



Solomon Islands Maritime Development & Resilience Strategy 2024-2030

Concept note on medium-term perspectives and a strategy for large-scale maritime development and resilience initiatives in Solomon Islands

Rationale

Solomon Maritime

As a maritime nation made of 98% of ocean with a population of around 750,000 people living on more than 300 islands, Solomon Islands heavily relies on mobility at sea, the maritime industry (port, shipping) and the maritime workforce. With a growing population projected to reach 1.3 million in 2050, the Solomon Islands maritime sector has the potential to unlock development opportunities, support productive sectors, create new jobs, contribute to economic growth and benefit from an equitable transition to a decarbonised maritime sector if it is allowed to play its role in connecting islands communities, infrastructures and businesses.

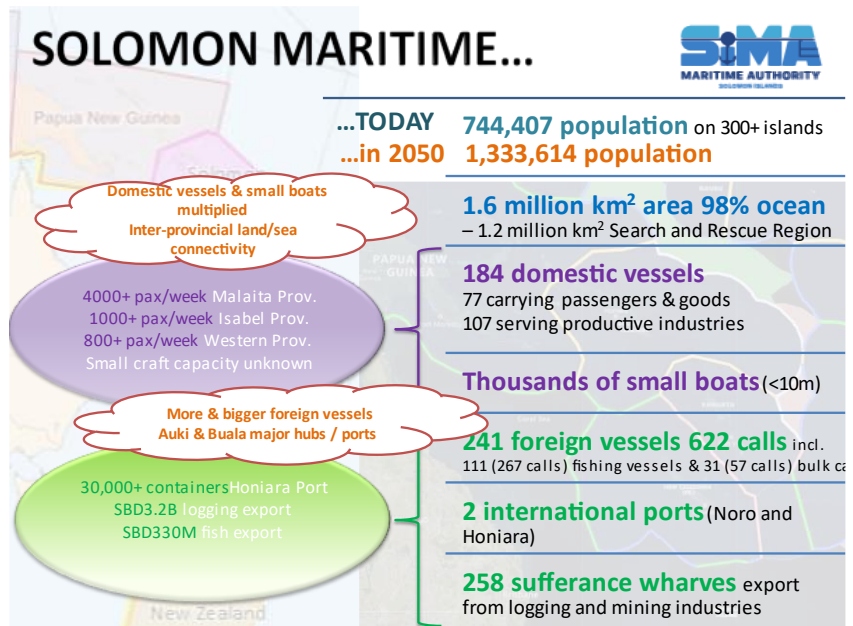
In the context of the climate crisis, the maritime sector underpins the resilience of Solomon Islands communities which must prepare and recover from disasters, adapt to sea level rise and may have to relocate in the future.

The issue of irregular and unreliable shipping services

For decades the maritime sector has suffered the heritage of a shipping industry owned and operated by the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) which transitioned to an open domestic shipping market and privately-owned shipping services without proper governance and regulation taking into account the special circumstances of uneconomical maritime routes to a growing population.

This issue is exacerbated by uncoordinated public interventions and special arrangements¹ established to address the persistent issue of highly competitive, irregular and uncoordinated shipping services. It tends to increase the number of vessels, increase competition and risk for shipping companies, and reduce operational efficiency and ship operators' financial capacity resulting in low investment in ships and maintenance. As a consequence shipping services do not fully respond to the population needs and connectivity through maritime infrastructure.

¹ Special arrangement include the franchise shipping scheme (FSS), the National Shipping Grant and to some extent the Constituency Development Fund used to operate vessels or move cargo and passengers.



Recent developments are addressing issues

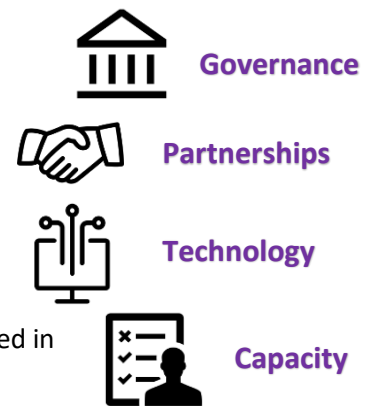
Recent developments such as Solomon Ports new management and operations, the establishment of the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA) and the implementation of maritime infrastructure development projects by SIG and development partners are demonstrating good results. The port and maritime infrastructures are improving, the number of ships has reduced with improved safety and standards and quality shipping services are provided between Honiara and Malaita and to some extent between Honiara and Isabel. However, these developments are still not sufficiently coordinated to ensure the maritime sector connects infrastructures and communities.

Maritime Development & Resilience Strategy

Solomon Islands ambition and vision for the maritime sector

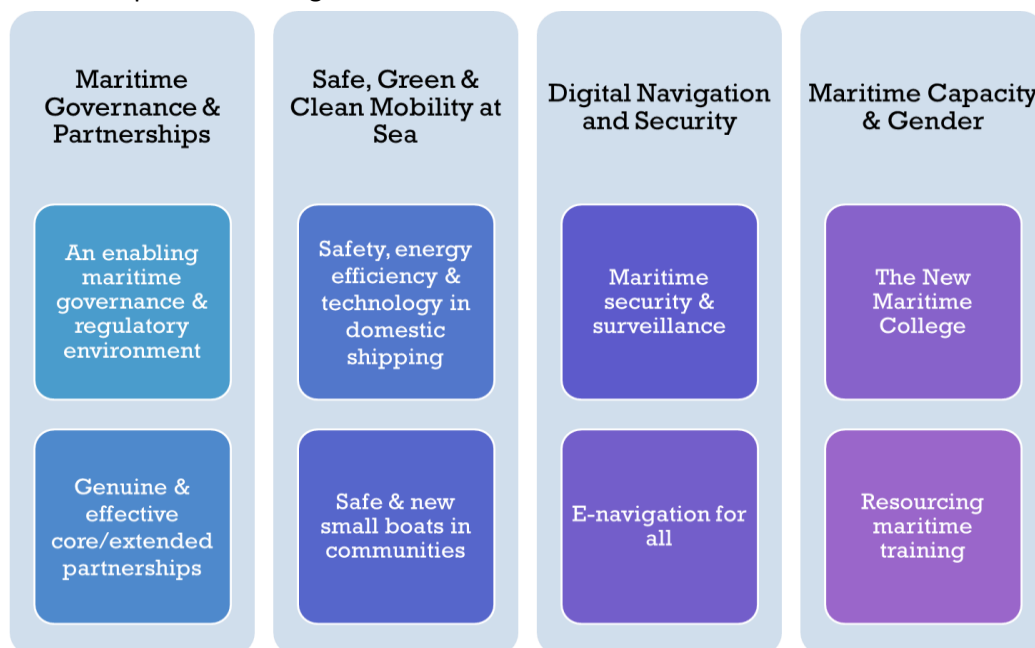
Solomon Islands has been leading at the international level to advocate for an equitable transition to decarbonisation of shipping which integrates the vision of the Maritime Future We Want for Solomon Islands presented at the Second Anniversary of SIMA on 5 April 2023 and under the initiatives being designed for Solomon Islands low emission development.

At the 5th Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' Meeting held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 5 to 12 May 2023, Solomon Islands invited other Pacific Islands countries to embrace a new maritime development framework building on governance, partnerships, technology and capacity² which translated in a regional commitment for a safe, resilient, green, clean, digital, gender-just maritime transport for the Blue Pacific.



Strategic planning and project development

To harness the potential of decarbonisation of the maritime sector and uptake emerging technologies, a strategy is being developed to coordinate initiatives and projects with the aim to establishing robust maritime governance, regulation and coordination, and facilitating transformative projects focussing on an equitable transition to safe, green, clean and digital maritime transport connecting infrastructures and communities.



² <https://icon-library.com/>

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Outcomes

- Improved resilience of islands communities by providing more regular and safer shipping services and connecting infrastructures and communities.
- Effective contribution to sustainable and low emission development by implementing strategic actions adopted by the Solomon Islands Government.
- Enabling environment for safer, greener, cleaner and digital maritime transport to harness the potential of an equitable transition to decarbonised maritime transport.

Maritime Governance & Partnerships

An enabling maritime governance & regulatory environment

Genuine & effective core/extended partnerships

Objective 1:

1. Improve governance and coordination and establish effective partnerships to oversee, regulate and control international and domestic ports and shipping development and operations.

1.1. Conduct a legal review of governance, regulation and operation of declared ports and port facilities, sufferance wharves and other maritime infrastructure under applicable laws.

1.2. Establish a governance framework and coordination system under the responsible ministry to regulate and operate declared ports and port facilities, sufferance wharves and other maritime infrastructure under applicable laws.

1.3. Support coordination of national agencies and provincial governments in delivering their mandate to oversee, regulate and control international and domestic ports and shipping development and operations.

1.4. Support coordination of public interventions in domestic shipping to improve connectivity and reliability of shipping services.

1.5. Establish a core partnership between SIMA, Solomon Islands Ports Authority (SIPA), the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) and Solomon Islands Maritime Transport Association (SIMTA) to implement strategic actions for safe, resilient, green, clean, digital, gender-just maritime transport in Solomon Islands under national strategies and action plans.

1.6. Coordinate partners support to the Maritime Development and Resilience Strategy.

1.7. Collaborate and establish working relationship and communication with infrastructure development programmes supporting port and other maritime infrastructure development across Solomon Islands.

1.8. Provide leadership and strategic advice to concerned ministries and national agencies in delivering their mandate to oversee, regulate and control international and domestic ports and shipping development and operations.

No activity, no project and no partner.

HIGH PRIORITY

SIMA is using its own governance framework to form a core partnership with SIPA, SINU and SIMTA.

Safe, Green & Clean Mobility at Sea

Safety, energy efficiency & technology in domestic shipping

Safe & new small boats in communities

Objective 2:

2. Build systems and processes and pilot projects to prepare the transition to safe, green and clean mobility at sea.

2.1. Upgrade the maritime legal framework to regulate safety, energy efficiency and pollution prevention of international and domestic shipping.
 2.2. Contribute to coordination with national agencies and provincial governments to oversee, regulate and control domestic shipping development and operations.
 2.3. Pilot projects related to safety and energy management of domestic shipping operations, collect domestic shipping GHG emissions information and data and uptake of new technologies and operations.
 2.4. Build systems and processes to control implementation of international maritime instruments related to safety, pollution prevention and energy efficiency of international vessels.
 2.5. Pilot projects to prevent marine litter and pollution from domestic shipping.

No activity, no project and no partner.

HIGH PRIORITY

Requires major projects and legal drafting.

2.6. Deliver awareness and training programmes in communities to improve safety of small boats.
 2.7. Establish working relationships and communication with provincial governments to oversee, regulate and control the operations of small boats with priority on borders.
 2.8. Pilot projects related to safety and energy management of small boats in communities.

Ongoing SIMA project with support of New Zealand.

**Digital Navigation
and Security**

Maritime
security &
surveillance

E-navigation
for all

Objective 3:

3. *Build capacity and systems to track vessels and ensure safety of navigation and security in Solomon Islands waters.*

- 3.1. Support maritime domain awareness and coordination of maritime intelligence and surveillance between national agencies responsible for border and maritime security.
- 3.2. Develop radiocommunication, tracking and internet systems ashore and onboard domestic vessels and small boats to respond to all maritime emergencies and track all vessels in Solomon Islands waters.
- 3.3. Equip, monitor and regulate small boats in collaboration with provincial governments to improve safety of all at sea.

*Coordinated by MPNSCS with support of New Zealand (3.1).
Ongoing SIMA project with support of New Zealand (3.2 & 3.3).*

- 3.4. Build capacity and systems, procure and maintain equipment, conduct multibeam hydrographic survey and produce electronic charts in all priority navigation areas.
- 3.5. Build capacity and systems, procure and maintain equipment, conduct risk assessment, inspection and maintenance, and monitor all aids to navigation to maintain required level of service.
- 3.6. Build systems to make electronic navigational information accessible to all at sea.

Ongoing SIMA-JICA project on hydrography (3.4).
Ongoing SIMA activities with partial support from SPC (3.5).

Maritime Capacity & Gender

The New Maritime College

Resourcing maritime training

Objective 4:

4. *Strengthen maritime education through a well-resourced and independent maritime training institute able to train maritime professionals required to transition to safe, green and clean mobility at sea.*

4.1. Support and contribute to establishing governing and oversight mechanisms of the maritime training institute to facilitate resourcing and compliance to international and national maritime obligations and internationally-recognised certification of seafarers.

4.2. Develop capacity, systems and equipment of the maritime training institute to deliver internationally-recognised maritime including scholarship, professional placement and new cadet programmes responding to the maritime industry needs.

4.3. Support development of capacity and equipment upgrade to develop new maritime skills and facilitate the uptake of new technologies and operations in maritime transport.

4.4. Implement projects to raise awareness in schools, maritime training courses and in shipping companies and onboard vessels on gender-related issues, and support the Solomon Islands Women in Maritime Association.

4.5. Mobilise resources for maritime development managed from a dedicated fund overseen by a governing body comprising the core partners and funding partners of the transition to safe, green and clean mobility at sea.

No project and no partner.

HIGH PRIORITY