



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT**

**POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES FOR
TERTIARY EDUCATION IN SOLOMON
ISLANDS**

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Glossary of tertiary education terms

Academic plan for Tertiary education providers: a plan that focuses on the academic aspect of a university or institution which include courses, program of studies, research, academic structure, assessment and accreditation issues. It also deals with the implications of planned academic activities on buildings and facilities and the decentralisation or concentration of such facilities to support particular institutional objectives. An academic plan is usually for the medium term (3 years) and provides guidelines for the funding, staffing and teaching plans of the institution.

Colleges of advanced education: All post-secondary education institutions of higher learning, which are characterised by teaching and research required for the pre-school compulsory and post –secondary sectors of education, and for associated social and educational roles.

Charter or mission document: a document that: (a) sets out the organisation’s general mission and role in the tertiary education system;(b) is intended to cover a medium –to long term timeframe; and (c) provides the basis for development of the medium term academic plan .

Foundation programme at USP: equivalent of Form 7, to prepare students for tertiary academic education and degree programmes at USP.

Higher education refers to education and training that leads to undergraduate and postgraduate awards.

Ministry of Education: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in Solomon Islands (MEHRD).

Polytechnic: is characterised by a wide diversity of continuing education, including vocational training that contributes to the maintenance, advancement, dissemination of knowledge, expertise. Polytechnics promote community learning and research, particularly applied and technological research..

Preliminary programme at USP prepares students for foundation and tertiary studies..

Solomon Islands National University (SINU): a university owned and funded by the state and usually reflecting its particular priorities, directions and focus, as well as providing the benchmark for excellence and relevance in contexts where there are likely to be more competing non state universities.

Solomon Islands University Network: This refers to a network of university and tertiary education institutions in which co-operation, sharing of resources, facilities and joint research etc. is promoted.

Technical and further education institution (TAFE): a term that is widely used in Australia to refer to tertiary institutions that provide a wide range of

vocationally tertiary education courses at non degree levels in fields such as hospitality, tourism, construction, engineering, secretarial studies, visual arts, computer programming, community work and others.

Tertiary accreditation: A system for recognition of tertiary education and training.

Tertiary college: a college at tertiary level as different from colleges at secondary (school) level, which may take the form of different types of colleges depending on their functions such as a Medical College, College of Nursing, and College of Education etc.

Tertiary education: Any post-secondary, third stage or higher level tertiary education and training as distinct from any post-secondary further education which is know as technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Tertiary Education Division: A division within the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development responsible for the development of national policies and regulations in the Tertiary Education sub sector and for the monitoring of the implementation of these policies.

Tertiary Education Legislation: Legislation which will provide for the establishment and governance of tertiary institutions and universities.

Tertiary institutions: All institutions that provide tertiary education.

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET): Education concerned with the development of practical skills, especially those involving use of the hands and specialised tools and machinery and education concerned with learning skills and knowledge of direct use in every day living, including employment and self-employment. (From: Education for living, Approved policy for TVET, 2005).

University: a tertiary institution that provides higher education and research and promotes intellectual independence and enquiry.

University College: a tertiary institution that provides tertiary education linked to a university but does not have full university status.

List of abbreviations

AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Audit
AusAID	Australian Government's Overseas Development Aid Programme
CBTC	Community Based Training Centre
CNURA	Coalition of National Unity and Rural Advancement
DFL	Distance Flexible Learning
ESIRP	Education Sector Investment and Reform Programme
EU	European Union
FIT	Fiji Institute of Technology
FSM	Fiji School of Medicine
GPA	Grade Point Average
HRD	Human Resources Development
IOA	Institutional and Organisational Assessment
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IPAM	Institute of Public Administration and Management
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JOCV	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers
MoC	Ministry of Commerce (Industries and Employment)
MDPAC	Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Co-ordination
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHRDTC	National Human Resources Development Training Council
NTEPN	National Tertiary Education Providers Network
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRI	National Research Institute
NTC	National Training Committee
NTTTU	National Technical Trade Test Unit
NTU	National Training Unit
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency
NZUAAU	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PSSC	Pacific Secondary School Certificate
RTC	Rural Training Centre
SICC	Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce
SICHE	Solomon Islands College of Higher Education
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SLS	Student Loan Scheme
SINU	Solomon Islands National University
SITEC	Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission
SoE	School of Education
SISC	Solomon Islands Secondary School Certificate
SISE	Solomon Islands Secondary School Entrance
TA	Technical Assistance
TAF	Technical and Further Education
TED	Tertiary Education Division
ToR	Terms of Reference

TQAF	Tertiary Qualifications Accreditation Framework
TIT	Teachers in Training
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organisation
UNITEC	UNITEC-Institute of Technology (New Zealand)
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
USP	University of the South Pacific
UWI	University of the West Indies

1. Definition

This document is called the “Policy Statement and Guidelines for Tertiary Education in the Solomon Islands“. The document shall be the governing instrument for all tertiary education and training activities in Solomon Islands.

2. Introduction

- The development of a good tertiary education system is necessary as it prepares our human resources for the ‘knowledge economy’ of today. Knowledge and advanced skills are critical determinants of a country's economic growth and standard of living.
- Learning outcomes at tertiary education level are generally transformed into goods and services, greater institutional capacity, a more effective public sector, a stronger civil society, preservation of languages, cultures and cultural values and a better investment climate.
- Good quality, relevant, merit-based, equitable, efficient tertiary education and research are therefore essential for this transformation.
- Most of the university qualified graduates receive education and training overseas. This is causing an increasing financial burden to the country. A substantive portion of the total annual education budget is spent on Tertiary Education. Efficiency therefore is an important criterion for reviewing the financial support systems. The provision of more Tertiary Education and training in Solomon Islands and the development of Distance Flexible Learning methodologies will be some of the strategies to achieve this.
- Furthermore, value for money, quality and relevancy will be other important criteria for reviewing the sub sector of Tertiary Education. The aim is to cover the skill gaps in the country and therefore to match the provision of education and training with the national demand for specific studies and courses.

3. Authority

The following legislation provides the underpinning authority for Solomon Islands policy on Tertiary Education:

- The Education Act (1978);
- The Solomon Islands College of Higher Education Act 1984, (as further amended);
- Constitution (Amendment) Act (1982);
- Employment Act (1968);
- Public Finance and Audit Act (1978)
- Financial Instruction (2006)
- Research Act (1984)

This policy can be read in conjunction with other related (inter)national policy documents and papers. See Annex 6.

4. Application

The policy applies to all tertiary training providers operating in Solomon Islands.

5. Purpose

The purpose of this policy statement is

1) to set the strategic direction of tertiary education in Solomon Islands in terms of vision, strategic goals, objectives, strategic activities, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and equity for the period 2009-2015.

2) to indicate how the organisation, management and delivery of tertiary education can help to achieve the economic and social objectives of the Solomon Islands government. It will focus primarily on national policies for tertiary education systems rather than on specific institutional policies and practices. Key questions include the economic and social objectives of tertiary education; financial sustainability and national mechanisms to ensure equitable access, effective governance and the provision of tertiary education to meet the manpower demands of the government and other stakeholders (private sector, non-state actors) with respect to the indicators in the *Solomon Islands Study to Support the Development of a National Skills Training Plan, 2007*.

3) to delineate the overall scope and size of the tertiary education system, articulate the system in terms of structure, institutional types, programme/qualifications structure and articulation, and core activities (teaching, learning, research, societal engagement), and set out how the system will be managed within a governance framework of responsibilities and accountabilities.

4) to ensure that the tertiary education sector and the individual institutions that it comprises (public and private) are of high quality, responsive and relevant to Solomon Island needs and culture, provide value for money, are accountable to their stakeholders, are supported in terms of their efforts to improve, and are responsive to the tertiary education vision and goals. The policy will spell out a range of regulation and quality assurance activities including the establishment of a national accreditation and qualification framework.

5) to determine how tertiary education is to be funded. Against an inevitable backdrop where only a limited growth in public expenditure can be expected the tertiary education sector will have to devise a new tertiary education funding framework and strategy which has to be developed in parallel with the policy

area on regulation and be inclusive of a comprehensive review of student and institutional financial assistance.

6. Vision

Our vision is that ;

‘All Solomon Islanders will have equitable access to a responsive and relevant tertiary education that will enable them to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life in their communities and to develop their skills and competencies needed to make Solomon Islands’ workforce globally competitive and to link them to international employment, business and export opportunities.’

In a framework of open life-long learning and a sector wide approach, we envisage the creation, sustaining of work or livelihood and an academic education and higher technical, vocational training system which

- is flexible, responsive to the labour demands in the Solomon Islands society and the individual study demands of clients,
- prioritises the provision of specific courses and standards, which are highest in demand from the private, public and informal sector
- develops gradually while making the best use of sharing financial and human resources, facilities and available land
- is supportive to the development of a knowledge and modern society,
- nurtures the evolving Solomon Islands culture and values
- stimulates practical and relevant research,
- is efficiently managed by its stakeholders and clients and is overseen by the government.
- has clear link between trades, technical and professional qualifications and the workplace.

7. Main policy goals

Goal 1: To provide high quality tertiary education, that will meet individual, national and regional needs for a knowledgeable, skilled, competent and complete people and a cohesive and sustainable society

Goal 2: To provide equitable access to high quality tertiary (post secondary) education and to close the opportunity gap in tertiary participation for marginalised groups.

Goal 3: To manage resources in an efficient, effective, sustainable and transparent manner

8. Principles and implications

The tertiary education policy statement is built on several principles, which determine the strategies for planning and implementation. These principles are the following:

- **Equity and Inclusiveness**
 - Ensuring equitable access for all, including men and women from all provinces and students with disabilities
- **Emphasis on Universal Basic Education as a public and human right and an important foundation for tertiary education.**
 - Government's emphasis is on Universal Basic Education as the first priority. The Government will determine the balance of funding between the different education sub sectors and levels.
- **Quality provision of tertiary education**
 - International, regional accreditation and recognition and quality control;
 - Learner and outcomes focused curriculum development, continuous review and staff training;
 - Academic plans or profiles as condition for accreditation and funding;
 - Diverse methods of training delivery like face to face, DFL, mentoring
 - Increasing national scientific research capacity;
 - Attract international researchers and lecturers;
 - Professional and adequate teaching and student support facilities;
 - Competition between tertiary education providers will encourage efficiency and the maintenance of standards.

- **Relevance of tertiary education**
 - Tertiary education and training links closely to labour market demand in public and private sector in Solomon Islands society and be in line with the recommendations of the National Skills and Training Study (2007);
 - Culturally relevant and supportive;
 - Supports development of Solomon Island's epistemology, knowledge, research and innovation.

- **Lifelong Learning**
 - Acknowledging that being competitive in the global economy requires more than formal degree-oriented learning; it requires a lifetime of skill development and knowledge generation.
 - Supporting initiatives that provide access to learning for students of all ages and at all stages of their lives.

- **Efficiency and sustainability**
 - Financing system is clear and is based on fair selection criteria for the individual student. The principle of merit and a strong linkage to prioritised areas of studies and national labour market demand.
 - Tertiary education will be increasingly provided on the basis of cost sharing by students or parents, private business and government, increased donor contribution
 - The financial support will be closely linked to periodic review, regular monitoring and assessment of student progress. Study duration limitations, repayment and bonding schemes and rationalisation of welfare costs will be introduced.
 - A study for a loan scheme will be organised.
 - The financial system will include full scholarships, fee based scholarships, loan scheme and tax incentives.

- **Increased national delivery of tertiary education**
 - The aim is to develop the national capacity for the delivery of high quality tertiary education and gradually decrease the number of students abroad.

9. Policy Objectives

Quality and assessment

- 1) To develop a national tertiary education system of the highest standards with international, regional accreditation and national recognition of tertiary education providers.
- 2) To promote continuous, open, distance, flexible learning.
- 3) To initiate curriculum review of existing courses and develop new courses and maintain an ongoing curriculum review system. The curriculum review aims to match tertiary education services with current and future national labour demands.
- 4) To increase the capacity of national scientific technology and promote innovative research.

Access

- 5) To develop the necessary physical and ICT infrastructure for the provision of high quality tertiary education.
- 6) To introduce a fair, transparent, needs-driven, efficient and clear financing system for students, that is sustainable.
- 7) To establish an increased national and decentralised delivery of tertiary education including through distance and flexible learning options and partnerships with regional training institutions

Co-ordination and management

- 8) To establish a Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC), that coordinates and regulates a national system of tertiary education and training and develops a strategic action plan for the tertiary education sub sector.
- 9) To develop or to continue internal organisation change and restructuring or course review of the current education providers in the tertiary sector.
- 10) To increase financial support to the tertiary education sub sector related to academic plans, matching academic and training standards and other criteria such as research or student results.
- 11) To use research data as basis for informed decision making.
- 12) To promote national and regional co-operation among education providers.
- 13) To utilise human resource planning and labour market demands as basis for determining academic and tertiary training forecast.

10. National System for Tertiary Education

10.1 Essential Elements

- 10.1.1 The national tertiary system embodies the important principles enunciated in this policy document. It needs to reflect important experiences and lessons learnt from other comparable tertiary systems in the Pacific region, the Commonwealth and beyond. At the same time, it has to be realistic and grounded on the social, economic and political realities of the Solomon Islands.
- 10.1.2 The national system will have two components: the first is the creation of an enabling instrument, a tertiary education commission under a proposed Higher Education Act, to oversee the operation of the whole tertiary system. The second component is the actual institutional arrangements of the tertiary system.
- 10.1.3 There are two distinct layers in this system: one is concerned with governance and policy; the other with the actual operations of those policies.
- 10.1.4 A well coordinated and comprehensive tertiary education system will bring enormous benefits in terms of quality, efficiency and reduced unit costs of tertiary education in Solomon Islands.

10.2 Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC)

- 10.2.1 The enabling instrument known as the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC) is to be a statutory authority. It would be responsible to Parliament through the Minister for Education and Human Resource Development.
- 10.2.2 The objective of the commission is to promote, plan, develop and coordinate tertiary education in the Solomon Islands. It will ensure the maintenance of a high quality and internationally recognized tertiary education system.
- 10.2.3 Recognition of tertiary education providers will be based on charters and profiles to be developed by the providers to comply with standards set by SITEC.
- 10.2.4 SITEC has responsibility for the overall budget and its allocation to various tertiary sectors and institutions.
- 10.2.5 It will set up a tertiary qualification and an accreditation framework for maintenance of standards. Regular assessment will be conducted to maintain the quality of the tertiary education providers (see Chapter 12).

- 10.2.6 It will promote quality teaching, sound scholarship, an active research policy and a concern for community service.
- 10.2.7 SITEC will exercise independence and autonomy in its governance and operation.
- 10.2.8 SITEC will provide the necessary environment for academics and scholars in its institutions to enjoy academic freedom in their teaching, scholarship, research and community service. These are critical provisions in attracting good international, regional and local academics and scholars and researchers, to work in tertiary institutions in the Solomon Islands.

10.3 Solomon Islands College of Higher Education

- 10.3.1 The main focus for SICHE is on the delivery of technical and skills training.
- 10.3.2 Any decision upgrade SICHE to university status must be based on a rational assessment on whether it has achieved top quality accredited programmes
- 10.3.3 However, some schools of SICHE, such as the School of Education can become first elements for a university status.

10.4 The Solomon Islands National University (SINU)

- 10.4.1 Decisions taken about the start of a National University at an existing or new site must be based on objective assessments (learning needs, estimated enrolment e.g. cost calculations, available resources, feasibility and sustainability). Decisions about decentralisation must be based on similar criteria.
- 10.4.2 The Solomon Islands National University if it is to start right away within a short time span of 3 years could begin with one institution that builds on existing resources and facilities like secure land, buildings, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, hostels, staff quarters, sports grounds, gymnasiums and a core of existing staff and students with or without ongoing tertiary education programs.
- 10.4.3 As part of a planned program for development, other new set of facilities could be developed in new sites in selected parts of the country to contribute to or complement the core of the new national university system whether it be a university college, a campus or some other selected entity in accordance with the national university master plan¹ or charter.
- 10.4.4 The decentralisation of the physical facilities of the national university system has to be planned and carefully integrated with the charter and

¹ The University of the West Indies (UWI) is a notable example on which the USP model was based.

academic requirements of the institution and with clear financial projections and implications.

10.4.5 The idea of a National University itself is a well established tradition in situations where the state takes responsibility for establishing a university which would reflect its particular priority, directions and focus.

10.4.6 National Universities are looked upon to provide the benchmark for excellence and relevance in situations where there are likely to be many competing tertiary institutions funded and supported by different agencies and private providers.

10.5 Academic Structure and Programs of SINU

10.5.1 The structure and academic organisation of the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) should be flexible so as to capture the existing and potential higher level education and training needs of Solomon Islands.

10.5.2 The structure and course provision should be developed following a major academic planning seminar involving relevant stakeholders in the Solomon Islands and others from the region or elsewhere with relevant experiences².

10.5.3 The academic structure is expected to recognize the demand of program areas like teaching, nursing, commerce and business, information and communication technology, medicine, applied science in areas such as agriculture, forestry and rural and industrial development among others, as identified in the *Solomon Islands Study to Support the Development of a National Skills Training Plan (2007)*, and other relevant reports (see Annex 6).

10.5.4 The academic structure also needs to consider the place of Foundation and Preliminary Programs for those who need bridging courses as an interim arrangement at SINU. There are successful examples of addressing this issue in the Pacific region in the short term which could be explored until the secondary school system in the Solomon Islands is in a position to address this need.

10.5.5 The academic structure also needs to accommodate the provision of a university- wide Centre for Continuing and Community Education (CCCE), which will cater for the broad range of community education and community training needs of the country. This type of community outreach corresponds with the objectives expressed in the TVET Policy *Education for Living, Approved Policy on Technical, Vocational Education and Training (2005)* and links up to the Rural and Community Based Training Centres (RTC/CBTC).

² These could include USP, UWI, UPNG, University of Samoa, University of Mauritius, the National University of Fiji and relevant donor agencies.

10.5.6 The academic structure of SINU must provide, in time, capacity for outreach and decentralization of its operations and functions particularly where units and or sections could be effectively located outside its core Campus.

10.5.7 This may be done by way of centres, campuses, specialized colleges, and university colleges as appropriate, after careful study of their academic and financial viability. These options must be considered and provided for in forward planning to enhance the feeling of ownership of the institution and equitable participation by all communities in the Solomon Islands, and overall, to promote the idea of the National University throughout the nation.

10.6 Planning, funding and monitoring of national and regional institutions

10.6.1 The SITEC will determine its investment in both the national and regional institutions in terms of its funding formulae to ensure they deliver to the needs of the stakeholders-especially students, employers, local authorities and communities.

10.6.2 SITEC will ensure the rationalization of programs between institutions, which will also be closely tied to the funding formulae.

10.6.3 It will be efficient and advantageous for Solomon Islands and Solomon Islands students, if all programs which could be taught at SINU are offered whenever practicable, in accordance with its academic plan.

10.6.4 .Within 10 years the greater majority of Solomon Islands tertiary students will receive their education and training in Solomon Islands. Such development will have implications for the provision of residential halls and hostels and supportive study and counselling facilities in and around the core campus of SINU. This would create an opportunity for various Church groups to enter this important field as they have done in many countries.

10.6.5 Only students with specialist programs and post graduate qualifications would be required to attend overseas institutions including USP.

10.7 Relationship with private providers

10.7.1 SITEC will be responsible for the registration/licensing of private providers of tertiary education in Solomon Islands, including institutions from overseas.

10.7.2 The government will stipulate the conditions under which government funding will be available to assist in the operational costs of tertiary institutions (see chapter 12 Financing).

10.7.3 Students with SIG-awards or scholarships which are administered by the National Training Unit of MEHRD will be required in principle to

undertake their study programmes at SINU. Where the course programmes are not offered at SINU, students may elect to study at other institutions, under the scholarship award.

11. Roles and Responsibilities of main stakeholders

The various stakeholders in the Tertiary Education sub sector can be subdivided into three main groups; facilitators, providers and users.

I. FACILITATORS

Three new bodies (see 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) need to be established and come under legislation. Other organisations or committees (1.4, 1.5 and 1.6) already exist and continue their tasks.

11.1 Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission

11.1.1 The SITEC as referred to in Section 9.2 will be legislated as a statutory authority with responsibility to oversee the whole operation of tertiary education. It will be responsible to Parliament through the Minister for Education and Human Resources Development.

11.1.2 Its Commissioners and Chairperson are expected to collectively have wide experience, expertise and depth of knowledge, regarding tertiary education.

11.1.3 The Director or Chief Executive Officer of the Commission will be responsible to the Commission for policy and for strategic functions as required under his/her leadership.³

11.2 National Human Resources Development and Training Council

11.2.1 The NHRDTC will be the Executive body which covers all policy making, planning and implementation in the area of national human resources management and development. It will advise SITEC in the area of matching the human resource needs in Solomon Islands with tertiary education provision.

11.2.2 The NHRDTC determines the priorities in terms of skills in high demand by the country and related courses to meet the needs. It is therefore represented in the National Training Committee to give advice on the award of scholarships for these prioritised courses and training institutions and student numbers in relation to budget ceilings, study and welfare costs.

11.2.3 The NHRDTC will have representatives from relevant SIG departments (Education, Home Affairs, Finance, Development Planning, Commerce Industries and Employment) and from the private sector (such as Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce), Churches, NGOs and Donor Agencies.

³ Details of membership will be covered in the SITEC legislation (proposed Higher Education Bill).

11.2.4 Until the NHRDTC is properly established, the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) will lead the development of a National Human Resource Development and Training Plan with the understanding that the public and private sector, NGO's and development partners are consulted on a regular basis. Details of membership will be agreed upon by all stakeholders.

11.2.5 The NHRDTC will be supported by a Secretariat.

11.3 Tertiary Education Division

11.3.1 The Tertiary Education Division in the Ministry of Education will lead the development of national policies and regulations in the Tertiary Education sub sector, and monitor the implementation and compliance with the policies. It will also prepare and set the budget for tertiary education. SITEC will receive, from the budget, the funds it needs to manage the tertiary education sector in Solomon Islands. The Ministry of Education will retain funds for tertiary scholarships, which is a responsibility of the Ministry.

11.3.2 The Tertiary Education Division advises the SITEC.

11.3.3 The TED can make recommendations to SITEC regarding a national tertiary education strategic plan, assist in monitoring, assessing, reviewing that plan. One of the monitoring strategies will be tracking students in relation to employment.

11.3.4 The TED continues to supervise the national teacher training (pre-and in-service). It can advise on financing mechanisms for tertiary education providers and fees.

11.3.5 The TED will be responsible for monitoring and supervising the NTU, its adherence to the national scholarship regulations (approved in 2008). The TED will have a representative in the NTC.

11.3.6 The TED will also be responsible for communicating and maintaining sector dialogue on the tertiary education developments which aim to involve all relevant stakeholders and to improve the quality of its advice to SITEC and policy making.

11.4 National Training Unit

11.4.1 The National Training Unit supports the National Training Committee with the administration of all available government and donor funded scholarships for Solomon Islands' students.

11.4.2 It needs to regularly report to TED and the Management Team in the Ministry about study results and welfare of individual students. It also needs to ensure regular payments of contributions to the relevant institutions.

11.5 National Training Committee

11.5.1 The National Training Committee (NTC) is the decision making body on the award of scholarships for pre-and in-service training.

11.5.2 The committee has representatives from the Ministry of Planning, Education, Labour, Provincial Government, Churches and National Council of Women, private sector and in the future from the NHRDTC. In regard to decision making about the different scholarships categories (open category, public category and short term training) financed by AusAID and NZAID, these donor agencies are co-opted members of the NTC.

11.5.3 The committee must work under the approved regulations for government scholarships (2008), see annex 4 and 5. It is accountable to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education.

10.6 Development Agencies

11.6.1 AusAID, NZAID, Republic of China, Japan and PNG at the moment support Solomon Islands' students by offering scholarships in different categories. AusAID and NZAID also provide regional development scholarships under which students enrol in tertiary education institutions in Australia and New Zealand.

II. CURRENT STATE PROVIDERS

11.7 SICHE

11.7.1 The Solomon Islands College of Higher Education operates under its own council. It is partly funded and supported by the Ministry of Education.

11.7.2 It offers certificate and diploma-level courses for students who have completed at least secondary education, with the majority of students entering after Form 5 or Form 6.

11.7.3 SICHE is made up of seven schools, the largest being the School of Education (896 students⁴) and the smallest being the School of Marine and Fisheries Studies (43 students). The other four are the Schools of Finance and Administration (585), Industrial Development (105), Nursing (258), Natural Resources (205), and Tourism & Hospitality, which started in 2009 with 30 students.

11.8 IPAM

11.8.1 The institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) runs short term training and induction courses for public servants, mostly

⁴ Data all from 2008

those who are new to the service. IPAM is a newly established service provider fully funded by SIG and AusAID.

11.8.2 IPAM offers the following courses; Executive Personal Services, Human Resources Management, Public Finance, Public Service Appointments and Promotions, Public Service Disciplinary Procedures, Public Service Induction, Registry Procedures and Solomon Islands Law.

11.9 USP

11.9.1 University of the South Pacific (USP) is a regional institution for twelve Pacific Island countries, and has campuses in several countries (Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu), the main one being the Laucala Campus in Suva, Fiji. The USP is supported by governments in the South Pacific Region.

11.9.2 USP offers preliminary and foundation, certificate, diploma, Bachelor Degree, Masters' and PHD-research programmes and also post-graduate (continuing) education.

11.9.3 In 2008 it had a total of 18.974 full-and part time students, of which 63% originates from Fiji. Solomon Islands have the second biggest student population with 2773 (15%). USP also has a small number, 252, (1%), of international students.

11.9.4 All other countries have local USP centres. The USP-centre in Honiara had 3598 full-and part time students in 2008. It will expand into a USP-campus in the medium term.

III. PRIVATE PROVIDERS

11.10.1 At the moment there are no private tertiary education providers in Solomon Islands. The Ministry of Education recently received applications from the Church of Melanesia and Seventh Day Adventists Church for the establishment of universities. The number of private general training institutions, which offer a wide range of courses, has been growing in Solomon Islands. These institutions will also need to be accredited by SITEC.

IV. USERS

11.11 Public Sector

11.11.1 All Ministries are utilising the scholarship arrangements to upgrade staff in different areas.

11.12 Private Sector

11.12.1 Firms can work through Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce (SICC) and other business associations in reporting to the Ministry

(TED) and NHRDTC about human resources development needs, job creation, training and about the quality of tertiary education.

11.12.2 The private sector also needs to advise the government and tertiary education providers on enabling employees or graduates to attend suitable and quality courses (such as entrepreneurship, management) which can result in increased employment in the private sector.

11.12.3 The private sector could gradually offer more sponsorships or apprenticeship schemes to students or job candidates and also create opportunities for in-service training for staff. This will depend partly on the availability of suitable high quality training and on national financing policies to stimulate business investments and economic growth.

11.13 Students

11.13.1 Students can report, either directly or through their appropriate associations to the NTU about their education needs, quality and relevance of training and employment rates.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

General

- 12.1 There is a general need to improve the quality of data collection, processing and analysis for information based decision making in the tertiary sub sector. This is the responsibility of every tertiary education provider as well as the SITEC, which oversees the monitoring of access, quality and management of tertiary education.
- 12.2 SITEC in close collaboration with TED will develop a quality control and accreditation system for the tertiary education providers, which will initially prescribe satisfactory standards for the charter, profile, academic and corporate planning, and academic standards of tertiary education providers.
- 12.3 SITEC will also develop and implement a strategic action plan for the tertiary education sector which will include expected outputs, outcomes, indicators and means of verification within an agreed framework of legislation, administration and funding. An example of such a strategic action plan is presented in Annex 3.
- 12.4 The monitoring system generally will include indicators for all three main policy goals (see Chapter 6), but will not be limited to checking progress on indicators. The monitoring will rely on different data sources and collection methods, and this will require physical visits, inspections, interviews and research.
- 12.5 The Ministry has developed a *Performance Assessment Framework* (PAF) for all sub sectors, including the tertiary education sub sector, which will be used as the basic data collection format and a 'quick scan' for the sub sector. The PAF is a data collection system based on selected core indicators to measure improved access/infrastructure, quality and management.
- 12.6 SITEC and TED need to jointly develop specific targets and minimum standards to measure progress in the areas of access, infrastructure, quality and management in the tertiary education sub sector.
- 12.7 The scholarship system administered by the NTU will be subject to periodic independent reviews.

Specific indicators for tertiary sub sector

12..8 This policy promotes several outcomes and processes in the tertiary education sub sector. Therefore the monitoring system should capture specific indicators on quality and management of tertiary education such as:

- students' learning progress, results and employment rates.
- gaps between courses delivered by tertiary education providers and labour market needs
- number of relevant, nationally led and published research.
- unit costs
- number of partnership arrangements
- all fee, revenue collection by tertiary education providers from different sources

13. Financing

- 13.1 A coordinated financing policy is necessary in order to maintain and improve existing standards of the current national and regional tertiary education providers, to produce a cohesive plan for tertiary education in the future and to manage access to tertiary education by individual students. The financing policies will in the medium term only apply to accredited tertiary institutions recognized by SITEC.
- 13.2 The financing policies will be structured under policies for individual students (scholarships) and policies for national and regional tertiary education providers. In general the financing will be based on similar principles as enhanced efficiency, cost sharing, increased monitoring etc., but the details may differ between national and regional tertiary education providers.

A. Scholarships and financing for students in-country

- 13.3 The cost sharing principle will be introduced whereby students or families will pay a percentage of the annual registration and tuition fees.. The initial percentage to be paid by students and parents is 25% and to be adjusted by the Permanent Secretary as and when required.. Scholarship renewal will be provided on the same cost sharing basis for the second and subsequent years, but will strictly depend on exam success. See Annex 4, paragraph 5.1 for what is considered unacceptable delay in study progress.
- 13.4 The government will also seek Development Partner support to assist in the development of tertiary education.
- 13.5 The system of cost sharing would only apply to selected courses determined by an independent body, for example a National Human Resources Development and Training Council, which determines the priorities of courses based on labour market demands. Other courses can be provided to students, but fees will not be subsidised by government.
- 13.6 The cost sharing scholarship arrangement is for registration and tuition fees only. All text books and materials are paid for by the student/family.
- 13.7 From introduction, the percentage, set by the Permanent Secretary, for student/family contribution would be conditional on prevailing economic conditions and subject to annual review at the time of the government budget.
- 13.8 For private business an incentive will be introduced through 100 % deduction from taxable business income of registration and student fees, allowances and resources paid by employers. The promotion of full apprenticeship schemes by private business is also supported whereby student fees and other training costs are also fully deductible.

- 13.9 An incentive for parents will be introduced through 100 % deduction where student course fees, allowances and resources are fully paid by parents and the parents have a taxable income.
- 13.10 To encourage more full-time workers and personnel to undertake part-time study, particularly in Finance and Administration by on-campus attendance or through distance learning, 100% of course fees, allowances and resources paid will be deductible from taxable income earned by the student.

B. Scholarships to students in overseas institutions

- 13.11 Scholarships to students enrolled in overseas institutions will generally be provided under either of two categories, a full scholarship or a fees-only scholarship. Study programmes determined by the NHRDTC to be in high demand for the country will generally attract a full scholarship.
- 13.12 All Solomon Islands citizens are eligible to apply for sponsorship at any stage during their tertiary studies.
- 13.13 The fees-only scholarship will cover registration, tuition and book fees only.
- 13.14 The government will also implement a feasibility study on a Student Loans Scheme (SLS) to be administered by the banks. The study will focus on interest free-loans, identify possible studies for a loans scheme and assess feasibility of repayment procedures on the basis of employment. The SLS will only be launched once the study has been completed and recommendations are positive.
- 13.15 Increased control will be exercised by the National Human Resources Development and Training Council (NHRDTC), which will determine the priorities in terms of skills and the corresponding courses to deliver these skills in high demand by the country. This body also determines the numbers of students needed, but at the same time affordable and related to budget ceilings, study and welfare costs.
- 13.16 Full scholarships, including fees, fares and all other allowances should be linked to prioritised needs in the National Human Resources Development and Training Plan, which is produced and reviewed annually by the NHRDTC.
- 13.17 Merit and development priority are the most important factors in deciding pre-service awards while years of service, work performance, experience and development priority are the criteria used for in-service applications.
- 13.18 In the award of scholarships there will be a deliberate and concerted effort to achieve fifty percent of scholarships going to women as soon as possible and not later than 2015.

- 13.19 Forty percent of scholarships will be divided into provincial quotas in proportion to the official provincial population as recorded by the national census. Honiara is categorised as a separate province. Applicants will be required to specify the province from which they are applying.
- 13.20 Scholarships awarded under both the gender and the provincial balancing categories must still meet the requirements for SIG scholarships.
- 13.21 Scholarships awarded to students will be reviewed on the basis of successful progress according to scholarship contracts (see Annex 4 and 5).
- 13.22 Students with a full scholarship award will sign a contract with the Government and be bonded for at least the same number of years as the scholarship duration to work in Solomon Islands after completing their studies
- 13.23 Awardees will be required to repay the total cost or a portion of the total cost of their scholarship if they, in a full course load, fail more than one course or subject in the first year of the award and in each subsequent semester for the remaining duration of the award. If a full course load is not undertaken, the awardee must pass all courses. See also Annex 4, paragraph 2.4 and 5.1.
- 13.24 Progression to post-graduate studies should not be automatic until the bond period (see Annex 5) has first been completed. However, students with exceptional ability, evidenced by outstanding academic results, may be allowed to continue to postgraduate studies immediately after undergraduate studies, either under government postgraduate scholarships or funded from other sources.
- 13.25 Government's emphasis is on Universal Basic Education as the first priority. The Government in consultation with Development Partners will determine the balance of funding between the different education sub sectors and levels.
- 13.26 While maintaining or increasing the agreed share of Basic Education within the total government education budget, the government will increase the financial support to the quality development of secondary senior education and tertiary institutions, in particular where courses are provided which match the labour demand in Solomon Islands for public, private and informal sector.

C. Financing National Tertiary Education Providers

- 13.27 The government will introduce a block grant system for recognised and accredited national tertiary education providers, based on the unit costs for students. This will replace the current lump-sum funding.
- 13.28 A grant formula will be developed to subsidise part of the operation costs for tertiary education providers. However, this also means that the institutions need to meet demands for efficiency and effectiveness in terms of improved strategic planning, matching academic standards, teaching and learning conditions, intellectually and physically, human resource development planning, database management etc.
- 13.29 A clear monitoring framework (see chapter 11) will be developed to measure and evaluate progress in efficiency and effectiveness of the national education providers. SITEC will be responsible for this, but before its establishment TED will develop a basic monitoring framework. In the longer term, this monitoring framework will form the basis for accreditation.
- 13.30 National Tertiary Education Providers can get more financial support if they improve on internal efficiency and increasing revenues from other sources than from students and/or parents e.g. by self-income generation from practical research, selling products or services or cultivating land.
- 13.31 National Tertiary Education Providers receiving grants must have long and medium term (three to five years) strategic plans covering development options based on estimated enrolments. The plans must be formulated or reviewed on a 'rolling' or annual review basis and follow policy guidelines relating to unit fee costs.

D. Financing the regional or international education providers

- 13.32 Fees and other costs for selected students to recognised and accredited regional and international education providers can only be paid on the basis of full transparency of cost calculations, clear student fee formulae and regular reporting on students' progress.
- 13.33 The government will develop contracts or partnerships with selected regional and international tertiary education providers, which are selected to train and educate Solomon Island students. They need to perform to the principle of 'value for money' with regular reporting on individual student progress, on study results within the predicted time and costs.
- 13.34 The regional and international tertiary education providers will be selected on the basis that a reasonable number of courses are available in DFL-mode and where a professional mentor system is in place, which enables an increasing number of students to spend most

of the study time in the Solomon Islands, to make regular progress and to finalise the study within the planned time and costs.

- 13.35 The government will allocate funding for contracting selected regional and/or international tertiary education providers to assist in the development and institutional strengthening of the tertiary education sector in the Solomon Islands.
- 13.36 'Partnership arrangements' based on a mutual understanding and Terms of Reference between a regional or international education provider and a national tertiary institution must be considered as useful investments to increase the efficiency, quality and management of the national tertiary education provider(s) and also to increase access for Solomon Islands' students to international tertiary education.
- 13.37 Franchise of relevant courses in the region is another possible medium term investment for courses that are identified by the NHRDTC as priorities for Solomon Islands, but can't yet be provided nationally.

Annex 1 The current situation in Tertiary Education provision

Tertiary (or post-secondary) education in the Solomon Islands is provided by the University of the South Pacific (USP) Campus here in Honiara, the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), and overseas universities and colleges. Other providers of tertiary education courses in the Solomon Islands include several church funded or private education providers that focus specifically on technical and vocational education and training (including the rural training centres and the community-based training centres that deliver post-secondary education). These other providers are delivering tertiary (post-secondary) education, although often at a relatively low level of achievement.

The Solomon Islands Centre of the University of the South Pacific (USP) provides an extension of the University's programmes and courses. It offers courses at the preliminary and foundation and degree levels, through distance and flexible modes of learning. In order to increase tertiary education opportunities, the Government invited the University of the South Pacific to carry out a joint feasibility study on the establishment of a full USP campus in Honiara. This study, which was completed in October 2004, recommended that such a campus be developed as soon as practicable. Recently a follow up visit in February 2007 by USP, resulted in a Letter of Intent where the two parties, Solomon Islands Government and University of South Pacific agreed on the expansion of the University's education activities in the country and the need to increase the face-to-face-teaching of first degree courses. The Solomon Islands Government would therefore make land available and provide financial support towards the design and the construction of the new facilities. A first sum of 3 million SBD has been made available in 2009 by the government to meet the cost of the design and other preliminary activities. This will assist in coping with the strong growth in enrolment numbers for tertiary education. There are plans to expand capacity up to 3500 full time students in 2012, of which a growing number will be addressed in face to face teaching.

After a strong growth in total enrolment numbers at the USP-centre in both full time and part-time students in 2005 (3674 for first semester) and 2006 (4374 for first semester), the number decreased in 2007 (3306 for first semester) but then increased again in 2008 (3598). Highest enrolment rates are for the Foundation course, preliminary and 100-level courses. There is a significant drop out rate compared to enrolment for semester 2 courses (14% for 2005, 18% for 2006, 11% for 2007), probably for reasons as financial limitations and lack of study progress beyond 100 level for lack of course offerings.

University of the South Pacific (USP)

Solomon Islands rely on overseas universities and colleges to meet its degree-qualified human resources needs. Most of the Solomon Islanders studying for a degree enrol with the University of the South Pacific, or attend universities and colleges in Papua New Guinea. A significant number also attend universities and colleges in Australia and New Zealand. There were 1,219 degree-level students in SI in 2005, about one-quarter of whom (283) were studying at the USP Center (where many students do their first two to three semesters of university study before going abroad to finish their degree programs) and three-quarters of whom (936) were studying abroad. Of those studying abroad in 2005, the largest numbers were at the main campus of the USP in Suva, Fiji (452 students in 2005); two other higher education institutions in Fiji, the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM) and the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) (182 students); the USP campuses in Samoa and Vanuatu (99 students); and several higher education institutions in Papua New Guinea (135

students). A relatively small number (68 in 2005) were studying in Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of China.

In 2008, over 928 students were studying in universities and colleges abroad, supported by the Solomon Islands Government as well as foreign governments through Third Country Scholarship Awards. The total number of full –and part time students at USP in 2008 is 18,974 of which 57% is originated from Fiji (10,760 students) and 15% (2,773) from the Solomon Islands, which forms the second biggest student population. These numbers also reveal that some Solomon Islanders pay for their training at USP from their own or other sources (NZAID, AusAid, RoC, Japan or PNG-scholarship support). A big group of the USP-university population is formed by the so-called ‘private students’.

The average annual cost of each scholarship is well in excess of SBD 52,000. Overseas scholarship training opportunities (opportunity lists) at the moment are determined by the availability of scholarships rather than by predetermined needs of the economy of the country. The Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) will establish a *National Human Resources Development and Training Council (NHRDTC)*, which will advise the National Training Committee on human resource training needs that will inform the award of scholarships. The advice from the NHRDTC will aim to link up prioritised courses and institutions with nationally required skills. The establishment of the NHRDTC is one of the main recommendations of the *Study to Support the Development of a National Skills Training Plan (2007)*. The NHRDTC and secretariat are also expected to strengthen the co-ordination of all skills training in the country. Unfortunately this has dropped from the original development budget for 2008. Yet the Ministry of Planning will try to get it started.

The **Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE)** is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, and is the main state supported tertiary institution in the Solomon Islands. It was established under the College of Higher Education Act 1984 by amalgamating the Solomon Islands Teachers College, Honiara Technical Institute and the Solomon Islands School of Nursing. It has expanded considerably since, with facilities, equipment and resources provided under donor projects funded by development agencies such as the World Bank, AusAID, NZAID, United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Union. As the largest tertiary institution in the Solomon Islands, SICHE has a key role to play in the economic and social development of the country.

In 2004, the MEHRD, with its donor partners the European Union and New Zealand, launched the Education Sector Investment and Reform Programme (ESIRP) with the intention of implementing an education reform programme for the Solomon Islands over a period of twelve years or more. Among the priority areas for the first three years of the planning cycle (2004 – 2006) was the restructuring of SICHE and an investigation of the feasibility of an expanded USP campus in Solomon Islands. SICHE was last reviewed in 2005⁵. This review concluded that a major restructuring is essential, but this review needs to be undertaken in the context of a forward-looking strategic plan which is owned by SICHE’s Council and Senior Staff and actively supported by major stakeholders, particularly the Solomon Islands Government and significant aid donors. The CNURA –government which took office at the end of 2007 made the upgrading of SICHE an important part of its government programme in the education sector and has transferred substantial amounts from the

⁵Dr Martin Grinstead, Mr Johnson Fangalasu, *Short-Term Assistance for the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education: Institutional Development and Planning*, 2005

development budget to SICHE to realise curriculum review and the long-overdue upgrading of its infrastructure.

SICHE offers courses in both academic and technical and vocational areas, leading to formal awards from certificate to advanced diploma levels. The broad areas of study include teacher education, nursing and health education, finance and administration/secretarial skills, natural resources including agriculture and forestry, basic trades and marine engineering, and courses that develop skills for the maritime and fisheries industries. Enrolment is increasing quickly, in 2007 with 2345 students, 2008 with a total of 2435 students and in 2009 with 2708 students. SICHE gets much more applications than it can accommodate. Enrolment numbers therefore could be higher if block grants could be disbursed and facilities could be expanded. At the moment only the school of nursing, school of education and tourism receive some state support from the respective Ministries.

Most students enrol full-time, but SICHE also offers part-time courses e.g. in School of Finance, and recently also the School of Nursing. Depending on the programmes and courses, tuition fees at SICHE range from SBD 800 to 1000 per academic year, consisting of two semesters of 18 weeks each. Most students however live on campus, so boarding and meal fees must be added which have risen to an average of SBD 5000 tuition (exclusive boarding) and SBD 30.000 per year for full time courses (inclusive boarding). SICHE enrolments by school and year are set out in Table 1: Enrolment data was not available for the Distance Education Centre, so any enrolment information from this has not been included in the table below.

Table1. SICHE Enrolments All Schools, 2007-2008-2009

Enrolments	2007			2008			2009		
	S1	S2	Tota	S1	S2	Tota	S1	S2	Tota
School of Education	883		883	896		896	1002		1002
School of Marine & Fisheries studies	49		49	43	42	85	100		100
School of Industrial Development	195	142	337	105	162	267	243	231	474
School of Natural Resources	169		169	205		205	279		279
School of Finance & Administration	531	172	703	585	120	705	468	94	562
School of Nursing & Health Studies	204		204	258	19	277	291		291
Total	2031	314	2345	2092	343	2435	2383	325	2708

Generally the “flagship” courses at SICHE are of two years full-time duration, such as the business studies diploma and the business studies certificate, the nursing diploma, and the certificates in forestry and tropical agriculture. The teacher training diploma courses have also been recently changed into 2 year full-time pre-service training for primary and secondary schools. The School of Education (SoE) co-

operates with the Ministry on the conversion of the Teachers in Training (TIT) course for 'untrained' teachers into a distance flexible learning course. That course is still a teaching certificate course. It has been organized once in 'face-to-face-mode' in the period 2007 till beginning of 2009 for a group of 250 teachers. For both the pre-service training and the TIT, the SoE and the Ministry receive considerable technical and financial support from the University of Waikato for the review of the pre-service and a TA-team leader for the TIT-conversion funded by NZAID. SoE also provides the Advanced Standing Courses for degree graduates who wish to enter the teaching profession and are one year in length.

Other shorter courses are offered as well. The JOCV provides volunteers who are specialized teachers for several subjects in the different schools of SICHE.

Access and Equity

Earlier analysis of data in 2005 revealed that 45% of the 1,756 enrolments at SICHE in 2005 were female, while 55% were male. There was therefore a slight gender imbalance in favour of males.

Enrolments at SICHE by province of origin and by school in 2005 are set out in Table 18. The numbers of enrolments are broadly in line with the overall population of the provinces, although the number of enrolments from Honiara seems low by comparison in every school, except for the teacher education courses.

Table 2: SICHE Enrolments by Province of Origin and by School, 2005

Province	Education	Finance	Industrial Development	Marine Resources	Nursing	Natural Resources	Totals
Blank	26	8	0	0	0	0	34
Central	35	21	6	3	5	4	74
Choiseul	56	37	15	6	4	7	125
Guadalcanal	83	35	20	3	14	17	172
Honiara	32	0	0	1	0	0	33
Isabel	70	61	24	4	33	12	204
Makira & Ulawa	64	21	7	4	12	5	113
Malaita	246	172	75	7	48	46	594
Rennell & Bellona	15	12	4	0	3	0	34
Temotu	67	30	8	8	5	2	120
Western	77	99	28	3	19	25	251
Total	771	496	188	39	143	118	1754

Facilities

Most of the student accommodation, the library, some classrooms, equipment, books and resources have been provided under donor projects. Some of the facilities have not been fully repaired or renovated after the 2000-2003 conflict. The buildings, physical plant and equipment at SICHE have deteriorated, not only as a result of the conflict, but also through lack of maintenance, to the point where considerable re-investment in infrastructure is required.

The current state of student facilities (dining halls, halls of residences, classrooms, etc) and the learning resources and equipment (books, tools, etc) is of the minimum standards required. The School of Finance and Administration offer computer

courses, and is equipped with computer laboratories. The library and some Schools have internet facilities for student and staff access. Under the ongoing restructuring programme, conditions conducive to effective student learning and research have been created and maintained. Since 2008 SICHE has received extra operational funding (SBD 5 million) and also SBD 3 million in 2009 for upgrading of all facilities. The EU-project continued in 2009 to support SICHE with upgrading of the workshop at the School of Industrial Development. The project will also support SICHE in 2009 with the development of a Distance Learning Centre, which will help the revitalisation of the Distance Education Centre which has not been active because of lack of financial support and computer facilities. Also the Government of Japan has provided infrastructure support under the 'Grassroots'-project.

Curriculum

In common with other tertiary education institutions, the curriculum for courses at SICHE and the University of the South Pacific is developed by the institution itself to meet local or regional needs and conditions. Both councils have academic approval procedures that must be adhered to. USP seeks to plan for international accreditation of its courses in its new Strategic Plan for 2010-2012. The Policy and Statement for Tertiary Education in Solomon Islands also expresses the urgent need to improve the standards by accreditation of courses and quality control measures to be set by an independent Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC). If SICHE wants to be registered under these requirements, it will also need external accreditation. At the moment SICHE-courses and programmes are self-standing and have not been regularly assessed for external accreditation from any other Institution. Yet efforts at making the curriculum relevant to the workplace are vigorously pursued and personnel is sought to manage the necessary curriculum review of the courses. Part and parcel of the ongoing restructuring programme has been the reviews of all the Schools of SICHE, which was supported by the EU-Technical Advisors. This involved broad consultations with stake holders, on the basis of which, new directions were set especially in curriculum content, and teaching and learning experiences. The reviews led to certain Schools establishing new Institutional linkages, as well as examining existing ones for possible improvement. The School of Education is now benefiting from linkages with the University of Waikato, and the School of Finance and Administration had the opportunity, to examine its degree programmes with its USP counterpart. The reviews also led to some improvements in the management of SICHE, as the necessary structures and processes were created and managers can now apply these in their work. Senior officers underwent a series of in-house staff development activities designed and delivered by international Technical Advisers. Also much emphasized, are activities focussing on customer satisfaction, and general improvement of student services. Yet a clear, longer term strategic action plan for SICHE needs to be developed to guide its upgrading which is supported by the current government.

USP also has undergone reviews. A quality audit of the University by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU) were undertaken in 2008. Both audits recommended that "USP review the Strategic Plan, establish its key priorities and objectives, set time-frames and realistic targets and develop key performance indicators to monitor progress towards objectives"⁶. At the USP-council meeting 3-5 June 2009 in Nadi, Fiji a new strategic plan 2010-2012 was indeed approved.

Teacher Supply and Demand

⁶ USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012. Progressing together for sustainable futures. Consultative document. Draft version 2 Post SMG, 29th of January 2009.

At SICHE there has generally been at times, severe lecturer shortages in the technical, professional areas of teaching as Accounting and Marine engineering. But this reflects the national trend of shortage of trained manpower in these areas, rather than any peculiarity only to SICHE. Present reviews will lead to the establishment of a staff work-load model for determining SICHE staffing. Now that this is established, staffing at SICHE would be better controlled with improved accountability. It is SICHE policy to employ only qualified staff. It does this either through the development of its own staff or recruitment of qualified people. Demand for qualified staff varies from School to School and is reflective of the fact that SICHE is a multi-faced, academic/practical institution. Just as the School of Education, the most academically regarded School of SICHE, boasts some of the most highly qualified academic staff within SICHE, so is the School of Industrial Development boasting some of the most highly qualified practical staff of the College, in the areas of Basic Trades. The number of staff with Masters Degrees has increased substantively across the College, with the first PhD graduated staff, already serving at the School of Education.

The review of the School of Education in 2005⁷ noted that a key strength of the School of Education was the academic qualifications of its staff. Some 87% of the SoE staff hold a Bachelors degree or higher from a recognised international university; 21% hold a Masters degree or Doctorate, making it a very well qualified school.

USP has more than 1700 academic and support staff in 12 member countries distributed over a vast area. USP therefore faces specific challenges in the human resources area, which are not common to other universities. These challenges go not only to attracting and retaining high quality, geographically mobile staff in increasingly competitive academic, professional and support staff labour markets, but to the range of attributes and skills which often have to be developed 'on the job.' Teaching staff, for example, are required to transmit knowledge effectively through flexible education and sophisticated satellite communication technologies, including instructional approaches that incorporate significant multi-media content.

To attract, support and develop outstanding academic and support staff, which it draws both regionally and internationally, USP must be an exemplary employer, with fair, open, consistent recruitment and promotion practices, strong incentives for outstanding people to perform at the highest level, and opportunities for all staff to participate in appropriate staff development programmes.

Therefore, in the current planning period USP will continue to place particular emphasis on identifying and implementing best practice in staff recruitment, selection, career management, retention and reward.

Financing

Annually, SICHE is financed jointly by the Solomon Islands Government, donor funding, and fees from students and sponsors. The level of revenues from these sources in 2006 was Solomon Islands Government SBD11.5 million; NZAid SBD13.07 million; and Fees SBD 5.9 million. Funds from the Solomon Islands Government are a form of lump sum. Since 2006 both support from the government and fees collection and other income has increased considerably. In 2009 SICHE received SBD 19.8 million from the government, SBD 10.8 million from NZAID and it expects an income of 21.7 SBD from tuition, boarding, registration and other sources.

⁷ Lester Taylor and Bob Pollard, *School of Education: Review Report and Development Plan*, March 2005

The improvement and strengthening of SICHE's financial management and control systems, are major areas of focus under the ongoing restructuring and reorganization of the Corporate Services of the College. These systems collapsed to a certain extent in the height of the '99/'2000 conflict. New and better systems have been established and management is quickly getting used to these through application and a series of in-house staff development and training activities. Already, there is significant improvement in the management and control of finances as transparency and need for efficient use of scarce finances and resources are increasingly valued college wide. All of these achievements were possible through the input of an international Technical Adviser through European Union assistance. It won't be long before regular Financial Statements are produced and audited.

It is clear that for implementation of the ambitious USP Strategy 2010-2012 a new financial strategy and funding mechanism needs to be developed.

Management

SICHE is established by an Act of Parliament. It has a Council which governs it. Members of Council are appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Ministers of the Crown responsible for certain Fields of Studies under the mandate of SICHE. Members appointed by the Governor General include the representative of the Solomon Islands Christian Association. There are also members elected by certain organizations within SICHE, as well as those who are ex-officio, by virtue of the offices they hold at SICHE and USP. The Council has an Executive which comprises of all the Chair Persons of the Council's Standing Committees. The College has an Academic Board, with each School having a Board of Studies. There is a Senior Officers Committee, which assists in the day to day administration and management of the College. All these organs served the College well, until the social problems of 2000. The recovery process under the restructuring program is progressing well. A number of appraisal systems are now in place including formal and informal, and based on such things as pre-set objectives, and key performance indicators.

USP underlines in its USP Strategy 2010-2012 that it is 'committed to delivering institutional effectiveness through the highest standards of governance, management and continuous improvement' and has set out a package of strategies under governance, management and continuous improvement (priority area number 5 of the USP-strategy, 2010-2012).

Future Directions

Tertiary education is an important sub sector in the national education system, just as the Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary education sub sectors are. As such, it must also be featured prominently in the national education system structure. A national set of policies to guide expansion/investment, provision, equity, and access, is needed. These should at least pose the question of how long can the country continue to afford the present scheme of things. Strategies to implement the policies should then be drawn up. Should the country start investing in creating more opportunities at home rather than relying on the expensive scholarships abroad? The basis for addressing the issues of provision, access and equity, need to be clearly researched and established. Considerations must be given to making government investments in this sub sector proportionate to the needs of the other sub sectors. The principle that education provided in-country is generally cheaper than that provided abroad is worth considering. The ongoing structural reform of SICHE will hopefully lead to the rationalization of programs of TVET nature between SICHE and

other tertiary providers. Guidelines towards this are already in the national TVET policies approved by the Government in 2005.

The principle of rationalization is also to be observed in the relationship between USP and SICHE with regards to the plans for establishment of the USP Campus in Honiara. This is to avoid duplication, and competition, but instead encourage the ongoing co-operation and complementary approaches to meeting the country's manpower needs. USP Campus and other tertiary providers co-existing with SICHE in this manner could lead to the efficient provision of tertiary education within the Solomon Islands in the short and longer term. The 2004 feasibility differs from the Irvine-report (1999) in when to develop close ties between USP and SICHE. The former recommends development of USP firstly as SICHE is yet to change into a more conducive learning environment, the latter recommends close ties from the beginning. There are clear benefits however to develop a Solomon Islands-USP-campus. Fewer students have to leave the country, lower costs therefore to be expected in the longer term, the opportunity of adapting the courses to the needs in Solomon Islands, increased local research opportunities. But on the other hand there is also need for caution: to establish a small-sized campus that is yet financially viable, the limited ability of students to pay for courses and the limited ability of the government to fund this sub-sector within its sector wide approach which needs attention for all sub-sectors, in particular basic education. Furthermore encouraging of face-to-face-teaching requires facilities, student accommodation at low rates of rent and more staffing. In other words, USP-campus development needs an increased contribution from SI, in particular during the initial phases of new construction.

The *Study to Support the Development of a National Skills Training Plan*, March 2007 to assist in the development of a National Skills Training Plan will be important for the future direction of tertiary education in the Solomon Islands. The report of this study was published in 2007. This proposed plan is intended to provide a basis for the Government to plan and to co-ordinate its future investment in the skills training and education of the nation's work force. The intention is that this plan will be linked to the future skilled manpower needs (both formal and informal) of the economy.

Access and Equity

Access to tertiary education opportunities in the Solomon Islands needs to improve significantly. Current participation levels are relatively low (1.1% participation rate in higher education⁸), but is seeing strong growth. As an indication, USP had 2634 full and part time Solomon Islands students in 2002 and 3598 students in 2008. Increasing participation in higher level tertiary education courses will therefore be necessary to lift the level of productivity and the performance of the work force.

Facilities

Facilities at the School of Education at SICHE have been upgraded with support from NZAID in 2006. In 2009 SICHE in general has received SBD 3 million from the government for general upgrading. This refurbishment programme is recognised as a priority.

The main reason for USP-expansion into a campus is the strongly growing demand for higher academic studies. A design for the gradual expansion of USP has been finalized. The expansion is planned at the Panatina-site.

Curriculum

⁸ USP, Planning Office, Regional Centres Development Plan 2004

The planned academic reviews of SICHE will lead to revised curriculum across all Schools. This will ensure that the right balance is maintained between international quality and standards and needs of the workplace. Also at USP within the new strategic plan, 2010-2012, there are clear indications that USP aims to improve the quality and the relevance of learning and teaching and to reduce course failure by students. Graduate destinations surveys will be reintroduced to strengthen the link with the needs in the Pacific region and employability of students. Also advice from industry advisory groups and employer surveys will be utilised. USP will therefore complete in 2010 a major review of the structure of its academic programmes at undergraduate level, which might include development of new or additional programmes.

Teacher Supply and Demand

The key need is to continue with the implementation of the proposed restructuring programme at SICHE in order to ensure effective and efficient use of staff. The review and restructure will also lead to improved systems to attract and retain staff at SICHE.

The strategic plan 2010-2012 of USP includes a whole package of measures planned to improve on staff recruitment, selection, career management, retention and reward.

Financing and management

As more opportunities become available locally, there is a need to encourage people to get access to tertiary education through company sponsorship and other external funding arrangements. Strategies need to be developed to ensure a fairer distribution of the costs of tertiary education, shifting from nearly 100% total reliance on the Government, to a more proportionate bearing of the costs by all beneficiaries. The Ministry has just formulated a policy with proposals on different options to finance tertiary education. In 2009 the Ministry also appointed its first Under Secretary Tertiary education, who will gradually establish a Tertiary Education Division, which will lead the policies, regulations and monitoring of the tertiary sub sector.

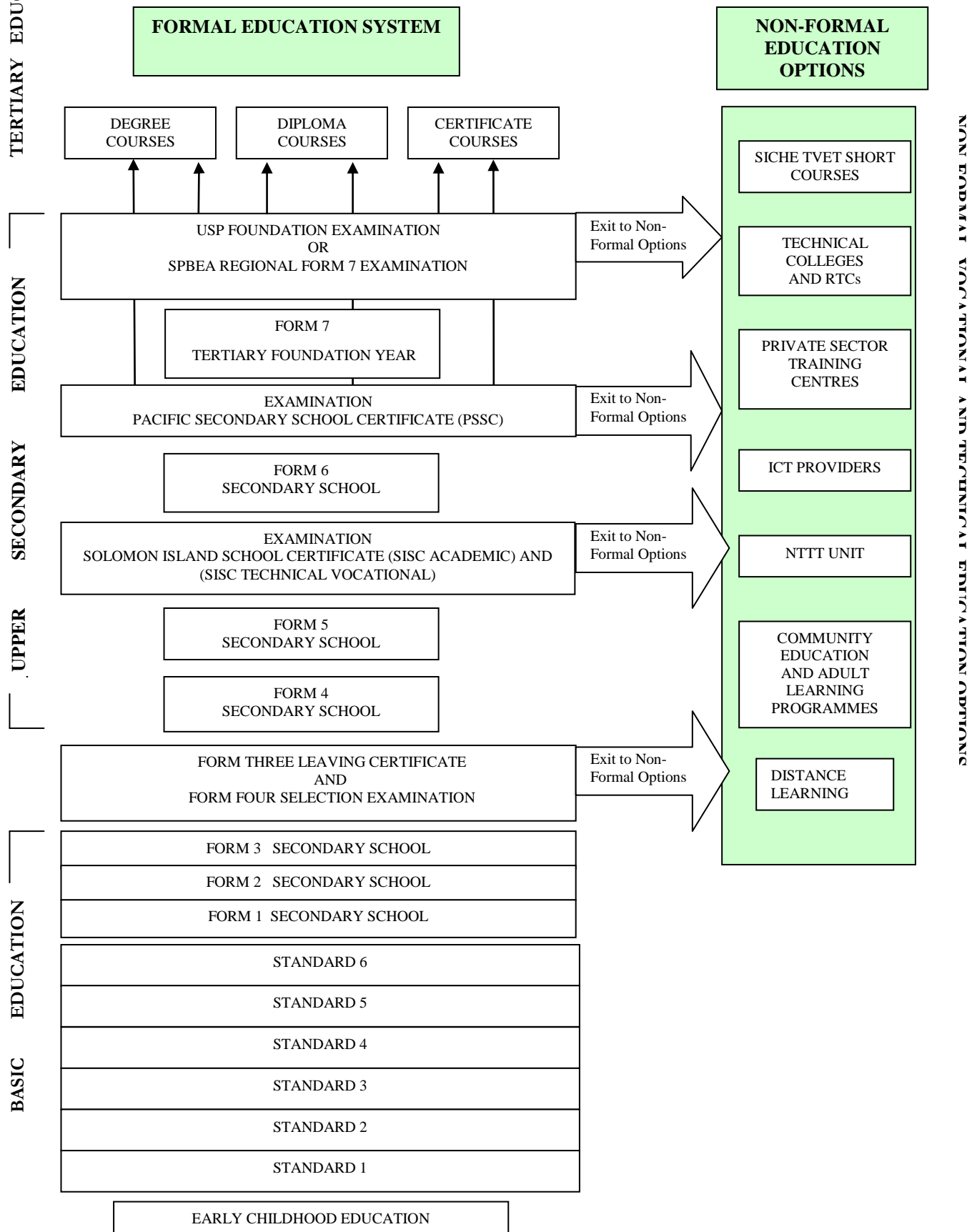
The ongoing review and restructure at SICHE will make it a more effective and efficient educational and training institution to be able to sustain itself in the long term. SICHE has been strengthening by EU-support in terms of its governance, and financial, personal and administrative management. Academic planning, administration and management are also emphasized in the ongoing restructuring exercise. NZAID is supporting the SICHE's School of Education with recurrent budget funding and also with technical support to curriculum review of the pre-service teacher training and development of teacher in training courses (for the unqualified teachers). The University of Waikato in New Zealand has been selected as the partner for the School of Education to provide technical support to these reforms and developments.

USP will put specific measures in place to strengthen its finance and investment committee by developing new financial plans, strategies and a new budget preparation process.

The CNURA government is supporting the development of tertiary education with extra financial support to operation costs of SICHE, the upgrading of SICHE infrastructure and curriculum review.

USP is supported in its expansion plans and development from centre to campus in Honiara by longer term development budget support.

Annex 2. Structure of the Formal & Non-Formal Education System Solomon Islands



Annex 3. Policy Framework and Strategic Action Plan for Tertiary Education

I. QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT

Policy Objective 1	Strategies	Responsibilities	Outcomes	Timing
To develop a national tertiary education system of the highest standards with international, regional accreditation and national recognition of national tertiary education providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC), establish a Tertiary Qualifications Accreditation Framework (TQAF) ○ Organise Technical Assistance (TA) or 'twinning arrangements' to SITEC in areas such as for registration, recognition, accreditation and permanent quality control of courses or studies ○ SITEC assesses all tertiary education providers and provisions for tertiary education and facilitates registration process for accredited providers ○ SITEC makes recommendations to tertiary education providers and Minister of Education and Human Resources Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SITEC ○ SITEC ○ SITEC ○ SITEC 	Establishment of SITEC and TQAF Twinning arrangements or TA in place TQAF operational SITEC operational	2010 2010 2010 2010

<p>Policy Objective 2 To promote continuous, open, distance, flexible learning</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a national policy for DFL ○ All national tertiary education providers are represented in the Technical Working Group DFL ○ National tertiary education providers develop regional co-operation and service-contracts with regional tertiary institutions in the area of DFL, provision of distance, open and e-learning modalities ○ Regional tertiary education providers organise technical assistance in the area of DFL-course design and development and provide increased number of courses in DFL. ○ Introduce more flexibility in study duration, timing of exams and increase students' support, mentoring and coaching mechanisms to improve study results ○ All tertiary education providers aim at increased co-ordination and collaboration in the areas above 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TWG-DFL, MEHRD. ○ National tertiary education providers ○ Regional education providers ○ Tertiary education providers ○ Tertiary education providers 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>National Policy for DFL produced TWG DFL in operation Contracts, MoU's signed in areas of DFL</p> <p>TA recruited and increased number of courses available on DFL Coaching and mentoring systems in place Increased regional and national collaboration</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2010 2010 2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2010</p>
<p>Policy Objective 3 To initiate curriculum review of existing and development of new courses and maintain an on-going review system. The curriculum review aims to match tertiary education services with national labour demands.</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All tertiary education providers review, update existing curriculum, courses and studies, match these closer to individual student and labour market/private sector demand and changed context of knowledge economy, creativity, entrepreneurship and new learning strategies ○ Promote the expansion and utilisation of open, distance, flexible and e-learning methodologies and facilities (see also objective 2) ○ Develop and review of apprenticeship schemes to promote involvement of private sector in capacity building and improved quality of learning 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tertiary education providers ○ Ministries, such as Planning, Communication, Telecom organisations ○ SICCI and MEHRD 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>New curricula, courses, studies developed or reviewed</p> <p>New learning methodologies introduced (DFL, e-learning etc.) Apprenticeship system revitalised and re-introduced</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p>

<p>Policy Objective 4 To increase the national scientific technology and innovation research capacity</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote national scientific technology and innovation research relevant for the economic, social, technological and cultural development of SI ○ Establish or revitalise research units in the tertiary education institutions and in MEHRD, MDPAC, MoC and other Ministries ○ Under the SITEC, establish a National Research Institute (NRI) within the framework of the National University with clear Terms of Reference 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SITEC, MEHRD, MDPAC, MoC ○ Tertiary education providers ○ SITEC and NRI 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Research implemented</p> <p>Research units established</p> <p>NRI established</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p>
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II. ACCESS and INFRASTRUCTURE

<p>Policy Objective 5 To develop the necessary physical and ICT infrastructure for the provision of high quality tertiary education</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All tertiary education providers carry out a needs-based infrastructure assessment linked to the existing physical and necessary ICT-facilities. ○ Production of longer term costed, needs-based infrastructure planning including for necessary ICT-facilities. ○ The physical and ICT-needs assessment needs to include the possible sharing of facilities, human resources and land 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tertiary education providers 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Costed, longer term infrastructure action plan including for ICT-developments</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2010</p>
<p>Policy Objective 6 To introduce a fair, transparent, needs-driven, efficient and clear financing system for students, that is sustainable.</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review entry level standards and maintain strictly merit based selection criteria for government funding combined with formulas for maximum number of students allowed for specific studies and related to national priorities set by SITEC and available financial resources. ○ Review current scholarship award system and develop a new financial support system, which increases access for more students, is fair, transparent, has increased equity (also targeting 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TED ○ TED/NTU/NTC 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Reviewed admission and financing policies and guidelines.</p> <p>Revised regulations in place</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2010</p>

	<p>marginalised groups), labour market relevance, gender and provincial balance and which is financially sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction of clearer selection and monitoring criteria for students with government support (students' progress regularly assessed) ○ Introduce cost sharing measures between government and individual students, parents and private sector. ○ Organise a study on the feasibility of a loan system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TED/NTU/NTC ○ TED/NTU/NTC ○ TED/NTU 	<p>Quarterly progress reports</p> <p>Implementation of tertiary education policy</p> <p>Study with recommendations</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2011</p>
<p>Policy Objective 7 To establish an increased national and decentralised delivery of tertiary education including through distance and flexible learning options and partnerships with regional training institutions</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start research on feasibility of increased national delivery of tertiary education, a national university, teacher/lecturers' supply and demand for specific courses, tertiary infrastructure and facilities, economic effects ○ All national tertiary education providers undergo organisation review and produce a charter, a profile, academic plans and plans for decentralisation ○ National tertiary education providers aim at regional technical support by twinning arrangements ○ Implement studies on DFL opportunities in national tertiary education provision and also for regional education providers who are expected to deliver courses by DFL to Solomon Islands' students 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TED-special taskforce ○ National tertiary education providers ○ National and regional education providers 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Studies produced on feasibility of national university</p> <p>Charter, profile and academic plans in place</p> <p>Twinning arrangements or partnerships developed.</p> <p>Studies produced on the feasibility of investments in ICT and development of DFL-courses.</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2010 and beyond</p> <p>2010 and beyond</p> <p>2011</p>

III. MANAGEMENT

Policy Objective 8	Strategies	Responsibilities	Outcomes	Timing
<p>To establish a Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission (SITEC) that coordinates and regulates a national system of tertiary education and training and develops a strategic action plan for the tertiary education sub sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish SITEC ○ Develop a Tertiary Education Act ○ Develop a longer term costed tertiary education strategic action plan till 2015, based on the National Policy for Tertiary Education. ○ Establish a National Human Resources Development and Training Council and Secretariat (with clear ToRs) on the co-ordination and priority setting of all national HRD, skills and training planning and service, which advises the SITEC ○ Establish a National Tertiary Education Providers Network (NTEPN), which advises the SITEC and links all tertiary education providers to the NTEPN ○ Establish a Tertiary Education Division in the Ministry and recruit specialised personnel with Under Secretary and necessary staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MEHRD ○ TED ○ MEHRD/TED ○ MDPAC ○ Tertiary education providers ○ MEHRD 	<p>SITEC in place</p> <p>Tertiary Education act produced</p> <p>Strategic action plan for tertiary education produced</p> <p>NHRDTC and Secretariat established</p> <p>NTEPN established</p> <p>Tertiary Education division established</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p>
<p>Policy Objective 9 To develop or to continue internal organisation change and restructuring or course review of the current education providers in the tertiary sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and implement an Institutional and Organisation assessment (IOA) within the Solomon Islands Higher Education providers aiming at reform and improved efficiency, relevance and effectiveness of the institutions ○ All tertiary education providers develop a charter, an academic plan and business plan (which includes organisation change, HRD and improved efficiency) ○ All tertiary education providers implement and regularly review their strategic and academic plans ○ Tertiary education providers implement equitable employment procedures and systems, ensuring fair, equitable employment practice consistent with human rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tertiary education providers ○ See above ○ See above ○ See above 	<p>IOA-process started</p> <p>Charter, profile and academic and business plans developed</p> <p>Strategic and academic plans reviewed</p> <p>HRD-measures in place</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2012 and 2014</p> <p>From 2010 onwards</p>

<p>Policy Objective 10 To increase financial support to the tertiary education sub sector related to academic plans, matching academic and training standards and other criteria such as research or student results</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement research on the operation costs of higher education institutions and possible revenues ○ Develop fair, affordable block grant system for tertiary education providers on the basis of student enrolments, student progress and matching standards set by SITEC ○ Promote and implement financing systems for tertiary education providers such as cost sharing in which a share is taken by the training institution (self-income generation), the individual student (own contribution) and private sector (e.g. through apprenticeships or sponsorships). ○ Develop incentives or tax rebate system for companies that offer or participate in sponsorship or apprenticeship scheme(s) ○ Within tertiary education providers increase capacity in data base management and monitoring systems ○ Implement research on outsourcing NTU- tasks 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SITEC ○ SITEC ○ SITEC, MoF MEHRD, MDPAC, SICCI ○ SITEC, MoF ○ Tertiary education providers ○ MEHRD/TED 	<p>Financing studies done</p> <p>Block grant system for tertiary education developed</p> <p>Cost sharing models developed and introduced</p> <p>Incentives, tax rebate system developed Apprenticeships operational</p> <p>Data base management operational</p> <p>Study implemented</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2012</p> <p>2010</p>
<p>Policy Objective 11 Use data and research for informed decision making.</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve monitoring and evaluation, information management system in the tertiary education sub sector 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tertiary Education providers, MEHRD 	<p>Outcomes Improved data base and information management systems in place</p>	<p>Timing 2010</p>

<p>Policy Objective 12 To promote regional co-operation between education providers</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Franchise relevant courses in the region ○ Organise and/or participate regularly in regular regional seminars on Tertiary education ○ Develop relevant and active partnerships or twinning arrangements with regional education providers ○ Tertiary education providers develop websites for information sharing and improved external communication 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tertiary education providers ○ See above ○ See above ○ See above, NTEPN 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Courses franchised</p> <p>Regular participation in regional, national seminars on tertiary education</p> <p>Twinning arrangements developed</p> <p>Websites developed</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2010 and beyond</p> <p>2010 and beyond</p> <p>2011</p>
<p>Policy Objective 13 To establish national human resources needs planning to connect studies to labour demand and to increase the number of required academic and training staff</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a National Human Resources Development and Training Council and Secretariat (with clear ToRs) on the co-ordination and priority setting of all national HRD, skills and training planning and services (see also objective 8) ○ Establish a Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission which manages the strategic planning, quality and assessment framework in the tertiary sub sector 	<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MDPAC ○ MEHRD 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>NHRD&TC established</p> <p>SITEC established</p>	<p>Timing</p> <p>2010</p> <p>2010</p>

Annex 4 SIG-Award policy regulations

Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

SIG Award Interim Policy Regulations

1.0 Applications

- 1.1 SIG will sponsor pre-service awards and in-service awards.
- 1.2 Subject to national training needs, applications will be considered at the following levels of study:
 - a) Undergraduate qualifications at Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor levels;
 - b) Postgraduate qualifications at Postgraduate Diploma, Master and Doctorate levels.
- 1.3 SIG will only consider applicants who meet all the eligibility criteria. Applicants must:
 - a) hold Solomon Islands citizenship;
 - b) not hold another scholarship that would give overlapping benefits;
 - c) be aged between 17 and 40 years for an undergraduate program and be no more than 45 years old before the award start date for a postgraduate program;
 - d) satisfy the requirements of the institution in which the course is to be undertaken;
 - e) be able to take up the award in the calendar year for which it is offered unless special arrangements have been made for a deferral to the award start date; and
 - f) attain a minimum Grade Point Average of 3.0 (pre-service awards only). Some fields of study, such as Medicine require a higher GPA level. This information will be provided in the Opportunity list, produced by the NHRDTC (before establishment of this council it will be Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Co-ordination).
- 1.4 Meeting this criterion does not guarantee provision of an award. Applicants will be ranked according to GPA level and field of study. The annual scholarship budget will determine how many awards will be provided in any given year.
- 1.5 Applicants will be required to apply for awards in fields of study from an Opportunity List. The National Training Committee through the National Training Unit in consultation with the Ministry of Planning annually determines the number and composition of awards to be offered. Awards are targeted to meet the country's training needs and development need priorities. The Opportunity List will be advertised in local media at the beginning of the year.
- 1.6 Applications must include certified copies of the applicant's birth certificate, police clearance certificate, medical report, relevant high school academic transcripts and receipt of payment. Incomplete applications will not be considered for an award.
- 1.7 Applicants must ensure that their completed application form is submitted to the National Training Unit (NTU) office no later than 31 May each year. Postal

applications should be dated by the Post Office 31 May or earlier. Late applications will not be considered.

2.0 Funding

A. Full scholarships:

- 2.1 Solomon Islands government Scholarship Awards entitlements for the two categories provide for major study related costs and welfare costs specific to the awards:
 - a) In-Country Awards cover tuition fees, accommodation and maintenance allowances; and
 - b) Overseas Awards cover tuition fees, accommodation, maintenance, health and return travel costs.
- 2.2 SIG Awards provide funding only for the following items:
 - a) return airfares;
 - b) book allowances;
 - c) maintenance allowances (pocket money);
 - d) academic tuition and other compulsory fees and field trips
 - e) basic living costs including meals and accommodation;
 - f) medical expenses including dental and optical;
 - g) repatriation of educational books at graduation; and
 - h) airport departure tax (excluding Solomon Islands).
- 2.3 Any expenses outside of the provisions noted in 2.2 and in clause 9.1 will be the responsibility of the award recipient.
- 2.4 The Solomon Islands Government Award is not intended to cover the costs of supporting the awardees' dependants in the study country.
- 2.5 Awardees will be required to repay the total cost or portions of the total cost of their scholarship if they:
 - a) fail to complete at least 20% (20 weeks) of the duration of their award without reasonable cause;
 - b) withdraw without reasonable cause from courses that have been billed to the Solomon Islands Government;
 - c) prematurely withdrawing their awards without reasonable cause and without informing the National Training Unit.

B. Fees only scholarships

- 2.6 Solomon Islands government will also provide Scholarship Awards entitlements for the two categories (in-country and overseas awards) and for specific studies based on the 'fees-only' principle. This means that only registration, tuition and book fees for selected studies will be covered.
- 2.7 Different from the full scholarships facility (see A. 2.2) it will only cover b) and d)

2.8 Fees-only awards will follow regulations 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6

3.0 Selection

- 3.1 Merit and development priority are the most important factors in deciding pre-service awards while years of service, work performance and experience are the criteria used for in-service applications. Gender equity and provincial representation are used interchangeably with these criteria as and when the need arises in the selection process. Priority sectors for assistance are those expected to have the greatest overall development impact.
- 3.2 A shortlist of top applicants will be provided to the NTC who will confirm a provisional award list for pre-service awards (subject to adequate results in the second semester of Form 7 studies) and a final award list for in-service awards. The decision of NTC will be final and no further correspondence will be entered into. Should applicants wish to lodge a query regarding their application, a letter should be forwarded to the Ombudsman's Office.
- 3.3 A receipt will issued for each application received. Each applicant will be sent written notification of the decision of the NTC.

4.0 Award Acceptance

- 4.1 An Official SIG Award Declaration form will be sent to the successful applicants with their letter of offer. This document is a formal contractual agreement between SIG and the award recipient. Awardees have an obligation to themselves and to the country to make the most of their opportunity.
- 4.2 If an applicant accepts the award they must read, sign and return the Official SIG Award Declaration to NTU within two weeks of receiving their letter of offer.
- 4.3 If an applicant declines the award they must advise the NTC within two weeks of receiving their letter of offer.

5.0 Award Recipient Responsibilities

- 5.1 In undertaking their study, awardees must
- a) demonstrate commitment to their studies;
 - b) fail no more than one course in a full course load in the first year of the award;
 - c) fail no more than one course in a full course load in each subsequent semester for the remaining duration of the award;
 - d) if a full course load is not undertaken, the awardee must pass all courses;
 - e) pass all core subjects that are pre-requisites for continuation to the next level of study;
 - f) endeavour to complete the award in the minimum prescribed time frame;
 - g) attend all required lectures, tutorials and classes;
 - h) complete all required assignments and tasks;
 - i) make full use of available institutional facilities;
 - j) undertake a full time load each semester; and

k) not undertake paid employment for the duration of their award.

If an awardee does not make satisfactory academic progress, the Director of National Training Unit may recommend to the NTC that the award is terminated, as outlined in section 10.1.

- 5.2 By accepting the Official SIG Award Declaration, as noted in section 3.2, award recipients agree to assist the NTU to monitor and evaluate their progress by:
- a) providing enrolment details prior to the commencement of each semester;
 - b) providing academic transcripts following the completion of each semester;
 - c) providing a copy of the degree once all requirements have been completed;
 - d) advising of any change to contact details including residential/postal address, phone and email; and
 - e) assisting with evaluation of the award as required.
- 5.2 Award recipients must ensure that immigration permits, passport, medical and police clearances are kept current for the duration of the award.
- 5.3 Award recipients must return to Solomon Islands, their home country of residence, at the end of each academic year.
- 5.4 Award recipients must return to Solomon Islands upon completion of the award duration or completion of all requirements of their degree, whichever occurs first.
- 5.5 On successful completion of their award, Solomon Islands Government Scholarship Awardees are required to return to Solomon Islands and work for at least a number of years similar to the duration of their scholarship to apply their knowledge and skills in the development of the nation in government, civil society or the private sector.

6.0 Deferral

- 6.1 After commencing their program of study, an awardee may request deferral of their award. A one year deferral may be considered by the NTC if an awardee:
- a) has serious family problems, either in the study country or at home in Solomon Islands;
 - b) has a serious medical condition that is affecting their academic performance;
 - c) has psychological problems;
 - d) is pregnant; or
 - e) is hospitalized for more than three weeks during semester time.

The NTU will assist the awardee to return home, and suspend all their award entitlements.

- 6.2 If the NTC does not approve an award deferral, the awardee has the option to continue on, or withdraw from their award.
- 6.3 Award deferrals may also be approved during emergency situations and evacuations.
- 6.4 Award recipients who wish to defer their award must apply in writing to the NTC at least one month prior to the commencement of their first semester of study and provide relevant supporting evidence or documentation.

- 6.5 Award recipients may not defer their award for a period longer than one year. SIG will withdraw the award successful applicants who need to defer their award start date for more than one year and advise them to consider reapplying for a new award at a later date.

7.0 Change of Study Program or Institution

- 7.1 Approval for a change in program of study is not normally given unless:
- a) the awardee's proposed program of study continues to meet the training needs of the country for which the award was originally given. In this case the student must submit:
 - i. a current academic transcript;
 - ii. an outline of the original program of study;
 - iii. an outline of the proposed program of study;
 - iv. a supporting letter from the institution
 - b) the awardee has displayed positive attitude and commitment to their current program of study;
- 7.2 Where an awardee shows insufficient academic ability, rather than terminating the award, consideration may be given to varying the award for study at a lower/downgraded level.
- 7.3 SIG will only consider a request for an upgrade to a higher level qualification in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.4 In exceptional circumstances, and primarily for academic reasons, awardees may be given approval to change institution. Approvals will not be given merely to accommodate an awardee's change of mind.
- 7.5 Any request for an institution transfer should be compatible with the original award and development priorities. All transfers are subject to the same approval process as other award variation requests.
- 7.6 Awardees must not change their program of study or transfer institutions without the prior written approval of the NTC.
- 7.7 Award recipients who wish to change their program of study or institution must apply in writing to the NTC at least one month prior to the commencement of the relevant semester and provide relevant supporting evidence or documentation.

8.0 Withdrawal from Study Program or Units

- 8.1 Award recipients who wish to withdraw from their Study Program or units must apply in writing to the NTC at least one month prior to the commencement of the relevant semester and provide relevant supporting evidence or documentation.

9.0 Extensions

- 9.1 National Training Committee approval for an extension is subject to:
- a) whether it is the only option that will allow the awardee to complete his or her approved program of study;
 - b) consideration of the reasons why the extension is needed (supported by a statement from the institution)
 - c) institution confirmation that the awardee will be able to complete his or her qualification within the extended award duration;

- d) the awardee's attitude and commitment;
 - e) the length of the required extension; and
 - f) the cost of the extension and funds available
- 9.2 Award recipients who wish to extend their award must apply in writing to the NTC at least six months prior to the end of the original award duration and provide strong supporting evidence or documentation.
- 9.3 If an award extension request is not approved, and the qualification is not complete, the award will be terminated.
- 9.4 The NTC will not approve a second request for an extension unless the request has resulted from factors outside of the awardee's control. If the award is not completed within the extended duration, then the award will be terminated.

10.0 Award Suspension

- 10.1 Institutions will advise the NTU immediately if an SIG Awardee is suspended for misconduct/breach of institution disciplinary regulations.
- 10.2 The NTU will automatically suspend the award and all entitlements and arrange for the awardee to return home immediately.
- 10.3 The length of the award suspension is determined by the length of the institution suspension and when the awardee can re-commence a full study load.
- 10.4 For serious offenses, the National Training Committee will terminate the award.

11.0 National Training Council

- 11.1 The Committee was established principally to assess all Solomon Islands Government Scholarship Awards applications. The Committee has been mandated to award, suspend, extend or terminate any Solomon Islands Government Scholarship Awards.
- 11.2 The deliberations of the National Training Committee are confidential and unless otherwise directed by the Committee, all decisions made by it shall only be communicated to concerned parties by the Secretary to the National Training Committee who shall convey such decisions by formal letter as soon as possible after the meeting.
- 11.3 NTC will endeavour to respond within two weeks of receiving a request from an award recipient.

12.0 Terminations

- 12.1 The following circumstances are grounds for award termination.
- a) Non-performance. Award recipients must not fail more than one course in a full course load in the first year of the award or fail more than one course in a full course load in each subsequent semester for the remaining duration of the award. If a full course load is not undertaken, the awardee must pass all courses. The awardee must also pass all course subjects that are pre-requisites for continuation to the next level of study.
 - b) Non-attendance. Award recipients must attend all lectures, classes and tutorials as required. Any absences must be explained in writing to NTU.

- c) Behaviour of disrepute. Award recipients are expected to obey the host country's laws and maintain an acceptable standard of conduct. Recipients must uphold ethical conduct and at all times be worthy representatives of their country.
- 12.2 From the time a termination letter is issued, awardees have 14 days in which to lodge an appeal with the MEHRD Appeals Board.
- 12.3 Apart from return home travel, which is arranged and paid for by SIG, all award entitlement will cease when the award is terminated. Departure will take place within five days or on the next available flight after the termination notice is issued.

Annex 5 Official SIG Award Declaration

**Solomon Islands Government
Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development**

Official SIG Award Declaration

Type of award: full scholarship/fees only⁹

SIG Award Recipient

Last Name.....

First Name.....

Declaration

1. Do solemnly and sincerely declare that
 - a) Information provided about me in my scholarship application is correct and I acknowledge that the supply of incomplete or false information may result in the Ministry of Education and National Training Committee or the donor agency withdrawing the award.
 - b) I authorize the Ministry to collect, see and disclose personal information about me in accordance with the Privacy Act, including, for the purposes of assessing my application and monitoring my award, the collection of academic results and other information from the education or training provider or contracted organization administering my award. The Ministry may disclose the above information to other agencies as required in connection with my study or training.

2. In accepting an SIG award, I have read and agree to:
 - a) obey the host country's laws and maintain an acceptable standard of conduct;
 - b) undertake my approved course of study or training full time;
 - c) attend all classes, lectures and tutorials as required;
 - d) attain satisfactory academic progress, that is a pass grade in at least 80% of all units in a full course load and passing 100% of course subjects that are pre-requisites for continuation to the next level of study;
 - e) comply with the rules of the education provider and/or contracted organization administering my award and the National Training Committee (NTC) semester reviews;
 - f) make every effort to achieve adequate progress in my studies to complete my training in the period of award, which is three or four years for bachelor degree studies and six years for medical degree studies;
 - g) not accept paid employment;
 - h) ensure my immigration permits, passport, medical and police clearances are kept current for the duration of my training;

⁹ Encircle what is relevant

- i) return to Solomon Islands, my home country of residence, at the end of each academic year; and
- j) return to Solomon Islands, my home country of residence, upon the completion of my award even if this occurs before the duration of my award has ended. Also refer to clause 4.

3. As an SIG award recipient I will assist the NTU to monitor and evaluate my progress. I will:

- a) provide my enrolment details prior to the commencement of each semester;
- b) provide academic transcripts following the completion of each semester;
- c) provide a copy of my degree once I have completed all requirements;
- d) advise of any change to contact details including address, phone and email; and
- e) assist with evaluation of my award as required.

4. I will seek the written permission of the NTC prior to:

- a) changing my course of study;
- b) changing units after the semester has commenced;
- c) withdrawing from any units or my course of study;
- d) deferring my award;
- e) extending my award; or
- f) moving off campus.

5. I accept that if I do not comply with clause 2a to 2i of this Official SIG Award Declaration, my award will be suspended or terminated.

6. I understand that any expenses outside of the following provisions will be my own responsibility.

- i) Return airfares (*not for 'fees only'*);
- j) registration fees, book allowances;
- k) maintenance allowances (pocket money) (*not for fees only*);
- l) tuition and boarding;
- m) medical expenses (*not for fees only*);
- n) repatriation of educational books at graduation (*not for fees only*); and
- o) airport departure tax (*excluding Solomon Islands and fees only-award*).

7. In the event of death overseas I and my parents or caretakers do irrevocably agree that an autopsy can take place on the request of Solomon Islands government.

8. I fully understand that if I do not return to my country of residence, Solomon Islands, on the completion of my study/ training, I will refund to the donor agency or Solomon Islands Government the whole or such part of the cost of my award as may be required when called upon to do so. Any such refund will be a debt payable to the donor agency or the Solomon Islands Government and payment will be enforceable under the donor agency law and the Solomon Islands Government Law.

9. I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Oaths and Declarations Act.

Signature of Award Recipient

Declared at Honiara thisday ofmonth.....year.....

Signature of Witness

Name of Witness

For further information regarding scholarships, please contact the National Training Unit.

Office: MEHRD Headquarters, Tuesday or Thursday between 9 and 11am.

Postal address: PO Box G28, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Tel: (677) 28721

Fax: (677) 23442

Email: ntu@mehrd.gov.sb

Office Use Only

Scholar Award No.

Scholar Award Type Full/ fees free¹⁰

Original on file

Copy provided to student

¹⁰ Encircle what is relevant

Annex 6. Relevant documents

- The Government policy on education as outlined in the *Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement, CNURA Policy Framework, 2008-2010*
- The *Education Strategic Framework 2007 – 2015*, June 2007
- The *National Education Action Plan 2007-2009*, April 2007
- The *National Education Action Plan, 2010-2012*, August 2009
- The *Public Expenditure Review Report, 2007-2009*, July 2009
- The *Review of the Sector Wide Approach, 2004-2009*, October 2009
- Solomon Islands *Study to Support the Development of a National Skills Training Plan, March 2007*
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, *Education for living, approved policy on Technical, Vocational Education and Training*, March 2005
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, *Annual Report 2008*
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, *Digest of Education Statistics 2005*.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, *Performance Assessment Framework (PAF), 2006-2008*, July 2009
- UNESCO, *Resolution* adopted at the 34th Session of UNESCO's General Conference (October 2007), requesting the Director-General "to convene a world conference on higher education in 2009 to take stock of developments since 1998 and to re-examine the *Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development in Higher Education* adopted in 1998 so it can provide a basis for UNESCO's activities to promote access to quality higher education."
- Solomon Islands Government, *Mid Term Development Strategy, June 2008, 2008-2010*
- USP *Strategic Plan 2010-2012. Progressing together for sustainable futures*. March 2009
- E. Hankin, *Background paper Tertiary Education Sector Solomon Islands*, March 2009
- Asian Development Bank/PIFS, *Skilling the Pacific*, 2008
- *New Zealand Education Act* (1989. no 80)
- *Mauritius Tertiary Education Act* (1988)
- *Papua New Guinea, Higher Education Act* (1983)