



Pacific Immigration Development Community

2023 Regular Annual Meeting

20-22 June, Port Vila, Vanuatu

Agenda item 15: Electronic Passports: Opportunities, challenges and lessons in electronic-passport development

Recommendations

Members are invited to (i) discuss the requirements, standards, potential and challenges of electronic passports; in addition to (ii) sharing lessons that can guide members in determining their electronic passport journey.

Purpose

This session explores opportunities, challenges, and lessons in the development and implementation of electronic passports in the Pacific region. It seeks to discuss the potential benefits and advantages of electronic passports, examine the obstacles and difficulties faced during their introduction, and analyze the lessons learned and best practices derived from experiences across the membership.

Background

2. The evolution of e-passports has been driven by the joint efforts of governments, international organizations like the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and technology developers. The ICAO with partner stakeholders has played a key role in setting global standards for e-passports and working together to implement secure and efficient e-passport systems. Such collaborations have paved the way for enhanced security, streamlined travel processes, and improved international cooperation in border management.

3. Electronic passports, or e-passports, have gained significant interest in the Pacific region as they incorporate embedded microchips storing personal information and biometric data. This technology aims to improve security, border control processes, and travel efficiency. Examples of successful e-passport systems include Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, where advanced security features and biometrics have significantly enhanced border control.

4. However, the development of electronic passports across the Pacific region faces several challenges. Limited resources and technical capabilities pose infrastructure and technological hurdles. Data privacy and security concerns arise due to the storage and transmission of personal biometric data. Additionally, ensuring standardization and interoperability between different e-passport systems can be complex. On the other hand, electronic passports offer immense potential for the Pacific region in terms of security, border control efficiency, and integration.

5. Addressing challenges related to infrastructure, data privacy, and standardization is vital for successful implementation. By applying lessons learned, the Pacific region can optimize the benefits of electronic passports and achieve optimal outcomes.