

# Executive summary: Solomon Islands country case study

## **Data for Health, a forward thinking new Initiative, is supporting the government of Solomon Islands to improve how it collects and uses health data**

The Data for Health Initiative is a pioneering public-private partnership developed by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's InnovationXchange and Bloomberg Philanthropies to improve country-level collection and use of health data. With InnovationXchange's

special focus on the Pacific region, which is not currently benefiting from the global attention on development innovation, Solomon Islands is an ideal focus country for the Initiative, committed to improving data collection and using it to improve health outcomes.

## **Data for Health at work in Solomon Islands**

### **With Data for Health support, the Solomon Islands government is modernizing its how it collects and uses birth and death data**

In Solomon Islands, Data for Health is helping to institutionalize civil registry and vital statistics systems that operate according to international best practices, particularly for mortality and cause of death.

In the first two years of the Initiative, measurable progress has been made. Solomon Islands now have eight master trainers for medical certification of cause of death. These experts have in turn trained 72 others.

The National Mortality Technical Working Group has been established, and works to build capacity and improve the infrastructure supporting data collection, transfer, analysis and availability.

### **Solomon Islands is scaling up its capacity to use health data to tailor policy**

In Solomon Islands, Data for Health partners are focused on working with government to institutionalize decision support tools that facilitate the evaluation and planning of programs, and address the Ministry of Health and Medical Services' larger strategic policy decision-making needs. This includes using the ANACoD electronic tool, which quickly conducts a comprehensive analysis of data on mortality levels and causes of death and presents results in easy to use tables and charts.

**Solomon Islands is one of the five Data for Health focus countries that have moved to the international standard death certificate.**

*Between 2012 and 2014, less than 2% of deaths were registered in Solomon Islands. With Initiative support, all medical doctors now receive training in using the medical certificate of cause of death and the mortality module of the country's vital events database has been modernized to reflect these internationally standardized forms. This will allow Solomon Islands, for the first time in its history, to analyze hospital mortality data.*

## **Lessons and way forward**

In the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services, human resource and technical capacity are low. Also, approximately 80% of Solomon Islands population live in rural areas – and, as an archipelagic nation, most of these areas are physically separated from the capital and have limited infrastructure. To make the most of Data for

Health investments by government, partners and donors, the Initiative needs to focus on building technical capacity and actively reaching out to community leaders, including church ministers, who often know the most about people who die in community settings.

## **Solomon Islands has the momentum it needs to make major strides in the next phase of the Initiative**

Solomon Islands is at a tipping point, well positioned to make substantial advances in collecting and using health data to improve outcomes across its population. With Data for Health support, the government's demonstrated commitment can be translated to increased collection of accurate data, greater data accessibility and marked improvements in using data to craft policy to best addresses health needs, particularly in vulnerable populations, including women and girls.

“In Solomon Islands, Data for Health has put a lot of energy into training people to code cause of death. The early results are showing around 1% mistakes in their coding. This is a great outcome.” - Implementing partner