



Pacific Immigration Development Community
2022/23 Board Meeting 2
17-18 April 2023: Port Moresby, PNG

Agenda item 9: Regular Annual Meeting 2023 Update and Planning

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- a) **welcome** Vanuatu's commitment and preparation for the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting;
 - b) **approve** the list of organisations that are to be invited to RAM 2023;
 - c) **endorse** the proposed RAM 2023 Agenda Planning to guide preparations for the 2023 PIDC annual conference;
 - d) **establish** a RAM Agenda Committee and **task** the Committee to develop a draft 2023 conference agenda for Board intersessional endorsement by 5th May 2023;
 - e) **encourage** Vanuatu to confirm a proposed theme for the 2023 RAM;
 - f) **approve** East Timor's PIDC Observer status application and invite their participation at this year's 2023 RAM;
 - g) **endorse** the list of Observer organisations and partner organisations to be invited to the 2023 RAM; and
 - h) **task** the Secretariat to send out invitations to the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting by 30th April 2023.
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Purpose

To brief the Board on preparations undertaken for the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting (RAM) and seek endorsement of specific arrangements.

Background

2. Following the 2022 Regular Annual Meeting in Fiji, Members accepted Vanuatu's offer to host the 2023 PIDC annual conference. The meeting is expected to bring together 21 Heads of PIDC Member administrations and a number of invited regional and international Observer organizations.

(i) Regular Annual Meeting Theme Options and Draft Conference Agenda

3. The accepted PIDC practice has been to allow the host country priority in choosing a conference theme that not only reflects national immigration priorities but is also relevant for the wider PIDC Membership. The previously selected themes have usually been general in nature providing a broad scope for PIDC Members to adapt as required for key domestic issues.

4. Due to the linkages between the meeting theme and agenda, these matters are best discussed together. As such, the Board is encouraged to discuss a meeting theme and finalise an appropriate draft agenda for planning purposes. To promote a sense of ownership to the development of PIDC's RAM agenda, the Board can consider establishing a 2023 Conference Agenda Sub-committee to discuss and recommend to the Board out of session a draft agenda for endorsement. To assist discussions on the subject, listed below is a list of past annual regular meeting themes.

Table 1: List of PIDC Regular Annual Meeting themes

Year	PIDC Conference Theme
2005	"The Future of Regional Cooperation on Managed Migration in the Pacific"

Year	PIDC Conference Theme
2006	"Strengthening Border Management Across the Region to Contribute to Improved Social and Economic Well-being and Security in the Pacific"
2007	"Working Together to Strengthen Regional Security and Prosperity through Managed International People Movements"
2008	"People on the Move"
2009	"PIDC: Focus on the Future"
2010	"Consolidating PIDC Status as a Valuable Entity"
2011	"Good Governance, Strong Laws, Secure Borders"
2012	"Securing Pacific Oceanic Gateways through Effective Use of Information"
2013	<i>Conference Not Held</i>
2014	"Economic Growth and National Development through Skilled Entry Programs"
2015	"Our Voyage towards Tomorrow"
2016	"New Beginning and Growth"
2017	"Our waka: Advancing approaches to regional migration challenges for a safe and prosperous Pacific"
2018	"Climate Change and Migration"
2019	"Steering the Course: Welcoming Difference, Sharing Solutions"
2020 - 21	<i>No RAM but had online Special General Meeting due to COVID-19 and closure of international borders</i>
2022	"Overcoming Challenges, Building Resilience"

(ii) Host Country Planning Update

5. Vanuatu will be given the opportunity to update Board Members on preparations being undertaken by the Department of Immigration to host the 2023 RAM. In preliminary discussions since the last Board meeting, the Secretariat had met with Vanuatu Immigration in Port Vila to confirm their ongoing commitment to host this year's RAM in light of current recovery efforts being undertaken across Vanuatu following the recent cyclone. Vanuatu had confirmed their commitment to host the 2023 RAM which is proposed to be scheduled from the week beginning 19 June 2023. Vanuatu is expected to advise the Board on the following:

- i. Confirmation of Vanuatu Hosting the 2023 RAM
- ii. meeting venue;
- iii. meeting accommodation;
- iv. meeting date; and
- v. RAM Theme.

6. In preparation for their hosting responsibilities, the department has completed an in country consultative discussions with the PIDC Secretariat on preparations for the meeting leading to the establishment of a Vanuatu Secretariat Support Group (SSG) in addition to Site visits of possible meeting venues. The SSG has been formed primarily to lead in-country planning and preparations for the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting. In addition, the SSG will be the lead Vanuatu Department of Immigration contact group working directly with the Secretariat in the lead-up to the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting in June.

(iii) Invitations and Observer Organisations

7. The Secretariat will be sending out invitations to Members and Observers to attend the Regular Annual Meeting. Observers are currently identified as regional and international stakeholders that traditionally collaborate with PIDC in the region.

8. The Board will be requested to confirm new Observer organisations to be invited to the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting once the draft Agenda has been discussed and confirmed. Below is a

participant list from last year’s Regular Annual Meeting including other Observer Organisations that were invited:

Table 2: List of Members and Organisations to be invited to 2023 RAM

Members	Observers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Australia 2. American Samoa 3. Cook Islands 4. Federated States of Micronesia 5. French Polynesia 6. Fiji 7. Kiribati 8. Marshall Islands 9. Nauru 10. New Caledonia 11. New Zealand 12. Niue 13. Palau 14. Papua New Guinea 15. Samoa 16. Solomon Islands 17. Tuvalu 18. Tonga 19. Tokelau 20. Vanuatu 21. Wallis and Futuna 	<p><u>PIDC Observers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2. Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police 3. Oceania Customs Organisation 4. International Organisation for Migration 5. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 6. United Nations Office Drug and Crime 7. Pacific Islands Law Enforcement Network 8. Pacific Fusion Centre

Observers to be invited

9. While table 2 outlines the list of PIDC RAM member participants and traditional Observers, PIDC has also normally invited expert speakers and other partner organisations to participate in conferences depending on the conference theme and agenda. The following list of organisations are additional organisations that we have also normally invited to our conferences:

- (a) US Immigration and Customs Enforcement – representatives of our former members from Guam and CNMI
- (b) Canada Citizenship and Immigration representatives based out of Australia
- (c) Bali Process Regional Support Office
- (d) Pacific Fusion Centre
- (e) PTCCC through the PICP
- (f) NZ Passports/ICAO representative for the Pacific

10. In addition, the Secretariat is considering inviting the following organisations to this year’s RAM for these partner stakeholders to share their experiences and perspectives on the work they do and insights into successfully proven best practices that can be adopted in the Pacific to address similar operational and border management issues:

- (a) Biometric Institute; and
- (b) CARICOM

(iv) East Timor Observer Status Application

11. The East Timor Immigration Division has submitted an application seeking to attend the 2023 RAM and also become an Official PIDC Observer organisation in our Regular Annual Meetings. Attached as Annex 1 is a copy of the formal request from the government of East Timor. Coincidentally, PIDC last hosted an East Timor delegate at our RAM in 2010 in Port Vila, Vanuatu. While no further communication nor relationship was established following that initial engagements, East Timor has begun reengaging with PIDC following the 2022 JHOPS that was hosted in Fiji and BMIC Conference in

Bangkok where a number of bilateral discussions were explored between PIDC and the East Timorese delegation.

12. The approach from the East Timorese delegation mirrors the engagements East Timor Customs has undertaken with the Oceania Customs Organisation where East Timor is a member of the OCO organisation.

Financial implications

13. PIDC is not financially obligated to meet any costs for East Timor's participation as an official Observer as partner organisations are expected to meet their own costs in attending any PIDC organised forum.

Strategic Implications

14. The inclusion of the East Timor as an Observer organisation directly provides a pathway for enhanced engagement. It supports the implementation of objectives promoting collaboration with partner law enforcement agencies contained in Article 3 of the PIDC Constitution and the PIDC 2022-25 Strategic Plan, SFA 1 to strengthen PIDC leadership as a regional immigration focal point.

Governance implications

15. There are no legal implications for East Timor joining the PIDC Observer Status category. It is expected to strengthen our working partnership and sends out a clear message to East Timor of our support to immigration agencies across the region and the complementary nature of the work we do in the region.

16. East Timor's application has however raised an important procedural question which PIDC's Constitution and Rules of Procedure appear to be silent on. International and regional forums tend to grant **observer status** to international and regional organizations, entity or non-member states, which entitles the entity to participate in the work of these forums, though with limitations.

17. The PIDC Constitution has not provided any special definition or criteria for observer organisations nor any special treatment to be accorded. Our foundation documents in particular the PIDC Constitution and PIDC Rules of Procedure do not provide guidance on the application criteria that PIDC can use to determine an Observer Status Application like other regional and international organisations.

18. Article 22.4 of the PIDC Constitution provides that "any organization with which the PIDC has entered into an arrangement or agreement under this Article may designate representatives to attend meetings of the PIDC as observers in accordance with the rules of procedure of the PIDC. Procedures shall be established for obtaining the views of such organizations in appropriate cases". (*Refer to Annex 2 for Article 22 of the PIDC Constitution*)

19. The supporting "rules of procedure" document provides for the invitation of Observer members to our regular annual meetings on a case-by-case basis based on their expertise relevant to the PIDC and its business or strategic interest. Organisations are only invited to Observe our RAM on a case-by-case basis when required or needed.

20. However, PIDC has long recognised and given official Observer Status to organisations to our traditional partners since PIDC was established in 1996. These organisations are given recognition in article 22.2 of the PIDC Constitution but falls short in giving them a special "Observer Status" category at all our regular annual meetings. However, our recognition of our traditional partner organisations as observers has always been an accepted understanding at every PIDC regular annual meeting. These regional and international partner organisations include the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Pacific

Islands Chiefs of Police, Oceania Customs Organisation, International Organisation for Migration, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

21. To clarify what ‘Observer Status’ means for some partner organisations, the PILON Charter for example clearly outlines that “*a country, territory or organisation may apply to the Secretariat to become an **observer member of PILON.***” In addition, the PILON Charter subsequently requires where the Applicant is an *organisation*, to provide details of the purpose, objectives and activities of the organisation, highlighting in particular areas which relate to the purpose of PILON.

Way Forward

22. To cater for future organisations seeking observer status in PIDC’s regular annual meeting, the Secretariat recommends the Board to task the Governance Committee in consultation with the Secretariat to develop formal criteria and procedures for the granting of observer status that can be adopted into PIDC’s Rules of Procedure. This process should support our efforts in building and strengthening cooperative relationships with partner organisations. The establishment of an “Observer Status” category is expected to strengthen our cooperative partnerships with regional and international organisations.

23. However, in light of East Timor Immigration’s current official request to become an Observer organisation of PIDC’s Regular Annual Meeting; the Board is recommended to approve East Timor’s application and ensure that it is provided similar treatment to current recognised Observers such as PIFS, OCO, PICP, UNODC and IOM.

Vendors

24. PIDC had more than a decade ago allowed a number of vendors to participate in a number of PIDC forums but had taken a decision not to include vendors in subsequent conference due to the issues around the conference being captured by vendors in terms of member distractions from the core discussion themes of the conference. It has been more than a decade now since vendors last participated in any PIDC RAM or regionally organised forums. However, the evolving migration operational landscape especially around border management technologies has been changing quite significantly with the Pacific becoming one of the last frontiers trying to adapt to the evolving border technology that the rest of the world is implementing in the areas of:

- Border Management Information Systems
- Smart Registration Systems for Border Management
- Biometric Capture and Registration Systems
- Solutions for Capturing non-ICAO Compliance Documents
- IT Infrastructures for Integrated Registration Systems
- Identity Management and Traveller Facilitation; and
- Other Related products and services related to border operations

25. A number of Companies providing solutions for specific areas in border management for members have expressed interest in attending the 2023 PIDC Annual Conference. While our conference will have open and closed session, these vendors can be given the opportunity to take part in the open sessions of the PIDC RAM and engage with Members on the sides of the meeting during meeting breaks while their inclusion to make brief presentations on their respective areas of expertise can be determined during the meeting if time allows. At this stage there has only been one Vendor that has approached the Secretariat expressing their interest to participate at this year’s RAM to show their products as they have a footprint in the region:

a) Muehlbauer a German based passport company that has Fiji and FSM as its current client listing from the Pacific.

26. Members continually face the issue of lack of access to reliable sources of information to guide their border technology development projects. The invitation of identified vendors currently contracted to delivering a number of products across the membership in areas of common interest like passports for example and Border Management Systems provides an opportunity for members to access more detailed information of specific products during the course of the PIDC RAM.

Annex 1: East Timor Letter of Request to be an Observer



REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR - LESTE
MINISTÉRIO DO INTERIOR

DIREÇÃO GERAL SERVIÇO DE MIGRAÇÃO
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Mr Akuila Ratu
Acting Head of Secretariat
Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC)
PO Box 1881, Apia, Samoa

Dear Akuila,

The Ministry of Interior of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste presents its compliments to the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) and has the pleasure of writing to request that the Immigration Service of Timor-Leste be admitted to PIDC with Observer Status, commencing 2023.

The Immigration Service of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (Serviço de Migração in Portuguese or Servisu Imigrasaun in Tetum) was established in its current form in early 2003 as a Department of the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL). By virtue of passage of Decree-Law 30/2009 – the Organic Law of the Migration Service, and a subsequent Government restructure, the Immigration Service now reports directly to the Interior Minister in matters pertaining migration management. It has a staffing complement of 86 seconded police officers and 66 civilian staff.

At the recent BMIC 6 conference in Bangkok, Thailand, it became apparent that the Immigration Service faces many of the same challenges confronting Pacific Immigration agencies. These include issues with implementation of integrated border management, staffing, human capability, and budgets, as well as a need to renovate legislation and policy and systems to meet contemporary border management challenges.

As the Service now has sufficient staff who speak English fluently and drawing upon the precedent set by Timor-Leste's membership of the Oceania Customs Organisation, it is appropriate that the Timor-Leste Immigration Service re-engages with PIDC to share experiences with and learn from our Pacific colleagues.



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The contact officer for any administrative arrangements in respect of this request is:

Ms. Lindalva Fernandes
International Affairs
Immigration Service
Dili, Timor-Leste
Email: lfernandes@migracao.gov.tl

I trust that this step will ultimately lead to an application to join PIDC as a full member in due course.

Yours sincerely

Dili, 19 January 2023
General Director

Dr. Luís Soares Barreto, Lic. Dir, MD
Supt. Asst. Police



Annex 2: Article 22 of the PIDC Constitution

Article 22

Co-operation with other Organisations

- 22.1. The PIDC shall cooperate, as appropriate, with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat on matters of mutual interest.
- 22.2. The PIDC shall make suitable arrangements for consultation, cooperation and collaboration with other relevant intergovernmental organizations, particularly those which have related objectives and which can contribute to the attainment of the objective of this Constitution, such as the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- 22.3. The PIDC may enter into relationship agreements with the organizations referred to in this article and with other organizations as may be appropriate, with a view to obtaining the best available advice, information and collaboration to further the attainment of the objective of this Constitution and to minimize duplication with respect to their work.
- 22.4. Any organization with which the PIDC has entered into an arrangement or agreement under this Article may designate representatives to attend meetings of the PIDC as observers in accordance with the rules of procedure of the PIDC. Procedures shall be established for obtaining the views of such organizations in appropriate cases.