



Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Administration



Solomon Islands
Government

SWPHC12-06f

SOLOMON ISLANDS HYDROGRAPHIC UNIT



SOLOMON ISLANDS

**National Report for the
12th SOUTH WEST PACIFIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION MEETING
PORT VILA, VANUATU, 12th – 14th November 2013**

**12th South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC) Meeting
Port Vila, Vanuatu – 12th to 14th November 2013**

SOLOMON ISLANDS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Administration (SIMSA) was established by an Act of Parliament in 2009 as a government entity within the Ministry of Infrastructure Development to raise the standards of maritime safety, promote marine environment protection and coordinate maritime search and rescue operations.

1.2 Functions

The core functions of the Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Administration are:-

- Registration of ships and seafarers
- Certification of seafarers and marine pilots
- Establishing and refurbishing of navigational aids
- Ensuring that search and rescue operations is effectively carried out when required or necessary
- Establishing a hydrographic capability including the updating, preparation and approval of charts and surveys for maritime purposes
- Ensuring environmental marine pollution response whenever necessary
- Investigations of all maritime incidents, accidents & casualties
- Monitoring safety of all ships through Flag State Control and Port State Control inspections
- Enforcement of wreck removal and any salvage activities
- Continuous reviewing of maritime safety policies and relevant legislation
- Enforcement of standards of construction, repair or salvage of vessels in Solomon Islands

2. SI HYDROGRAPHIC UNIT

The Solomon Islands Hydrographic Unit (SIHU) was established under the Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Administration Act 2009, in which it gives the SIHU the functions involving hydrography, including the updating, preparation and approval of surveys and charts for maritime purposes.

This gives the Unit the responsibility for the surveying and charting of Solomon Islands waters including its Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) which covers approximately 600,000 plus square kilometres of sea area. The Unit is also the

focal point for the receipt and dissemination of global Maritime Safety Information (MSI) and for the dissemination of such data in Solomon Islands.

3. SIHU DEVELOPMENT

Since the establishment of the Unit in early 2012, good progress has been made although at a slow phase as expected. In its line of development, the Unit has been focusing on these three phases of development as follows:-

- i) Maritime Safety Information (MSI)
- ii) Hydrographic Survey Capability and
- iii) Nautical Cartographic Capability and may also include the publishing of our own national tide tables of selected ports throughout the provinces in the future.

To date the Unit has developed to a state that it can now fully execute the activities and provide such information as in item (i) and also fully equipped to carry out any of its field survey projects in its phase (ii) of development.

In its phase (iii) of development, initial preparatory work will also commence in 2014 although may take sometimes yet to get to the required level to fully perform these activities. However, with the Unit's proposed four (4) year development programme put forward to the government for consideration for 2014 to 2017, it is likely that these developments may accomplish within this period.

4. HYDRO SURVEY ACTIVITIES

The Unit has identified a number of areas urgently required for surveys to be carried out. These sites are for Growth centres, fisheries centres, new port/harbour developments and tourism sector developments etc. The Unit's two (2) year work programme (Hydro scheme) will indicate the proposed sites for surveys when fully completed.

No field survey activities were carried out during the year with the exception of field tours to the provinces mainly for the gathering and updating of MSI data of existing navigational aids throughout the country.

The Unit is looking forward to commence carrying out some of these field survey projects as from early 2014 onwards. Surveying activities will mostly concentrate on port/harbour areas and entrances to ports etc. Despite that, there are also several critical offshore areas that had been identified as priority areas for surveys which needs outside support.

5. NAVIGATIONAL CHARTS AND PUBLICATIONS

At present the UKHO continues to be the Publishing Charting Agent (PCA) for Solomon Islands under an exchange of letters Agreement signed between the two countries on the 14th April 2011. This covers the Publishing of Nautical Charts, Nautical Publications and Notices to Mariners.

The Unit currently has in its possession some of its own National Published Charts which SIHU is looking into re-generating them. These charts were locally produced and are mainly at larger scales of various isolated Ports/Harbours and passages throughout the Solomon Islands. Whilst funding support may be limited, it is seen necessary that these charts are re-generated so that it can be suitable for reuse in the future.

An update charting scheme for the Solomon Islands is yet to be developed. SIHU is also focusing on the idea of producing its own National Tide Tables for some of its main selected ports throughout the Provinces.

6. PERSONNEL

SIHU has four (4) full time staff for its current establishment which consist of three officers for carrying out surveying activities whilst one officer as Nautical Cartographer. However, due to the limited staff, all are encouraged to familiarize and well versed with the basics of both hydrographic surveying and nautical charting activities.

There may be considerations for additional staffing in the Unit's development requirements in the future.

7. SURVEY EQUIPMENT

SIHU currently has in its possession the following equipments:-

- a) 1 x CEEScope Hydrographic data acquisition system
- b) 1 x CEETIDE Radar Tide Gauge
- c) 1 x STARFISH sidescan sonar Model 452F system
- d) 1 x AO chart printer
- e) 1 x Sokkia Total Station
- f) 1 x Sokkia Automatic Level
- g) 1 x Toughbook Computer CF 31 and
- h) Hypack Max software.

8. TRAINING

Two of the Unit's staff currently on approved training programmes overseas at present as follows:-

- a) 1 x surveying staff - IHO Cat B Hydrographic survey Training in Japan and
- b) 1 x Cartographic Staff - IHO Cat B Cartographic Training at the UKHO. Both officers are due to complete studies in mid-December this year. The training was made possible through support from JICA for the Hydrographic Training and Nippon Foundation with UKHO and IHO for the Cartographic Training.

Under the SWPHC Capacity Building Projects submissions SIHU has also requested that consideration be given for its Nautical Cartographer for a two week attachment at the Australian Hydrographic Service for Nautical Cartography and

Hydrographic Information Training and work experience. This has been scheduled to take place during the 2014 financial year.

Maritime Safety Information (MSI) Trainings for the SIHU staff is another area that needs consideration in the future. This is because the Unit has just been established and there is a need to raise and sustain personnel with MSI knowledge.

9. ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES

9.1 Maritime Boundaries:-

SIHU is currently represented in the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) appointed Committee to spearhead initial talks in preparation for the resumption of the Maritime Boundary Delimitation talks between Solomon Islands and its neighbour, Vanuatu. This is an important issue which has been left attended for a number of years since 1987. It is now becoming evident that both states would like to see this long outstanding issue be sorted out. SOPAC staff did play a significant role in assisting Solomon Islands officials in the initial preparatory work in determining the base points and other related activities.

Similarly, SIHU has also been involved in the internal talks over the Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) in the Ontong Java Plateau regarding a single joint submission involving FSM, PNG and Solomon Islands. However, due to internal commitments, the SI delegation was unable to make it to a meeting proper in Canberra from 13-17th May this year. This joint submission is likely to be defended by the three countries in 2014.

There are still other outstanding areas like the Charlotte Banks, North Fiji Basin and the Rennell Ridge that needs to be sorted out with neighbouring states.

10. IMMEDIATE PLANS

To continue further in the development of the SIHU to effectively carry out its responsibilities as required, a four (4) year proposal have been submitted for consideration by the Solomon Islands Government with a hope that this will be considered and the proposal be implemented in the future.

Additionally, SIHU will continue to seek further assistance where ever possible for other areas which may be beyond our capabilities. These involve surveys in certain selected offshore areas in Solomon Islands waters and further specialized capacity building trainings for our personnel.