

# Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP)

Improving small scale infrastructure, social and agricultural services, and rural business development in rural Solomon Islands.

Improve mechanisms at community and provincial level in order to deliver economic and social infrastructure and services.

Increase the access of rural households to quality agricultural services to support rural income growth.

Develop rural businesses through the provision of financing, related training and technical assistance.



**Location:** RDP is operating in Western, Temotu, Choiseul, Malaita, Isabel and Makira-Ulawa provinces and has started in Guadalcanal and Central Islands provinces.

**Approval Date:** 9 November 2007

**Closing Date:** February 2015

**Total Program Cost:** US\$38.48million

**Donors:** Solomon Islands Government — US\$4.1million  
Community contributions — US\$1.08 million  
World Bank (International Development Association) — US\$9.2 million  
European Commission — US\$7.65 million  
Australian Government — US\$9.45 million  
Global Food Crisis Response Fund (WB) — US\$3 million  
International Fund for Agriculture Development — US\$4.00 million

**Implementing Agencies:** Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) and Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) in collaboration with provincial governments and communities

## Background

Rural development is extremely important to the Solomon Islands where 85 percent of the population live in remote and isolated areas. After a period of civil conflict from 1998 to 2003, Solomon Islands has moved from a post-conflict reconstruction phase and into longer-term development. However, improving living standards remains a formidable challenge. Agriculture remains the backbone of the economy and most Solomon Islanders rely on subsistence-living and smallholder agriculture for their livelihood. The Rural Development Program (RDP) is designed to respond to priorities identified by communities in order to raise the living standard of rural households.

## About the Project

RDP uses a community-driven development (CDD) model where communities are given the opportunity to consult, select, manage and implement their own sub-projects. Experience shows that when communities are in charge projects are completed more cost-effectively compared to other delivery mechanisms. Individuals, particularly women, are also empowered to engage more actively in community activities.

RDP is implemented by the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and partners are the Australian Government, European Union, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the World Bank, and, the communities from eight of the country's provinces excluding Renbel. RDP has three main components:

1. **Local infrastructure and service delivery.** Grants are provided to each ward for the construction or rehabilitation of essential infrastructure, such as health posts, teachers' accommodation, water supply and foot bridges. Projects are implemented by village-level committees.
2. **Improved agriculture services.** This provides essential equipment and training to SIG ministries to improve capacity and services. Training and services provided are driven by demand at the local level, with men and women farmers prioritising their own needs.
3. **Rural business development.** This facilitates growth and development to each province of rural enterprises by providing supplementary equity-financing to rural businesses.

As at July 2014, across the provinces of Western, Choiseul, Malaita, Temotu, Isabel, Makira-Ulawa, Central Islands and Guadalcanal, the following results have been achieved:

- Completed community projects are already benefitting 120,000 people — more than one in 10 Solomon Islanders. There has been a more than 90 percent increase in villages reporting satisfaction with access to critical services including water supply, health centres, community halls and school buildings.
- More than 37,000 farmers, nearly half of them women, from all 8 provinces received extension advice or training in growing subsistence and commercial crops.
- Supplemental equity provided by RDP resulted in 58 businesses benefiting from increased access to finance.
- The program is on track to provide assistance to some 300,000 people, more than half of the country's population. Program investments include water supply, classrooms, health aid posts, foot bridges and community halls.

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