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# UNIVOIS NEWSLETTER



**SINU VC Prof Transform Aqorau posed for a photo with the visiting team from Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation of Japan at SINU.**

## SINU Strengthen Partnerships for Fisheries Development

Professor Transform Aqorau, Vice-Chancellor of Solomon Islands National University (SINU), recently had the privilege of meeting with representatives from the Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF). The discussions centered on the OFCF's 15 years of support to the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) in Solomon Islands, a partnership which has now concluded. This collaboration has played a pivotal role in advancing fisheries management, infrastructure development, and technical assistance in the fisheries sector of the Solomon Islands. During the meeting, the importance of continued investment in capacity building was highlighted, with a focus on creating opportunities for SINU students to participate in internships through OFCF's programs. This initiative will provide valuable, hands-on experience for SINU students in international fisheries cooperation, fisheries management, and sustainable resource governance.

In addition to reflecting on the past successes of the partnership, the meeting also revisited the legacy of the Japan Promotion Fund (JPF) at the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), a groundbreaking initiative that continues to shape regional fisheries cooperation. Professor Aqorau, who played an instrumental role in establishing the fund, shared insights into the fund's role in providing a stable financial mechanism to support Pacific fisheries development. The Japan Promotion Fund was established in 2008 as a collaboration between the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and Japan's Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation (OFCF). The fund was designed as a unique financial mechanism, where Japan purchased ¥8.3 billion (approximately USD \$80 million) in Japanese government bonds, with the interest earned annually used to fund regional fisheries projects. This innovative approach has provided a consistent and long-term financial source of approximately USD \$1 million per year for Pacific fisheries cooperation.

The Japan Promotion Fund has supported numerous high-impact projects across the Pacific, including maritime boundary delimitation, fisheries observer training, fisheries data and research, and the development of fisheries officers.

Additionally, it has facilitated technology and knowledge sharing, public outreach, and investment facilitation for sustainable fisheries.

### Key Achievements of the Japan Promotion Fund:

- **Maritime Boundary Delimitation Support:** Assisting Pacific nations in finalizing their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) boundaries to reduce territorial disputes.
  - **Fisheries Observer Training & Capacity Building:** Supporting the Pacific Islands Regional Fisheries Observer Programme (PIRFO) to monitor tuna fishing vessels and collect scientific data.
  - **Fisheries Data and Research:** Funding economic studies, stock assessments, and improvements in monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) systems.
  - **Training for Fisheries Officers:** Running workshops to improve licensing, monitoring, and compliance capabilities across the region.
  - **Technology & Knowledge Sharing:** Developing the FFA Training Portal to provide fisheries officers with access to training materials and research.
  - **Public Outreach & Investment Facilitation:** Attracting investment in sustainable fisheries and supporting infrastructure projects like fish markets.
- As SINU continues to strengthen its role as a center of excellence in fisheries and marine studies, partnerships like those with OFCF present invaluable opportunities for students, researchers, and the broader fisheries sector in Solomon Islands. The discussions emphasized the importance of developing internship programs that will allow SINU students to gain practical experience in fisheries management and sustainability practices.
- Through continued collaboration with OFCF, FFA, and international fisheries organizations, SINU aims to provide cutting-edge research, training, and policy engagement for the future leaders of the fisheries sector in the Pacific.
- Professor Aqorau expressed his gratitude and joy in welcoming the OFCF team, recognizing their visit as a reminder of the importance of long-term partnerships and investments in sustainable fisheries. The Japan Promotion Fund stands as a symbol of innovation, cooperation, and commitment to the future of Pacific fisheries. It is the hope of SINU that these efforts will continue to strengthen the university's role in fisheries education, research, and regional collaboration.

# SINU Strengthens Public-Private Partnerships to Drive Innovation in Mariculture and Agriculture



SINU team meets with Isabel Premier and JQY

Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is forging new pathways in mariculture and agriculture through strategic public-private partnerships. A high-level meeting between Professor Transform Aqorau, Vice Chancellor of SINU, the Premier of Isabel Province, Hon. Laurence Kile, and representatives from JQY has laid the groundwork for an innovative collaboration that will leverage international expertise to boost economic development in the Solomon Islands.

The discussions centered on a forward-thinking private-public partnership (PPP) model to enhance mariculture and agriculture, with a specific focus on beche-de-mer farming.

A key component of this initiative is the involvement of the Oceans University of China, which brings extensive research expertise and technical know-how in sustainable marine farming and aquaculture.

This collaboration is expected to drive knowledge exchange, capacity building, and local employment while ensuring environmentally responsible industry growth.

Speaking on the importance of public-private partnerships, Professor Transform Aqorau stated:

"The only way forward for Solomon Islands to realise its full economic potential is through robust public-private partnerships. By harnessing the resources and expertise of both the public and private sectors, we can drive sustainable economic growth, create jobs, and empower our people with new skills.

This partnership in mariculture and agriculture will not only improve food security but also open up new export opportunities for our country."

The Premier of Isabel Province, Hon. Laurence Kile, welcomed the initiative and emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts in developing provincial economies. He reiterated his government's commitment to fostering investment opportunities that align with provincial development goals.

JQY, a key private sector player, expressed confidence in the collaboration and reaffirmed its support in mobilizing resources and technical assistance to advance the initiative.

The proposed partnership aligns with SINU's broader vision of positioning itself as a driver of innovation and sustainable economic development in the Solomon Islands.

Through collaboration with leading international institutions such as the Oceans University of China, SINU continues to champion research-led solutions that address critical industry challenges while uplifting local communities.

This meeting marks the beginning of a transformative journey, setting the stage for a dynamic partnership that will contribute meaningfully to the economic resilience of Solomon Islands.

# SINU Vice-Chancellor Meets Canadian Diplomats to Discuss Regional Collaboration

The Vice-Chancellor of Solomon Islands National University (SINU), Professor Transform Aqorau, held a productive meeting with senior officials from the Government of Canada to discuss Canada's renewed engagement in the Pacific and the role of SINU in national and regional development.

The Canadian delegation comprised Mr Alan Bowman, Director-General, Southeast Asia and Oceania Bureau of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa; Mr David Fournier, Counsellor and Head of Cooperation for the Pacific Islands, based in Fiji; and Ms Alexandra Croyle, Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Service Officer - Pacific Manager for the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, based in Canberra.

During the discussions, the parties explored Canada's growing interest in the Pacific Islands, particularly in areas such as climate change adaptation, ocean governance, economic development, and strengthening regional institutions.

Canada has been an active partner in the Pacific, supporting initiatives through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives and engaging with Pacific Island countries to promote resilience, economic sustainability, and governance reforms.

Professor Aqorau highlighted SINU's critical role in national and regional development, particularly in fostering research, capacity building, and providing education and training that are tailored to the development needs of the Solomon Islands and the wider Pacific region.

He welcomed Canada's interest in deepening its engagement in the Pacific, noting the strong historical and educational ties between Canada and the region.

"As an alumnus of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, I have always valued Canada's contributions to global education and international collaboration.

Canada's renewed engagement in the Pacific is timely and deeply appreciated, as our region faces complex challenges that require strong and enduring partnerships.

SINU looks forward to working with Canada to advance shared priorities in education, research, and sustainable development," said Professor Aqorau.

The meeting reaffirmed the mutual interest in exploring future collaboration, including potential partnerships between SINU and Canadian academic and research institutions, as well as Canada's continued support for Pacific initiatives.



SINU VC Prof Transform Aqorau with Canadian Diplomats



## SINU Hosts Design Workshop to Advance Fish Innovation and Aquatic Food Safety in the Pacific

The Solomon Islands National University (SINU), in collaboration with WorldFish, the University of Wollongong (UOW), the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), and The Pacific Community (SPC), is hosting a three-day Design Workshop for Fish Innovation 2 from March 4 to 6, 2025.

This event aims to advance national fish innovation programs focused on improving aquatic food safety and sustainability within the Pacific Blue Economy.

The workshop serves as a crucial platform for stakeholders to refine current work packages and research questions outlined in the preliminary project proposal. Key objectives include:

- Reviewing the existing research framework and refining project work packages.
- Identifying necessary activities and defining their scope within the ACIAR proposal template.
- Assigning lead agencies and individuals to specific activities while assessing available resources from key partners, including UOW, WorldFish, SPC, MFMR, and SINU.
- Establishing a roadmap for the next steps, including full proposal submission and contracting.

The Fish Innovation Project Phase 1 will end this year, and planning for Phase 2 is ongoing, with SINU as part of the initiative.

As part of the project, Mr Collin Gereniu, Ms Madeline Solo and Mr Luke Jino from SINU have developed a standardized fish handling module tailored for the Solomon Islands.

This module, presented in a newly created training booklet, provides comprehensive guidelines on best practices for fish handling, ensuring food safety and quality.

A key focus of Phase 2 is the implementation of a Training of Trainers (TOT) program, which will be rolled out over the next five years.

This initiative will equip local trainers with the necessary knowledge and skills to promote safe fish handling-practices nationwide.

Speaking on behalf of SINU, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (FAFF), Dr Vaeno Vigulu, emphasized the importance of this collaborative effort in advancing fish innovation in the Pacific region.

“Today is your day, and this week is your week to discuss, share, and deliberate on Fish Innovation. This workshop is an opportunity to collectively enhance our strategies for sustainable fisheries and aquatic food safety.

The work we do here will have a lasting impact on our communities and the Pacific Blue Economy.”

SINU remains committed to strengthening research and innovation in the fisheries sector and looks forward to contributing valuable insights and expertise to the Fish Innovation 2 project.



**Workshop facilitators and participants**

# Staff Profile

**Name:** Grace Leziton

**Province:** Isabel

**Age:** 51

**Work station:** Kukum Campus

**Department:** Finance

**Job title:** Principal Management Accountant

**Qualification:** Master of Commerce in Accounting.

**How long have you been working here?** 2 years & 9 months.

### Tell us about your job:

I am responsible for the management of all costs and the preparation of management reports.

That is, I ensure that all spending is within the budget allocation for the certain period to avoid overspending which will result in halting of some activities of each cost center.

Also, I provide management reports for decision making in terms of operations and also provide budget advisory to all costs centers in regard to their budget preparation and implementation on monthly basis and also as and when needed.

I assist the Director Finance in approval, authorization and initiation of payments of the University and any responsibilities delegated to me by my supervisor.

I also manage and lead a team of 8 staff under the management, IT – Attache and Asset teams.



### What do you like about SINU and your job?

These are some of the reasons why I like the University and my job.

-The University has provided the working environment I preferred to work with in terms of collaboration, openness, and continuous professional development.


In regard to my job, I like it because it builds up my capabilities in the field of accounting and also, I am with a team that manages the finances of the University, and I see it as a huge opportunity.

## About us:

Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is the Prime and ONLY National University of Solomon Islands. Founded in 2013, SINU is striving to be one of the Best Education and Research Institute in the Region. Our VISION: “A quality National University, raising Standards of education and applied research in the Pacific Region.”

Our Mission: “Championing the pursuit of knowledge, skills, academic inquiry and applied research to transform lives through higher education and training, inclusive of diverse communities, while providing relevant solutions for the Solomon Islands.



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