



Seminar on E-Navigation on our Ocean: the contribution of SIMA-JICA project

Report

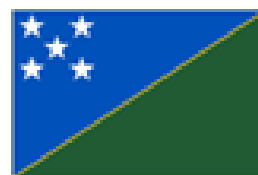
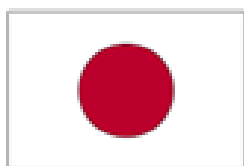


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Figure 1 - Group photo

Introduction

In 2022, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA) jointly initiated a significant undertaking titled the "Project to Support the Development of Electronic Charts for Honiara and Noro Ports in the Solomon Islands" (referred to as "the Project"). As part of this JICA-funded initiative, experts from Japan's Aero Asahi Corporation (AAC), the Project's contractor, collaborated with SIMA personnel.

Between 2022 and 2023, these teams conducted hydrographic surveys in five distinct locations using state-of-the-art technology. The surveyed areas included Honiara and Noro Ports, the approaches to Honiara Port, Diamond Narrows to Munda Bar Entrance, and Blackett Strait, which encompasses Ringgi Cove. The advanced technology utilized for collecting bathymetric data involved Multi Beam Echo Sounder (MBES) systems, Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) for real-time positioning, and other specialized equipment for gathering tidal data, sound velocity, sea temperature, current direction, and speed.

Based on these survey results, precise Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) are being produced in partnership with the Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO), which serves as the Primary Charting Authority (PCA) for the Solomon Islands. The first of the anticipated seven ENC cells for the surveyed areas, specifically covering Honiara Port, was published on February 7, 2024. The validation and publication of the remaining six cells by AHO are expected to be finalized before December 2025. To commemorate these achievements and gather feedback on the progress

made, a seminar was planned by an organizing team comprising JICA/AAC and SIMA personnel, scheduled for May 13, 2025.

Purpose & Objective

A seminar titled "*E – NAVIGATION ON OUR OCEAN: the Contribution of SIMA/JICA Project*" was successfully held at the Heritage Park Hotel on June 13, 2025. The purpose of this seminar was to convene stakeholders with interests in hydrography, e-navigation, and broader ocean-related matters, enabling them to celebrate and provide feedback on the accomplishments of the JICA-SIMA project regarding the development of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) in Honiara and Noro.

The specific objectives of the seminar were to:

- Formally launch the first ENC in Solomon Islands waters.
- Discuss the role of hydrography and its contributions to ocean governance under the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy, including its support for maritime boundary and continental shelf developments.
- Present on the JICA-SIMA project's support for ENC development in Honiara and Noro, emphasizing the tripartite partnership between Australia (through AHO), Japan (through JICA), and the Solomon Islands (through SIMA).
- Elaborate on the partnership with AHO concerning "E-navigation for all in Solomon Islands," covering project development and the impact of the JICA Project on the safety of navigation and national economic development.
- Discuss future developments and the concept of "e-navigation for all in Solomon Islands".

Proceedings & Presentations

The seminar's proceedings commenced with an introduction by the Master of Ceremony, Mrs. Diana Vasula, SIMA's Senior Officer for Sustainable Shipping. She extended a welcome to the guest of honour, dignitaries, invited guests from various government and private agencies (primarily from the shipping industry), and participants joining remotely from the JICA Headquarter Office in Tokyo, Japan.

Opening

The seminar was officially opened by Mr. John Hugo BUGORO, Deputy Chair of the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA) Board, who welcomed the participants and delivered an opening prayer.

Opening Address

The main opening address was delivered by His Excellency Mr. Keiichi Higuchi, the Ambassador of Japan to the Solomon Islands. He highly praised the project's achievements and the involvement of the Japanese experts, emphasizing the Government of Japan's significant commitment to the maritime sector through JICA's initiation and sponsorship of the JICA/SIMA project.

Keynote Address

The seminar's keynote address was given by the Guest of Honour, Mr. Ricky Fuo'o, the Minister of Infrastructure Development (MID). The Minister described the achievements as a "testament to the successful collaboration between Solomon Islands, Japan, and Australia". He highlighted the project's success in "harnessing state-of-the-

art technology, implementing rigorous data processing systems, and crucially, building national capacity in Solomon Islands and at SIMA, our mandated agency for hydrographic services".

Launching of Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC)

The formal launching of the ENC began with a joint presentation titled "What is an Electronic Chart?". This presentation was delivered by Dr. Arata Sengoku, JICA/AAC Team Leader and Project Chief Advisor, and Mr. John Dalomae, Principal Officer – Safety of Navigation at SIMA. Their presentation covered the different chart formats, their benefits, and the method for allocating their identifying numbers.

A highlight of the launching ceremony was the screening of a short, animated video demonstrating how the Honiara Port ENC would be displayed on a vessel's Electronic Chart Display Information System (ECDIS). ECDIS is an operating system required for displaying ENCs on vessels above 500 gross tonnage, as mandated by IMO SOLAS regulations. The video depicted a vessel entering the port in real-time, with maritime information warnings periodically broadcast as the vessel approached hazards (such as obstructions, shoals, and wrecks), Aids to Navigation infrastructure (lateral and cardinal buoys), waypoints, and the shoreline.

The ceremony concluded with the MID Minister, the Ambassador of Japan, the AHO Hydrographer, and the SIMA Board Deputy Chairman displaying a printed version of the ENC and shaking hands to signify their appreciation for the achievements.



Figure 2 - Fig 2: Photo showing the MID Minister and Ambassador of Japan to SI holding a paper version of Honiara Port chart and flanked by SIMA Board Deputy Chairman, Hydrographer of Australia (left) and JICA's Representative to SI (right). (Photo source: SIBC TV)

Vote of Thanks

Following the launching ceremony, Mr. Takeshi Watanabe, the Resident Representative in Solomon Islands, delivered a vote of thanks on behalf of JICA. He expressed gratitude to the AAC Experts involved in the JICA Project and commended all who participated in making the project a success.

Session 1 – The Role of Hydrography in Ocean Governance

The first of the two main sessions focused on the vital role hydrography plays in supporting effective ocean governance, maritime safety, and sustainable development within the Solomon Islands and beyond. This session was facilitated by Mr. John DALOMAE, SIMA's Principal Officer – Safety of Navigation. The session reiterated the seminar's goals and objectives, which included:

- Formally launching the first ENC in Solomon Islands waters.
- Discussing the role of hydrography and its contribution to ocean governance under the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy, along with its support for maritime boundary and continental shelf developments.
- Presenting on the JICA-SIMA project's support for ENC development in Honiara and Noro, highlighting the tripartite partnership between Australia (through AHO), Japan (through JICA), and the Solomon Islands (through SIMA).

Video Message by IHO Director

A recorded video message from Dr. John Nyberg, Director of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), was presented. Dr. Nyberg expressed his pleasure in acknowledging a "significant milestone: the successful development of electronic navigational charts for two major ports". He attributed this achievement to the collaborative efforts of the Solomon Islands Government, JICA, the Japanese Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department, the Australian Hydrographic Office, and other supporting partners. He emphasized that the seminar provided a crucial opportunity to not only reflect on the project's technical accomplishments but also to recognize its wider impact on maritime safety, regional integration, and long-term development in the Solomon Islands.

The IHO Director particularly commended the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA) for its commitment to embracing new capabilities and advancing its national hydrographic program. He stated that the ability to produce internationally recognized ENCs represents a transformative step in enhancing the country's maritime infrastructure, positioning it to engage more fully with international shipping, trade, and tourism. He concluded that this effort "reflects a shared commitment to excellence and a vision for a safer, more connected Pacific".

Speech by the Hydrographer of Australia

Next, Commodore Robyn Philips, the Hydrographer of Australia, delivered a speech on behalf of the AHO and the Government of Australia. She also spoke highly of the collaborative efforts among the partners and detailed the AHO's relationship and responsibilities concerning charting capabilities with the Solomon Islands. Commodore Philips stressed the AHO's commitment to further developing the Solomon Islands' ENCs to enhance safety of navigation and support its hydrographic aspirations.

Video Message by the Hydrographer of Japan

Thirdly, Vice Admiral Hideki Kinoshita, the Chief Hydrographer of Japan, conveyed his "deepest respect to the Government of Solomon Islands, the Australian Hydrographic Office, the Embassy of Japan in Solomon Islands, the JICA and all those who have contributed to the completion of this project". He explained that this project, aimed at

supporting the development of electronic nautical charts for the international ports of Honiara and Noro, is designed to address challenges in economic and social development and provides an opportunity for the Solomon Islands to realize its potential as a fellow Pacific Island nation. Vice Admiral Kinoshita expressed his certainty that this initiative would contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 9 and further strengthen ties between the Solomon Islands, Japan, and other involved countries.

The role and importance of hydrography

Dr. Arata Sengoku, the Project Team Leader and Chief Technical Advisor, delivered a presentation on the "Importance of Hydrography and Nautical Charts - Relationship to management of sea". To emphasize the critical importance of conducting hydrographic surveys and maintaining reliable, up-to-date charts of navigable waters, his presentation included two real-world scenarios:

- One involved a vessel running aground during a new wharf launching ceremony.
- Another depicted a coast guard vessel narrowly avoiding a collision with the unremoved remains of former wharf piles after new construction.

Additionally, Dr. Sengoku highlighted other crucial benefits of hydrography, such as fostering an efficient and safe maritime transport system, promoting tourism, ensuring safe navigation for all vessels (including small boats), and assisting in the delimitation of the continental shelf and maritime boundaries.

The contribution of hydrography to the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy

Mrs. Agnes Gaote'e, the Deputy Director of SIMA, presented on "Hydrography and the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy 2018". Her presentation focused on:

- General contributions of hydrography.
- Hydrography's specific contributions to the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy (SINOP) 2018.
- The significance of the 2024 National Ocean Conference and the Tulagi Declaration.

Panel Discussion on Maritime Boundary and Continental Shelf

A panel discussion was held during the seminar to address the latest developments in securing maritime boundaries and claiming continental shelf areas, and to explore the expectations from hydrography in these processes.

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Moderator: Mr. Thierry NERVALE, Director of SIMA.
- Panelists:
 - Mr. Tony KABASI, Team Leader, Ocean Management and Literacy (SPC).
 - Mrs. Gladys L. ISIHANUA, Assistant Secretary, Ocean & Climate Change Desk (MFAET).
 - Mr. Robert CARIO, Assistant Director, International Charting Development (AHO).
 - Mr. Lawrence BALANI, Deputy Director (Petroleum) MMERE.

The discussion, which included a question-and-answer segment, began with the SPC Team Leader detailing SPC's roles and ongoing work with member countries in delineating, negotiating, registering, and preparing treaties for declaration of maritime boundaries.

Representatives from MFAET and MMERE spoke about their respective ministries' involvement and efforts to ensure that the Solomon Islands' maritime boundaries are handled in accordance with applicable requirements and laws. MFAET representative also emphasized the need for coordination and for all ministries to support the Ocean12 initiatives that is committed to integrated Ocean Governance. The Moderator invited the audience to consider an Ocean Flagship Programme as an outcome of this seminar.

The AHO representative explained the AHO's role in depicting maritime boundary zones on charts for deposition at the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS), as well as within the S-121 layer of Maritime Limits and Boundaries. The comments indicated the progress made at both regional and national levels in negotiating and securing maritime boundaries and extended continental shelves, further illustrating how hydrography contributes to this area. The Moderator invited the audience to emphasize in the Seminar's outcome the need to progress S-100 standards implementation.

The representative of MMRE presented on the role of the ministry in this area and the need to coordinate with SIMA not only for contributing to securing maritime zones but beyond that to get the science and data that allows Solomon Islands to develop and genuinely manage its ocean.

This was the subject of the question-answer with the audience which reiterated the need to know our ocean, collect data and ensure it is used for development and foster ocean economy and growth. The moderator appreciated the session and invited the seminar to consider the proposed outcome later in the day.

Session 2 – E- Navigation for All in Solomon Islands

Session 2 was facilitated by Mr. Allen Ofea, SIMA's Principal Officer, Pollution and Safety Response. This session's goals and objectives primarily aimed to:

- Strengthen the partnership with AHO for "E-navigation for all in Solomon Islands," focusing on project development and the impact of the JICA Project on the safety of navigation and national economic development.
- Discuss future developments and the broader concept of "e-navigation for all in Solomon Islands."

Project for Development Support of ENC for Honiara and Noro Ports

Mr. Kei Takashita, JICA Expert and Vice Chief Advisor for Capacity Building in the Project, presented on this topic. He explained that the Japanese Government's policy aims to improve connectivity between Asia and Africa via the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and to promote regional stability and prosperity. These objectives are administered through JICA, whose mission aligns with the Development Cooperation Charter, focusing on human security and quality growth.

Consequently, the JICA/SIMA Support project was initiated in 2022 with a dual purpose: to enhance safety of navigation in and around the two international seaports in the Solomon Islands, and to develop hydrographic capabilities and transfer knowledge to SIMA personnel. This initiative involves the provision of various hydrographic surveying equipment and the delivery of both practical and theoretical training, conducted both locally and in Japan.

Next-generation international standards for navigational information (S-100) international trends and impact to Society

This presentation was delivered by Mr. Robert Cario, the AHO Assistant Director for International Charting Development. He elucidated AHO's responsibility within the project, which encompasses conducting survey appraisals on submitted bathymetric survey data and performing validation checks on compiled ENC cells. A particularly technical segment of his presentation explained the S-100 Products, which are currently being introduced into the charting environment, and their significant impact on enhancing safety of navigation. His

discussion also covered the timelines for compiling these products, as well as the guidelines and standards that are continually developed and reviewed to meet the needs of each country.

Impact of JICA-SIMA Project on Safety of Navigation and National Economic Development

Mr. Malesi MANI, SIMA's Senior Officer – Safety of Navigation, presented on this topic, stressing the project's importance given the Solomon Islands' rapidly growing population, demands for port development, and its identity as a maritime nation. The project has had a significant impact by enhancing safety of navigation through the provision of reliable charts, thereby reducing the risk of collisions and groundings, and optimizing voyage planning and vessel energy efficiency. Furthermore, hydrography plays a crucial role in national economic development by supporting the delimitation of maritime zones and sovereignty over the ocean, fishing, and marine tourism, all of which align with the development of the "Blue Economy".

Mr. Mani also outlined SIMA's future aspirations, which include:

- *Advancements in Hydrographic Technology:* Adopting technologies such as multi-beam echo sounders to further refine charting accuracy, uncover previously unknown underwater features, improve maritime infrastructure, and advance Navigational Information and Marine Spatial Planning.
- *E-navigation for All in Solomon Islands:* The future of e-navigation in the Solomon Islands envisions integrating satellite-based navigation systems, automated chart updates, and digital platforms that provide live maritime data. This will be crucial for supporting economic development, disaster preparedness, and environmental protection.
- *Sustainable Ocean Management:* Hydrographic data is increasingly utilized for coastal protection, fisheries management, and climate resilience, thereby assisting the Solomon Islands in safeguarding its marine resources.

Following this presentation, a question-answer session was held. Attendees raised questions regarding why hydrographic data collected by SIMA were stored by the AHO noting that data is sovereignty. Also, a comment was made first appreciating the work done by SIMA and partners and asking how this new ENC's will be made available to people really needing them such as ship operators for their domestic vessels (knowing that very few areas are surveyed) and all people navigating the ocean on their small boat.

It was clarified that, because hydrographic data are sovereign and precious data, they must be stored in a safe and secure environment which is not the case in Solomon Islands and at SIMA. SIMA is still developing its systems to ensure security of data and backup. However, AHO has very advanced systems and the MOU between AHO and SIMA provide for data security and sharing that is the prerogative of Solomon Islands. About the question related to the use of ENC by people of Solomon Islands, SIMA indicated that a second phase of the project is in preparation to develop an application and made available those ENC to all in Solomon Islands. Beyond that, SIMA is advocating for and working towards e-navigation for all in Solomon Islands which is the response to the question raised.

Pacific One Maritime Framework (POMF) National Consultation

Mr. Thierry Nervale, Director of SIMA, delivered a presentation highlighting the purpose of the Pacific One-Maritime Framework (POMF) as a regional maritime framework initiated to:

- Guide responsible ministries and maritime administrations towards an agreed regional approach for the maritime sector.
- Assist development partners in understanding the maritime priorities of the Pacific region.

POMF's vision is to achieve "a safe, secure, environmentally friendly and connected maritime sector that is sustainable, resilient and fully accessible, ensuring inclusiveness and equitable access, fair treatment and opportunities for all, across the Blue Pacific". Its ambition encompasses cultivating a thriving and sustainable maritime sector within the Blue Pacific that empowers all Pacific people, promotes gender equality, and upholds

environmental stewardship. This ambition is founded on core values and aims to create a maritime future where the needs and aspirations of all Pacific peoples are realized. The presentation further elaborated on the trends, goals, pathways, strategies, structure, and ongoing consultation efforts directed towards materializing this framework. The speaker presented in more details the ambition and strategy that foster safety of navigation, e-navigation development and S-100 standards implementation that is a need in the Pacific Islands region if we really want maritime development.

Closing Remarks & Outcomes

Mr. Allen Ofea, Principal Officer, Pollution and Safety Response and facilitator for session 2, delivered the closing remarks. He expressed gratitude to the JICA, AHO, and SIMA Teams for their collaborative efforts on the project, which culminated in the launching of the first official ENC for Honiara Port. He also thanked all participants for their attendance, acknowledging their collaboration with SIMA in advancing navigation safety, and then presented the seminar's final outcomes:

The Seminar:

- **Recognised** the impact of SIMA-JICA Project on Development Support of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) in Solomon Islands and **applauded** the launch of the first ever ENC.
- **Recognised** the tripartite collaboration between Australia, Japan and Solomon Islands to support hydrographic development and cooperation in Solomon Islands.
- **Called** development partners to further support Solomon Islands commitment to the advancement of hydrographic capabilities as stated in the Tulagi Declaration.
- **Requested** the Solomon Islands Government, SIMA and development partners to continue to maximise opportunities and build capacity for hydrographic data acquisition and management and ensure we explore the 90% unsurveyed part of our ocean.
- **Requested** the Solomon Islands Government to consider Integrated Ocean Management under the Ocean 12 framework and developing an Ocean Flagship Programme.
- **Acknowledged** the progress made in developing Solomon Islands hydrographic capabilities and the long-term perspective of developing e-navigation for all and S-100 standards.
- **Acknowledged** the development of the Pacific One-Maritime Framework (POMF) for the Pacific Islands region and **called** development partners to support its implementation in particular the implementation of S-100 standards.

Annex 1 - Agenda

| Time | Agenda Item | Presenters |
|--|--|--|
| Tuesday 13 May 2025 | | |
| 0830 – 0900 | Registration | SIMA |
| OPENING | | |
| Master of Ceremony – Diana Vasula | | |
| 0900 – 0905 | Welcome & opening Prayer | Mr. John Hugo Bugoro Deputy Chair, Board of SIMA |
| 0905 – 0915 | Opening Address | H.E. Keiichi Higuchi Ambassador of Japan |
| 0915 – 0925 | Keynote Address | Hon. Ricky Fuo'o Minister for Infrastructure Development |
| 0925 – 0950 | Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) Launching Ceremony | SIMA, JICA & AHO |
| 0950 – 1000 | Vote of Thanks | Mr. Takeshi Watanabe, JICA Solomon Islands Office Resident Representative |
| 1000 – 1030 | Group Photo & Morning Tea | |
| SESSION 1 – The role of hydrography in ocean governance | | |
| Facilitator – John Dalomae | | |
| 1030 – 1040 | Messages from our partners: <i>The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)</i> <i>The Australian Hydrographic Organisation (AHO)</i> <i>The Japan Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department (JHOD)</i> <i>including video conference call or video message</i> | Dr. John Nyberg, IHO Director (Video) Cmdr. Robyn Philips, Hydrographer of Australia V.Adm. Hideki Kinoshita, Chief Hydrographer (Video) |
| 1040 – 1050 | The role and importance of hydrography | Dr. Arata Sengoku, JICA Chief Adviser & Team Leader |
| 1050 – 1100 | The contribution of hydrography to the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy | Ms. Agnes Gaote'e, SIMA Deputy Director |
| 1100 – 1200 | Panel Discussion on Maritime Boundary and Continental Shelf <i>Moderator: Thierry Nervale, Director of SIMA</i> <i>Panellists</i> <i>Team Leader, Ocean Management and Literacy (SPC)</i> <i>Assistant Secretary, Ocean & Climate Change Desk (MFAET)</i> <i>Assistant Director, International Charting Development (AHO)</i> <i>Deputy Director, Petroleum, MMERE</i> Questions and Comments | Panel |
| 1200 – 1330 | Lunch | |
| SESSION 2 – e-navigation for all in Solomon Islands | | |
| Facilitator – Allen Ofea | | |
| 1330 – 1450 | Project for Development Support of ENC for Honiara and Noro Ports <i>Project expect outcomes & results</i> <i>ENC demonstration</i> Next-generation international standards for navigational information (S-100) international trends and impact to Society Impact of JICA-SIMA Project on safety of Navigation and national economic development Questions and comments | Mr. Kei Takashita, JICA Vice Chief Adviser Mr. Robert Cario, AHO Assistant Director International Charting Development Mr. Malesi Mani, SIMA Senior Officer Safety of Navigation |
| 1450 – 1520 | POMF national consultation <i>Questions and comments</i> | Mr. Thierry Nervale, Director SIMA |
| 1520 – 1530 | Closing Remarks & Outcomes Prayer | SIMA |
| 1530 – 1600 | Afternoon tea | |

Annex 2- Participant list

| | Name | Organization | Email/Contact |
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