

Visiting the Pacific Maritime Training College (PMTTC) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 20th – 29th March 2025.



PMTTC urgently needs the assistance of SINU through the Solomon Islands Maritime College (SIMC) for the issuance of the Global Maritime Distress Signal System (GMDSS) Restricted Operators Certificate (ROC)



Staff of the PMTTC

Some GP Class 2 & 1 Rating Students

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1. Executive Summary

This document focuses on the outcomes of the visit of the Director of SIMC to the PMTC based on the urgent need of PMTC for their trainees to be issued with a proper recognized Restricted Radio Operators Certificate (ROC) so that the Certificates of Competency (CoC) can be issued to their graduates by their own regulator which is the National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA).

During the visit other related issues relevant to the maritime education training (MET) for seafarers were discussed also. Examples of these important maritime issues are the possibilities of: 1) training Solomon Islands seafarers General Purpose (GP) Ratings Class 1 & 2 at PMTC, 2) training PMTC Class 5 graduates to do Master Class 4 at SIMC and 3) Manning the Crewing Agency of PMTC by both Papua New Guineans and Solomon Islanders to go and work onboard foreign going ships mainly in China.

2. Introduction

Based on the PMTC invitation for the Director of SIMC to visit them in Port Moresby, the trip was carried out from the 20th to the 29th of March 2025. The main purpose for the trip was to assist the PMTC with the GMDSS ROC which has caused lots of problems for the CoC of their Mate / Master Class 5 graduates or successful seafarers to be issued CoC by their regulator the National Maritime Safety Authority.

After looking at various options to resolve this main problem, both the PMTC and SIMC further discussed and agreed on some other very important maritime issues that will benefit the seafarers of both nations as well as both national economies.

The last part of this report will also highlight the way how the PMTC was set up in such a way that it can fully utilized the limited space available for them. This will include a few photographs as evidences and also to prove that they have expanded and improved so fast even with very minimal or no financial support at all from the Papua New Guinea government. From a commercial perspective, the establishment of its own crewing agency is another milestone that I learned from them during my visit.

2.1 The need for collaboration in the delivery of IMO GMDSS short courses

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) GMDSS short courses known as General Operators Certificate (GOC) and Restricted Operators Certificate (ROC) are mainly pre-requisite courses for seafarers to be issued with CoC. However, issuing them depends on the level of maritime training course conducted whether it is a support, operational or management level program.

In the case of PMTC, they will issue ROC at an operational level but due the difficulties encountered by their own telecom services known as the National Information Communication Telecommunication Authority (NICTA) and their regulator the National Maritime Safety Authority, NMSA cannot issue CoC to the PMTC graduates until a proper and recognized ROC is issued first because it is one of the main pre-requisites of the said course.

2.2 Overview of the GMDSS course

2.2.1 Inspecting the required equipment

On the 24th of March 2025 all GMDSS equipment required to deliver both GOC and ROC courses at PMTC were inspected to ensure compliance with the IMO Standards of Training and Certification for Watchkeepers (STCW) requirements. All available equipment were found to be in good condition and appropriate to conduct the said course [as can be seen below](#).



2.2.2 Curriculum / Syllabus documents

The PMTC keeps the correct curriculum or syllabus documents in line with the STCW Code 1978 as amended in 1995 and 2010. PMTC also has the required IMO model course document to be used by trainers as a guide when conducting both GMDSS GOC and ROC short courses.

2.2.3 Trainers' qualifications

The PMTC trainers both have the GOC qualification so they can deliver the ROC course. The executive management of PMTC was also informed and advised to consider allowing all their instructors to do the required compulsory courses that complies fully with IMO Model Course 6.09 and 6.10 particularly if they are planning to upgrade to Class 4 Mate or Class 4 Master CoC.

3. Exchange of students training opportunities

First of all, while I have been working tirelessly behind the scene with the former General Manager of Pacific Towing Company Ltd, Captain Richard Haika, who was one of my former students when I was at the PNG Maritime College in Madang, to ensure the current MOU between SINU & FNU is also utilized. In other words, by working together or liaising with Pacific Towing and other shipping companies to sponsor SI seafarers through their companies' scholarships to do higher level maritime courses in Fiji while waiting for SIMC to be upgraded, another opportunity for SI seafarers is also available now but this time for lower grades like GP Rating 2 & 1 which we have been considering year in and year out here at the SIMC. It is agreed with PMTC that we can also send some SI seafarers to do this kind of rating course at the PMTC in PNG. Once they complete their GP Rating 2 & 1 course, they can go straight and work onboard foreign going ships as managed and coordinated by the Crewing Agency which will be discussed more in the next sections of this report.

3.1 General Purpose (GP) Rating 2 & 1 for Solomon Islands trainees

Since our current seamanship workshop building to train GP rating courses has not been repaired or fixed properly, we cannot run this kind of course here in SI but at PMTC, they have the full resources, capacity and training equipment to offer this course. So, while waiting for the right time for SIMC to run or offer the same course here in Honiara, in order to continue narrowing the gap between the old and young SI seafarers, they can go to PNG to be trained and start exposing themselves to the international shipping market as expected. This is in line exactly with our current SIG Maritime Labour Mobility (MLM) Roadmap.

Common types of proper seamanship training can be seen in the photos below:



3.2 Qualifications: Master Class 5 to Master Class 4 for the PMTC officers

Since PMTC only train seafarers, deck officers and marine engineers up to a Class 5 level at the time of writing this report, PMTC requested if there is a possibility of training their Class 5 officers here at SIMC to do Class 4 Master. I agreed to that on behalf of SINU and SIMC but it really depends now on the final MOU to be agreed upon and signed by both parties.

Some of the Marine Engineering training equipment which are fully operational can be seen below:



3.3 Proposed Plan

After confirming that PMTC does have very good training facilities for GP Rating 2 and 1 course while we at SIMC are still trying to obtain and improve our training facilities and equipment first so that we can offer the same courses, the plan now is to send some SI seafarers to do GP Rating 2 & 1 courses in PNG so that they can be employed on any regional and international merchant ships and start contributing to our national economy straight away through their foreign remittances once employed onboard foreign going vessels. This idea or plan again is absolutely in line with the current SIG MLM as mentioned earlier on.

4.0 Crewing Agency at PMTC

The PMTC has established its own Crewing Agency office for foreign shipping companies vessels particularly in China and other Asian countries. The whole idea was to train PNG seafarers and send them straight away overseas to be employed rather than being unemployed for

a long time. From my own experience, this is exactly what my small country Kiribati did since the 1960s which has resulted in more and more Kiribati seafarers now currently working on foreign cargo and fishing vessels abroad. This scheme contributed significantly also to the nation's economy as we all know in the same way as sending seasonal workers to Australia or New Zealand. As a private Institute, the PMTC informed and advised me that if SI is also interested to join, the door is open and the green light has been given. This is something to consider properly in the near future.

Photos of the PMTC administration office, boardroom, restaurant, and classrooms, are as shown below:





5.0 MOU between PMTC & SINU-SIMC

With respect to SINU Vice Chancellor and his higher executive management team, instead of me doing the signing process of MOUs which the VC of SINU normally does, I decided just to take the copy of their drafted MOU for deliberation and feedbacks first from us. Once approved by SINU, then we can proceed to the next steps if required. Attached or enclosed with this report is the draft copy of that very short and simple MOU which is very similar to the one PMTC signed with the Chinese shipping companies for their trainees to be employed upon completion of their training in PNG.

6.0 Drafted Radio Operators Certificate (ROC) for both PMTC & SIMC to sign

It was agreed that once the PMTC qualified and approved trainers have conducted the GMDSS course at PMTC in Port Moresby, they will produce their own certificate with their logo and ours on it and we will only co-signed it for the National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA) to approve. After meeting with the senior officers of NMSA, they informed us that once they sight that we (SIMC) also sign the same ROC certificate, they will recognize, endorse and approve it so that PMTC graduating officers can be issued with their CoC as normally done by Maritime Authorities. The draft copy of that ROC will be provided and available soon.

Additionally, and if required by us here in the SI, PMTC is willing to pay a certain amount directly to SINU or SIMC account for every ROC they produce and we counter-sign as agreed in the negotiations and guided by the planned MOU to be approved also.

7.0 Way forward

It is all depends now on whether SINU / SIMC agrees with all the negotiations made during the visit, before we can proceed further. I believe that there is still room for win-win outcomes in these negotiations and proper final conclusion can be made thereafter as ways forward.

8.0 Conclusion

To conclude, let me emphasis again that although the main purpose of my trip to PNG was to assist PMTC with the delivery of the GMDSS GOC and ROC short course and certifying their trainees accordingly upon completion of their course, we explored other maritime training areas as well for the benefit of all SI seafarers and its economy to some extent.

Those additional areas of the MET training are the GP Rating 2 and 1 STCW course and the possibility of joining their Crewing Agency Scheme or even creating our own for the same purpose, if possible, here in Honiara. Finally, I must state that despite being a very young Maritime College, the set up and the way PMTC is run managed and operated is in line exactly with the ship's set up in normal practice whereby both deck officers and marine engineers work collaboratively together to maintain the College just like a normal ship. If fact, as you all know, I have tried my very best here at SIMC to do exactly the same but still facing many challenges.

This report is compiled based on what I actually did and saw during the trip. Proof and evidences of all other activities performed can be seen as photographs or attachments to this report. Finally, I am encouraging any corrections, advices and constructive ideas from any SINU staff members regarding this report. Such comments and feedbacks will be considered thoroughly prior to taking further actions where necessary.