Pacific Immigration Development Community
2023/24 Board Meeting 1
25-26 October 2023, Koror, Palau

Agenda Item 6:   **Strategic Focus Area 3 – Border Enforcement and Traveller Facilitation**

Proposed Recommendations
The Board is invited to consider recommendations outlined in each subsection of Agenda Item 6(a)-(e).

Purpose
This paper provides an update to the PIDC Legislation modernisation programme in addition to discussing upcoming activities for the Information Sharing Working Group to consider.

(a) Legislation Review Programme Update
2.   A key responsibility of the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) is supporting PIDC Member Countries and Territories to modernise and align domestic immigration legislations and Standard Operating Procedures where appropriate to relevant international and regional standards and best practice.

3.   Table 1 below provides a summary of the legislation review programme and where the respective countries assisted under PIDCs modernisation programme are at. Two member countries are scheduled for support in the 2023/24 financial period including the Solomon Islands and Palau, while ongoing work to finalise Samoa and Tonga legislation review project continues.

Table 1: Summary of 2023-24 Legislative Review Modernisation project – Phase One Policy and Legislation Support

Country		Legislation Review Project Update
Solomon Islands *(Phase One)*	Immigration Act	- First drafting Instruction completed and provision of technical support provided to support Solomon Islands national consultations. - Local Technical Assistant recruited and national consultation programme on Solomon Islands Immigration Bill initiated with Malaita and Guadalcanal Province national consultations completed in September 2022. - National consultations for remaining provinces to be completed by February 2023 - Development of additional drafting instructions to review Immigration Bill following completion of national consultations to be submitted by end of March 2023.
Palau *(Phase One)*	Immigration Act	- Currently scheduled for Quarter three. However, Secretariat currently monitoring funding support that Palau has secured through UNDP that could potentially be used also support the review of Palau's Immigration legislation

Table 2: Summary of 2022-23 Legislative Review Modernisation project – Phase Two Drafting of Legislation

Tonga *(Phase Two)*	Immigration Act	- Immigration Act Drafting Instructions completed - Tonga to advice of recruitment of locally based legal drafter to support drafting of draft immigration bill and drafting programme
Solomon Islands *(Phase Two)*	Immigration Act Migration Policy	- Migration Policy - Immigration Bill
Palau *(Phase Two)*		- Drafting scheduled for quarter 2
Samoa *(Phase Two)*	Regulations	- Draft Immigration Regulations completed and currently undergoing final national approval process

Table 3: Summary of completed support programme awaiting Member's decision to finalise legislation

Tuvalu	Immigration Act	- Draft Immigration Bill and Draft Immigration Regulations completed and awaiting government decision on next steps
	Passport Act	- Development of desktop analysis of Tuvalu Passport Act completed - Development of Tuvalu Passport Act Information paper based on desk top analysis for Tuvalu to consider for Cabinet information completed - Tuvalu to determine decision to progress to next stage of Passport Act review
Tonga	Passport Act	- Drafting Instruction completed - Tonga to determine scheduling of Drafting consultation programme
FSM	Immigration Act	- Drafting national consultations and Drafting Instruction completed - FSM Government to determine next steps.
Niue	Immigration Act	- Phase 1 completed and drafting instructions submitted for Niue government to determine next steps

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

   (i) **note** the update provided by the Secretariat and the work undertaken to date; and

   (ii) **encourage** the Secretariat to continue monitoring members modernisation programme and keep working with members to complete their respective legislation modernisation programme.

(b) Regional Strategic Plan Support Programme

4.   The PIDC regional Strategic Plan Support Programme was established to support members modernise their operations through the development of department strategic plans, business plans or operational plans where none existed. The support provides members access to a PIDC expert directly supporting them in developing country specific strategic plan frameworks through an in- country PIDC consultation mission.

5.   Two member countries have been scheduled for assistance under this support programme in this financial year include the Solomon Islands and the Cook Islands. Table 2 provides a summary on the latest implementation update of the strategic plan development programme.

Table 4: Summary of regional strategic plan support programme

Country		Regional strategic plan support Programme Update
Solomon Islands	Strategic Plan Development	- National consultations completed and first final draft of Strategic Plan completed and undergoing national approval process for endorsement and adoption
Cook Islands	Strategic Plan Development	- Scheduled for end of quarter 2.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:
   (i)   **note** and **welcome** the progress in the development of members national strategic plans; and
   (ii) **encourage** the Secretariat to continue the development of members strategic plans

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(c) USP Master Programme Development Proposal

Background

6.   At the PNG Board meeting in march 2023, the Board had considered the development of the Masters in Border Security programme and subsequently tasked the Secretariat to undertake an analysis of the current USP postgraduate programme for border security including an assessment of current PIDC sponsored USP postgraduate students' performance and member country's support for the programme and commitment to contribute to the annual student quota of postgraduate and Masters participant to guide the Board in determining the viability of committing to a 5-year Masters programme.

Analysis of PIDC Sponsored Students Performance

    (i)   An assessment of Sponsored Students Academic Performance

Table 5: Summary of sponsored student performance

Cohort	No courses Attempted (Drop-outs)	In-Progress (1 course pending completion)	In-Progress (2 or more courses pending completion)	Completed Certificate	Completed Diploma	Total Completions	Total
2020	2(13%)	1 (7%)	-	1 (7%)	11 (73%)	12 (80%)	15 (100%)
2021	1 (7%)	1(7%)	1(7%)	-	12 (80%)	12 (80%)	15 (100%)
2022	**No New Intake as Course Put on Hold following Resignation of Lecturer & USP Freeze on Recruitment**						
2023	2	1	5		2	In Progress	10

- There was a total of 30 sponsored officers from 2020 – 21
- Sponsored officers recorded a percentage pass rate of 80% for both 2020 and 2021.
- Where 24 graduated, with 6 either dropping out of the course or not completing it.
- 6 students that didn't complete the course between 2020-2021 was primarily due to the following reasons:
    - (i)   3 dropped out early after registering and enrolling and did not progress to make any attempts to continue with the course.
    - (ii)   2 officers have 1 pending course that they need to complete to graduate.
    - (iii)   1 officer has 2 courses pending to complete to graduate.
    - (iv)   While there was one officer who graduated with a Post Graduate Certificate in Border Security but didn't continue to pursue the Post Graduate diploma level.

- Generally, the non-completion cases have been due mainly to sponsored Officers inability to manage their responsibilities between the demands of work and the university course.
- Interviews with students currently enrolled and those sampled that had been part of the non- completion group identified that the underlying reason was specifically around time management challenges and subsequently prioritising the need to meet work demands over the USP course.
- There were no new intakes for the 2022 academic year following the resignation of the course lecturer and the inability of USP to recruit a replacement following a USP recruitment freeze during this period.

Commitment to support the Masters Programme Course

7.   Generally, all students that have successfully completed the course have expressed interest and support to pursue undertaking a Master's programme should it eventuate in the future. This support and interest are due mainly to their familiarity of the course and its relevance to their workplace. In addition, privately funded students from immigration agencies and other partner law enforcement agencies enrolled in the course like customs and Police have also expressed an interest in pursuing a Masters in Border Protection programme if it is to be established.

8.   It should be noted that the Post Graduate Diploma in Border Security is the only law enforcement specific course now available at the University of the South Pacific following USP's withdrawal to continue delivering the Policing Degree. Consequently, law enforcement interested in furthering their academic objectives through the university have only one option available through the USP system and this is the PIDC supported PGDBS.

9.	While general interest and funding continues to grow in the security space in the Pacific with increasing geopolitics becoming more prominent, PIDC stands alone in the space of supporting immigration officers and partnering with a recognised regional academic institution to build the capacity of immigration officers to obtaining a regionally and internationally recognised academic qualification. While other partner organisations pursue short term capacity building programmes of 1-2-week short courses on specific specialist subjects around transnational organised crime and security, PIDC is unique in progressively building the long-term knowledge and expertise of officers with a qualification that is recognised as a prerequisite to higher executive management and leadership positions.

Opportunity

10.	The development of the Masters Programme had been pursued by PIDC with USP over the last couple of years without success and this was largely due to the non-availability of an academic specialist in course creation in USP. The opportunity to progress and establish a Master's Programme is now possible as PIDC has obtained a commitment from an academic course creation specialist to support PIDC in the development of the Masters Programme. Failure to capitalise on this opportunity would mean that there would be a higher probability in the possible lengthened delayed time to the development of a Master's programme due to the non-availability of a university course developer especially in the area of border security in the Pacific.

11.	The planned withdrawal of the policing degree from the university of the South Pacific academic programme provides an opportunity for PIDC to link the Border Security programme with other partner agencies linked to the Policing degree like Police and other agencies that are security focused like customs, fisheries and the aviation sector. The withdrawal of the course provides an opportunity for PIDC to advocate the Border Protection Course across the other law enforcement partner agencies.

12.	Possible joint partnership options could be explored with OCO and PICP on consideration to complement the student quota from their membership utilising government funded scholarship like the Australian government and NZ funded scholarships in the Pacific. This partnership could be further explored through the creation of the Master Programme that draws policing and customs components into the Border Security Programme.

Proposed Recommendations
The Board is invited to:
   (iii) **note** the findings of the USP PGDBS sponsored officers' academic performance; and
   (iv) **consider PIDC commitment to** work with USP to develop the inaugural
         Masters in Border Security Programme at the University of the South Pacific.

(d) PIDC Members Website Development Programme Update

13.   The development of members website was identified as a key visibility development programme supporting members objectives of raising its visibility and more importantly the

accessibility of its services to a global audience. Visitors into the region continue to face difficulty accessing readily available information on entry requirements across a number of jurisdictions in the Pacific and the development of websites was intended to support members core immigration responsibilities of managing and facilitating legal travel.

14.   Fiji and Vanuatu were scheduled for support under this programme. Fiji has been supported through this project with the revamp of their website to improve its functionality and usability. The website development has been completed and awaiting the Fijian government approval on the departments logo before the website is launched. The website revamp undertook a rebranding, redesigning and enhancement of content structure for clear navigation and easy access to its website content. Vanuatu's website revamp development is currently in progress with a timeline for completion and launching in November 2023.

15.   Additional members are expected to be supported in the next financial year as members recognize the need to enhance the visibility of their department through information access to a global audience intending to visit the Pacific.

> **Proposed Recommendations**
> The Board is invited to:
> (i)   **note** the website development update; and
> (ii)   **encourage** the Secretariat to continue supporting members in the development of their websites.

(e) BMS Support Programme Update

16.   The BMS Assessment member support programme was established to provide immigration agencies direct access to a PIDC expert that would be able to review their border operating systems and develop a set of recommendations on the preferred BMS solution that was specific to members operational environment. The BMS Business Case was consequently utilised to guide department decision makers in determining the type of immigration border systems that could be customised to member country's specific operational need.

17. Two member countries have been scheduled for support in this financial period; Palau and Tuvalu. The Palau business case development had been completed in August 2023 and Tuvalu is currently being scheduled for November 2023 with ongoing discussions on scheduling of this activity. Members that have to date received technical support in the submission of a business case include the Cook Islands and Tonga. Cook Islands and Tonga have subsequently progressed towards the adoption of BMS that meet their objectives as outlined in their business cases. Palau is currently reviewing their BMS with the Business Case report currently guiding discussions in the development of their customised Border Management System.

Country	Year	Status
Cook Islands	2019	Completed
Tonga	2022	Completed
Palau	2023	Completed
Tuvalu	2023	Scheduled for November 2023

18.   While Border Management Systems outside of the pacific have progressed and developed quite significantly over the years, PIDC Members have been limited in their ability

to embrace and adopt new advanced border-based technologies due mainly to resource and capacity limitation across the region. While some PIDC members have adopted BMS into their operations, some members still continue to operate on manual systems.

With BMS funding becoming available to members, the development of a BMS Business Case has become central to guiding decision makers in determining the path members are to take in their BMS journey. Consequently, this BMS support programme has strengthened immigration agencies understanding of their technology needs and be better positioned to manage BMS vendors.

19.   The Business Case document provides functional, non-functional, and business requirements, as well as service and availability requirements reflecting immigration agencies existing business processes and needs, and guidance to a technological solution that will be determined by the vendors who will be required to deliver these upgrades and to determine the best technological response to these requirements and provide written details as to how each requirement will be satisfied, as well as costs in their response. The vendor will be ultimately responsible for delivering the appropriate solution/s subject to post inception identification, documentation and confirmation of final requirements by both the supplier and BCBP.

Proposed Recommendations
The Board is invited to:
  (i)   **note** the progress update in the support provided to members to develop their BMS Business Cases; and
  (ii) **encourage** the Secretariat to continue supporting members in the development of their BMS Business Cases.