



Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Administration



Solomon Islands
Government

SOLOMON ISLANDS HYDROGRAPHIC UNIT



SOLOMON ISLANDS

National Report for the 13th SOUTH WEST PACIFIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION MEETING RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS, 25th – 27th February 2015

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Functions of the Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Administration

3.0 Hydrographic Unit Capacity

4.0 Capacity Building Trainings

5.0 SPC/SOPAC Hydrography Assistance

6.0 National Priorities

7.0 Publishing Charting Agency

8.0 Maritime Boundaries

9.0 Maritime Safety Information

10.0 IHO Membership

11.0 Conclusion

**National Report for the 13th South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission
(SWPHC) Meeting
RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS – 25th to 27th February 2015**

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared for the 13th South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission meeting to be held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, from 25th to 27th February 2015.

The Solomon Islands is a self-governing archipelagic state which lies South Easterly of Papua New Guinea with a total sea area of approximately 1.34million square kilometres.

Under SOLAS Chapter V Regulations 2,4,9,19 and 27 requirement in which Solomon Islands is a signatory to, stresses the obligation for the Government of the Solomon Islands for the collection and compilation of hydrographic data and the publication, dissemination and for the updating of all nautical information necessary for safe navigation.

The Solomon Islands, like any island state in the region has a large sea area within its 200 EEZ which they depend on for the export and importation of goods for its economic benefits. The flow of trade into the country and in between the islands, is mostly transported by sea.

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. From the above piece of legislation, the functions of the then Solomon Islands Hydrographic Unit (SIHU) which used to be with the Lands and Survey Department was later transferred to the Ministry of Infrastructure Development.

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 surveys and charts 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 legislations
- Enforcement of standards of construction, repair or salvage of vessels in Solomon Islands

3. SOLOMON ISLANDS HYDROGRAPHIC UNIT CAPACITY

3.1 SURVEY EQUIPMENT

SIHU currently has in its possession the following equipments:-

- 1 x CEESCOPE Hydrographic data acquisition system
- 1 x CEETIDE Radar Tide Gauge
- 1 x STARFISH side scan sonar Model 452F system
- 1 x AO chart printer
- 1 x Sokkia Total Station
- 1 x Sokkia Automatic Level
- 1 x Toughbook Computer CF 31 and
- Hypack Max software.

3.2 ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- 2 x CEETIDE Rader Tide Guages
- 1 x Marine Magnetometer
- 1 x Van Veen Bottom Sampler
- 1 x HYPACK MAX hydrographic data management software
- 1 x CEETIDE Analysis and Prediction software and
- 1 x AML Acoustic velocity meter. These items are the remaining ones which we still want to procure from overseas during this financial year 2015.

3.3 PERSONNEL

Our current manpower still remains at four (4) with three FIG/IHO/ICA CAT B Hydrographic Surveyors and one (1) FIG/IHO/ICA CAT B Nautical cartographer.

However, for our CAT B Nautical Cartographer to finally acquire the recognition, he is still to complete the different stages involved in chart compilation. Noting that our establishment is quite small he may still have difficulties in achieving these requirements. As such, we may consider looking for support to fulfil this requirement.

Attempts to recruit two more staff to join the team during last year or this year seems to be not possible. However, we will continue in pursuing this issue with our new Government which came into power in late December last year.

4.0 DEVELOPMENTS

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

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

To date the Unit has developed to a state where it can now carry out some of the responsibilities and activities as required in phases (i) and (ii) of its development.

For phase (iii), initial preparatory work commenced in 2014 although may take sometimes yet to get to the required level to fully perform these activities. However, with the Unit's proposed five (5) year development programme put forward to the government for consideration for 2014 to 2018, it is anticipated that further developments may be accomplished within this time period.

4. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAININGS

Training programmes which was attended by staff of SIHU during 2014 is as follows:-

- a) 1 x survey staff - HYPACK SOFTWARE training workshop in Sydney for 2 weeks under funding support from SIG.
- b) 1 x Survey Staff - Attachment with SPC/SOPAC survey team during their deployment for a hydrographic survey in Luganville (Vanuatu) from March to June 2014 with support from SPC/SOPAC.
- c) 1 x Survey staff:- Attended the IMO/IHO training course in Basic Hydrographic Surveying and Governance held in Suva, Fiji in June 2014.
- d) 1 x Cartographic Staff:- Attachment at the Australian Hydrographic Service Office for two (2) weeks under IHO's Capacity Building Programme.
- e) 1 x Survey Staff:- Attended the 3 days Maritime Safety Training (MSI) course organized by the SWPHC and the IHO WNWNS sub-committee held in Wellington, New Zealand.

4.1 PROPOSED TRAINING BID FOR 2016

- a) 1 x survey staff:- FIG/IHO/ICA Category A Hydrographic Surveyor Course. We are proposing that one officer undertakes this training if funding assistance/support can be secured or identified.

5. SPC/SOPAC HYDROGRAPHY ASSISTANCE

Aside from our normal ongoing surveying programmes, there are also several critical offshore areas that had been identified as priority areas for surveys which needs outside support possibly from donors due to being beyond the units capabilities.

As scheduled for this year 2015, a proposed hydrographic survey deployment will be carried out in the Solomon Islands. The proposed site identified for the survey will be Tulaghi Harbour and surroundings in the Central Islands Province.

Staff indicated in the carrying out of this survey project will be from SOPAC and a Hydrographic Charge Surveyor from the Australian Hydrographic Service (AHS). The exact dates for the deployment is yet to be confirmed although it's proposed to be during the period March/April 2015.

6. NATIONAL PRIORITIES

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

In 2014, a detail hydrographic survey was carried out of the Honiara International Port at a scale of 1: 2,500 purposely for the updating of BA Charts 3997 and 1735. [The survey data is yet to be submitted for Quality Control Assessment.](#) We are yet to identify who can be able to assist us on this requirement

The Unit is looking forward to carrying out Choiseul Bay survey early next month and another two more field survey projects this year after the passage of the 2015 national Budget. The Survey projects will mostly concentrate on new port/harbour developments for fisheries and the tourism requirements etc.

7. PUBLISHING CHARTING AGENCY (PCA)

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 if possible. 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 use 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.

Our Publishing Charting Agent (PCA) may likely to change in future as at present negotiations is still ongoing with the UKHO and the AHS. However, at this stage we are yet to have any further updates on this.

8. MARITIME BOUNDARIES

SIHU continues to be represented in the Solomon Islands Government's (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 played 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 internal talks over the Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) in the Ontong Java Plateau regarding a single joint submission involving FSM, PNG and Solomon Islands.

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

9. MARITIME SAFETY INFORMATION

Following my attendance at the MSI Training Workshop, we now have an Officer who will besides his other activities shall be responsible to look after the compilation, and dissemination of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) alongside our nautical cartographer. Arrangements has now been developed to have informations from Ports Authority, Fishing Companies, and other stakeholders to be made available to the officer as is seen appropriate.

10. IHO MEMBERSHIP

Submission of Solomon Islands bid to become a member state of the IHO was lodged during August of 2014. Up until now we are yet to have any information regarding the submission. Attempts were made to get any information from our Ministry of Foreign Affairs but still nothing has been received.

Currently we have assigned an officer to follow up on this with the relevant authorities in country.

11. CONCLUSION

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

We shall continue to maintain the ongoing good working relationship with the Regional and International Organizations as we continue to strive towards fulfilling our responsibilities as a small island state.