EUROPEAN UNION AND SOLOMON ISLANDS PARTNERSHIP
European Union’s bilateral relations with Solomon Islands have developed steadily since 1981 when the European Commission opened a delegation in Honiara as a sub office of the EU Delegation in Papua New Guinea.

In early 2014, the former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, H.E Catherine Ashton, decided to upgrade this office to a fully-fledged Delegation of the EU to Solomon Islands with regional responsibility also for Vanuatu.

The fact that since 1st of August 2014, there is a resident EU Ambassador in Honiara proves the importance that the European Union attaches to Solomon Islands.

It is my aim, as Head of the European Union Delegation, to help strengthen and deepen even further relations with Solomon Islands. I can do it, together with my team, by working closely with local state and non-state actors, as well as with other international partners.

Our goal is to help maintain stability and reduce poverty, while supporting democracy, good governance and human rights. Experience has shown that working on all these aspects is indispensable for achieving sustainable and inclusive political, social and economic development.

This booklet contains, I believe, useful resource material. It outlines our development support priorities for Solomon Islands which show our commitment as Political and Development partner and friend of Solomon Islands and its people.

‘TAGIO TUMAS’
The European Union (EU) and Solomon Islands (SI) can look back over 34 years of cooperation in the context of the EU-ACP partnership. This partnership is based on the legacy of a shared history, common values, economic and trade relations.

The Partnership between the EU and SI has allowed both parties to work together addressing challenges such as governance issues, climate change, gender issues, rural development, infrastructure, water, sanitation and basic hygiene.

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement provides the framework for our common development goals. It has rationalized a wide range of financial instruments which had been created under the previous Lomé Conventions. Available resources to support long term development are channelled through National and Regional Indicative Programmes (NIPs and RIPs) and an Investment Facility.

The EU is seeking an increasingly close relationship with SI, beyond development cooperation. The partnership, through political dialogue, promotes human rights, democracy and political and economic governance.

The EU’s desire to support Solomon Islands economic and social development is in the interest of the EU. Such development offers greater stability, creates higher incomes and jobs and is more sustainable by involving the private sector.

Regarding trade and economic cooperation, the EU remains committed to the Economic Partnership Agreement process and dialogue with Pacific ACP countries.
THE NATIONAL INDICATIVE PROGRAMME

Each ACP country and region are allocated by the EU financial resources over a six – seven year period to finance activities under their National or Regional Indicative Plans.

Under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), which covered the period 2008-2013, the focal sector in Solomon Islands was ‘Sustainable Rural Development with Capacity Building’. Funds were committed to the Rural Development Programme Phase I (RDP I), set up in cooperation with the World Bank, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and Australia. The Programme focussed on demand-driven social infrastructure, capacity building of extension services and on providing supplementary equity to businesses.

‘Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (RWASH)’ was added at the end of the 10th EDF as a second focal sector financed with funds remaining from the STABEX instrument and uncommitted funds of on-going projects.

Funds were also earmarked to strengthen the office of the National Authorising Officer (NAO) at the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination through a specific capacity building programme and the Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF).

The 11th EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) covering the period 2014-2020 has been allocated EUR 40 million (SBD371 million). The NIP focuses on two sectors (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH); Rural Development) in line with the priorities of Solomon Islands Government Medium Term Development Plan’s (MTDP).

This time provision of basic services will continue with the WASH programme for both rural and urban areas, ‘Rural Development’ will focus on private sector and institutional development aimed at creating employment and increasing income with focus on agriculture.

Through the Technical Cooperation Facilities (TCF), capacity will be built in the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) to plan, monitor and evaluate EU-funded development cooperation programmes.

The EU will continue to participate actively in the Core Economic Working Group (CEWG) in support of the Government’s Economic and Financial Reform Programme.
EU-funded WASH programmes amount to almost EUR 400 million per year globally. They help build infrastructure for drinking water and wastewater systems and provide basic sanitation and hygiene.

Rural communities across the nine provinces in Solomon Islands face health problems caused by lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation, and through poor hygiene behaviour. Many communities spend too much time collecting water for basic living, while open defecation is still common. With the population increasing at the rate of approximately 2.3% per year, further pressure will be placed on resources to provide water and sanitation infrastructure to rural villages.

The Government’s vision is for all Solomon Islanders to have easy access to sufficient quantity and quality of water, appropriate sanitation and to live in a safe and hygienic environment by 2024.

Under the 10th EDF, the EU provided EUR 17.4 million to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) through a Sector Reform Contract (budget support) for a Rural WASH Programme implemented in partnership with churches, NGOs and the private sector.

The EU also funded WASH projects under the (I-WASH) Water Facility Project. The EU provided EUR 1.9 million to UNICEF to support WASH in 3 provinces with a focus on Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS).

Under the 11th EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP), the EU will continue to support Rural WASH, but will also focus on WASH issues in urban and peri-urban areas.

An indicative amount of EUR 26 million (approx. SBD 241 million), ie 65% of the total 11th EDF allocation, is earmarked to support Urban and Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Programmes.
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

EU support to the rural population of Solomon Islands is aimed at generating employment; improving livelihoods, and mitigating the risk of young people moving to the capital in search of jobs. 80% of the population live in rural areas and agriculturally activities remain their main source of livelihood.

Under the 10th EDF, the EU contributed EUR 11.22 million towards sustainable rural development with focus on capacity building. Funded projects included the Rural Advancement Micro Projects (RAMP), RWASH, and the Solomon Islands Road Improvement Project (SIRIP).

Under the 11th EDF, the indicative amount of EU support for Rural Development is EUR 10 million (SBD 92.8 million).

The EU intends to support the Rural Development Programme (RDP) phase II, which is developed in cooperation with World Bank (WB), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia (DFAT), and IFAD. EU support through RDP II is expected to focus on the agricultural sector in rural areas, creating employment opportunities for trained and untrained rural dwellers, strengthening private sector development and promoting private-public sector linkages.

HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are core values of the European Union. These rights are universal and indivisible. The EU actively promotes and defends them both within its borders and when engaging in relations with non-EU countries.

The EU decided in 2013 to contribute EUR 3.5 million (SBD 33 million) under the 10th EDF to the Strengthening of the Electoral Process in the Solomon Islands (SECSIP). The project which played an important role in the successful 2014 general elections is being implemented by UNDP. It targets the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Support areas include:

» voter registration system and voter registry,
» capacity building of SIEC to better manage an electoral cycle,
» capacity building of civil society organisations in voter education and awareness,
» advocacy for women's participation in politics.
Support to Non-State Actors

Civil Society is crucial for effective and transparent democratic accountability and oversight, including that of security, justice sector and corruption control.

The EU committed more than EUR 3.4 million (SBD 32.3 million) to support the capacity of civil society and their participation in the promotion of human rights in various field: gender equality; participation of women in decision making; combating violence against women; awareness on democratic processes & human rights; anti-corruption; private sector development; environmental conservation.

In 2014, the EU supported voter education and awareness activities through SIDT, a civil society organisation. Grant Support of EUR 0.23 million (SBD 1.9 million) were made available for a period of 14 months in support of a range of activities including consultations, production of electoral education materials, voter awareness, radio talk back shows, capacity building, Q & A sessions, empowerment and education strategies designed for women and youths and TV and video shows on voter education.

‘Strongim Mere’: Promoting Women’s Political Participation and Representation in the Solomon Islands

In 2013, grants of EUR 0.28 million (approx. SBD 2.4 million) were made available for a period of 24 months to support:

- gender responsive training consultations and capacity building for women candidate.
- community Radio Exchanges between women candidates and village communities to discuss platform issues.
- advocacy tools and communications campaigns to promote women’s role as leaders and peace agents.
- transformational leadership training sessions, targeting aspiring female and male candidates. The radio drama series “A time to stand” was produced under this project.
WHAT IS THE EU?

The Second World War left the continent of Europe devastated. European integration started then as an effort to manage collectively the coal, steel and atomic energy industries and avoid future wars.

The European Union started with 6 countries and is now a unique economic and political partnership among 28 countries that cover much of the continent. By working together, the EU is stronger than each of its members on their own.

In just over a half century, the EU has delivered peace and prosperity in Europe, a single European Currency (the Euro) and a “single market” where goods, people, services and capital move around freely.

EU Member States include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The EU has a population of over 500 million citizens and 24 official languages.
EU IN THE WORLD

The World’s largest Donor of Development Aid.

The European Union and its Member States were in 2014 the world’s largest aid donor. EU’s collective Official Development Assistance from EU institutions and EU members amounted to EUR 56 billion, up 3.7% from 2013. EU accounted for more than 50% of aid reported last year to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD).

The World’s Largest Trader

In 2014, total EU exports (including intra-EU trade) amounted to EUR 4,600 billion. Total EU imports were roughly at the same level. In comparison, China and the US, exported the EUR equivalent of 1,800 and 1,200 billion respectively. The EU is by far the largest international trader.

EU and ACP

The 1957 Treaty of Rome made provisions for the creation of the European Development Fund (EDF). This is the main source of development funding for the group of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) which was created by the Georgetown Agreement in 1975 and currently numbers 79 States.

Of these 79 States 48 are located in Sub-Saharan Africa, 16 in the Caribbean and 15 in the Pacific. States in the Pacific include Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Niue, Palau, Timor Leste, Federated States of Micronesia, and Marshall Islands.

The partnership aims at reducing poverty through sustainable economic, social and environmental development in the ACP region and improved integration of ACP countries into the world economic and trade system.
**EU Delegation**

The Delegation of the European Commission to Solomon Islands opened in Honiara in 1981.

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the Delegation became the Delegation of the European Union to Solomon Islands. It is one of the 140 EU Delegations around the world.

The Delegation was upgraded in August 2014 into a fully-fledged Mission led by an EU Ambassador. It also covers relations with Vanuatu.

The United Kingdom is the only EU member state with resident representation in Solomon Islands. Contact details for the UK: British High Commission, PO BOX 676 Honiara, Tel: +677 21705.

Other EU member states accredited to Solomon Islands are based in Canberra or Port Moresby.


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