



Agenda item 4 (e): PIDC COVID-19 Member Support Programme

Proposed Recommendations:

Members are invited to:

- a) **welcome** the activities undertaken by the Secretariat to implement the PIDC COVID-19 Support Programme;
- b) **encourage** Members where a priority and also where possible to incorporate activities and services provided by the PIDC COVID-19 Support Programme into national budgets;
- c) **encourage** Members to inform the Secretariat of additional activities and support that they may require as part of the Programme; and
- d) **task** the Secretariat to continue to deliver this important programme in an effective manner.

Purpose

This paper seeks to provide Members with an update regarding activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the last Regular Annual Meeting in 2020 to implement the PIDC COVID-19 Support Programme.

Background

2. The COVID-19 PIDC Support Programme was endorsed at the Special General Meeting in 2020 to support Members:

- a) protect their communities;
- b) meet their national obligations effectively as part of the multi-agency COVID-19 response; and
- c) effectively implement the Pacific Islands Forum Pacific Humanitarian Pathway – COVID-19 (PHP-C) obligations which referred to high level immigration protocols that had been drafted with the support of the PIDC Secretariat.

The programme Core Activities include:

- a) provision upon request of a Communication Package to assist Members adapt to the new virtual communication reality caused by COVID-19 (support outlined in ANNEX ONE);
- b) supporting Members to develop tailored Standard Operating Procedures and updated training curriculum and modules that incorporate COVID-19 measures; and
- c) assisting Members to meet any operational gaps for the implementation of the PHP-C and provision of Person Protective Equipment (PPE) where required.

3. It was recognised that this support in many cases was a one-off injection of resources to allow Members to adapt to the new realities and technology of online communication and border safety protective equipment which had been used in a very limited manner by PIDC and most Members prior to June 2021. It was envisaged that once the importance of these

activities and costs were recognised by national governments, it would allow Members to readily incorporate these costs into their national organisational budgets. In November 2020, the Secretariat recruited a Programme Officer to coordinate the Programme's implementation. Since then, the Secretariat has engaged and provided support to 15 PIDC Members or about 75% of the membership.

PIDC COVID-19 Communication Package

4. The Secretariat has completed procurement of Communication Packages for all 15 PIDC Members engaged under the programme, including American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federate State of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The final package composition varied based on the Members' prioritised needs. The Secretariat has also developed an Asset Register database and registered all communication equipment procured and received by the 15 Members.

5. For the use of the PIDC Communication Package, the Secretariat developed Terms and Conditions for the Members and held a briefing for Members in March 2021. The Terms and Conditions are signed by the Members when they received their full communication packages. The Terms and Conditions focus on three key areas: Security, Use and Maintenance of the communication equipment ensuring their effective and secure use by PIDC Members.

6. In addition, the Secretariat procured zoom licenses for Members and delivered two Zoom Training sessions to support Members to build the capacity of Members' to host meetings. This included a Beginners (6 May 2021) and an Advanced (7 May 2021) training session with more than ten participants per session. One-on-one sessions were also held with Members upon request.



Figure 1: PIDC Communication Packages for Members

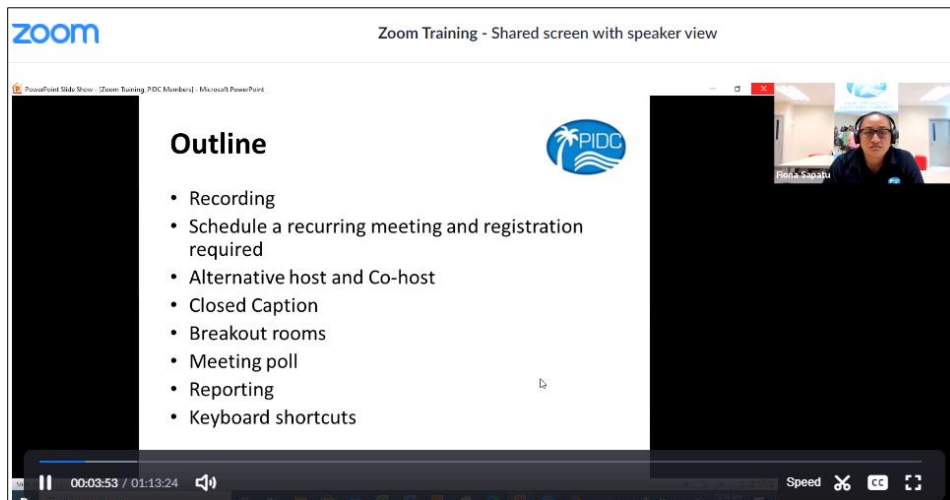


Figure 2: Zoom training delivered on Zoom platform

At the completion of the Zoom training, the Secretariat conducted a Training Feedback survey online which was very positive with 88% finding the training very productive and agreeing to recommend the same training to new staff members.

PIDC COVID-19 Operational Safety Equipment

7. A total of 14 Members confirmed request for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) support. This was mainly as backup PPE stock specifically for Immigration Officers in case the current equipment usually sourced through their health officials ran out. The general items requested included face masks, face shields, disposable gloves, disposable gowns, hand sanitizers and other disinfectants items. The Secretariat has completed procurement of PPE for all 14 Members, which were sourced from both local and overseas suppliers.



Figure 3: Personal Protection Equipment supplied under the COVID-19 Support Programme

8. The Secretariat also engaged the assistance of Australia Border Force (ABF) Pacific Engagement & Capacity Building on guidance regarding border safety in a COVID-19 environment as part of the Operation Akamau network. This collaboration is continuing as the Programme moves into further capacity building for Immigration authorities in ready for border reopen in due time.

Resource Implications

9. The programme spending is within budget for the current financial year of \$350,000WST. Total spending as of 03 May 2021 is at 80% (WST\$278,949.39) of the total budget with about with about 9% committed for final payment process (at date of this report). The Secretariat is looking to support additional specific activities for the 2021/ 2022 financial year especially around policy and PPE support especially as the region looks towards the easing of travel restrictions in the future.

ANNEX ONE

Standard Communication Package provided by PIDC

1. To support direct contact between PIDC Executives and Operational Staff:
 - a. Up to two laptops per Member;
 - b. Two online Zoom Platform licenses for 12 months;
 - c. Two Microsoft Office licences for a period of 12 month;
 - d. Two anti-virus licences for a period of 12 months.

2. To support teleconferencing multi-media support for online group meetings, workshops or consultations with PIDC Secretariat, Members and technical experts:
 - a. One tele-conferencing camera with microphones capability;
 - b. One projector;
 - c. One UPS for the equipment.

3. To support connectivity:
 - a. Internet support for a dedicated separate wifi or landline connection for 12 months to support Zoom communication should PICT government policies restrict the use of this platform on its networks or computers.