# SEVENTH SIMA WORKSHOP WITH SHIP OPERATORS

## Report

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

## Purpose & Objective

The Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA) convened the Seventh SIMA Workshop with Ship Operators on 2 June 2026 at Heritage Park Hotel in Honiara. The workshop brought together government officials, representatives of diplomatic corps, ship operators, industry associations, seafarers, representatives of financial institutions and insurers and other maritime stakeholders to discuss issues relating to maritime financing and investment and maritime workforce development in Solomon Islands. It also provided an opportunity to witness the official signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SIMA and Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR).

The purpose of the workshop was to continue the dialogue established in previous workshops and meetings, aiming to strengthen communication between SIMA, ship owners/operators, and key stakeholders regarding matters affecting the maritime industry in Solomon Islands. The workshop's objective was to provide a platform for ship operators to discuss their challenges and to collectively determine pathways towards sustainable and safe shipping. The theme, ***"Financing and investing in Shipping and the maritime Workforce,"*** reflects the economic realities of the shipping industry of solomon Islands and recognised that sustainable growth depends on improved access to financing, investment in modern vessels and the maritime workforce to ensure a safer, greener and more resilient shipping in the Solomon Islands.

## Meeting Arrangements

**Dates:** 2 June 2026

**Location:** Heritage Park Hotel

## Opening

The workshop was officially opened by Mr. John Hugo Bugoro, Chair of SIMA Board. He delivered welcome remarks and a prayer, emphasizing the urgent need for the Solomon Islands to invest in new ships, harness new technologies and build our maritime workforce.

He also highlighted collaboration between stakeholders to explore opportunities for investment, innovation and workforce development. Mr. Bugoro also underscored SIMA's ongoing commitment to preserving and revitalizing traditional shipbuilding knowledge, recognizing its cultural and practical significance for the Pacific Islands region and reinforced the importance of partnership, knowledge-sharing, and strategic investment to ensure a resilient and sustainable maritime sector in the Solomon Islands.

## Presentations & Interactive Session

### Maritime Investment & Financing

The facilitator, Mr. Tony Justin, Officer Shipping & Vessel Inspection, then introduced the first session and the presentations. The first presentation was delivered by Mr. Thierry Nervale, Director of SIMA on maritime financing and investment. Mr. Nervale highlighted that Solomon Islands maritime sector faces a critical transition driven by an ageing fleet, workforce gaps, and the need for decarbonisation.

However, this challenge presents a strategic opportunity to align fleet renewal with climate finance and sustainable development objectives. He further stressed that, the establishment of coordinated investment mechanisms, particularly through the proposed *Solomon Islands Maritime Investment and coordination platform (SI-MICP),* will be essential in mobilising resources, strengthening planning, and ensuring long-term sustainability of maritime transport in Solomon Islands.

Following this, Mr Joash Bella, Senior Legal Officer provided an update on the consultation regarding the draft Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (STCW Convention) Maritime Order 2026, noting the importance of area of operation and level of seafarer qualification. Theses presentations were followed by question-and-answer session.

Stakeholder Feedback and Discussion:

- Participants noted that current lending interest rates offered by domestic financial institutions remain prohibitively high for vessel acquisition and fleet renewal, limiting private sector investment in shipping.
- Participants highlighted the absence of marine insurance services in Solomon Islands, noting that this increases operational risks for shipowners, restricts access to finance, and leaves passengers and cargo interests with limited protection and compensation in the event of maritime accidents.
- Participants welcomed SIMA's initiative to support traditional shipbuilding and the certification of existing traditional vessels, while noting the need for a clearer long-term strategy for the development and sustainability of the traditional shipbuilding sector.
- Participants emphasized the importance of investing in maritime workforce development to support Solomon Islands' growing population and increasing demand for employment opportunities. Particular support was expressed for strengthening the Solomon Islands Maritime College, including through its ongoing university accreditation process and engagement of the Joint Oversight Committee.
- Participants noted that maritime financing and investment should be considered alongside broader reforms to domestic shipping services. Suggestions included the development of regional shipping hubs and alternative service models to reduce dependence on Honiara as the sole origin and destination of most domestic shipping routes.
- Participants recognised that investment in the domestic fleet is an investment in Solomon Islands' future development and connectivity. Participants further highlighted the need to consider government support mechanisms, management of wrecks and decommissioned vessels, maritime training opportunities for youth, and future investment in low-emission technologies, including electric vessels and alternative fuels.

## Shipping Operations, Environmental Protection and Safety

The facilitator then introduced the second and final session. The opening presentation was delivered by Mr. Francis Pita, Senior Officer, Sustainable Shipping. He highlighted the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Preventing Marine Litter and expected it to be launched at the end of 2026. Mr. Pita also emphasized the need for collaboration between government agencies, development partners, communities and maritime operators to achieve a clean, healthy and resilient ocean, free from harmful pollution and litter, sustaining future generations.

The workshop then moved to the official signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SIMA and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR). The MOU marked a significant milestone as it represents for both parties' commitments on safety and operation of fishing vessels and prevention of marine litter from ships and fishing activities in Solomon Islands waters.

**Photo (L-R): Nester Nalangu, Manager (acting) Executive Office, SIMA, Thierry Nervale, Director SIMA, Edward Honiwala. Director Fisheries, MFMR, Rinah Mark, Senior Legal Officer, MFMR.**

Following this, Mr. George Atalifo, Managing Director of Trinity Marine Consultancy services and naval architect, delivered his presentation based on the fundamentals of ship stability and construction as part of his mission to the Solomon Islands. He highlighted the critical importance of vessel stability and emphasized the need to conduct initial review of stability and loadline are conducted before certification of ships. This presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session.

Stakeholder Feedback and Discussion:

- Participants welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between SIMA and MFMR. Participants acknowledged the statements made by Director SIMA and Director Fisheries highlighting the close cooperation between the two agencies in areas such as the registration of fishing vessels under the Solomon Islands flag, promotion of employment opportunities for Solomon Islanders in the fisheries sector, conduct of port State control inspections, and support for the sustainable management of fish stocks in Solomon Islands waters.
- Participants strongly supported the continued development of traditional shipbuilding and encouraged all stakeholders to contribute to preserving and strengthening this unique maritime heritage of Solomon Islands. Participants expressed appreciation to SIMA for its leadership in reviving traditional shipbuilding and advancing the initiative despite criticism and misconceptions expressed through social media.
- Participants appreciated the presentation on ship stability and acknowledged the importance of conducting stability and load line assessments before the acquisition of vessels. Participants

noted that these assessments contribute to safer vessel operations and better-informed investment decisions.


Photo: attendees of the Seventh SIMA Workshop with Ship Operators.

## Closing & Outcomes

The workshop concluded with closing remarks from SIMA acknowledging the successful outcomes achieved through the participation of all attendees as follows:

1. **Recognised** the contribution of domestic shipping operators and private maritime operators in Solomon Islands economy and inter-island connectivity.
2. **Supported** reviving traditional shipbuilding and further development of shipbuilding in Solomon Islands.
3. **Requested** government and development partners to support maritime training and mobility of seafarers, and training in naval architecture by supporting the Solomon Islands Maritime College.
4. **Requested** the government to consider the financial hardship experienced by ship operators with the fuel price increase and to provide dedicated support.
5. **Noted** the Small Craft Safety and Operation Guidelines currently being piloted in the Western Province before implementation across all provinces.
6. **Recognised** maritime financing and investment as a national development priority, and maritime workforce development and fleet replacement and as immediate investment priorities to improve inter-island connectivity and decarbonization; new technologies should be considered such as electric vessels, hydrid-vessel (wind assisted, alternative fuels, etc.).
7. **Requested** Government to consider coordinated maritime financing and investment mechanisms to support priorities taking into account the issues faced by ship operators to access financing from financial institutions and the need to engage with development partners, financial institutions and insurance companies.
8. **Agreed** to proceed with consultation for making of the SIMA (STCW Convention) Maritime Order by end of 2026 to comply with the STCW Convention.

9. **Recalled** the need to ensure protection and rights of passengers and seafarers as required by the Shipping Act 1998 and to consider a marine insurance regime covering operation of ships and carriage of passengers and seafarer.
10. **Supported** the development of the National Action Plan on Preventing Marine Litter for launch end of 2026.
11. **Recognize** that preventing marine litter requires action on both land-based and ship-sourced pollution.
12. **Called** on government agencies, development partners, communities, and maritime operators to work together to reduce marine litter and pollution.
13. **Welcomed** the SIMA-MFMR Memorandum of Understanding and commitments to safety and operation of fishing vessels in Solomon Islands waters and preventing marine litter from ships and fishing activities.
14. **Recognised** the importance of ship stability and loadline for safety of passenger and crew, and to ensure initial review of stability and loadline is conducted before purchasing a ship.
15. **Requested** the government to incorporate maritime development in the Solomon Islands government policies and budget.

These were adopted as the outcomes of the Seventh SIMA Workshop with Ship Operators.

# Annex – Workshop Agenda

## Seventh SIMA Workshop with Ship Operators

*2 June 2026 – Heritage Park Hotel*

**PROGRAMME**

| Time | | Agenda Item | Presenters |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Tuesday 2 June 2026** | | | |
| **0930 – 1000** | Registration & Coffee | | SIMA |
| **OPENING** | | | |
| *Facilitator – Tony Justin, Officer Shipping Operations & Vessel Inspection* | | | |
| **1000 – 1005** | Administrative Matters | | Trisha Thogole, Technical Officer, Vessel Inspection |
| **1005 – 1015** | Welcome Remarks and Prayer | | John Hugo Bugoro, SIMA Chair |
| **SESSION 1 – Maritime Investment & Financing** | | | |
| **1015 – 1115** | 1 | Dialogue on Shipping Economics<br>*Maritime Financing and Investment*<br>*Open discussion* | Thierry Nervale, Director SIMA |
| **1115 – 1215** | 2 | Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (STCW Convention) Maritime Order 2026<br>*Review of comments from consultation*<br>*Discussion* | Joash Bella, Senior Legal Officer |
| **1215 – 1330** | **Group Photo**<br>**Lunch** | | |
| **SESSION 2 – Shipping Operations, Environmental Protection and Safety** | | | |
| **1330 – 1430** | 3 | Maritime & Fisheries Cooperation<br>*National Action Plan on Preventing Marine Litter*<br>*Discussion*<br>*Signing of the MOU between MFMR and SIMA* | Francis Pita, Senior Officer, Sustainable Shipping |
| **1430 – 1530** | 4 | Ship Safety standards<br>*Basics of ship stability and construction*<br>*Discussion* | George Kava<br>Naval Architect |
| **1530 – 1600** | 5 | Outcomes, Wrap Up & Closing | Francis Pita, Senior Officer, Sustainable Shipping |
| **1600 – 1700** | **Cocktail** | | |

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