



# FOURTH SIMA WORKSHOP WITH SHIP OPERATORS

## Report

Solomon Islands Maritime Authority  
<https://sima.gov.sb>

## Purpose & Objective

The purpose of the Fourth SIMA Workshop with Ship Operators was to continue fostering engagement and partnership between SIMA and the shipping industry. The workshop's theme, *“Resourcing and Delivering Safety and Environmental Obligations”* guided discussions towards funding maritime development and training, securing partnerships, and applying laws to create a fair environment for ship operators, seafarers, and users of shipping services. It aimed to review progress since the Third Workshop in October 2023 and address key issues for effective maritime development.

## Meeting Arrangements

**Dates:** 20 March 2024

**Location:** Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara.

## Opening and presentations

### Opening

The workshop commenced with administrative matters managed by Ms. Alison Ohamana, SIMA Administration Officer. Mr. John Hugo Bugoro, SIMA Deputy Chairman of the Board, officially opened the workshop, delivering welcome remarks and a prayer. He highlighted SIMA's achievements since its establishment in 2020 and its ongoing commitment to its mandate. Mr. Bugoro also outlined the Board's priorities: resourcing maritime development and training, improving ship safety standards and safety management, supporting sustainable maritime employment, and developing collaboration with regional and international partners.

Mr. Jonah Mitau, Manager Shipping, Operations and Safety, delivered the keynote address. He reviewed the key outcomes from the Third Workshop in October 2023, emphasizing progress in areas such as the Partnership Agreement for the Solomon Islands Maritime College, the implementation of Seafarer Employment Agreements (SEA), the obligation to assist ships and persons, and the commitment to developing and implementing Safety Management Systems (SMS) onboard vessels. Mr. Mitau also anticipated discussions on the functionalities of the SIMA E-gate database and the approach to develop and resource maritime training.

### Presentations and Interactive Session

The workshop featured several key presentations and discussions across two main sessions: Shipping Operations and Safety, and Environment Protection & Safety.

#### Launching of SIMA E-gate Database

Mr. Roger Houalaha, Technical Officer-Data Management, presented on the launching of the SIMA E-gate Database, which is an integrated database intended for access by operators.

#### Resourcing Maritime Development

Ms. Agnes Gaote'e, Deputy Director SIMA, presented on resourcing maritime development. The presentation highlighted maritime training issues, including a lack of capacity and equipment for

internationally recognized qualifications, insufficient knowledge about ship equipment, and difficulty securing competent seafarers with foreign-going vessel experience.

Challenges also included a lack of opportunities for seafarers to perform required sea time and a shortage of experienced seafarers for training, instruction, examination, and pilot roles, which compromises sustainable maritime employment.

The "Our way forward" included a Partnership Agreement, improved governance and support for maritime training, establishment of a Maritime Development Fund, and upgrade of SINU's Maritime College to deliver competent maritime workforce. The Partnership Agreement is for Governance, Oversight and Advisory Services of the Solomon Islands Maritime College (SIMC), recognizing its central role and the need for dedicated partnerships and resources. A Joint Oversight Committee (JOC), comprising representatives from MID, SINU, SIMA, SIPA, and SIMTA, was established to oversee the SIMC development plan, monitor progress, and manage resource mobilization, curriculum development, and infrastructure upgrades.

Resourcing maritime training and development would involve new fees, charges, and levies from July 2024, including a Maritime Development Levy for all vessels and a Maritime Development Fund, overseen by SIMA's Advisory Committee.

The upgrade of SINU's Maritime College includes installing a lifeboat on davit, refurbishing fire-fighting and lifesaving workshops, upgrading the navigation simulator, refurbishing/replacing engines, installing an engine room simulator, refurbishing the wharf and buildings, upgrading power generation, and developing curricula for various seafarer qualifications up to Class 4 masters and engineer officers, as well as other training courses.

### [Seafarer Qualification, Employment & Remuneration](#)

Mrs. Cathy Indu, Principal Officer Shipping Operations, and Ms. Leeane Kivolyn, Senior Officer Shipping Operations, led this session. They presented on the status of seafarer qualifications, noting a total of 1708 seafarers, with 910 Marine Officer CoCs & CoRs (550 valid, 360 invalid), and 798 Basic Safety Certificates. Specific numbers for various Master and Engineer classes were provided, indicating both active qualifications and demand.

The session also focused on Seafarer Employment Agreements (SEA), emphasizing the objective to ensure fair and compliant contractual terms for domestic seafarers and improve their well-being and safe employment. The SEA Implementation Plan defines and guides the agreement process between ship owners/operators and seafarers, drawing on the Shipping Act 1998, Labour Act 1996, and MLC 2006. The plan outlines SEA compliance, submission, review, amendment, approval, registration, and monitoring, aiming for all seafarers on domestic vessels to have signed SIMA-approved SEAs with fair and compliant terms. As of the workshop, 91 vessels had been notified, 49 had submitted SEAs, and 5 had been approved, with a total of 128 registered SEAs.

Remuneration analysis highlighted the need for the Maritime College to adapt training to demand, ensuring internationally recognized qualifications. It was noted that seafaring employment is sustainable due to population growth, requiring investment and support. The monitoring of qualified seafarers is crucial to balance salary levels and ship owners' financial capacity, with a need to compare remuneration with other sectors.

Recommendations included strengthening shipping company ownership, logistics, and management, and employing a designated person ashore/operations manager to facilitate administration.

## Safety Management System (SMS) Implementation

Mr. George Tutu, Principal Officer Vessel Inspection, provided an update on SMS Implementation. The presentation detailed SMS implementation targets for 2024-2027: by 2024, 100% of registered vessels of more than 100 passengers to receive SMS Training; by 2025, 50% to have an approved SMS; by 2026, 100% approved; and by 2027, 100% audited.

The objectives of SMS include ensuring safe operations, good maintenance, seafarer competency, fostering a safety policy and culture, promoting good relationships between ship and company personnel, ensuring compliance with maritime laws and best practices, and enhancing reliability, operational efficiency, profitability, and safety of all persons and cargo onboard.

The legal framework for SMS includes SOLAS Convention Article VIII and Chapter IX, the Shipping Act 1998 as amended, and a draft SIMA maritime order on SMS for domestic ships. Details on initial SMS training preparation and scheduled training sessions for various shipping companies and their vessels were also provided.

## Preventing & Responding to Air & Marine Pollution / Public Awareness Campaign

Mrs. Diana Vasula, Senior Officer, Sustainable Shipping, presented on preventing pollution from ships and launching a public awareness campaign. The campaign's objectives include increasing public awareness, driving behavioral change, advocating for policy, engaging communities, and developing partnerships.

Ship operators' responsibilities under MARPOL were emphasized, including the development and implementation of a Ship Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP), Sewage Management Plan (SMP), Garbage Management Plan (GMP) (including no discharge of plastics), and a Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP). The National Pollution Fund (POLFUND), established under the Shipping (Marine Pollution) Regulations 2011, was highlighted as a SIMA-administered fund to finance NATPLAN implementation, meet regulatory obligations, and build capacity for response, recovery, and awareness.

The campaign strategy involves on-the-ground activities, visual awareness on domestic ships, and collaboration with public media for deployment in rural areas.

## Reporting & Assistance Obligations

Mr. Ernest Legumana, Senior Officer, Pollution & Safety response, and Mr. Patrick Wamahe, Senior Officer, Safety of Navigation, addressed reporting and assistance obligations. This included ship position reporting, with an obligation under the Shipping (Non-Convention Vessel Safety) Regulations 2006 for twice-daily radio reporting on HF Frequency 6215.00 kHz, crucial for effective Search & Rescue (SAR) operations and reducing response time. The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) operates 24/7 for SAR operations, prioritizing saving lives and protecting the marine environment.

The obligation to assist persons in distress at sea was stressed as both a moral and legal duty for ship masters under SOLAS Convention 1974, SAR Convention, IAMSAR, and the Shipping Act 1998. Masters are required to render assistance without danger to their vessel, crew, and passengers.

The workshop also covered the reporting of incidents or vessel modifications (e.g., major repairs or alterations) to the Director SIMA as soon as practicable.

Finally, the reporting of damage or non-functioning Aids to Navigation (AtoN) was emphasized, highlighting their importance for safety, navigation facilitation, and efficiency (e.g., buoys, beacons,

lighthouses). Prompt reporting by ship masters is crucial for swift resolution and enhancing maritime safety, with penalties for damaging or failing to report defects. The session concluded with a call for agreement on reporting and response to incidents and dangers at sea.

### National General Election Shipping Arrangement

Mrs. Joy Ririmae, Secretary of SIMTA, provided an update on the National General Election Shipping Arrangement. It was highlighted and agreed that arrangements facilitated the carriage of passengers but raised again the issue of transporting a huge number of people for one voting from Honiara to their home province which is materially impossible. Maintaining such a capacity would make all shipping companies unprofitable.

## Closing & Outcomes

The workshop concluded with closing remarks from Ms. Brenda Oeta, Principal Officer, Vessel Inspection, who presented the workshop's outcomes:

1. **Recognised** the signing of Partnership Agreement for Governance, Oversight and Advisory Services of the Solomon Islands Maritime College between SIG, SINU, SIMA, SIPA and SIMTA.
2. **Acknowledged** the establishment of the Solomon Islands Maritime College by SINU's Senate which gives it more autonomy to generate revenues, and **agreed** to resourcing and upgrading the Maritime College.
3. **Agreed** that maritime training is a four (4) partner collaboration between SIMA, the maritime college of SINU, the ship operators, and the seafarers.
4. **Agreed** with the new maritime development levy and fees for vessels remaining more than one week in Solomon Islands, and **called** partners to also contribute to resource maritime training and development projects.
5. **Acknowledged** the implementation of the Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA) implementation plan.
6. **Recognized** the need to ensure salaries of seafarers are affordable to ship operators and acknowledge that SIMA cannot regulate seafarer salaries; SIMTA to consider a mechanism to monitor and harmonize them.
7. **Recognized** the obligation to assist ships and persons and **called** all ship operators and masters to fulfil their reporting obligations.

## Annex – Workshop Agenda

### FOURTH SIMA WORKSHOP WITH SHIP OPERATORS

*Theme: “Resourcing and Delivering Safety and Environmental Obligations.”*

20 March 2024

Time	Agenda Item		Presenters
Wednesday 20 March 2024			
0830 – 0900	Registration		SIMA
OPENING/PRESENTATION			
MC Rachel Bare Anita Manager – Environment, Protection & Safety			
0900 – 0905	Administrative Matters		Administration Officer, Ms. Alison Ohamana-SIMA
0905 – 0910	Welcome Remarks and Prayer		SIMA Deputy Chair, Mr. John Hugo Bugoro
0910 – 0915	keynote Address		Manager Shipping, Operations and Safety, Mr. Jonah Mitau-SIMA
0915 – 0930	1	Launching of SIMA E-gate Database	Technical Officer-Data Management, Mr. Roger Houalaha-SIMA
0930 –1000	2	Resourcing Maritime Development	Deputy Director SIMA, Ms. Agnes Gaote’e
1000 – 1030	Group Photo & Morning Tea		
SESSION 1 – Shipping Operations and Safety			
MC Rachel Bare Anita Manager – Environment, Protection & Safety			
1030 – 1100	3	Seafarer Qualification, Employment & Remuneration	Principal Officer Shipping Operations, Mrs. Cathy Indu-SIMA  Senior Officer Shipping Operations, Ms. Leeane Kivolyn-SIMA
1130 – 1200	4	Safety Management System Implementation	Principal Officer Vessel Inspection, Mr. George Tutu-SIMA

1200 –1330	Lunch		
SESSION 2 – Environment Protection & Safety			
MC Rachel Bare Anita Manager – Environment, Protection & Safety			
1330 – 1400	5	Preventing Pollution Public Awareness Campaign	Senior Officer, Sustainable Shipping, Mrs. Diana Vasula-SIMA
1400 – 1430	6	Reporting & Assistance Obligations	Senior Officer, Pollution & Safety response, Mr. Ernest Legumana-SIMA  Senior Officer, Safety of Navigation, Mr. Patrick Wamahe-SIMA
1430 – 1500	7	National General Election Shipping Arrangement	Secretary of SIMTA, Mrs. Joy Ririmae-SIMTA
1500 – 1515	8	Wrap Up	Principal Officer-Vessel Inspection, Ms. Brenda Oeta-SIMA
1515 – 1545	Afternoon Tea		



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