Trip Report: SINU Delegation Visit to China (April 25 – May 3, 2025)

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Executive Summary

From April 25 to May 3, 2025, the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) participated in a high-level, multi-sectoral delegation to the People's Republic of China. The mission was part of a broader national effort to deepen diplomatic, academic, and development cooperation with China. The delegation was coordinated under the leadership of His Excellency Ambassador Barrett Salato, Solomon Islands Ambassador to China, and comprised a distinguished group of national leaders, sector experts, and institutional representatives, including: Hon. Lawrence Hayward, Premier of Isabel Province; Dr. Morgan Wairui, Pro Chancellor and Chair of the SINU Council; Professor Transform Agorau, Vice Chancellor of SINU; Mr. Michael Ho'ota, Under Secretary (Technical) from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock; Ms. Michelle Lam, Chief Executive of the Isabel Investment Corporation; and Mr. Jian Qing Yang, Chairman of JQY Group (Private Sector Partner). This diverse composition reflected a deliberate whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, aligning provincial interests, university mandates, ministerial priorities, and private sector capabilities under a shared vision of national development. For SINU, the mission provided a strategic platform to advance its teaching, research, and innovation agenda through formal partnerships with leading Chinese universities and research institutions. Over the nine-day program, the delegation concluded four major academic agreements that will form the foundation for long-term collaboration in key development areas.

The outcomes of the mission include:

- Ocean University of China (OUC) Agreement to establish a Mariculture and Aquaculture Research & Development Center in Isabel Province, Solomon Islands, in partnership with OUC. This center will focus on marine science research, aquaculture training, and sustainable fisheries development.
- Liaocheng University A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) supporting collaboration in climate change research and the introduction of Chinese language and culture education at SINU. This includes joint research projects on climate resilience and the creation of a Confucius Classroom at SINU to enhance language learning and cultural exchange.
- Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) A strategic workplan for cooperation in tropical agriculture and food security. SINU will work with CATAS and its specialized institutes (e.g. Coconut Research Institute and Spice & Beverage Research Institute) on crop research (coconut, cassava, banana, spices) and capacity-building for agricultural innovation.
- Wuyi University A partnership agreement to develop a China-Pacific Disaster Resilience Research Center at SINU. This collaboration focuses on disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation engineering, and joint academic programs to strengthen resilience to natural hazards in the Pacific region.

These partnerships align with SINU's mandate to support national development through education, research, and community service. Each agreement emphasizes capacity building – from staff training and student exchanges to the development of new programs and research facilities – ensuring that SINU is better equipped to address Solomon Islands' priorities in marine resources, climate change, agriculture, and disaster management. The delegation's engagements also reinforced Solomon Islands' growing bilateral relationship with China, laying a foundation for sustained academic cooperation.

Moving forward, SINU will implement these agreements through dedicated coordination mechanisms and focal point appointments (see table at end of report). This report provides a detailed day-by-day account of the visit, followed by an analysis of the trip's thematic outcomes in the areas of Strategic Partnerships, Research and Innovation Alignment, and Capacity Building & Institutional Strengthening.

Day-by-Day Itinerary and Highlights

- April 25 Qingdao (Shandong Province): Partnership with Ocean University of China (OUC). The delegation visited OUC, a top maritime university, to formalize a public–private partnership for a Mariculture and Aquaculture Research & Development Center at SINU. The day included a signing ceremony and technical negotiations. Key outcomes: an agreement to establish the joint research center focusing on aquaculture (with an emphasis on sea cucumber and other high-value marine species), a governance framework with equal representation from OUC and SINU, and commitments for equipment and expertise from OUC to support the center's setup. The partnership will enable SINU to access OUC's renowned expertise in marine science and fisheries, directly supporting Solomon Islands' blue economy goals. *SINU Focal Point: (Designated) Head Department of Fisheries Studies (Danny Shadrach)*.
- April 26 Liaocheng (Shandong Province): MoU with Liaocheng University. The delegation spent a full day at Liaocheng University engaging in workshops on Chinese language education and climate change research. Highlights: SINU and Liaocheng University signed a comprehensive MoU to collaborate on cultural exchange and climate science. Liaocheng University agreed to assist SINU in establishing a Confucius Classroom (Chinese language center with seed funding and two visiting lecturers), and both institutions discussed joint research on climate adaptation (e.g. studies on coastal erosion, renewable energy for rural communities, and integration of indigenous knowledge in climate solutions). They also outlined an academic exchange program beginning in 2025, up to 5 students and 2 faculty from SINU will visit Liaocheng annually, and vice versa - and curriculum alignment to facilitate credit transfers and mutual recognition of courses. This partnership leverages Liaocheng University's strengths in applied research and pedagogy (including their experience linking students to industry and community projects) to enhance SINU's capacity in climate resilience research and language education. SINU Focal Point: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Research) – overseeing Climate Research collaboration and Chinese Language program implementation. (Dr. Mary Paia) & (Lenora Houma and Georgina Pitaqae)
- April 27 Haikou, Hainan Province: Strategic Dialogue with CATAS Headquarters. The delegation traveled to Haikou to begin a three-day engagement with the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS), China's premier institute for tropical agriculture R&D. On April 27, discussions at CATAS headquarters focused on developing a technical workplan for agricultural cooperation. Key focus areas: joint field trials of 15 improved hybrid coconut varieties in Solomon Islands (to improve coconut productivity and climate resilience), knowledge exchange on pest/disease management for tropical crops, and community outreach programs. CATAS committed to offer annual training residencies for SINU faculty and to co-host biannual farmer field schools in Solomon Islands (in Isabel and Guadalcanal Provinces) to disseminate best practices to local farmers. SINU, in turn, will allocate land for demonstration farms (approximately 20 hectares) and collaborate on bilingual training materials for farmers and students. Both sides also agreed to pursue joint funding opportunities (for example, co-developing a proposal to the FAO for supporting coconut and staple crop research). This strategic framework with CATAS directly targets Solomon Islands' food security needs by enhancing research on key crops and building local agricultural expertise. SINU Focal Point: Dean, Faculty of Agriculture. Forestry and Fisheries (Dr. John Bosco)
- April 28 Wenchang, Hainan Province: Visit to CATAS Coconut Research Institute. The delegation visited CATAS's Coconut Research Institute in Wenchang, which is a world-leading center for coconut and palm research. SINU delegates toured laboratories and processing facilities showcasing value-added coconut products and innovations. They observed research on coconut germplasm improvement including breeding of high-yield and pest-resistant coconut varieties and saw examples of product development such as virgin coconut oil derivatives, coconut-based food products, and coir fiber materials. Of particular interest was the Institute's work on nutritional analysis of coconut water and oil, and the development of coconut-based candies and essential oils as part of adding value to coconut farming. The Coconut Research Institute also

shared insights from its extension model of "research institute plus farmer" – how it works with local farmers and enterprises to pilot new techniques and products. The SINU team discussed potential adaptation of these approaches to benefit coconut growers in Solomon Islands (where coconut is a vital cash crop). The day reinforced opportunities for collaborative research in coconut industry development and provided practical models for linking scientific research to agribusiness growth in the Pacific context.

- April 29 Wanning, Hainan Province: Visit to CATAS Spice and Beverage Research Institute. On the final day in Hainan, the delegation travelled to CATAS's Spice and Beverage Research Institute in Xinglong, which specializes in tropical spices, beverage crops, and botanicals. The SINU team learned about ongoing research and diversification in crops such as pepper (black pepper), vanilla, cocoa, coffee, and exotic teas. Researchers demonstrated how the institute has developed high-value spice products and improved crop varieties – for example, new pepper cultivars suited to Hainan's climate and techniques for curing vanilla to world-class quality. The institute has also pioneered agro-processing methods to create products like spice extracts, essential oils, and herbal teas, thereby increasing farmer incomes through value addition. The delegation toured the institute's tropical botanical garden, seeing demonstrations of integrated farming and crop intercropping (some of which could be relevant for Solomon Islands agroforestry practices). Importantly, CATAS experts also briefed the team on research into other staple tropical crops cassava and banana. They highlighted work on cassava high-starch varieties and disease-resistant banana strains - innovations that could bolster food security and climate resilience in island nations. By the end of the Hainan visit, SINU and CATAS had identified several priority areas for collaboration (coconut industry development, spice crop trials, and knowledge transfer on cassava/banana cultivation) to be formalized under the emerging workplan.
- April 30 Jiangmen, Guangdong Province: Partnership Agreement with Wuyi University. The delegation concluded its official visits with a stop in Jiangmen City to sign a partnership with Wuyi University (WYU). Wuyi University, known for its strong engineering and applied sciences programs, hosted SINU for final negotiations and an MoU signing focused on disaster resilience and sustainable development. Key outcomes: agreement to establish a China-Pacific Disaster Resilience Research Center at SINU's main campus. This center will be a joint initiative where Wuyi University will contribute technical expertise and equipment to outfit a new facility dedicated to disaster risk reduction research (e.g. earthquake-resistant construction, cyclone early warning systems, and renewable energy solutions for resilience). The center will be staffed collaboratively – initially, experts from Wuyi (in areas like civil engineering and climate adaptation) will work alongside SINU researchers to jumpstart research programs. The partnership also launches new academic offerings, including a dual-degree Master's program in Climate Adaptation Engineering (planned for 2026) co-taught by faculty from both universities, joint supervision of PhD students on relevant research topics, and an annual two-week intensive training in disaster management for practitioners and students. Both universities agreed to promote mobility opportunities such as student summer internships at Wuyi's engineering labs and exchange of faculty in the field of climate resilience. This partnership leverages Wuyi University's engineering strengths to build SINU's capacity in an area of urgent importance to the Solomon Islands - preparing for and mitigating natural disasters. SINU Focal Point: Director, Institute of Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management (to be established under the new center).
- May 1 Transit and Agricultural Site Visit: Jiangen to Kaiping City. On May 1, the delegation travelled from Jiangen to Kaiping City, continuing its journey through Guangdong Province. Along the way, the group visited a local chicken hatchery facility to observe modern poultry production systems and understand the operational model used in rural China. The visit provided practical insights into scalable hatchery management, feed systems, and value chain integration—elements that could inform efforts to reduce the cost of chicken production in the Solomon Islands. Delegates discussed how similar systems could be adapted to local conditions to enhance food security and reduce import dependency. No official meetings were scheduled on this date

due to China's national Labour Day holiday, but the visit provided valuable applied learning as part of the broader agricultural and private sector engagement strategy.

- May 2 Kaiping to Shenzhen, Transit to Hong Kong. On May 2, the delegation travelled from Kaiping City to Shenzhen, where they boarded a ferry to Hong Kong to connect with their international return flights to Honiara. While no formal meetings took place on this day, the group used the transit period to reflect on the outcomes of the mission, coordinate post-visit follow-up actions, and consolidate internal briefings for subsequent reporting to stakeholders at SINU and across the Solomon Islands Government.
- May 3 Departure and Conclusion of Visit. The delegation concluded its mission and departed China on May 3, returning to Honiara. Prior to departure, the Vice Chancellor and delegation members compiled key findings and next-step recommendations for presentation to SINU's Senior Management Committee and Council. With partnerships formally in place and relationships strengthened, SINU now enters a critical implementation phase to turn the agreements into tangible benefits for the university and the nation.

Strategic Partnerships

The visit resulted in the formalisation of several strategic partnerships that will advance SINU's academic and developmental objectives. Each partnership targets specific priority areas for Solomon Islands and establishes a framework for long-term collaboration. Below is an overview of each partnership and its significance to SINU, along with the designated SINU focal point who will coordinate its implementation:

- Ocean University of China (OUC) Mariculture & Aquaculture Center: This partnership establishes a joint Mariculture and Aquaculture R&D Center to be based at SINU. OUC's stature as a leading ocean sciences university makes it an ideal partner to help SINU build expertise in marine biology, aquaculture techniques, and sustainable fisheries. The collaboration will bring in OUC's knowledge on breeding and farming of marine species (such as sea cucumbers, shellfish, and finfish) and support the transfer of technology (e.g. hatchery systems and marine ecosystem monitoring) to SINU. For SINU, this aligns with national aims to expand the blue economy and improve livelihoods in coastal communities. The center will facilitate research that can directly benefit local industries (like coastal aquaculture and reef fisheries management) and provide hands-on training for students. *SINU Focal Point:* Danny Shadrach will coordinate all joint activities with OUC and oversee development of the new center's facilities and programs.
- Liaocheng University Climate Research & Cultural Exchange: The MoU with Liaocheng University is a multifaceted partnership supporting both climate change research and Chinese language/cultural exchange. Liaocheng University's strengths in applied environmental research and its commitment to international exchange complement SINU's goals of building climate resilience and fostering global competencies among students. Under this partnership, SINU and Liaocheng will undertake joint research on climate adaptation strategies relevant to the Pacific (such as community-based climate mitigation, sustainable agriculture under changing climate, and renewable energy in island settings). At the same time, the establishment of a Confucius Classroom at SINU with Liaocheng's support will enhance Chinese language instruction and cultural understanding on campus – an important asset as Solomon Islands deepens engagement with China. This dual focus addresses both a pressing developmental issue (climate change) and a capacity need (language skills for international collaboration). SINU Focal Points: Dr. Mary **Paia**– designated to lead the climate research collaboration, ensuring joint projects and exchanges are aligned with SINU's research agenda; and Head of Languages Department - Lenora Houma and Georgina Pitaqae to oversee the Chinese language program and serve as liaison for cultural exchange initiatives.
- Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) Food Security & Agricultural Innovation: The strategic workplan with CATAS positions SINU to benefit from the only

national-level tropical agricultural research academy in China. CATAS encompasses specialized institutes for crops that are highly relevant to Solomon Islands – including coconut, cocoa, spices, tubers (cassava), fruits (banana), and more. Through this partnership, SINU will collaborate with CATAS on crop research and development aimed at improving food security and agricultural value chains. Key areas of focus will include developing improved crop varieties (e.g. high-yield, climate-tolerant varieties of coconut, cassava, and banana), enhancing pest and disease control methods, and exploring value-added processing for local commodities (such as coconut products and spices for export). The partnership will also involve technical assistance: CATAS will host SINU researchers and students for training in Hainan, and dispatch experts to Solomon Islands for on-site projects and farmer training. For SINU's mandate, this collaboration directly strengthens the University's role in supporting sustainable agriculture and rural development in the country. It also expands SINU's research network into global tropical agriculture initiatives. *SINU Focal Point:* **Dr. John Bosco** – will act as the coordinator for all CATAS-related initiatives, from managing joint field trials in Solomon Islands to aligning CATAS expertise with the curriculum and research at SINU's Department of Agriculture.

Wuyi University - Disaster Resilience & Engineering Innovation: The partnership with Wuyi University establishes a joint approach to addressing disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation, areas of critical importance to Solomon Islands. Wuvi University, a comprehensive institution with strong engineering and technology programs, brings expertise in designing practical solutions for infrastructure resilience and sustainability. The newly agreed China-Pacific Disaster Resilience Research Center at SINU will be the cornerstone of this partnership. It will facilitate research on disaster-proof building techniques, early warning systems for extreme weather events, and community-based disaster preparedness, blending Wuyi's technical knowhow with SINU's local contextual knowledge. Additionally, Wuyi's experience in smart engineering and renewable energy will help SINU innovate in fields like solar energy for remote areas and sustainable construction materials, complementing the disaster focus. Joint academic programs (such as the planned Master's in Climate Adaptation) will enrich SINU's curriculum and produce graduates skilled in resilience and adaptation engineering. This partnership supports SINU's strategic goal of becoming a national leader in climate change and disaster management education. SINU Focal Point: Director of Climate & Disaster Research Centre (Interim) - an appointment to lead the establishment of the new center, coordinate collaborative research with Wuyi University, and guide development of academic programs in disaster resilience.

Each of these partnerships is formalized through signed agreements or MoUs and is aligned with Solomon Islands' development priorities. They also serve as models of South-South cooperation, linking Pacific needs with Chinese expertise. Going forward, SINU's Senior Management will ensure that these partnerships are actively managed and reviewed for impact, with the above focal points accountable for driving progress under each agreement.

Research and Innovation Alignment

A core objective of the China visit was to align international partnerships with SINU's research priorities and the innovation needs of the Solomon Islands. The delegation's engagements were carefully chosen to target key sectors where SINU's enhanced capacity can make a significant difference. This section outlines how the partnerships and observations from the trip will feed into SINU's research and innovation agenda:

• Marine Resources and Blue Economy: The collaboration with OUC squarely advances SINU's focus on marine science and the sustainable use of ocean resources. Solomon Islands, as a maritime nation, faces challenges such as overfishing, degraded reefs, and limited aquaculture development. By partnering with OUC's world-class marine experts, SINU can accelerate research into aquaculture techniques (like fish breeding, seaweed farming, and sea cucumber cultivation) and marine ecology. This directly contributes to innovative solutions for food security and export diversification (e.g. developing commercial aquaculture farms) and positions SINU as a hub for marine research in the Pacific. Research conducted through the new Mariculture Center

will be applied in nature – for instance, piloting sustainable farming of high-value marine species – ensuring innovation translates into economic and environmental benefits.

- Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience: The agreements with Liaocheng University and Wuyi University together strengthen SINU's capacity in climate change research and practical adaptation measures. Liaocheng's input will help SINU advance scientific research on climate impacts such as modeling coastal erosion, studying changing weather patterns, and designing community adaptation strategies. This academic research underpins evidence-based policy and teaching at SINU on climate resilience. Complementing this, Wuyi University's partnership injects engineering and technology-driven innovation into SINU's climate change response. Research and development under the Disaster Resilience Center will focus on tangible solutions to Solomon Islands' vulnerability to cyclones, floods, and earthquakes (e.g. designing cyclone-resistant housing prototypes, developing flood early-warning sensor networks, or testing renewable energy micro-grids for emergency power). These initiatives ensure SINU's research outputs are aligned with the nation's urgent need to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change, bridging the gap between academic inquiry and real-world problem solving.
- Food Security and Agricultural Innovation: Through CATAS, SINU is aligning itself with cuttingedge research in tropical agriculture that can be directly applied to improve local farming systems. Solomon Islands relies heavily on crops like coconut, cassava, sweet potato, bananas, and various fruits for food and income. By engaging in joint research on these crops, SINU will introduce innovations such as high-yield and climate-resilient crop varieties, improved cultivation techniques, and pest-resistant strains to local agriculture. For example, testing hybrid coconut varieties and disease-resistant bananas in Solomon Islands conditions can lead to significant gains in productivity and farm resilience. Similarly, learning from CATAS's spice and commodity crop research opens possibilities for diversifying the agricultural sector (e.g. exploring niche markets for Solomon Islands spices or cocoa). This partnership ensures SINU's School of Agriculture research agenda is not only academically robust but also tightly linked to practical outcomes like enhanced food security, rural livelihoods, and agribusiness development. It fosters an innovation ecosystem where faculty and students work on solving real agricultural challenges with mentorship from international experts.
- Cross-cutting Innovation and Entrepreneurship: An important theme across all visits was the integration of research with practical implementation. The delegation noted how Chinese institutions encourage students and faculty to translate research into products, startups, and community projects (for instance, Liaocheng University's innovation incubators or CATAS's model of linking researchers with farmers and industry). Aligning with this, SINU plans to embed similar innovation practices in its programs. Joint projects will be designed with pathways to implementation such as incubating student-led projects in renewable energy (inspired by Wuyi's smart technology expertise) or developing coconut-based small enterprises (leveraging CATAS know-how). By aligning partnerships to SINU's strategic plan, which emphasizes entrepreneurship and community impact, the University will promote a culture where research findings lead to innovative solutions and enterprises. This approach will help produce graduates who are problem-solvers and innovators in their fields, thereby extending SINU's impact beyond academia into the wider society and economy.

In summary, the China visit has ensured that SINU's international collaborations are directly aligned with its mission to drive research that addresses national issues. Each partnership fills a gap in SINU's current capabilities and provides a platform for innovation in teaching and practice. As these collaborations take root, SINU's research output and innovation capacity are expected to grow, supporting Solomon Islands' development with home-grown expertise informed by global knowledge.

Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening

Beyond formal agreements and research plans, the delegation's visit emphasized capacity building at multiple levels – from individual skills development to strengthening SINU's institutional

frameworks. This focus on capacity building ensures that the partnerships will have a lasting impact on SINU's growth and its ability to deliver on its mandate. Key capacity and institutional strengthening outcomes include:

- Human Resource Development (Staff and Students): All partnerships include significant training and exchange components that will build the expertise of SINU's faculty, staff, and students. For example, CATAS will host SINU agricultural scientists for residencies in China and send experts to train local farming communities, elevating the skill set of both academia and extension agents. Liaocheng University will facilitate faculty and student exchanges, which means SINU lecturers in climate science or language studies will spend time in Shandong gaining new insights, while SINU students gain international exposure and vice versa. Wuyi University's collaboration involves joint supervision of graduate students and staff development in disaster management techniques. These exchanges and training programs will produce a new cadre of SINU academics and graduates who are internationally experienced and technically proficient in specialized fields (marine science, climate adaptation, etc.). In the long term, this human capital development will raise the quality of instruction and research at SINU.
- Curriculum and Program Enrichment: The mission outcomes directly feed into academic program improvements at SINU. With OUC's input, SINU is setting up a new Marine Science/Aquaculture program, expanding its curriculum to cover marine biology, aquaculture engineering, and ocean resource management. Liaocheng's partnership is enabling SINU to introduce Chinese language courses and cultural studies, adding to the Humanities offerings and preparing students for opportunities in the China-Pacific context. The joint Master's program with Wuyi University in Climate Adaptation will be a novel offering in the region, combining engineering and environmental science modules tailored to Pacific challenges this not only enriches SINU's postgraduate portfolio but also raises academic standards through co-teaching by international faculty. Additionally, exposure to CATAS's research may lead to new course content in agriculture (for instance, modules on tropical crop biotechnology or agri-entrepreneurship using CATAS case studies). Such enhancements ensure that SINU's curriculum remains relevant, forward-looking, and competitive, producing graduates with up-to-date knowledge and skills suited to national needs.
- Research Infrastructure and Facilities: A major aspect of capacity building is the development of physical and organizational infrastructure at SINU. Through the partnerships, SINU will be establishing new facilities such as the Mariculture Research Center (with aquaculture labs and hatcheries) and the Disaster Resilience Research Center (with simulation equipment, training labs, etc.). Chinese partners are contributing equipment and technical design support to set up these centers to international standards. These facilities, once operational, will vastly improve SINU's research environment giving faculty and students access to modern laboratories, field stations, and technology (e.g. oceanographic instruments from OUC, engineering simulation software from Wuyi). Additionally, CATAS's collaboration may lead to the improvement of agricultural research stations and experimental farms at SINU (through provision of planting materials, lab protocols, etc.). Strengthening infrastructure goes hand-in-hand with building technical capacity: SINU staff will be trained to operate and maintain new equipment, ensuring sustainability. Over time, these centers and upgraded facilities will serve as platforms for further international projects and attract funding, thereby reinforcing SINU's status as a growing research institution.
- Institutional Governance and Partnership Management: To effectively implement these multifaceted collaborations, SINU is enhancing its institutional structures. During the visit, the need for robust coordination mechanisms was recognized. As an immediate step, SINU's management is designating specific focal points (lead coordinators) for each partnership (see Table 1 below). By assigning clear responsibility to senior staff or faculty experts for each major partnership, SINU is adopting a proactive management approach – these focal points will liaise with the counterparts in China, monitor progress on MoU deliverables, and report to SINU leadership on milestones and issues. This approach is part of SINU's progressive institutional strengthening: it not only spreads leadership opportunities among staff but also embeds the new partnerships into the university's

organizational structure (rather than handling them ad hoc). Furthermore, SINU plans to establish a central Partnership Coordination Office to support these focal points administratively and ensure alignment across different initiatives. The University will also develop a monitoring and evaluation framework (with key performance indicators for each partnership) to track outcomes like joint publications, student exchange numbers, or new technologies adopted by communities. These governance improvements mean that SINU can handle the increased complexity that comes with multiple international partnerships and scale up collaborations in a sustainable manner.

• Community and Stakeholder Engagement: As SINU strengthens internally, it is also mindful of its role in the wider community. The delegation's interactions (especially with CATAS) underscored the value of linking institutional capacity building with community impact. For instance, training programs like farmer field schools and the annual disaster management course ensure that knowledge gained through these partnerships is passed on to local stakeholders – be it farmers, fishermen, or provincial disaster officers. By training trainers (SINU faculty/students who will then train others in Solomon Islands), these initiatives have a multiplier effect. SINU's institutional strengthening thus extends outward: improved capacity at SINU will lead to more effective outreach and service to government ministries (e.g. providing scientific input on agriculture and climate policy) and to communities (through education and applied projects). This aligns with SINU's mandate as a national university to contribute to society, and it justifies the Solomon Islands Government's support by delivering tangible public value.

The capacity building gains from the China trip lay a strong foundation for SINU's transformation into a more capable and robust institution. The combination of trained people, better facilities, enriched programs, and stronger management systems will enable SINU not only to execute the new partnerships successfully but also to pursue future initiatives with confidence. The University's leadership will issue formal notices to confirm the appointment of partnership focal points and launch the new centers and programs, signaling to all stakeholders that SINU is moving decisively into the implementation phase.

Designated Partnership Focal Points

To ensure effective follow-through on each collaboration, SINU has identified dedicated focal point personnel for each partnership. These individuals will be the primary liaisons between SINU and the partner institution, coordinating activities, monitoring progress, and reporting to SINU management. This approach of assigning focal points is part of SINU's broader strategy of empowering its staff and streamlining partnership management (formal designation letters for these roles will be issued by SINU management). Table 1 below summarizes the focal point assignments for each partnership:

Partner Institution & Initiative SINU Designated Focal Point

Ocean University of China –	Head of Department of Fisheries Studies, (Interim Director SI-
Mariculture Center	China Oceans Research Center – Danny Shadrach)
Liaocheng University –	Pro Vice-Chancellor (– Climate Collaboration Lead Dr. Mary Paia
Climate Research & Chinese	and Head of Languages Department – Chinese Program Lead,
Language	Lenora Houma & Georgina Pitaqae)
CATAS (Tropical Agricultural Sciences) – Food Security Research	Dean, FAFF (Dr. John Bosco)
Wuyi University – Disaster	(Interim) Director, Climate & Disaster Research Centre – Project
Resilience Center	Lead for Wuyi–SINU Partnership

Table 1: SINU Partnership Focal Points. (Each focal point will coordinate the respective partnership's activities and liaise regularly with the partner institution. Formal designation notices will confirm

these roles as part of SINU's initiative to strengthen internal governance of international collaborations.)

Conclusion and Strategic Reflections

The SINU delegation's visit to the People's Republic of China was highly successful in establishing transformative academic and research partnerships that align with SINU's mission to deliver relevant, applied education and to contribute meaningfully to national development. The formal agreements concluded with the Oceans University of China (OUC), Liaocheng University, the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS), and Wuyi University signify a major step forward in the internationalization of SINU and its capacity to engage in high-impact research, technology transfer, and human resource development.

Of particular significance is the Public-Private Partnership Agreement signed between SINU, the Isabel Provincial Government, OUC, and JQY Enterprises. This multi-actor collaboration represents a strategic innovation in institutional development for the University. Under this framework, SINU will be integrated into the planning, construction, and operation of a Mariculture and Aquaculture Research and Development Center in Isabel Province. With OUC providing scientific expertise, Isabel Province facilitating land and community support, and JQY Enterprises contributing capital and operational management, the Center will serve as a national model for university-led applied research linked to real-world economic opportunities.

The involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, as represented by the Under Secretary (Technical) in the delegation, underscores the national relevance of this initiative. The collaborative platform established through the PPP enables cross-sectoral alignment—linking provincial priorities, national development strategies, and SINU's academic programs. It also reflects a forward-thinking model for university–government–industry cooperation, which is especially critical given SINU's current resource constraints. Through this partnership, the University can access infrastructure, field-based research sites, and professional networks that would otherwise be unattainable within its budget envelope.

In practical terms, the partnership will create opportunities for SINU students to engage in hands-on training, internships, and research in a live commercial aquaculture environment. This is expected to significantly improve the employability of SINU graduates in fisheries and marine science, while also contributing to Solomon Islands' food security, climate resilience, and export diversification objectives. Furthermore, the Research Center will function as a vehicle for knowledge generation and policy engagement, with the potential to influence national decision-making on marine resource management and sustainable aquaculture practices.

While the signing of agreements marks a significant achievement, the next phase—implementation is the most important. The challenge now is to ensure that words and commitments are translated into practical and tangible action. To this end, the Senior Management Committee is advised to adopt a structured and time-bound roadmap for implementation, focusing on four priority pillars:

- 1. Formalisation of Focal Points and Governance Structures (May–June 2025): Official designation of SINU coordinators and establishment of Joint Steering Committees with each partner institution.
- 2. Infrastructure and Program Design (June–October 2025): Site assessments, establishment of research centers (starting with the Kukum Campus coordination units), and development of joint work plans.
- 3. Launch of Academic and Research Activities (Late 2025–Early 2026): Activation of student exchanges, faculty collaborations, and pilot projects aligned to national priorities.

4. **Monitoring and Strategic Engagement (2026 onward)**: Periodic reviews of implementation progress, reporting to Council and Government, and pursuit of additional funding opportunities.

Taken together, the suite of engagements established during the visit has repositioned SINU as a credible and capable actor in international academic cooperation. The trip demonstrated that with the right partners and strategic alignment, even resource-limited institutions can play a central role in national innovation systems and contribute to regional development.

This report is submitted to the Senior Management Committee for its consideration, and to guide further communication with the SINU Council and relevant government ministries. The Committee is invited to endorse the key next steps outlined in this report and provide ongoing oversight to ensure the successful realization of SINU's international partnerships and their alignment with institutional transformation goals.

Professor Transform Aqorau Vice Chancellor

4 May 2025

Annex A: Participants from Ocean University of China (OUC)

Qingdao, Shandong Province — April 25, 2025

No. Name Title

- 1 Prof. Zhang Junfeng President
- 2 Dr. Li Weidong Director, International Office
- 3 Prof. Lin Xiaopei Dean, College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences
- 4 Prof. Ai Qinghui Dean, Fisheries College
- 5 Ms. Yu Hong Deputy Director, Interpretation Division, International Office

Annex B: Participants from Liaocheng University

Shandong Province — April 26, 2025

No.	Name	Title
1	Bai Chenglin	President of Liaocheng University
2	Fang Zengfu	Deputy Director of University Council; Director, China–Pacific Island Countries Climate Change Cooperation Center
3	Zhang Bingyuan	Director, International Affairs Office of Liaocheng University
4	Zhao Shaofeng	Director, Pacific Island Countries Research Center; Deputy Director, Climate Change Cooperation Center
5	Sun Zuoding	Dean, School of International Education
6	Jia Zefeng	Dean, School of Agriculture and Biology

Annex C: Participants from the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) Haikou, Hainan Province — April 27–29, 2025

CATAS Headquarters

No.	Name	Title
1	Li Jihua	Vice President
2	You Wen	Deputy Director, International Cooperation Division
3	Liu Meng	Coordinator, International Cooperation Division
4	Li Jingyang Banana Expert	
5	Gao Fei	Cassava Expert

Coconut Research Institute (CRI)

No.	Name	Title
1	Zhu Anhong	Secretary of the Party Committee
2	Wang Hui	Deputy Director
3	Song Weiwei	Director, Science and Technology Office
4	Yang Yadong	Director, Coconut Research Center
5	Zou Jixin	Deputy Director, Oil Palm Research Center
6	Lyu Chaojun	Associate Researcher, Plant Protection Research Department
7	Zhang Jianguo	Engineer, Processing Research Department
8	Xu Lijing	Associate Researcher, Science and Technology Office
9	Fu Ya	English Translator

Spice and Beverage Research Institute (SBRI)

No.	Name	Title
1	Chu Zhong	Deputy Director
2	Fu Hongmei	Vice Director, Science and Technology Department
3	Su Ning	Manager, Industrial Development Department
4	Li Zhigang	Associate Researcher, Agricultural Ecology and Crop Cultivation Lab
5	Wang Xi'ao	Research Assistant, Tropical Spice and Beverage Germplasm Resources Lab

No.	Name	Title
6	Gu Chunhe	Research Assistant, Processing and Engineering Technology Research Lab
7	Liu Shichao	Research Assistant, Plant Protection Research Lab
8	Zhu Hongying	Deputy General Manager, Hainan Xingke Tropical Crop Engineering Technology Co., Ltd

Annex D: Participants from Wuyi University

Jiangmen City, Guangdong Province — April 30, 2025

No. Name Title

- 1 Tiangang Luan Chancellor
- 2 Wenhua Chen Vice President
- 3 Chunyang Wang Director, International Affairs Office
- 4 Yan Liang Director, Knowledge Transfer Center
- 5 Hui Huang Executive Vice Dean, School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- 6 Jianying Lyu Interpreter

Attachment E: Participants of the Meeting with the Jiangmen Municipal Committee

Jiangmen City, Guangdong Province — April 30, 2025

No.	Name	Title
1	Chen Anming	Secretary of the CPC Jiangmen Municipal Committee; Party Secretary and Director of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress
2	Luan Tiangang	Secretary of the CPC Wuyi University Committee
3	Cai Dewei	Secretary-General of the CPC Jiangmen Municipal Committee; First-Tier Inspector
4	Zhao Xiaobin	Director, Office of Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Jiangmen Municipal Committee
5	Zheng Shaoqiang	Secretary of Party Group and Director, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Bureau of Jiangmen
6	Yi Zhi	Secretary of the Party Committee and Director, Jiangmen Municipal Emergency Management Bureau