

Surveyor Mentor

Bureau of Land and Survey , Republic of Palau

Assignment title	Surveyor Mentor		
Partner organisation	Bureau of Land and Survey		
Location	Palau	Koror	
Type of assignment	Hybrid Assignment		
Duration of assignment	12 months		
Assignment phase	Phase	Mode	Duration
	1	In-Country	12 months
Proposed start date	12 September 2026		
Website	https://www.palau.gov.pw/executive-branch/ministries/public-infrastructure/bureau-of-lands-and-surveys/		
Australian organisation:	No AO linked		

ABOUT THE PARTNER ORGANISATION

The Bureau of Lands and Surveys (BLS) operates under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure & Industries and is a National Government Agency. It is the national government agency responsible for administering, managing, and documenting public lands and survey activities within the Republic of Palau. Its primary role is to ensure accurate land identification, boundary determination, and the proper maintenance of official land records that support land ownership, land use planning, and government development projects. BLS conducts cadastral, topographic, and boundary surveys to establish and verify land boundaries for public infrastructure, government facilities, and private land registration. The Bureau also maintains survey records, maps, and geospatial data that are essential for land management, legal documentation, and dispute resolution. In addition, BLS provides technical guidance and survey services to national and state governments to support land development, environmental management, and infrastructure planning. Through these functions, the Bureau plays a critical role in protecting land tenure security, supporting sustainable land use, and ensuring that land related decisions in Palau are based on accurate and legally recognized survey information.

The Bureau of Lands and Survey (BLS) is mandated to conduct surveys of all lands within the Republic of Palau. In carrying out this responsibility, BLS plays a critical role in the national cadastral program by identifying, surveying, and documenting land boundaries to ensure accurate land records throughout the country. BLS works closely with the Judiciary Branch, particularly the Land Court, to support the adjudication and finalization of land ownership determinations. Through this collaboration, survey data and cadastral information produced by BLS assist the Land Court in resolving land claims and confirming legal ownership. This coordinated process is essential to fulfilling the mandate established by the

Constitution of the Republic of Palau, which calls for the systematic return of public lands to their rightful owners. By providing professional land surveying services and technical support to the land adjudication process, BLS contributes to the orderly administration of land ownership and the completion of Palau's cadastral program.

The Bureau currently faces significant operational challenges in completing the survey of the remaining 9,117 hectares of land within the Republic of Palau's total land mass. These remaining areas are largely located in remote and inaccessible regions, characterized by dense vegetation, rugged landscapes, and steep terrain. The physical conditions of these areas make fieldwork particularly difficult, requiring extensive time, logistical planning, and specialized technical effort from survey teams. In addition to the challenging topography, limited access routes and the absence of established infrastructure further complicate survey operations. Survey crews often must travel long distances on foot while transporting sensitive equipment necessary to conduct accurate cadastral and topographic surveys. These factors significantly increase the time, manpower, and resources required to complete the remaining survey work. Despite these challenges, BLS remains committed to fulfilling its mandate of systematically surveying all lands within the Republic of Palau in order to support land registration, cadastral completion, and the eventual return or confirmation of land ownership to the rightful landowners.

ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENT

The assignment of the Australian Volunteer is to primarily focus on strengthening the technical capacity of the BLS by providing hands-on training and mentorship to local surveyors and field crews. The volunteer will assist in enhancing the professional skills of personnel by ensuring the use of correct survey methodologies, accurate data collection techniques, and standardized survey procedures consistent with the BLS Survey Manual and internationally accepted surveying practices. A key component of the assignment is to train local survey teams in the proper use of modern surveying equipment, field data recording, and quality control methods to ensure accuracy and reliability in cadastral and topographic surveys. The volunteer will also provide instruction on survey computations, data processing, and the interpretation of field measurements to produce precise survey results and legally defensible survey records. In addition, the volunteer will support BLS in strengthening internal survey workflows by demonstrating best practices in planning field operations, conducting boundary surveys, and maintaining proper documentation of survey activities.

Through workshops, field demonstrations, and direct mentoring, the volunteer will help build long-term technical capacity within BLS to ensure local surveyors are well-equipped to independently carry out professional surveying work in support of national land management and cadastral programs. The overall goal of the assignment is to transfer knowledge and technical expertise to local surveyors, thereby improving the efficiency, accuracy, and sustainability of surveying operations within the BLS.

The volunteers' support is particularly important given that there are only three local licensed surveyors in the entire Republic of Palau with two in private practice, not involved in government service and the

third having retired leaving the Bureau with a significant shortage of licensed professionals to support its cadastral responsibilities.

The BLS is the Republic of Palau's official government surveying authority, mandated to regulate, oversee, and ensure the integrity of all land surveying and land administration activities nationwide. As the central institution responsible for maintaining accurate land records, enforcing surveying standards, and supporting legal land transactions, BLS plays a critical role in safeguarding Palau's land resources and upholding the country's statutory and cultural frameworks. A placement with BLS offers a volunteer a uniquely rich learning environment. Palau is a matrilineal society, where land is deeply tied to lineage, identity, and community authority. Through direct engagement with land tenure processes, customary land protocols, and the day-to-day realities of land administration, the volunteer will gain rare, first-hand insight into how land shapes social structure, decision-making, and intergenerational responsibility. Land is regarded by Palauans as one of the most important foundations of life, heritage, and continuity. Working alongside BLS staff, the volunteer will observe and learn how land rights, family relationships, and traditional leadership intersect an experience that few foreigners ever have the opportunity to access. This placement provides not only technical exposure to government land management, but also a meaningful cultural immersion into the values and practices that sustain Palau's matrilineal way of life

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

The volunteer will work alongside members of the Bureau of Lands and Surveys to support the below objectives:

Assignment objectives	Proposed activities
In-Country Phase Objective: Provide mentorship to local surveyors	- Strengthen the technical capacity and professional skills of local surveyors in proper surveying procedures, accurate data collection, field techniques, and survey computations in accordance with the BLS Survey Manual. - Help to develop best practices in land surveying, improve the quality and reliability of survey outputs, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of surveying capacity within BLS. - Support continuous knowledge sharing and professional development of BLS survey personnel through mentoring and technical advice.

	Conduct field mentoring by accompanying survey crews to active survey sites to demonstrate proper surveying methods, equipment use, and field procedures.
In-Country Phase Objective: Facilitate in-house professional development training	- Facilitate in-house workshops and training sessions for survey staff on survey procedures, computations, and best practices outlined in the BLS Survey Manual. - Review and discuss field data and survey computations with staff to reinforce learning and ensure accuracy.
Inclusion objective and proposed activity	
The volunteer will work alongside the partner organisation to uphold values of diversity, equity and inclusion. Inclusive approaches will aim to make everyone welcome and support equal access to activities and opportunities regardless of gender, age, disability status or background (eg religion, language, ethnicity and marginalised or vulnerable groups). The volunteer will work alongside members of Bureau of Land and Survey to: To strengthen already diverse and inclusive workplace culture. BLS currently employs LGBTQ staff and women across technical and administrative roles, reflecting the organization's commitment to equitable participation in land administration.	

SELECTION CRITERIA

Education and qualifications

Essential	Desirable
Undergraduate degree in Geodetic Engineering	- GIS Expert - Proficient in Drone Operation for surveying purposes

Knowledge and experience

Essential	Desirable
- Proficient in AutoCad Software - At least 5 years of Survey Experience	Training and Mentorship

Following the Program's values on locally led development, this Assignment Description has been developed and negotiated in good faith with the Partner Organisation. The information contained was correct at the time of acceptance of the request. However, while we take responsibility for matters under our direct control, all assignments and arrangements are subject to change. This assignment may be amended or withdrawn to reflect changes in circumstances.

Line Manager: Jovan E. Isaac, Director

Working relationships: National Surveyor, Cadastral Surveyor & All Survey Crew

Hours and days of work: 8am – 5pm

In-country phase

Full time

Leave: All volunteers are entitled to 20 days leave per 12 months, unless advised otherwise. The same conditions and terms as local colleagues apply, including national holidays.

Work from home: Working from home while on an in-country phase must be in line with usual partner organisation's practices and agreed with the in-country office.

Professional indemnity insurance (*Required for all volunteers who are acting as a medical, allied health or legal professional whilst on assignment*):

No, this assignment is not deemed to require professional indemnity insurance

The volunteer should consult the partner organisation about the need for professional indemnity insurance for the role prior to departure. Where required and/or considered essential to hold this insurance, please discuss this with the Volunteer Services Manager in Melbourne prior to departure.

LIFE AS A VOLUNTEER

The Australian Volunteers Program supports volunteers from preparing to go on assignment through to returning home. For a full breakdown of support provided including assignment allowances, please visit: <https://www.australianvolunteers.com/volunteering/lifestyle-and-support/>

Country context

Learn more about the host country's location by reading the country profile. We encourage candidates to research the specific location of this assignment as it will be discussed and addressed with a recruitment officer during the interview process.

For more information, please visit country links: <https://www.australianvolunteers.com/countries/palau> and <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/republic-of-palau>

HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted online through the Australian Volunteers Program website. If you have not already done so, you will need to register on our website prior to applying. For more information about how to apply, please visit:

<https://www.australianvolunteers.com/volunteering/how-it-works>

We actively support and encourage people of all backgrounds and abilities to volunteer internationally and aim to make the program as accessible and inclusive as possible. The program has a dedicated Indigenous Programs Coordinator to support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander volunteers, who can be contacted at indigenouspathways@australianvolunteers.com. Access and inclusion plans are available for volunteers with disabilities, to ensure their assignments and living and working arrangements are made more accessible.

Personal circumstances

Due to security, cultural, legal or visa restrictions associated with this location, we ask that applicants disclose the following:

- If they want their same-sex partner to accompany them on assignment.
 - If they want their partner, to whom they are not legally married, to accompany them on assignment.
 - If they want their child(ren) to accompany them on assignment.
 - If they have a criminal conviction where a criminal conviction may be relevant to the inherent requirements of the assignment.
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