8,000 seasonal workers by 2025 from PNG
OUTLINE

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WHAT IS PNG DOING TO ACHIEVE ITS TARGET?

1. Identified issues & opportunities
2. Conducted pilot regional recruitment initiative to identify best practice recruitment model for PNG
3. Labour mobility reforms introduced – LMU established to boost PNG’s numbers to 8,000 workers by 2025
4. Design & implement best practice decentralised Regional Recruitment model (model)
5. LMU partnered with Participating District Administrations & Provincial Governments known as Regional Recruitment Hubs (RRHs)
6. Pre-selection, pre-screening and funding for all in-country mobilisation costs decentralised to RRHs
7. LMU finalises recruitment and manages WRP to match the right workers to the right jobs
8. A robust & responsive national labour mobility policy & framework is developed to ensure sustainability & consistency at all levels of Government
9. Confidence in PNG’s recruitment process is achieved
10. Demand for PNG workers increases as first preference for employers as a reliable workforce

Scope: First time confirmed PALM workers recruited directly under this model since end of 2019
**Issues: PNG’s low numbers**

- Despite PNG’s large land mass in the Pacific with a population of almost nine million people of whom around 28% are unemployed and eligible for temporary work, it remains one of the lowest sending countries compared to its fellow PICs neighbours.

- Since 2011, PNG has struggled to effectively promote and target rural based workers for temporary overseas jobs due to a host of factors including lack of human and financial resources and poor governance when the seasonal worker functions were coordinated through the Department of Labour & Industrial Relations (DLIR).
Opportunities: Economic benefits

“Even with the setback of COVID-19, we [PNG] are on track to achieve the Marape Government goal of having over 8,000 workers overseas by 2025.”

Hon. Ian Ling-Stuckey, Minister for Treasury

Promoted as a key revenue driver under the Marape-led Government estimating PGK$140 million worth of remittances from the workers to their families.

(Post Courier, 2021)
Opportunities: Pilot Regional Initiative

• Madang District was the first RRH to successfully mobilise 49 workers under PALM (SWP + PLS)
• Applied the Ward Development Structure through a bottom-up approach
  • practiced rural community participation to identify, select & screen candidates from the clan, village, community and ward level prior to final endorsement and funding from the Madang District Development Authority (MDDA)
• Outcome: Best workers were selected and financially supported & increased employer requests for Madang workers

Caption: Honorable Member for Madang Open District, Honourable Bryan Kramer with the pioneer cohort of workers from his electorate bound for Australia under the pilot regional initiative.
Design & implement best practice model in PNG: Decentralised Regional Recruitment model

- Builds on success of pilot regional recruitment initiative
- NEC submission made Nov 2019 to establish an independent LMU under Dept. of Treasury to send 8,000 workers by 2025 was approved and enacted.
- LMU increased partnership through MOUs with more participating RRHs
- RRHs act as agents through this model to identify, pre-select and pre-screen workers from the clan, village, community and ward level prior to endorsement at the DDA or PEC level
- All seasonal worker functions transferred from DLIR to LMU who oversee entire recruitments process as trusted intermediary to facilitate mobilisation & manage the WRP
- RRHs are financiers through a unique funding arrangement enabled by DSIP or PSIP & meet all in-country costs to mobilise workers.
Who are the RRHs?

- 14 RRHs
- Anticipating more to join
- Result in increased number of workers
Early wins despite travel restrictions

Nov-Dec 2019: 49 workers mobilised

Mar 2020: 195 workers prepared (horticulture, meatworks & hospitality)

Jan 2021: 46 workers prepared (meatworks & broccolini)

Mar 2021: 184 workers signed contracts (C-19 disrupted travel)

Apr 2021: 162 workers prepared

Sep 2021: More than 200 women in Enga Province pioneer a new pilot project PNG Work Readiness Pathway

TBA: Borders opening an additional 1,200 workers ready for mobilisation

PNG maintains its progress to meet its target
CONSIDERATIONS FOR PNG

• Mitigate risks associated with disbursement of DSIP or PSIP funds to ensure sustainability
• Reduce in-country mobilisation costs incurred by RRH ranging from PGK3,000 – K7,000 (AUD $1,400 - $2,700) per worker
  • Explore advantages & disadvantages of mobile panel physicians
• Conduct targeted stakeholder consultations to inform the draft policy
• Develop standard systems and processes that capacity build the LMU and RRHs
  • National governance arrangements should be reflected at the sub-national level
• Develop standard database management tool to capture accurate worker information
  • Streamlined to the Department of Information Communication standards
• Increase demand for PNG workers in other strategic employment sectors such as fisheries, forestry, poultry, maritime, healthcare, tourism and hospitality
• Engage a PNG Country Liaison Officer to establish and enhance stronger links between PNG local communities and Australian employers/industries
Significance & relevance of PNG’s model

Research gap: it will contribute to the scholarship of Pacific labour mobility specifically in decentralisation through the triple wins framework.

Policy: PNG offers an alternative recruitment model that:

• At national level will contribute to achieving KRA 1 (Increased revenue & wealth creation) and KRA 3 (Sustainable Social Development) of the PNG MTDPIII
• At a regional level, will provide key lessons learned for other low mobility PICs

“We know our new approach to labour mobility will set the standard for the region...”
Hon. Ian Ling-Stuckey, CMG. MP
Caption: Hon. Bryan Kramer, Minister for Justice & Attorney General and Open Member for Madang District standing with some of the Madang workers who departed for Australia last year and are now working in the agriculture and meatworks industries in regional New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland.