



SOLOMON ISLANDS
**SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL
STATISTICS OFFICE**

NATIONAL ECONOMIC ESTABLISHMENT CENSUS 2024
NEEC-2024



Solomon Islands Government (SIG)



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SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE (SINSO)

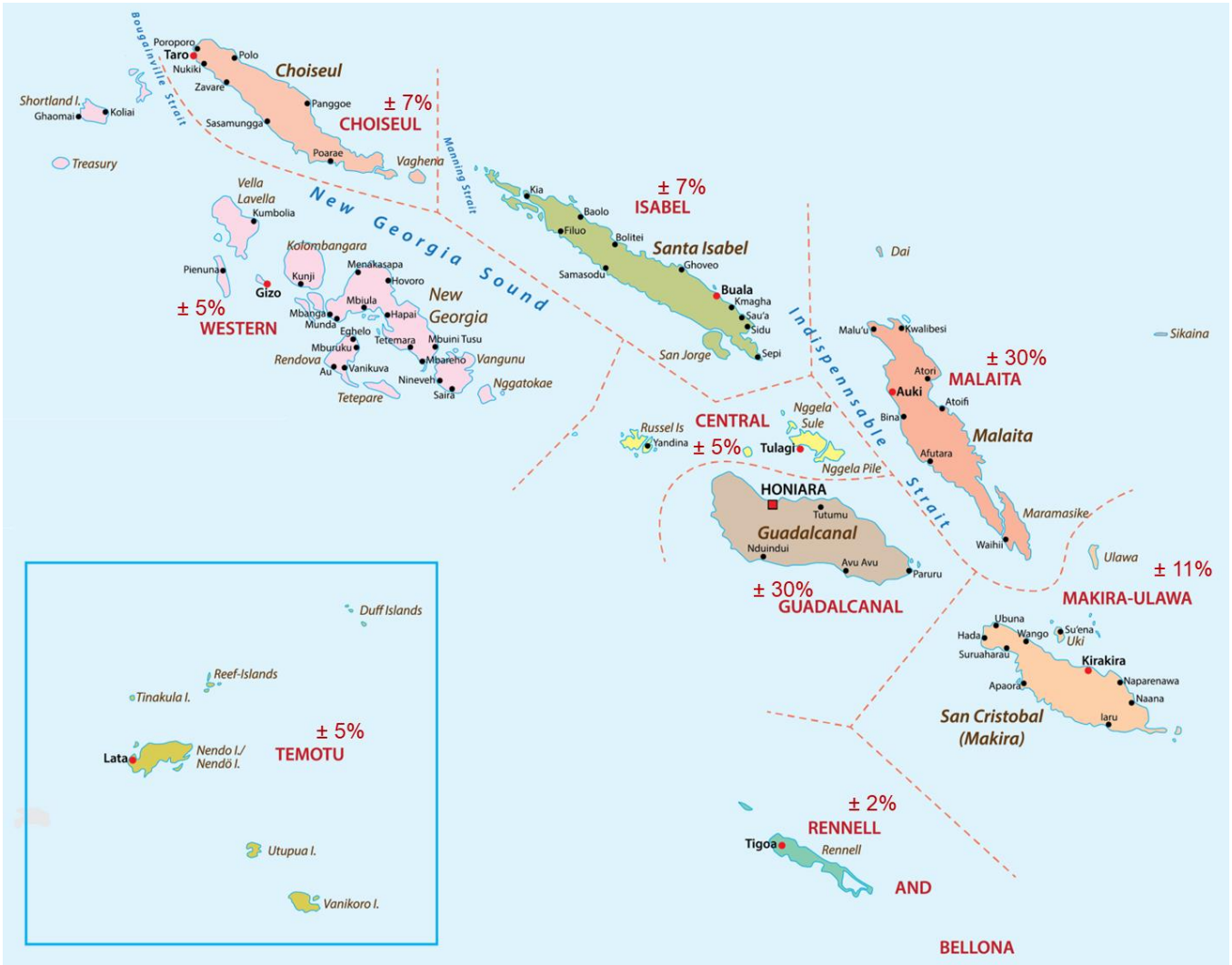


SINSO Economics Unit Staff with the Government-Statistician (GS)-Samson-Kanamoli and Arthur Johannes Giesberts from World-Bank as they prepare for the Pilot-Test-NEEC-2025.

Solomon Islands National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC-2024)

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Map of Solomon Islands.



Solomon provinces and their approximate population share

Foreword

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office is pleased to present the Solomon Islands National Economic Establishment Census Report (NEEC-2024), our nation's first comprehensive census of all establishments. This report marks a major milestone in Solomon Island's journey towards sustainable economic growth, providing essential data that will support evidence-based policy-making, economic planning and Development programming across the country.

As the first of its kind, NEEC-2024 offers a thorough analysis of Solomon Island's business landscape, covering a wide range of sectors and urban centers under the Solomon Islands Government. This extensive NEEC-2024 delivers important insights about the structure, characteristics and activities of businesses operating within Solomon Islands. With detailed information on employment composition, economic performance, business ownership and geographic distribution, this report serves as an invaluable resource for policymakers, investors, development partners as well as all stakeholders working to stimulate a robust and resilient economy.

The successful completion of the NEEC-2024 and the subsequent compilation of its Report would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication and hard work of the Economics team from the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO). The National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC-2024) was driven by the collective efforts from the group of CAPSA-NEEC-2024 professionals who played essential roles in project coordination, technical advising, and field operations. Their expertise and commitment at every stage of the process were critical to the success of this initiative, ensuring that each task was carried out effectively and on time. Special thanks are extended to our development partners, particularly the World Bank, (WB) whose technical guidance and financial support through the Solomon Islands Capacity Building in Statistics and Auditing Project (CAPSA) were instrumental in the realization of this important new initiative. We also acknowledge the invaluable cooperation of business owners and operators across Solomon Islands, whose participation was essential for this achievement.

The findings in this report offer vital knowledge that fills critical information gaps and lays the groundwork for a future where data-driven strategies guide Solomon Islands' economic decisions via the National Statistics Development Strategy (NSDS) 2015/16-2035. This census enables SINSO-Economics Unit Team with the support of development partners to develop a Statistical Business Register (SBR), that will be updated from the NEEC-2024, Annual Economics Surveys (AES-2025) and the other administrative data sources, which will support continued updates on the business sector as well as the broader economy. In doing so, NEEC-2024 establishes a foundation for further research, investment planning and growth within key sectors as envisioned in the NSDS-215/16-2035.

As Solomon Islands moves forward, the need for precise and reliable data remains central to informed decision-making. NEEC is committed to maintaining the highest standards of statistical research in service to Solomon Island's progress, even as we invite all stakeholders to utilize the insights in this report to drive meaningful improvements in our business environment and the lives of Solomon Islands citizens.



Mr. Samson Kanamoli
Government Statistician
Solomon Islands National Statistics

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Abbreviation and Acronyms

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| AES | Annual Economic Survey |
| CAPI | Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOT | Input and Output Tables |
| ISIC Rev 4 | International Standard Industrial Classification Revision 4 |
| NEEC | National Economic Establishment Census |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| SBR | Statistical Business Register |
| SIG | Solomon Islands Government |
| SINSO | Solomon Islands National Statistics Office |
| SS | Survey Solution |
| SUT | Supply and Use Tables |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| ToE | Training of Enumerators |
| UN | United Nations |
| WB | The World Bank |

Executive Summary

The Solomon Islands National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC) report is a ground-breaking endeavor by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO), supported by the World Bank, to completely capture the country's business demography. This first of its kind census collected information on the number and characteristics of formal (regular) and informal (micro) establishments for all principal wards. Now comprehensive insights are available economic activity, ownership structures, worker compositions, and geographic distributions and size classes of the business community. The collected data was completed by making imputations for the least populated and more remote wards.

The main objective of the census was to identify and register all active businesses in Solomon Islands in order to establish the Statistical Business Register (SBR). This register will serve as a critical tool for compiling economic statistics, tracking business activities, and generating key national indicators such as GDP, gross output, and intermediate consumption. The data captured will support evidence-based policymaking and strategic planning for economic development. This pioneering census lays the foundation for data-driven economic planning and policymaking, providing insights that will support Solomon Island's sustainable growth and the implementation of the NSDS. The census benefited from the active participation of Solomon Islands business owners and development partners.

The total number of establishments recorded were 22,567, categorized into formal (53%) and informal (47%). The majority of these establishments were in Wholesale and Retail Trade, which accounts for 78.3% of all establishments, followed by 10.3% in Manufacturing, 4.8% Accommodation and Food Services.

Geographically, Malaita recorded the highest concentration of establishment with 6,697 (29.7%) followed by Honiara with 4,991 (22.1%) and Guadalcanal with 3,307 (14.7%) establishments, respectively. These three provinces account for 66.4% of all establishment enumerated.

Workforce data revealed significant gender and employment trends. Women dominate employment in formal and informal establishments, accounting for 57.5% of the workforce, while men are more active in micro-establishments, accounting for 41.9% of employees, and not stated accounts for 0.6%.

In terms of ownership, sole proprietorships emerged as the predominant business structure, accounting for 94.1% of all formal businesses.

NEEC-2024 provides critical data for GDP (Gross Domestic Product) compilation, SUT (Supply use Table) and input-output tables, enabling detailed economic planning, policy evaluation, and regulatory adjustments in alignment with the NSDS.

The census highlights disparities among women and men with respect to employment, presenting actionable observations to promote women-inclusive policies in Solomon Islands' private sector.

NEEC-2024 represents a landmark achievement in Solomon Island's statistical and economic development, providing a robust framework for;

- ◇ Strengthening national accounts and economic indicators.
- ◇ Forming the base for the compilation of the upcoming 2024 GDP by production approach
- ◇ Identifying growth sectors and monitoring sectoral performance.
- ◇ Developing targeted interventions to enhance economic resilience and inclusivity.
- ◇ Supporting equity initiatives through disaggregated employment data.
- ◇ Enabling subject-specific surveys such as the Producer Price Index.



NEEC-2024: GUADALCANAL TEAM DEPLOY FOR FIELD ENUMERATION.

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW AND KEY CONCEPTS
OF THE ESTABLISHMENT
CENSUS-2024

1.1 Overview

The Solomon Islands National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC) aimed to collect comprehensive data on various dimensions of business establishments, which include economic activity, ownership, employment distribution by sex, geographic location, turnover and period of existence of businesses and age of proprietor(s). The data was collected from businesses with fixed physical locations across 10 main provinces, providing a strong representation of active businesses operating under both production and service sectors as defined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Rev 4). Sectors such as agriculture, public administration and household activities were intentionally excluded, as were businesses without fixed locations e.g., hawkers.

This census will contribute to the comprehensive aim of establishing a Statistical Business Register (SBR) that will act as a foundational resource for ongoing business surveys, economic research, and policy formulation.

1.2 Objectives of the Establishment Census

The Solomon Islands National Economic Establishment Census is the first comprehensive survey of all active enterprises and establishments in Solomon Islands. The primary objective is to gather detailed structural information about each business, including name, economic activity, cost and revenue structures, ownership, employment by sex, and location. The specific objectives of the census are to:

- Establish a Statistical Business Register System (SBR)
- Determine the spread of business establishments by economic activity.
- Obtain the employment categorization of business establishments by sex.
- Gather data on the ownership status of business establishments.
- Create a reliable framework for future surveys, such as Annual Economic Survey (AES).

Main Outputs and Importance. Solomon Islands Statistical Business Register (SBR)

This will be a comprehensive list of all active business enterprises and establishments in the Solomon Islands, containing statistical data on business names, economic activities, cost and revenue structures, employment, ownership status, and location, with a gender concept.

Sampling Frame for AES: The NEEC data will serve as the main sampling frame for the Solomon Islands Annual Economic Survey (AES), which will use the production approach to compile key economic indicators (such as value added, gross output, intermediate consumption, and gross fixed capital formation) required for national accounts compilation in the Solomon Islands.

Enhanced Quality of National Accounts: The data will improve the quality of national accounts, supply and use tables (SUT) and input and output tables (IOT). These are essential for informing progress in government economic policy formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of the impact of current regulations on business operations, and developing new policies aligned with development goals.

- **Improved Economic Policymaking:** The census will provide accurate and comprehensive data, leading to better economic policymaking, monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Insights into the Business Sector:** The census will highlight growth opportunities and aid in formulating strategies, providing gender-disaggregated data to enhance gender equality in the private sector.
- **Basis for In-Depth Economic Surveys:** The output will also form the basis for more in-depth, subject-specific economic surveys.

1.3 Key Concepts

The primary outcome of the National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC-2024) is to develop and maintain a Statistical Business Register (SBR) to establish a reliable framework for sample selection in future statistical activities. To ensure consistency and accuracy, a set of criteria has been developed to define businesses and determine their eligibility for enumeration and inclusion in the SBR.

Formal (Regular) Establishment Criteria

1) Fixed Structure/Location

- ◇ The business should operate from a fixed structure or location.
 - Acceptable structures include formal constructions (built from bricks, steel, or wood) or permanent demarcated areas.

2) Residential Businesses

- ◇ Businesses located in residential areas must have a separate room with a distinct entrance, enclosed from the dwelling place, to qualify.

3) Licensing Requirements: Businesses holding the following licenses:

1. Ministry of Commerce
2. Ministry of Finance (TIN)
3. Chamber of Commerce (SCCI)
4. HCC/Provincial Licenses

Informal (Micro) Establishments

1. These are unregistered businesses that operate outside the formal regulatory framework.
2. They often lack fixed premises, official documentation, or compliance with tax laws.
3. Examples include mobile hawkers and unregistered small vendors.

Informal constructions like kiosks or containers may also qualify under this category.

Categories of Businesses NOT to Be Listed

The following business types are excluded from enumeration in NEEC:

1. Hawkers,
2. Farming, forestry and fishery (boats) within households_(invisible from the street)
3. Mosques, churches, worship places
4. Black and illegal market activities
5. Individual taxi, car, and truck drivers/operators.
6. Construction sites operated by enterprises without their own offices.
7. Enterprises lacking a fixed location.
8. Pure public utilities like electricity, water supply and sewage collection,
9. Local and central government (municipalities or ministries)
10. Pure public health and pure public education

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Activity Inclusion

The data collection instruments, which includes the questionnaire (hardcopy and softcopy) and detailed instructions manuals for enumerators, were prepared for collecting data from the field. Data collection was conducted digitally using tablets and Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI).

The questionnaires were designed to meet the information requirements of stakeholders

The census questionnaire was categorized into two versions:

A short version for the informal (micro) sector: The short version was administered to small businesses, especially kabars, for which some questions were not applicable.

A long version: This detailed questionnaire was designed for larger/formal businesses and was tailored to capture comprehensive information.

The focus of the Census was on a complete listing and enumeration of all operating economic units with a fixed physical location across the 10 main provinces of the Solomon Islands. 108 wards selected from total 183 wards.

The statistical unit of coverage was the business establishment undertaking an economic unit under any legal ownership as defined in the SIG. All economic activities, as described in the fourth edition of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Rev 4) were covered, be they in the production or service sectors, as shown below. NGOs are also covered in the related ISIC main activity sections.

Table 1.1: Activity Coverage by International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Revision Four (Rev 4))

| ISIC Section | Production Sectors | ISIC Section | Non-Production Sectors |
|--------------|---|--------------|--|
| A | Agriculture, forestry and fishing | G | Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles |
| C | Manufacturing | H | Transportation and storage |
| D | Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | I | Accommodation and food service activities |
| E | Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | J | Information and communication |
| F | Construction | K | Financial and insurance activities |
| L | Real estate activities | | |
| | | M | Professional, scientific and technical activities |
| | | N | Administrative and support service activities |
| | | P | Education |
| | | Q | Human health and social work activities |
| | | R | Arts, entertainment, and recreation |
| | | S | Other service activities |

1.4.2 Activity Exclusions by (ISIC Revision Four (Rev 4))

Business establishments undertaking economic activities in the 4 following sectors were excluded.

Table 1.2: Activity Exclusions

| ISIC Section | Production Sectors | ISIC Section | Non-Production Sectors |
|--------------|--|--------------|------------------------|
| B | Mining and quarrying | | |
| O | Public administration and defense; compulsory social security | | |
| T | Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use | | |
| U | Activities of Extraterritorial organizations and bodies | | |

1.4.3 Imputation

Data was collected in 108 out of the 183 Wards. For 75 Wards imputations were used based on their remoteness and characteristics using the 2019 Population Census results and NEEC results. This method estimates establishment and staff counts for wards not surveyed, by using both the population of those wards and economic density inferred from the same province. Instead of simple averaging, it combines demographic and economic information to produce more accurate imputation results.

1.5 Recruitment and Staff Training of Enumerators

1.5.1 Recruitment and Training

Before commencing the fieldwork, a comprehensive training programme was conducted to ensure enumerators were fully prepared for data collection. This program involved a total of 97 enumerators of whom 73 enumerators and team leads were successfully recruited and trained to undertake the NEEC – 2024 Survey throughout the ten (10) Provinces.

Out of the 73 enumerators 33 were males and 40 were females. Phase one of the training was conducted from between October and December 2024 in 5 phases.

NEEC provided a list of experienced enumerators and team leads to implement field work. An initial training session was conducted and 13 Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) were selected. These ToTs were implemented the pilot test of NEEC including CAPI application for 4 days. In certain locations, trainees assigned to different urban centers were trained in a central location (Choiseul & Western, Makira & Isabel, Honiara & Guadalcanal & Central & Rennel-Bellona), while in other cases, for logistical efficiency, the training was conducted in the urban centers where the data collection was to take place.

The training methodology included;

- Instructions on interviewing techniques and field procedures
- A detailed review of the data collection modules
- Environment and social safeguard, security and risk management
- Tests and practice using Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) devices (tablets)
- Classroom mock interviews exercises to test their ability
- Test and quiz were administered first day and at the end of the training.

Special focus was placed on understanding the ISIC Rev 4 activity classification system, to avoid the incorrect coding of activities, and legal ownership. The training also covered the different routes in the questionnaire for:

- Informal (micro) establishments versus regular establishments
- Open and responding establishments versus refusing or closed establishments and including follow-up procedures
- How to handle stopped interviews effectively.

Short tests were administered to ensure the enumerators understood the census modules, ethical considerations, and safeguard measures for data collection. Only those who passed all the tests at the end of the training were recruited to be part of the data collection team.

1.6 Field work and Data Collection

The main census enumeration for the Solomon Islands National Establishment Census (NEEC) began in October 2024 with Honiara, Guadalcanal and Central and was completed in 7 February 2025 in Makira-Ulawa and Isabel provinces.

Phase 1 & 2 commenced in 5th November 2024, covering Honiara, Guadalcanal, Central, Western, Choiseul and Rennell- Bellona,

Phase 3 began in 18th November 2024, covering Malaita,

Phase 4 began in 26th November 2024, covering Temotu,

Phase 5 started in 30th November 2024 for Makira-Ulawa and Isabel.

Honiara and Guadalcanal were strategically chosen as the first cities kabars for the NEEC-2025.

Deployment for several key reasons:

High Concentration of Establishments: They are home to over a third of all estimated business establishments in the country. Prioritizing them allowed for the bulk of the data collection efforts to be addressed early in the process, ensuring comprehensive data capture from the most significant economic hub.

Complexity of Operations: Given their high population density and the diversity of their business activities, it was anticipated to be the most complex data collection operation. By starting there, we aimed to tackle the most challenging environment first, allowing us to refine our processes and methodologies before expanding to other provinces.

Proximity to SINSO: NEEC's provincial supervisor in the central locations facilitated supervision and collaboration. This proximity allowed for real-time monitoring and quick resolution of any issues during the initial data collection phase, enhancing the overall efficiency and accuracy of the census operations.

After that the rest of the districts were covered systematically and a summary of the districts covered in the different phases is presented in Annexes A

1.7 Pilot Study

Successfully conducting the pilot and initial data collection in Central province provided a solid foundation for the subsequent phases. Lessons learned and best practices established in Central province were applied to streamline operations in other urban centers, ensuring a smoother and more efficient rollout across the country.

1.8 Challenges

The NEEC 2024 questionnaire was designed to comprehensively capture a wide range of data on business activities across the country. There were several minor challenges identified by the field teams during its administration. The main 2 challenges, presented below, were primarily related to the structure, content, and contextual relevance of certain sections.

1. CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) usage with tablets was the first time for SINSO Economic Statistics Unit to utilize. As a result, SINSO made extra efforts in terms of training and practices in face to face mode.
2. Solomon Islands has more than hundreds of small islands. Therefore, the country has a lot of remote and not easily accessible islands. Hence, SINSO excluded extreme remoted islands. Figures of these remote islands were provided by applying the imputation methods.

1.9 Limitations

The current NEEC findings do not account for all businesses in the country. Data for some businesses in industries (e.g., mining, quarry etc.) are currently been reconciled with the business register, and a separate updated report will be forthcoming.

1.10 Data Validation and Table Generation

Data tabulation and table generation were conducted in partnership with the World Bank and SINSO once the data collection phase ended. In this period technical experts carried out data correction and verification, coding of the data and validation of the code. The WB and SINSO then proceeded to generate the tables listed in the report to accurately depict the data and the various distributions which are presented in this report. Once data was validated and tables were generated the official press release as well as the draft report was produced. Key line Ministries, Departments and Agencies who will be the primary end-users of the data generated by the NEEC will be included in stakeholder engagement exercises to validate the data further at a government level.



CHAPTER TWO

FORMAL AND INFORMAL ESTABLISHMENTS

2.1 ESTABLISHMENT TYPE

Table 2.1 presents all establishment types enumerated in the census. In total, the number of establishments enumerated in the NEEC-2024 are 22,568, of which 11,992 are formal (regular), 10,576 are informal (micro) establishments. Micro establishments account for 47% of establishments while for formal establishments account for 53%.

Table 2.1: Distribution by Establishment (Number & Percentage)

| Establishment Type | Number | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|--------|----------------|
| Formal | 11,991 | 53% |
| Informal | 10,576 | 47% |
| Total | 22,567 | 100% |

In addition, the above depicted figures include the imputed data for the uncovered wards within the country, while the linked data table “ [NEEC Field Data Tables](#) ” clearly shows the actual data captured for both formal and informal establishments during the actual field data collections.

2.2. ESTABLISHMENT BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Table 2.2 presents establishment by economic activity. 78.3% of establishments recorded in the NEEC-2024 are in the Trade (wholesale and retail trade) sector. The second most prevalent sector is the Manufacturing which account for 10.3% of establishments. Accommodation and Food Service activities recorded 4.8% of establishments.

Table 2.2: Distribution of Establishments by Economic Activity (Number & Percentage)

| Economic Activity (ISIC level 1) | Number | Percentage % |
|---|--------|--------------|
| Agriculture, forestry and fishery | 564 | 2.5 |
| Manufacturing | 2,321 | 10.3 |
| Electricity and water | 10 | 0.0 |
| Construction | 20 | 0.1 |
| Trade | 17,674 | 78.3 |
| Transport | 235 | 1.0 |
| Accommodation and food service activities | 1,086 | 4.8 |
| Information and communication | 283 | 1.3 |
| Banking and insurance | 40 | 0.2 |
| Real estate activities | 17 | 0.1 |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 49 | 0.2 |
| Administrative and support service activities | 36 | 0.2 |
| Education ¹ | 123 | 0.5 |
| Human health and social work activities | 38 | 0.2 |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 13 | 0.1 |
| Personal and other service activities | 58 | 0.3 |
| Total | 22,567 | 100 |

¹ Education sector covers both public and private institutions

Solomon Islands National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC - 2024)

2.3. DISTRIBUTION OF ESTABLISHMENTS BY PROVINCE

The table 2.3 displays the distribution of establishments by province. Malaita stands out with the highest concentration of businesses, with 6,697 establishments, representing 29.7% of the total. Other provinces with significant economic activity include Honiara with 4,991 establishments (22.1%) and Guadalcanal with 3,307 establishments (14.7%). Rennell-Bellona shows much fewer establishments, with 95 establishments (0.4%).

Table 2.3: Distribution of Establishments by Province (Number & Percentage)

| Provinces | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Choiseul | 642 | 2.8 |
| Western | 2,275 | 10.1 |
| Isabel | 776 | 3.4 |
| Central | 825 | 3.7 |
| Rennell-Bellona | 95 | 0.4 |
| Guadalcanal | 3,307 | 14.7 |
| Malaita | 6,697 | 29.7 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 2,306 | 10.2 |
| Temotu | 654 | 2.9 |
| Honiara | 4,991 | 22.1 |
| Total | 22,567 | 100% |

2.4. DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS BY SIZE

The table below presents the distribution of workers by establishment size, including both formal and informal sectors. The majority of workers are employed in formal sectors, which account for 24,883 workers, representing 68.6% of the total workforce. 11,392 workers are in the informal sector (31.4%). For both sectors (formal and informal), 2-4 workers class has highest percentages 12,509 workers (50.3%) and 6,118 workers (53.7%) respectively.

The second highest worker size group is only 1 worker in which the formal sector accounts for 2,513 and informal sector accounts for 5,274 workers. 1 worker group has 21.5% in total for both formal and informal sectors which is second highest percent (21.5) compared to the highest percentage for (2-4 worker group) with 51.3%. 100-199 worker group has the lowest percentage of 1.0%.

The Solomon Islands National Statistics
Office

Table 2.4: Distribution of Workers by Size (Number & Percentage)

| Size Classes | Establishment Type | | | Percentage | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------|--------|------------|----------|-------|
| | Formal | Informal | Total | Formal | Informal | Total |
| 1 Worker | 2,513 | 5,274 | 7,787 | 10.1 | 46.3 | 21.5 |
| 2-4 Workers | 12,509 | 6,118 | 18,627 | 50.3 | 53.7 | 51.3 |
| 5-9 Workers | 2,708 | 0 | 2,708 | 10.9 | 0.0 | 7.5 |
| 10-19 Workers | 1,857 | 0 | 1,857 | 7.5 | 0.0 | 5.1 |
| 20-49 Workers | 2,519 | 0 | 2,519 | 10.1 | 0.0 | 6.9 |
| 50-99 Workers | 1,218 | 0 | 1,218 | 4.9 | 0.0 | 3.4 |
| 100 -199 Workers | 370 | 0 | 370 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| 200 or More Workers | 1,189 | 0 | 1,189 | 4.8 | 0.0 | 3.3 |
| Total | 24,883 | 11,392 | 36,275 | 100 | 100 | 100 |



Western NEEC Team, proceed with their Enumeration @ GZIO Market.

CHAPTER THREE

FORMAL AND INFORMAL SECTOR

3.1. Characteristics of Establishment

The following chapter delves into the detailed characteristics of establishments in Solomon Islands, providing a comprehensive overview of their legal structures, economic activities, geographic distribution, labor force, ownership patterns, and operational dynamics. By examining these key aspects, the below findings will detail insights into the structure and composition of the country's business landscape.

The subsequent chapter will explore the following:

- **Legal Structure:** An analysis of the legal status of establishments, such as sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies, cooperatives and NGOs.
- **Economic Activity:** A classification of establishments based on their economic activity.
- **Geographic Distribution:** A look at the geographic distribution of establishments across different provinces.
- **Labor Force:** An analysis into the size, composition, and characteristics of the workforce employed by establishments, including gender and age.
- **Ownership Patterns:** An analysis of ownership structures, including individual, corporate, and foreign ownership.
- **Operational Dynamics:** Information on the age, size, and branch network of establishments, as well as their adoption of technology and digital tools.

Through a detailed exploration of these characteristics, this chapter will provide valuable insights into the structure, dynamics, and potential of Solomon Islands business sector.

3.2. Distribution of Formal and Informal Establishments

Table 3.1 presents establishment types enumerated in the census. In total, the number of establishments enumerated in the NEEC are 22,567, of which 11,991 are formal and 10,576 are informal establishments. Formal establishments account for just over half of the total at 53% compared to Informal establishments at 47% of the total.

Table 3.1: Establishment Type

| Establishment Type | Count | Percent |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| Formal | 11,991 | 53% |
| Informal | 10,576 | 47% |
| Total | 22,567 | 100 |

3.3. Distribution of Formal and Informal establishment by legal status

Table 3.2 illustrates the distribution of formal establishments by legal status. The business environment in Solomon Islands is dominated by sole proprietorships, which account for 94.1% (11,288 establishments), reflecting a preference for simpler, individually owned businesses. Limited liability companies (Ltd.) make up 1.8% (214), while partnerships make up 1.4% (164 establishments). NGOs and non-profits contribute 0.6% (76 establishments).

Table 3.2: Distribution of Formal Establishment by Legal Status

| Legal Status | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Sole Proprietorship (Unlimited Private or Informal) | 11,288 | 94.1 |
| Partnership | 164 | 1.4 |
| Limited Liability Company (Ltd) | 214 | 1.8 |
| Corporation (Limited Liability Private Company) | 87 | 0.7 |
| Cooperative | 63 | 0.5 |
| Government | 13 | 0.1 |
| Non-profit (NGO) | 76 | 0.6 |
| Not stated | 86 | 0.7 |
| Total | 11,991 | 100 |

3.4. Distribution of establishment by economic activity

Employing the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Rev 4), the NEEC-2024 presents the distribution of establishments by economic activity and establishment type. The distribution in Table 3.3 is presented both in numbers and percentages.

The distribution of establishments by economic activity in Solomon Islands is dominated by Trade (wholesale and retail trade) which recorded 17,674 establishments, of which 9,575 (54.2%) are formal and 8,099 (45.8%) are informal. Wholesale and retail trade accounted for 78.3% of the total establishments.

This was followed by the Manufacturing economic activity which recorded 2,321 (10.3% in total) establishments, of which 595 (25.6%) are formal and 1,726 (74.4%) are informal. Accommodation and Food Service accounted for 4.8% of formal and informal establishments.

Table 3.3: Distribution of Establishments by Economic Activity (ISIC Rev 4, Level I) (Number & Percentage)

| Economic Activity Establishment type percentage (ISIC Level I) | Number | | | Percentage % | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| | Formal | Informal | Total | Formal | Informal | Total |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishery | 564 | 0 | 564 | 4.7 | 0.0 | 2.5 |
| Manufacturing | 595 | 1,726 | 2,321 | 5.0 | 16.3 | 10.3 |
| Electricity and water | 11 | 0 | 11 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Construction | 20 | 0 | 20 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Trade | 9,575 | 8,099 | 17,674 | 79.9 | 76.6 | 78.3 |
| Transport | 235 | 0 | 235 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Accommodation and Food Service Activities | 560 | 526 | 1,086 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 4.8 |
| Information and Communication | 66 | 217 | 283 | 0.6 | 2.1 | 1.3 |
| Banking and insurance | 40 | 0 | 40 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Real Estate Activities | 17 | 0 | 17 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Activities | 49 | 0 | 49 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Administrative and Support Service Activities | 36 | 0 | 36 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Education | 123 | 0 | 123 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| Human Health and Social Work Activities | 38 | 0 | 38 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 9 | 4 | 13 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Other Service Activities | 54 | 4 | 58 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Total | 11,991 | 10,576 | 22,567 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

3.5. Distribution of Formal and Informal Establishments by Province

Malaita has 6,697 establishments, accounting for 29.7% of total establishments of which 46.2% are formal and 53.8% were informal. This was followed by Honiara with 4,991 establishments accounting for 22.1% of total establishments. Guadalcanal recorded the third highest number of establishments at 3,307 establishments (14.7%), of which 61.6% are formal and 38.4% are informal. Makira-Ulawa and Western provinces contribute 10.2% and 10.1 of the total establishments respectively.

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Table 3.4: Distribution of Establishments by Province both Formal and Informal (Number & Percentage)

| Province | Number | | | Percentage | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Formal | Informal | Total | Formal | Informal | Total |
| Choiseul | 437 | 205 | 642 | 3.6 | 1.9 | 2.8 |
| Western | 1,108 | 1,167 | 2,275 | 9.2 | 11.0 | 10.1 |
| Isabel | 641 | 135 | 776 | 5.3 | 1.3 | 3.4 |
| Central | 604 | 221 | 825 | 5.0 | 2.1 | 3.7 |
| Rennell-Bell | 81 | 14 | 95 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 0.4 |
| Guadalcanal | 2,037 | 1,270 | 3,307 | 17.0 | 12.0 | 14.7 |
| Malaita | 3,093 | 3,604 | 6,697 | 25.8 | 34.1 | 29.7 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 1,739 | 567 | 2,306 | 14.5 | 5.4 | 10.2 |
| Temotu | 412 | 242 | 654 | 3.4 | 2.3 | 2.9 |
| Honiara | 1,840 | 3,151 | 4,991 | 15.4 | 29.8 | 22.1 |
| TOTAL | 11,991 | 10,576 | 22,567 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

3.6. Distribution of Formal and Informal establishment of single owner by nationality

Table 3.5 presents the distribution of establishments by the nationality of the owner. In Solomon Islands, there is evident dominance of domestic ownership of businesses, with 95.7% of establishments being Solomon Islands owned. China follows that with 2.6%. Despite domestic entrepreneurship being predominant in the Solomon Islands economy, foreign investment and foreign owned businesses are key contributors to economic growth.

Table 3.5: Distribution of Establishment by Nationality of Owner (Number & Percentage)

| (single-owner establishments only) | Establishment type | | | Percentage | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Formal | Informal | Total | Formal | Informal | Total |
| Solomon | 8,292 | 9,434 | 17,727 | 91.4 | 99.8 | 95.7 |
| Pacific Countries | 16 | 5 | 21 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Australia or New Zealand | 55 | 0 | 55 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| China | 471 | 1 | 472 | 5.2 | 0.0 | 2.6 |
| Other Asian | 179 | 1 | 180 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Rest of the world | 13 | 1 | 14 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Not stated or unknown | 43 | 13 | 56 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Total | 9,070 | 9,456 | 18,526 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

3.7. Distribution of Formal and Informal establishment by age-group of owners

Table 3.6 presents data on the age distribution of owners of business establishments. The 26-34 age group holds the largest share of business ownership, accounting for 7,568 establishments, which represents 40.9% of the total establishments (both formal and informal). Within this group, 38.5% of establishments are formally owned, while 61.5% are informal.

The next largest group is the 35-55 age range, which owns 37.8% of establishments, with a total of 7,005 establishments. Of these, 57% are formal, and 43% are informal.

The >56 age group owns 14.6% of the total establishments. This age group is predominantly engaged in formal businesses, as 66.3% of their establishments are formal, and 33.7% are informal.

For those aged <26 owns only 5.9% of all establishments. Of the 1,084 establishments in this group, 26.2% are formal and 73.8% are informal.

Finally, a small percentage of establishments (0.9%) have ownership data that is not stated, with 54.7% of those being formally owned

Table 3.6: Distribution of Establishment by Age-group of Owners (Number & Percentage)

| Age range of single owners | Establishment Type | | | Percentage | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------|--------|------------|----------|-------|
| | Formal | Informal | Total | Formal | Informal | Total |
| <26 | 284 | 800 | 1,084 | 3.1 | 8.5 | 5.9 |
| 26-34 | 2,914 | 4,654 | 7,568 | 32.1 | 49.2 | 40.9 |
| 35-55 | 3,991 | 3,014 | 7,005 | 44.0 | 31.9 | 37.8 |
| 56+ | 1,787 | 910 | 2,697 | 19.7 | 9.6 | 14.6 |
| Not stated | 93 | 77 | 171 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Total | 9,070 | 9,456 | 18,526 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

3.8. Distribution of Formal and Informal workers by province and by sex²

Table 3.7 presents the distribution of workers by province and sex, the total number of workers in the formal sector is 32,753, with 17,126 females and 15,506 males, while the informal sector employs 14,460 workers, of which 10,006 are females and 4,295 are males.

Establishments in Honiara employ 6,378 females and 4,526 males in the formal sector, and 3,805 females and 1,122 males in the informal sector. In Guadalcanal, establishments employ 4,038 females and 3,770 males, totaling 7,912 workers in the formal sector and 1,560 females and 687 males totaling 2,273 workers in the informal sector.

This is followed by Malaita where the formal sector employs 2,732 females and 2,664 males, totaling 5,407 workers and the informal sector has 2,754 females and 1,701 males, totaling 4,505 workers.

Makira-Ulawa formal sector employs 1,210 females and 1,728 males, totaling 2,938 workers, while the informal sector employs 442 females and 272 males, totaling 715 workers.

In Western province, the formal sector employs 1,179 females and 921 males, totaling 2,101 workers, and the informal sector employs 892 females and 296 males, totaling 1,189 workers.

Overall, there is a notable gender imbalance in the workforce, with females consistently outnumbering males in the informal sectors across all provinces. This trend is particularly pronounced in the informal sector, where females dominate across the board. In the formal sector, the gender gap is somewhat narrower, but females still hold a larger share of the workforce in most provinces.

For instance, in Honiara, the formal sector employs 6,378 females versus 4,526 males, showing a female-to-male ratio of about 1.4:1. This pattern is similar in other provinces, such as Western, where the formal sector employs 1,179 females and 921 males, resulting in a ratio of about 1.28:1.

² Not stated category is not added.

Table 3.7: Distribution Formal and Informal of Workers by Province and by Sex

| Province | Formal | | | | Informal | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|----------|-------|------------|--------|
| | Female | Male | Not Stated | Total | Female | Male | Not Stated | Total |
| Choiseul | 336 | 561 | 0 | 896 | 149 | 70 | 0 | 218 |
| Western | 1,179 | 921 | 0 | 2,101 | 892 | 296 | 1 | 1,189 |
| Isabel | 487 | 523 | 0 | 1,010 | 81 | 30 | 0 | 112 |
| Central | 430 | 361 | 1 | 792 | 142 | 52 | 0 | 194 |
| Rennell-Bellona | 92 | 70 | 5 | 167 | 11 | 10 | 0 | 22 |
| Guadalcanal | 4,038 | 3,770 | 104 | 7,912 | 1,560 | 687 | 27 | 2,273 |
| Malaita | 2,732 | 2,664 | 11 | 5,407 | 2,754 | 1,701 | 50 | 4,505 |
| Makira-Ulawa | 1,210 | 1,728 | 0 | 2,938 | 442 | 272 | 1 | 715 |
| Temotu | 243 | 383 | 0 | 627 | 169 | 56 | 0 | 225 |
| Honiara | 6,378 | 4,526 | 0 | 10,904 | 3,805 | 1,122 | 80 | 5,007 |
| Total | 17,126 | 15,506 | 121 | 32,753 | 10,006 | 4,295 | 159 | 14,460 |

3.9. Distribution of Formal and Informal workers by economic activities and sex³

Table 3.8 presents the distribution of workers by economic activities and sex, both in count and percentage, providing an overview of labor market participation in Solomon Islands across various industries.

Trade (Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles) sector stands as the largest employer, accounting for 71.2% of the total workforce. This reflects the central role of trade and commerce in Solomon Islands' economy, particularly in the informal sector. Within this sector, 67.8% of workers are female, indicating a strong female presence, especially in informal retail activities. This sector also shows significant involvement from both male and female workers, with 12,053 females and 10,467 males in the formal sector and 7,424 females and 3,370 males in the informal sector.

Manufacturing sector is the second-largest employer, engaging 8.6% of the workforce. This sector shows a significant 74.3% of female workers in informal sector, highlighting women's predominant role such as Accommodation and Food Service Activities. The sector employs 1,660 females and 751 males in the formal sector, while 565 females and 155 males are employed in the informal sector.

In contrast, the Manufacturing sector for informal sector, formal sector is male-dominated. The formal manufacturing sector employs 757 males and 1,006 females, with a substantial gender disparity of 57.1% male workers and only 42.9% female workers. The informal manufacturing sector, which employs 1,691 females and 574 males, show a contrast trend, with female dominating this industry, suggesting that manufacturing remains less accessible to women in Solomon Islands for only formal establishments.

The Education sector is also notable, with 1,098 workers in total, comprising 678 females (61.7%) and 421 males (38.3%) in the formal economy (2.3% in total economy). That indicates education is a predominantly formal sector for both genders, though men represent a smaller proportion.

Other sectors such as Agriculture, forestry and fishery activities and Information and Communication Activities also show a still imbalanced gender representation, with 622 females and 911 males, and 351 females and 202 males, underscoring the varied gender dynamics in Solomon Islands' labor force.

Table 3.8: Distribution of workers by economic activities and by sex

| Economic Activity | Formal | | | | Informal | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Female | Male | Not Stated | Total | Female | Male | Not Stated | Total |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishery | 622 | 911 | 0 | 1,533 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Manufacturing | 757 | 1,006 | 0 | 1,762 | 1,691 | 574 | 10 | 2,275 |
| Electricity and water | 25 | 9 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 58 | 403 | 0 | 461 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Trade | 12,053 | 10,467 | 113 | 22,633 | 7,424 | 3,370 | 147 | 10,941 |
| Transport | 192 | 618 | 0 | 811 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Accommodation and food service activities | 1,660 | 751 | 8 | 2,419 | 565 | 155 | 0 | 720 |
| Information and communication | 148 | 95 | 0 | 243 | 203 | 107 | 1 | 311 |
| Banking and insurance | 199 | 167 | 0 | 366 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Real estate activities | 57 | 50 | 0 | 107 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 161 | 161 | 0 | 322 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Administrative and support service activities | 160 | 214 | 0 | 373 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Education | 678 | 421 | 0 | 1,098 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Human health and social work activities | 117 | 71 | 0 | 189 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 96 | 13 | 0 | 109 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 13 |
| Other service activities | 95 | 108 | 0 | 203 | 118 | 83 | 0 | 201 |
| Total | 17,077 | 15,466 | 121 | 32,663 | 10,006 | 4,296 | 159 | 14,460 |

ANNEX A- Coverage of Provinces

| Phase | Provinces |
|-------------|------------------|
| Phase One | Honiara |
| | Guadalcanal |
| | Central |
| | Rennel-Bellona |
| Phase Two | Western Province |
| | Choiseul |
| Phase Three | Malaita |
| Phase Four | Temotu |
| Phase Five | Makira-Ulawa |
| | Isabel |

| SECTION 3: INFORMATION ABOUT EMPLOYMENT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Please fill in the average number of staff members per type of employment during the previous year (or within this year if the establishment started this year)? | | | |
| 3.2a Working owners / family member (not on the payroll) | | 3.2c Employees on a contractual basis (not on the payroll) | |
| 3.2b Average number of paid employees on the payroll | | 3.2d Other unpaid staff | |
| 3.2f How many of the total of 3.2a + 3.2b staff is female staff? | | 3.2e For HQ only: Total 3.2a + 3.2b at HQ and all branches? | |

| SECTION 4: REVENUE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4.1 Estimate the total turnover in the past year (or this year for new business)? | | 0. No regular turnover (Gov. or NGO) | 1. Less than SD\$ 25 thousand |
| 2. SD\$ 25-250 thousand | | 3. SD\$ 250 thousand-1 million | 4. SD\$ 1-5 million |
| | | | 5. SD\$ 6 million or more |
| | | | 9. Refused to answer |
| 4.1e For headquarters only: Total turnover for HQ and all branches? | | 0. No regular turnover (Gov. or NGO) | 1. Less than SD\$ 25 thousand |
| 2. SD\$ 25-250 thousand | | 3. SD\$ 250 thousand-1 million | 4. SD\$ 1-5 million |
| | | | 5. SD\$ 6 million or more |
| | | | 9. Refused to answer |

For single owner (legal status 1-3) or main director (legal status > 3) fill 5a only, otherwise fill 5b

| SECTION 5: CHARACTERISTICS OF OWNER OR DIRECTOR | | | |
|---|---|----------------|--|
| 5.1 Gender? | 1. Female – 2. Male | 5.2 Age class? | 1. 24 or younger – 2. From 25-39 years – 3. From 40-54 years – 4. 55 and older |
| 5.3 Nationality? | 1. Solomon Islands – 2. Pacific country – 3. Australia or New Zealand – 4. China – 5. Other Asian country – 6. Other country – 7. Unknown | | |

For multiple owners (legal status 1-3) fill 5b only

| SECTION 5: CHARACTERISTICS OF MULTIPLE OWNERS | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 5.10 Number of owners? | | 5.11 How many of the owners are female? | |
| 5.12 Age class main owner (or average all owners)? | | 1. 24 or younger – 2. From 25-39 years – 3. From 40-54 years – 4. 55 and older | |
| 5.13 Nationalities of owners? (write number per nationality) | ← 5.13a Solomon Islands | ← 5.13b Pacific country | ← 5.13c Australia or New Zealand |
| | ← 5.13e Other Asian | ← 5.13f Rest of the world | ← 5.13g Unknown |

| SECTION 6: REGISTRATION DETAILS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT | | | |
|---|--------------|--------|--|
| 6.1a Is establishment registered at Inland Revenue Division? | 1 Yes – 2 No | IRD N° | |
| 6.1b Is establishment registered at City Council (CC) or provincial government? | 1 Yes – 2 No | CC N° | |
| 6.1c Is establishment registered at the Company House? | 1 Yes – 2 No | CH N° | |
| 6.2a Does the establishment pay fees to social security? | 1 Yes – 2 No | | |
| 6.2b Does the establishment pay fees to local government? | 1 Yes – 2 No | | |
| 6.2c Does the establishment pay fees to a market association? | 1 Yes – 2 No | | |

| SECTION 7: INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENT | | | |
|---|--|--------------|--|
| 7.1 Surname | | First name | |
| 7.2 Position | 1. Manager / Owner – 2. Bookkeeper / Accountant – 3. Administration / HR staff – 4. Other senior staff – 5. Other junior staff | | |
| 7.3 Email | | 7.4 Phone N° | |

Thank you for your cooperation.
 The enumerator will come back or call back to collect the answers to this form.
 For information call +677 25451 or look at the website:
www.statistics.gov.sb



NEEC-2024-Choiseul Team Enumeration underway.



Solomon Islands Government (SIG)

**SOLOMON ISLANDS
NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE**

Solomon Islands National Economic Establishment Census
(NEEC-2024)



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The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office