



**UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT  
JABATAN PERIKANAN  
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**18 OGOS 2022**

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# Bigger, better boats for fishermen

## State assistance scheme to help locals generate more income

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TWENTY fishermen will be among the first few recipients of bigger boats and more powerful engines, thanks to the social impact management plan (SIMP) of the Penang South Islands (PSI) project.

Penang Deputy Chief Minister 1 Datuk Ahmad Zakiyuddin Abdul Rahman, who is also the fishermen taskforce chairman, presented boats to four recipients in Kampung Padang Benggali near Butterworth.

He said eight boats would be delivered by the end of this month and another eight by October under the first phase.

Recipients have been identified through the SIMP registration and boat audits conducted over the past year.

"The new boats are larger with a length of 8.23m and width of 2.26m.

"It can carry a load of up to one tonne," he said, adding that each boat was approximately RM75,000.

The boats have safety features that prevent them from sinking when water gets into them.

"They are also equipped with a global positioning system (GPS), sonar, robot (net hauler) and high-powered engines.

Ahmad Zakiyuddin said the handing over of the boats was a meaningful moment for the fishermen and Penang government.

"It means the PSI project benefits promised to the fishermen are

being fulfilled in phases."

Apart from the boats, the implementation of the SIMP scheme also involved Koperasi Komuniti Pulau Pinang Selatan Bhd (KKPPSB), which was established earlier this year for the benefit of fishermen and other locals, he added.

KKPPSB was appointed by Penang Infrastructure Corporation (PIC) to manage the designing and building of boats by a marine consultant and local boat builders respectively, as well as supply boat engines.

"Through this assistance programme and other future business activities, KKPPSB will generate income which will benefit its members, made up of fishermen and other locals.

"This is a good example of how a state project can provide economic spillover to residents and businesses in terms of income and employment opportunities," said Ahmad Zakiyuddin.

According to the Fisheries Department, 315 boat owners from Permatang Tepi Laut, Gertak Sanggul, Sungai Batu and Teluk Kumbar units (Tier 1) are eligible to receive boat and engine assistance under the SIMP scheme.

Penang government, Ahmad Zakiyuddin said, had decided to deliver 20 boats ahead of the project implementation to help fishermen who were in dire need of new boats to replace old ones that were no longer seaworthy.

"The 20 recipients in the first group were identified based on their SIMP registration and the



(From fourth left) Ahmad Zakiyuddin with recipients of the new boats Suhaimi Abas, Ahmad Khamis, Mat Isa and Yeoh at Fibra Marine Manufacturing & Trading in Kampung Padang Benggali.

condition of their existing boats," he said.

The remaining 295 boats will be built after PSI project's environmental impact assessment (EIA) report and environmental management plan (EMP) are approved.

Also present at the ceremony were Teluk Air Tawar assemblymen Datuk Mustafa Kamal Ahmad, PIC chief executive officer Datuk Seri Farizan Darus and SRS Consortium Sdn Bhd project deputy director Azmi Mohamad.

Yeoh Teong Chye, 60, from Teluk Kumbar, has been a fisherman for the past 40 years and changed five boats.

"It is very expensive to keep changing boats.

"That is why I am very thankful to the state government for the new boat I just received," he said.

Veteran fisherman Mat Isa Mat Noor, 64, from Permatang Tepi Laut, was very impressed by the new boats' features.

"I am very satisfied with the design and safety features.

"The boat is bigger so I will have more space to work on board," said Mat Isa, who last bought a new boat in 2004 at a cost of RM12,000.

Ahmad Khamis, 76, was also elated to receive his new boat.

"I have been fishing for over 50 years but could only afford to change boats twice because of the cost.

"It is not cheap to buy a new boat and I can hardly afford it.

"It is very good of the state government to provide new boats to fishermen like me," he said.