and collaborations with others.

Making use of existing resources and in line with the overall program approach APTC will work, together with other interested Solomon Islands TVET stakeholders, using the following core strategies¹⁷ :

Deliver Quality TVET Programs

- Continue to deliver quality TVET programs to appropriate standards and document and share these examples with SIG, donors and TVET providers to build confidence in the TVET system.
- Build capability and capacity in the RTCs and other training institutions to support their delivery of quality TVET programs.

Coordination and Collaboration

- Establish a TVET sector coordination and planning committee for national qualifications, potentially made up of SIG, SITESA, industry, TVET providers, NGOs and donors.
- Collaborate with programs and projects that support access for women to training and business opportunities.

Establish TVET Standards

- Collaborate with SITESA to become fully established by supporting its capacity development and promoting understanding of and compliance with this new authority by TVET providers.
- Support the development of TVET standards and qualifications.

Work with Industry

- Facilitate collaboration with industry and employers to ensure TVET training is providing the skills required by the labour market currently and into the future.

Advocacy on Government Resourcing

- Undertake an analysis of the economic value of TVET training to inform the Solomon Islands Government and influence it to increase funding to the sector.
- Advocate to the SIG to fund and direct scholarships to demand areas and to introduce other incentives such as student loans and tax breaks for employers who support employees through training.

TVET Promotion

- Improve the perception of TVET with families, communities and employers by designing and implementing a TVET communication strategy.

¹⁷ APTC will lead on a subset of these agreed strategies, as well as add value through collaborating with other interested stakeholders leading on the remaining ones.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation will focus on changes achieved in three outcome areas with particular attention to the following:

- How the establishment and operation of SITESA, working in close collaboration with key partners, furthers the development of TVET standards and improves graduate outcomes.
- Partnerships and engagement with industry and the extent to which this helps shape industry demand for skilled graduates, quality curriculum and training, and increased opportunities for graduate employment.
- Collaborative and strategic advocacy for the value of TVET based on analysis of its economic value and the extent to which this influences government, families, communities and industry towards further support for the sector.
- The extent to which there is increased political support from SIG and the narrative of individual MPs and Solomon Island leaders is changing about the value of TVET value and its priority for national development.
- Economic and regional development opportunities and how well the Solomon Islands is engaged with these to its benefit.



Outcomes

Graduates have high quality skills, are productive and high in demand Nationally & Regionally

Government, Families and Students invest more in High Demand TVET training

TVET delivery at consistently high standards by well resourced & managed TVET Providers



Strategies

Work with Industry

Establish TVET Standards

Deliver Quality TVET Programs

Advocacy on Government Resourcing

Coordination & Collaboration

Advocacy on Government Resourcing



Assumptions

Priorities of Industry, NGOs & Civil Society groups will be understood so that effective strategies that incentivise employers to engage and invest in local people can be designed.

There will be adequate resources for providers, including to strengthen their management capacity with access to a pool of sufficiently qualified and competent trainers.

Collaboration between TVET sector & Industry based on a commitment to producing skilled graduates which industry is willing to employ at appropriate levels.

SITESA will be successfully established and able to implement a National Accreditation system that TVET providers can work with.

Graduates will be sought after by employers nationally and regionally, and salary levels will increase.

Pathways between Training and Employment will be viable and understood.



TVET system and workplaces will better understand and cater to the needs of women & PLWDs.

There will be the Political and Economic change necessary to generate economic development pathways.

There will be the Political and Economic change necessary to generate economic development pathways including possibility of influencing government to allocate resources to TVET.

Training will focus on teaching the necessary skills to the required standard that enable graduates to move straight into employment or set up their own businesses.

Sufficient improvements demonstrated in TVET quality so that it becomes a viable option for families & employers.

PRINCIPLES

Focus on Rural Areas, Women & PLWD

Focus on growing youth population

Focus on Entrepreneurial skills

TVET Advocacy for Political Will

Enablers and Disablers for Success

DRIVERS



Strengthening government planning, policy & systems: National Development plan & Education Strategic Framework identify & elevate role of TVET with clear direction for reform.

Large Youth population: The large & growing youth population combined with a high degree of self-reliance amongst most populations in the Solomon's creates an opportunity to develop local solutions.

Provincial level Development: The renewed interest and support for provincial government and associated development tailor-made to provincial challenges/needs is a driver for locally tailored TVET training.

Civil Society: Building on existing capacity of provincial & church authorities active in rural areas, including training delivery in remote areas they operate in.

Skilled Solomon Islander professionals: Cohort of returned & returning early level professionals who were studying overseas are looking for employment could potentially contribute to areas of TVET training & reform.

Donor support & resourcing: DFAT & MFAT have significant roles in policy, planning & financial management and financing education over the last decade with numerous other donors & NGOs in certain aspects of TVET.

OPPORTUNITIES



Labour Mobility: Australia's Seasonal Worker Program (SWP), Pacific Labour Scheme & New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer program are regional initiatives with potential to improve employment and labour mobility outcomes, particularly for men.

Establishment of SITESA & Course Accreditation: To provide systematic quality assurance of TVET. The courses & qualifications within the National Skills Packages given interim recognition & accreditation under SITESA.

Major Projects & Industry Demand: Several planned major construction projects which might create opportunities to tailor & deliver TVET courses that result in employment outcomes including infrastructure for the 2023 Pacific Games.

Improved ICT: Undersea fibre optic cable currently being built from Australia to the Solomons will improve internet services providing potential for more online learning & promotion of value of TVET through social media.

Improved allocation of scholarships: National Development Plan identifies need to improve provision of National & International scholarships so there is better alignment with labour market demands.

Emerging Relationships: The recent ties with China with SIG will open doors for further developments, resourcing (including qualified workers) and new ways of working.

BARRIERS



Geography: Population is relatively small & highly dispersed with 80% of population living in rural areas. High cost of public services (poor transport, logistics & communication systems). TVET in provinces delivered by small, under-resourced RTCs.

Capacity & Management Limitations: Significant capacity & management gaps in MEHRD & lack of resources identified for its minimal progress in ESF 2007-2015 TVET goals.

Lack of Coordination Between TVET Partners: And across Govt. Ministries; between government and TVET providers and among TVET providers. Inadequate collaboration between TVET providers & Industry.

Poor Perception of TVET: TVET is second option for families behind academic option and perception among businesses that SI TVET qualifications are of low quality.

Economic & Political Challenges: Economy is heavily reliant on external donor support which may have fostered dependency on foreign countries, undermining the role of SIG in addressing nation's development challenges.

Level & Focus Areas for Govt. Investment Due to limited funding by SIG for education & training, funding for TVET inadequate resulting in under-resourced TVET providers, lack of qualified trainers, poor training facilities & equipment (esp. in provinces).

Limited standards & regulation of TVET sector: SIG is in process of establishing SITESA meaning it's still in early stages of working on TVET standards & regulation therefore contributing to risk of insufficient funding & resources to achieve intended reform.

Annex One: Recent and ongoing donor support for technical and further education and training in Solomon Islands ¹⁸

DONOR	SUB-SECTOR	INVESTMENT/ AGREEMENT/ ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES / KEY ACTIVITY
Australian Government (DFAT)			
Education	Education Sector Support Program Up to \$71 million, 2015-2019	The Education Support Program builds on high primary education enrolment rates to improve the literacy and numeracy of primary school students. Australia supported a Solomon Islands Government initiative to remove school fees and provide grants to schools, which is helping more than 150,000 young Solomon Islanders get an education. Australia will also assist Solomon Islands to develop a new national qualifications framework and its own vocational and educational system with nationally and internationally recognised qualifications. Australia will also support skills training so that young Solomon Islanders will be better placed to get jobs. Through the Australia Awards program, Australia offers 30 tertiary scholarships each year in Solomon Islands targeting human resource gaps. In 2015, half were awarded to women despite fewer women applying than men and seven women commenced study in traditionally male dominated fields of law, information technology and business systems. Priority areas are health, education, engineering and construction, economics, business, accounting and finance, information technology, law, agricultural science, fisheries and community/youth development.	
New Zealand Government (MFAT)			
Education	NZ Development Cooperation with Solomon Islands	New Zealand has been a lead donor in the education sector since 2004. Current activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to improve literacy and numeracy, and school management and leadership. 	
World Bank			
Employment	Rapid Employment Project, 2011-2018	The Rapid Employment Project aimed to assist targeted vulnerable urban populations in Honiara to: (i) increase their incomes through the provision of short term employment; (ii) improve their knowledge, experience and basic skills that are valued in the workplace and society that are valued in the workplace and society; and (iii) improve their access to services and markets through repaired, more climate resilient roads and access infrastructure.	
Japan			
Education/Training	Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP)	Japan's GGP aims to aid self-supporting socio-economic development activities that benefit sectors at the grassroots level. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Building and repairing school buildings in rural areas and schools with poor educational environments. (b) Building and repairing training centre buildings for human resource development and community development. 	

¹⁸ From the ATPC3 Investment Design Document. Accessed at <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/Documents/aptc3-design-document.pdf> on 14/8/19.

PACIFIC REGIONAL

DONOR	SUB-SECTOR	INVESTMENT/ AGREEMENT/ ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES / KEY ACTIVITY
Australian Government (DFAT)			
TVET/Skills development	APTC Phase 3	As Australia's flagship TVET investment in the Pacific region, APTC works collaboratively with national governments, development partners, the private sector, organisations for people living with disabilities, civil society organisations and Pacific TVET institutions regionally and across nine Pacific Island countries to support skills development and the improved quality of Pacific TVET systems. APTC activities in Solomon Islands include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 additional qualifications delivered through the bilateral skills program. • Training partnerships with infrastructure development projects and key employers established. • Mentoring and capability development in vocational trades and competency-based training, delivery and assessment for eight TVET training providers (SINU, DBTI & 6 RTCs). • Establishment of flexible learning centres for skills development in the provinces in partnership with training providers, SIAVRTC, MEHRD and SITESA. • Establishment of SITESA and governance arrangements developed for the same. • National qualifications framework and quality standards developed in partnership with SITESA. • National TVET strategy developed in conjunction with MEHRD. • Training and refresher courses delivered by APTC and through co-investment partnerships to prepare Solomon Islanders to work in Australia as part of labour mobility schemes. • GESI principles reinforced with co-investment partners in the skills sector in Solomon Islands. 	
Education	Partnership with Educational Quality and Assessment Program (EQAP) \$2.13 million, 2016-2018	EQAP is the regional institution mandated to improve education quality in the Pacific. Situated in the Pacific Community (SPC), EQAP provides a range of services to member countries such as regional assessments of literacy and numeracy, and support to national education assessments and education management information systems. Australia is a long-term partner of EQAP and provides funding towards implementation of EQAP's Business Plan.	
Education	University of the South Pacific Partnership 2014-2018, \$70 million	The USP-Government of Australia Partnership is aligned with the USP Strategic Plan 2013-2018 and is focused on achieving improved outcomes in Learning and Teaching, Research, Information and Communication Technology, and Regional Engagement. DFAT is designing the next phase of support to commence in early 2019.	
Scholarships	Australia Awards	Australia Awards Scholarships and Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships contribute to human resource development in the Solomon Islands by providing opportunities for Solomon Islanders to undertake vocational, graduate and postgraduate study in Australia and the Pacific. In 2019, Australia awarded 38 new scholarships to Solomon Islands students to study at universities in Australia.	
Employment	Seasonal Worker Program (Department of Education, Skills and Employment)	Australia's Seasonal Worker Program connects Pacific island workers with Australian employers experiencing labour shortages, typically in rural and remote areas. Since 2012, 937 Solomon Islands workers (103 women and 834 men) have participated in the SWP.	
Employment	Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme	The Pacific Labour Scheme commenced on 1st July 2018. Building on the success of the Seasonal Worker Program, the new Scheme will help meet business demand across all sectors in rural and regional Australia. Since commencing, 154 Solomon Islands workers have participated in the scheme, with the majority working in meat processing and fishing/aquaculture.	

Employment	Pacific Labour Facility	<p>The Pacific Labour Facility (the Facility) connects Australian employers with Pacific workers and supports the administration of the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). It also provides targeted support for the Department of Jobs and Small Business (DJSB) led Seasonal Worker Program (SWP). The Facility commenced in October 2018 and is focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the quality of training and flow of workers to Australia. • Promote the PLS with Australian employers. • Provide support services for Pacific workers in Australia and support their return to local communities and economies. • Monitor the social and economic impacts of Australia's labour mobility arrangements.
Employment/ Livelihoods	Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development	<p>Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development aims to improve opportunities for the political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. One of the four outcomes sought by the program is 'Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets'. Activities under this area in Solomon Islands include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Empowering Women is Smart Business (Waka Mere) program engaged with the private sector to address gender inequalities in the labour market (International Finance Corporation, 2016–2019). • The Innovative Approaches to Increasing Women's Access to Markets (World Bank Group, 2016–2018) project researched the constraints to, and effective measures for, increasing women's participation and productivity in agricultural value chains. • Do No Harm: Understanding the Relationship between Women's Economic Empowerment and Violence against Women in Melanesia (Australian National University and International Women's Development Agency). • Research on how to support women's economic advancement without increasing their exposure to violence in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands and development of guidelines for women's economic empowerment programs (2016–2018). • Improving market governance, management, infrastructure and access to financial services to increase women's economic empowerment and ensuring markets are more sustainable, accessible and safe for women vendors in Honiara, Auki and Gizo in Solomon Islands (Markets for Change, UN Women, 2014–2019).
Technical assistance	Australian Volunteers International	<p>The Australian Volunteers Program matches a broad range of skilled Australians with partner organisations in the Indo-Pacific region, to support them to achieve their own development goals. In 2018, there were 46 Australian volunteers in Solomon Islands. Volunteer assignments focus on a range of development issues, such as health, sustained economic growth, education, governance, and family protection.</p>
New Zealand		
Education	Support for EQAP	<p>The Educational Quality and Assessment Program (EQAP) at the Pacific Community (SPC) is a valued and respected partner working across the Pacific region to raise the quality of education. As the key technical agency in the region for education, EQAP supports the development of assessment practice, curriculum and teacher standards, and the effective use of data across the Pacific.</p> <p>We are working with Australia to jointly provide broad-based support for EQAP and their work. This is envisaged as a ten-year partnership and we have committed NZD\$5m in base funding for the first three years.</p>
Education	E-learning for Science in Pacific Schools	<p>Design of a program to address the shortage of teaching expertise in science through an e-learning initiative.</p>
Scholarships	New Zealand Scholarships	<p>Full scholarships to study in New Zealand or at a Pacific university.</p>

Scholarships	New Zealand Short Term Training Scholarships	New Zealand Short Term Training Scholarships fund skills training and work experience for professionals from eligible Pacific countries and Timor-Leste for between a minimum of one week and up to 12 months. Scholarships are available for technical or vocational study; non-formal courses; a work placement; Diploma programs; and certain maritime courses.
Employment	Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme	The Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme (RSE) allows New Zealand employers in the horticulture and viticulture industries to employ up to 12,850 migrant workers for up to seven months each year. MFAT supports Pacific Island countries to maximise participation in the RSE scheme by funding the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to deliver capacity-building activities that improve worker selection, recruitment processes and pre-departure programs. While in New Zealand, RSE workers have access to additional training (such as English language, financial management, and business development) through Vakameasina: the RSE Worker Training Program, delivered by Fruition Limited.
Employment	New Labour Mobility Initiatives	MFAT funds the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to pilot and implement labour mobility initiatives in sectors beyond horticulture and viticulture, and to build the capacity of Pacific island countries to recruit and prepare their workers for New Zealand. The Pacific Trades Partnership is one new initiative that offers trained Pacific carpenters and hammer-hands the opportunity to work in New Zealand's construction industry. A labour mobility fisheries pilot is also underway, offering opportunities for graduates of the Pacific marine training centres to work on New Zealand fishing vessels.
Japan		
Scholarships	Pacific Leaders' Educational Assistance for Development of State (Pacific-LEADS), 2016-2018	Pacific-LEADS aims to foster young leaders who play a vital role towards the resolution of development challenges in Pacific Island countries. Between 2016 and 2018, 120 government officials from 14 Pacific nations received scholarships to undertake Masters study in Japan.
UK		
Education	Scholarships	Chevening scholarships are available for postgraduate studies in any subject at any UK university.
ADB		
Education/Skills development	University of the South Pacific: Higher Education in the Pacific Investment Program 2012-2022	The program sought to support USP in expanding access to higher education in its 12 member Pacific island countries by improving physical environments and learning programs. The program aimed to strengthen USP's regional role and support its four priority areas: (i) improvement and expansion of the USP regional campuses and accommodation facilities in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, and Fiji, (ii) enhancement of information and communication technology (ICT)-based learning programs and curricula; (iii) improvement of USP student services; and (iv) improvement of USP governance and management systems.



HOW TVET CHANGE HAPPENS

SOLOMON ISLANDS

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

SOLOMON ISLANDS JULY 2019

