

# Solomon Islands



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SABER Country Report

2014

### Status

#### Strategic Framework

Solomon Islands is in the midst of developing a set of policies, strategic plans, and frameworks that will enable the education and training system to better respond to the country's economic and social development goals. These have not yet been operationalized. The activities of Solomon Islands' ministries and agencies are often fragmented. However, there are signs of increasing coherence and *ad-hoc* collaboration in the government's approach to WfD, especially in the development of strategic plans. Other stakeholders are not consistently active in strategic WfD initiatives, some of which may potentially be curtailed by the lack of legal provisions for stakeholder involvement.



#### System Oversight

Procedures for allocating funds to education and training providers do not take into account performance or efficiency. The education and training system lacks a national qualifications framework and a process for approval of qualifications and of training providers. Such processes are currently being developed and build on intermittent success in setting standards and competency-based testing in a limited number of occupations. Pathways available for students to pursue vocational education and training are limited, and progression to further study is challenging. There have been no significant system-wide efforts to facilitate the recognition of prior learning or provide a broader set of services for adult education and occupational development.



#### Service Delivery

A range of non-state providers are active in the training market; however, the number and breadth of these providers is unknown, leaving the government with limited ability to manage the quality of education and training provision. The government does not require any providers (both public and private) to meet implicit or explicit quality standards or performance targets, nor does it provide financial or non-financial incentives for provider performance. Links with industry and opportunities for staff professional development vary across providers. The collection and use of data from providers for managing performance and informing policy development is limited.



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## Executive Summary

Solomon Islands is a lower middle-income country that has achieved considerable gains in development and macroeconomic stability in recent years. Since the end of the conflict in 2003, rapid growth recovery has been driven by an influx of aid and a logging boom.

However, economic growth has not kept up with the high population growth rate of 2.1 percent annually,<sup>1</sup> and revenues – including from natural resources – have not been distributed evenly among Solomon Islanders. New challenges include uncertainty in future aid and the expected exhaustion of the logging stocks on which Solomon Islands has relied for government revenue, exports, and employment.

Formal public and private sector growth in Solomon Islands will not be sufficient to provide opportunities for the roughly 10,000 new entrants to the labor force each year, making informal sector opportunities and productivity vital.<sup>2</sup> This presents an important social problem, as low absorption of school leavers into formal employment was an important factor in civil unrest in 1999-2003 and 2006.

Solomon Islands' youth bulge is a major consideration in employment policy and expenditure. Given limited formal employment, and to an even greater extent than other Pacific Island countries, education and employment systems that support opportunities in the transition from subsistence agriculture to livelihoods will be important for the majority of Solomon Islanders. Education and training systems need to prepare Solomon Islanders for the job opportunities which are available in formal and informal business, and at

home and overseas. Solomon Islands could benefit much more from employment opportunities in labor mobility, as while Tonga and Samoa regularly gain over 30 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) from overseas remittances, Solomon Islands gains only 0.3 percent.

Furthermore, while levels of education expenditure (at 20 to 25 percent of budget) is consistent with both recognized international good practice on education expenditure and levels in other Pacific Island countries, budget allocations are significantly skewed to a small minority of students in tertiary education. Tertiary education spending also faces considerable efficiency problems and lack of incentives for improved performance. Education and training expenditure does not adequately benefit the majority of Solomon Islanders. Most notably, despite an estimated 80 percent of the population being functionally illiterate, Solomon Islands is one of the eight lowest funders of adult literacy in the world.

In response to these challenges, Solomon Islands has embarked on a set of important strategic initiatives to create a favorable environment for addressing the importance of skills to economic and human development including (i) the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), (ii) reform of tertiary education and training, and (iii) the creation of coordinating bodies to better link education and training to the labor market.

Solomon Islands has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the strength of its workforce development (WfD) policies and institutions to support these initiatives and enhance evidence-based dialogue on their implementation. This assessment has been based on the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) systems benchmarking initiative, under which a suite of analytical tools have been

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, 2010.

developed for important education subsectors, including WfD.

## The Findings

Solomon Islands is rated at the **Emerging** level<sup>3</sup> for the Strategic Framework dimension, achieving its highest score across the three dimensions. Solomon Islands has a number of recently developed policies, strategic plans, and frameworks. To date, practical implementation of these has been limited, and government coordination to implement strategies still requires strengthening. Useful analysis is available on workforce development (WfD) constraints, and recent initiatives like the National Human Resource Development and Training Plan (NHRDTP) have started to define formal roles and responsibilities for government entities. A strengthened WfD strategy and its effective implementation require stronger political leadership, consistent engagement by policy makers on agreed coordination mechanisms, and increased participation and advocacy by employers on training needs and standards.

The System Oversight dimension is rated as **Latent**. The rating is based on the fact that (i) no key processes are currently in place for the quality assurance of qualifications within the education and training system; and (ii) the several subsectors of tertiary education and training are disconnected, resulting in limited opportunities for those trying to progress through the system. There is strong government support for tertiary education and training, but relative to the size of the population, the number of places available at tertiary institutions is limited. Scholarship processes are of varying credibility, but are the subject of policy reform during 2014. In the absence of consolidated information from schools on administration and

funding usage, the system is currently not able to effectively manage resources to promote efficiency in public expenditure on education and training. Development of a Solomon Islands Qualifications Framework (SIQF) will be important for strengthening system oversight.

The Service Delivery dimension is rated as **Emerging**. There are a range of formal and non-formal non-state providers active in the training market across Solomon Islands' provinces, responding to strong demand for training from a large youth population. The government does not require any providers, state or non-state, to meet implicit or explicit quality standards or performance targets, nor does it provide financial or non-financial incentives for provider performance. There is no consolidated administrative data from education and training providers for the analysis of provider performance and system trends or to inform policy. Sources of data on labor market outcomes are limited to a few *ad-hoc* skills-related surveys or studies. Finally, there is no consolidated information on the nature, extent, and quality of provision in the tertiary education sector in the Solomon Islands.

## Next steps

Solomon Islands is facing some key challenges in relation to workforce development. Based on the SABER-WfD assessment, there are some areas requiring priority attention, which Solomon Islands government agencies, employers, and training providers can prioritize to implement programs for better employment outcomes:

### 1. Solomon Islands' leaders need to define the skills required for participatory economic development

An emergent priority for realizing implementation is strong leadership from political leaders to enable action to be taken and coordinated. The SABER

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to Figure 2 on page 12 for a summary of the levels in the SABER-WfD scoring rubric, and Annex 6 for a full description of the rating criteria for each policy goal assessed.

analysis of Solomon Islands' WfD system shows that public servants and individuals from education, training providers, and industry are taking the lead in WfD, and not political leaders. SABER-WfD results from advanced countries show that sustained system improvement is almost impossible without clearly articulated strategic priorities from the country's political leadership. Officers at the technical level can submit for Cabinet approval budgeted NHRDTP policy commitments and resource requirements for priority implementation. However, ownership and active support from political leaders will be essential to sustain progress made under employment initiatives and overcoming institutional barriers to implementation. In the medium term, day-to-day responsibility for coordination in implementing WfD policy can be a shared priority of the newly formed National Human Resource Development Training Council (NHRDTC) and the proposed Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC). Advice and briefings from technical officers can support political leaders to drive employment initiatives and overcome institutional barriers.

## **2. Policy makers need to sustain coordination and regularly participate in agreed meetings**

Solomon Islands has multiple policies, plans, and strategies in place that have not seen practical implementation. A key constraint has been the ability to sustain coordinated participation in agreed meetings across policy makers in key agencies. Regular and empowered participation in meetings to define skills policies and program allocations is needed. This needs to be supported by timelines and secretariat resources from central coordinating agencies such as the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) and the NHRDTC. A consistent link between coordinating functions such as the NHRDTC and budget allocations (including Development Budget, Tertiary Education funding,

and possibly Constituency Funds) will both help maintain participation and make full use of the important opportunity for coordination.

## **3. Employers need to participate at the strategy and governance levels of the WfD system to guide education and training policy and standards**

Strengthened coordination among the government agencies, employer groups, and training providers making up Solomon Islands' WfD system is vital for establishing pathways leading Solomon Islanders to employment either domestically or internationally. Stronger engagement by industry, including through employer associations, is needed to drive WfD strategy and a demand-driven approach to education and training provision. Practically, this requires active participation and representation by employer groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in coordination structures such as the NHRDTC, and in the future the SITEC and the Solomon Islands Qualifications Authority (SIQA). In addition, employers in specific industry sectors need to lead the development of competency standards to form the basis of qualifications under the SIQF.

## **4. Policy makers should develop a strategy to support the informal economy including skills development for livelihoods**

Given that many Solomon Islanders will make their living in the informal economy, it cannot be left out of a comprehensive WfD strategy. Evidence from other countries shows that the informal economy has proven effective in creating jobs, absorbing new labor market entrants, and fostering entrepreneurs, and often offers a better standard of living than subsistence farming and fishing.<sup>4</sup> At present, there

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, 2012. *Improving Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa*.

is little information available on the activity of informal businesses, what types of people they employ, and the barriers they face in growing and transitioning to formality. How these firms rely on the formal education and training system is also not well understood. A first step to improving productivity and incomes in the informal economy is to better understand the characteristics of informal businesses and the constraints that they face, and identify key strategies and programs to support the informal economy, including skills building for livelihoods. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI) could take the lead in developing this strategy and key programs within NHRDTC.

**5. Build stronger pathways connecting the pre-employment education and training system, including recognition of prior learning (RPL) as a key component in the SIQF**

Within the tertiary education and training sector, there is considerable disconnect between the non-formal, TVET and higher education subsectors. In addition, pathways through informal or formal means are limited as there is little opportunity for RPL or second chance opportunities to gain skills. Increased coordination between relevant ministries and agencies and training providers should help alleviate these issues. Work has recently been undertaken to develop an NQF and associated quality assurance arrangements. Until it is established, pathways between institutions and procedures for RPL will remain limited. Mechanisms for RPL can be integrated into current work being undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) with Australian support to develop the SIQF and accompanying legislation. The SIQF should define and emphasize the key role of RPL.

Skills development for informal livelihoods needs to be included in the WfD strategy and resourcing, due

to their relevance to the majority of Solomon Islanders. Recognition of prior or informal learning (adult literacy and livelihoods training), remedial education, and expanded support to community-based training are priorities that can increase access to employment and recognized education and training credentials for the majority of the population. MEHRD, and in the medium term the proposed SITEC and SIQA, should be responsible for (i) working with training providers (formal and informal) to identify and take action on priorities to improve access to employment, such as certificate recognition, information sharing between institutions, and development of joint programs; and (ii) providing multiple exit points within qualifications (e.g., embed lower-level qualifications in higher-level qualifications through modular curriculum).

**6. Include robust quality standards in the SIQF to ensure Solomon Islands qualifications are valued.**

Quality matters if qualifications are to have any value to trainees, or if employers are to invest resources or time in the WfD system. A two-step process of registration of providers is suggested so that all interested providers can be listed with the regulator and supported with resources from government, development partners, and employers to develop capacity to meet the full quality standards. Providers such as Vocational Rural Training Centers (VRTCs) will require resources for capacity development to meet quality standards over time. Measures to support compliance with quality standards will be required, including through incentive-based allocation of funds (as per Recommendation 7). Integration of robust quality standards in the SIQF will require training providers to engage with employers to ensure that education and training programs are current and appropriate.

## **7. Introduce basic incentive and efficiency measures for tertiary education and training funding**

Resources are a constraint to supplying an adequate level of education and training. It is essential that such limited resources for tertiary education and training are used increasingly efficiently. Development of the SIQF alone will be insufficient to improve the quantity and quality of education and training delivered.

Tertiary education and training providers need incentive-based funding. MEHRD's Tertiary Education Division, and in the medium term SITEC could develop—or seek technical advice to develop—proposals for new funding arrangements based on evidence of employment needs and student performance. This could include a base level of regular funding with the addition of grants based on performance against key criteria such as enrollment, completion, and employment outcomes. Given the current limited supply of trainers, private training provision provides an important opportunity to expand and broaden training to meet the significant demand. However, private training provision needs to be regulated, recognized, and encouraged through similar incentive-based programs.

More equitable funding will not be realized until fiscal management of tertiary scholarships is improved. At present, such scholarships (almost all of which are for higher education qualifications—i.e., degree level and above) take up a large proportion of the budget envelope. The proposed Education Act includes rationalization of scholarships to realistic employment needs and merit-based selection, greater control measures on expenditure, and an additional focus on TVET scholarships.

The government also needs to consider how to address identified funding gaps, particularly for continuing vocational education, employment services programs, and VRTCs, which currently have to rely on other sources of income, such as student fees and sale of products, to be self-sustaining, despite being provided with some financial support from the government. Drawing on existing analysis and recommendations and potentially additional technical advice, responsibility for proposing new funding arrangements for efficiency and incentivizing quality would sit with MEHRD and in the medium term with the proposed SITEC.

## **8. Invest in the capacity to measure education and training performance and jobs demand**

The current accountability systems are weak; there is no consolidation of education and training data to analyze provider performance and system trends or to inform policy. Better administrative data could include enrollments, completion rates, student satisfaction, and employment outcome data. With better quality education and training data collection, relevant agencies would be able to strengthen the management, oversight, and quality of training delivery and have the ability to introduce performance-based funding mechanisms.

It is critical to address the general lack of labor market data. A practical and sustainable labor market information system needs to be established to regularly provide information on labor market demand to government, training providers, job seekers, and employers. The MDPAC and MCILI have prepared initial steps to allocate staff positions or recruit national consultants, supported by the Development Budget, to undertake this data coordination role. Implementing procedures to measure the performance of tertiary education and training providers can be undertaken as part of the current MEHRD and development partner strengthening of Solomon Islands' Education

Management Information System (SIEMIS). In the medium to long term, the accountability measures of education and training performance will rest with the proposed future SITEC.

A summary of the WfD actions for Solomon Islands is included in Annex 1.

## 1. Introduction

The Government of Solomon Islands and its development partners place a high priority on public investment in skills formation. Almost a quarter of the annual government budget is spent on education and training, supplemented by significant donor and civil society investment. Yet there is concern about the results of this important investment. While primary school enrollment is high, estimated rates of functional literacy are low, even among those completing Grade 6. Moreover, while there is high youth unemployment and inactivity, employers report difficulties in recruiting suitably skilled employees. This skills shortage constrains employers from growing their businesses or employing more young Solomon Islanders.

In response to these challenges, Solomon Islands has embarked on a set of important new initiatives, including (i) the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), (ii) reform of tertiary education and training, and (iii) the creation of coordinating bodies to better link education and training to the labor market.

To inform policy dialogue on these important issues, this report presents a comprehensive diagnostic of the country's WfD policies and institutions. The results are based on a new World Bank tool designed for this purpose. Known as SABER-WfD, the tool is part of the World Bank's initiative on Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER),<sup>5</sup> which aims to provide systematic documentation and assessment of the policy and institutional factors that influence the performance of education and training systems. The SABER-WfD tool encompasses initial, continuing, and targeted vocational education and training that are offered through multiple channels, and focuses largely on

programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

In Solomon Islands, the SABER-WfD tool was implemented in close consultation with key WfD stakeholders, who provided and vetted the information used for the analysis. Previous assessments—several of which were donor-commissioned and/or not widely disseminated or consulted on—laid a solid information base and displayed valuable analysis (see Table 4, page 47 for a list of these assessments). Building on these assessments, SABER-WfD data collection efforts provided a forum for systematic and broad-based discussions about the state of WfD policies and institutions with Solomon Islanders active in the sector. Both the process of carrying out the SABER-WfD assessment and this report are intended to strengthen the existing deliberative processes on the major system reforms.

**The tool is based on an analytical framework<sup>6</sup>** that identifies three functional dimensions of WfD policies and institutions:

- (1) *Strategic framework*, which refers to the praxis of high-level advocacy, partnership, and coordination, typically across traditional sectoral boundaries, in relation to the objective of aligning WfD in critical areas to priorities for national development;
- (2) *System Oversight*, which refers to the arrangements governing funding, quality assurance, and learning pathways that shape the incentives and information signals affecting the choices of individuals, employers, training providers, and other stakeholders; and

<sup>5</sup> For details on SABER see <http://www.worldbank.org/education/saber>; for acronyms used in this report, see Annex 4.

<sup>6</sup> For an explanation of the SABER-WfD framework see Tan et al 2013.

(3) *Service Delivery*, which refers to the diversity, organization, and management of training provision, both state and non-state, that deliver results on the ground by enabling individuals to acquire market- and job-relevant skills.

Taken together, these three dimensions allow for systematic analysis of the functioning of a WfD system as a whole. The focus in the SABER-WfD framework is on the institutional structures and

practices of public policymaking and what they reveal about capacity in the system to conceptualize, design, coordinate, and implement policies in order to achieve results on the ground.

Each dimension is composed of three Policy Goals that correspond to important functional aspects of WfD systems (see Figure 1). Policy Goals are further broken down into discrete Policy Actions and Topics that reveal more detail about the system.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1: Functional Dimensions and Policy Goals in the SABER-WfD Framework



Source: Tan et al 2013

<sup>7</sup> See Annex 5 for an overview of the structure of the framework.

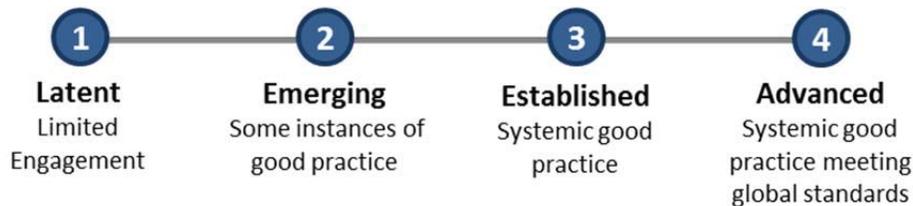
### Implementing the Analysis

Information for the analysis is gathered using a structured SABER-WfD Data Collection Instrument (DCI). The instrument is designed to collect, to the extent possible, facts rather than opinions about WfD policies and institutions. For each Topic, the DCI poses a set of multiple choice questions which are answered based on documentary evidence and interviews with knowledgeable informants. The answers allow each Topic to be scored on a four-point scale against standardized rubrics based on available knowledge on global good practice (See

Figure 2).<sup>8</sup> Topic scores are averaged to produce Policy Goal scores, which are then aggregated into dimension scores.<sup>9</sup> The results are finalized following validation by the relevant national counterparts, including the informants themselves.

The rest of this report summarizes the key findings of the SABER-WfD assessment and also presents the detailed results for each of the three functional dimensions. To put the results into context, the report begins below with a brief profile of the country’s socioeconomic makeup.

**Figure 2: SABER-WfD Scoring Rubrics**



Source: Tan et al 2013.

<sup>8</sup> See Annex 6 for the rubrics used to score the data. As in other countries, the data are gathered by a national principal investigator and his or her team, based on the sources indicated in Annex 7, and they are scored by the World Bank’s SABER-WfD team. See Annex 8 for the detailed scores and Annex 9 for a list of those involved in data gathering, scoring and validation, and report writing.

<sup>9</sup> Since the composite scores are averages of the underlying scores, they are rarely whole numbers. For a given composite score, X, the conversion to the categorical rating shown on the cover is based on the following rule: 1.00 ≤ X ≤ 1.75 converts to “Latent”; 1.75 < X ≤ 2.50, to “Emerging”; 2.50 < X ≤ 3.25, to “Established”; and 3.25 < X ≤ 4.00, to “Advanced.”

## 2. Country Context

### Overview

Solomon Islands, situated in the south-west Pacific Ocean, is a lower middle-income country that has been an independent parliamentary democracy since 1978. In the late-1990s, Solomon Islands suffered significant civil unrest, marked by ethnic tension, which erupted into open confrontations in 1998 between two militant forces. Stabilization strategies included the government signing the Townsville Peace Agreement with the two militia groups in October 2000 and the establishment of a Regional Assistance Mission in the Solomon Islands in 2003 to help restore peace and order. Additional periods of unrest have occurred in 2006 and 2010.

The conflicts have had significant economic and human costs. A 2004 survey of Honiara market places found that around 73 percent of respondents had experienced direct personal trauma from the impacts of the tensions. Unknown numbers of people died during the conflict, at least 35,000 people were displaced, and the disruption to education and health services resulted in a range of adverse human development outcomes (including a 20 percent increase in malaria cases in 2000–2002, in contrast to an 80 percent reduction over 1995–1999).<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the human and social costs of these conflicts, the periods of unrest have had significant economic consequences. From 1998 through 2002, GDP decreased by an estimated 24 percent, while merchandise exports fell by an average of 19 percent per year between 1999 and 2002. More than 8,000 jobs were lost due to the closure of businesses, which had been a significant source of employment opportunities in the formal sector.<sup>11</sup>

While new businesses are now entering Solomon Islands, they have not done so in the numbers present before the conflict. Institutions that had traditionally channeled employer input to policy makers and had provided training opportunities to Solomon Islanders have also yet to re-emerge.

### Economic Trends

Solomon Islands has achieved considerable gains in development and macroeconomic stability in recent years. Since the end of conflict in 2003, rapid growth recovery has been driven by an influx of aid and a logging boom. Living standards today are much better than a decade ago, although still lower and more unequal than prior to the tensions.

Despite strong growth in certain areas in recent years, Solomon Islands currently faces some serious economic challenges. Growth driven by extractive industries in the last decade has been narrowly based, boosting GDP, exports, and tax payments, but offering economic opportunities to only a small proportion of the population. Reliance on natural resources and smallholder agriculture leaves the economy dependent on ongoing resource availability and vulnerable to volatility in global prices and external and internal shocks. Sustained external financing over the long term will remain important.

New economic challenges include the impending exhaustion of the logging stocks on which Solomon Islands has relied for government revenue, exports, and employment. Growth has slowed in recent years, with the recent Honiara floods expected to have a significant negative impact on output, reducing growth to 0.1 percent in 2014.<sup>12</sup> Lending to the private sector has stagnated, foreign investment is expected to decline, and revenue growth has also slowed. International aid, a key

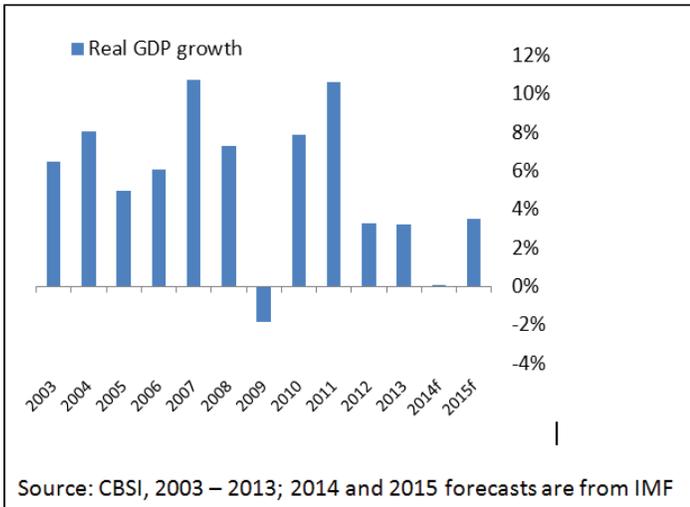
<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs East Asia Analytic Unit, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> IMF, 2014.

feature of growth following the tensions, is likely to flat-line at current levels. As a result, fiscal expansion of the last decade is likely to come to a halt, with new spending programs being limited. Figure 4 outlines expected real growth for 2013 and 2014.

**Figure 4: Real growth expected in 2013 and 2014**

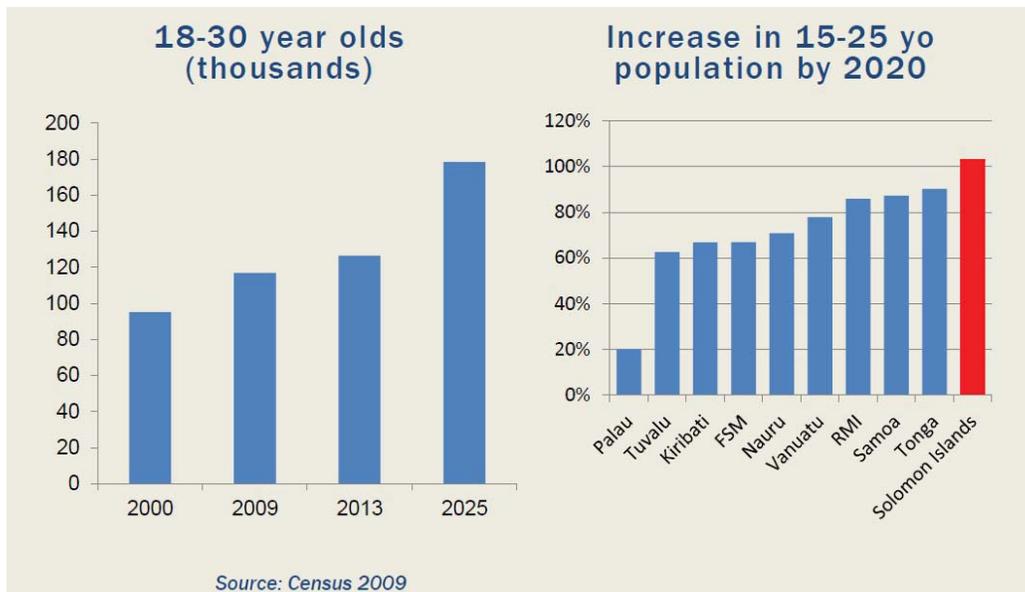


## Demography

Solomon Islands’ population in the 2009 Census was 515,870, of which 102,030 were urban and 413,840 rural. The share of people aged 15-29 years old nationally is 45 percent, and in Honiara it is 52 percent. The population in the youngest age group (0-4) is almost double that of the 25-29 age group. Accordingly, by 2020, Solomon Islands faces an increase of over 100 percent in the population aged 15-25 years old. This is the largest youth bulge of any Pacific Island country.

Solomon Islands’ youth bulge is a major consideration in education and employment policies and in expenditure decisions. It also places demands on service delivery and on employment generation. Figure 5 outlines the projected demographic projections for 18-to 30-year-olds in the Solomon Islands, and also makes a comparison with other Pacific Island countries for the projected population increase for 15- to 25-year-olds by 2020.

**Figure 5: Demography projections and Pacific comparison**



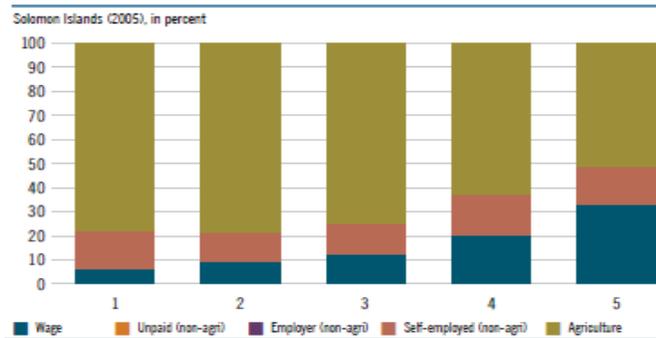
Source: Solomon Islands 2009 Population and Housing Census, 2013

## Employment

Pacific Island countries face overlapping employment challenges. Space and distance are barriers to larger-scale development of services and manufacturing industries. Natural resource revenues are uneven and unsustainable, benefiting enclaves of Pacific economies but not yielding broad-based employment. Rapid population growth, rapid urbanization, exhaustion of traditional subsistence resources, climate change, and—in the case of Solomon Islands—post-conflict barriers and barriers to labor mobility (see Box 1), make employment generation both challenging and pressing in the development choices of Pacific Island countries.<sup>13</sup>

To an even greater extent than other Pacific Island countries, subsistence agriculture is the most common economic activity in Solomon Islands, followed by informal employment, and then by

**Figure 6: Employment by Wealth Quintile**

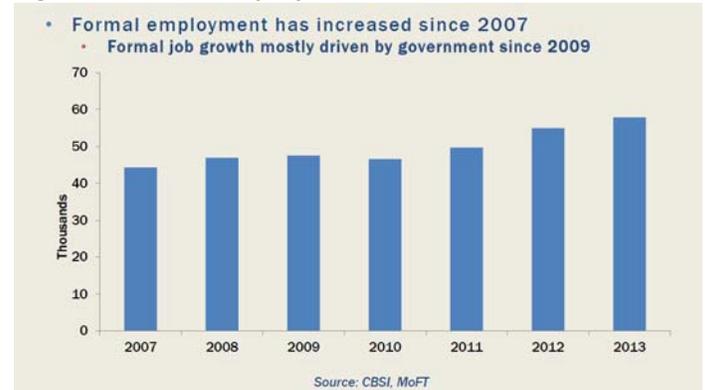


Source: World Bank, 2013

employment in the small formal sector. From an analysis of 2009 census results, of a total workforce of 208,118 people, 43,505 (20.9 percent) were in the formal workforce; 77,763 (37.4 percent) were in the informal economy; and 86,850 (41.7 percent) were in the subsistence economy. Within the formal sector, 15,126 positions (34.8 percent) were in

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, 2014.

**Figure 7: Formal employment**



Source: Central Bank of Solomon Islands, Ministry of Finance & Treasury, 2013

government, and 28,379 (65.2 percent) were in the private sector (such as employment in small- to medium-sized firms and self-employment in registered businesses). Figure 6 provides an overview of employment by wealth quintile, illustrating the predominance of agriculture-sector engagement. Figure 7 provides an outline of formal employment levels since 2007.

The most important source of household income recorded in the 2009 census was the sale of fish, crops, and/or handicrafts, with 45 percent of all households stating this as their main source of income. Nationally, only 14 percent of households do not produce any crops for sale, and 93 percent of rural households have some cash income from the sale of crops.<sup>14</sup> The transition from subsistence agriculture to selling goods for profit is therefore the most important skill and employment transition for the majority of Solomon Islanders.

Wages and salaried jobs were only the second most important source of household income nationally, and are predominantly located in urban areas. The formal sector will likely not be able to absorb the large number of youths leaving school in the coming years. There are roughly 10,000 new entrants to the

<sup>14</sup> Solomon Islands 2009 Population and Housing Census: Report on Economic Activity and Labour Force, Solomon Islands Government, Honiara, 2013, p. 14.

labor force each year. Simply maintaining the current employment-to-population ratio will require the creation of over 2,000 formal jobs every year, an increase of 5 percent per year of the current formally employed workforce. While public sector growth (a large portion of which was due to an increase in the teacher corps) was an important contributor to formal jobs growth in the decade leading up to 2009, the lack of any further significant increase in government revenues will limit the extent to which the government can further contribute to increased employment. This presents an important social problem, as low absorption of school leavers into formal employment was an important factor in the civil unrest in 1999-2003 and 2006, and makes the creation of productive informal sector opportunities vital.<sup>15</sup>

**Box 1: Looking Ahead: Where Will Future Jobs Come From?**

Predicting areas of job growth to satisfy the rapidly growing Solomon Islands population is not easy. Growth in the last decade has come from expanded public services supported by recovering public revenues and increased aid resources, with the largest growth being in the number of teachers. But these sources of jobs are not expected to grow in the coming years. Informal livelihoods participation has expanded in the past decade during post-conflict recovery and urbanization, and the transition from subsistence income to selling goods for profit is likely to form the main economic opportunity for the majority of Solomon Islanders. Natural resource sectors such as mining and logging have contributed to growth, but will not be significant employers without initiatives to expand the employment and economic participation of such ventures. Catching up with other Pacific Island states to take better advantage of labor mobility will be an important opportunity for Solomon Islands (see Box 2: 'Looking Overseas').

<sup>15</sup> World Bank, *Solomon Islands Growth Prospects*, 2010.

Twenty-two percent of households receive some income from remittances, but with wide provincial variation. The majority of these remittances are from internal migration rather than international labor migration. Labor migration abroad is an under-exploited opportunity in Solomon Islands, which lags behind other Pacific Island countries such as Tonga and Samoa in accessing benefits such as international remittance income (see Box 2).<sup>16</sup>

**Box 2: Looking Overseas: Workforce Development for Opportunities Abroad**

Solomon Islands could gain substantial benefits from labor mobility. While countries like Tonga or Samoa regularly gain 30 percent of GDP from overseas remittances, Solomon Islands only gains 0.3 percent. There are 10 times more Samoans working in Australia than Solomon Islanders, despite a smaller global population. Several Pacific Island countries such as Tonga, Samoa, and Vanuatu have benefited significantly from the Regional Seasonal Employment Scheme in New Zealand and the more recent Seasonal Workers Program in Australia. Solomon Islands is a late starter to these schemes, and while numbers accessing work on New Zealand farms have increased, Solomon Islanders currently form only 2.9 percent of Australian scheme participants. Solomon Islands' private sector model for labor-sending struggles to compete with other Pacific Island countries, which benefit from coordinated government labor-sending functions. Solomon Islands needs a coordinated strategy, networks in labor-receiving countries such as Australia, and stronger sending capacity so as to enhance Solomon Islanders' access to these opportunities. Market sectors including hospitality, health, and aged care, as well as farm work, are promising industries that may offer new opportunities for Solomon Islands' workforce to access remittance incomes, networks, and skills that they can bring home.

<sup>16</sup> Solomon Islands 2009 Population and Housing Census: Census Report on Economic Activity and Labour Force, Solomon Islands Government, Honiara, 2013, p. 27.

## Education and Training

Solomon Islands has significantly improved access to education in recent years (see Table 1), albeit from a low base. The net primary enrollment rate in 2013 was 65 percent, with 47 percent of students being female.<sup>17</sup> Net enrollment rates in 2013 for early childhood education (ECE) and secondary school sectors were much lower, with the net ECE enrollment rate at 30.7 percent, and the net secondary enrollment rate at 47 percent.<sup>18</sup>

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) data from its Solomon Islands Student Testing and Assessment survey in 2010 reveal a slight improvement in the literacy and numeracy achievement levels at year 4 compared to 2005/2006, but the critical level for both literacy and numeracy remains under 50 percent, which

means that too many primary students cannot read, write, and calculate very well (see Figure 8).<sup>19</sup>

Tertiary sector enrollment data from the universities, the Institute for Public Administration and Management (IPAM), and from Vocational Rural Training Centers (VRTCs) are not systematically reported. Statistics on the number of students attending private providers are not collected. Based on available information from recent research, Table 2 gives details of total student tertiary sector enrollments for the period 2009-2011.

As a group, VRTCs train the most students in TVET. Research in 2013 undertaken by Bateman et al (draft 2014) indicated that, for the sampled VRTCs, supply did not meet the demand for places.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 1: School enrollments by subsector, 2007-2012**

School subsectors	2007	2012	Increase	% increase
ECE	18,818	21,045	2,227	11.8
Primary Education(1-6)	105,049	120,718	15,669	14.9
Basic Education (1-9)	124,140	148,858	24,718	19.9
Secondary Education (7-13)	29,420	42,209	12,789	43.5
Senior Secondary (10-13)	10,329	13,889	3,560	34.5

Source: MEHRD Annual Report 2012.

Note that there is overlap between these subsectors as the categories are linked to MEHRD performance indicators.

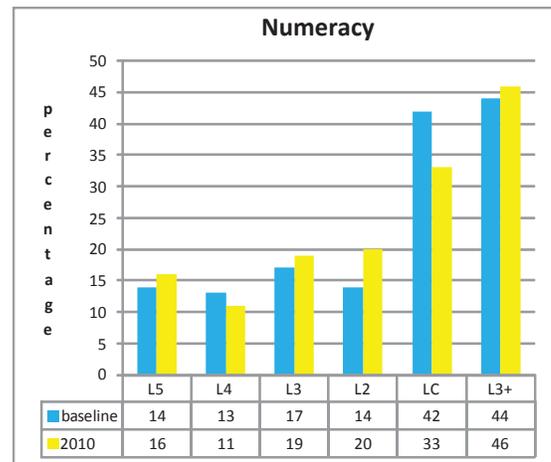
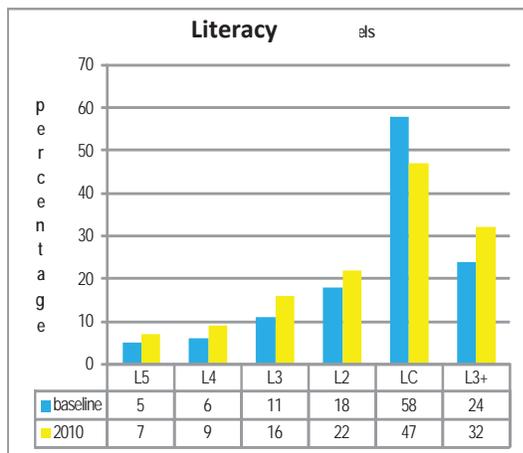
<sup>17</sup> Revised data, White Paper 2014. MEHRD Performance Assessment Report for 2006-2013 (2013) put primary net enrollment at 89 percent.

<sup>18</sup> MEHRD Performance Assessment Report 2013.

<sup>19</sup> MEHRD Annual Report 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Bateman et al., draft 2014.

**Figure 8: The national overall literacy and numeracy achievement levels at year 4 in 2010 compared to the baseline year 2005/2006**



Note: The levels used are as follows: L5: Full mastery of the learning outcome; L4: Substantial mastery of the learning outcome; L3: Moderate mastery of the learning outcome; L2: Minor mastery of the learning outcome; Lc: Critical underachievement levels reflecting minimal or no mastery of the learning outcome. Source: MEHRD Performance Assessment Report for 2006-2013 (2013)

Education outcomes are modest and are noted by employers as not leading strongly to employment. The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) *Skills in Demand Report 2011-2012*, based on a survey of its members, indicated that 85 percent of respondents believed students did not possess the necessary skills to ensure employability.

Solomon Islands’ education and training expenditure was an average of 27.6 percent of the national budget between 2009 and 2012.<sup>21 22</sup> Table 3 summarizes subsector expenditures from 2009 to 2012.

Solomon Islands’ significant financial commitment to education, around 20–25 percent of the budget annually, is consistent with both recognized international good practice on education expenditure and levels of expenditure in other Pacific Island countries. As in neighboring countries, concerns rest with the allocation, execution, and efficiency of expenditures.

<sup>21</sup> Gannicott (2012), based on SIG Recurrent and Development Budgets, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

<sup>22</sup> This can be compared to an average of 16 percent for educational expenditure as a percentage of public spending in developing countries. UNESCO Table 9, as cited in Gannicott (2012).

Solomon Islands faces similar challenges as neighbors Vanuatu and Tuvalu: high and over-spent allocations to higher education (mostly tertiary scholarships) and teacher salaries, which have proven difficult to control as they involve multiple authorities and databases. In 2012, allocations to the higher education subsector comprised 24.5 percent of the education budget, benefiting 1 percent of students (see Table 3). This limits the national budget available for development expenditures, such as infrastructure maintenance, professional development, and learning materials. It also stands to divert funds from lower levels of education—including TVET—something which raises concerns with respect to access and equity. With one of the highest rates of population growth in the Pacific, declining unit cost allocations are being made to lower levels of education. The TVET and early childhood education subsectors have the lowest percentage of funding. Moreover, Solomon Islands is one of the eight-lowest funders of adult literacy programs in the world, despite the widespread lack of functional literacy among Solomon Islanders over the age of 15.

**Table 2: Enrollments, Solomon Islands 2009-2011**

Provider*	2009	2010	2011
SINU	1146	862	866
USP - Solomon Islands campus	793	875	1,044
VRTCs	n.a.	1,874	2,398
IPAM**	724	1424	1,953
NTTTU certificate assessments+	n.a.	n.a.	850
NTTTU apprenticeship assessments#	n.a.	34	26

\*Data for UPNG were not provided. \*\*IPAM participation is not full-time equivalent student. + For the year 2012, participation is not full-time equivalent student. #Participation is not full-time equivalent students  
Source: Bateman et al draft 2014.

**Table 3: Expenditure by subsector, constant 2009 prices, Solomon Islands**

Subsector	2009	2010	2011	2012
ECE	8,512,459 (1.7)	8,213,825 (1.5)	7,253,088 (1.3)	11,947,256 (2.1)
Primary	253,141,932 (50.0)	250,704,446 (46.2)	219,238,434 (41.0)	239,083,725 (42.6)
Lower Secondary	72,706,589 (14.3)	81,229,674 (15.0)	74,090,410 (13.9)	93,614,749 (16.7)
Upper Secondary	42,965,450 (8.5)	52,167,893 (9.6)	50,063,691 (9.4)	65,850,625 (11.8)
TVET	18,681,352 (3.7)	13,822,992 (2.5)	18,434,080 (3.4)	13,035,167 (2.3)
Higher education	110,530,446 (21.8)	136,780,704 (25.2)	165,830,449 (31.0)	137,369,172 (24.5)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>506,538,228 (100)</b>	<b>543,184,345 (100)</b>	<b>534,910,152 (100)</b>	<b>560,900,694 (100)</b>

Note: Bracketed figures are sub-sector percentage shares

Source: Gannicott 2012

### 3. Overview of Findings and Implications

This chapter highlights findings from the assessment of Solomon Islands’ WfD system based on the SABER-WfD analytical framework and tool. The focus is on policies, institutions, and practices in three important functional dimensions of policymaking and implementation—strategic framework, system oversight, and service delivery. Because these aspects collectively create the operational environment in which individuals, firms, and training providers, both state and non-state, make decisions with regard to training, they exert an important influence on observed outcomes in skills development. Strong systems of WfD have institutionalized processes and practices for reaching agreement on priorities, for collaboration and coordination, and for generating routine feedback that sustain continuous innovation and

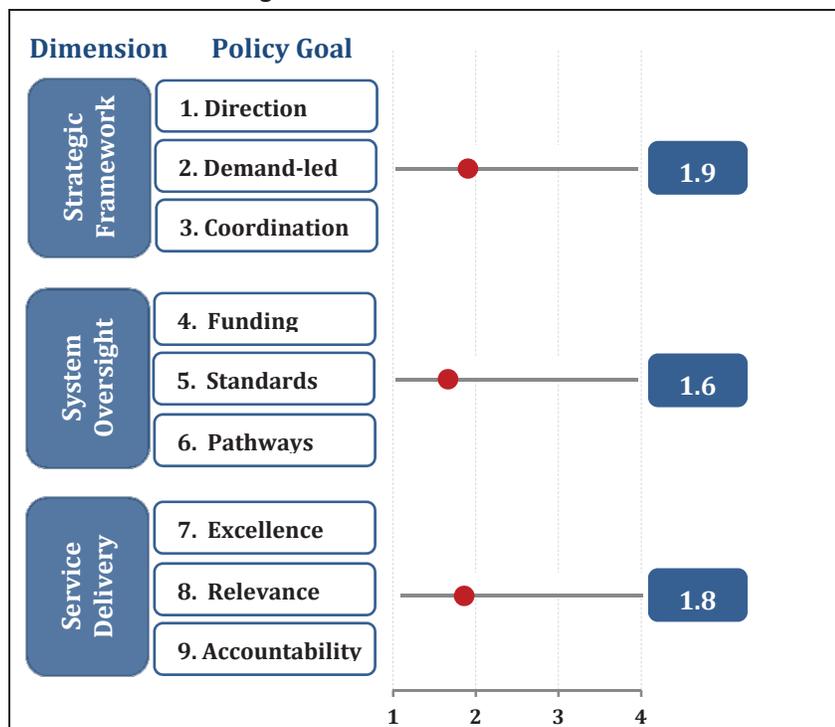
improvement. By contrast, weak systems are characterized by fragmentation, duplication of effort, and limited learning from experience.

The SABER-WfD assessment results summarized below provide a baseline for understanding the current status of the WfD system in the country, as well as a basis for discussing ideas on how best to strengthen it in the coming years.

#### Overview of the SABER-WfD Assessment Results

Figure 10 shows the overall results for the three Functional Dimensions in the SABER-WfD framework.<sup>23</sup> Solomon Islands is rated at the **Emerging** level of development for the two Dimensions of Strategic Framework and Service Delivery and at the **Latent** level for System Oversight.

Figure 10: Dimension-Level Scores



Note: See Figure 2 for an explanation of the scale on the horizontal axis.  
 Source: Based on analysis of the data collected using the SABER-WfD questionnaire.

<sup>23</sup> Refer to Annex 8 for the detailed scoring results.

Solomon Islands scores highest on the Strategic Framework for WfD (1.9). This rating reflects the fact that a number of initiatives to reform system design are underway but also that practical implementation of these initiatives has been limited. The SABER analysis shows that public servants and individuals from training providers and industry are currently taking the lead in setting strategic WfD priorities, and not political leaders. The findings suggest that, apart from the fragmented, *ad-hoc* efforts of this limited number of champions, the important connection between WfD and economic development is tenuous. The lack of a shared vision as to how WfD affects economic development can make coordination difficult.

Strengthened coordination among the government agencies, employer groups, and training providers is vital for improved employment opportunities at home and overseas through labor mobility. Although recent initiatives, like the development of the National Human Resource Development and Training Plan (NHRDTP), have started to define formal roles and responsibilities for government entities, these have not yet resulted in coordinated action to harmonize various ministries' efforts to advance strategic WfD initiatives. Other stakeholders are not consistently active in strategic WfD initiatives, some of which may potentially be curtailed by the lack of legal provisions for stakeholder involvement. At present, the participation of non-government stakeholders is largely driven by the government suggesting that formalizing the roles of non-government stakeholders may also require effort to incentivize them to assume such roles.

Solomon Islands scores lowest (1.6, Latent level) on System Oversight. The rating reflects the fact that the procedures for allocating funds to Solomon Islands National University (SINU) and Vocational

Rural Training Centers (VRTCs) do not take into account outcomes achieved or allow for assessment of the efficiency of resource deployment. It also reflects the lack of a system-wide process for quality assurance of qualifications and of training providers, including approval and monitoring. Both quality assurance and funding procedures are hampered by a paucity of timely and reliable administrative data. Putting in place effective measures for funding and quality assurance suffers from limited engagement of industry, something stakeholders are working to overcome.

In addition, the institutions that comprise the tertiary education and training system are disconnected. Formal pathways that allow students to progress from lower levels of training at VRTCs to more advanced training at SINU or other post-secondary institutions do not exist. Private providers make their own decisions about the admission of students, and their qualifications do not necessarily have value for further study. There have been no significant system-wide efforts to facilitate the recognition of prior learning (RPL), though provision for RPL as well as for competency-based testing does exist through the National Trade Training and Testing (NTTT) Unit. Government support services for disadvantaged groups are limited.

Solomon Islands scores 1.8 for Service Delivery. Within the Solomon Islands there are a range of formal and non-formal non-state providers active in the training market. Except for financial support and some training for staff at the VRTCs, the government provides no incentives to encourage non-state provision. With regard to public training provision, the three universities are considered self-governing and therefore have considerable autonomy. However, this is not the case for the Institute for Public Administration and Management (IPAM), which provides continuing training to government employees and, through contractual

arrangements, to businesses, as it resides within the Ministry of Public Service and follows government human resources and budget policies. The government does not require any providers to meet implicit or explicit quality standards or performance targets, nor does it offer financial or non-financial incentives for provider performance. In terms of links with industry and opportunities for enhancement of staff professional development, the results across providers have varied.

The overall score for the Dimension was affected by the very low score on Policy Goal 9 (1.5), which reflects how the Solomon Islands government does not consolidate administrative data from training providers in a system-wide database for analysis of provider performance and system trends or to inform policy. There is no consolidation of education and training data to analyze provider performance, system trends, or to inform policy. There is a general lack of labor market data to inform WfD, with sources of data on labor market outcomes being limited to a few *ad-hoc* skills-related surveys or studies.

### Policy Implications of the Findings

Solomon Islands is currently in the midst of ambitious system reform. The SABER-WfD study is meant to inform and reinforce these existing efforts. The following recommendations thus highlight key entry points where initial success can lay the foundation for sustained system improvement over the coming years.

A rating of Established or Advanced is not a prerequisite for success in WfD. Rather, advanced systems are the product of a series of successes in policy design and implementation over a period of years, and sometimes decades. Sustained, incremental improvement in key areas is thus the hallmark of successful WfD system development.

**1. Solomon Islands' leaders need to define the skills required for participatory economic development.** An emerging priority for realizing implementation of WfD outcomes is strong leadership from political leaders to set strategic priorities and enable coordinated action. SABER-WfD results from advanced countries show that sustained system improvement is almost impossible without clearly articulated strategic priorities from the country's political leadership. The SABER analysis of Solomon Islands' WfD system shows that public servants and individuals from education, training providers, and industry are currently taking the lead in WfD, and not political leaders.

In Solomon Islands, the Budget Outlook and Strategy, which accompanies the annual national budget, provides guidance on the country's priorities for public expenditure. However, it does not set the type of clearly articulated longer-term goals that can serve as waypoints for WfD stakeholders. The large number of studies and strategic documents already produced serve as a good foundation for articulating a strategic direction for WfD, and existing processes for setting budgetary priorities could be amended to more clearly articulate medium-term economic development goals. What is now needed is a clear commitment to a limited number of initial strategic steps from the highest levels of leadership. The work of the National Human Resource Development Training Council (NHRDTC) and the Tertiary Council can inform leaders' decisions, but the definition of the economic development priorities that guide WfD policy is beyond the remit of these bodies, and therefore collaboration to identify priorities will involve leaders in economic policy not directly associated with these two groups.

Clear and constant communication of the strategic priorities by leaders is essential if WfD stakeholders are to develop and implement policies effectively. Leaders must also insist on the accountability of the

Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC), the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI), the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD), and others for the implementation of WfD policy. Advice and briefings from technical officers can support the leadership of political leaders to drive employment initiatives and overcome institutional barriers. Officers at the technical level can submit for Cabinet approval budgeted NHRDTP policy commitments and resource requirements for priority implementation. In the medium term, this can be a shared priority of the proposed Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC).

**2. Policy makers need to sustain coordination and regularly participate in agreed meetings.**

Critical to any strategy is its implementation. Solomon Islands has multiple policies, plans, and strategies in place that have not seen practical implementation. Strengthened coordination among the government agencies, employer groups, and education and training providers making up Solomon Islands' WfD system is vital for establishing pathways that will lead Solomon Islanders to employment either domestically or internationally. A key constraint has been the inability to sustain coordinated participation in agreed meetings across policy makers in key agencies. Regular and empowered participation in meetings to define skills policies and program allocations is needed, supported by timelines and secretariat resources from central coordinating agencies such as MDPAC and the newly formed NHRDTC. Required participants of the NHRDTC include technical-level officers with line responsibility for budgets and programs in the TVET Division of MEHRD; the Under-Secretary for Tertiary Education; MCILI's Labour Division, Business Division, Industrial Development Division, and National Trade Testing Unit; the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI); the Ministry of Public Service;

the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening; the Ministry of Finance and Treasury's Economic Reform Unit; the Ministry of Rural Development; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade's Labour Mobility Unit; as well as development partners and relevant civil society agencies such as the Solomon Islands Small Business and Enterprise Centre. A consistent link between coordinating functions, such as the NHRDTC, and budget allocations (including Development Budget, Tertiary Education funding, and possibly Constituency Funds) will both help maintain participation and make full use of the important opportunity for coordination.

**3. Employers need to participate at the strategy and governance levels of the WfD system to guide education and training policy and standards.**

There needs to be stronger engagement by industry to drive WfD strategy, with an important role for employer associations, and a demand-driven approach to education and training provision. Employers need to participate in policy making at the strategic level, in the development of competency standards and in the review of specifically funded training to ensure that WfD training meets the identified needs. Practically, this requires active participation and representation by employer groups, such as SICCI, in coordination structures such as the NHRDTC, and in the future SITEC and Solomon Islands Qualifications Authority (SIQA). Employers in specific industry sectors need to lead and develop competency standards to form the basis of the qualifications under the Solomon Islands Qualifications Framework (SIQF).

**4. Policy makers should develop a strategy to support the informal economy including skills development for livelihoods.**

Given that many Solomon Islanders will make their living in the informal economy (including by selling fruit and vegetables and other consumption items, and providing services such as transport, repairs, and

labor), it cannot be left out of a comprehensive WfD strategy. Evidence from other countries shows that the informal economy has proven effective in creating jobs, absorbing new labor market entrants, and fostering entrepreneurs, and that it often offers a better standard of living than subsistence farming and fishing.<sup>24</sup> At present, there is little information available on the activity of informal businesses, what types of people they employ and the barriers they face in growing and transitioning to formality. The extent to which these firms rely on the formal education and training system is also not well understood. Thus, a first step to improving productivity and incomes in the informal economy is to better understand the characteristics of informal businesses and the constraints that they face, and identify key programs to support the informal economy, including skills building for livelihoods. As a member of the NHRDTC, the MCILI could take the lead in developing a strategy and key programs.

**5. Build stronger pathways connecting the pre-employment education and training system including RPL as a key component in the SIQF.**

There is considerable disconnect between the TVET and higher education subsectors. Currently, VRTC's and private training providers do not issue recognized qualifications that provide a clear pathway to further study at the universities. Although some vocationally trained students progress to more advanced programs, progression is through *ad-hoc* processes. In addition, there is virtually no link between current trade testing (through RPL assessment processes) conducted by the NTTT Unit and broader formal provision to allow for graduates of such programs, as well as individuals with informally acquired skills, to gain recognition of this learning as a means to gain

employment and continue their education. There thus needs to be a way to account for the learning of those who have gone through the VRTC system or other training provision retrospectively to enable more transparent and reliable mechanisms for educational progression. Moving forward, progression could also be facilitated by joint program development among vocational and higher education institutions and by creating a system that provides multiple exit points within qualifications (i.e., embed lower-level qualifications in higher-level qualifications).

In the face of high levels of informality in both training and work, many skills will not be developed by the formal system. Procedures for RPL, therefore, also need to provide for certification of informally acquired skills, as this stands to be a path to greater earnings and improved job prospects for the majority of Solomon Islanders. The Government of Grenada, for instance, has invested significant efforts to facilitate RPL under its vocational qualifications framework. Individuals may earn full or partial qualifications through competency-based assessment of prior learning and receive feedback on where further training is necessary. Mechanisms for RPL in Solomon Islands can be integrated into the current work being undertaken by the MEHRD with Australian support to develop the SIQF and accompanying legislation.

Many students exit the education and training system without adequate literacy skills. Remedial education for adults with a focus on basic literacy should be central to government efforts to promote skills for employment and livelihoods, and completion of such education should be certified so as to serve as a gateway for future training. The Mauritian Qualifications Authority, for instance, administers a large literacy program. Those who complete the program obtain a recognized National Certificate in Adult Literacy, which is considered in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as

<sup>24</sup> World Bank, 2012. *Improving Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa*.

being at the same level as the Certificate of Primary Education. Mauritius has recently expanded RPL programs to assess literacy as well.

Solomon Islands, like many other countries, has not developed CVET (workplace training) or short-cycle training to the same extent as tertiary education or Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET). Yet better development of these types of training would enable the provision of accessible, simple, short programs aimed at providing basic skill sets for employability, including literacy. These programs also stand to increase access to training of disadvantaged populations who face barriers to accessing longer and more costly programs. Private training provision provides an important opportunity to expand and broaden access to meet the significant demand for training. Private training provision needs to be encouraged under the SIQF and incorporated into the recognition and regulated functions. Provision of short programs for employment is also a fertile area for partnering with development partners. Short programs often fit well within partners' funding time frames, and they provide easier opportunities to evaluate program successfulness. The basis for such partnerships in Solomon Islands has been laid with the implementation of the Rapid Employment Program in Honiara, among others. Consideration needs to be given to (i) making these short programs sub-components of a formal qualification that leads to recognition by a tertiary provider; and (ii) developing programs to be delivered at VRTC that will constitute the early stages (or skill sets) of a higher qualification at either the proposed provincial colleges or university.

One issue with such interventions is sustainability, as the resources necessary to deliver and maintain such programs are often not available outside of donor support. In Fiji, the government collects a company levy of 1 percent of total wages from those companies that do not spend at least as much

on providing accredited training for workers. Such measures can provide more stable funding for short-term and continuing training while simultaneously incentivizing employers to train.

**6. Include robust quality standards in the SIQF to ensure that Solomon Islands' qualifications are valued.** Quality matters if qualifications are to have any value to trainees and if employers are to invest substantial resources or time in the WfD system. One consideration in the short term is to increase the presence of providers, such as the Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC), that deliver training that are quality assured by a reliable international body. In the medium term, much hope is riding on the development of SIQF to solve a range of WfD system governance issues related to quality assurance of providers and of qualifications. However, the development of the SIQF alone will be insufficient to improve the quantity and quality of education and training delivered. An NQF should be considered more as a driver for change rather than as a panacea for existing problems.

The SIQF may allow for a broader scope of recognized providers and hence a broader range of qualifications to address WfD. But this outcome will only be achieved if training providers have the capacity to meet the quality assurance requirements. Development of quality standards could be supported by a two-step process for the registration of providers. The first step would enable interested providers to be listed with the regulator as meeting the established minimum standards. These providers could then be supported to develop their capacity so that they meet the full quality standards, which would enable them to deliver accredited programs. Integration of robust quality standards in the SIQF will require training providers to engage with employers to ensure that education and training programs are current and appropriate.

VRTCs face considerable constraints with respect to human and physical resources and technological capacity to comply with any MEHRD requirements related to quality assurance. Increasing the amount of information available on VRTCs will be a crucial step toward improving quality provision and integration with the rest of the tertiary education and training system. But measures to improve the quality of data reporting and management need to reckon with the fact that VRTCs currently face multiple constraints on their ability to report information. Thus, measures to support VRTC compliance, including through the allocation of funds, need to be part of any attempt to improve MEHRD's ability to collect, manage, and analyze WfD system data.

**7. Introduce basic incentive and efficiency measures for tertiary education and training funding.** Current funding levels create constrain the supply of an adequate level of tertiary education and training. In the face of these considerable constraints, it is imperative that existing resources be used increasingly efficiently.

Training providers will need sufficient funding and support to strengthen their capacity to meet the emerging SIQF quality standards. Increased funding should be accompanied by procedures for its allocation that incentivize and reward providers for effective management and achievement of outcome targets. One example of a basic indicator that could be used more systematically is the graduation rate of students on government scholarships.

Tertiary education and training providers need incentive-based funding. MEHRD's Tertiary Education Division and, in the medium term, the proposed SITEC could develop—or seek technical advice to develop—proposals for new funding arrangements based on evidence of employment

needs and student performance. This could include a base level of regular funding with the addition of grants based on performance against key criteria such as enrollment, completion, and employment outcomes. Private training provision is important to expanding provision, and needs to be regulated, recognized, and encouraged through similar incentive-based programs. It is important to note that putting in place such incentives-based funding mechanisms requires timely and reliable administrative, expenditure, and outcomes data, something that currently does not exist.

More equitable and targeted funding will not be realized until there is improvement in the fiscal management of scholarships, which currently take a large proportion of the budget envelope. Rationalization of scholarships to realistic employment needs and merit-based selection, greater control measures on expenditure, and an additional focus on TVET scholarships are included in the proposed Education Act. The funding gaps are widespread, particularly for continuing vocational education and employment services programs. The current scholarship policies also have negative implications for equity, as current disbursement criteria take little account of household wealth or sources of disadvantage. Funding a relatively small number of students at very high levels inevitably limits access to tertiary education and training for many students who cannot afford to study. Providing equitable support would also include the upgrade of facilities and program quality nationwide.<sup>25</sup>

**8. Invest in capacity to measure education and training performance and jobs demand.** Current accountability systems are weak; there is no consolidation of education and training data to analyze provider performance and system trends or to inform policy. Better administrative data could

<sup>25</sup> Bateman et al draft 2014.

include enrollments, completion rates, student satisfaction, and employment outcome data. With better-quality education and training data collection, relevant agencies would be able to strengthen the management, oversight, and quality of training delivery. This will be required for the successful scaling-up (though not for immediate action on) of many of the items above.

An education and training management information system that is capable of providing timely administrative data from at least public providers is necessary over the medium term. The reporting requirements for VRTC's need to be streamlined and simplified. Investment in basic information technology capabilities for VRTC's should allow reports to be submitted in an electronic format, perhaps through portable USB drives, that will make processing, storage, and analysis easier. Solomon Islands makes funding for VRTC's contingent upon adequate reporting. However, such rules are not consistently enforced. Improvement of measures to enable and enforce compliance must go hand-in-hand with improvement in the education and training management information system itself.

It is critical to address the general lack of labor market data. A practical and sustainable labor market information system needs to be established (in the short term) to regularly provide information on labor market demand to government, training providers, job seekers, and employers. MDPAC and MCILI have prepared initial steps to allocate staff positions or recruit national consultants supported by the Development Budget, to undertake this data coordination role. Implementing measures to measure the performance of tertiary education and training providers can be undertaken as part of the current MEHRD and development partner strengthening of Solomon Islands' Education Management Information System (SIEMIS). In the medium to long term, the accountability measures

of education and training performance will rest with the proposed future SITEC.

A summary of the WfD actions for Solomon Islands is included in Annex 1.

## 4. Aligning Workforce Development to Key Economic and Social Priorities

WfD is not an end in itself but an input toward broader objectives – of boosting employability and productivity; of relieving skills constraints on business growth and development; and of advancing overall economic growth and social wellbeing. This chapter briefly introduces Solomon Islands' socioeconomic aspirations, priorities, and reforms before presenting the detailed SABER-WfD findings on Strategic Framework and their policy implications.

### Socioeconomic Aspirations, Priorities, and Reforms

#### *National aspirations and strategies*

The Solomon Islands Government is seeking to advance economic growth and rural livelihoods and support better service delivery in rural areas. Recognizing that Solomon Islands' economic wealth is rural-based, and that the majority of Solomon Islands' labor force will remain unable to access formal employment in the short term, the government plans to support the village economy through self-employment and wage employment, supporting new opportunities in small-scale agriculture, artisanal fisheries, tourism, and forestry. Community education has been recognized as a priority by the current government, supporting education for all beyond basic education.

In meeting the human resource needs of economic and livelihood development, medium-term priority is given to TVET, supported through the establishment of an National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to improve the usefulness of training to students and to establish demand-driven systems to make vocational training more responsive to employers' needs. While addressing the skills mismatch in formal employment will not provide opportunities for the majority of labor force

entrants in the short term, it does promise to release the skills constraint on economic growth and employment generation, and improve the qualifications and experience of Solomon Islanders relevant to jobs currently left vacant or filled by foreign workers.

Strengthening locally-provided higher education is a significant emphasis in current initiatives, most notably through the transition of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education to the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) and associated changes in that institution's governance, organization, and program offerings. The government has recognized that tertiary scholarships may not contribute to increased skill resources within Solomon Islands, and prioritizes the greater effectiveness and efficiency of this major skills investment.

#### *Key agencies*

Government ministries with responsibility for setting the government's WfD agenda include the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD), the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI), and the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC).

MEHRD is responsible for developing policies, procedures, and plans to improve access to education and training and for efficient management of the tertiary sector as a whole. It monitors the implementation of the National Education Action Plan (NEAP) and leads Solomon Islands' Education Management Information System (SIEMIS) data collection and management efforts. The National Training Unit (NTU), which is tasked with administering the country's sizeable scholarship scheme (currently only offered for qualifications at the bachelor level and above), also sits under MEHRD.

The Labour Act gives MCIL responsibility for running Solomon Islands' apprenticeship scheme and convening the apprenticeship board that manages the system. The National Trade Training and Testing (NTTT) Unit under the ministry undertakes assessments of apprenticeships (currently in three trades only) as well as testing for certificates of proficiency in five trades.

MDPAC has a core function of manpower planning for both the public and private sectors. It coordinates and manages the Development Budget (budget that outlines donor funds and projects) by consulting with various ministries on budgeting and shared initiatives between the government and development partners. This gives MDPAC a de facto role as coordinator for government initiatives that involve multiple responsible ministries, including WfD. MDPAC also takes responsibility for the development of the *National Human Resource Development and Training Plan 2013-2015*.

### *Strategic documents*

The strategic vision and direction of the education and training system is captured by the MEHRD's longer-term *Education Strategic Framework 2007-2015*. The associated three-year NEAP<sup>26</sup> documents measures to accomplish the goals laid out in the framework. The framework guides operations and underpins donor support, which is mainly channeled through the Education Sector Wide Program.

The *NEAP 2013-2015* sets targets for the TVET subsector including an expansion in the number of private TVET places and subjects taught, the creation of clear pathways for TVET students through the creation of an NQF, and improvements in school-based management practices. The *NEAP 2013-2015* also sets targets for medium-term

<sup>26</sup> MEHRD National Education Action Plan 2007-2009; MEHRD National Education Action Plan 2010-2012; and MEHRD National Education Action Plan 2013-2015.

development strategy goals in the higher education subsector, in particular for Solomon Islands-based higher education enrollment to increase by 25 percent, for total female enrollment to increase by 40 percent, and that the external audit reports that scholarship management is in accordance with equity and transparency requirements.

MEHRD and MDPAC collaborated on the National Human Resource Development and Training Plan (NHRDTP). The NHRDTP seeks to address the skills mismatch and improve the supply of skills sought by private and public sector employers. Within five components, the NHRDTP seeks to achieve the objectives of (i) achieving sufficient National Human Resource Development Training Council (NHRDTC) planning, coordination, and management capacity to produce, implement, monitor, and regularly update the NHRDTP; (ii) identifying human resource development priorities through systematic, reliable, and timely data collection and analysis; (iii) orienting human resource development systems to meet demand; (iv) building enterprise and skills in the workforce to improve livelihoods; and (v) increasing market share in international labor markets.

The tertiary education and training sector is currently undergoing reform. The Education Act and the 2010 *Policy Statement and Guidelines for Tertiary Education in Solomon Islands* are currently being revised. A revised Education Act will:

- recognize the higher education and the vocational education and training subsectors; and
- establish a Tertiary Education Commission to coordinate and regulate a national system of the tertiary education sector.

Human resource planning and labor market demand are to be prioritized under the revised Education Act as a basis for determining tertiary education and training forecasts, as well as for the

allocation of Solomon Islands’ sizable scholarship scheme. Under the proposed revisions, both vocational education and higher education programs will be included as scholarship options for the first time. Importantly, recognizing the significant budget impact of tertiary sector scholarship expenditure, the revised Education Act will aim to maintain and control total expenditure on government-funded scholarships to the level allocated by the budget of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.

The Solomon Islands Qualifications Framework (SIQF) is a key national instrument that aims to contribute to improving the quality of education in the country. The SIQF recognizes the four domains of (i) accredited qualifications; (ii) professional licensing and occupational standards, with particular relevance to labor mobility; (iii) traditional knowledge and indigenous skills; and (iv) benchmarks for literacy and numeracy as basic foundation skills. It seeks to enhance flexible pathways for those in both the formal and non-formal sectors to educational, livelihood, and employment opportunities. Effective implementation of the SIQF is anticipated to facilitate international recognition of Solomon Islands’ qualifications, because it will be aligned with the Pacific Qualifications Framework and in turn with existing international qualifications frameworks, which is important for labor-receiving countries.

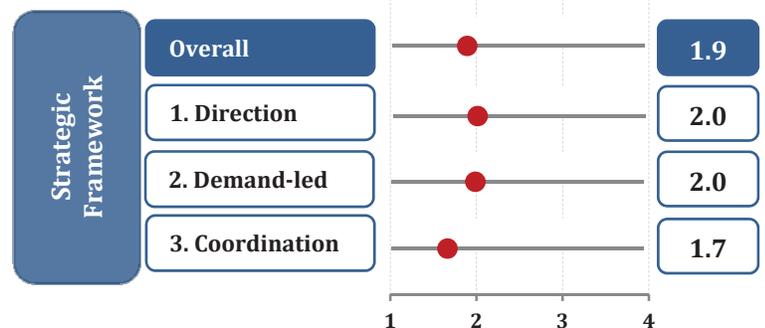
### SABER-WfD Ratings on the Strategic Framework

In the SABER-WfD framework, the role of WfD in realizing Solomon Islands’ socioeconomic aspirations materializes through actions to advance the following three Policy Goals: (i) setting a strategic direction for WfD; (ii) fostering a demand-led approach in WfD; and (iii) ensuring coordination among key WfD leaders and stakeholders. The

ratings for these Policy Goals are presented and explained below, followed by a reflection on their implications for policy dialogue.

Based on the data collected by the SABER-WfD questionnaire, Solomon Islands received an overall rating of 1.9 (**Emerging**) for the Strategic Framework Dimension (see Figure 11). This score is the average of the ratings for the underlying Policy Goals: setting a strategic direction (2.0); fostering a demand-driven approach (2.0); and strengthening critical coordination (1.7). These ratings are roughly on par for those low and lower-middle income countries that have completed a SABER-WfD assessment. Solomon Islands performs slightly better than the average with respect to engaging employers and collecting labor market information, which is the focus of Policy Goal 2. However, it lags slightly with respect to involving non-government stakeholders and setting up effective mechanisms for coordination, as indicated by a low score for Policy Goal 3. The explanation for these ratings and their implications follow below.

Figure 11: SABER-WfD Ratings of Dimension 1



Note: See Figure 2 for an explanation of the scale on the horizontal axis.

Source: Based on analysis of the data collected using the SABER-WfD questionnaire.

### Policy Goal 1: Setting a Strategic Direction for WfD

Leaders play an important role in crystalizing a strategic vision for WfD appropriate to the country's unique circumstances and opportunities. Their advocacy and commitment attract partnership with stakeholders for the common good, build public support for key priorities in WfD, and ensure that critical issues receive due attention in policy dialogue. Taking these ideas into account, Policy Goal 1 assesses the extent to which apex-level leaders in government and the private sector provide sustained advocacy for WfD priorities through institutionalized processes.

The score for Policy Goal 1 situates Solomon Islands at the **Emerging** level (2.0). Strategic plans are being developed, but practical implementation of policies and frameworks has been limited. There are advocates both within and outside government for the strategic importance of WfD for accomplishing broader economic and social development goals, but advocacy has been *ad hoc* and consensus on a consolidated WfD policy agenda has not yet emerged.

Government leadership on WfD comes primarily from MEHRD and MDPAC. MEHRD's recent NEAP, which runs through to 2015, sets medium-term targets for both the TVET and higher education subsectors. The NHRDTP and the *Policy Statement and Guidelines for Tertiary Education in the Solomon Islands*<sup>27</sup> form the policy basis for WfD. These two policies both endeavor to create institutional mechanisms that will enable WfD strategy-making to be more collaborative and facilitate clearer articulation of WfD's inputs to economic development as well as create management structures to help guide the roll-out of Solomon Islands' planned NQF.

<sup>27</sup> Know from here on as the Tertiary Education Policy.

The NHRDTP also seeks to foster greater attention to entrepreneurship, the informal economy, and labor mobility. The exact division of responsibility for implementation of these two documents is still being worked out between the ministries.

Under ideal conditions, a WfD system will routinely review the adequacy of WfD strategy in light of a shifting economic context. In Solomon Islands, reviews of previous policies do occur, but in response to a desire to update strategy and legislation—often driven by the expiration of current documents or engagement with development partner—not the other way around. Current reviews also do not focus explicitly on WfD strategy, as the NHRDTP and Tertiary Education Policy, the key strategic documents for WfD, have not been completed.

Several non-government stakeholders occasionally act as champions who highlight the importance of skills to broader economic and social development goals. These stakeholders include:

- *The Solomon Islands Association of Rural Training Centres*, which represents the country's 41 Vocational Rural Training Centers (VRTCs). VRTCs are widely seen as bearing the role of training youth for rural livelihoods, rather than for urban, international, or emerging employment sectors. There are discussions about more completely integrating VRTCs into the formal education and training system, but this is something that is far from settled.
- *The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI)* is the main representative organization for the private sector in Solomon Islands.
- Given the large proportion of government financing in Solomon Islands that originates from development assistance, the role of

development partners as stakeholders in WfD is also important.

### Policy Goal 2: Fostering a Demand-led Approach to WfD

Effective advocacy for WfD requires credible assessments of the demand for skills, engagement of employers in shaping the country's WfD agenda, and incentives for employers to support skills development. Policy Goal 2 incorporates these ideas and benchmarks the system according to the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to: (i) establish clarity on the demand for skills and areas of critical constraint; and (ii) engage employers in setting WfD priorities and enhancing skills-upgrading for workers.

Solomon Islands is rated at the **Emerging** level (2.0), reflecting the fact that studies assessing skills constraints and their implications for economic development are occasional and uncoordinated. Employer engagement in influencing WfD strategy is largely limited to specific engagements around existing government or development partner initiatives.

The government, SICCI, and development partners have sponsored a range of assessments in the past 10 years, but few have been done on a regular basis. The limited number of studies and their lack of detail make identification of critical skills constraints in key economic areas difficult. Since gaps in labor market information hamper the ability to make strategic decisions about the allocation of resources for WfD, development partners in recent years have funded several studies with the cooperation and support of the government to expand, consolidate, and organize information on labor market conditions and system funding and regulatory practices.

The government Census and Household Income and Expenditure Survey contains information that provides very limited insights on current skills demand and supply such as educational attainment, employment status, and the primary sectors and occupations in which individuals work. In addition, surveys conducted by SICCI among its members, most recently in 2012, have shed some light on skills constraints faced by businesses in Solomon Islands. This survey is not conducted annually due to resource constraints and is limited to SICCI's members, which are mainly larger, formal-sector firms. The private formal sector is estimated to account for only 13 percent of total employment in Solomon Islands, meaning that conditions in much of the economy are not captured.

A more comprehensive picture of skills constraints could be provided by broader employer surveys, but neither the government nor other stakeholders conduct these. Some information, albeit limited, on labor market conditions does flow to the government through informal channels, such as the monitoring of job postings in newspapers and of visa applications for skilled workers by Solomon Islands-based firms. Finally, data that are collected are not always consolidated and managed in a way that makes the information available to other ministries or decision-makers. Table 4 lists labor market assessment reports.

In advanced systems, employers take a major and proactive role in influencing WfD strategy. In Solomon Islands, employer input is sporadic and often initiated by government during the development of specific initiatives such as the NHRDTP and Tertiary Education Policy. This reflects a lack of initiative on both sides. The government does not consistently seek employer input to inform strategic WfD decisions, nor does it provide incentives or support to allow employers to play a more effective role at the strategy level.

### Policy Goal 3: Strengthening Critical Coordination for Implementation

Ensuring that the efforts of multiple stakeholders involved in WfD are aligned with the country's key socioeconomic priorities is an important goal of strategic coordination. Such coordination typically requires leadership at a sufficiently high level to overcome barriers to cross-sector or cross-ministerial cooperation. Policy Goal 3 examines the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to formalize roles and responsibilities for coordinated action on strategic priorities.

Solomon Islands is rated at the **Latent** level (1.7). Formal, legally-defined roles and responsibilities for WfD for government entities have not resulted in coordinated action to implement strategic WfD initiatives. The activities of government ministries and agencies are often fragmented, though there are encouraging signs of increasing coherence and collaboration in the government's approach to WfD. Other stakeholders are not consistently active in strategic WfD initiatives.

MDPAC has played a leading role in the development of the NHRDTP in cooperation with MEHRD. While both the NHRDTP and MEHRD's Tertiary Education Policy assert the need for a multi-stakeholder body to lead the collection and analysis of information on labor market demand, recommend priorities for human resource development, and formalize coordination on strategic WfD issues, at present such a dedicated body does not exist.

Coordination among ministries on shared priorities is often weak, with the mandates of ministries having been described as 'disjointed' and with gaps in responsibility emerging in certain key areas. For example, both MDPAC and MCILI collect labor market information, but this is not often shared between the two or disseminated more widely.

Non-government stakeholders such as SICCI, SINU, and Solomon Islands Association of Vocational and Rural Training Centers (SIVRTC) are not given formal roles and responsibilities for WfD strategy and implementation by law. This may change as there is consensus among government officials that non-government stakeholder input is essential for strengthening the WfD systems.

**Table 4: List of assessments of the labor market**

Title	Year
"Tracing Their Steps": Training Outcomes of RTC Graduates in Solomon Islands	2006
Study to support the development of a National Skills Training Plan	2007
Implementation Plan for National Skills Training Plan Recommendations	2007
Peoples Survey 2008	2008
Report on 2009 Housing Census	2009
"Stayin' Alive" Social Research on Livelihoods in Honiara	2009
Sources of Growth Analysis	2010
Skills in Demand: Survey of Employers	2011
Literacy and Educational Experience Survey: Renbel and Isabel Survey Report	2011
Pacific Labor Market Note	2011
The Draft National Human Resource Development and Training Plan	2012
Skills for Solomon Islands: Opening New Opportunities	2012
Labor Market and Community Skills Needs Analysis	2012
Solomon Islands 2009 Population and Housing Census: Report on Economic Activity and Labour Force	2013
Review and Analysis of the Demand for Skills in the Solomon Islands Labour Market	2013
Research into the Financing of TVET in the Pacific: Solomon Islands Country Report	2014

## 5. Governing the System for Workforce Development

An important function of WfD authorities is to foster efficient and equitable funding of investments in workforce development, facilitate effective skills acquisition by individuals, and enable employers to meet their demand for skilled workers in a timely manner. The objective is to minimize systemic impediments to skills acquisition and mismatches in skills supply and demand. This chapter begins with a brief description of how the WfD system is organized and governed before presenting the detailed SABER-WfD findings on System Oversight and their policy implications.

### Overall Institutional Landscape

The Education Act 1978 is the foundational legislation that establishes the structure, mandate, and responsibilities of the education sector. It establishes the three levels of governance: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), which is the central authority; Education Authorities,<sup>28</sup> which are the sub-national authorities; and schools. The Education Authorities are responsible for managing their respective schools (namely private, public, and mission

schools). There are 10 Education Authorities responsible for vocational and rural training centers.

The education and training system consists of four levels: early childhood; primary; secondary; and tertiary education (see Table 5). Tertiary education is provided through the Solomon Islands National University (SINU), as well as local branches of University of the South Pacific (USP) and University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), one regional TVET provider and 41 Vocational Rural Training Centers (VRTCs) (the characteristics of these types of providers are described in more detail in Annex 2). Facilitated by government scholarships, several hundred students pursue higher education abroad, most commonly in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, and Australia. While there are few formal barriers to progression through these institutions, in practice, finance and the low number of available spaces both in VRTCs and universities pose constraints to progression to tertiary education and training. Pathways are also not particularly formalized, creating problems especially for those who do not come through the formal education and training system. Qualifications issued at VRTCs or at many private training centers are not always

**Table 5: Solomon Islands Education and Training System**

Solomon Islands School System Structure		
Level of Education	Age	Grade/Year
Early Childhood Education	3 – 5	Pre-school
Primary School	6 – 13	Grade 1 to Grade 6
Secondary School	14+	Form 1 to Form 6
Post Secondary School Education and Training ( <i>known as tertiary sector</i> )	19+	Form 7, TVET, college and university

Source: MEHRD Performance Assessment Framework 2009-2011

<sup>28</sup> All schools including vocational and rural training centers must be aligned to an Education Authority.

recognized as a basis for progression to further education.

The structure of Solomon Islands' education and training supply system is outlined in Figure 12.

WfD in Solomon Islands is funded through three separate budgets: the Recurrent Budget, the Establishment Budget prepared by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, and the Development Budget. The Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) is responsible for the preparation of the Development Budget, which is focused on donor and government contributions to development initiatives. The Development Budget is made up of projects and programs that are specifically targeted at achieving the development goals outlined in the national development plan. Some donor funding supports both the Recurrent Budget and the Development Budget. The government budget relies heavily on donor support, which is estimated at \$924.6 million.<sup>29</sup> Major donors include New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Taiwan (China), Asian Development Bank, and the EU.

There is very little information on funding data dedicated to WfD, although more is known in relation to the funding of formal education and training. Solomon Islands' total public consolidated expenditure on education and training (across all education sectors) was an average of 27.6 percent of the national budget between 2009 and 2012.<sup>30 31</sup> Over this period, the four-year average of the MEHRD budget for the TVET subsector was 3 percent (not including government support to SINU), while support to the higher education subsector over the same period averaged 25.6 percent of the education budget. In addition, the

government provides an overwhelming proportion of the higher education subsector budget to providing scholarships, which in 2011 was calculated as 71.7 percent (including donor contributions).<sup>32</sup> None of these scholarships related to TVET programs.<sup>33</sup>

Two recent studies have attempted to determine the cost per student in the tertiary education and training sector. Gannicott (2012) indicated that the average cost per higher education student was SI\$70,462 and for TVET students SI\$7,352. Bateman et al (draft 2014) indicates that, for selected SINU programs, the cost per TVET student varied between SI\$28,302 and SI\$40,459 per annum, and for non-specialist VRTC's the cost per student varied from SI\$2,883 to SI\$11,495 per annum. For two VRTC's that provide services to students with disabilities, the annual cost per TVET student varied from SI\$21,258 to SI\$99,075.<sup>34</sup> It is too soon for these reports to inform government policy.

<sup>29</sup> Solomon Islands Budget 2013: Budget Strategy and Outlook.

<sup>30</sup> Gannicott (2012), based on SIG Recurrent and Development Budgets, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.

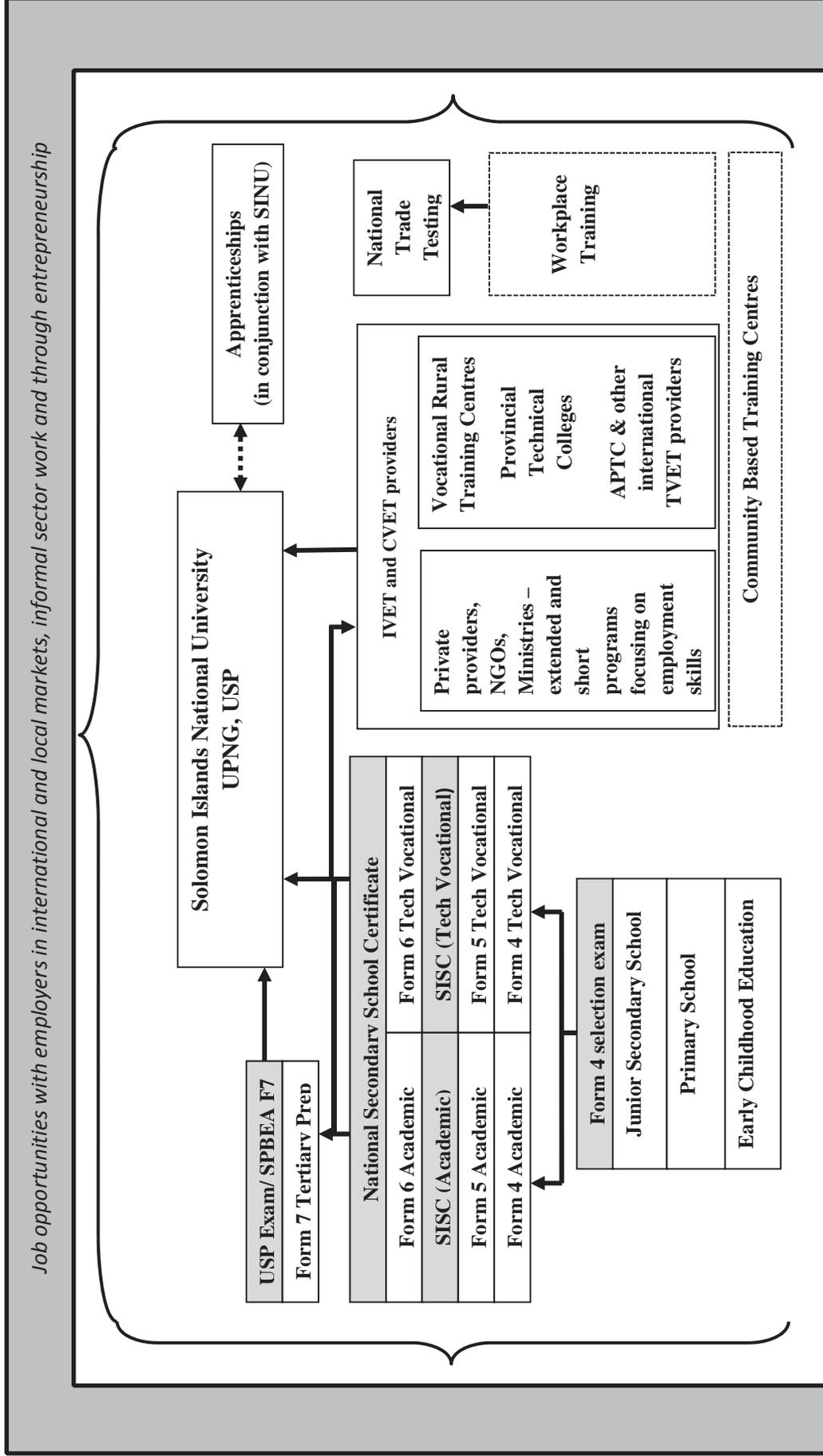
<sup>31</sup> This can be compared to an average of 16 percent for educational expenditure as a percentage of public spending in developing countries. UNESCO Table 9, as cited in Gannicott (2012).

<sup>32</sup> Gannicott (2012).

<sup>33</sup> Bateman et al (draft 2014).

<sup>34</sup> Bateman et al (draft 2014).

Figure 12: Structure of Solomon Islands' Education and Training Supply System <sup>35</sup>



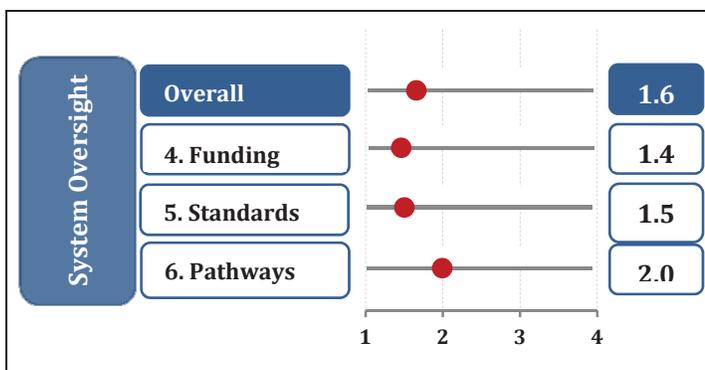
<sup>35</sup> Adapted from NHRDTP 2013-2015.

## SABER-WfD Ratings on System Oversight

The SABER-WfD framework identifies three pertinent Policy Goals corresponding to oversight mechanisms for influencing the choices of individuals, training providers, and employers: (i) ensuring efficiency and equity in funding; (ii) assuring relevant and reliable standards; and (iii) diversifying pathways for skills acquisition. The ratings for these Policy Goals are presented and explained below, followed by a reflection on their implications for policy dialogue.

Based on the data collected by the SABER-WfD questionnaire Solomon Islands received an overall rating of 1.6 (**Latent**) for the System Oversight Dimension (see Figure 13). This score is the average of the ratings for the underlying Policy Goals: ensuring efficiency and equity of funding (1.4); assuring relevant and reliable standards (1.5); and diversifying pathways for skills acquisition (2.0). Across all three Policy Goals, these ratings are just about at the average for low and lower-middle income countries for which SABER-WfD results have been generated. The explanation for these ratings and their implications follow below.

Figure 13: SABER-WfD Ratings of Dimension 2



Note: See Figure 2 for an explanation of the scale on the horizontal axis.  
 Source: Based on analysis of the data collected using the SABER-WfD questionnaire.

## Policy Goal 4: Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding

WfD requires a significant investment of resources by the government, households, and employers. To ensure these resources are effectively used, it is important to examine the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to: (i) ensure stable funding for effective programs in initial, continuing, and targeted VET; (ii) monitor and assess equity in funding; and (iii) foster partnerships with employers for funding WfD.

Solomon Islands is rated at the **Latent** level on Policy Goal 4 (1.4). The rating reflects the existence of rudimentary procedures for allocating funds to SINU and VRTC and for allocating scholarships, and an undeveloped culture of assessment of the impact of funding on beneficiaries. The fact that the government does not facilitate partnerships between training providers and employers is also consistent with a latent level of development.

Budgeting for Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) is routine for both the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCIL) through the annual budget process. Budget estimates are largely based on actual budget expenditure from previous years with some consideration of expected enrollments. MEHRD provides financial support to VRTCs through two payments per year, dependent on submission of SIEMIS (Solomon Islands Education Information Management System) data and on twice yearly retirement reports that document how the government grants were spent. Non-submission of SIEMIS data or retirement reports results in suspension of grants (at least in principle). Some Education Authorities also receive a grant from MEHRD to assist in the management of schools and VRTCs. The MCIL budget allocation includes

management of the apprenticeship scheme and assessment of graduates from VRTC and existing workers.

Government funding for Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) is almost entirely directed at the Institute for Public Administration and Management (IPAM) for the training of public sector employees. The funding for IPAM is determined through consultation with client ministries. Other CVET funding is provided through the universities—SINU, USP, and UPNG)—with the government contributing annual budget allocations to both SINU and USP. However, there is no government budget funding for on-the-job training for small/medium enterprises and no direct support for individuals seeking to upgrade their skills or learn new ones.

Short-cycle courses and training-related active labor market programs receive no routine and sustained support in the government budget. This gap, which is reflected in the low score for this Policy Goal, potentially leaves a large portion of the population that is not in formal training or education without stable access to such services. Almost all projects to support short-term training and employment services for specific beneficiary groups are donor funded (e.g., Honiara City Council’s World Bank-funded Rapid Employment Project, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community’s Australia-funded Youth at Work Project). Because they are not overseen by one specific entity, coordination can prove challenging.

There have been very few reviews of the impact of funding decisions on beneficiaries, which limits the quality of information on the funding procedures’ efficiency and impact on equity. IPAM is the one government agency that undertakes such reviews at regular intervals, with the last external review being conducted in 2012.

The National Training Unit within MEHRD manages the allocation of scholarships. Scholarships in the Solomon Islands are a complex mix of various strategies to provide access to education. Gannicott (2012) indicates that in the higher education subsector budget for 2011, administration, overheads, and salaries amounted to 2.6 percent, while institution support was 25.7 percent and scholarships 71.7 percent (including support to SINU School of Education, and scholarships funded by partners such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Taiwan, China). Very little of this money is used to provide scholarships for TVET. In addition, although the level of funding is significant, there is no strategic process in place to use scholarship funding to address equity issues, to drive a change in TVET provision, or to target WfD priorities.<sup>36</sup>

The government is not actively engaged in making partnership arrangements with employers, except for the apprenticeship program, which is legislated. Selected employers, as members of the apprenticeship board, influence the training requirements for apprentices. A small number of employers provide facilities and equipment for on-site training and provide a log of apprentice activities for assessment purposes. SINU is the only provider of off-the-job apprenticeship training. Benefits to employers include the chance to train and screen potential new employees. MEHRD (through an EU project) has also developed a draft Memorandum of Agreement with employers, but this has not yet been finalized or activated.

#### Policy Goal 5: Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards

The WfD system comprises a wide range of training providers offering programs at various levels in diverse fields. An effective system of standards and accreditation enables students to document what they have learned and employers to identify

<sup>36</sup> Bateman et al draft 2014.

workers with the relevant skills. For Policy Goal 5, it is therefore important to assess the status of policies and institutions to: (i) set reliable competency standards; (ii) assure the credibility of skills testing and certification; and (iii) develop and enforce accreditation standards for maintaining the quality of training provision.

Solomon Islands is rated at the **Latent** level (1.5) for this Policy Goal. The score is consistent with the country's lack of procedures for (i) developing occupational competencies, standards, or curriculum; (ii) putting in place a widely recognized testing regime to certify skills; and (iii) approving and monitoring qualifications and training providers.

Solomon Islands is establishing the Solomon Islands Qualifications Framework (SIQF), but the draft framework has not yet been endorsed and the legislation has not been enacted. At this stage, no national competency standards have been developed, although outdated standards from the International Labour Organization are used to develop a competency-based curriculum for a few trades at SINU, and are the basis of trade testing by the National Trade Training and Testing (NTTT) Unit in MCILI. Universities approve their own curricula internally, while VRTC's utilize an internally developed program for training purposes.

There is no system in place to establish registration standards for providers to ensure a minimum level of quality of provider facilities, equipment, staffing, and student support services. It is envisaged that registration standards will be established as part of the process of developing the SIQF and the establishment of a quality assurance and accrediting agency. These initiatives have not been implemented as yet.

The universities within Solomon Islands are established through an act of parliament and have self-governing status, which includes the

development and conduct of assessments and issuance of qualifications. The NTTT Unit undertakes testing of apprenticeships based on training schedules set by the apprenticeship board and also tests VRTC graduates and existing workers for a few occupations. However, very few apprentices are being tested each year. The NTTT Unit tests both theory and practical application. In universities the focus is on normative testing, whereas in the VRTC's the focus is more on practical application.

At a systems level, testing does not form a reliable indication of trainee skills, as there is little standardization in procedures, content, or quality of testing, leaving employers to rely on their own knowledge of the issuing institution to judge the quality of graduates.

#### Policy Goal 6: Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition

In dynamic economic environments, workers need to acquire new skills and competencies as well as keep their skills up to date throughout their working lives. They are best served by a system of initial and continuing education and training that promotes lifelong learning by offering clear and flexible pathways for transfers across programs, progression to higher levels of training, and access to programs in other fields. For those already in the workforce, schemes for recognition of prior learning (RPL) are essential to allow individuals to efficiently upgrade their skills and learn new ones. Policy Goal 6 therefore evaluates the extent to which policies and institutions are in place to: (i) enable progression through multiple learning pathways, including for students in TVET streams; (ii) facilitate the recognition of prior learning; and (iii) provide targeted support services, particularly among the disadvantaged.

Solomon Islands is rated at an **Emerging** level (2.0) for Policy Goal 6. While limited pathways are available for TVET students to progress to other

types of programs, several parts of the system are still disconnected and there have been no significant system-wide efforts to facilitate the recognition of prior formal or informal learning. Outside of three dedicated VRTC, there is no support for training services for disadvantaged students, such as those with disabilities, creating barriers to access for such students.

TVET options at the tertiary level include VRTCs as well as vocational programs at SINU, USP, and UPNG. In terms of access to programs, the certifications issued by VRTCs have some value for admission to SINU, but this is not through formal arrangements. In some cases, students who have earned a VET qualification from SINU or USP can use the qualification to access further, non-vocational study within those providers. Certificates issued to students by the NTTT Unit for completion of an apprenticeship do not consistently enable further study but are recognized by employers. However, employers do not always put a lot of faith in these certificates to signal quality. Nonetheless, having a certificate does improve the employment prospects of individuals and can improve earnings.

SINU, USP, and UPNG will recognize for admission and cross-credit each other's qualifications on an individual basis. IPAM has one qualification at the diploma level approved through an international university that could be recognized by other training providers but, given the lack of formal procedures, this is not guaranteed. RPL is not integrated into provider processes. The testing conducted by the NTTT Unit is the only avenue to certify the skills and knowledge gained through formal, informal, and non-formal learning, and it is limited to five trades.

The government does not directly provide or fund services to support further occupational and career development for the general public. IPAM is the main way that the government provides support to

those already in the labor force seeking training, albeit targeting only public servants. The government supports three VRTCs that are dedicated to serving people with disabilities through the standard twice yearly disbursements available to all VRTCs, but provides no other targeted support for members of disadvantaged populations to access job training and career development services.

## 6. Managing Service Delivery

Training providers, both non-state and government, are the main channels through which the country's policies in WfD are translated into results on the ground. This chapter therefore provides a brief overview of the composition of providers and the types of services available in the system before presenting the detailed SABER-WfD findings on Service Delivery and their policy implications.

### Overview of the Delivery of Training Services

The education and training system is heavily reliant on Christian mission schools and centers at the secondary and tertiary levels; other than SINU, there are only two government national secondary schools and four Vocational Rural Training Centers (VRTCs) administered by non-religious Education Authorities. Tertiary education includes both higher education and TVET, with key policy documents only recognizing provision through universities (and not VRTCs) as formal education and training.

In the tertiary education and training sector:

- Higher education is provided by three universities: Solomon Islands National University (SINU); University of the South Pacific (USP); and University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).
- TVET is mainly provided by: (i) SINU (although the other two universities offer TVET programs); (ii) 41 VRTCs across the provinces; (iii) the National Trade Training and Testing (NTTT) Unit, which provides licensing assessments for apprentices and trade testing of existing workers and exiting VRTC graduates; (iv) Institute for Public Administration and Management (IPAM), which provides professional and continuing education to public servants and, on a

contractual basis, to employees of other formal sector employers; (v) Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC), a training provider that offers Australian-standard skills and qualifications funded through the Australian aid program;<sup>37</sup> and (vi) private providers and NGOs.

- Non-formal training is provided through 56 Community Based Training Centres across the provinces, as well as through adult literacy classes and *ad-hoc* training offered in the workplace and by NGOs.

Annex 2 includes an overview of tertiary education and training providers.

### SABER-WfD Ratings on Service Delivery

The Policy Goals for this Dimension in the SABER-WfD framework focus on the following three aspects of service delivery: (i) enabling diversity and excellence in training provision; (ii) fostering relevance in public training programs; and (iii) enhancing evidence-based accountability for results. The ratings for these three Policy Goals are presented below and are followed by a reflection on their implications for policy dialogue.

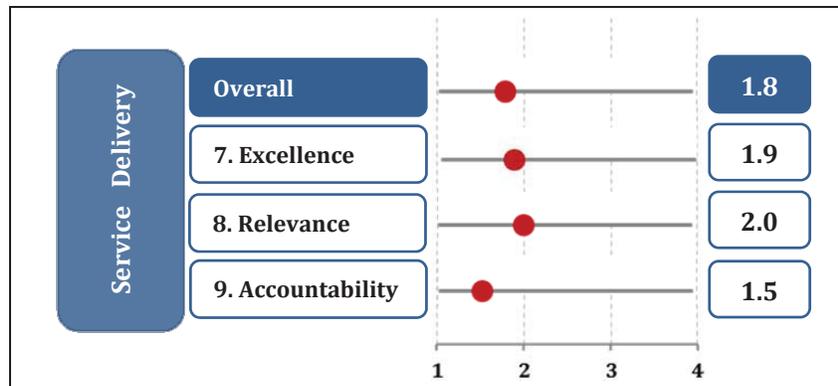
Based on data collected by the SABER-WfD questionnaire, Solomon Islands receives an overall rating of 1.8 (**Emerging**) for the Service Delivery Dimension (see Figure 14). This score is the average of the ratings for the underlying Policy Goals: (i) enabling diversity and excellence in training provision (1.9); (ii) fostering relevance in public training programs (2.0); and (iii) enhancing evidence-based accountability for results (1.5). Solomon Islands' ratings place it below the average of low and lower-middle income countries with

<sup>37</sup> APTC is a regional TVET provider. It is an Australian government initiative funded by the Australian government and managed through its aid program.

respect to quality assurance of private providers, covered in Policy Goal 7, and to the use of data for program and system monitoring and improvement, covered in Policy Goal 9. By contrast, it leads among comparator countries for Policy Goal 8, which is concerned with managing public providers to

ensure quality and relevance. It is important to note that this result is driven by the relative strength of SINU and the NTTT Unit in soliciting input from employers and is balanced against less advanced practices elsewhere. The explanation for these ratings and their implications follow below.

Figure 14: SABER-WfD Ratings of Dimension 3



Note: See Figure 2 for an explanation of the scale on the horizontal axis.

Source: Based on analysis of the data collected using the SABER-WfD questionnaire.

### Policy Goal 7: Enabling Diversity and Excellence in Training Provision

Because the demand for skills is impossible to predict with precision, having a diversity of providers is a feature of strong WfD systems. Among non-state providers, the challenge is to temper the profit motive or other program agendas with appropriate regulation to assure quality and relevance. Among state providers a key concern is their responsiveness to the demand for skills from employers and students. Striking the right balance between institutional autonomy and accountability is one approach to address this concern. Policy Goal 7 takes these ideas into account and benchmarks the system according to the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to: (i) encourage and regulate non-state provision of training and (ii) foster excellence in public training provision by combining incentives and autonomy in the management of public institutions.

Solomon Islands scored at the **Emerging** level for Policy Goal 7 (1.9). A range of non-state providers are active in the education and training market, but as the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) does not recognize or have a list of non-state providers in Solomon Islands, so it is unclear how many there are. There are few government incentives to encourage non-state provision and no quality assurance arrangements in place to approve and monitor programs or providers. The three universities have considerable autonomy, whereas IPAM resides within a ministry and its autonomy is limited. The government does not require any providers, public or private, to meet implicit or explicit performance targets, nor does it provide financial or non-financial incentives for provider performance.

A range of non-state training providers are allowed to operate, including NGOs and private providers (for profit and not for profit). Private providers are required to register as a business, but do not need

to seek approval to be an education and training provider or to deliver programs. There are no incentives to encourage private providers, nor are there government measures to assure the quality of their education and training provision.

VRTCs are notionally recognized under the Education Act as ‘schools’ and are required to be listed with MEHRD to receive financial support through annual grants and teaching staff salaries. Some measures have been established in order to monitor VRTCs, such as reporting on enrollment, facilities, staff, and financial data. A small number of audits are conducted annually, but these audits focus on administrative data and facilities, and non-compliance does not have consequences. Measures to ensure accountability for results with the use of public funds are not in place.

Legislation affords SINU, USP and UPNG broad institutional autonomy over management decisions by giving them status as self-governing institutions. All have boards to which they are accountable, but formal mechanisms for handling non-academic complaints do not exist at SINU. IPAM has less autonomy with respect to selection and recruitment of staff given that it is a government agency, and complaints are handled through normal public service channels.

The government has no control over program provision at any of the providers, and sets no targets or incentives for the performance of public providers like IPAM, SINU, and USP. These institutions follow formal internal procedures for opening and closing programs, with IPAM offering programs in response to consultations with client ministries and SINU making decisions about program offerings based on the availability of funding and equipment, student interest, and informal employer feedback.

### Policy Goal 8: Fostering Relevance in Public Training Programs

Public training institutions need reliable information on current and emerging skills demands in order to keep their program offerings relevant to market conditions. It is therefore desirable for public training institutions to establish and maintain relationships with employers, industry associations, and research institutions. Such partners are a source of both information about skills competencies and expertise and advice on curriculum design and technical specifications for training facilities and equipment. They can also help create opportunities for workplace training for students and continuing professional development for instructors and administrators. Policy Goal 8 considers the extent to which arrangements are in place for public training providers to: (i) benefit from industry and expert input in the design of programs and (ii) recruit administrators and instructors with relevant qualifications and support their professional development.

Solomon Islands is evaluated at the **Emerging** level of development for Policy Goal 8 (2.0). This score reflects the fact that some training providers have informal and formal links with industry in regard to curricula design and in offering internship programs. The score on this Goal also reflects the fact that instructors and administrators of public training providers and at VRTCs<sup>38</sup> are required to meet basic vocational and teaching skills and knowledge requirements; however, for all providers, opportunities for the professional development of heads of schools and instructors

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<sup>38</sup> VRTCs have not been considered public institutions for the purposes of this study. However, the government pays for staff salaries (in addition to providing recurrent funding), giving the government *de facto* influence over policies toward teachers and administrators and other operational matters. Because policies toward staff are a major consideration of this Policy Goal, and because VRTCs make up a large part of the non-tertiary post-secondary training supply in Solomon Islands, they have been considered here so as to provide a more complete picture of measures taken to ensure the relevance of TVET to industry.

are not managed strategically by the provider and are limited.

The majority of institutions have links with industry to improve training relevance and quality. For VRTC, these links are informal or weak, with some centers providing their students with work placement in local industry, (e.g., shipyards, construction). For universities, formal links are established through course development and review processes. With the apprenticeship scheme, industry input on training and assessment requirements through participation in trade-specific Industry Advisory Groups is required under the Labour Act. While five trades are recognized, Industry Advisory Groups have been established for only three of the trades. A small number of employers host apprentices and participate in student assessment.

In addition, approximately 50 percent of firms surveyed for the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI)'s *Skills in Demand 2011-2012* report claimed to offer some form of internship or volunteer program, and 85 percent of respondents indicated that they had some sort of an affiliation with a tertiary institution. Bateman et al (draft 2014) noted that 80 industry-sponsored students were enrolled in SINU in 2012.

State providers, such as the universities and IPAM, have established processes to assure that heads of schools and instructors are appropriately qualified. Heads and instructors of public training institutions (such as SINU, USP, and IPAM), as well as VRTC instructors whose salaries are paid by the government, are recruited on the basis of minimum academic qualifications and teaching experience. However, for both heads of school and for instructors, there are limited opportunities for in-service training. For SINU, its budget allocates monies to professional development, but only five scholarships are provided each year across all staff.

The government's general scholarship scheme, as well as scholarships funded by development partners and other organizations, are an additional source of funding for professional development that allow a limited number of heads and instructors to pursue formal study either in Solomon Islands or abroad each year.

For VRTC, the *Teaching Service Handbook* (2012) outlines five categories of employment and 4-8 levels of pay within each category. This handbook requires heads of schools to have at least a vocational certificate, a teaching certificate, and extensive teaching experience. Instructors are required to have at a minimum a vocational certificate. Those instructors not registered with the Teaching Service (under MEHRD) and not paid by MEHRD may not have formal qualifications and/or experience; they are recruited and paid solely by the VRTC. In-service training opportunities for VRTC staff are rare.

#### Policy Goal 9: Enhancing Evidence-Based Accountability for Results

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of service delivery are important for both quality assurance and system improvement. Accomplishing this function requires gathering and analyzing data from a variety of sources. The reporting of institution-level data enables the relevant authorities to ensure that providers are delivering on expected outcomes. Such data also enable these authorities to identify gaps or challenges in training provision or areas of good practice. Additionally, periodic surveys and evaluations of major programs generate complementary information that can help enhance the relevance and efficiency of the system as a whole. Policy Goal 9 considers these ideas when assessing the system's arrangements for collecting and using data to focus attention on training outcomes, efficiency, and innovation in service delivery.

Solomon Islands scores at the **Latent** level for Policy Goal 9 (1.5). This low score reflects the fact that the government does not collect or consolidate administrative data from training providers in a system-wide database for analysis of provider performance and system trends or to inform policy. Sources of data on labor market outcomes are limited to a few *ad-hoc* skills-related surveys or studies.

The government does not require any training providers to submit administrative data (e.g., enrollments, completion rates, student satisfaction, and employment outcomes). Nor is there any consolidation of data to analyze provider performance and system trends or to inform policy. There is no requirement regarding the format for provider data retention, and so systems for retention vary from large-scale databases in universities to paper based or very limited records in VRTCs. There is thus no consolidated information of the nature and extent of education and training provision in the tertiary sector. MEHRD does not report TVET or higher education enrollment data in Annual Reports or in the Performance Assessment reporting process.

VRTCs are required to submit data to be eligible to receive the government grants. However, there is a low level of SIEMIS survey returns and a lack of completeness of data.<sup>39</sup> SIEMIS data are used for reconciliation of grant monies and for determining the required number of staff, but are not at a level of quality and completeness where robust system-level analysis is possible. Administrative data on funds reconciliation, salaries, and assets are collected but rarely used to guide investments beyond teacher payments. In addition, administrative data are limited to inputs (e.g., the number of toilets to students, access to clean water, student-teacher ratios, etc.).

Universities report administrative data through their annual reports; however, the data are not reviewed or collated at the ministerial level. IPAM and the NTTT Unit report data within their respective ministry's annual report. No data are collected from private providers or NGOs.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI) does not publish data on the employment and earnings of those who have completed the apprenticeship program or of graduates of NTTT Unit assessments, nor does it conduct any periodic or special surveys related to labor market conditions or other topics.

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<sup>39</sup> Bateman et al, draft 2014.

## Annex 1: Workforce Development Actions for Solomon Islands<sup>40</sup>

This matrix includes priority actions arising from the SABER - Solomon Islands Workforce Development Assessment. Responsibilities are proposed based on the consultations undertaken during the workforce development assessment. Resources are also proposed; please note that resource requirements are focused on existing or minor incremental resources (such as national consultants or staff positions).

Recommendation	Actions <i>Current: September 2014;</i> <i>Short term: Dec 2014;</i> <i>Medium term: Dec 2015</i>	Responsible
<b>1. Solomon Islands' leaders need to define the skills required for participatory economic development</b>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Submission for Cabinet approval on NHRDTP policy commitments and priority implementation resource requirements.</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Proposed SIQA and SITEC to prepare advice to cabinet on skills priorities for growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDPAC: Social Services Division</li> <li>• SIQA, SITEC (once they are in place)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Policy-makers need to sustain coordination and regularly participate in agreed meetings</b>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Enable regular and empowered participation by high-level staff from relevant ministries and stakeholders in meetings of formal coordination bodies in place and being developed (NHRDTC, SITEC, and SIQA). Efforts need to be supported by timelines and secretariat resources from central coordinating agencies such as MDPAC and the NHRDTC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEHRD: TVET Division and Under-Secretary for Tertiary Education</li> <li>• MCILI: Labour Commissioner, National Trade Testing Officers</li> <li>• MDPAC: Director, Social Services Division</li> <li>• SICCI: CEO or delegate</li> <li>• Other agencies as per draft NHRDTC</li> <li>• SITEC, SIQA (once they are in place)</li> </ul>
<b>3. Employers need to participate so as to guide training policy and standards</b>	<p><b>Current:</b> SICCI and other employer representatives to participate in NHRDTC.</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Employer groups to participate in emerging SITEC and SIQA structures.</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Support and incentivize employer groups to initiate informal meeting groups to identify sector training needs and standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SICCI to facilitate and coordinate employers' participation</li> </ul>
<b>4. Policy-makers should develop a strategy and programs to support</b>	<p><b>Medium term:</b> As a member of the NHRDTC, MCILI could lead on developing strategy and key programs for informal livelihood support including</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCILI (staff responsibilities to be identified)</li> </ul>

<sup>40</sup> Presented to Solomon Islands stakeholders at a SABER-WfD dissemination meeting on June 26, 2014.

Recommendation	Actions <i>Current: September 2014;</i> <i>Short term: Dec 2014;</i> <i>Medium term: Dec 2015</i>	Responsible
the informal economy including skills development for livelihoods.	skills development. Experience of micro-business grants, small business training and informal village skills training can contribute.	
<b>5. Build stronger pathways connecting the pre-employment education and training system, including recognition of prior learning as a key component in the SIQF</b>	<b>Short term:</b> Development of SIQF to include recognition of prior learning. <b>Short term:</b> MEHRD should work with training providers to identify and take action on the priorities to improve pathways into formal education and training and facilitate flexible pathways for progression and transfer (e.g., certificate recognition and development of joint programs; and provide multiple exit points e.g. embed lower level qualifications in higher level qualifications).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEHRD Under Secretary for Tertiary and the TVET Division (with Australian Government support)</li> <li>• SITEC, SIQA (once they are in place)</li> </ul>
<b>6. Include robust quality standards in the SIQF to ensure SI qualifications are valued.</b>	<b>Short term:</b> Increase the presence of providers delivering training that are quality assured by a reliable international body.  <b>Medium term:</b> Development of SIQF to include a two-step registration process to ensure that there are robust quality standards. This will require employer coordination and participation in meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEHRD Under Secretary for Tertiary and the TVET Division</li> <li>• SITEC, SIQA (once they are in place)</li> </ul>
<b>7. Introduce basic incentive and efficiency measures for tertiary education and training funding</b>	<b>Short term:</b> Seek technical advice to develop proposals for new funding arrangements based on evidence and analysis to date. MT: SITEC to continue work of developing new funding arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEHRD Under Secretary for Tertiary and the TVET Division</li> <li>• SITEC, SIQA (once they are in place)</li> </ul>
<b>8. Invest in the capacity to measure education and training performance and jobs demand</b>	<b>Short term:</b> Recruit for national data coordinator positions; recruit international technical assistance specialist as needed. <b>Short term:</b> Implement measures to enable compliance with data reporting requirements by vocational training providers, something that can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Training Performance Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MEHRD Under Secretary for Tertiary, the TVET Division and Planning Coordination and Research Unit</li> <li>▪ SITEC, SIQA (once they are in place)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Recommendation	Actions <i>Current: September 2014;</i> <i>Short term: Dec 2014;</i> <i>Medium term: Dec 2015</i>	Responsible
	be undertaken as part of the current MEHRD and development partner strengthening of Solomon Islands' Education Management Information System (SIEMIS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Labor Market Data:</b> MDPAC Social Services Division and/or MCIL Labour Division</li> </ul>

### Annex 2: Summary of Key Providers

Provider	Summary
Solomon Islands National University (SINU)	Based in Honiara. Provides TVET certificate or diploma programs to students who enter after Form 3 or Form 6, as well as a small offering of degree programs. Government funding is provided to SINU along with apprenticeship sponsorship and support grants (or sponsorships) for student fees and living expenses, e.g. lunch.
VRTCs	Provides formal TVET provision throughout the provinces. Loosely managed by Education Authorities and are not seen by MEHRD as public providers under their direct control. However, if VRTCs register with the MEHRD they are provided with a per capita student grant and per capita student boarding grant (if relevant). Registered VRTCs (n=41) also have teaching staff salaries paid by MEHRD. There are only four of these 41 centers that do not have boarding facilities <sup>41</sup> , and three VRTCs provide education and training to students with disabilities. The VRTCs provide basic training programs in the areas of life skills, agriculture, small engines, carpentry, electrical and plumbing. Although the VRTCs have a narrow offering of programs, they have the potential to reach a wider range of students.
University of the South Pacific	Pacific regional university with a campus in Honiara. Provides a range of TVET and bridging programs, degrees and post graduate qualifications; in addition to a range of short programs through the Continuing and Community Education (CCCE) regional center.
Open College of The University of Papua New Guinea	Campus in Honiara. Provides a small number of distance and open programs including a bridging program, as well as TVET and tertiary education programs.
Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC)	Recently opened campus in Solomon Islands in collaboration with Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre – Henderson to provide a small number of trade programs. APTC is an Australian Government initiative funded by the Australian Government and managed through its aid program. The APTC was designed as a center of training, helping Pacific islanders to gain Australian-standard skills and qualifications for a wide range of vocational careers throughout the Pacific. APTC campuses are also located in Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.
Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM)	Part of the Ministry of Public Service. Provides training services to the workforce of the Government which is approximately 13,000 public officers including teachers, nurses and police officers, both in Honiara and the nine provinces of the country. <sup>42</sup> Programs include Public Administration and Supervision, Leadership and Management, Information, Communication and Technology skills, Financial Management and the Public Service Induction Program which aims to familiarize public officers with the Public Service culture. It also provides a range of short programs (e.g. code of conduct, presentation skills, negotiation skills, report writing,

<sup>41</sup> Don Bosco – Henderson, St Peter’s, GSF and Tuaruhu.

<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Public Service (2013). *IPAM Learning and Development Prospectus 2013*.

Provider	Summary
	leadership skills, Microsoft programs) plus Diploma in Human Resource Management. <sup>43</sup> IPAM has provided similar programs to businesses on a fee for service basis.
National Trade Training and Testing Unit	Part of MCILI. Provides training support for those in the workforce (specific trade areas), undertakes proficiency assessments of completing apprentices and undertakes assessments of exiting students from VRTC and of those in the workforce. Proficiency assessments are conducted in the areas of: light mechanical, heavy mechanical, electrical, plumbing/allied areas, carpentry and joinery. The NTTT certificate assessments of VRTC students and employees are related to the same trade areas across the following levels: basic, intermediate and final.
Private providers <sup>44</sup>	There is very little documentation about private provider training provision in the Solomon Islands. There are a small number of private (for profit and not for profit providers) with most of the training appearing to be linked to business management, bookkeeping and ITC skills. These providers are not registered with MEHRD and are not acknowledged by MEHRD as formal training providers.
Other	A range of NGOs provide non-formal training. There are 56 community based learning centers across the provinces that provide short-term skills training or provide opportunities for the informal exchange of skills with communities. <sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> This program is delivered by the Divine Word University.

<sup>44</sup> Private providers are defined as those that are privately owned and are for-profit.

<sup>45</sup> Bateman et al, draft 2014.

### Annex 3: Sustainable Labor Market Information System

The table below summarizes current data sources that can form the basis of a sustainable labor market information system and presents and options for strengthening and better connecting this system. Complete information on all sources was not immediately available. Areas where more information is required have been noted in italics in this table.

Form of Data Collection	Content/ Questions	Current Status	Source	Next Steps/ Potential additional content
<b>1. Census</b>	Survey of entire adult population, therefore including entire workforce. Demographics and employment status. Includes 43 occupation categories but has potential for analysis of 400 occupations.	Analysis of 2009 Survey recently released. Curtain's report based on that census	NSO	A simple, appropriately-sized literacy question which produces more accurate data on functional literacy [e.g. – enumerator asks respondent to read & write a sentence]
<b>2. Household Income and Expenditure Survey</b>	Wage data by occupation and qualification [ <i>Level of detail unknown</i> ]	In preparation by National Statistics Office	NSO	
<b>3. Work visa approvals</b>	Occupation of foreign worker and name of employer	A available, used in R Curtain report	MCILI	Needs ISCO Template for collecting information on occupations
<b>4. Labour Force Survey</b>	Wage data by occupation and qualification, study field, size of employer, match between qualification, field of study and occupation	[ <i>More information required</i> ]	NSO	Requires use of ISCO
<b>5. Job Advertisements: Newspapers; Govt Gazette</b>	Occupation, qualification and work experience required	Available from newspapers and Govt Gazette – currently Pasifiki Employer Survey uses newspapers (SICCI?)	CBSI	Requires use of ISCO to code job descriptions
<b>6. Skills shortages lists in Australia and in NZ</b>	Information on specific occupations in demand	Available, used in R Curtain report	Aust & NZ Immigration website	
<b>7. National Provident Fund records</b>	Data on occupations and industry if coded to these categories	Quarterly figures available	NPF	Solomon Islands National Provident Fund
<b>8. CBSI Business sentiment survey</b>	[ <i>More information required</i> ]	[ <i>More information required</i> ]	CBSI	
<b>9. SICCI Employers Survey</b>	Workers required by sector, experience, qualifications, characteristics, characteristics of placement programs; affiliation with tertiary institution, graduates meeting employer demand, job functions difficult to fill and member specific job functions in demand, future employment needs by sector, member training practices, recommendations for government policy	Every two years – seeking funding to make annual.	SICCI	Current job vacancies; Longer term skill shortages and workforce skill gaps; Wages rates by occupation Occupations of foreign workers, if any; Recent employment growth/decline; Expectations of jobs growth, decline, stability for next three months Willingness to provide work placements or experience with them; Relations with TVET providers; Suggestions for better relations with providers
<b>10. 2009 MCILI, SMEC, SIMA and SISBEC national business survey of SME capacity.</b>	Size and skills needs of small-medium enterprises [ <i>More information required</i> ]	[ <i>More information required</i> ]	SMEC, SIMA, SISBEC	
<b>Further Options:</b>				
<b>(a) Graduate destination survey; (b) Use of SICCI Enterprise Database; (c) School-to-work Transition Survey (d) Self-employment and informal sector information</b>				

## Annex 4: Acronyms

APTC	Australia-Pacific Technical College
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development (now Australian Aid Program, DFAT)
CBTC	Community Based Training Centre
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
EA	Education Authority
ECE	Early childhood education
EFT	Effective full-time student
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPAM	Institute for Public Administration and Management
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
MCILI	Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration
MDPAC	Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
MFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
NEAP	National Education Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRDTP	National Human Resource Development and Training Plan
NSO	National Statistics Office
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

NTTT	National Trade Training and Testing
NTU	National Training Unit
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development (now the New Zealand Aid Programme, MFAT)
QA	Quality assurance
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SI	Solomon Islands
SIAVRTC	Solomon Islands Association of Vocational and Rural Training Centres
SICCI	Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SICHE	Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (now SINU)
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SIMA	Solomon Islands Monetary Authority
SINU	Solomon Islands National University
SISBEC	Solomon Islands Small Business Enterprise Centre
SISC	Solomon Islands School Certificate
SIQF	Solomon Islands Qualifications Framework
SME	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise
SMEC	Small and Medium Enterprise Council
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
USP	University of the South Pacific
VRTC	Vocational Rural Training Centre
WfD	Workforce Development

## Annex 5: The SABER-WfD Analytical Framework

		Policy Goal		Policy Action		Topic	
Dimension 1	Strategic Framework	G1	Setting a Strategic Direction	Provide sustained advocacy for WfD at the top leadership level	G1_T1	Advocacy for WfD to Support Economic Development	
					G1_T2	Strategic Focus and Decisions by the WfD Champions	
		G2	Fostering a Demand-Led Approach	Establish clarity on the demand for skills and areas of critical constraint	G2_T1	Overall Assessment of Economic Prospects and Skills Implications	
					G2_T2	Critical Skills Constraints in Priority Economic Sectors	
					G2_T3	Role of Employers and Industry	
					G2_T4	Skills-Upgrading Incentives for Employers	
					G2_T5	Monitoring of the Incentive Programs	
		G3	Strengthening Critical Coordination	Formalize key WfD roles for coordinated action on strategic priorities	G3_T1	Roles of Government Ministries and Agencies	
					G3_T2	Roles of Non-Government WfD Stakeholders	
G3_T3	Coordination for the Implementation of Strategic WfD Measures						
Dimension 2	System Oversight	G4	Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding	Provide stable funding for effective programs in initial, continuing and targeted vocational education and training	G4_T1	Overview of Funding for WfD	
					G4_T2	Recurrent Funding for Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET)	
					G4_T3	Recurrent Funding for Continuing Vocational Education and Training Programs (CVET)	
					G4_T4	Recurrent Funding for Training-related Active Labor Market Programs (ALMPs)	
					G4_T5	Equity in Funding for Training Programs	
					G4_T6	Partnerships between Training Providers and Employers	
		G5	Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards	Broaden the scope of competency standards as a basis for developing qualifications frameworks	G5_T1	Competency Standards and National Qualifications Frameworks	
					G5_T2	Competency Standards for Major Occupations	
					G5_T3	Occupational Skills Testing	
					G5_T4	Skills Testing and Certification	
					G5_T5	Skills Testing for Major Occupations	
					G5_T6	Government Oversight of Accreditation	
					G5_T7	Establishment of Accreditation Standards	
					G5_T8	Accreditation Requirements and Enforcement of Accreditation Standards	
					G5_T9	Incentives and Support for Accreditation	
		G6	Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition	Promote educational progression and permeability through multiple pathways, including for TVET students	G6_T1	Learning Pathways	
					G6_T2	Public Perception of Pathways for TVET	
					G6_T3	Articulation of Skills Certification	
G6_T4	Recognition of Prior Learning						
G6_T5	Support for Further Occupational and Career Development						
G6_T6	Training-related Provision of Services for the Disadvantaged						
Dimension 3	Service Delivery	G7	Enabling Diversity and Excellence in Training Provision	Encourage and regulate non-state provision of training	G7_T1	Scope and Formality of Non-State Training Provision	
					G7_T2	Incentives for Non-State Providers	
					G7_T3	Quality Assurance of Non-State Training Provision	
					G7_T4	Review of Policies towards Non-State Training Provision	
					G7_T5	Targets and Incentives for Public Training Institutions	
					G7_T6	Autonomy and Accountability of Public Training Institutions	
					G7_T7	Introduction and Closure of Public Training Programs	
		G8	Fostering Relevance in Public Training Programs	Integrate industry and expert input into the design and delivery of public training programs	G8_T1	Links between Training Institutions and Industry	
					G8_T2	Industry Role in the Design of Program Curricula	
					G8_T3	Industry Role in the Specification of Facility Standards	
					G8_T4	Links between Training and Research Institutions	
					G8_T5	Recruitment and In-Service Training of Heads of Public Training Institutions	
					G8_T6	Recruitment and In-Service Training of Instructors of Public Training Institutions	
		G9	Enhancing Evidence-based Accountability for Results	Expand the availability and use of policy-relevant data for focusing providers' attention on training outcomes, efficiency and innovation	G9_T1	Administrative Data from Training Providers	
					G9_T2	Survey and Other Data	
G9_T3	Use of Data to Monitor and Improve Program and System Performance						

## Annex 6: Rubrics for Scoring the SABER-WfD Data

Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework				
Level of Development				
Policy Goal	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
G1: Setting a Strategic Direction for WfD	Visible champions for WfD are either <b>absent</b> or take <b>no specific action</b> to advance strategic WfD priorities.	<b>Some</b> visible champions provide <i>ad-hoc</i> advocacy for WfD and have acted on <b>few</b> interventions to advance strategic WfD priorities; <b>no arrangements</b> exist to monitor and review implementation progress.	<b>Government leaders</b> exercise <b>sustained</b> advocacy for WfD with <b>occasional, ad-hoc</b> participation from <b>non-government leaders</b> ; their advocacy focuses on <b>selected</b> industries or economic sectors and manifests itself through <b>a range of</b> specific interventions; implementation progress is monitored, albeit through <i>ad-hoc</i> reviews.	<b>Both government and non-government leaders</b> exercise <b>sustained</b> advocacy for WfD, and rely on <b>routine, institutionalized</b> processes to collaborate on <b>well-integrated</b> interventions to advance a <b>strategic, economy-wide</b> WfD policy agenda; implementation progress is monitored and reviewed through <b>routine, institutionalized</b> processes.

Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework				
Level of Development				
Policy Goal	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
G2: Fostering a Demand-Led Approach to WfD	<p>There is <b>no assessment</b> of the country's economic prospects and their implications for skills; industry and employers have a <b>limited or no role</b> in defining strategic WfD priorities and receive <b>limited</b> support from the government for skills upgrading.</p>	<p><b>Some ad-hoc</b> assessments exist on the country's economic prospects and their implications for skills; <b>some</b> measures are taken to address critical skills constraints (e.g., incentives for skills upgrading by employers); the government makes <b>limited</b> efforts to engage employers as strategic partners in WfD.</p>	<p><b>Routine</b> assessments based on <b>multiple data sources</b> exist on the country's economic prospects and their implications for skills; a <b>wide range</b> of measures with <b>broad</b> coverage are taken to address critical skills constraints; the government recognizes employers as strategic partners in WfD, <b>formalizes</b> their role, and <b>provides support</b> for skills upgrading through incentive schemes that are <b>reviewed and adjusted</b>.</p>	<p>A rich array of <b>routine and robust</b> assessments by <b>multiple stakeholders</b> exists on the country's economic prospects and their implications for skills; the information provides a basis for a <b>wide range</b> of measures with <b>broad</b> coverage that address critical skills constraints; the government recognizes employers as strategic partners in WfD, <b>formalizes</b> their role, and <b>provides support</b> for skills upgrading through incentives, including some form of a <b>levy-grant scheme</b>, that are <b>systematically reviewed</b> for impact and <b>adjusted</b> accordingly.</p>

Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework				
Level of Development				
Policy Goal	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
G3: Strengthening Critical Coordination for Implementation	Industry/employers have a <b>limited</b> or <b>no role</b> in defining strategic WfD priorities; the government either provides <b>no incentives</b> to encourage skills upgrading by employers or conducts <b>no reviews</b> of such incentive programs.	Industry/employers help define WfD priorities on an <i>ad-hoc</i> basis and make <b>limited</b> contributions to address skills implications of major policy/investment decisions; the government provides <b>some</b> incentives for skills upgrading for formal and informal sector employers; if a levy-grant scheme exists its coverage is <b>limited</b> ; incentive programs are <b>not systematically</b> reviewed for impact.	Industry/employers help define WfD priorities on a <b>routine</b> basis and make <b>some</b> contributions in <b>selected</b> areas to address the skills implications of major policy/investment decisions; the government provides a <b>range</b> of incentives for skills upgrading for all employers; a levy-grant scheme with <b>broad</b> coverage of formal sector employers exists; incentive programs are <b>systematically</b> reviewed and <b>adjusted</b> ; an annual report on the levy-grant scheme is published with a <b>time lag</b> .	Industry/employers help define WfD priorities on a <b>routine</b> basis and make <b>significant</b> contributions in <b>multiple</b> areas to address the skills implications of major policy/investment decisions; the government provides a <b>range</b> of incentives for skills upgrading for all employers; a levy-grant scheme with <b>comprehensive</b> coverage of formal sector employers exists; incentive programs to encourage skills upgrading are <b>systematically</b> reviewed for <b>impact on skills and productivity</b> and are <b>adjusted</b> accordingly; an annual report on the levy-grant scheme is published in a <b>timely fashion</b> .

Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight				
Level of Development				
Policy Goal	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
<p><b>G4: Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding</b></p>	<p>The government funds IVET, CVET and ALMPs (but not OJT in SMEs) based on <i>ad-hoc</i> budgeting processes, but takes <b>no action</b> to facilitate formal partnerships between training providers and employers; the impact of funding on the beneficiaries of training programs has <b>not been recently reviewed</b>.</p>	<p>The government funds IVET, CVET (including OJT in SMEs) and ALMPs; funding for IVET and CVET follows <b>routine</b> budgeting processes involving <b>only government officials</b> with allocations determined largely by the <b>previous year's budget</b>; funding for ALMPs is decided by government officials on an <i>ad-hoc</i> basis and targets <b>select</b> population groups through various channels; the government takes <b>some</b> action to facilitate <b>formal</b> partnerships between individual training providers and employers; recent reviews considered the impact of funding on <b>only training-related indicators</b> (e.g. enrollment, completion), which stimulated dialogue among <b>some</b> WfD stakeholders.</p>	<p>The government funds IVET, CVET (including OJT in SMEs) and ALMPs; funding for IVET is <b>routine</b> and based on <b>multiple</b> criteria, including evidence of program effectiveness; recurrent funding for CVET relies on <b>formal</b> processes with <b>input</b> from key stakeholders and annual reporting with <b>a lag</b>; funding for ALMPs is determined through a <b>systematic</b> process with <b>input</b> from key stakeholders; ALMPs target <b>diverse</b> population groups through various channels and are reviewed for impact but follow-up is <b>limited</b>; the government takes action to facilitate <b>formal</b> partnerships between training providers and employers at <b>multiple</b> levels (institutional and systemic); recent reviews considered the impact of funding on <b>both</b> training-related indicators and labor market outcomes; the reviews stimulated dialogue among WfD stakeholders and <b>some</b> recommendations were implemented.</p>	<p>The government funds IVET, CVET (including OJT in SMEs) and ALMPs; funding for IVET is <b>routine</b> and based on <b>comprehensive</b> criteria, including evidence of program effectiveness, that are <b>regularly reviewed and adjusted</b>; recurrent funding for CVET relies on <b>formal</b> processes with <b>input</b> from key stakeholders and <b>timely annual reporting</b>; funding for ALMPs is determined through a <b>systematic</b> process with <b>input</b> from key stakeholders; ALMPs target <b>diverse</b> population groups through various channels and are reviewed for impact and <b>adjusted</b> accordingly; the government takes action to facilitate <b>formal</b> partnerships between training providers and employers at <b>all levels</b> (institutional and systemic); recent reviews considered the impact of funding on a <b>full range</b> of training-related indicators and labor market outcomes; the reviews stimulated <b>broad-based</b> dialogue among WfD stakeholders and <b>key</b> recommendations were implemented.</p>

Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight				
Policy Goal	Level of Development			
	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
<p><b>G5: Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards</b></p>	<p>Policy dialogue on competency standards and/or the NQF occurs on an <i>ad-hoc</i> basis with <b>limited</b> engagement of key stakeholders; competency standards have <b>not been defined</b>; skills testing for major occupations is <b>mainly theory-based</b> and certificates awarded are recognized by <b>public sector employers only</b> and have <b>little</b> impact on employment and earnings; <b>no system</b> is in place to establish accreditation standards.</p>	<p>A <b>few</b> stakeholders engage in <i>ad-hoc</i> policy dialogue on competency standards and/or the NQF; competency standards exist for a <b>few</b> occupations and are used by <b>some</b> training providers in their programs; skills testing is competency-based for a <b>few</b> occupations but for the most part is <b>mainly theory-based</b>; certificates are recognized by <b>public and some private sector employers</b> but have <b>little impact</b> on employment and earnings; the accreditation of training providers is supervised by a <b>dedicated office</b> in the relevant ministry; private providers are required to be accredited, however accreditation standards are <b>not consistently publicized or enforced</b>; providers are offered <b>some</b> incentives to seek and retain accreditation.</p>	<p><b>Numerous</b> stakeholders engage in policy dialogue on competency standards and/or the NQF through <b>institutionalized</b> processes; competency standards exist for <b>most</b> occupations and are used by <b>some</b> training providers in their programs; the NQF, if in place, covers <b>some</b> occupations and a <b>range</b> of skill levels; skills testing for <b>most</b> occupations follows standard procedures, is competency-based and assesses <b>both theoretical knowledge and practical skills</b>; certificates are recognized by <b>both public and private sector employers</b> and <b>may impact</b> employment and earnings; the accreditation of training providers is supervised by a <b>dedicated agency</b> in the relevant ministry; the agency is responsible for defining accreditation standards with <b>stakeholder input</b>; standards are reviewed on an <i>ad-hoc</i> basis and are publicized or enforced to <b>some</b> extent; all providers receiving public funding must be accredited; providers are offered <b>incentives</b> and <b>limited support</b> to seek and retain accreditation.</p>	<p><b>All key</b> stakeholders engage in policy dialogue on competency standards and/or the NQF through <b>institutionalized</b> processes; competency standards exist for <b>most</b> occupations and are used by training providers in their programs; the NQF, if in place, covers <b>most</b> occupations and a <b>wide range</b> of skill levels; skills testing for <b>most</b> occupations follows standard procedures, is competency-based and assesses <b>both theoretical knowledge and practical skills</b>; <b>robust protocols</b>, including <b>random audits</b>, ensure the credibility of certification; certificates are <b>valued by most employers</b> and <b>consistently improve</b> employment prospects and earnings; the accreditation of training providers is supervised by a <b>dedicated agency</b> in the relevant ministry; the agency is responsible for defining accreditation standards in <b>consultation with stakeholders</b>; standards are reviewed following <b>established protocols</b> and are publicized and <b>routinely</b> enforced; all training providers are required as well as offered <b>incentives and support</b> to seek and retain accreditation.</p>

### Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight

		Level of Development			
Policy Goal	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced	
<p><b>G6: Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition</b></p>	<p>Students in technical and vocational education have <b>few or no options</b> for further formal skills acquisition beyond the secondary level and the government takes <b>no action</b> to improve public perception of TVET; certificates for technical and vocational programs are <b>not recognized</b> in the NQF; qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are <b>not recognized</b> by formal programs under the Ministry of Education; recognition of prior learning receives <b>limited</b> attention; the government provides <b>practically no support</b> for further occupational and career development, or training programs for disadvantaged populations.</p>	<p>Students in technical and vocational education can only progress to <b>vocationally-oriented, non-university programs</b>; the government takes <b>limited</b> action to improve public perception of TVET (e.g. diversifying learning pathways); <b>some</b> certificates for technical and vocational programs are recognized in the NQF; <b>few</b> qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are recognized by formal programs under the Ministry of Education; policy-makers pay <b>some</b> attention to the recognition of prior learning and provide the public with <b>some</b> information on the subject; the government offers <b>limited</b> services for further occupational and career development through <b>stand-alone local service centers</b> that are <b>not integrated</b> into a system; training programs for disadvantaged populations receive <b>ad-hoc</b> support.</p>	<p>Students in technical and vocational education can progress to <b>vocationally-oriented programs, including at the university level</b>; the government takes <b>some</b> action to improve public perception of TVET (e.g. diversifying learning pathways and improving program quality) and reviews the impact of such efforts on an <b>ad-hoc</b> basis; <b>most</b> certificates for technical and vocational programs are recognized in the NQF; a <b>large number</b> of qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are recognized by formal programs under the Ministry of Education, albeit <b>without the granting of credits</b>; policy-makers give <b>some</b> attention to the recognition of prior learning and provide the public with <b>some</b> information on the subject; a <b>formal association</b> of stakeholders provides <b>dedicated</b> attention to adult learning issues; the government offers <b>limited</b> services for further occupational and career development, which are available through an <b>integrated network of centers</b>; training programs for disadvantaged populations receive <b>systematic</b> support and are reviewed for impact on an <b>ad-hoc</b> basis.</p>	<p>Students in technical and vocational education can progress to <b>academically or vocationally-oriented programs, including at the university level</b>; the government takes <b>coherent</b> action on <b>multiple fronts</b> to improve public perception of TVET (e.g. diversifying learning pathways and improving program quality and relevance, with the support of a media campaign) and <b>routinely</b> reviews and <b>adjusts</b> such efforts to maximize their impact; <b>most</b> certificates for technical and vocational programs are recognized in the NQF; a <b>large number</b> of qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are recognized and <b>granted credits</b> by formal programs under the Ministry of Education; policy-makers give <b>sustained</b> attention to the recognition of prior learning and provide the public with <b>comprehensive</b> information on the subject; a <b>national organization</b> of stakeholders provides <b>dedicated</b> attention to adult learning issues; the government offers a <b>comprehensive menu</b> of services for further occupational and career development, <b>including online resources</b>, which are available through an <b>integrated network of centers</b>; training programs for disadvantaged populations receive <b>systematic</b> support with <b>multi-year budgets</b> and are <b>routinely</b> reviewed for impact and <b>adjusted</b> accordingly.</p>	

### Functional Dimension 3: Service Delivery

Policy Goal	Level of Development			
	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
G7: Enabling Diversity and Excellence in Trainings Provision	<p>There is <b>no diversity</b> of training provision as the system is largely comprised of <b>public providers</b> with <b>limited or no autonomy</b>; training provision is <b>not informed</b> by formal assessment, stakeholder input or performance targets.</p>	<p>There is <b>some</b> diversity in training provision; non-state providers operate with <b>limited</b> government incentives and <b>governance</b> over registration, licensing and quality assurance; public training is provided by institutions with <b>some</b> autonomy and informed by <b>some</b> assessment of implementation constraints, stakeholder input and basic targets.</p>	<p>There is <b>diversity</b> in training provision; non-state training providers, <b>some</b> registered and licensed, operate within a <b>range</b> of government incentives, <b>systematic</b> quality assurance measures and <b>routine</b> reviews of government policies toward non-state training providers, mostly governed by management boards, have <b>some</b> autonomy; training provision is informed by <b>formal analysis</b> of implementation constraints, stakeholder input and basic targets; lagging providers receive <b>support</b> and exemplary institutions are <b>rewarded</b>.</p>	<p>There is <b>broad</b> diversity in training provision; non-state training providers, <b>most</b> registered and licensed, operate with <b>comprehensive</b> government incentives, <b>systematic</b> quality assurance measures and <b>routine</b> review and <b>adjustment</b> of government policies toward non-state training providers; public providers, mostly governed by management boards, have <b>significant</b> autonomy; decisions about training provision are <b>time-bound</b> and informed by <b>formal assessment</b> of implementation constraints; stakeholder input and use of a <b>variety of measures</b> to incentivize performance include support, rewards and performance-based funding.</p>

Functional Dimension 3: Service Delivery				
Level of Development				
Policy Goal	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
G8: Fostering Relevance in Public Training Programs	There are <b>few or no attempts</b> to foster relevance in public training programs through encouraging links between training institutions, industry and research institutions or through setting standards for the recruitment and training of heads and instructors in training institutions.	Relevance of public training is enhanced through <b>informal</b> links between <b>some</b> training institutions, industry and research institutions, including <b>input</b> into the design of curricula and facility standards; heads and instructors are recruited on the basis of <b>minimum academic standards</b> and have <b>limited</b> opportunities for professional development.	Relevance of public training is enhanced through <b>formal</b> links between <b>some</b> training institutions, industry and research institutions, leading to collaboration in <b>several</b> areas including but not limited to the design of curricula and facility standards; heads and instructors are recruited on the basis of <b>minimum academic and professional standards</b> and have <b>regular</b> access to opportunities for professional development.	Relevance of public training is enhanced through <b>formal</b> links between <b>most</b> training institutions, industry and research institutions, leading to <b>significant</b> collaboration in a <b>wide range</b> of areas; heads and instructors are recruited on the basis of <b>minimum academic and professional standards</b> and have <b>regular</b> access to <b>diverse</b> opportunities for professional development, including <b>industry attachments</b> for instructors.

Functional Dimension 3: Service Delivery				
Level of Development				
Policy Goal	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
<b>G9: Enhancing Evidence-based Accountability for Results</b>	<p>There are <b>no specific</b> data collection and reporting requirements, but training providers maintain their <b>own databases</b>; the government <b>does not conduct or sponsor</b> skills-related surveys or impact evaluations and <b>rarely</b> uses data to monitor and improve system performance.</p>	<p>Training providers collect and report <b>administrative</b> data and there are <b>significant</b> gaps in reporting by non-state providers; <b>some</b> public providers issue annual reports and the government <b>occasionally</b> sponsors or conducts skills-related surveys; the government <b>does not consolidate data</b> in a system-wide database and uses <b>mostly administrative data</b> to monitor and improve system performance; the government publishes information on graduate labor market outcomes for <b>some</b> training programs.</p>	<p>Training providers collect and report <b>administrative and other</b> data (e.g., job placement statistics, earnings of graduates) and there are <b>some</b> gaps in reporting by non-state providers; <b>most</b> public providers issue internal annual reports and the government <b>routinely</b> sponsors skills-related surveys; the government consolidates data in a <b>system-wide database</b> and uses <b>administrative data</b> and information from <b>surveys</b> to monitor and improve system performance; the government publishes information on graduate labor market outcomes for <b>numerous</b> training programs.</p>	<p>Training providers collect and report <b>administrative and other</b> data (e.g., job placement statistics, earnings of graduates) and there are <b>few</b> gaps in reporting by non-state providers; <b>most</b> public providers issue <b>publicly available</b> annual reports and the government <b>routinely</b> sponsors or conducts skills-related surveys and impact evaluations; the government consolidates data in a <b>system-wide, up to date database</b> and uses <b>administrative data</b>, information from <b>surveys and impact evaluations</b> to monitor and improve system performance; the government publishes information on graduate labor market outcomes for <b>most</b> training programs <b>online</b>.</p>

## Annex 7: References and Informants

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Solomon Pita	Director	Institute of Technology SINU and Deputy Chair of App Board
Tiraro Galo	Manager	Curriculum and Standards Unit, Solomon Islands National University

## Annex 8: SABER-WfD Scores

		Policy Goal		Policy Action		Topic			
Dimension 1	1.9	G1	2.0	Provide sustained advocacy for WfD at the top leadership level	2.0	G1_T1	2		
						G1_T2	2		
		G2	2.0	Establish clarity on the demand for skills and areas of critical constraint	2.0	G2_T1	2		
						G2_T2	2		
						G2_T3	2		
		G3	1.7	Engage employers in setting WfD priorities and in enhancing skills-upgrading for workers	2.0	G2_T4	2		
						G2_T5	2		
						G3_T1	3		
		G3	1.7	Formalize key WfD roles for coordinated action on strategic priorities	1.7	G3_T2	1		
G3_T3	1								
Dimension 2	1.6	G4	1.4	Provide stable funding for effective programs in initial, continuing and targeted vocational education and training	1.3	G4_T1	info		
						G4_T2	2		
						G4_T3	1		
				G4	1.4	Monitor and enhance equity in funding for training	1.3	G4_T4	1
								G4_T5_IVET	1
								G4_T5_CVET	2
		G4	1.4	Facilitate sustained partnerships between training institutions and employers	2.0	G4_T5_ALMP	1		
						G4_T6	2		
		G5	1.5	Broaden the scope of competency standards as a basis for developing qualifications frameworks	1.0	G5_T1	1		
						G5_T2	1		
				G5	1.5	Establish protocols for assuring the credibility of skills testing and certification	2.3	G5_T3	2
								G5_T4	2
								G5_T5	3
				G5	1.5	Develop and enforce accreditation standards for maintaining the quality of training provision	1.0	G5_T6	info
		G5_T7	1						
		G5_T8	1						
		G6	2.0	Promote educational progression and permeability through multiple pathways, including for TVET students	2.0	G5_T9	1		
G6_T1	3								
G6	2.0			Facilitate life-long learning through articulation of skills certification and recognition of prior learning	2.0	G6_T2	1		
						G6_T3	2		
						G6_T4	2		
G6	2.0			Provide support for skills acquisition by workers, job-seekers and the disadvantaged	2.0	G6_T5	2		
		G6_T6	2						
Dimension 3	1.8	G7	1.9	Encourage and regulate non-state provision of training	1.5	G7_T1	2		
						G7_T2	2		
						G7_T3	1		
				G7	1.9	Combine incentives and autonomy in the management of public training institutions	2.3	G7_T4	1
								G7_T5	1
								G7_T6	3
		G8	2.0	Integrate industry and expert input into the design and delivery of public training programs	1.9	G7_T7	3		
						G8_T1	2.5		
						G8_T2	2.5		
		G8	2.0	Recruit and support administrators and instructors for enhancing the market-relevance of public training programs	2.1	G8_T3	1.75		
						G8_T4	1		
						G8_T5	2.5		
		G9	1.5	Expand the availability and use of policy-relevant data for focusing providers' attention on training outcomes, efficiency and innovation	1.5	G8_T6	1.75		
						G9_T1	2		
						G9_T2	1.5		
				G9_T3	1				

## **Annex 9: Authorship and Acknowledgements**

This report is the product of collaboration between Andrea Bateman and Judy Fangalasuu and staff at the World Bank, comprising Stephen Close (Task Team Leader), as well as Jee-Peng Tan, Ryan Flynn, and Viviana Gomez, who are leader and members, respectively, of the SABER-WfD team based in the Education Global Practice. A research team comprised of Andrea Bateman, Judy Fangalasuu, Ryan Flynn, and Stephen Close collected the data using the SABER-WfD data collection instrument, scored the data and wrote the report; the Bank team scored the data, designed the template for the report, and made substantive contributions to the final write-up. This report has benefited from suggestions and feedback from Luis Benveniste, Sukhdeep Brar, Rita Costa, Franz Drees-Gross, Tobias Haque, David Letichevsky, and Anne Tully.

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The **Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)** initiative produces comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems. SABER evaluates the quality of education policies against evidence-based global standards, using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy data. The SABER country reports give all parties with a stake in educational results—from administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, objective snapshot showing how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

This report focuses specifically on policies in the area of workforce development.

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