



## Mid-term evaluation of the Strengthening Pacific Partnerships project

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## Executive Summary

### Background

The Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) project, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), is managed by the RSE SPP team in the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). The RSE SPP team works with Pacific States to strengthen capacity to administer RSE and other labour mobility activities by providing technical assistance. The intended medium-term outcomes of SPP are (1) Sustained participation by Pacific States in RSE (2) Pacific States will successfully manage domestic labour requirements and social cohesion (3) On-going RSE income and horticulture skills will contribute to Pacific States' economic development.

### Evaluation

A mid-term evaluation of the Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) was conducted by an independent company, Analytic Matters Ltd. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess how well the SPP project is progressing (at its 18 month milestone) to achieve the development outcomes for Pacific States. Four criteria were used for assessing progress as required by MFAT:

- **Relevance:** the extent to which activities are suited to the priorities and policies of the RSE SPP project.
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which activities attain intended results (outputs and outcomes) and deliver any unintended results (both positive and negative).
- **Efficiency:** how well (quantitatively/qualitatively) the activity has used resources in order to achieve the results (value for money).
- **Sustainability:** whether the benefits of the activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

### Findings

#### *Relevance*

Very strong relationships have been developed between individual Pacific States and the RSE SPP team. Team members are highly respected by officials in Pacific States, and their regular visits to provide technical assistance are greatly valued. Pacific States officials describe team members as very responsive and knowledgeable. The quality of the relationships and contributions of the team were also acknowledged by local MFAT officials. In particular, the efforts of the RSE SPP team in the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu were highlighted by MFAT officials.

Approximately 245 people (officials from core RSE teams, other officials involved in RSE, and agents) have attended one or more of the six training workshops, designed to build capacity amongst officials responsible for overseas labour mobility. The workshops' relevance for respondents was evident in their ability to recall what they had done and learnt in a workshop held up to 12 months previously. The workshops have been delivered by the same trainer who has built up relationships with the core RSE teams and other participants through repeat visits.

There are conflicting findings about the Branding and Marketing workshop. On the one hand, the training's emphasis on a whole-of-government approach to the management of RSE has been

effective, with States reporting improved collaboration across government departments involved in RSE. The training also serves as a mechanism to communicate RSE as a business activity, rather than an administrative task. However, employers report they are not interested in, or impressed by, Pacific States' marketing efforts. For employers, worker performance (in and out of the workplace) is most important.

To date, 31 Pacific officials have participated in secondments in New Zealand. The secondments have enabled officials to gain a better understanding of RSE work, workplaces and worker living arrangements. Officials and employers report that the opportunity to meet has improved communication between them.

### *Effectiveness*

Positive changes are occurring for individuals and RSE work practices from SPP activities (SPP outcome one). Changes observed or reported include: improved interpersonal and communication skills, increased cross cultural understanding of employers' needs, confidence when talking with employers, improved time management and planning skills. However, structural issues are acting as a barrier to changes occurring in individuals and work practices. Structural issues include excessive workloads and under resourcing of core RSE teams, restructuring of teams or staff transfers with little (if any) knowledge transfer, and an absence of senior officials and/or government ministers acting as a "RSE champion".

Some stakeholders describe SPP's effectiveness as being compromised by a lack of clarity about its overall objective. They question whether its objective is to make RSE more efficient for employers through building capacity in Pacific States? Or does SPP aim to deliver additional value to island communities, over and above the direct contribution being made by remittances? These stakeholders are of the view that SPP (as it is currently operating) appears to be predominantly focussed on the former.

Several Pacific officials described the contribution of RSE income to economic development (SPP outcome three) as problematic given that income from RSE earnings is returning repeatedly to the same families, rather than the financial and social benefits (and costs) of RSE being spread more widely. Officials face a difficult task trying to balance employers' demands for return workers, with community leaders' desire to ensure new recruits take part in RSE. As a result, the potential for financial and social inequities developing among communities is very real. Further, Pacific States such as Kiribati, Vanuatu and PNG want RSE income to be used to develop the economies of their outer islands as a way of mitigating urban migration.

### *Efficiency*

The RSE SPP team and trainer command a high level of trust and regard by Pacific States. The team and trainer work in a participatory and collaborative way with Pacific officials. These relationships allow the respective partners to work easily and productively together. By working in collaboration, initiatives are tailored to the individual needs of Pacific States, thus making better use of SPP funding.

Future efficiency gains likely to occur with respect to increased collaborative activities with the Australian Government and international agencies. While some collaboration has already occurred with the Australian Seasonal Worker Program (SWP), there is scope to explore more opportunities especially in the areas of pre-departure training, domestic awareness activities, and health-related initiatives.

### *Sustainability*

The evaluation has identified a number of structural issues that are compromising (or have the potential to compromise) the continuity of the capacity being built by SPP, as noted above. Such structural issues may have significant consequences, namely, changes that are occurring at the individual staff level may not translate into changes in work practices and workplace cultures.

Three other potential risks to sustainability are identified, all outside SPP's area of responsibility. Firstly, although Pacific States' uptake of SWP to-date is low compared to RSE uptake (with the exception of Tonga), worker numbers may build over time and place pressure on already under-resourced units overseeing seasonal work programmes. Secondly, the limited capacity of the Visa Application Centres in Vanuatu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands is placing pressure on the seasonal work teams, increasing the likelihood of mistakes occurring. Lastly, the RSE liaison officers lack the time and funds to travel around New Zealand to address employer/worker issues, as the role was originally envisaged by MBIE and employers. There is also some difference among the RSE liaison officers in how they view their RSE role.

### **Going forward**

The SPP project is designed to assist Pacific States to gain most value from their participation in RSE. The findings indicate that the SPP activities undertaken to-date are helping to create such value by building labour mobility capacity (outcome one), specifically, the one-on-one technical assistance, secondments, training workshops, health-related initiatives and domestic awareness activities. A number of enhancements to current SPP activities are suggested including country-specific pre-departure training targeted at different audiences (new workers and return workers), leaders' training for RSE workers, and 'train the trainer' courses.

Two priorities are identified from the findings for the next phase of SPP. Firstly, the greatest leverage for ensuring the sustainability of capacity being built by SPP will come from working with senior Pacific officials to address the identified structural issues. This will assist the positive changes identified by the evaluation to become embedded into the work practices and workplace cultures of the Pacific RSE teams.

Secondly, stakeholder concerns about the lack of clarity of SPP's objective may be addressed if the project incorporates more activities that support outcomes two and three: 'Pacific States will successfully manage domestic labour requirements and social cohesion' and 'On-going RSE income will contribute to Pacific States' economic development'. Such activities include worker re-integration initiatives (such as financial literacy for workers and their families) that are appropriate for each States' identified priorities. There is potential to link such initiatives with other agriculture, micro-business or financial training initiatives funded by MFAT or international agencies in the Pacific States.

## Introduction

This report presents the findings of an independent, mid-term evaluation of the Strengthening Pacific Partnerships (SPP) project for the 18 month period October 2011 to March 2013. The main report presents the evaluation findings about the SPP project, including general observations about the seven Pacific States involved in SPP. Appendix A includes the specific findings for each of the States.<sup>1</sup>

In this report, the term “respondent” refers to a person who was interviewed for the evaluation. The term “official” refers to a Government employee in a Pacific state unless otherwise stated.

## Background

### About RSE

The Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy was introduced in April 2007 to allow for the temporary entry of offshore workers from eligible Pacific States to work in the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries. The policy has multiple objectives, including one relating to the development of Pacific States: “to contribute to New Zealand’s broad objectives in the (Pacific) region ... encouraging Pacific economic development, regional integration, and stability”.<sup>2</sup>

Between 6,800 and 7,700 RSE visas per year have been approved between 2008/09 and 2011/12 enabling Pacific workers travel to New Zealand to work for periods of up to seven months before returning home.<sup>3</sup> Pacific States are required to administer RSE systems in-country, including facilitating worker recruitment, worker pre-departure training, health and police checks, visa applications, and liaison with New Zealand employers.<sup>4</sup>

### About SPP

The SPP project is developmental, aimed at strengthening (for existing participating States) or establishing (for newer participating States) capacity to administer RSE and other labour mobility activities. The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) through the New Zealand State Sector Partnership Fund. The project is part of New Zealand’s on-going commitment to supporting the economic development of participating Pacific States through involvement in labour mobility schemes, with a particular focus on RSE. The SPP project is designed to assist Pacific States to gain most value from their participation in RSE.

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<sup>1</sup> The seven Pacific States include five (Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) which have participated in RSE from its inception in 2007; the Solomon Islands which has had RSE workers in New Zealand since 2007, but did not sign an Inter-Agency Understanding (IAU) with the former Department of Labour until 2010, and Papua New Guinea which has been involved in some SPP activities and is in the process of negotiating an IAU with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment..

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet Policy Committee (2006). Pacific Labour Mobility POL (06)293, Wellington: Cabinet Policy Committee.

<sup>3</sup> Workers from Kiribati and Tuvalu may be employed for periods of up to nine months before returning home, reflecting the greater distance from New Zealand and associated travel costs from these countries.

<sup>4</sup> This is not the case in the Solomon Islands where private agents undertake these activities.



The SPP project, which began in October 2011, is managed by the RSE SPP team in the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).<sup>5</sup> The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry and MFAT identifies three goals for the SPP project, namely:

- i. Pacific States' capacity to administer RSE and wider labour export activities is strengthened (for existing participating States) or established (for new States).
- ii. In-country opportunities for horticulture skills development and use are identified and scoped.<sup>6</sup>
- iii. Pacific States' processes for wider labour export are improved (including through improved regional cooperation around Pacific labour mobility).

The MoU identifies the intended outcomes of the SPP project as follows. The SPP results diagram is provided in Appendix B.<sup>7</sup>

1. Sustained participation by Pacific States in RSE.
2. Pacific States will successfully manage domestic labour requirements and social cohesion.
3. On-going RSE income and horticulture skills will contribute to Pacific States' economic development.

## The evaluation

An independent evaluation company, Analytic Matters, was contracted to undertake the mid-term evaluation of SPP. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess how well the SPP project was progressing to meet the short term development outcomes for Pacific States. Four criteria were used for assessing progress as required by MFAT:

- Relevance: the extent to which activities are suited to the priorities and policies of the RSE SPP project.
- Effectiveness: the extent to which activities attain intended results (outputs and outcomes) and deliver any unintended results (both positive and negative).
- Efficiency: how well (quantitatively/qualitatively) the activity has used resources in order to achieve the results (value for money).
- Sustainability: whether the benefits of the activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

The evaluation was designed in collaboration with the RSE SPP team and involved, primarily, a qualitative research methodology. Face to face interviews were conducted with key RSE officials and other stakeholders in each of the Pacific States by two evaluators and an academic with extensive knowledge of RSE. Face to face and telephone interviews were conducted with key stakeholders and RSE employers in New Zealand. The evaluation methods also included observations in each Pacific State and a review of SPP and related documents. More detailed information about the methodology is in Appendix B.

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<sup>5</sup> The SPP project followed on from the SPP Pilot which was scoped during 2008/09 and introduced in 2009/10. The primary objective of the pilot was to build the capacity of RSE to contribute to the development dimension of the policy. The initial focus was on building capacity in Kiribati and Tuvalu and encouraging employers to recruit from these countries so they could remain viable in RSE.

<sup>6</sup> Goal (ii) is out of scope for this evaluation.

<sup>7</sup> Dated 13 December 2011.

## SPP findings

This section presents the findings of the SPP evaluation, based on the four criteria, namely, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The section begins with a description of the main SPP activities with Pacific States.

### Overview of SPP activities

The RSE SPP team works with participating States to deliver capacity-building technical assistance focussed on five key areas: information management, processes, knowledge, communication and marketing. This assistance is tailored to each State according to how it administers the RSE policy, its level of engagement, capacity-building needs, contextual factors and its identified priorities.

Table 1 summarises the SPP activities that have been undertaken with the seven Pacific States in the 18 month period October 2011-March 2013. The number of ticks represents the number of times a workshop has been delivered. An asterisk refers to training planned for April-June 2013. More detailed information about each of these activities is provided in the section titled "Relevance".

**Table 1: SPP activities**

SPP activities	Kiribati	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu	Papua New Guinea
<b>Training workshops</b>							
Conversations for Results	*		✓		✓	✓	
Communication for Success	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	
Planning for Outcomes and Customer Relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
RSE Branding and Marketing	*	✓	✓	*	✓	*	
Negotiation and Influencing for Strategic Success	✓	✓		*	✓	✓	
Leadership Essentials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Other activities</b>							
Secondments (number of participants)	6	6	4	5	4	3	3
Health-related initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre-departure and other resources (see below)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

SPP activities	Kiribati	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu	Papua New Guinea
Pacific Liaison Officer pre-season briefing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

## Findings

### Relevance

Relevance is defined as “the extent to which the SPP project is suited to the priorities and policies of the Pacific States, and key stakeholders”.<sup>8</sup> The relevance of SPP activities is discussed under the following headings: context, relationship-based approach, training workshops, secondments, health-related activities, and domestic awareness workshops.

#### Context

In 2011, the labour sending capacity of Pacific States was variable. Although some infrastructure had been built up in the four years since RSE began, a number of factors adversely impacted on such capacity, resulting in systems described as “delicately poised”.<sup>9</sup> Such factors included staff turnover resulting from operational staff being transferred to other government departments, the restructuring of RSE teams, and political change.

A three-day workshop was held in December 2011 with senior Pacific officials, representatives from the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industry, and key stakeholders to identify development needs crucial to the management of RSE in Pacific sending states. The workshop was followed by one-on-one discussions between officials in the RSE team and each Pacific State about their priorities and needs. This information formed the basis of an action plan for each State identifying its priorities.

#### Relationship-based approach of the RSE SPP team

There are two aspects to relevance in respect of SPP – **how** SPP is working and **what** SPP is doing. This section focusses on “the how” question.

There is evidence that very strong relationships have been developed between individual Pacific States and the RSE SPP team.<sup>10</sup> Team members are highly respected by officials in Pacific States, and their regular visits to provide technical assistance are greatly valued. Pacific States officials describe team members as very responsive and knowledgeable. The quality of the relationships and contributions of the team were also acknowledged by local MFAT officials. In particular, the efforts

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum of Understanding.

<sup>9</sup> SPP Concept paper (undated).

<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this report, the RSE SPP team refers to the SPP Relationship Manager and SPP Senior Advisor positions (both of which are funded by SPP), and the two RSE Relationship Manager positions (both of which are funded by MBIE).

of the RSE SPP team in the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu were highlighted by MFAT officials.

Some senior Pacific officials compare the supportive, relationship-based approach of the RSE SPP team to their experience of the Seasonal Work Program (SWP) in Australia. According to respondents, there has been minimal interaction between SWP officials and Pacific States, except in Tonga where a joint domestic awareness workshop was run in 2012 by the SPP Relationship Manager, an Australian official and Tongan government officials.

### *Training workshops*

The SPP training workshops to date have been primarily designed to build capacity amongst officials responsible for overseas labour mobility in the participating Pacific States. The workshops have targeted the RSE operational staff and managers within each State, and agencies with a role in the RSE process (e.g. Police, Health, officials from outer islands). Recruitment agents have also been included in workshops in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Approximately 245 people have attended one or more of the six training workshops shown in Table 2.

The workshops are based on core content relating to RSE work processes and practices that is customised to the needs of individual States and their particular operating arrangements. Tools, templates and resources are developed with participants for use in their work e.g. planning tools and customer service protocols. The evaluators sighted some of these resources and tools being used in the workplace.

**Table 2: SPP workshop objectives**

Workshop	Objectives
Conversations for Results	Improving confidence and assertiveness to initiate and sustain effective conversations with RSE employers and key stakeholders by addressing cultural issues and barriers.
Communication for Success	Building interpersonal and communication skills, in particular as they relate to RSE employers.
Planning for Outcomes and Customer Relationship Management	Developing project planning and management skills, to successfully plan for and manage the recruitment and deployment of RSE workers to New Zealand.
RSE Branding and Marketing	Developing a branding and marketing plan to market their country's seasonal labour mobility schemes to existing and potential employers.
Negotiation and Influencing for Strategic Success	Building skills, knowledge and assertiveness for communicating with RSE employers in an influential, persuasive and credible way towards achieving more successful results in their negotiating, issues management and marketing conversations.
RSE Leadership Essentials	Developing the knowledge, skills and confidence of Pacific RSE leaders for applying a range of leadership strategies to increase staff and team performance towards achieving more successful outcomes for the RSE scheme.

The trainer's objective is for the workshops to achieve more than enhancing participants' skills. The training is used as a "vehicle" for influence by delivering key messages that are embedded in the

workshop content. For example, a key message communicated to participants is the need for Pacific States to have a business-like approach to operating RSE (rather than regarding RSE as an administrative activity). The trainer describes the workshops as providing an entry point for influence.

The workshops are delivered by the same trainer who has built up relationships with the core RSE teams and other participants through repeat visits. Participants' comments about the trainer were consistently positive, reflecting their trust and respect for him. It was interesting to observe participants smiling or becoming animated when they talked about the trainer:

*"(name of trainer) is a good man, very understandable, very socialised with us."*

The workshops' relevance for respondents was evident in their ability to recall what they had done and learnt in a workshop held up to 12 months previously. Many respondents commented that the SPP workshops were engaging and interesting, unlike other training and education experiences in the past.

The relevance of the training is also evident in the way some participants have used content from the workshops to train other officials, or included material in the pre-departure training, or built on the training. For example, in Tonga the Deputy Chief Executive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) ran a week's training for all staff building on the SPP training. In Kiribati, material from the "Communications for Success" workshop has been incorporated into the pre-departure training. In Tuvalu, material from the training has been used with staff in the National Bank of Tuvalu.

There are conflicting findings about the Branding and Marketing workshop. On the one hand, the training's emphasis on a whole-of-government approach to the management of RSE has been effective, with States reporting improved collaboration across government departments involved in RSE.<sup>11</sup> The training also serves as a mechanism to communicate the importance of Pacific States approaching RSE as a business activity, rather than an administrative task.

The findings from employer and stakeholder interviews provide a different perspective. Employers report they are not interested in, or impressed by, Pacific States' marketing efforts. For employers, worker performance (in and out of the workplace) is "what counts", together with the ease and timeliness of their dealings with Pacific officials. Employers share information among themselves about well performing worker groups. They have "long memories" about poor worker performance, with the result that a State's reputation as a source of good workers can be damaged and it may take a considerable time to recover from this.

The state of the RSE market is also identified as a reason for respondents' reservations about the marketing training. The current cap on RSE arrivals (8,000) is already close to being met, leaving little opportunity for a Pacific State to increase its market share. Currently, a State can only increase its worker numbers when another State's numbers decline. Consequently, a few respondents question whether the marketing training is raising false expectations for Pacific States. Given these

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<sup>11</sup> This whole-of-government approach is referred to as the "Inc" approach.

conflicting findings, it is suggested that the intent and approach of the Branding and Marketing workshop is reviewed to assess its on-going relevance.

### *Secondments*

The principal objective of secondments is to enhance Pacific officials' understanding of the working operations of RSE from a New Zealand (government and private sector) perspective. Officials visit two or more RSE employers who recruit workers from their country to gain first-hand experience of the workplace and workers' living arrangements. A few officials have spent time working alongside workers in orchards and pack houses, or stayed overnight with workers in their accommodation. Officials and employers have the opportunity to talk to each other about their respective priorities and expectations. Officials also discuss any workplace and pastoral care issues with workers.

Thirty one Pacific officials have participated in secondments to-date, with more planned for 2013. Participants have ranged from ministerial and senior government officials to operational staff, the majority of whom have little, if any, experience of the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries. For some officials, the secondment was their first visit to New Zealand.

The secondments are very relevant for Pacific officials, as reflected in their comments about their experiences and how they are using what they learnt on returning home. From the perspective of officials, there are two aspects to the secondments' relevance:

- Experience of work, workplaces and worker living arrangements:  
Operational staff are using their first-hand experience of work and workplaces to brief prospective workers about the nature of the work and what is expected of them in the workplace. Examples provided by respondents include: what is involved in working at the top of a ladder while carrying a bin of apples, and bud rubbing. Similarly, operational staff are better able to brief prospective workers about accommodation and other living arrangements.
- Improved communication and relationships with employers:  
Pacific officials commented that communication with employers had become easier since meeting the employer during a secondment. A Pacific State official said the opportunity to talk face to face with employers resulted in greater acceptance of the need for their workers to have at least four months' work to make travel to New Zealand worthwhile.

Secondments may also benefit employers. The following vignettes from interviews with two employers illustrate how face to face contact between employers and Pacific officials has improved the quality of their interactions:

*What has really helped is having the Pacific officials come to our premises, and meeting them face to face. It means both organisations can put a face to the name, questions can be asked face to face. This has resulted in a better working relationship. If anything is not working, we can talk easier (having met each other). It is important that (the) face to face relationship continues.*  
(Kiwifruit employer)

*Talking with (officials) has been beneficial. The officials asked if they could increase their numbers and the employer agreed after saying "you will have to get your recruitment process working better". The employer explained what they were looking for (with regard to apple*

*harvesters) and the officials have delivered, by getting workers from the outer islands who have a work ethic and are used to manual labour. (Pipfruit employer)*

Officials and employers provided three suggestions for increasing the value of secondments:

- Ensure secondments are not arranged during the busy times of the year for officials and employers.
- Extend opportunities for secondments to include other departments involved in the RSE process, community leaders involved in worker selection, and agents.
- Provide employers with sufficient warning of visits by officials to ensure relevant personnel are available.

#### *Pre-departure and other resources*

The following resources have been produced to brief workers about working and living in New Zealand.

- A brochure produced by the Heart Foundation has been translated into the Pacific languages for distribution in pre-departure briefings.
- A poster about lawful behaviour was produced in association with the NZ Police. The poster was distributed to employers to display in worker accommodation.
- A brochure for workers about complaints and dispute resolution was produced in conjunction with the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.
- Work-related equipment (e.g. picking ladders and bin bags) was supplied for demonstration purposes in pre-departure briefings.
- Electronic equipment was supplied to Pacific States for pre-departure and other presentations.

#### *Health-related activities*

Risk management is an important contributor to SPP intended outcome: “*Sustained participation by Pacific State in RSE*”. Worker health is a key risk management area. The following health-related activities have occurred to-date:

- A health workshop was held with Pacific States in December 2011.
- The SPP Relationship Manager worked with the Samoan Ministry of Health to develop a one-day RSE healthy worker programme which is delivered during pre-departure training.
- A worker health programme has been initiated with Tongan and Ni-Vanuatu RSE officials.
- Health information for workers has been translated for use by workers from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.

Most Pacific States also recognise worker health as a key risk management area. Workers from Papua New Guinea attend three weeks of pre-departure training which includes physical exercise to prepare them for work. Prospective workers in Tonga are required to attend weekly exercise classes. Officials in the Tongan Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) work closely with the RSE/SWP doctor to ensure workers are fit for physically demanding work. During the 2012/13 season MIA staff sent some RSE workers to the doctor for a check-up, although the workers’ medical certificates were still valid. The workers were deemed unfit for work because they had gained too much weight since their previous medical.

Some respondents identified specific concerns about the quality of worker health checks, as follows:<sup>12</sup>

- Old X-ray machines are being used for worker health checks (Vanuatu).
- Workers are arriving in New Zealand with pre-existing medical conditions which are not being picked up in the medical check. Pre-existing conditions are not covered by medical insurance (Samoa and Tonga).
- The hospital ran out of a chemical used in the blood tests, resulting in workers' departure being delayed (Solomon Islands).
- The medical check is not comprehensive. Screening for TB is not sufficient and workers should be subject to a full medical assessment (Samoa).

#### *Domestic Awareness workshops*

Domestic awareness workshops have been held in Tonga and Kiribati.<sup>13</sup> The purpose of these workshops is to disseminate information about RSE to prospective workers, their families and communities. As noted above, the workshop in Tonga was a collaboration between SPP, SWP and Tonga officials. Fifteen consultations were held across the main islands which were attended by around 1,000 people. The Domestic Awareness workshop in Kiribati (held over four days) was targeted at mayors and officials from the outer islands who are responsible for worker selection. The workshop was attended by around 30 people. In both countries these workshops were considered to be very valuable.

### ***Effectiveness***

Effectiveness is defined as "the extent to which the SPP project attains its intended results (outputs and outcomes), and any unintended results (both positive and negative)." <sup>14</sup> This section presents the findings about two key outcome areas: "building labour mobility capacity", and "RSE income contributes to economic development".

#### *Building labour mobility capacity*

The evaluation sought to identify tangible changes that can be attributed to SPP activities. Since SPP has been operating for only 18 months, this section focuses on the progress that is being made towards SPP's intended result of increased Pacific labour mobility capacity.

Table 3 summarises reported changes that have occurred as a result of SPP activities to-date. More detailed accounts of changes that have occurred in respect of individual Pacific States can be found in Appendix 1.

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<sup>12</sup> The quality of worker health checks is beyond SPP's area of responsibility.

<sup>13</sup> Domestic awareness activities are included in the action plans of all the Pacific States. It is up to each State to decide the approach and timing of such activities.

<sup>14</sup> Memorandum of Understanding.



**Table 3: Changes from SPP capacity building**

Changes in individuals	Changes in RSE work practices (or work practices in other departments)	Wider changes
Improved interpersonal skills. Pacific officials were observed shaking hands confidently, maintaining eye contact, and engaging in conversation	More timely email and phone responses	Improved relationships and more collaborative approach across government departments (and with recruitment agents in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands)
Officials have increased cross cultural understanding e.g. the importance of timeliness	Development and use of a customer service protocol	Improved relationships with New Zealand employers and better understanding of New Zealand work and living conditions
Officials have increased confidence about talking with employers	Material from the Communications workshop incorporated into pre-departure training (Kiribati)	Progress has been made in some States to approaching RSE as a business opportunity, rather than an administrative task
Officials have improved their time management and planning skills	Establishment of regular cross-agency meetings (Vanuatu)	
Officials are able to communicate more effectively with their colleagues and with RSE workers	Development and use of an RSE processing timeframe (from ATR approval to workers' departure date) to manage workflow (Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu)	
Improved interviewing and listening skills (Tonga)	Use of priority lists and checklists to organise daily tasks (Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu)	
Improved HR management of more junior staff (Tuvalu)	Use of a customised yearly planner to manage workflow (Tonga)	
An island deputy chief and a recruitment agent have written business proposals to gain funding (Tuvalu and Vanuatu)	Restructuring of RSE administrative unit (Tonga)	
	Staff assessments introduced (Tuvalu)	
	Establishment of weekly departmental meetings (Tuvalu)	
	Prompt processing of RSE payments (advance to RSE workers for initial costs) (Tuvalu)	

We are confident these changes are attributed to SPP for two reasons. Firstly, two of the evaluation team have existing relationships with Pacific officials through their on-going RSE-related visits since 2007. During the evaluators' recent visit, they observed changes in individuals, notably improved confidence and communication skills. The responsiveness of Pacific officials to our emails when arranging interviews was also noted.

Secondly, we applied the findings against learning transfer theory (e.g. Gilley and Hoekstra, 2003; Holton, 1996; Yamnill and McLean, 2001). This body of theory identifies the factors required for learning to be successfully transferred from a learning context (such as a classroom), to being used or applied in a workplace. In summary, three main factors are required:

- Motivation to transfer: This refers to participants' desire to use the knowledge and skills from a course (or other learning situation) in their job. A key influence on participant motivation is their perceptions of the relevance of the learning for them and their work.
- Transfer design: This refers to the design and content of the training which provide for the transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace. The features of training design that facilitate learning transfer include the inclusion of "problems", tasks or activities that are the same as those in the workplace.
- Transfer climate: This refers to characteristics of the work environment that facilitate or inhibit the application of learning on the job.

The SPP findings are applied against these three factors (Table 4).

**Table 4: Application of SPP findings to learning transfer dimensions**

Motivation to transfer (the participant)	Transfer design (the training)	Transfer climate (workplace environment in which the learning is to be applied)
<p><i>Summary of findings:</i> Workshops reported by respondents as a positive learning experience, they were engaged ("I didn't feel sleepy"). Respondents commented on the effort made by the trainer to get to know them as people. Respondents explained how the training was relevant for their work. Respondents said they were looking forward to the trainer returning to do more training with them.</p>	<p><i>Summary of findings:</i> Core workshops are tailored according to the needs of individual Pacific States. Training is participatory. Training is focussed on use /application i.e. workshops produce resources that will be useful to respondents after the training; the evaluators sighted emails sent by the trainer to individuals after a workshop, following up on officials' activities. Repeat visits by the trainer reinforces the emphasis on use/application of training.</p>	<p><i>Summary of findings:</i> Structural issues are acting as a barrier to the use and application of learning from the workshops. Such issues include: Restructuring of core RSE teams, or staff transfers. Little (if any) knowledge transfer. Excessive workloads and under resourcing of core RSE teams. Bureaucratic processes acting as a "block" for new initiatives. Absence of senior officials and/or government ministers acting as a "champion" for RSE</p>
<b>Assessment:</b> ✓	<b>Assessment:</b> ✓	<b>Assessment:</b> X

Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate that SPP activities are having an impact. However as Table 4 shows, the extent of this change is constrained. Change is occurring within individuals' spheres of influence. However, such change is "rubbing up" against the structural issues identified above. Unless attempts are made to address such structural issues by both Pacific States and the RSE SPP team, the benefits of SPP that are emerging (notably increased capacity within individuals in the core RSE teams) will dissipate over time. This is discussed further in the sustainability section below.

#### *Contribution of RSE income to economic development*

Some stakeholders said the overall objective of SPP is not clear – is the objective to make RSE more efficient for employers through building capacity in Pacific States (the outcome area above)? Or does SPP aim to deliver additional value to island communities, over and above the direct contribution being made by remittances? Other stakeholders are of the view that SPP (as it is currently operating) appears to be predominantly focussed on the former. They question the extent of SPP's development focus, particularly relating to workers' families and communities. These concerns are examined further in the Discussion section.

Pacific respondents identified a number of issues that are impacting on RSE income contributing to economic development. Firstly, respondents from Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu expressed concern about how RSE income is being used by some workers and their families, as follows.

- There may be a significant discrepancy between the amount earned in New Zealand and the amount brought home by the worker.
- Earnings are being spent on consumer goods or given to the church.

- Workers are spending their earnings quickly, or distributing cash to their family, leaving little if any savings for the future.
- When the worker returns home s/he finds that the remittances have been already been spent.
- Consumer expectations and behaviour are increasing in some families, resulting in workers having to return to New Zealand to earn the income required to meet such expectations.
- Workers purchase equipment but lack money for repairs when it breaks down.
- Cultural practices whereby workers focus on meeting immediate needs, rather than on longer term planning.

Other comments relate to structural issues. Pacific officials face a difficult task trying to balance employers' demands for return workers, with community leaders' desire to ensure new recruits take part in RSE. Income from RSE earnings is returning repeatedly to the same families, rather than the financial and social benefits (and costs) of RSE being spread more widely. The potential for financial and social inequities developing among communities is very real. Further, Pacific States such as Kiribati, Vanuatu and PNG want RSE income to be used to develop the economies of their outer islands as a way of mitigating urban migration.

The following extract from the interview with the Commissioner for Labour in Vanuatu describes his vision for how the benefits of RSE income can be spread more widely, thereby supporting economic and social development in island communities.<sup>15</sup> The Commissioner is keen for this approach to be trialled in one of the provinces.

*Food production has to be the bottom line. We need to plan and prepare ourselves for the time when food production is the most important aspect of life. RSE workers need to be encouraged to combine together for the purposes of food production, rather than getting into land speculation. Seventy to 80 percent of Ni-Vanuatu people live in rural areas. They are the main players in the economy. They need incentives to stay in the rural areas, rather than moving into the towns. We need to create an economy in the rural areas based on agri-business. This will make people self-reliant rather than depending on government, so they can decide for themselves what is best for them.*

*Workers are encouraged to use their earnings wisely and in a way that brings benefits beyond their immediate family. So in their first year(s) of work, the worker focuses on their family's needs (e.g. a house), before establishing an agri-business. Once the business is running successfully, workers would focus on their community's needs, such as health (e.g. building clinics), education (e.g. building schools), and social structure to build social capital.*

*The vision is for a fund to be set up based on financial contributions from return workers which would be used for two purposes - as a revolving credit scheme for workers' travel costs (to avoid paying deductions), and for investment capital to fund social, health and education initiatives in workers' communities. Each year, every return worker (around 2500 workers)*

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<sup>15</sup> Used with permission.

*could contribute 100,000 Vatu from their RSE earnings, providing a total annual contribution of 25m Vatu to the fund.*<sup>16</sup>

## Efficiency

Efficiency refers to “how well (in quantitative and/or qualitative terms) the SPP project uses resources in order to achieve results (e.g. value for money). The efficiency criterion can also be used to determine how efficiently the project has been implemented”.<sup>17</sup>

Two full-time equivalent positions (SPP Relationships Manager and SPP Senior Advisor) are funded by SPP. The funding also covers the costs related to the following activities: training, secondments, technical assistance visits, funding of the information management work in Tuvalu and Solomon Islands, supply of equipment to Pacific States, collaboration with international stakeholders, evaluation, and the Primary Industries Training Organisation initiative (out of scope for this evaluation).<sup>18 19</sup>

While efficiency can be incorporated into an initiative’s design, efficiency in social programmes like SPP is difficult to achieve at the beginning. Significant investments of time and resource are required at the front-end, and efficiencies emerge as the initiative matures. This is the case with SPP at its 18 month milestone. Two efficiencies are identified, both of which are “invisible”. They relate to the RSE SPP team and the quality of relationships between the team and Pacific States (Table 5).

**Table 5: Efficiencies associated with SPP**

Findings	Implications for efficiency
The RSE SPP team and the trainer have established relationships with Pacific States as a result of interaction over a long period and repeat visits. They command a high level of trust and regard by Pacific States. The team works in a participatory and collaborative way with officials.	These relationships allow Pacific States and the RSE SPP team/trainer to work easily and productively together. By working in collaboration, initiatives are tailored to the needs of individual Pacific States, thus making better use of SPP funding.
Although the roles of the SPP Relationships Manager and SPP Senior Advisor focus solely on SPP, the two RSE Relationship Managers (involved in the day-to-day operation of RSE) work with them on SPP-related activities.	SPP benefits from the knowledge and experience of the two long-standing RSE Relationship Managers.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Vatu = 0.012 NZ\$. A worker’s contribution of 10,000 Vatu is the equivalent of NZ\$120.

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum of Understanding.

<sup>18</sup> Formerly known as the Horticulture Industry Training Organisation.

<sup>19</sup> The Memorandum of Understanding identifies four output areas for SPP, as follows. Activities with Pacific States are funded from output one; the Primary Industries Training Organisation initiative is funded from output two; regional co-operation is funded from output three; and the RSE SPP team is funded from output zero.

Efficiency gains are most readily available with respect to collaborative activities with Australian government officials involved in SWP, and international agencies working in the Pacific States. The following collaborative activities have occurred as at March 2013.

- A meeting was held in February 2013 between the RSE Manager and Australian government agencies to discuss cooperation. A few teleconference meetings have been held since then.
- The RSE SPP team is working with Pacific States and the World Bank to support the database and website development work being funded by the World Bank.
- A domestic awareness initiative was jointly delivered in Tonga by the SPP Relationship Manager and a DIAC official in April 2012.
- The RSE SPP team and Australian officials attend key events in the other country e.g. a DEEWR official attended the SPP Health workshop in December 2011; the SPP Relationship Manager has been invited by DEEWR to attend a labour mobility policy workshop in June 2013.
- Joint travel with officials from the World Bank and the Primary Industries Industry Training Organisation.

There is scope to explore options for further collaboration with Australian officials, especially in the areas of pre-departure training, domestic awareness activities, and health-related initiatives. Appendix D provides a summary of labour mobility capacity building initiatives of the Australian Government and international stakeholders. Two initiatives offer potential opportunities for collaboration - the recently announced AusAID funding for a new initiative to be operated by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), and the economic development initiative of the International Labour Organisation's Fiji Office (ILO) (if it is successful in securing on-going funding).

Such collaboration is essential between the SPP team, Australian officials, and officials from the World Bank and ILO to ensure their agencies' initiatives support, rather than duplicate, each other. From the Pacific States' perspective, such collaboration is important to avoid time and resource burdens for Pacific officials as a result of the visits and activities of overseas agencies.

### ***Sustainability***

Sustainability is defined as "whether the benefits of the SPP project are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Sustainability is also used to assess environmental, financial and social sustainability of an activity."<sup>20</sup>

There are two aspects of sustainability in relation to the capacity built by SPP, namely, continuity and transferability defined as follows:

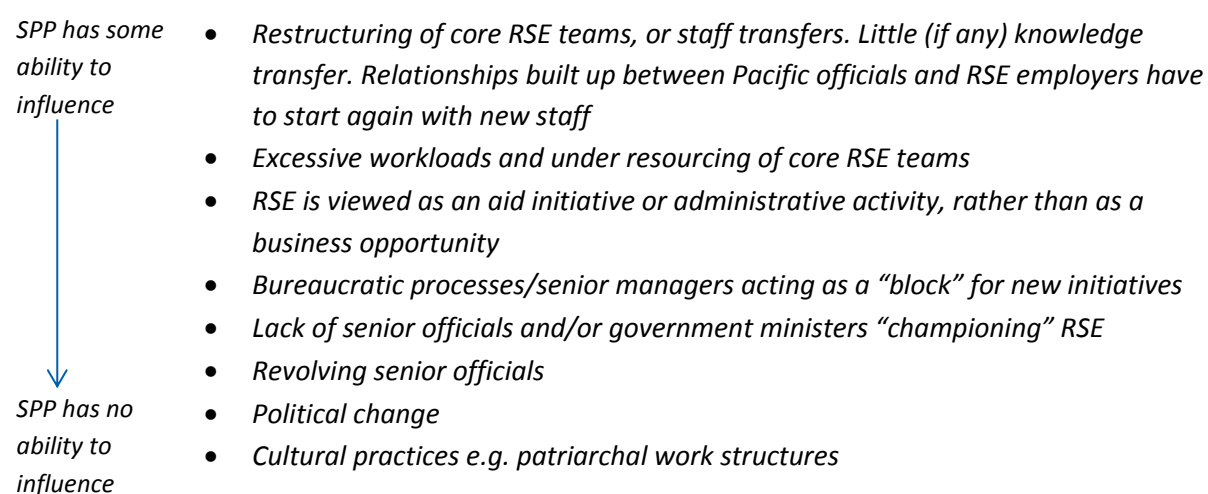
1. Continuity refers to the capacity built through SPP being retained (*SPP medium-term outcome: Sustained participation by Pacific States in RSE*).
2. Transferability refers to this capacity being transferred to wider labour export activities (*SPP long-term outcome: Pacific States' increased capacity to manage labour mobility, in addition to RSE*).

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<sup>20</sup> Memorandum of Understanding.

The first aspect (continuity) has to be achieved, in order for the second aspect (transferability) to occur. Given the evaluation's focus on SPP at its 18 month milestone, this report focusses on continuity.

The evaluation has identified a number of structural issues that are compromising (or have the potential to compromise) the continuity of the capacity being built by SPP. These structural issues may have significant consequences, namely, changes that are occurring at the individual staff level may not translate into changes in work practices and workplace cultures. We acknowledge that some of these issues are beyond the influence of SPP. Figure 1 summarises these issues and the extent of SPP's ability to influence them.



**Figure 1: Structural issues and SPP influence**

In addition to these structural issues, three other potential risks to continuity are identified, all of which are outside of SPP's area of responsibility. The first potential risk is the impact of SWP on the capacity of offices overseeing seasonal work programmes. Although Pacific States' uptake of SWP to-date is low compared to RSE uptake (with the exception of Tonga), worker numbers may build over time and place pressure on already under-resourced teams.<sup>21</sup>

The second potential risk concerns the Visa Application Centres (VACs) in Vanuatu, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands. The VACs are reported as accepting only 25-35 visa applications a day.<sup>22</sup> Visa applications for RSE workers occur in peaks over the year which may be problematic for the VACs given their current capacity. The situation in Vanuatu is particularly problematic given the number of RSE workers (around 2400 per annum). The VAC's limited capacity is placing more pressure on the RSE team and increasing the likelihood of mistakes occurring. More detailed findings about the VAC issue are provided in Appendix D.

<sup>21</sup> The numbers of SWP workers in Australia for the 2012/13 season as reported by Pacific officials are: Tonga 1000, Samoa 52, Vanuatu 50, Solomon Islands 8, Kiribati 4, PNG and Tuvalu have no SWP workers at the time of interview.

<sup>22</sup> This number covers all visa types: Student, Pacific Access Category, Limited Purpose etc.

The third potential risk concerns the Pacific RSE Liaison Officers funded by their respective Pacific government. Four of the six Liaison Officers were interviewed for the evaluation work in their Consulate or High Commission, and undertake RSE liaison work in addition to their main role.<sup>23</sup> They lack the time and funds to travel around New Zealand to address employer/worker issues, as the role was originally envisaged by MBIE and employers. There is also some difference among the Consul Generals in how they view their RSE role.

Based on the findings, indicators of sustainability have been identified to be incorporated in the SPP Exit Strategy (Appendix E).

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<sup>23</sup> Consul General (Vanuatu), Consul (Commercial) and Trade Commissioner (Samoa), Consul General (Tuvalu), Deputy High Commissioner (Papua New Guinea).



## **Discussion: evaluative assessment and going forward**

This section begins with a discussion of two key contributors to the progress made by the SPP project to-date. An overall assessment of SPP is then provided, based on the four evaluative criteria. This is followed by some suggested enhancements to SPP and concluding remarks on the future of SPP.

### ***Key contributors***

The findings indicate there are two key contributors to the success of the SPP project – effective relationships between Pacific officials and the RSE SPP team, and Pacific States’ engagement with SPP.

The positive changes that have occurred to-date as a result of SPP activities are due in part to the quality of the relationships between Pacific officials and the RSE SPP team (and trainer) which have been built over time. These relationships are greatly valued by Pacific States. They provide significant leverage for influence and create time efficiencies in working with Pacific officials. The relationships operate within the larger context of the Pacific State-New Zealand bilateral relationship, with local MFAT officials commenting on the contribution of RSE and SPP to this relationship. These relationships will continue to play an important role in future SPP activities.

Pacific States’ engagement with the SPP project is also a key contributor. This engagement is evidenced in the commitment of some senior RSE managers and government officials to build labour mobility capacity, their “championing” of RSE in particular.

### ***SPP evaluative assessment***

The main findings of the previous section are summarised below to provide an overall assessment of SPP during the first 18 months of operation.

#### ***Relevance***

The relevance of SPP is examined from two perspectives: the relevance of what is being done, and how it is being done. The workshops, secondments, technical assistance visits and other activities are relevant for building labour sending capacity in Pacific States.<sup>24</sup> The one-on-one technical assistance provided during visits of the RSE SPP team is on an as-needed basis. The content of the workshops is focussed on RSE processes and systems, and has a strong emphasis on the use and application of learning. The workshops have been targeted at operational officials, and other key participants such as agents. The trainer uses the workshops as a vehicle for influence through communicating key messages. The secondments build industry knowledge, and enhance Pacific State-employer relationships.

There is significant evidence to confirm the appropriateness of the relationship-based approach of the RSE SPP team and trainer. As noted above, the RSE SPP team has a high level of credibility and influence among Pacific officials and local MFAT officers. Similarly, the trainer has the respect of workshop participants which has built up over his repeated visits.

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<sup>24</sup> The need to review the Branding and Marketing workshop is noted.

### *Effectiveness*

Capacity is being built among members of the core operational teams. This is evident from changes in individual officials observed by the evaluators and reported by employers and other respondents. There is also evidence of changes in RSE work practices (and work practices in other departments where workshop participants work). However, examining the findings against learning transfer theory indicates such changes are being constrained by structural issues in the workplace, including staff turnover, under-resourcing of RSE teams, and lack of RSE “champions”. Unless these structural issues are addressed, the benefits of SPP that have emerged to-date will dissipate over time.

### *Efficiency*

Two important efficiencies are identified, both of which are “invisible”. They relate to the RSE SPP team and the quality of relationships between the team and Pacific States. These relationships allow Pacific States and the RSE SPP team/trainer to work easily and productively together. Efficiency gains are most readily available in respect to collaborative activities with Australian government officials involved in SWP, and international agencies working in the Pacific States. Two initiatives in particular offer opportunities for collaboration - the recently announced AusAID funding for a new initiative to be operated by DEEWR, and the economic development initiative of the ILO Fiji Office.

### *Sustainability*

The structural issues described above are compromising (or have the potential to compromise) the sustainability of the capacity being built by SPP. This means that changes occurring at the individual staff level may not translate into changes in work practices and workplace cultures. We acknowledge that some of these structural issues are beyond the influence of SPP. Three other potential risks to the sustainability of capacity built by SPP are identified: the impact of SWP on the capacity of RSE teams; the impact of VAC processes, particularly in Vanuatu; and constraints on the activities of the Pacific Liaison Officers.

### ***Suggested enhancements***

Pacific officials were asked about their priorities for the immediate future during the evaluation interview. Other stakeholders were asked about their views on SPP going forward. Based on these responses and the evaluation findings, a number of enhancements to SPP are suggested. They are presented according to their relevance to the three development outcomes for SPP identified in the MoU. The suggested enhancements will ensure the project remains on-track to achieve all of the development outcomes.

As noted above, some stakeholders describe the objective of the SPP project as ambiguous. They are concerned that SPP activities appear to serve the interests of RSE employers, rather than workers and their families and communities at home. This leads them to question the extent of SPP’s development focus. These concerns may be due in part to the fact that SPP activities undertaken to-date have concentrated on building Pacific States’ labour mobility capacity. The concerns may be addressed if the SPP project incorporates more activities that support outcome areas ‘*Pacific States will successfully manage domestic labour requirements and social cohesion*’ and

*'On-going RSE income will contribute to Pacific States' economic development'* as outlined below. These concerns may also be addressed through improved communication with stakeholders about the SPP objectives.

*Outcome: sustained participation by Pacific States in RSE*

As noted above, SPP activities have focussed primarily on this outcome area as this was of immediate concern. While capacity building should continue among the core RSE teams in each Pacific State, training workshops can be extended out to other RSE participants, including agents in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (which has already begun). Other capacity building activities such as secondments should continue. The focus of SPP on health-related initiatives should also be maintained.

The greatest leverage for this outcome area will come from working with senior Pacific officials to address the structural issues identified above, focusing on the issues shown at the top of Figure 1 (where SPP has most ability to influence). The knowledge and skills of the SPP team, together with their existing relationships with key officials will enable them to identify ways of doing this that are culturally appropriate and suited to the Pacific State's context.

Other suggested enhancements include the following.

- Implementation of the electronic database and improving the database management skills of Pacific RSE officials.
- Country-specific pre-departure training that is targeted for different audiences (e.g. new and return workers). <sup>25</sup> This may include:
  - more information about the factors that impact on earnings (e.g. weather, work down-time) and savings (e.g. repayment of airfare, distribution of money to family members and the church in New Zealand and home)
  - case studies of workers who have used their earnings to invest in family/community projects
  - video footage of the different work environments in New Zealand
  - updated videos that have a stronger island focus and content.
- Provide 'train the trainer' courses so local staff can up-skill their training skills.
- Worker health should remain a key focus for all parties. Pacific States could be encouraged to develop arrangements (beyond the required health check) to prepare workers for physically demanding work (as is being done by Tonga).
- Develop culturally appropriate leaders' training for RSE workers, some of whom are responsible for selecting other workers.
- Schedule regular meetings between the heads of the government agencies responsible for RSE/SWP administration in the islands, to share information and experiences so Pacific officials feel confident in their dealings with New Zealand and Australian employers.
- Discuss the Pacific RSE Liaison Officer role with individual Pacific States in light of the identified time and resource constraints.

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<sup>25</sup> This was also noted by some stakeholders.

*Outcome: Pacific States will successfully manage domestic labour requirements and social cohesion*

There is widespread support by Pacific States for domestic awareness activities. Officials want to extend knowledge across local communities about working and living in New Zealand as a RSE worker. This will enable local leaders, potential workers, their families and communities to have a better understanding of what is involved, and the implications of workers' extended absence on life at home. Respondents suggested the following activities, both of which could be done in collaboration with SWP officials.

- Information activities for key local stakeholders e.g. mayors, town leaders, village leaders, and others involved in worker selection. The aim is to assist worker selection processes by building understanding of the physically demanding nature of RSE work, and create awareness of the implications of worker absences on their families and communities.
- Information activities are also suggested for potential workers, their partners and families, focussing on the implications of worker absences on work at home, family relationships, and childcare.

*Outcome: on-going RSE income will contribute to Pacific States' economic development*

Worker re-integration activities are a priority for Pacific States, especially relating to financial literacy/budgeting for workers and their families. This is in response to their concern about how RSE income is being used by some workers and their families, and structural issues arising from disparities in incomes streams among community members. In-country skills training, especially in small agribusiness development would benefit rural communities. There is potential to link such training to the Primary Industries Training Organisation pilot arrangements in Samoa and Vanuatu, and other agriculture, micro-business or financial training initiatives funded by MFAT or international agencies in the Pacific States. The interest in re-integration activities is clearly apparent in the country reports provided in Appendix A. The suggestions in these reports could provide a useful focus for further activities supported by SPP as it moves into the next phase of its operations.

***Conclusion: creating most value for Pacific States***

The SPP project is designed to assist Pacific States to gain most value from their participation in RSE, as reflected in its three key outcome areas: increased labour sending capacity, successful management of domestic labour requirements and social cohesion, and contribution of RSE income to economic development.

The findings indicate progress is being made towards building labour sending capacity of the core RSE teams in the Pacific States. The challenge now is to ensure these positive changes become embedded into work practices and workplace cultures of the core RSE teams. This involves the proactive support of senior Pacific managers and government officials. It also requires the identified structural issues to be addressed.

The next phase of the SPP project provides significant opportunities to increase information-based activities designed to maximise the benefits and minimise the impact for families and communities of worker participation in RSE. Re-integration activities are required to "seed" longer-term

economic benefits for workers' families. Without such input, the benefits of RSE income for families will be short lived, and may create life style expectations that are impossible to maintain in the longer-term. As described by the Commissioner of Labour in Vanuatu, the benefits of RSE income have to extend across workers' communities, if social and financial inequities are not to emerge.

Scoping and implementing re-integration activities appropriate to each Pacific State's identified priorities will help to address stakeholder concerns about SPP's development focus. Engagement with Australian and international officials during the scoping phase will help to identify potential synergies across agencies, and avoid duplication of effort. Re-integration activities facilitated by the SPP project have the potential to facilitate "bottom-up" economic and social development of workers' families and communities, thereby helping to maximise the value of RSE participation for Pacific States.

## Appendix A: Pacific State findings

The findings for individual Pacific States are outlined in this appendix, and include contextual factors, what has worked well with SPP, what has changed as a result of SPP, the perspective of RSE employers (where applicable), and respondents' suggestions for improvements to SPP.

### **Samoa**

#### *Contextual factors*

Samoa is the third largest supplier of labour to New Zealand employers, sending approximately 1,100 RSE workers for the 2012/13 season. Samoa also provides a small number of seasonal workers to Australia (around 50 workers for 2012/13). When the RSE scheme was introduced in 2007, RSE administration was located in the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (OPMC). The CEO of the OPMC noted that administration of the scheme has remained with the OPMC for the past five years because of the scheme's importance to Samoa. The Prime Minister takes a strong personal interest in the programme, and it is considered a crucial part of the New Zealand-Samoa bilateral relationship. This commitment is also evident in the employment of a liaison officer based in New Zealand.

For the first three seasons RSE administration was handled by the Seasonal Worker Action Team (SWAT). The SWAT had approximately four staff seconded from different ministries/departments to manage the RSE. The retirement of the former Permanent Secretary of the OPMC in 2010, followed by the unexpected death of the head of the SWAT in early 2011 and a change of personnel in the division, caused major disruption to Samoa's ability to meet RSE employers' demands for labour in 2010/11.

Late in 2011 the current CEO of the OPMC set up a dedicated unit employing full-time staff to handle RSE administration. The Seasonal Employment Unit (SEU) initially employed three staff, with another joining the unit in early 2012. The fourth staff member, who is the unit's Principal Labour Officer, had been involved in RSE administration in the first season. She had been transferred to another division, and was brought back to oversee RSE administration in 2012.

The disruption that occurred in the SWAT in early 2011 meant there was a significant loss of institutional knowledge, and little knowledge transfer between the SWAT and the SEU. Staff employed in the SEU effectively had to "start from scratch" with RSE administration. The planned management structure for the SEU was for two staff members to be responsible for handling RSE administration, and another two to oversee the Australian scheme. However given the small numbers participating in the Australian programme, the four staff have jointly worked on the RSE.

#### *What's worked well about the SPP?*

Staff interviewed in the SEU were enthusiastic about the SPP training workshops. One of the main benefits identified by several respondents was the collaborative approach of the workshops, bringing together officials from various ministries (health, police, INZ, and labour) to ensure they are aware of each other's responsibilities and timeframes with regards to RSE processing. This whole-of-government approach to managing RSE has been carried through to the pre-departure

briefings, which also include staff from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour and the Ministry of Police.

Two SEU staff said the planning and relationship management training had been particularly valuable, generating something of a “culture shift” in the office. The Principal Labour Officer noted that SEU staff had in the past struggled at times to manage their workloads and submit RSE applications to INZ prior to INZ’s five-day turnaround, but the training had taught them how to prioritise tasks and improve their workload management.

One SEU staff member had attended leadership training in New Zealand, and said it taught them various skills that were relevant not only to RSE, but to other aspects of their life. They are now trying to develop course materials that build on the leadership training and that are customised to the Samoan work environment. The aim is to deliver the training initially to other staff in the OPMC, and longer-term to other sectors (e.g. leadership training for school teachers).

Another SEU respondent commented that the negotiation skills training had been “a milestone” in their personal development. They learnt how to approach people in the public sector in a more professional manner, and they now have a greater sense of confidence when interacting with colleagues. This respondent also said the marketing and branding training had been useful. The Samoan government had developed a draft marketing plan in the early years of the RSE scheme, but it had never progressed beyond a draft. The marketing training provided SEU staff with some essential “marketing basics” to develop their marketing plan further and to improve Samoa’s brand and image overseas.

The assistance provided by the RSE SPP team was highlighted as a benefit of the SPP programme. The CEO of the OPMC noted that the secondments have been invaluable for SEU staff, helping them to build stronger relationships with New Zealand employers and to increase their knowledge of New Zealand work and living conditions which can then be passed on to recruits during pre-departure training. The secondment in December 2012 had been especially helpful for the newly appointed Samoan RSE liaison officer who is based in the Hawke’s Bay. Visits to Samoa by an RSE Relationship Manager have also played an important role in improving communication and building relationships between the Samoan government and New Zealand RSEs.

SEU staff are yet to begin using the electronic website and database funded by the World Bank. World Bank consultants were in Samoa in early April, devising a formal set of operational procedures for the SEU, as well as working on improving the SEU’s information management systems. Data management is a priority for the SEU. The Principal Labour Officer explained that at present there is no shared network and no joint database for the storage of RSE and SWP data. Rather, SEU staff members store information on employers and RSE/SWP workers on their individual computers, which in turn can lead to inconsistencies in the data stored and some doubling up of information.

Limited staff resources in the SEU exacerbate the problem of poor information management. During peak periods SEU staff are too busy handling RSE visa applications to input RSE data. Data entry is put aside until the end of the season, when SEU staff have more time available, and the

information held by individual staff is consolidated into one spreadsheet. At the time of interview this was a task that had yet to be completed by the SEU for the current season, and a consolidated list of all RSE workers who have gone to New Zealand for 2012/13 was not available.

#### *What's changed as a result of SPP?*

According to respondents in the SEU, RSE processing has been “getting much easier” over the past 12 months as a result of the SPP training workshops. Their workload management has improved, and one respondent said the SEU “now has plenty of time” from when they receive ATR approvals to organise workers’ applications for submission to INZ. The manager of INZ, however, felt there had been little improvement in SEU’s processes during 2012, although “that is not to say RSE was bad in the first place or it’s bad now”. From this respondent’s perspective there have always been some difficulties with workflow and workload management in the SEU, and staff continue to submit late applications to INZ. But overall the SEU-INZ relationship works very well, with good communication between staff and a willingness on both sides to work collaboratively in the interests of ensuring good outcomes for Samoa.

With assistance from the SPP the Ministry of Health has developed a comprehensive ‘RSE Healthy Worker Programme’. It is a one-day programme to be run as part of the SEU’s pre-departure briefings, and covers a wide range of health-related topics. The programme was developed in 2012 with support from one of the SPP Relationship Managers, but it is yet to be formally approved by the CEO’s of the OPMC and the Ministry of Health. Bureaucratic processes within the Samoan government that require all ministerial activities to be signed off by senior government officials were identified by two respondents as a structural constraint to the successful operation of the RSE in Samoa, because it often leads to lengthy delays in new activities being implemented.

#### *Perspectives of New Zealand employers*

Of the 14 RSEs interviewed, seven employed workers from Samoa. Few employers had noticed any changes in the way the Samoan RSE programme had operated over the past 18 months. Rather, they described the processes as consistently professional and “very easy”. As one employer commented:

*They (Samoa) have a very experienced team in Apia, which reduces a lot of stress and hassle as an employer.*

Another described Samoa’s approach as a “one stop shop”:

*(They) assist with all visa applications and processing, and at no charge to the employer.  
The (RSE) staff assist (us) to get everything sorted.*

These views were reinforced by the Horticulture NZ respondent who commented that Samoan officials “listen well” to what employers want.

Only two employers said the processes had improved over the past 12 months. One attributed the improvement to support they had provided, rather than SPP. The employer had sent examples of documents prepared by the Tongan officials to Samoa to use as templates and as a result the Samoan team is now “duplicating what is done in Tonga”. The other employer commented the



current staff in the SEU were particularly “competent” and noted the RSE processes over the past six months had been “outstanding”.

Workers who perform well are described by employers as Samoa’s best marketing tool. One employer said he deliberately employs workers from different Pacific States, which sets up a competitive element in the workplace. As workers from one Pacific State had become “complacent”, Samoa had been quick to seize the opportunity to increase the number of their workers coming to this employer. In contrast, two employers had trialled Samoa workers, but had found the workers’ behaviour after hours less than satisfactory. Hence these workers had not been invited back.

### *Suggestions for improvements*

The following suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities were suggested by respondents:

Training and secondments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule training/secondments to occur outside peak RSE periods.</li> <li>• Open secondments to staff from other ministries involved in RSE, especially staff who have a role in pre-departure training.</li> <li>• Provide ‘train the trainer’ courses so Samoan staff can learn the requisite skills to effectively pass on to others.</li> <li>• Provide additional training on marketing, as SEU staff wish to improve their capacity to market Samoan workers overseas.</li> </ul>
Operational procedures and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with developing operational procedures and guidelines for ministries involved in RSE administration.</li> <li>• RSE workers recruited directly by agents/employers should be screened by SEU, to help minimise behavioural and health issues arising with some workers.</li> </ul>
Pre-departure training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training materials need to be updated and tailored for Samoan workers. Include case studies of workers who have returned to Samoa and invested in family/community projects.</li> <li>• Discuss how families and communities deal with the social costs of regular absence of workers.</li> <li>• Workers need more information about factors that impact on earnings (e.g. weather and down-time during the season) and savings (e.g. repayment of airfare, distribution of money to family members and the church in New Zealand and in Samoa).</li> </ul>
Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link database to INZ for visa processing. This would help ensure relevant information is stored in the database by SEU staff and informal agents.</li> </ul>

### Horticulture Industry Training Organisation ITO pilot

The Horticulture Industry Training Organisation (Hort ITO) is out of scope of this evaluation. As the pilot programme was mentioned by respondents during interviews, a summary of the information is provided here.

The pilot was deemed a success by the Samoan government, but there is concern about the loss of momentum now that the pilot has moved on to Tonga and Vanuatu. At this stage there are no plans to implement a full-scale horticulture training programme in Samoa, and respondents in the New Zealand High Commission felt there was some confusion around the pilot's objectives. From their perspective the programme should be designed to develop horticultural expertise in-country so that local Samoans can build the skills and knowledge required to establish horticultural enterprises at home.

The manager of the NZAID programme suggested future SPP funding could assist with the development of a full-scale one or two-year horticulture programme in Samoa. The programme could be run as a horticulture-specific cadetship, open to all Samoans, and providing extensive technical and vocational training. If the training took place prior to selection for the RSE it would serve multiple purposes: it would provide horticultural expertise to a wider pool of people than simply RSE workers (some who completed the training would be selected for seasonal work, while others would establish small horticultural enterprises at home); it would ensure RSE workers had some horticultural expertise prior to deployment in New Zealand; and it would help ensure there was greater turnover in worker groups because employers could select from a pool of well-trained candidates, rather than relying predominantly on return workers because they have the requisite skills. This, in turn, would help to spread the benefits of participation in seasonal work more widely among local Samoan communities.

## ***Tonga***

### *Contextual factors*

Tonga is the second largest provider of RSE labour to New Zealand, sending approximately 1,200 workers for the 2012/13 season. Tonga also supplies around 1000 workers to Australia for their Seasonal Worker Program (SWP), far exceeding the numbers supplied by other Pacific states. The general consensus among Tongan officials is that 2200 seasonal workers abroad each season is sustainable.<sup>26</sup> Officials do not want to increase the numbers of seasonal workers offshore. Rather the focus is on improving the quality of those selected, as well as managing risks associated with workers' health and welfare in New Zealand and Australia. Respondents made it clear that the RSE is critical for the NZ-Tonga bilateral relationship, and there is a high level of ministerial interest in the RSE scheme.

Since the RSE's introduction in 2007 there has been some debate within the Tongan government about which ministry should be responsible for RSE administration. For the first four years RSE administration was handled by the Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industry (MLCI). Following a cabinet reshuffle in 2011, management of the RSE (and the SWP) was transferred to the Ministry of Training, Employment, Youth and Sport (MOTEYS). The formal transfer took place in January 2012.

In March 2012 MOTSYS was disestablished, and became part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). The Employment Division of the MIA manages both the New Zealand and Australian seasonal work schemes. This division is made up of five staff members, including two staff that transferred across from MLCI. The remainder of the unit, including the Deputy CEO of the Employment Division, had little knowledge of the RSE/SWP prior to taking over the administration in early 2012. As a result, 2012 proved to be a difficult year for the MIA. There was minimal transfer of resources (e.g. pre-departure training materials) and knowledge from the MLCI. No formal training was provided during the handover, and MIA staff had to work hard to familiarise themselves with RSE visa processing during the peak period of the 2011/12 season, and to build connections with New Zealand employers.

### *What's worked well about the SPP?*

From the perspective of staff in the MIA, the SPP training workshops and the secondments to New Zealand have played a vital role in educating them about the RSE policy, building connections and improving their communication with New Zealand employers, and helping them to get their administrative processes working efficiently. SPP training on planning and relationship management was particularly valuable because MIA staff were able to devise a six-week timeframe to plan the processing of RSE workers' applications from the notification of ATR approval through until the planned date of workers' departure to New Zealand. This has improved their workload management. The six-week timeframe is also given to New Zealand employers so that they are fully aware of Tonga's visa processes, and there is no confusion over when workers will be arriving in New Zealand.

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<sup>26</sup> Tonga has an estimated net migration loss through international migration of 1800 per year out of a total population of 101,000 (2006 Census, Lolohea and Demmke, 2008). The numbers participating in the RSE and SWP therefore represent more than the current level of out-migration from Tonga.

Another benefit of the SPP training was the cross-agency approach, bringing together staff from different agencies (e.g. Ministry of Health and Ministry of Police) as well as officers from MIA's three regional outer-island branches, to encourage different agencies to work together on RSE administration. The Deputy CEO of the Employment Division followed up on the SPP training in 2012 by running a week-long internal training course for MIA staff, the outer island branch officers, and the government-appointed Tongan RSE liaison officer (flown over from New Zealand). The internal training course was based on the content of the SPP workshops, but was customised to address Tongan issues more specifically, and to deliver training in a "Tongan way".

Two MIA staff members said the communications training had been beneficial, as it had taught them how to communicate more effectively with RSE workers and with New Zealand employers. Linked to this was an improved understanding of the importance of good customer service. One official said they now recognised the value of treating RSE workers like customers, asking if there was anything they could do to help them, answer their queries and so forth. This official suggested customer service training should be delivered to all ministries in Tonga.

The SPP also supported a joint RSE-SWP Domestic Awareness Programme in 2012 that included one of the SPP Relationship Managers and an official from Australia. MIA staff valued the collaborative nature of the training, which involved officials visiting local Tongan communities to discuss RSE and SWP. MIA staff learnt about the operation of both schemes at the same time, including some of the concerns and complaints at the community level.

Visits to Tonga by officials from the RSE SPP team were highlighted as another positive outcome of the SPP initiative. The responsiveness of staff in the RSE SPP team to any requests from MIA officials (e.g. assistance to help resolve a pastoral care issue in New Zealand) was contrasted to the difficulties of dealing with officials in Australia, and the minimal assistance (in the form of training or secondments) that has been provided by Australian officials to date.

One member of the Employment Division has attended leadership training in New Zealand. The official said the training had taught them valuable skills for interviewing prospective RSE/SWP workers, as well as for counselling workers and family members about what to expect while seasonal workers are abroad and how to deal with some of the more difficult aspects of family separation. The respondent identified improved listening skills as a specific outcome of the training, learning how to sit down with workers, listen to them, be friendly and choose the "correct questions" for an interview. The leadership training had improved their overall ability to deliver the pre-departure briefings and to perform community engagement work. The official has also been on secondment to New Zealand. During the secondment they tried picking apples, oranges and strawberries, and found this practical training very useful. They are now able to explain some of the jobs that will be performed in New Zealand to new RSE recruits during pre-departure training. The official also makes use of new pre-departure training materials (a picking ladder and bin bags) provided by the RSE SPP team.

#### *What's changed as a result of SPP?*

Due to the lack of any formal handover or training by MLCI when the RSE was transferred to the new division in 2012, the assistance provided by the SPP initiative over the past 12 months has been

critical to the MIA's successful management of RSE/SWP administration. The six-week processing timeframe is clearly visible on a whiteboard in the office and is regularly updated as different groups of workers move through the various stages of RSE processing. MIA staff make use of a customised yearly planner provided by the RSE SPP team to help with managing workloads and prioritising tasks, and the CEO and Deputy CEO of the MIA both had diaries with them and took notes during their interviews.

The Employment Division's management structure has been reorganised over the past 12 months. Initially there was one staff member solely responsible for RSE administration, and another staff member in charge of the SWP. This produced a somewhat competitive atmosphere in the office, and it became clear to the Deputy CEO that it was unwise for all institutional knowledge on a particular scheme to be held solely by one staff member. All staff are now generic 'Seasonal Labour Officers' and are required to be fully conversant with both schemes. This has built the capacity of staff within the office, and it helps to minimise the future risk of loss of institutional knowledge with staff turnover.

Although MIA staff consider RSE processes to be working effectively, INZ managers had observed little improvement in the management of end-to-end processes over the past 12 months. The minimal transfer of knowledge from the MLCI was cited as the primary cause for the lack of improvement, along with limited government resources to adequately staff the MIA's Employment Division. MIA staff continue to struggle to submit applications to INZ in a timely fashion. INZ guarantees a five-day turnaround for processing RSE limited purpose visas, but they often receive late applications from the MIA. INZ staff are then under pressure to process applications in a short timeframe, and they are required to prioritise late RSE applications over other visa categories (e.g. student visas or the PAC). From the perspective of INZ managers, MIA staff require further training to improve their workload management, and they need to respect and abide by INZ's five-day processing timeframe.

There has been little progress with the electronic website and database funded by the World Bank. Information management was not a priority for the Deputy CEO in 2012 because MIA staff were trying to get up to speed with RSE processes. The World Bank has offered to assist with the installation of the new database and to providing training to MIA staff, but this is yet to be taken up by the MIA. Improving information management systems is something the Deputy CEO plans to prioritise once the peak period of the 2012/13 season has finished.

#### *Perspective of New Zealand employers*

Six of the 14 RSEs interviewed employed workers from Tonga. One employer had only one Tongan worker and had no involvement with the Tongan authorities. Four employers and the Horticulture NZ respondent commented RSE processes and communication had incrementally improved over the years, although there had been no noticeable difference that could be attributed to SPP:

*The Tongan processes have always been very good; and the staff are good to deal with.*

*(The woman staff member we deal with) is efficient, she answers questions fully, comes up with straight 'up and down' information.*

Employers particularly appreciate having a "lead person" they can go to in the Unit if need be:

*Knowing who to contact is important, because at times we have sensitive information we want to send, for example the reasons why we may not want a worker back. We don't want that information going to all and sundry, cc'd to everyone. In this respect the communication and processes with the Tongan RSE unit are working well (for us). We can be honest why we don't want to bring someone back. We also feel comfortable asking why a person is missing from their list (when we had expected them to be coming back).*

Only one employer commented the Tongan administrative processes were not working well. He referred to constant staff changes; stating he does not appreciate starting each year with finding out who the personnel are, and dealing with people who are not knowledgeable about the administrative processes. However the employer values their current workers, and in particular the leader of their Tongan group. They respect him and would like to continue providing benefit to his family, "but if this was to change, we would stop bringing workers from Tonga". Two employers commented they had reduced their number of Tongan workers, due to workers misbehaving out of work time, and instead increased numbers coming from other Pacific States.

Workers who performed well were described as the country's best marketing tool. One employer commented: "Tongans come as a family unit...they work as a family and come with the belief they are privileged to come. They make (name of business) a better workplace."

#### *Suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities*

The following suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities were suggested by respondents:

Training and secondments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership training at the community level, especially for Town Officers who effectively operate as an extension of the MIA selecting and registering workers. Formal training will help them to disseminate RSE/SWP information more effectively and tackle issues that arise among families before they become significant issues in New Zealand (e.g. educating family members on how to deal with family separation).</li> <li>• Officials from other ministries involved in the RSE (e.g. police and health), as well as Town Officers who have a role in shaping how RSE works, should be given the opportunity to participate in future secondments to learn about seasonal work in New Zealand.</li> <li>• Development of a culturally appropriate leaders' training package for RSE workers, some of whom are responsible for selecting other workers.</li> <li>• There is a view that some people, who have been funded to visit New Zealand more than once, need to stand back and allow others the opportunity to see how RSE works on the ground.</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration between New Zealand and Australian officials on any future training initiatives (e.g. future joint Domestic Awareness Programmes) would also be beneficial.</li> </ul>
Collaboration with other Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up regular meetings between the heads of the various government ministries responsible for overseeing RSE/SWP administration in the</li> </ul>

States	islands. Pacific states need to take a more collaborative approach to managing offshore labour arrangements, sharing information and experiences so that they feel confident in their dealings with New Zealand and Australian government officials and employers.
Pre-departure training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More detailed pre-departure training at the community level, especially to address some of the social costs of sending workers offshore for several months.</li> <li>• Video footage of the different work environments in New Zealand (filmed by officials during secondments) should form part of the community pre-departure training sessions.</li> <li>• Families and community members need a clearer understanding of the physically demanding nature of work in New Zealand.</li> <li>• Financial literacy training is required, particularly for the immediate family members of RSE/SWP workers.</li> </ul>
Community understanding of RSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentaries on the impact of the RSE and SWP at the community level. These would showcase RSE/SWP workers who have returned and invested in small business enterprises, as well as discussing some of the challenges for Tongan families participating in offshore seasonal work. The purpose of the documentaries would be to increase understanding of the RSE and SWP at the community level, and to promote a “culture of thinking” among Tongan families about how to use their RSE/SWP earnings productively.</li> </ul>

## ***Kiribati***

### *Contextual factors*

Over the first three seasons of the RSE scheme the numbers recruited from Kiribati were small, with a total of 158 RSE limited purpose visas approved for I-Kiribati workers by June 2010. The low numbers recruited from Kiribati were due in part to the distance from New Zealand and the associated transport costs for workers, as well as a lack of established relationships with New Zealand employers. The poor performance of some groups of I-Kiribati workers over the first two seasons also damaged the reputation of Kiribati as a reliable source of seasonal labour.

With the introduction of the SPP pilot programme in 2009,<sup>27</sup> the then Department of Labour undertook a series of facilitated recruitment drives – accompanying several RSEs to Kiribati and Tuvalu to assist with the recruitment of small groups of female RSE workers and their pre-departure training. The success of these recruitment drives, and a strong push by the Department of Labour to increase the small groups of I-Kiribati and Tuvaluan women employed in New Zealand, has led to additional RSEs becoming involved in subsequent seasons. For 2012/13 approximately 150 I-Kiribati workers have been recruited, the majority of whom are female. Numbers participating in the Australian SWP are negligible, with only four workers in Australia for the 2012/13 season.

The Ministry of Labour, Human Resources and Development (MLHRD) continues to oversee RSE administration in Kiribati. In early 2013 the MLHRD went through a restructure and the labour division, which used to be made up of three units (local employment (employment for the public sector and monitoring the recruitment of seafarers), overseas employment (seasonal work schemes), and vocational training) was downsized to two units: one dealing with employment, and the second dealing with vocational training.

As part of the restructure, the Labour Officer responsible for overseeing RSE administration for the previous five seasons was transferred to vocational training. A Labour Officer from the former local employment unit has taken over the RSE and SWP schemes, and at the time of interview there were a total of five staff employed in the employment unit. Three of the five staff are involved in the RSE and SWP. Of the three staff, one has prior experience working on the RSE (since 2011). According to one respondent the amalgamation of the two employment units (local and overseas) has resulted in a significant increase in workload for staff, and the unit's capabilities are constrained by limited staff resources.

### *What's worked well about the SPP?*

Two officials interviewed in the MLHRD had been on secondment in 2012 with the Minister for Labour and the MLHRD's senior accountant (involved in the management of Kiribati's revolving fund facility for RSE workers). Both officials found the secondment useful. They established connections with New Zealand employers, visited I-Kiribati workers, learnt about the jobs workers are performing on the orchard/vineyard and saw their accommodation facilities, and improved their overall understanding of the RSE policy.

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<sup>27</sup> The SPP project, funded by MFAT, initially operated for two years June 2009-2011.



Staff interviewed in the MLHRD felt the SPP training workshops had been of great value. One Labour Officer said the training had helped staff learn how to prioritise and manage workloads, and gave the example of one staff member who now uses a priority list to plan and tick off tasks completed each day. Another respondent felt the communications training had improved their ability to work with colleagues in the office and taught them how to communicate more effectively with RSE workers. This respondent also found the marketing training useful because it gave staff “new ideas about how to present their workers to potential employers”.

Support provided by the RSE SPP team was highlighted as an important element of the SPP. Two SPP Relationship Managers visited Kiribati in 2012, and one was involved in the delivery of a Domestic Awareness workshop. The MLHRD have received new pre-departure training materials including a ladder, a picking bin and examples of fruit. Return workers use the materials during pre-departure briefings to train new recruits.

Two officials in the MLHRD and another in the New Zealand High Commission noted the VAC seems to be working satisfactorily. The VAC employs local I-Kiribati staff and they generally take two to three days to process RSE applications, as long as they are not processing other visas categories (e.g. the PAC) at the same time. VAC staff double check RSE applications submitted by the MLHRD, and according to one MLHRD official there have been no complaints from INZ in Suva regarding poor quality or unsuitable applications. Another MLHRD respondent commented, however, that a pregnant woman “slipped through the net” this season (but it was unclear whether MLHRD staff or the VAC were responsible for the error).

#### *What’s changed as a result of SPP?*

An outcome of the SPP training was the development of a “four step customer service promise” for the MLHRD, which staff are encouraged to follow. One official gave the example of answering the phone in the office - staff in the employment unit now answer the phone within three rings, and there is some competition between the RSE/SWP staff as to who can answer the phone first. This is in contrast to other staff in the MLHRD who they said make little effort to answer the phone quickly, if at all.

Officials that attend an SPP training workshop are required to provide internal training to others in the office to ensure there is some transfer of knowledge to a wider audience. Some elements of the communications training are now included in the RSE pre-departure briefings to help workers improve how they communicate with RSE employers, orchard managers and accommodation supervisors.

The evaluators noted a significant improvement in the responsiveness of MLHRD staff, their communication skills and willingness to engage in conversation. When the evaluators first visited the MLHRD in 2009 none of the staff approached or greeted them, and the evaluators obtained very little information during their interviews. When the evaluators visited the MLHRD in April 2013, the Labour Officer responsible for overseeing the RSE and SWP greeted them immediately. MLHRD staff spoken to during interviews were more relaxed, and more forthcoming with their views on how the RSE and SWP are operating, what the challenges are, and the areas they need assistance with. Additional information that was requested from one of the Labour Officers after

interview was emailed through, and the Labour Officer was willing to provide the evaluators with further information if required.

During an SPP workshop in 2011, the 2007 work-ready pool was completely revised, and Kiribati now has a much smaller pool of RSE candidates. The 23 island councils (two on Tabiteuea) each nominate six workers for the pool, and the three urban councils in Tarawa can appoint a total of 20 candidates. The MLHRD continues to select workers from across all of Kiribati's islands under the quota system, despite feedback from returning group leaders and employers that it would be preferable to select workers from a particular island or community.

The New Zealand High Commissioner has seen little change in MLHRD's processes as a result of the SPP. There continue to be problems with a general lack of forward planning on the part of MLHRD staff and the late submission of RSE applications to the VAC. From his perspective the RSE scheme's success in Kiribati is "totally reliant" on the assistance provided by the RSE SPP team. When RSE SPP team members visit Kiribati there are some improvements in MLHRD's administrative processes, but these are relatively short-lived, and staff turnover in the Ministry is a problem. The RSE scheme "wouldn't work" in Kiribati unless the RSE SPP team "bent over backwards" to make it work.

#### *Perspective of New Zealand employers*

Of the 14 RSE employers (RSEs) interviewed, four employ workers from Kiribati. All commented that RSE processes and communication had improved over the past year to 18 months. One employer commented that Kiribati staff had mapped out the RSE process from start to finish and are working through it in a more timely fashion. This had made the recruitment process easier:

*It's smoother; we don't feel like we have to double-check all the time. We give them names and have updates and can be confident it's happening.*

Another commented that in the past, emails would go "back and forth and to numerous people. Everyone seemed confused". The employer now deals with one person who is "really responsive"; the responses come back quicker:

*It started to get better last year and this year has been very good.*

Two employers commented that Kiribati officials are listening to what the New Zealand grower wants "which is quite a fundamental change" from what happened previously.

A Horticulture NZ respondent had a different perspective on Kiribati's processes. They had heard complaints from employers about the administration processes being difficult.

*Suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities*

The following suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities were suggested by respondents:

Pre-departure training	Financial literacy training for RSE workers and their families, including planning for the future (how to budget and save, and mapping where workers and their families would like to be in 5-10 years' time).
Database	Database training is a priority for MLHRD staff. The Labour Officer overseeing RSE and SWP was not aware of the World Bank-funded website and database that is being implemented across Pacific states. She is concerned that MLHRD staff do not have the requisite skills to develop and maintain a good database, or analyse the data.
Overarching labour mobility policy	The Kiribati government would like to develop an overarching labour mobility policy that provides a framework for sending workers offshore.

## ***Tuvalu***

### *Contextual factors*

Tuvalu remains the smallest provider of RSE labour, sending 56 workers for the 2012/13 season to four New Zealand employers, one of whom has continuously recruited from Tuvalu since the scheme's introduction in 2007. The Tuvalu government signed an MOU with Australia in July 2012 for participation in the SWP, but they are yet to send any workers to Australia.

There is one Acting Labour Officer responsible for all RSE administrative work in Tuvalu who reports to the Assistant Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour (MFATTEL). This staff member is also responsible for overseeing the recruitment of seafarers who have graduated from the Maritime School. Managing this recruitment takes up the majority of their time. From the perspective of the SPP trainer and the evaluators the Acting Labour Officer is highly competent, but has an unsustainable workload and receives little support from more senior government officials. The MFATTEL has attempted to secure funding for another position to assist the Acting Labour Officer, but has been unsuccessful. Limited staff resources are a significant constraint to Tuvalu's ability to handle RSE administration.

### *What's worked well about the SPP?*

The Acting Labour officer has attended two SPP training workshops: one delivered in-country; and the Leadership Essentials training held in New Zealand. This workshop included a session for operational staff from across the participating Pacific Island countries to share experiences and ideas. The Acting Labour Officer also went on secondment to New Zealand in 2012. She has made a number of changes to her work as a result of the SPP training. These include: ensuring that the information she sends to New Zealand employers is complete; developing checklists; using the timeframe for forecasting RSE worker numbers once they receive employers' ATR requests; and she has sent the customer service pledge to other RSE stakeholders. The evaluators also saw the customer service pledge posters up on the walls in the MFATTEL.

The Operations Manager of the National Bank of Tuvalu, who is also the appointed deputy chief of their island community of Niutao on Funafuti and a member of the selection committee for the RSE work-ready pool, found the SPP training useful for their work in the Bank and for educating other community members. They have used the customer service protocol devised during training to improve service standards at the bank. The SPP training powerpoint on leadership has been delivered to bank staff, and a printed planning list has been developed for staff to help them prioritise daily tasks. Staff performance assessments are also being conducted at the bank as a result of the SPP training.

The Operations Manager learnt how to write a simple business proposal, and has subsequently written several proposals including one for their island development committee. They have adopted a message of "self renew", learnt during training, which has been passed on to bank staff and community members. This message is about changing habits and adopting practices that will benefit individuals and families (e.g. for those who want to be selected as RSE workers they must cut down their alcohol consumption because it is not good for them or their families). During the

training some of the issues with Tuvaluan workers in New Zealand were discussed, and the Operations Manager said they had fed back this information to their community.

The Assistant Accountant of the Treasury<sup>28</sup> said the training helped them to improve time management and planning skills. They now understand their team needs to process RSE payments promptly, otherwise, if they are late, the rest of the RSE application process will be delayed. They make use of the planning tool to organise work into tasks that are more important, less important and so forth. The evaluators noted an RSE process map produced during the SPP training was up on a wall in the room where they interviewed the Assistant Accountant, along with another large piece of paper that listed areas for improvement. The Assistant Account also had a diary provided in the training course with them during the interview.

The Tuvalu Police Sergeant attended three SPP workshops and found them “very fruitful”, especially for their work reviewing RSE applications (checking none of the candidates have former convictions). The Sargent identified several changes to their work practices as a result of the training: they have learnt to plan and prioritise work into urgent, important, and not urgent; how to make notes and set deadlines; and improved their management skills, learning better ways to approach the staff they supervise.

Four respondents said they enjoyed the way the training was delivered – “it was never boring” and the trainer socialised well with the class.

The Permanent Secretary of the MFATTEL has been on two secondments to New Zealand. When the Permanent Secretary took up his position in 2011 he visited New Zealand employers and government officials, and only then he realised there had been a significant drop in the numbers of Tuvaluan RSE workers because of poor performance. He convinced New Zealand’s largest RSE to take on a group of Tuvaluans, and since then the numbers of Tuvaluans in New Zealand have fluctuated up and down in response to workers’ performance and behaviour.

The Assistant Permanent Secretary of the MFATTEL has also been on secondment to New Zealand with the Permanent Secretary, and the New Zealand-based liaison officer. During the secondment they visited four RSEs. They appreciated the opportunity to market Tuvaluan workers to New Zealand employers “face to face”, and to explain the revolving credit facility. The Tuvaluan liaison officer’s impression was that employers “were positive about Tuvaluan workers and willing to continue employing them”.

Materials provided by the RSE SPP team for pre-departure training have been useful. Tuvalu runs a one-day pre-departure briefing that includes representatives from the departments of police, health and women’s affairs. RSE workers attend a second, shorter briefing prior to their departure for New Zealand.

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<sup>28</sup> The Assistant Accountant oversees the revolving fund for RSE workers and advances each new RSE recruit AUD\$200 for initial RSE costs (e.g. to buy warm clothes for New Zealand).

A member of the RSE SPP team visited Tuvalu with the World Bank consultant responsible for implementing the new electronic website and database, but there has been little progress since. The Acting Labour Officer currently uses her own system to store information on RSE workers, and she is awaiting the draft IT programme from the World Bank consultant, which is due in June 2013. The new website and database is to be launched at a fono, scheduled for July 2013, for RSE stakeholders and island chiefs and representatives who live on Funafuti. The SPP project is contributing to the cost of the fono.

#### *What's changed as a result of SPP?*

The government has made some changes to their end-to-end processes. The Permanent Secretary of the MFATTEL has introduced a new selection process for the work-ready pool that opens up access to all citizens who wish to apply (the former selection process was based on community service activities). There are currently around 300 candidates in the work-ready pool. A revolving credit facility has been established to assist RSE workers with their upfront costs to New Zealand. Employers deduct an amount fortnightly from workers' wages for the loan repayments, and the money is kept in an account managed by the Tuvaluan Consulate in Auckland. The cost sharing arrangements for workers' international airfares have also been amended to reduce the risk for New Zealand employers. RSE workers are now required to pay their entire airfare to New Zealand. The employer pays the return airfare to Fiji, and the worker then covers the cost of travel between Fiji and Tuvalu.

The Permanent Secretary of the MFATTEL said the SPP programme had been very useful for Tuvalu because it had helped build the capability of the Acting Labour Officer. Another benefit of the training was its whole-of-government approach, bringing together a range of people from different agencies involved in the RSE in Tuvalu.

On completion of the SPP training, participants agreed they would form a multi-agency committee to encourage ongoing collaboration between the agencies involved in the RSE (i.e. Tuvalu Inc.). The Acting Labour Officer was going to organise the cross-departmental group, but a more senior official delegated the task to himself. At the time of the interview Tuvalu Inc. had not been established. The senior official wanted to form an association of RSE worker families, rather than a multi-agency taskforce. There is, however, an RSE screening committee that consists of representatives from police, health, immigration and representatives from the island communities.

According to the Manager of the Immigration Department, the SPP training has also led to establishment of weekly meetings in the Immigration Department that include the Secretary to Government, and the Prime Minister when he is available to attend. During the meetings officials discuss any issues that have arisen during the week, and plan ahead for the following week.

#### *Perspectives of New Zealand employers*

Three of the 14 RSEs interviewed employed workers from Tuvalu. One employer commented that the administration processes in Tuvalu had improved "slightly" over the past 18 months. "(They) have mapped out the process from start to finish and are working through it in a more timely fashion". This has made the recruitment process easier for the employer as they do not feel they have to double-check all the time.

The Horticulture NZ respondent highlighted communication as a particular issue for New Zealand employers. This was also identified in interviews with two employers, one of whom commented that it could be difficult to get hold of officials in Tuvalu. An employer said that communication had become even more pedantic than previously:

*They cc everyone in the world into emails. Fifteen people from different NZ and Tuvalu departments will be cc'd in. Officials (in Tuvalu) want everyone to stay in the loop. Everyone has a stake or a role to play.*

Another employer described having good communication with the Acting Labour Officer. The staff member was described as “competent”.

However, there is a general view that Tuvalu officials and others exert an influence over how RSE operates that is detrimental to the scheme’s success. One employer said: “There is a culture of ‘this is how we do it in Tuvalu’. There’s no compromise, discussion, just ‘these are our rules’”. Another employer said they had wanted to increase their number of Tuvaluan workers but in the end decided not to: “The Tuvaluan officials just didn’t listen to what we told them”.

This view was confirmed by the Horticulture NZ respondent who commented that (in contrast to the Tuvaluan liaison’s view) employers are “slowly being turned off” employing Tuvaluan workers: “It’s a combination of lots of things – complexity of distance, cost, communication”. Their view is that a certain level of improvement has occurred as a result of SPP, “but RSE hasn’t improved”.

#### *Suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities*

The following suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities were suggested by respondents:

Remittance transfer options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPP could assist Tuvalu to improve its remittance transfer system, including expanding the options available to workers to send money home each season. At present the majority of workers send money via Western Union which incurs high transfer costs. There is no ATM in Tuvalu for workers to remit money electronically, so all money is sent via bank drafts to the National Bank of Tuvalu.</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional SPP training to help Tuvalu improve its capacity to administer offshore labour arrangements. Courses could include “train the trainer” programmes and additional communications training for officials.</li> <li>• Domestic awareness training in the outer islands would be beneficial, to raise communities’ awareness of the importance of RSE, and to improve selection processes among island councils.</li> <li>• One MFATTEL official suggested future SPP workshops should focus on workers and their families, rather than officials. Financial literacy training for workers (how to save and budget) would be particularly useful.</li> </ul>
Pre-departure training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated pre-departure training materials that include more detailed information (via DVD, booklet or chart) on the different types of jobs</li> </ul>

	<p>workers may perform while in New Zealand. This is especially relevant for workers employed on joint ATRs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-departure training could also include a session run by the Police Department to talk about appropriate behaviour in New Zealand, New Zealand laws and regulations etc.</li> <li>• One official suggested that candidates in the work-ready pool could receive one to two months' training similar to that provided by the Maritime School. Candidates could then be given a certificate of completion to show to RSE and Australian employers prior to their selection for employment.</li> </ul>
Work completion certificate in New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPP could produce a certificate for workers on completion of their employment in New Zealand confirming they met the employer's expectations. This would be helpful for returning recruits who are awaiting reselection from the work-ready pool.</li> </ul>
Opportunity for permanent residence in New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two respondents suggested New Zealand should consider offering RSE workers who have completed five seasons' work in New Zealand, and performed well during that time, the option to transition to residence.</li> </ul>



## **Vanuatu**

### *Contextual factors*

Vanuatu continues to supply the largest number of RSE workers to New Zealand, with approximately 1,500 in New Zealand at the time of interview in March 2013, and the scheme is of great importance to the Vanuatu-New Zealand bilateral relationship. The numbers participating in Australia's SWP are much smaller (around 50 workers for 2012/13).

The Employment Services Unit (ESU) within the Vanuatu Department of Labour has been responsible for RSE administration since the scheme's introduction in 2007. The present Commissioner of Labour has overseen the RSE for the past five years, and during that time the number of staff in the ESU has grown to eight full-time staff. The ESU staff are responsible for both the New Zealand and Australian programmes, and provide assistance to employers wishing to recruit from Vanuatu. The Vanuatu Government is currently developing a national labour market policy. As part of the policy the ESU is going to be renamed the National Employment Services Centre and will cover employment services domestically and internationally.

### *What's worked well about the SPP?*

Three ESU Labour Officers had attended four in-country SPP training workshops. The officers said the training provider was good, delivering practical training that is directly relevant for RSE work. During one of the training courses the ESU developed their "customer service promise" (printed in multiple copies on plastic in the ESU office).

The ESU invites staff from other government agencies involved in RSE (Passport Office, Customs, Health and Civil Status) to participate in the SPP training workshops, along with licensed agents (there are four currently registered for RSE). After the "communicating for success" training the ESU set up Vanuatu Inc., a multi-agency group that includes staff from the different agencies involved in RSE as well as recruitment agents. These agencies are also invited to attend the pre-departure briefings. The RSE SPP team has supplied the ESU with new demonstration equipment for the briefings, including a long ladder for picking apples.

A labour agent who has attended two SPP training courses said they "loved the workshops" and found them very useful. They learnt how to "document things better, [and] the art of negotiation". Following on from the training the agent wrote a proposal to their RSE employer requesting a separate office to be built adjoining their house. The proposal was approved and a new office was built in January 2013. The agent used their newly acquired negotiation skills to persuade Western Union to fund the Vanuatu Inc. meetings, and to get a discount on tiles from an Auckland manufacturer.

The Commissioner of Labour has been on secondment with two of the ESU staff. According to the Commissioner the secondments are of great value, helping staff to understand what jobs are performed on the orchards/vineyards and to "get a feel for New Zealand". Staff can then communicate this information to new recruits during pre-departure briefings, and they are also required to write a report about their visit when they return to Vanuatu. Similarly the two ESU Labour Officers said the secondments were helpful for their role in explaining what work and life in

New Zealand is like (e.g. the weather and what picking and pruning involves). The secondments gave them the opportunity to meet employers and RSE workers, and for RSE workers to discuss any concerns they had with the ESU staff, who could in turn raise them with the employer.

The VAC system is a cause for concern. At present the VAC can only process 35 applications (and visa fees) per day. This is problematic for agents and ESU staff when submitting applications for groups of workers that exceed this number, as it means the applications must be split into smaller batches and processed over a number of days. This creates more work for ESU staff and agents, and because the VAC only accepts cash or bank drafts for the application fee (VT\$350 per application), agents and the ESU often have to store large sums of money while applications are waiting to be submitted to the VAC. Agents need to receive approved ATRs earlier, so that they can factor in a wait period for the visa applications to be submitted and processed by the VAC. The VAC system also assumes workers are literate and have access to a computer, neither of which may be the case.

The New Zealand High Commissioner expressed concern about the lack of quality assurance associated with the visa approval processes. The NZHC used to play an important role in screening potential RSE workers. Now that all visa applications are processed via the VAC, such screening no longer occurs. The VAC approval process is an administrative system without a quality assurance component; it is a "one size fits all approach" that requires workers to pay more for a poorer service, and which "is making it harder for Vanuatu to be successful in RSE". One employer interviewed also commented on the lack of quality assurance. They have heard reports of 'banned' workers being able to return to New Zealand under a new name and passport.

#### *What's changed as a result of SPP?*

According to the Commissioner of Labour the SPP training workshops and secondments have been very useful for Vanuatu. The SPP workshops have helped ESU staff to understand what is required in terms of end-to-end processes, encouraged them to develop improved systems for administering RSE, including tackling any issues that arise, and managing the arrangements for workers going to and from New Zealand. The ESU is establishing a process that is robust, delivers on time and responsive to employers: "Our goal is to deliver results. We still need to find our answers to our problems".

The involvement of multiple government agencies and recruitment agents in the SPP workshops has encouraged the establishment of Vanuatu Inc. - a whole-of-government approach to administering offshore seasonal labour. At the time of interview the fourth Vanuatu Inc. meeting was due to be held, funded by Western Union.

One of the evaluators observed an improvement in the communication skills of a Labour Officer in the ESU, whom the evaluator had spoken to on previous visits to Vanuatu.

#### *Perspectives of New Zealand employers*

Of the 14 RSEs interviewed, seven employ workers from Vanuatu. Most employers commented that RSE processes with ESU had steadily improved over five years, but none had seen particular improvements over the past 18 months. The Horticulture NZ respondent also commented that employers are "relatively happy" with Vanuatu's administration of RSE and understand they need

to work in three week blocks to avoid last minute hiccups. This is consistent with results from the RSE Monitoring – 2012 Employers Survey (Research New Zealand, 2012) in which employers assessed the performance of the RSE administrators they have dealt with from different Pacific states. Ratings for the RSE administrators from Vanuatu were significantly higher than those of other countries in terms of their processes, knowledge and communication.

Employers interviewed described individuals within ESU as “highly efficient”, “very competent” and “professional”. Only one employer had a different view, describing the ESU as “not doing a very good job”. Their view is that some staff seem more focused on the Australian scheme than in improving processes and communication with New Zealand.

Some employers and the Horticulture NZ respondent commented on behavioural issues with ni-Vanuatu return workers. There is a view that if these behavioural issues are not sorted, these workers will be replaced by those from other Pacific nations. One employer commented they had already done this, replacing some of their ni-Vanuatu workers with Samoans. There is a view that the Vanuatu government needs to help change workers’ attitudes, e.g. through government presence at pre-departure training sessions. There is also a need for better liaison support in New Zealand. Otherwise the risk is that employers will replace ni-Vanuatu workers with those from other nations.

#### *Vanuatu liaison officer*

The Vanuatu Consulate General in New Zealand is listed in MBIE documentation as the New Zealand-based liaison officer. However, an interview with the Consulate General suggests this role is in dispute. The Consulate General is adamant he is not a liaison person; but that the Vanuatu government “takes for granted” that he will perform this role. He said he receives a “small budget” for RSE but, by default, is working on RSE fulltime.

While other liaison officers interviewed described their role as liaising between different stakeholders (Pacific State and New Zealand officials, employers and workers), the Consulate General described his focus as singular. His responsibility is to look after “the welfare of the people of Vanuatu”.

Interviews with employers suggest the Vanuatu liaison role is required, but not working as anticipated. The Consulate General is “mostly” available for workers arriving and departing at the airport. However, employers who have engaged the Consulate General to help resolve issues have found his involvement very unhelpful. The Horticulture NZ respondent commented it was important liaison officers had a collaborative approach to finding solutions to issues: “(Other liaison officers) understand the importance of a good outcome for both worker and employer”.

### *Suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities*

The following suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities were suggested by respondents:

Pre-departure training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-departure training should be differentiated between new recruits, returnees and group leaders, with specific training materials developed for each group, including leadership training for group leaders.</li> <li>• Pre-departure training should include standard modules on employment contracts and occupational health and safety, delivered by the relevant government agency (not ESU) so that workers clearly understand their rights and obligations.</li> <li>• Employers would like to see a greater government presence at pre-departure training sessions.</li> <li>• Financial literacy training is required, particularly for the immediate family members of RSE/SWP workers. The National Bank of Vanuatu could be involved in the financial literacy training (because the bank has a micro-credit scheme that could be used to assist with loans for small-scale ventures in rural areas).</li> </ul>
Liaison officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding is required for two liaison officers, one in the North Island and a second in the South Island, to assist the Consul General. The liaison officer positions could be jointly funded by SPP and Vanuatu's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their Department of Labour.</li> <li>• A clear job description needs to be devised for the liaison officer role.</li> <li>• With significant numbers of ni-Vanuatu workers in New Zealand, respondents see a need for one or two dedicated liaison officers.</li> <li>• A clear job description needs to be devised for the liaison officer role.</li> </ul>
Worker reintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worker reintegration is a priority for the Commissioner of Labour, and could be integrated into Vanuatu's overarching labour migration policy. The focus of the reintegration programme should be on building sustainable rural livelihoods through opportunities for agribusiness development (especially food production).</li> <li>• As part of the reintegration strategy a revolving credit scheme could be set up to fund community projects. Workers each contribute 10,000VT every year (x 2,500 workers = 25 million vatu p.a). In the first year the focus is on the needs of individual RSE workers' households (building/renovating houses, schooling etc.). From the second year onwards the focus is on establishing an agribusiness and contributing to the community (building social capital, health (building clinics), education (building schools). Vanuatu financial institutions could lend funds (and then perhaps match funds). A model could be trialled in one of the six provinces.</li> </ul>
Identifying and managing risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the shift to the VAC a new quality assurance system is required to ensure workers selected for New Zealand are not an immigration compliance risk.</li> </ul>

## ***Solomon Islands***

### *Contextual factors*

The Solomon Islands government was officially engaged as the sixth kick-start state with the signing of an IAU in 2010. Their successful engagement in the RSE scheme has been attributed to pre-existing recruitment relationships that existed between New Zealand employers and the Solomon Islands prior to the introduction of the RSE policy. When the RSE scheme was implemented, these employers simply realigned their existing recruitment arrangements with the new policy. During the year ended June 2007 there were 150 Solomon Island workers in New Zealand, recruited via a mix of Approval in Principle (AIP, which pre-dated the RSE) and RSE engagements. By the 2012/13 season there were approximately 400 RSE workers in New Zealand.

Recruitment in the Solomon Islands is done through an agent-based system – there is no work-ready pool. Recruitment of RSE workers to date has favoured those located around the capital Honiara, partly due to the small numbers involved, and partly because of the internal transport costs for those coming from further afield.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade Relations (MFAET), which houses the Labour Mobility Unit (LMU), is the lead agency for the RSE. The LMU was established in 2008 and prior to this there was no specific unit within the government dealing with offshore seasonal work. There are three staff in the LMU: two Trade Liaison Officers and one administrative officer. One of the Trade Liaison Officers has been with the LMU since its establishment in 2008, the second took up his position in 2012. Since the introduction of the RSE there have been some tensions between MFAET and the Department of Labour (in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration) regarding the location of RSE administration. The Department of Labour wanted management of the RSE because it involves contracts for work. MFAET has been determined to retain control of the RSE because of its significance to the New Zealand-Solomon Islands bilateral relationship.

### *What's worked well about the SPP?*

Support provided by officials in the RSE SPP team was identified as a core benefit of the SPP initiative. This support has included facilitating the involvement of LMU staff in workshops in New Zealand, as well as visiting the Solomon Islands to deliver training and assist with end-to-end processes. Two LMU staff attended a workshop in New Zealand in December 2011 where the health of RSE workers was a key theme. An RSE Relationship Manager was involved in an SPP-funded workshop in October 2012 that focused specifically on building the capacity of recruitment agents to manage RSE administrative processes, including the collection of basic data. This workshop also included staff from the LMU, the Solomon Islands Department of Labour and the New Zealand High Commission (NZHC), as well as the World Bank consultant responsible for the implementation of the electronic website and database.

The NZHC has supplied the LMU with a laptop for database management, and a World Bank consultant has helped the LMU develop a standard template for recording data on RSE/SWP workers. The new electronic website and database are not yet operational, but an official in the NZHC along with an RSE SPP team member have developed a prototype which includes

information on Solomon Island workers, by recruiter and employer, up to the year ended June 2012. The work of the RSE SPP team member was identified as particularly important for laying the groundwork for the web-based system longer-term.

In early 2012 two staff members from the LMU and another two from the Department of Labour took part in a secondment to New Zealand. The officials visited several New Zealand employers, spending a day in a packhouse in the Bay of Plenty, another day in the field with an RSE in the Hawke's Bay learning what orchard work involves, and a third day with an RSE in Nelson. During the secondment officials also submitted material for an expo at the annual Horticulture New Zealand RSE Conference. The two LMU staff felt the secondment had been invaluable for building better relationships with New Zealand employers, and the opportunity to talk face to face with employers had resulted in greater acceptance of the need for Solomon Islanders to have at least four months' work to make travel to New Zealand worthwhile.

In early March 2013 the Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade Relations, accompanied by a delegation including staff from the LMU and Department of Labour, visited New Zealand as part of the SPP programme. The delegation met with Minister McCully, MBIE officials, as well as visiting New Zealand RSE employers. This was first time the Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade Relations had been in New Zealand to see the Solomon Island workers participating in the RSE programme.

#### *What's changed as a result of SPP?*

One respondent observed that until recently the LMU has had little involvement in RSE processing because of the absence of a government-managed work-ready pool, and because of the many existing recruitment relationships between New Zealand employers and agents that pre-dated the signing of the IAU. Prior to the SPP there was little government coordination of management of the RSE and the LMU's systems and processes were underdeveloped. The RSE in the Solomon Islands is essentially operated as a series of business relationships between labour agents and New Zealand employers, with limited government oversight.

According to officials in the NZHC, the LMU and the Department of Labour the SPP training has delivered two significant changes to RSE processes. The first is the improved capacity of the LMU staff and recruitment agents to manage the processing of requests for RSE workers and to handle the paper work associated with getting visas approved. The second is a significant improvement in the communication skills and responsiveness of staff (via telephone and email) in the LMU, and other agencies responsible for administering the RSE, to New Zealand employers.

The NZHC First Secretary said the SPP training is "delivering real value" in the Solomon Islands. There has been a noticeable increase in the confidence of key Solomon Island officials, shown in their conversational skills and general approach to New Zealanders when they meet them. One official interviewed shook the evaluator's hand more confidently, maintained eye contact and seemed more alert during the interview than when they had previously been interviewed in mid-2011. Another official interviewed was more confident to speak about the RSE than he had been in mid-2011, and was "not afraid to have his say about issues relating to the RSE."

The cross-agency approach to the SPP training courses, bringing together officials from the LMU, the Department of Labour, the ministries of health and police, and INZ, has helped strengthen relations between ministries involved in the RSE. It has also ensured that knowledge of RSE administration is held by staff in various agencies, minimising the risk of loss of institutional knowledge with staff turnover. Three respondents observed that the training has also reduced tensions between the LMU and the Department of Labour, and led to a clear improvement in relations between the two agencies over the past 12 months. Officials in both departments are now more willing to share information and work more collaboratively on RSE matters (this improvement may also be attributed to a change of personnel in both divisions and the opportunity this has provided for the two agencies to forge new working relationships).

Links between the LMU and recruitment agents have strengthened. One labour agent noted there is now increased acknowledgment by NZHC and LMU of the importance of agents as the interface between New Zealand employers and Solomon Island workers. Agents play a pivotal role in all RSE-related processes (selection, preparation of visa applications, pre-departure training, organisation of travel to New Zealand, liaising with employer, and the return of workers at the end of the season). The SPP-funded workshop in October 2012 that focused on recruitment agents and involved staff from various agencies helped to bring recruitment agents into more regular contact with other Solomon Islands stakeholders. The RSE Relationship Manager responsible for administering the training also told agents they could contact them directly if they had any concerns about their workers in New Zealand, and the agent interviewed said they had sought some assistance this season.

A former senior official in the LMU attended several SPP-funded meetings in New Zealand in 2011. A NZHC official observed that through participation in these meetings the LMU official became more engaged in the RSE and recognised its potential contribution to development in the Solomon Islands. As a result of these meetings, the official was able to impress upon their LMU staff the importance of being committed to the RSE as a business opportunity (as distinct from an administrative chore). This, in turn, has led to more focused engagement by LMU staff with RSE processes and the development of more clearly defined aspirations for the Solomon Islands in the RSE scheme.

Visa processing was handled by the NZHC until introduction of the VAC in 2012. The LMU had minimal involvement in the processing of RSE visa applications. With the transition to the VAC system, the LMU has become involved more directly in the operational procedures surrounding the recruitment and pre-departure of workers, including compiling RSE data and assisting agents with their paperwork.

From the perspective of the NZHC, the VAC is working satisfactorily. This is due in part to the way INZ managed the transition, and also due to the training on New Zealand visa processes provided by a NZHC official to the four VAC staff. The VAC employs local Solomon Islands staff and it takes between three to five days to process RSE visas for New Zealand. According to one respondent there have been some challenges with equipment and staffing capacity. Of the four VAC staff only one is trained to deal with all aspects of visa advice.



The VAC cannot process more than 25 visas within one day (this is the maximum number of applications that can be handled by the scanning equipment). Therefore if an agent has more than 25 applications to be processed, they have to be split into batches and processed separately. However a recruitment agent interviewed said the VAC is more flexible about the RSE application process than the NZHC was, and the requirement to split applications into batches is a “good thing” because it means not all applications for a group of workers have to be submitted at once and the agent can continue to complete some applications while others are processed.

#### *Perspective of New Zealand employers*

Three of the 14 RSEs interviewed employed workers from the Solomon Islands. These interviews confirmed employers have little contact with LMU staff. One employer commented that recruitment was organised by a Solomon Islands’ solicitor who had been out to visit their operation and thus has a good understanding of their requirements. Another employer uses one of his workers to recruit on his behalf. However, they had had problems with workers not arriving on time due to immigration problems. This employer would like to see LMU more involved in supporting RSE. A Horticulture NZ official noted the calibre and capability of agents had improved over the past year.

#### *Suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities*

The following suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities were suggested by respondents:

Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for recruitment agents on managing the RSE application process, including timeframes for the submission of applications to the VAC.</li> <li>• For agents who have not travelled to New Zealand with their RSE workers, training on New Zealand work and living conditions and how to handle pastoral care issues that may arise with worker groups.</li> <li>• Greater involvement of NZHC staff in future SPP workshops.</li> <li>• Leadership training for government officials.</li> <li>• Communications training for New Zealand employers so that they are aware of culturally appropriate ways of interacting with their Solomon Islands workers.</li> </ul>
Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the new database is a priority for LMU staff. LMU staff do not currently have access to data on RSE workers, this information is held by recruitment agents. When the electronic database is implemented, both LMU officials and agents will require training on the new system.</li> </ul>
Pre-departure training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More detailed pre-departure training at the community level, so that families and communities in the Provinces have a better understanding of how RSE operates, including the numbers of workers likely to participate and the amount of money workers can expect to earn.</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more coordinated, whole-of-government approach to marketing the Solomon Islands as a supplier of reliable seasonal labour.</li> </ul>



## ***Papua New Guinea***

### *Contextual factors*

Papua New Guinea (PNG), a country with a population of just over seven million in 2012 (the equivalent of 70 percent of the total population of all Pacific countries),<sup>29</sup> became involved in the RSE scheme in the 2010/11 season, sending six workers to New Zealand on a joint ATR with employers in the Hawke's Bay. By February 2013 there were 21 PNG workers recruited for seasonal work in New Zealand. PNG is yet to sign an IAU with New Zealand and does not receive the same facilitative arrangements as the other six countries.

In 2009 Australia agreed to include PNG in their Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (PSWPS) and in July 2010 a MOU was signed between the two countries. By June 2012 a total of 82 PNG workers had participated in the Australian pilot scheme. At the time of interview no PNG workers had been sent to Australia under the SWP, which was launched in July 2012 to follow on from the pilot.

Despite the small numbers of PNG workers participating in the New Zealand and Australian seasonal work schemes, PNG has invested heavily in the institutional arrangements for managing offshore employment. The government has established the PNG Seasonal Work Task Force, a cross-agency group led by the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR) that includes representatives from Foreign Affairs, Immigration, Agriculture and Livestock, and Rural Development among others. The government has also provided funding of PGK\$5.8 million (approximately NZ\$3 million) to support the development of PNG's participation in seasonal work, and their future involvement in an array of offshore labour arrangements should the opportunities arise.

All recruitment for seasonal work in New Zealand or Australia takes place via the government's work-ready pool. There is no direct recruitment by employers. Selection for the work-ready pool is managed by the DLIR - workers are selected from rural areas across PNG's 21 provinces (excluding the National Capital District) via a rigorous selection process. Potential candidates are required to complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the PNG Seasonal Work Coordination Office (PNGSWCO) located within the National Employment Division (NED) in the DLIR. The EOI is comprehensive and includes: a copy of a PNG passport, evidence of educational attainment (grade 10 or above) and a reasonable standard of English; a copy of the candidate's birth certificate; a full medical report; a statutory declaration (consent of spouse if married or parents if not) and character references from a community-based screening committee. To date only 264 candidates are in the work-ready pool. PNG's pre-departure training involves a three-week residential programme (funded by the DLIR) at the Defence Force's training facility that includes: physical fitness training, financial literacy, health, and 'life skills' (setting realistic aspirations for earnings, learning about time management and the importance of following a daily work routine in New Zealand, dealing with different cultural and legal environments and so forth) for working and living in NZ. Workers also participate in a reintegration programme when they return at the end of the season.

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<sup>29</sup> Population Reference Bureau (2012).

### *What's worked well about the SPP?*

Although an IAU is yet to be signed between PNG and New Zealand, the RSE SPP team has taken a proactive approach to facilitating PNG's participation in the RSE since the small-scale pilot in 2010/11. Two respondents spoke highly of the support provided by the former National Manager of the RSE who encouraged the participation of PNG officials in several SPP-related activities in New Zealand. These activities included: an SPP workshop in 2011 that focused on RSE worker health; leadership training in August 2012 for the lead official in the DLIR overseeing the RSE and SWP; and a secondment for three DLIR staff in October 2012. These trips to New Zealand, and the associated visits to employers as part of the secondment, stimulated considerable interest among PNG officials in the RSE. The Horticulture NZ official who attended one of the SPP-related activities confirmed:

*PNG is doing a lot of thinking about what they want to implement. They are learning rapidly.*

During 2012 formalising PNG's engagement via the signing of an IAU became a priority. According to a member of the RSE SPP team, a formal agreement will be signed before the end of June 2013.

The Manager of the National Employment Division in the DLIR who participated in the New Zealand secondment in 2012 said the opportunity to meet with employers was greatly appreciated, and the support provided by members of the RSE SPP team was highly valued by the DLIR staff.

The PNG Deputy High Commissioner has participated in one SPP secondment, which included visits to employers. They also attended an SPP-funded liaison officers' workshop in Auckland. Meeting with liaison staff from other Pacific States was enlightening as it identified behavioural issues with return workers that PNG had yet to encounter. The Deputy High Commissioner's reflection was that PNG's approach to RSE (bringing new workers each season) would help to mitigate this issue.

The inclusive approach of the RSE SPP team was contrasted to that of the approach taken by Australia's agencies involved with seasonal work. When the MOU was signed with Australia in 2010 there was discussion about training and capacity building to be provided by Australian officials. This has not materialised. The visit by an SPP Relationship Manager to PNG in 2013 was the first visit by an official from New Zealand or Australia directly involved in the administration of their seasonal work programmes. The primary task during the SPP Relationship Manager's visit was to progress negotiations on the signing of the IAU, and the official also took part in a pre-departure training session for a small group of new RSE recruits.

To date no formal SPP training courses have been held in PNG.

### *What's changed as a result of SPP?*

The main change in PNG that can be attributed to the SPP is the progress towards the signing of an IAU. The involvement of PNG officials in SPP-related activities over the past 18 months was identified by one respondent as critically important to getting some momentum behind the signing of an IAU, and to building connections between PNG officials and New Zealand employers.

### *Current capability*

PNG has a very comprehensive three-week pre-departure training programme. A New Zealand employer with workers from a number of Pacific States commented that PNG's pre-departure training is:

*the best of all of them. Workers fully understand what is expected (of them).*

### *Suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities*

The following suggestions for improvements/enhancements and new activities were suggested by respondents:

SPP should work with the systems already in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From the Acting New Zealand High Commissioner's perspective, the SPP can best add value to the systems and processes PNG already has in place for managing offshore labour arrangements, rather than trying to change these and fit them to models that might have been promoted in other Pacific countries. PNG has a carefully managed selection process via an EOI, a closely controlled work-ready pool in terms of the numbers who can be selected, and a comprehensive pre-departure training programme. The Acting High Commissioner noted that PNG's systems and processes are quite sophisticated by comparison with those in operation in other Pacific states. A member of the SPP team, who was in PNG at the time of interview, also acknowledged this.</li></ul>
Liaison officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The role of the liaison officer needs to be clarified. This role is currently undertaken by the PNG Deputy High Commissioner, in a voluntary capacity. A clear job description needs to be devised for the liaison officer role, with financial support for the position.</li></ul>
Worker reintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assistance with reintegration is a top priority for officials in the DLIR and the Department of Agriculture and Livestock. Practical training in small agribusiness development in both pre-departure and reintegration programmes has been suggested by an official in the DAL. There is fertile, government-owned land administered by the DAL near to Port Moresby that could be used for demonstration gardens for a range of horticultural crops, as well as demonstration blocks for livestock.</li><li>• There is considerable interest in the Hort ITO pilot (and any related opportunities in trades skills training) and how this might assist with a reintegration programme for returning workers. A consultant to the DLIR suggested the in-country Hort ITO training should be offered when workers return from their first season in New Zealand, and it should only be available to those who have performed well during their employment.</li><li>• Officials in the DAL saw opportunities for SPP to work with local training campuses (e.g. the Plantation Fellowship Ministry which works on addressing literacy and community development in PNG rural communities as well as improving methods of food production and local income generation) to help return workers transition into small-scale agribusinesses.</li></ul>

## Appendix B: SPP Results Diagram

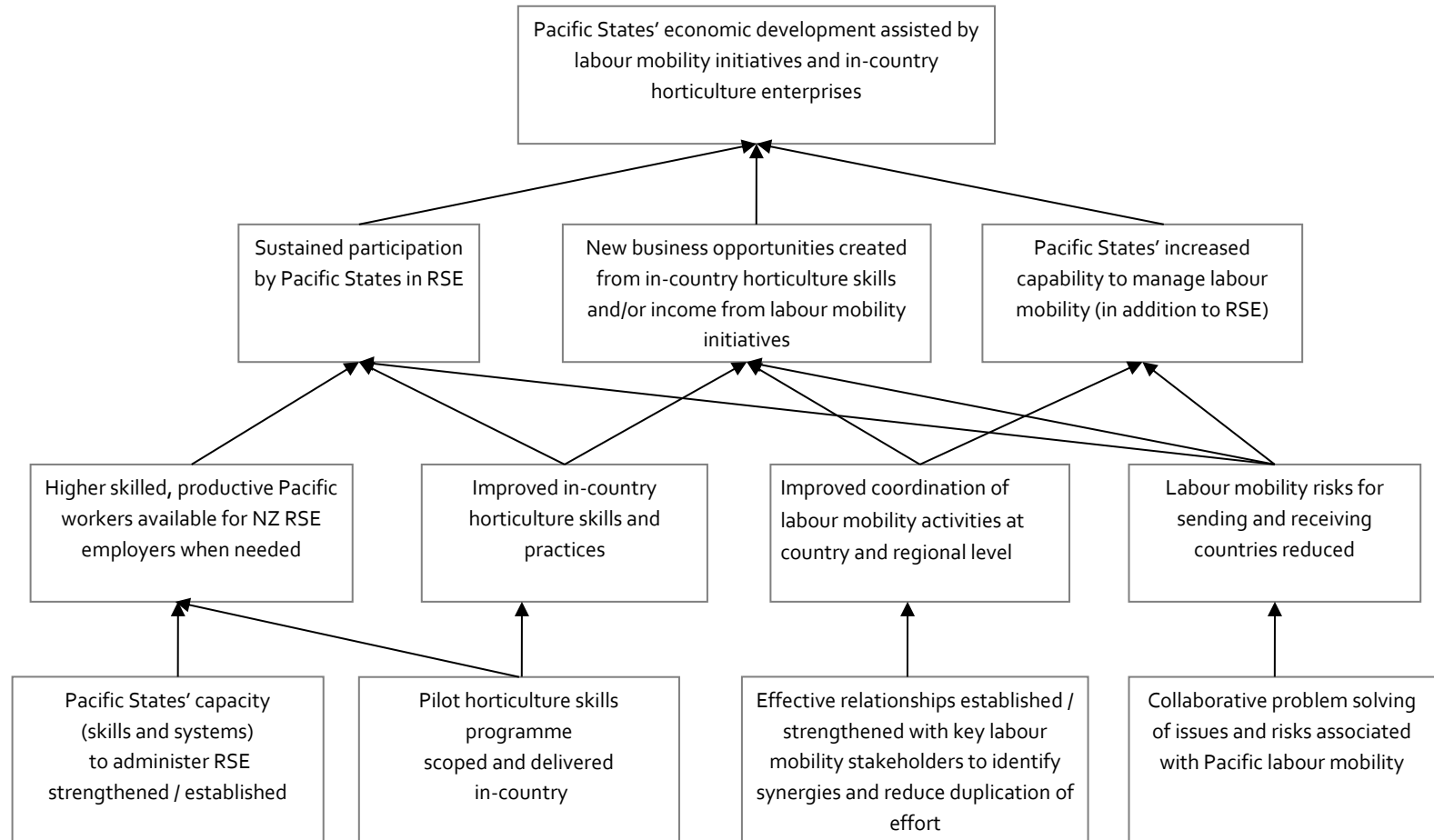
(Dated 1 December 2011)

**Long-term  
outcome**

**Medium-term  
outcomes**

**Short-term  
outcomes**

**Outputs**



## Appendix C: Methodology

The SPP evaluation was based on four criteria, as outlined in Table A. Indicators of criteria being achieved were developed through a top-down (assessment matrices for each Pacific State) and a bottom-up approach (emergent data gathered from interviews and observations). The assessment matrices were developed in a meeting with two members of the RSE SPP team. Participants were asked to provide their perspective of each Pacific State's strengths (with regard to RSE information management, processes, knowledge, communication and marketing), as at 01 July 2011 and the types of change they anticipated might be observed by the evaluators as at March 2013. The assessment matrices were also informed by the Pacific States' action plans. 'Bottom-up' indicators emerged in the interviews conducted with respondents in the Pacific States and New Zealand.

**Table A: Evaluative criteria, questions and indicators**

Criteria	Key evaluation questions	Indicators
Relevance	To what extent are SPP activities suited to the priorities and policies of the PI States and key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeting of training</li> <li>People engaged with training material/engaged with trainer</li> <li>Training information being used</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<p>To what extent are SPP activities achieving intended results?</p> <p>To what extent are effective relationships being established and/or strengthened with key labour mobility stakeholders?</p> <p>To what extent is collaborative problem solving of issues and risks associated with Pacific labour mobility effective?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in individual practice (e.g. interpersonal skills; understanding of timeliness, appropriate communication with employers)</li> <li>Changes in RSE work practices (e.g. documented processes; maintenance of database; improved pre-departure training; communication between PI State and liaison officer)</li> <li>Wider changes (e.g. coordination across agencies)</li> </ul>
Efficiency	How well are SPP activities using available human and financial resources to achieve results?	NA
Sustainability	To what extent are the benefits of SPP activities likely to continue without donor funding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structural barriers identified by respondents</li> <li>Changes in RSE work practices and wider changes noted by respondents</li> </ul>

### *Pacific-based interviews*

Qualitative interviews were conducted in the Pacific States by two evaluators and an academic who has extensive knowledge of RSE. Two of the evaluation team have existing relationships in each of the Pacific States; one speaks Pidgin/Bislama. In each Pacific State, interviews were conducted with staff in RSE teams and their immediate managers/senior officials who had attended one or more SPP workshops. Interviews were also conducted with other Pacific-based informants who had attended one or more SPP workshops, including officials from Police, Health, Treasury, and agents (Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands).

Other informants included the New Zealand High Commissioners and their staff; INZ managers and staff; Tuvalu High Commissioner and staff; two staff members of the Planning and Policy Division of the Department of Agriculture, PNG. A World Bank and ILO official were also interviewed.

**Table B: Pacific-based interviews: number and respondent type (Note: some interviews had more than one participant)**

Location	Pacific Government officials	NZ Government officials*	Other stakeholders	Total
Solomon Islands	2	3	2	7
Papua New Guinea	4	1	1	6
Tuvalu	6	0	1	7
Vanuatu	2	1	1	4
Kiribati	3	1	0	4
Samoa	5	2	0	7
Tonga	5	2	0	7
Fiji	1	1	** 2	4
Other international	0	0	*** 6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>

\* INZ and MFAT

\*\* ILO; Acting Head of the Pacific Immigration Conference

\*\*\* Australian Government officials (x 4); World Bank (x 2)

#### *New Zealand-based interviews*

The evaluators aimed to interview 20 RSE employers (RSEs), to explore how Pacific State processes were working from their perspective, and whether they had noticed any changes over the past 18 months. MBIE provided contact details for 40 RSEs who had been involved in the scheme since it was implemented, and sent an initial email to each informing them of the evaluation. The evaluators then followed up employers requesting their participation in telephone interview. Those who did not respond to the request were sent one email reminder. Only 15 RSEs from across New Zealand agreed to be interviewed.<sup>30</sup> Two of the RSEs said they had little time to participate in an evaluation. Many of the respondents have been involved in previous RSE research and evaluations and may be reaching saturation point with regard to providing feedback on aspects of the scheme.

Table C identifies the number of RSE employer respondents who employed workers from a particular Pacific State.

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<sup>30</sup> One interview was cancelled due to the employer's work commitments. Thus the total number of employer interviews was 14.

**Table C: Number of employer respondents with workers from a specific Pacific State**

Workers from	No. of employers with workers from this Pacific State
Samoa	7
Vanuatu	7
Tonga	5
Kiribati	4
Tuvalu	3
Solomon Islands	3
Papua New Guinea	1

Note: Some employers have workers from more than one Pacific State

### *List of respondents*

Table D lists the Pacific and New Zealand respondents. It does not include the names of the RSE employers interviewed.

**Table D: List of respondents**

	Name	Position
Kiribati	Kakiata Tikataake Koaa Ekeata Natario Keati Michael Walsh	Labour Officer, Ministry of Labour, Human Resources and Development (MLHRD) Labour Officer, MLHRD Deputy Permanent Secretary, MLHRD NZ High Commissioner
Papua New Guinea	Kennewton Kennedy Michael Gene Pius Lahari Max Pumina Daisy Lepon Nathan Glassey	Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR) Consultant, DLIR Immigration Official, Immigration and Citizenship Division Planning and Policy Division of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock; and members of Inter-agency Task Force NZ High Commissioner (Acting)
Samoa	Oikoumene Maualaivao Venus Tupai Fuatino Rokeni Vaosa Epa Perive Lelevaga Jackie Frizelle Peter Zwart Antony Harris	Principal Labour Officer, Seasonal Employment Unit (SEU) Labour Officer, SEU Labour Officer, SEU CEO, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Officer, Ministry of Health NZ High Commissioner Manager, NZAID Programme Manager, INZ
Solomon Islands	Jack Ooi Ezekiel Parairae Brown Pwai  Simon and Lorraine Tarifu Mark Ramsden Jonathan Schwass	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Relations' Labour Mobility Unit (LMU) Senior Industrial Relations Officer, Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration RSE agents  NZ High Commissioner First Secretary and Deputy High Commissioner

	Matthew Horwell Ruth Kwalemanu	First Secretary, Development Officer, NZ High Commission
Tonga	Akanesi 'Otunuku Elaine Havealeta Saulisi Mafile'o  Lopeti Senituli Meleoni Uera Mark Talbot Michelle Frankham Antony Jukich	Seasonal Labour Officer, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) Seasonal Labour Officer, MIA Pre-departure Training and Community Engagement Officer CEO, MIA Deputy CEO, MIA NZ High Commissioner Manager, INZ INZ
Tuvalu	Tapugao Falefou  Fakasoia Tealei Trinny Uluao Fakatoafe Katea Tepalalau Irata Sikale Sikale Salasopa Lingoasa Puti Lutelu Faavae Avafoa Irata Alio Panapa	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour (MFATTEL) Assistant Permanent Secretary, MFATTEL Acting Labour Officer, MFATTEL Operations Manager, National Bank of Tuvalu Assistant Accountant, Treasury Sergeant, Tuvalu Police Manager, Immigration Department Tuvalu High Commissioner, Suva Deputy High Commissioner, Suva Operations, High Commission, Suva
Vanuatu	Lionel Nasome Kaluat Tarisu Kailes Julie Rereman Christine Wabaiat Gwen Kalmet Carlot Bill Dobbie	Commissioner of Labour Senior Labour Officer, Employment Services Unit (ESU) Labour Officer, ESU Labour Officer, ESU RSE permit holder NZ High Commissioner
RSE Pacific Liaison Officers	Fonoti Dr Lafitai Fuatai McKenzie Kalotiti Morea Veratau Samuelu Laloni Sefita Haouli	Consul (Commercial) & Trade Commissioner, Samoa Consul General, Vanuatu Deputy High Commissioner, PNG Consul General, Tuvalu Employment Relationship Manager, Tonga
Australian stakeholders	Steven Kaleb  Mark Roddam  Karin Maier  Jura Sanchez Simon Strasiotto	Manager, Labour Mobility and Trade, Pacific Division, AusAID Acting Group Manager, Social Policy and Economic Strategy Group, Department of Education, Employment and WorkPlace Relations (DEEWR) Director of International Arrangements Policy Section, Education, Tourism and International Arrangements Branch, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) International Arrangements Policy Section, DIAC Director of Client Strategy and Performance, DIAC
International stakeholders	Anne Boyd Akuila Ratu  Leitumai Malaulau Brendan Quirk	Project Manager, ILO, Suva Acting Head of Secretariat, Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference World Bank World Bank
INZ officials, Suva	Steve Jones Rosina Ayers Pinome	Branch Manager, INZ, Suva INZ Suva INZ Suva
INZ officials, NZ	Emily Fabling Anne Masoe Lafaele Lupo Pip Jamieson George Rarere	RSE Manager SPP Advisor SPP Relationship Manager RSE Relationship Manager RSE Relationship Manager



NZ stakeholders	Ken Mitchell	Brandheart
	Peter Conway	NZ Council of Trade Unions
	Jerf van Beek	Horticulture NZ
	Matthew Gibbs Deighton Condor	Development Manager, MFAT Senior Policy Analyst, Pacific Group, MFAT

#### *Document review*

The evaluators examined documents relating to the SPP project including policy papers, management reports, Pacific state action plans, Pacific officials' feedback on secondments and workshops, and training material. Data from the RSE Monitoring – 2012 Employers Survey Working Report (September 2012) has been included where applicable<sup>31</sup>.

#### *Observations*

The evaluators attended two pre-departure briefings (one in PNG, the other in Vanuatu). The evaluators also sighted examples of material produced in SPP workshops. Two of the evaluation team have visited the original kick-start Pacific States since 2007 and were able to observe changes that have occurred over time.

#### *Coding and analysis*

Data was coded into Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis package and in Excel. The evaluators used a framework developed by Williams (undated) to identify and analyse generalisations and exceptions across data sources.

#### *Reporting*

Due to the small number of staff working on RSE in Pacific States and New Zealand, it is not possible to offer anonymity to respondents. Respondents are named by title but names and gender have not been included.

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<sup>31</sup> The survey did not provide a breakdown of results for Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and the Solomon Islands because the sample of employers who recruit from these States was too small. Results for Samoa are also not included because the base number of respondents was low (meaning results were indicative only).

## Appendix D: Visa Application Centres

The INZ Branch Manager in Suva described the Visa Application Centres as working well, particularly the electronic system for transferring visa applications from the islands to the Suva Branch.

Comments from Pacific officials and MFAT officials about the Visa Application Centres in Vanuatu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands are summarised below.

RSE Pacific State	Reported comments
Vanuatu	<p>The VAC process assumes workers are literate and have access to a computer, neither of which may be the case.</p> <p>The VAC accepts cash or bank drafts only (cheques and electronic transfers are not accepted).</p> <p>The VAC will only accept 35 applications (and visa fees) per day. This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the applications of a group of RSE workers that exceed this number have to be split and submitted over two days.</li><li>• the Vanuatu RSE team and agents are having to store large amounts of cash for the visa fees while applications are waiting to be submitted to the VAC.</li><li>• agents need to receive approved ATRs earlier, so they can factor in a wait period for the visa applications to be submitted and processed by the VAC.</li></ul> <p>Concern was expressed about the lack of quality assurance associated with the visa approval process. The VAC approval process is an administrative system without a quality assurance component, especially relating to the accuracy of Police checks. When applications were processed through the High Commission, worker screening was done by staff with local knowledge.</p>
Kiribati	<p>Respondents report the VAC is working satisfactorily as long as it is not trying to process too many visas at once. The VAC has informed the I-Kiribati RSE team that RSE applications cannot be processed when they are processing PAC applications, because that will exceed their capacity.</p>
Solomon Islands	<p>Informants report that the VAC is working satisfactorily thanks to the way INZ handled the transition and the training from Ruth Kwalemanu in the NZHC. However the VAC can only handle 25 applications per day, so it only works well as long as it is not processing too many visas at a time.</p>

Comments from RSE employers:

- A RSE employer who pays for his workers' visa applications sent a bank draft to the VAC which was returned "because it was a cheque, not a bank draft". The RSE went to his NZ bank who confirmed that it was a bank draft. The RSE solved the impasse by ringing a government official in Fiji and giving her his credit card details. She went over to the INZ office in her own time and gave them the credit card details. The RSE commented "requiring a bank draft is like using pigeon post".
- A RSE complained about the additional cost for workers for visa processing.
- A RSE had arranged a group of 35 workers to come to New Zealand. Thirty three of the 35 workers received their visas on time. The visas for the other two workers turned up too late for them to travel. The RSE hasn't been able to find out the reasons for the delay.

## Appendix E: Sustainability indicators

The SPP exit strategy (November 2012) is based on four criteria to assess sustainability.<sup>32</sup> The evaluation findings have been used to develop indicators for these sustainability criteria as listed below.

Sustainability criteria	Indicators
In-country capability to administer RSE independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The level of resourcing is appropriate for staff workloads</li><li>• Processes are in place for the transfer of knowledge and relationships</li><li>• Pacific Liaison Officers are an effective facilitator between employers and workers</li></ul>
On-going supply of high skilled horticultural workers available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workers are selected who can cope with physically demanding work and long absences from home</li><li>• There are cohesive worker groups with effective group leaders</li><li>• No worker incidents are reported during the season</li><li>• Employers are prepared to take a mix of return and new workers, and engage in training of new recruits, to ensure there is a wide pool of workers available with the requisite skills</li></ul>
Effective in-country labour mobility risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Processes are in place to promote worker health</li><li>• Community leaders, communities and families understand the implications of worker absences, and have strategies in place to mitigate some of the costs (e.g. workers are required to plant crops during their time at home in preparation for the next season)</li><li>• Workers and their partners have plans about how to spend their earnings to benefit their family and community</li></ul>
In-country leadership of RSE and other labour market initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership from Government downwards</li><li>• RSE and other labour mobility initiatives are approached as a business</li><li>• Recognition that workers are “the product”</li></ul>

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<sup>32</sup> These criteria may also be used to assess the appropriateness of a Pacific State transitioning from SPP support before the end of the project in 2016.

## **Appendix F: Labour mobility capacity building initiatives of other stakeholders**

### ***Australia***

1. In early 2013 DEEWR received funding from AusAID, via the Public Sector Partnership Linkages (PSPL) programme, to support a three-year initiative that will build capacity around labour mobility in the nine countries involved in Australia's SWP (the seven linked to SPP, as well as Nauru and East Timor). A focus of their work, supported by the PSPL funding, will be the development of labour mobility policy in the different SWP states.
2. Under the SWP there is funding to support skills acquisition by workers while in Australia (A\$750 a year per worker). Technical and Further Education institutions (TAFEs) are funded to provide entry level training to SWP workers employed in the local area.

### ***International Labour Office***

The Suva ILO Office has been operating a project funded by AusAID to improve the development potential of RSE and SWP, focusing on reintegration and economic development. The project started at the end of 2011 and was funded for two years, with the expectation the funding would continue for a further three years. The funding was withdrawn at the end of 2012 due to cost savings by the Australian Government. The office is trying to secure funding for the initiative to continue.

### ***World Bank***

World Bank is being funded by AusAID to build information management infrastructure to assist labour mobility initiatives by Pacific States.

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