



Pacific Immigration Development Community

2019 Regular Annual Meeting

4 – 6 June, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

PIDC(19)RAM.25

Agenda item 25: Workshop 1 – High Risk Visa Waiver Country Best Practises

Proposed Recommendations

The PIDC Regular Annual Meeting is invited to:

- a) **discuss** Members' experiences and lessons in monitoring high risk visa waiver countries; and
 - b) **task** the Secretariat to consolidate best practises and standards to manage high risk visa waiver countries as part of the Model PIDC Standard Operating Procedures Manual.
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Purpose

The purpose of this workshop session is to discuss how immigration agencies can effectively manage the entry of irregular travellers originating from high risk visa waiver countries.

Background

2. With the significant continued growth in travellers across the region, migration management has moved to the forefront of many national agendas. Visas and related legislation and policies have subsequently become important tools in enabling human mobility. Visas are a key step towards effective integrated border management to ensure on one hand, smooth border crossing of travellers while on the other hand, preventing and responding to security threats. However, an emerging security risk in the Pacific today is the increasing movement of people across the region abusing visa free or visa on arrival regimes. Visa Free regimes continue to expose the vulnerability of the Pacific to people smugglers, human traffickers, transnational criminal organisations and opportunistic criminals seeking to exploit visa loopholes in our entry systems.

3. This workshop session looks to shed light upon high risk visa free countries in a comprehensive way. The session provides an opportunity for peer-to-peer discussions and exchange of good practises and challenges at the regional level. The workshop will also serve to identify the best and innovative approaches to managing visa free regimes and regional cooperation on mobility.

Format

4. At the beginning of the workshop session conference participants (including Observers) are to be divided into **4 groups** and are to discuss the role of immigration agencies at the national level on the basis of the workshop objectives. Groups are expected to present findings to the general Membership.

Group Discussions (10 minutes)

High Risk Visa Waiver Country Best Practises: Reflections

- Objective:**
- *To discuss Members' experiences in monitoring and managing high risk visa waiver countries.*
 - *To recommend national and regional approaches to managing high risk visa waiver countries.*

Group Guiding Questions:

- a) Which countries are regarded as high-risk visa waiver countries?
- b) What systems and processes has your department considered or put in place to manage irregular travellers from these countries abusing visa free/visa on arrival regimes? Explain.
- c) What collective (regional) and individual (national) approaches should PIDC Members adopt to manage high risk visa countries?
- d) What supportive role do you want PIDC to provide to Members in their varying levels of managing high risk visa free countries?
- e) Do you see e-visa solutions in the Pacific?

Feedback to Conference (20 minutes)