



Agenda item 9: PNG Hosted Information Border Management Systems Workshop

Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- a) **welcome** and **support** PNG's commitment to host a regional Information Border Management System (IBMS) Workshop for all members; and
 - b) **encourage** the Secretariat to continue coordinating partner agencies' support and participation in the IBMS Workshop.
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Purpose

This session provides an opportunity for Papua New Guinea Immigration and Citizenship Authority ("**PNGICA**") to give an update on the objectives, funding and scheduling of the Information Border Management System Workshop to be hosted in PNG.

Background

2. There are varying levels of information Border Management Systems (IBMS) technology in use throughout the PIDC membership. The systems range from the simple manual-based systems to the highly sophisticated IBMS used by Members to support border management operations. While IBMS can be expensive, its implementation complex, and maintenance both costly and ongoing, there are significant benefits of IBMS in terms of enhancing immigration agencies' capacity to manage border movements, connect offices and ports of entry and improve security both nationally and regionally.

3. However, over the years PIDC members have continued to work to introduce or upgrade their immigration IBMS systems. They also work to identify specific systems, system components or applications that can improve the way their respective borders are managed which are both applicable and sustainable in the Pacific Island operational context.

IBMS Regional Workshop

4. The proposal by PNGICA to host a regional IBMS workshop is quite timely especially during a period that has seen a significant shift towards information technology as a border management solution throughout the region following the global COVID-19 pandemic. The recent 2022 Regular Annual Meeting (RAM) held in Fiji again highlighted the difficulties and complexities involved in the development of country specific border management systems.

5. Consequently, the proposed regional IBMS workshop provides an opportunity to begin addressing the disparity in immigration IBMS development across the Pacific countries and territories. This disparity leads to situations where administrations that lack

IBMS solutions, or have developed it only to a limited degree at single entry points can be targeted as a 'soft touch' by criminal syndicates engaged in people smuggling and trafficking. It also leads to situations where data concerning the same individual or sponsoring organisation can be held in different ways (i.e., stored against different data fields) across neighbouring administrations. This, in turn, hinders the timely exchange of information, the identification of persons and organisations of interest and the analysis of movement trends across the Pacific. It can also permit individuals to 'shop' in different Pacific countries until they achieve a migration outcome.

Funding

7. While PNGICA will be responsible for venue hosting responsibilities, PNGICA has further committed to supporting member countries who wish to attend this workshop, to fund the cost of accommodation for participants from each member country. PNGICA will also fund participants per diems and facilitate participants arrival and processing through Jackson International Airport and coordinate transport to and from their respective accommodations while Participants are required to fund the cost of their air travel for the event.

8. In addition to funding support provided by PNGICA, the Secretariat has been able to secure additional funding support from UNDP who have committed to support funding for selected PIDC Member countries to participate in this proposed IBMS workshop. In addition, the Secretariat has also begun exploring support from other partner agencies that have similar programmes being rolled out in the PIDC Membership targeting to support the strengthening of IBMS in the Pacific.

Scheduling

9. PNGICA had originally scheduled this regional workshop for October 2022 but has agreed to reschedule the workshop to coincide with the second Board meeting now scheduled for the 3rd quarter of this financial year at around March 2023. The scheduling of this workshop with the Board meeting provides the opportunity to have the full participation of at least 10 members of the PIDC family in this regional workshop.

10. While the IBMS workshop is not a budgeted PIDC work programme, the timing of the workshop to coincide with our Board meeting has been scheduled to allow for confirmation of at least around 50% of members participation through a budgeted activity.

Conclusion & Recommendation

11. Board members are requested to support the IBMS Workshop and consider hosting the second Board meeting to coincide with this IBMS Workshop in March 2023.