

## Sea safety “grab bags” for PNG maritime safety officers

*Thirty small-craft, sea safety grab bags were presented to the Papua New Guinea National Maritime Safety Authority (PNG NMSA) by SPC’s DevFish2 Project. Each grab bag kit includes a rescue laser light (replacing flares), sea anchor, portable GPS, life jacket, mirror, whistle, and waterproof mobile phone pouch.*

Many lives have been lost at sea in PNG’s waters due to bad weather, ignorance or negligence on the part of boat operators who have no basic safety equipment on board. PNG NMSA is emphasising the importance of protecting lives while at sea and the need for simple safety precautions to be followed.

NMSA is in the process of introducing the “PNG Small Craft Act 2010”, which will regulate vessels 10 m and less due to the increasing number of accidents and incidents occurring at sea. This Act provides for the safety of people using small crafts in PNG, and provides standards for their construction, registration and operation. Under this legislation, small craft operators will be required by law to have minimal safety training and a range of safety equipment on board their craft.

The EU-funded DevFish2 Project focuses on assisting with small-scale fisheries development, and acknowledges that safety at sea for small-scale artisanal fishers is a critical priority in all of PNG’s 15 maritime provinces.

The SPC DevFish2 Project is providing this support to enhance NMSA’s capacity because they have a regular

provincial programme for awareness and training, which targets small boat operators and seafarers.

NMSA Project Officer, Peter Bell said; “These safety kits will be distributed to maritime provincial safety officers to assist with their training and awareness activities and with the new safety equipment requirements when travelling on small craft themselves.”

The timely support with these small craft safety kits will assist NMSA in their current programme of the PNG Small Craft Act in all 15 maritime provinces. “During this exercise, the grab bag kit of individual life saving safety equipment will be promoted to coastal communities as a cost-effective means for that community to both improve safety and comply with the law,” commented Chris Rupen, NMSA’s Chief Executive Officer.

### For more information:

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*Jonathan Manieva (centre) presenting the various elements of the sea safety grab bags to Mr Chris Rupen, NMSA’s CEO (right) and Mr Ulea Waroi, NMSA Education and Safety Officer (left).*