



REPORT ON SINU TEAM VISIT TO AUKI, MALAITA PROVINCE

Date: 16th August 2024

Prepared by:
IPD/PROM/DFL/SAS Team

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| IPD Officers | 1. Darius D.Ramo/ Director |
| | 2. Cypriano Nuake/Principal Planning Officer |
| PROM&MKT Officers | 3. Wilson Biriau Saeni/Asst Public Relation Officer |
| DFL Officer | 4. Priscilla Ragu/ Media Officer |
| SAS Officer | 5. Salexson Tosi/Asst Student Officer |

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Greatly appreciate the officer's dedication and hard work in supporting the development and promotion of SINU's educational programs.

Introduction

This report outlines the key objectives and activities undertaken by the SINU team which visited Auki, Malaita Province from 12th to 15th August 2024. The SINU team consisted of 6 officers from Institutional Planning & Development (IPD), Promotion & Marketing (PRO&KT), Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) and Student Academic Services (SAS).

The visit was purposely to engage in discussions and clarify the revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus project with critical stakeholders, including the Premier and Provincial Secretary of the Malaita Provincial Government (MPG), the Malaita Education Provider, and the Alligegeo PSS Administration. The goal of these negotiations is to secure the approval of the MoU and to formalize the agreement during the Malaita 2nd Appoint Day celebration on August 15th 2024. As part of the negotiations for the MoU discussions, the IPD advance team has facilitated courtesy and site visits and meeting key stakeholders related to the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus project to strengthen relationships and ensure smooth collaboration for formal signing of the MoU.

Another significant goal along this initiative is the promotion of SINU's educational programs. By enhancing local awareness and fostering stronger connections with the community, the team aims to encourage enrollment in SINU's programs, which align with the educational and professional aspirations of the Malaita region. This report provides a detailed overview of these activities and their expected impact on the successful implementation of the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus project.

Objectives of visit

The primary objectives of the visit included;

- i. The IPD advance team is to negotiate and clarify the revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus with key stakeholders, including the Premier of the Malaita Provincial Government (MPG), the Provincial Secretary of MPG, the Malaita Education Provider Chief Education officer, and the Alligegeo PSS Principal and Administration. The key objective is to secure the Malaita Provincial Government's approval of the MoU, getting understanding of the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus Project operational officers such as Malaita Education Provider and the Alligegeo PSS Principal and facilitate the potential signing of the document during the Malaita 2nd Appoint Day celebration.
- ii. IPD advance team to facilitate courtesy visits and conduct project site visit to strengthen relationships and ensure smooth collaboration.
- iii. The PROM/DFL/SAS to engage in promotion of SINU courses during the Malaita 2nd Appointed Day Mini Show week in Auki, Malaita Province. The aim is to enhance awareness of SINU's educational opportunities, foster stronger connections with the local populace, and encourage enrollment in programs that align with the community's educational and professional aspirations.

Detailed Activities Per Day Report (12th – 16th August)

Monday, 12th August

Upon arrival in Auki, the SINU-IPD/PROM/DFL/SAS team promptly set up an engaging and informative booth to showcase the diverse range of programs offered by the university. The booth was prepared to feature detail information about SINU's academic offerings, including undergraduate and postgraduate courses, vocational training, and research opportunities.



Additionally, at 4:00 pm, the IPD team met with the Premier and Provincial Secretary of Malaita Provincial Government. During the meeting, IPD team clarify the revised MoU for the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus to the Premier and the Provincial Secretary of Malaita Provincial Government. IPD team explained that the revised draft outlines in detail the roles of each stakeholder in the project, aiming to provide a comprehensive framework for collaboration. The Premier stated that the his executive already approved the first draft MoU and further expressed that his government will adopt this second revised draft MoU and get it sign during the Malaita 2nd Appoint Day official program. Provincial Secretary further expressed strong support to the initiative and stated that this initiative and the MoU was already discussed by the Executive and was approved. He confirmed that the MoU would be signed on Thursday, 15th August, during the Malaita Second Appointed Day official ceremony.



Tuesday, 13th August

The SINU PROMOTION Team started the promotional campaign at the booth in the Auki mini show ground. Interactive elements such as brochures, application forms and representatives available for one-on-one consultations were provided to answer questions and offer personalized guidance to prospective students and the local community. The booth attracted significant attention from students and the public, who inquired about SINU courses, application procedures, graduation requirements, and



fees. The team also engaged visitors with quizzes, awarding T-shirts for correct answers.

At 11:00 AM, the SINU IPD Team met with Mr. Andy Siarani, Chief Education Officer of the Malaita Education Authority. The team briefed him on the SINU proposal and the revised MoU. Mr. Siarani acknowledged the importance of the project for Malaita, especially in bringing tertiary education closer to the people.



At 4:00 PM, the SINU IPD team met with the Principal of Alligegeo Secondary School to inform him about the MoU developed and approved by the Malaita Provincial Assembly. The Principal was pleased with the collaborative effort between SINU and the Malaita Provincial Government. He inquired about the benefits the new campus would bring to Alligegeo. The SINU IPD team outlined several benefits, including advanced training for teachers and students, opportunities for Form 6 students to receive preparatory training, and various developmental benefits. The Principal was pleased about the approached SINU has undertaken to consult with the school administration prior to implementation of such project.



IPD Team with Alligegeo PSS Principal alongside the proposed campus site

Wednesday, 14th August

The SINU team continued the promotion of SINU courses at the mini show ground. The continuation of SINU course promotion is a strategic effort aimed at expanding awareness and accessibility of the university's diverse academic offerings. This ongoing initiative involves various activities designed to showcase the range of programs available at SINU, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, vocational training, and professional development courses.



At 10:30am, a significant visit took place involving the SINU Vice Chancellor, Andy Siarani, Chief Education Officer for Malaita Education Provider, Principal Education Officer for C and key officials from the SINU team. The group arrived at Alligegeo Provincial Secondary School (PSS) for an important engagement. The primary agenda of this visit was to meet with the school's Principal to discuss potential educational initiatives on the SINU 4th Campus and explore collaborative opportunities. The recent meeting and site



visit involving the SINU Vice Chancellor, Malaita Education Provider representatives, and SINU officials focused on the potential establishment of a new educational campus in Malaita Province. Discussions highlighted the alignment of the proposed initiative with local educational goals and assessed the proposed site's infrastructure, accessibility, and community impact. Both the Principal of Alligegeo PSS and the Chief Education Officer expressed strong support for the new campus, reflecting a positive reception and collaborative effort to enhance higher education and educational resources in the region. *(For detail infor, please refer to VC's Report in the Appendix)*

Thursday, 15th August

The SINU team attended the Malaita 2nd Appointed Day official program which started at 7am to 1pm at Auki Primary School ground. This program was officiated by the Prime Minister Hon. Jeremiah Manele as Quest of Honour. It was also attended by some Members of government, Members of Opposition and Independent, Diplomatic Corps, Members of Malaita Provincial Assembly, NGOs, Church Reps, Chiefs and the people of Malaita.

During the Official program, the Vice Chancellor Prof. Transform Aqorau and Premier of Malaita Provincial Government formally signed the MoU for the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus and witnessed by Malaita government Provincial Secretary and SINU Director for Institutional Planning & Development. The signing ceremony is a successful milestone which the people of Malaita gathered to witness the event.



(For detail infor, please refer to VC's Report in the Appendix)

Friday, 16th August

The SINU team made our way back to Honiara, aboard the Auki Express. The team's return marked the conclusion of the assignment, reflecting a successful completion of the activities conducted in Auki, Malaita Province.

Lessons Learned

1. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Early and continuous engagement with key stakeholders is crucial for gaining support and ensuring alignment with project goals.
2. **Public Outreach:** Effective public engagement through promotions and interactive activities can significantly enhance awareness and interest in educational programs.
3. **Local Collaboration:** Collaboration with local government, education authorities and schools helps to address concerns and build strong partnerships.
4. **Timely Information Sharing:** Effective communication requires timely updates and clear information sharing. During the visit, promptly informing stakeholders about the revised MoU and project details helped secure their support and align their expectations.
5. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implementing mechanisms to gather and address feedback from stakeholders, such as the Principal of Alligegeo and the Chief Education Officer, is crucial. This approach ensures that concerns are addressed and that all parties feel heard and valued.
6. **Efficient Setup and Operations:** Proper planning for logistical aspects, such as setting up the booth and coordinating site visits, is vital for smooth execution. Ensuring that all materials and resources are in place beforehand minimizes disruptions and maximizes effectiveness.
7. **Contingency Planning:** Having contingency plans in place for potential logistical challenges, such as travel delays or unforeseen issues with the booth setup, can help mitigate disruptions and maintain project momentum.
8. **Leadership**
 - **Strategic Vision:** Demonstrating clear leadership by articulating a strategic vision for the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus project was crucial. This vision guided the team's actions and helped in gaining the support of local officials and stakeholders.
 - **Delegation and Team Coordination:** Effective delegation of tasks and coordination within the team ensured that all activities, from promotions to meetings, were executed efficiently. Strong leadership involves not only guiding the team but also empowering them to take ownership of their respective roles.
 - **Building Relationships:** Leadership in this context involved building and nurturing relationships with key stakeholders, including the Premier, Provincial Secretary, and local education officials. Positive relationships fostered cooperation and facilitated the successful signing of the MoU.

Recommendations

- i. Improving public outreach is essential for raising awareness and generating interest in educational programs. Future promotional efforts should not only through social media and local media partnerships, but also more of community events and promotional campaigns. Interactive and hands-on activities should be included in promotional events to engage the public more effectively. By utilizing various promotional tools and creating engaging experiences, SINU can enhance its visibility and attract a broader audience.
- ii. Key stakeholders such as the Alligegeo PSS school administration, Malaita Education Provider Rep and Malaita Provincial Government Rep to be included in the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus Project 2024 steering

Way Forward

- i. **Project Implementation:** “[See Appendix on VC’s Proposed Roadmap of the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus project](#)”.
- ii. **Regular Updates:** Provide regular updates to all stakeholders on the progress of the campus development and any significant milestones.

Conclusions

The visit to Auki in Malaita Province was successful in advancing the SINU Alligegeo 4th Campus project and promotion of SINU Courses on multiple fronts.

Firstly, it made significant progress in the development and planning of the campus, setting the stage for its future construction and operational phases.

Secondly, the promotion of SINU courses to students and the public was effectively carried out, enhancing awareness and interest in the university's academic offerings and educational opportunities.

Additionally, the visit played a crucial role in fostering and strengthening positive relationships with local authorities, facilitating smoother collaboration and support for the project. Moreover, the outreach efforts successfully garnered public support for the initiative, building a sense of community investment and enthusiasm around the campus development. Overall, the visit was instrumental in laying a solid foundation for the project's continued advancement and integration into the local community.

Appendix

Vice Chancellor's Report of Auki Trip



Office of the Vice-Chancellor PO Box R113
Kukum Campus, Honirara, Solomon Islands

Building Bridges to the Future: Advancing Education and Conservation in Malaita – A Trip Report on the Development of the SINU 4th Campus and Strategic Partnerships" 14th - 16th August 2024

Introduction

The trip to Auki, Malaita Province, from 14th to 16th August 2024 was a momentous occasion marked by significant milestones in the development of the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) and the broader educational landscape of the Solomon Islands. The central highlight of the trip was the signing of the Agreement for the establishment of SINU's 4th Campus at Aligegeo, a transformative initiative that stands to reshape the future of higher education in Malaita. Additionally, the visit provided an opportunity to engage in strategic discussions with educational leaders and to launch the Baru Conservation Alliance's three-year project, supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in partnership with James Cook University.

Signing of the Agreement for the 4th SINU Campus at Aligegeo

On 15th August 2024, a historic Agreement was signed between SINU, the Malaita Provincial Government (MPG), and the Solomon Islands National Government to establish the 4th SINU Campus at Aligegeo. This event was not merely a ceremonial signing; it was a pivotal moment that marked the beginning of a new chapter in Malaita's educational and socio-economic development. The involvement of the National Government in this initiative signifies a profound commitment to addressing the educational disparities that have long existed between the provinces and the capital, Honiara. By endorsing and actively supporting the establishment of the Aligegeo Campus, the National Government is not only recognising the strategic importance of Malaita in the national landscape but also affirming its role in fostering equitable development across the Solomon Islands.

In my address during the signing ceremony, I underscored the significance of this development as a beacon of hope, opportunity, and progress for the youth of Malaita and beyond. The new campus is set to be more than just an educational institution; it will be a hub for innovation, a cradle of culture, and a catalyst for regional economic development. As highlighted in the Agreement, the Aligegeo Campus will include a dedicated Agriculture Centre, positioning Malaita as a leader in agricultural education and research within the Solomon Islands. The support from the National Government, particularly in securing funding and facilitating partnerships with international donors, underscores the government's recognition of the vital role education plays in national development. This initiative is expected to stimulate local economies, create jobs, and foster a culture of learning and innovation that will reverberate throughout the province and the nation.

The Agreement outlines clear objectives for the Aligegeo Campus, including the promotion of agricultural education, enhancement of educational opportunities, and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure the sustainability and success of the campus. The National Government's backing is crucial in achieving these objectives, as it brings the weight of national policy and financial support to the project. This partnership between SINU, MPG, and the National Government highlights a shared vision for the future of Malaita—a vision where education is accessible, equitable, and transformative. The establishment of this campus is not just an investment in infrastructure but an investment in the future of Malaita, ensuring that the province's youth have access to quality education and opportunities for growth without the need to relocate to Honiara. This development is expected to bridge the gap between Malaita and other parts of the Solomon Islands, fostering a more balanced and inclusive approach to national development.

Visit to Aligegeo High School and Strategic Educational Discussions

During our visit to Auki, we took the opportunity to visit Aligegeo High School, where we engaged in deep and meaningful discussions with the school's Principal. The visit to Aligegeo High School was particularly significant as it provided us with firsthand insights into the educational environment that will be closely linked with the upcoming SINU campus. Our discussions were focused on the strategic integration of the new campus with the existing educational structures in Malaita. This integration is essential for creating a seamless educational pathway for students transitioning from secondary education to higher education within the province. By aligning the resources, curricula, and teaching methodologies of Aligegeo High School with those of the new SINU campus, we can ensure a consistent and supportive learning experience for students. This approach not only enhances the quality of education but also ensures that the new campus builds on the strengths of existing institutions, creating a cohesive educational ecosystem in Malaita.

A key focus of our discussions was the shift from a content-based teaching approach to one that prioritises pedagogy. This pedagogical shift is critical for improving the quality of teacher training, ensuring that educators are not merely conveyors of knowledge but also facilitators of learning. By placing greater emphasis on pedagogy, we aim to equip teachers with the skills and tools necessary to foster critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning among students. This approach is particularly important in a rapidly changing world where the ability to adapt, innovate, and think critically is becoming increasingly valuable.

The discussions highlighted the need for continuous professional development for teachers, ensuring they are well-prepared to implement these pedagogical strategies effectively. This shift towards a more pedagogically focused approach will not only benefit the students of Aligegeo High School but also set a new standard for teacher training across the province, ultimately raising the overall quality of education in Malaita.

We explored the immediate possibilities of incorporating SINU's Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) programmes and University Preparatory College Programmes as part of the initial offerings at the new Aligegeo campus. These programmes represent an excellent opportunity to deliver educational services without waiting for the full physical development of the campus to be completed. By leveraging SINU's existing DFL infrastructure, we can provide students in Malaita with access to a variety of courses and academic resources right from the outset. This approach not only addresses the immediate educational needs of the community but also demonstrates SINU's commitment to making education accessible and adaptable to the needs of students, regardless of geographical barriers. The University Preparatory College Programmes, in particular, will help bridge the gap for students transitioning from secondary

education to university-level studies, ensuring they are well-prepared for the rigours of higher education.

These discussions were closely aligned with SINU's broader vision of transforming the educational landscape in the Solomon Islands through innovative and contextually relevant approaches. By incorporating DFL and University Preparatory Programmes into the Aligegeo campus, we are taking a proactive step towards realising this vision. This strategy not only capitalises on the existing strengths of SINU but also ensures that the new campus becomes a hub for modern, flexible education that meets the diverse needs of students in Malaita.

Moreover, this initiative underscores the importance of adaptability in education, particularly in regions where infrastructure development may take time. By offering immediate educational opportunities, we are setting the foundation for a dynamic and responsive learning environment that will continue to grow and evolve as the campus develops. This forward-thinking approach will ultimately contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of the Aligegeo campus, positioning it as a model for educational innovation in the Solomon Islands.

Launch of the Baru Conservation Alliance 3-Year Project

On 14th August 2024, the Baru Conservation Alliance proudly launched its three-year project titled “Community Led Development Climate Resilience and Conservation in East Malaita.”

This significant initiative, which is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and James Cook University, marks a critical step in addressing climate resilience and promoting sustainable development within the Kwaio communities of East Malaita. The launch event took place at the Baru Base in Auki, a central hub for the alliance's activities, and brought together local leaders, community members, and international partners to celebrate this new phase of collaborative efforts aimed at preserving the environment and enhancing the well-being of the people of Malaita.

The Baru Conservation Alliance is a coalition of tribal groups from the Kwaio region in Malaita Province, formed with the mission of protecting the unique ecosystems of Malaita and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Kwaio people. Established in 2019 and legally registered under the Solomon Islands Trust Act, Baru has grown into a pivotal organisation that coordinates conservation efforts in partnership with local tribal leaders and international organisations. The alliance's work is deeply rooted in the principles of *figunga te'efou*, or togetherness, which emphasises collective action for the development and resilience of the Kwaio communities. Through its various initiatives, Baru seeks to integrate traditional knowledge with modern conservation practices, ensuring that the Kwaio people are at the forefront of efforts to safeguard their natural and cultural resources.

The newly launched project, "Community Led Development Climate Resilience and Conservation in East Malaita," is a continuation of Baru's successful efforts to blend indigenous knowledge with contemporary environmental strategies. Over the past years, Baru has made significant strides in promoting sustainable land use, enhancing food security, and fostering climate resilience within the Kwaio communities. These achievements were prominently showcased during the launch event, where participants were able to witness the tangible impacts of Baru's work. The project will focus on co-developing climate information resources tailored to the needs of the Kwaio people, facilitating the use of traditional methods in responding to climate-related challenges, and empowering local communities to take an active role in conservation efforts.

The support from DFAT and James Cook University has been instrumental in advancing Baru's mission. Through these partnerships, Baru has been able to access the expertise and resources necessary to implement large-scale initiatives that have a lasting impact on the communities they serve. The collaboration with James Cook University, in particular, has enabled Baru to incorporate scientific research into its projects, ensuring that the strategies employed are both culturally appropriate and scientifically sound. The launch of the three-year project is a testament to the strength of these partnerships and the shared commitment to building a resilient and sustainable future for the Kwaio people.

As the project unfolds, it will continue to build on the foundation of success that Baru has established. The alliance's holistic approach, which integrates environmental conservation with community development and cultural preservation, sets a powerful example of how local and international collaborations can drive meaningful change. The launch event not only highlighted the achievements of the past but also set the stage for the future, where Baru's efforts will undoubtedly continue to make a significant difference in the lives of the Kwaio people and the broader Malaita community.

The Baru Conservation Alliance has played a pivotal role in promoting climate resilience, food security, and the preservation of traditional knowledge within the Kwaio community of Malaita. Through its initiatives, the alliance has successfully co-developed climate information resources that merge the deep-rooted wisdom of the Kwaio people with contemporary climate science. This integrative approach ensures that the community is not only better prepared for the

immediate impacts of climate change but also equipped to adapt to future environmental challenges. By grounding modern scientific understanding in the cultural context of the Kwaio, Baru has fostered a model of resilience that is both sustainable and respectful of the community's heritage.

One of the key achievements of the Baru Conservation Alliance has been its work in enhancing food security through the production of flour from locally sourced crops. In the remote areas of Kwaio, where access to external food supplies can be limited, this initiative has proven to be transformative. By facilitating the use of manual grinders and traditional food processing techniques, Baru has empowered communities to make the most of their local resources. This not only improves food security but also reinforces the value of indigenous knowledge and practices in sustaining livelihoods. The flour production project is a testament to how traditional methods can be revitalised to meet contemporary needs, providing both nutritional and economic benefits to the Kwaio people.

The establishment of the Centre for Islands Futures at SINU presents a unique opportunity to deepen the collaboration between SINU and the Baru Conservation Alliance. The Centre, envisioned as a hub for interdisciplinary research and education, can work closely with Baru to incorporate the rich traditional knowledge of the Kwaio people into its curriculum and research projects. By partnering with Baru, the Centre for Islands Futures can ensure that the lessons learned from the Kwaio community's approach to climate resilience and food security are shared with students and researchers at SINU. This collaboration could involve joint research projects, student internships, and community engagement initiatives that allow SINU students to learn directly from the people of Kwaio. This engagement would not only enrich the students' understanding of environmental and cultural sustainability but also provide valuable insights into how traditional knowledge can complement and enhance modern scientific approaches.

Through this partnership, SINU could play an active role in documenting, preserving, and disseminating the traditional knowledge that has been so effectively harnessed by the Baru Conservation Alliance. By incorporating these insights into its academic programmes, SINU could develop courses that teach students about the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge with scientific research, particularly in the context of climate change adaptation and sustainable development. The Centre for Islands Futures could also serve as a platform for showcasing the successful strategies employed by the Kwaio people, offering a model that could be adapted and applied in other parts of the Solomon Islands and the wider Pacific region.

Moreover, SINU's involvement in this partnership would help to bridge the gap between academia and community-led initiatives, creating a symbiotic relationship where both parties benefit. The university could offer technical support and access to broader networks, while learning from the practical experiences and traditional knowledge of the Kwaio people. This collaboration could also lead to the development of new educational programmes at SINU that are informed by the real-world challenges and solutions encountered by the Kwaio community. By embedding these lessons into the fabric of its academic offerings, SINU would not only enhance its relevance and impact but also contribute to the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage that is so vital to the identity and resilience of the Solomon Islands.

Roadmap for the Development of the SINU 4th Campus

In light of the discussions and agreements reached during this visit, a comprehensive roadmap has been proposed for the development of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo. This roadmap outlines the critical steps required to ensure the successful establishment of the campus, with a clear focus on strategic planning, sustainable development, and timely execution. Each step in the roadmap has been carefully designed to address both immediate needs and long-term goals, ensuring that the campus will not only meet the educational demands of the present but also serve as a lasting beacon of progress for future generations.

Land Surveying: The first and most critical step in the development of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo is a thorough land survey. This survey will be conducted to accurately define the boundaries of the designated land, assess its topography, and identify the most suitable areas for construction. The land survey will also involve detailed geological studies to determine the stability of the soil and identify any potential challenges that could affect the construction process. Moreover, the survey will address any land tenure issues, ensuring that the land is free from disputes and legally secure for development. This step is foundational, as it lays the groundwork for all subsequent phases of the project, and is essential to prevent any future legal or logistical complications.

Structural Groundwork: Once the land survey is completed and the site is cleared for development, the next phase involves initiating structural groundwork. This phase is crucial for preparing the land for construction and involves several key activities. These include site preparation, which involves clearing vegetation, levelling the ground, and addressing any drainage issues to prevent flooding. The laying of foundations will follow, ensuring that the buildings and facilities to be constructed will have a stable and durable base. In addition, access roads will be established to connect the campus to nearby communities and infrastructure, facilitating the transportation of materials and access for construction workers. This phase will be meticulously planned and executed to ensure that the campus is built on a solid and sustainable foundation, capable of supporting the long-term growth and development of the institution.

Water Supply: Securing a reliable water supply is essential for the successful operation of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo. This phase of the project will involve conducting hydrogeological surveys to identify suitable locations for drilling boreholes or tapping into existing water sources. The goal is to ensure a consistent and adequate supply of clean water to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff, as well as to support the various facilities and operations of the campus. In addition to identifying water sources, this phase will also involve the design and installation of a water distribution system that ensures efficient and sustainable water use across the campus. Given the importance of water security, this step will be prioritized to ensure that all other aspects of campus development can proceed without interruption.

Comprehensive Project Document: A critical component in the successful development of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo is the creation of a comprehensive project document. This document will serve as a detailed and meticulously crafted blueprint that outlines every aspect of the campus's development. It will include architectural designs that reflect both the functional needs of the campus and the cultural heritage of the region. These designs will be developed in consultation with architects, engineers, and local stakeholders to ensure that they meet the highest standards of sustainability and relevance. The project document will also detail the construction phases, breaking down the project into manageable stages with clearly defined tasks and timelines. Each phase will be carefully planned to ensure that the construction proceeds efficiently and that each completed phase builds upon the previous one. In addition, the document will outline the resource requirements for each phase, including materials, labour, and financial resources. This will enable the project team to anticipate needs and secure the necessary resources in a timely manner. The project document will also include timelines, which will serve as a roadmap for the project's progress and allow for the monitoring of milestones and deadlines. Furthermore, this document will be an essential tool for securing additional funding from donors and partners, as it will provide a clear and comprehensive vision of the project's goals, strategies, and needs. It will demonstrate the feasibility and sustainability of the project, making it more attractive to potential investors and collaborators.

Campus Construction: The construction of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo will be a pivotal phase in the project, translating the vision outlined in the project document into a tangible reality. This phase will be guided by principles of sustainability, cultural relevance, and environmental respect, ensuring that the campus not only serves its educational purposes but also harmonises with the natural and cultural landscape of Malaita. The architectural design will blend modern functionality with elements that reflect the local environment and cultural heritage, creating a campus that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Sustainable construction practices will be employed, including the use of eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient systems, and designs that minimise environmental impact. These practices will be integrated into every aspect of the construction process, from the selection of materials to the design of water and energy systems. Additionally, the construction will be carried out in close consultation with local communities to ensure that the campus meets their needs and respects their cultural values. This approach will not only create a campus that is a source of pride for the community but also set a benchmark for sustainable development in the Solomon Islands.

Operational Planning: The final phase of the project is the operational planning, which is crucial for ensuring that the campus is fully prepared to begin serving the educational needs of Malaita. This phase will involve the recruitment of qualified academic and administrative staff, who will be responsible for delivering high-quality education and managing the day-to-day operations of the campus. A comprehensive recruitment strategy will be developed to attract top talent from both within the Solomon Islands and internationally, ensuring that the campus is staffed by individuals who are not only experts in their fields but also committed to the mission of SINU. In addition to recruitment, this phase will involve the enrolment of students, which will be supported by outreach and marketing campaigns aimed at raising awareness of the new campus and its programmes. These campaigns will target potential students in Malaita and across the Solomon Islands, highlighting the unique opportunities offered by the Aligegeo Campus. The establishment of academic programmes will also be a key focus of this phase. These programmes will be designed to meet the specific needs of the region, with a particular emphasis on agriculture, environmental science, and vocational training. The development of these programmes will involve collaboration with industry

partners, government agencies, and community leaders to ensure that they are relevant, innovative, and aligned with the needs of the local economy. By the end of this phase, the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo will be fully operational, with a complete staff, a diverse student body, and a robust academic offering that positions it as a leading institution for higher education in the Solomon Islands.

The roadmap for the development of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo will be brought to life through a meticulously crafted work plan that serves as a strategic guide for the entire project. This work plan will break down the development process into specific tasks, assign clear responsibilities, and set out timelines for each phase of the project. The aim is to ensure that every step of the development is executed in a coordinated and systematic manner, with built-in mechanisms for monitoring progress and making adjustments as needed. By setting clear milestones and performance indicators, the work plan will provide a structured pathway towards the successful completion of the campus, ensuring that the project stays on track and achieves its goals.

Planning and Coordination: Central to the successful implementation of the work plan is the establishment of a Project Management Team, which will have overarching responsibility for overseeing the entire development process. This team will be composed of representatives from SINU, the Malaita Provincial Government, and other key stakeholders, including architects, engineers, environmental consultants, and community leaders. The Project Management Team will serve as the nerve centre of the project, ensuring that all activities are aligned with the project's strategic objectives and timelines. Regular coordination meetings

will be an integral part of this process, providing a platform for the team to review progress, address any challenges that arise, and make any necessary adjustments to the work plan. These meetings will also facilitate communication and collaboration among all stakeholders, ensuring that everyone is working towards the same goals and that the project benefits from a diverse range of expertise and perspectives.

Resource Mobilization: The success of the SINU 4th Campus development will heavily depend on the availability and effective management of financial, human, and material resources. The work plan will include a comprehensive budget that outlines the costs associated with each phase of the project, from land surveying and site preparation to construction and operational planning. Securing sufficient funding will be a critical task for the Project Management Team, which will work closely with the National Government, international donors, and potential private sector partners to secure the necessary financial resources. This will involve leveraging existing relationships and building new ones to attract investment and support for the project. Once funding is secured, the Project Management Team will be responsible for managing the disbursement of funds, ensuring financial transparency, and maintaining accountability to all stakeholders. This careful management of resources will be essential for keeping the project on schedule and within budget.

Timeline and Milestones: A clear timeline will be established for each phase of the development, with specific milestones that must be achieved within designated timeframes. For example, the land surveying phase, which is foundational to the entire project, will be expected to be completed within three months. The results of the survey will then inform the structural groundwork phase, which will include site preparation and the laying of foundations, to be completed within the next six months. The drilling of boreholes and the installation of the water supply system will be scheduled to ensure that water is available before the main construction activities commence. Each of these milestones will be closely monitored by the Project Management Team to ensure that the project remains on track. In the event of any delays or

challenges, the team will be prepared to implement contingency plans to keep the project moving forward.

Sustainability and Environmental Considerations: Sustainability will be a guiding principle throughout the development of the SINU 4th Campus. The work plan will place a strong emphasis on building the campus in an environmentally responsible manner that respects the cultural and natural heritage of Malaita. This will include the use of eco-friendly construction materials, the incorporation of energy-efficient systems, and the preservation of natural landscapes wherever possible. Environmental impact assessments will be conducted at each stage of the development to identify potential environmental risks and to guide the implementation of mitigation measures. These assessments will ensure that the campus development aligns with both national and international environmental standards and that it contributes positively to the sustainability goals of the Solomon Islands. By prioritizing sustainability, the project will not only meet the immediate educational needs of the community but also serve as a model for future development projects in the region.

Community Engagement and Capacity Building: The involvement of the local community in the development of the SINU 4th Campus will be crucial to the project's success. The work plan will include a robust community engagement strategy that seeks to involve the Malaita community in every stage of the development process. This will include creating opportunities for local employment during the construction phase, ensuring that the campus reflects the needs and aspirations of the community, and building local capacity through training programs. Capacity-building initiatives will be implemented to equip local workers with the skills needed for construction, maintenance, and eventual operation of the campus. This will not only contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project but also empower the local community by providing them with valuable skills and employment opportunities. By engaging the community in this way, the project will foster a sense of ownership and pride in the campus, ensuring that it becomes a valued and integral part of the community.

By adhering to this roadmap and work plan, the development of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo will be carried out in a structured, efficient, and sustainable manner. This approach will not only ensure the successful completion of the campus but also lay the foundation for it to become a centre of excellence in education, research, and community development in Malaita and the broader Solomon Islands. The campus will stand as a testament to what can be achieved through careful planning, collaboration, and a commitment to sustainable development, serving as a beacon of progress for future generations.

Conclusion

The trip to Auki was a resounding success, marked by significant milestones that signal a transformative era for both educational and conservation efforts in Malaita Province. The progress made in the development of the SINU 4th Campus at Aligegeo represents a bold step forward in the region's pursuit of academic excellence and socio-economic advancement.

This campus will not only provide access to higher education for the youth of Malaita but also serve as a centre for innovation, research, and community engagement, fostering a culture of learning that will resonate across generations. The agreements and discussions held during this visit have laid a solid foundation for a future where education, sustainable development, and cultural preservation are deeply intertwined, creating opportunities for growth that are rooted in the unique context of Malaita.

A key highlight of the trip was the opportunity to attend the launching of the Baru Conservation Alliance's three-year project, "Community Led Development Climate Resilience and Conservation in East Malaita." This event underscored the critical role that local initiatives play in addressing global challenges such as climate change and food security. The Baru Conservation Alliance, through its partnership with DFAT and James Cook University, has demonstrated that conservation and development can go hand in hand, benefiting both the environment and the local communities. Attending this launch was not only a show of support for the Alliance's efforts but also a recognition of the vital importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches. The success of the Baru Conservation Alliance serves as a powerful reminder of the impact that community-led initiatives can have when they are supported by strong partnerships and a shared vision for the future.

The role of SINU in these endeavours cannot be overstated. As an institution dedicated to education and research, SINU is uniquely positioned to drive the development and conservation efforts that are essential for the sustainable growth of Malaita. The establishment of the Aligegeo Campus is a clear manifestation of SINU's commitment to expanding access to quality education and empowering the youth of Malaita to become the leaders of tomorrow. This campus will be a hub where academic knowledge meets practical application, where students are not only educated but also equipped to address the real-world challenges facing their communities.

Moreover, SINU's involvement in the Baru Conservation Alliance's initiatives highlights the university's broader role in supporting sustainable development and environmental stewardship. By partnering with organisations like Baru, SINU can help bridge the gap between academic research and community action, ensuring that the knowledge generated within the university is applied in ways that benefit society as a whole. The university's engagement in these conservation efforts also provides valuable learning opportunities for students, who can gain firsthand experience in the fields of climate resilience, sustainable agriculture, and cultural preservation.

The trip to Auki was a pivotal moment for Malaita's development, marking significant advancements in both education and conservation. The agreements forged and the partnerships strengthened during this visit will pave the way for a future where Malaita's youth are empowered to lead, where education is accessible and relevant, and where the province's rich cultural and natural heritage is preserved for generations to come. The Solomon Islands National University, through its initiatives at the Aligegeo Campus and its collaboration with the

Baru Conservation Alliance, will continue to play a central role in these transformative efforts, ensuring that Malaita's progress is sustainable, inclusive, and deeply rooted in the values of its people.

Professor Transform Aqorau Vice Chancellor

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