



Solomon Islands Government

Statistical Bulletin: 06/2025

National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC)

– Preliminary Selected Findings

May 2025

Solomon Islands National Statistics Office
Ministry of Finance & Treasury
PO BOX G6
Honiara

Enquiries: Tel: (+677) 27835 Email: STATS-Economics@mof.gov.sb
Website: <https://statistics.gov.sb>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	2
MAIN LIMITATIONS.....	2
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	3
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS.....	3
FORMAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS.....	3
NUMBER OF FORMAL WORKERS IN BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS.....	5
INFORMAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS.....	5
NUMBER OF WORKERS IN INFORMAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS.....	6
LOOKING AHEAD.....	6

TABLES (ATTACHED EXCEL FILES)

TABLE P1: SUMMARY OF FORMAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES, SIZE CLASS OF EMPLOYMENT AND PROVINCE BY SELECTED INDICATORS, 2024

TABLE P2: SUMMARY OF THE NUMBER OF FORMAL WORKERS IN ESTABLISHMENTS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES, SIZE CLASS OF EMPLOYMENT AND PROVINCE BY SELECTED INDICATORS, 2024

TABLE P3: SUMMARY OF INFORMAL MICRO ESTABLISHMENTS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES, SIZE CLASS OF EMPLOYMENT AND PROVINCE BY SELECTED INDICATORS, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) successfully conducted a National Economic Establishment Census (NEEC) targeting business establishments in 2024. The census has covered all principal locations within the 9 provinces and Honiara. The census covered both formal and informal business establishments. The NEEC was supported financially and technically by the World Bank (WB) within the framework of the Capacity Building for Statistics and Audit (CAPSA) Project.

The outcomes of the NEEC will be used for building a statistical business register (SBR) for Solomon Islands. This SBR will form the foundation for compiling all economic statistics in the upcoming years and will result in more, improved quality and robust economic indicators for policy making and policy evaluation.

The NEEC results provide comprehensive data on an important set of business characteristics. Next to the number of establishments, it reveals the industry of the establishment (e.g., manufacturing, trade or services), the number and type of workers (hired/non-hired), location data, legal status, ownership of establishment, turnover classes and other business demography information.

This publication includes data on formal and informal business establishments. Formal business establishments are formally registered, taxed, licensed and regulated. The informal sector does not have formal business licenses and are not registered with the government. Thus, they are not subjected to government taxation or regulation.

MAIN LIMITATIONS

The key limitations of the NEEC and selected findings include:

- Data and information of only selected industries by establishment are released at this stage. During the NEEC, data was collected from more than 800 establishments in other industries such as in agriculture, banks and insurance, education and health industries. These data does not form part of this publication due to the data validation efforts that are currently on-going, but updated information will later be used for the SBR and also released.
- The NEEC covered all principal locations within the provinces were businesses were enumerated. Hence, 108 wards out of a total of 183 wards were selected in proportion to the population density of these provinces.
- The NEEC did not cover all islands or areas as this was almost practically impossible, and it would be inefficient and unnecessary in statistical terms whilst noting the huge costs involved for such expanded operations. For purposes of the SBR and for future economic estimates, statistical imputations will be made to estimate uncovered islands or areas.
- The NEEC merely captured visible businesses with a permanent location in the main public domain. Hence, for the purpose of a more complete SBR, data from other sources (e.g., admin records) will be used to supplement data from NEEC.
- In exceptional cases, establishments were incidentally closed or cooperation was refused allowing enumerators to provide a best possible estimates for such establishments, also noting situations where an establishment may have provided incomplete or incorrect information that were verified and corrected. The overall effect of these issues were minimal.
- Some industries or some size classes within these industries lack visible premises (e.g., in the transport sector, small construction firms, etc.). Therefore, more work is needed to build a complete SBR based on other data sources such as administrative records and from the housing and population censuses etc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SINSO is very grateful for the participation of the business community in providing data during the NEEC. The completeness and the correctness of the NEEC publication is based on the cooperation of the business community of the Solomon Islands.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

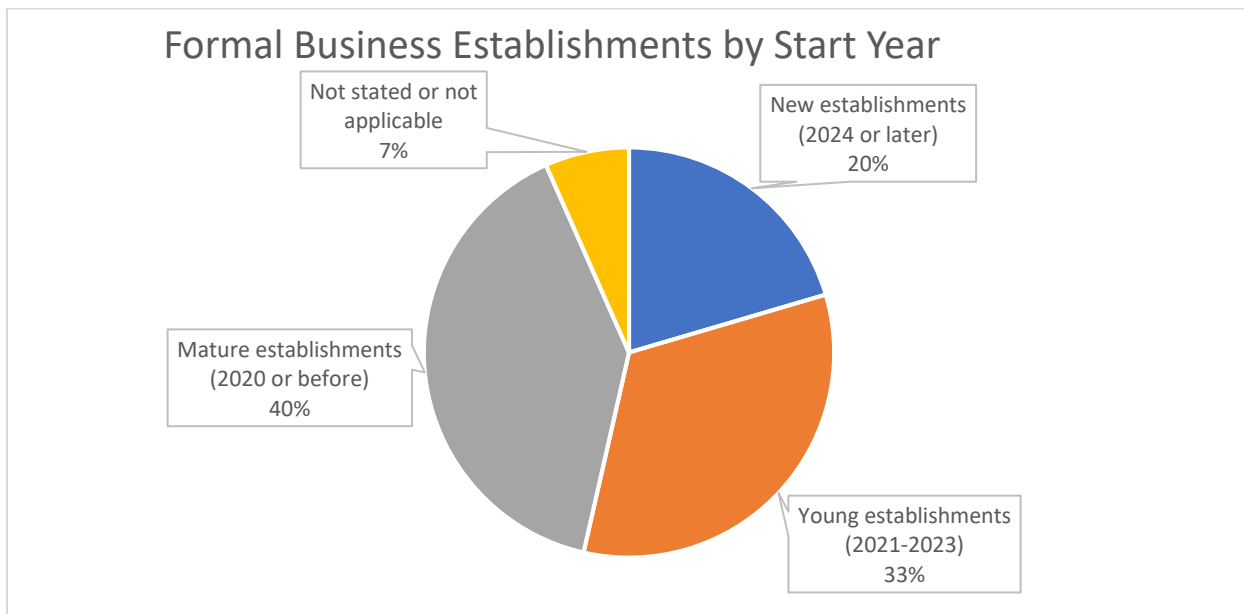
This preliminary release cover a provisional total of 16,497 business establishments comprising of 8,275 (50.2%) regular (formal) establishments and 8,222 (49.8%) informal micro establishments in the main business economy.

1-1-FORMAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

Reference: [Table P1. Summary of Formal Establishments in Selected Industries, Size Class of Employment and Province by Selected Indicators, 2024](#)

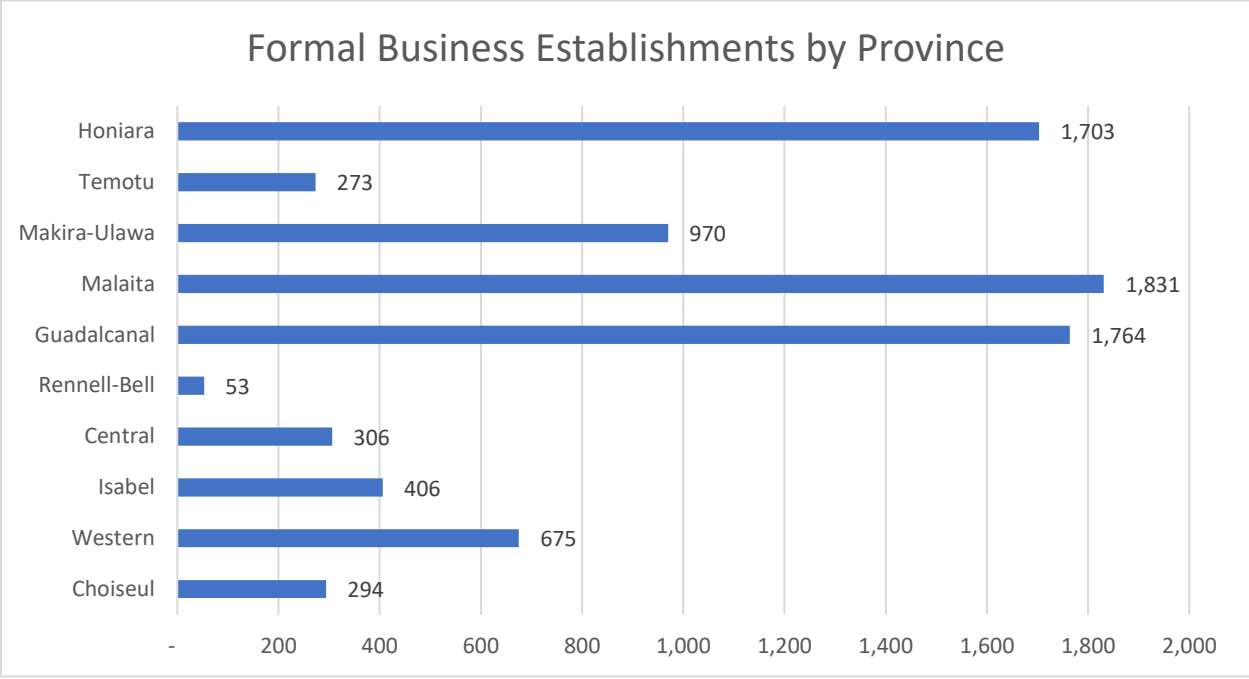
The NEEC 2024 identified and collected data from 8,275 formal business establishments. Based on the data collected, the largest group of establishments was active in the trade (wholesale and retail) industry (86.5%). Other substantial industrial groups were manufacturing (5.7%) and hospitality (5.5%).

A fifth of all the businesses (20.4%) are newly established establishments formed within the period 2024 or later. Moreover, about a third of the establishments (33.1%) are young establishments established between 2021-2023. The largest group of establishments (39.8%) are mature establishments that existed for 5 years or more. For a small portion of the establishments (6.6%), the data showing the start of operations was not stated.



The legal status of most establishments (95.1%) is sole proprietorship. A much smaller proportion of establishments are Limited Liability Company (1.7%) and Partnership (1.2%). Other statuses below 1% include Cooperatives (0.5%) and not stated (0.4%), respectively.

The majority of the establishments are independent enterprises (75.0%) and branches of national enterprises (20.6%). Some small groups of businesses are branches of international enterprises (3.0%) including a group of headquarter establishments (0.6%).



Most of the business establishments (22.1%) are located in Malaita province. Among the other 9 provinces, Guadalcanal (21.3%) and Honiara (20.6%) account for the highest number of establishments. The least number of establishments were found in Rennell and Bellona province (0.6%). These findings were partly influenced by the methodology in the coverage of the smaller provinces, as not all islands/wards were covered.

The largest group of business establishments (86.0%) was not involved in foreign trade. The group of establishments that were only exporting (7.3%) was much larger than the group that only imports (1.2%) and those that were engaged in both imports and exports on a regular basis (0.1%); and 5.3% of the establishments did not state information on imports or exports.

According to the NECC data, over half of the business establishments have 2-4 working people (64.9%), followed by those with 1 working staff (28.2%) and those with 5-9 workers (4.7%). The establishments with 10-19 workers and 20-49 working persons account for 1.4% and 0.7% respectively, including the number of establishments with 50-99 working persons (0.2%).

Over three quarters of the establishments have self-employed workers (75.8%). A much smaller group of businesses (17.9%) has only hired workers and 1.0% have both self-employed workers and hired workers. The remaining establishments (5.3%) did not state the status of their workers.

More than half of the establishments have both female and male workers (51.2%), followed by establishments with female workers only (28.6%) and male workers only (14.7%). The remaining establishments (5.5%) did not state the gender of their workers. The largest group of establishments with only female workers (52.8%) have 2-4 workers while the largest group of establishments with only male workers (53.8%) also have 2-4 workers.

Most of the establishments (65.1%) have a single owner, while those with two owners account for 14.6%. The majority of the single owners are Solomon Islanders (91.1%) followed by citizens from China (5.5%). Most of the single owners are within the age range of 41-55 (44.0%) and 26-40 (32.7%). The group of owners aged 56 or older (19.2%) are much larger than the group of owners that are 25 years or younger (3.2%).

1-2-NUMBER OF FORMAL WORKERS IN BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

Reference: Table P2: Summary of the Number of Formal Workers in Establishments in Selected Industries, Size Class of Employment and Province by Selected Indicators, 2024

The regular formal workers in establishments that were enumerated during the NEEC 2024 reported a total of 21,381 workers. The largest group of formal workers (79.2%) are predominantly engaged in the trade (wholesale and retail) industry. This implies that formal workers in establishments outside the trading industry are on average relatively small by comparison although industries such as hospitality (8.8%), and manufacturing (6.4%) account for a moderate number of formal workers in absolute terms.

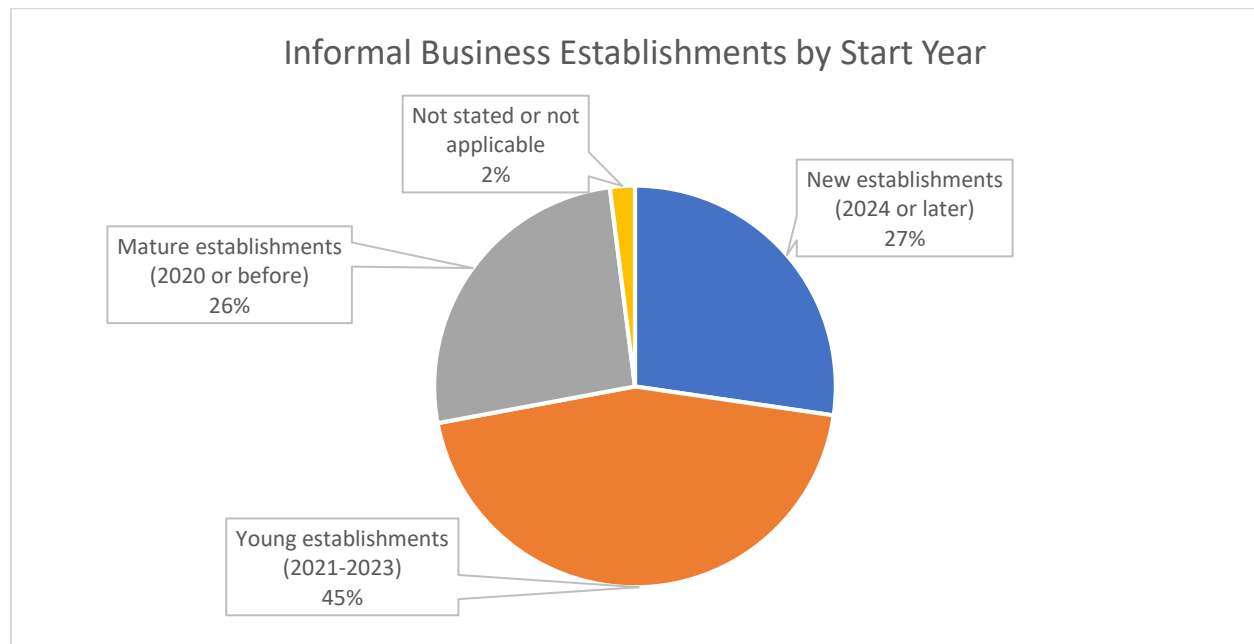
Most formal workers reported working in establishments in Honiara (32.7%) followed by Guadalcanal (24.5%) and Malaita (16.2%). Thus, the average firm size in terms of formal workers is the largest in Honiara.

Out of the 21,381 formal workers, 11,537 are females and 9,752 are males. The gender of the remaining 92 workers is not stated. The largest group of females work in the trade (wholesale and retail) industry (78.0%), the second largest work in hospitality (11.3%), followed by manufacturing (5.2%). The largest group of males also work in the trade industry (80.5%). The other industries with a large number of male workers are manufacturing (7.9%) and hospitality (5.9%).

2-1-INFORMAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

Reference: Table P3: Summary of Informal Micro Establishments in Selected Industries, Size Class of Employment and Province by Selected Indicators, 2024

During the NEEC, a total of 8,222 informal business establishments were identified and captured. The majority of the informal establishments were active in the trade (wholesale and retail) industry (76.6%), manufacturing (16.3%) and hospitality (5.0%). The largest number of informal establishments was found in Honiara (38.2%), followed by Malaita (27.6%), Guadalcanal (15.3%) and Western Province (8.8%).



On average informal establishments were younger than more formal establishments. About 27.4% of the establishments started activities in 2024 or later. A little over a quarter of the establishments (26.0%) started activities between 2020 and before. The largest number of informal establishments (44.6%) started activities

between 2021-2023 and 2.0% of the establishments did not state their start year. Over half of the informal establishments (59.0%) are female owned.

2-2-NUMBER OF WORKERS IN INFORMAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

Reference: Table P3: Summary of Informal Micro Establishments in Selected Industries, Size Class of Employment and Province by Selected Indicators, 2024

The 8,222 informal establishments accounted for a total of 11,234 workers. By gender disaggregation of workers, 69.3% of all workers reported as being female, 29.5% of workers reported as male, while 1.1% of the workers did not state their gender. The distribution of gender in the informal establishments by province showed that Honiara accounted for the highest percentage (38.4%) of females, while the lowest was reported in Rennell and Bellona (0.1%). On the other hand, Malaita province accounted for the highest (39.0%) of male workers in informal establishments, while the lowest rate of 0.2% of male workers was reported in Rennell and Bellona province.

LOOKING AHEAD

Into the short to medium term, data from the NEEC and all other available data sources will be combined into a statistical business register. This statistical business register is important for all economic statistics in the upcoming years as it will be used for sampling and for grossing up or weighing of survey results. Examples of these economic statistics include price statistics, annual and quarterly business statistics and national accounts. Since the current statistical registration system does not cover all establishments in the country (due to new operations, legislation barriers to access the administrative data sources or unregistered establishments etc.), measurements made regarding economic statistics would not be robust. Thus, studies to be conducted based on the new economic census results will give a boost to the size of the statistical business register, as its coverage will be for all registered establishments. Having all those data sources available will definitely have an increasing effect on the gross domestic product (GDP) compared to the current GDP trend due to a relatively smaller size of businesses and related information in the current business frame.

Apart from the findings of the NEEC, another important output is the extensive use of digital technology and modern lean methodologies. The positive experiences gained will be used by SINSO to shape, conduct and publish results of future economic surveys. The next major survey in which such technologies will be applied is the annual economic enterprise survey 2025.

Disclaimer

The SINSO does not assume liability with respect to the use of or failure to use the information, tables, indicators and conclusions of this bulletin. Please cite the SINSO as the source and bulletin number in the use of any information and material. For enquiries: Tel: (+677) 27835 Email: STATS-Economics@mof.gov.sb and Website: <https://statistics.gov.sb>