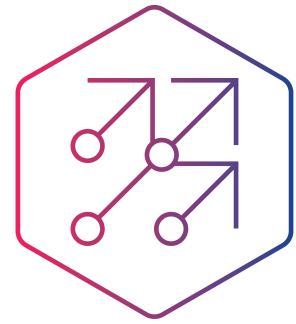# Australia - Solomon Islands Technology for Development Challenge

Challenge Statement:

How might we connect & support young people in the Solomon Islands to maximise their skills & education to access jobs across the country & internationally?

What are we looking for? Ideas that address the challenge statement, that can become sustainable technology driven solutions with cyber security and privacy inherent by design, which can be prototyped, tested and refined with a view to scalable roll out in the future.

How will an idea become a reality? The winners of the challenge will receive a grant of up to $250,000 AUD to: access professional mentoring from technology, development and cyber security experts over the course of two years; develop a prototype and trial this prototype in the Solomon Islands; and build a scalable business model, which can be pitched to potential investors.
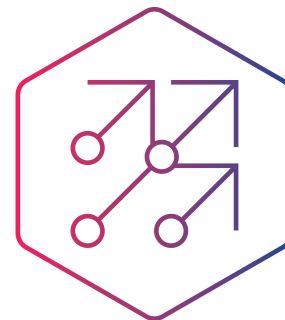
What are the timeframes? Ideas can be submitted from 27 September until the closing date of 10 December 2018 via the ideas portal. Shortlisted applicants will be notified in February 2019. Shortlisted ideas applicants will then be invited to submit a detailed pitch in March 2019. Winners will be announced in April 2019 with the winners expected to commence on their work in May 2019.

What are the conditions? The idea should be new or in the early stages of development and be viable, feasible, sustainable. It should take into account the local conditions with the end user in mind – that is young people in the Solomon Islands. The funding grant will be subject to Australian Government procurement and aid policy requirements.

Who are our ideal applicants? We are looking for individuals, community groups, business who have a passion for collaboration, technology (including the importance of cyber security and privacy by design), understanding of and commitment to supporting the Solomon Islands' economic growth and prosperity. To be eligible you must be a registered entity or willing to formally partner with one.

Questions? Submit via email to: TEch4Dev@dfat.gov.au

Australian Aid

Australian Government

Australia - Solomon Islands Technology for Development Challenge

Background Paper

The Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands is an archipelagic state situated in the south-west Pacific Ocean, approximately 2,000 km to the northeast of Australia. Its land mass of 28,400 km² extends over nearly 1000 islands comprising nine main island groups. The capital, Honiara, is located on Guadalcanal, the largest island. Over half of the Solomon Islands' population is under the age of 20 with the working-age population expected to grow by over 65 per cent between 2010 and 2040.

Approximately 100,000 of the Solomon Islands' highly-dispersed population of 600,000 use the Internet - with the majority in urban areas and access currently reliant on satellite technology[1].

The Coral Sea Cable System, will deliver faster, cheaper and more reliable internet to Solomon Islands, linking Auki in Malaita Province, Noro in Western Province, and Taro in Choiseul Province, with Honiara.

Solomon Islands vision

The Solomon Islands Government vision is that all Solomon Islanders will develop as individuals and possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to earn a living and to live in harmony with others and their environment. A united and progressive society in which all can live in peace and harmony with fair and equitable opportunities for a better life.

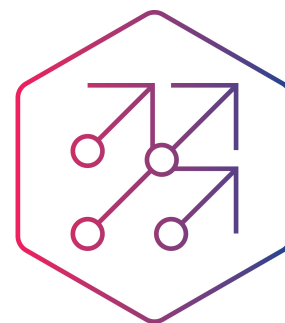## Solomon Islands challenge - education, skills and jobs

Solomon Islands has a small formal economy with only 43,500 people employed in 2009 of a working population at that time of just over 200,000. The majority of the economically active population is involved in subsistence/cash crop agriculture, with just over one tenth engaged in the formal economy and approximately one third in the informal economy.

A major challenge facing the Solomon Islands is the relevance of skills for employment and economic growth, with a need to improve the match between the skills provided by the education and training system and those required in the labour market and wider economy[1].

1UNCTAD trade readiness assessment 2018.
2 DFAT 2014, Solomon Islands Education Sector Program 2: Investment Design, [pdf] DFAT. Available at <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/solomon-islands-eduction-sector-program-2-investment-design.aspx> [accessed 3 June 2018]

The Solomon Islands Parliament passed the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority Act in 2017. The purpose of the Act is to improve the provision of and access to skills training, and improve the contribution that this training makes to local and international labour markets.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) is investigating ways to increase access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) through the secondary school system. Key to the success of increasing vocational and skills training will be to ensure that these young people can access jobs, and that their skills are well matched with employment opportunities and labour market gaps.
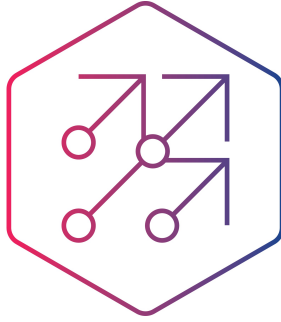
Connectivity - opportunities and vulnerabilities

Increased access to an open, free and secure Internet has the potential to be transformative for the majority of the Solomon Islands population – not only to connect people across the nation but also to facilitate participation in an ever increasing global digital economy. World Bank research estimates improved Internet access and connectivity could translate into additional GDP of more than USD5 billion and close to 300,000 additional jobs in the Pacific by 2040. The Internet also provides an opportunity for online democratic participation and the promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights. Increased connectivity not only brings opportunity, but also brings increased exposure to cyber threats.

Australia - Solomon Islands Partnership

Australia and Solomon Islands are key strategic partners. Through Australian development assistance to Solomon Islands, we are supporting improvement in health, education and skills, water and sanitation, transport, telecommunications, law and justice, rural livelihoods and effective governance. The Australian Government is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and empowering women in the Solomon Islands and across the Indo-Pacific.

Through the Australia-Solomon Islands Technology for Development Challenge, the Australian Government is partnering with the Solomon Islands to champion the use of resilient, development-enabling technologies to better education, skills and labour outcomes for young people in the Solomon Islands. The Challenge complements support Australia is delivering to the Solomon Islands through the Coral Sea Cable System Project.

**How might we
connect & support
young people in the Solomon Islands
to maximise their skills & education
to access jobs
across the country & internationally?**

GO TO THE IDEAS PORTAL
& SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS BEFORE 10 DECEMBER
2018
CLICK HERE

https://tech4dev.collabco.com.au/

Questions?
Email us at
Tech4Dev@dfat.gov.au

Australian Aid

Australian Government