



MFAT Management Response to Strengthening Pacific Labour Mobility



Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action
<p>Redefine the purpose, outcomes, and focus of the Programme to respond to current strategic and operational needs, recognising the need for a whole-of-government approach.</p>	<p>Agree. The SPLM Programme sits within a broader framework of labour mobility efforts from the RSE Scheme through to bilateral support programmes and a range of regional initiatives being pursued primarily through the Arrangement on Labour Mobility under PACER Plus. Additionally, since the inception of the SPLM Programme, the Pacific labour mobility landscape has fundamentally changed as a result of a range of economic, social and political factors, including the impacts of COVID-19. Accordingly, MFAT agrees that the strategic purpose, as well as the operational focus, of the SPLM Programme need to be clearly redefined in light of the altered context that underpins it.</p>
<p>Recalibrate the relationship between MFAT and MBIE including clarification of roles and responsibilities with respect to the Programme.</p>	<p>Agree. The COVID-19 environment altered the landscape for both the objectives and the ambits of the SPLM Programme and, in doing so, reshaped the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in supporting it's delivery. As such, ahead of the redesign of the SPLM Programme, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each agency will enable a more focused, refined activity design and more effective delivery of New Zealand's Pacific labour mobility efforts.</p>
<p>Develop a collaborative approach to the design of the next phase of the Programme through a process of early and meaningful consultation with participating PICs.</p>	<p>Agree. New Zealand's 'Resilience approach' to the Pacific requires us to ensure that our engagement with the Pacific is driven by and aligned with Pacific aspirations. Our approach to labour mobility programmes is no different. Labour mobility is a key driver of economic and social resilience in the Pacific, and as we work towards a peaceful, prosperous and resilient Pacific region, it is crucial that migration and labour mobility initiatives are well designed and fully aligned with the needs and interests of our Partners. In undertaking a redesign, we intend to meaningfully consult partners throughout the process (as we did during the Evaluation itself), beginning with discussions in the margins Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting in Samoa.</p>

Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action
Consider how best to enable ongoing Pacific ownership of the Programme.	Agree. As above, MFAT intends to consult partners in line with our 'Resilience Approach' for engagement, which will assist in determining how best to satisfy this recommendation.
Elevate reintegration support for LSUs to enable circular labour mobility, and align with individual, sector, and country demand.	Agree. New Zealand is adopting a "next generation" approach to regional labour mobility underpinned by principles that include a focus on both individual Pacific country aspirations and reintegration/circular labour opportunities. Our redesign will reflect our "next generation" approach, and will consider the most effective modalities to enable reintegration opportunities to be maximised.
Identify where there are opportunities to collaborate with Australia (and other regional players) and ways to most effectively allocate resources and support LSU capacity.	Agree. New Zealand's "next generation" principles also captures the need for the Pacific region to take a collective responsibility approach to labour mobility. The changing Pacific Labour Mobility landscape- driven by a range of factors, including COVID-19, the introduction of a Labour Mobility Secretariat within the PACER Plus Implementation Unit and Australia's expansion in this space- has created new opportunities as well as varied impacts on each Pacific partner. As such, New Zealand supports the articulation of a regional ambition for labour mobility, underpinned by a collectively-determined set of principles and agenda to guide cooperation. This will naturally require close collaboration with Australia and other regional players; however, collective approach will still need to be balanced against our individual policy drivers, which in some cases may still differ.
Align outcomes with Pacific country priorities, including consideration of the changing labour context and the need for tailored support to meet individual country needs.	Agree. As above, in recognition of the differences in scale and resourcing available to countries to facilitate labour mobility, the redesign will take into consideration the different needs and priorities of Pacific labour sending countries based on relevant bilateral plans and dedicated consultation.

Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action
<p>Learn from what the last phase has highlighted about worker welfare and wellbeing needs and identify the best modes and entities to deliver this support.</p>	<p>Agree. The COVID-19 environment brought worker well-being and pastoral care necessities directly to the fore, with the MOU between MBIE and MFAT being varied to include two separate outcomes orientated around this: 1) around supporting Pacific workers to make the most of their time in New Zealand, and 2) around the well-being of workers, including those stranded as a result of the pandemic. These needs obviously prevail post the pandemic and so will be an important consideration in the context of the SPLM Programme redesign but also the concurrent RSE Policy review. Alignment between these two programmes will need to ensue, noting that consideration will also need to be given to who is best placed to offer/should be offering this support.</p>
<p>Identify opportunities to build capacity remotely, for example through Pacific-based personnel.</p>	<p>Partially Agree. This will be looked at in the context of the redesign but MFAT reserves judgement as to whether installing Pacific-based personnel constitutes the most effective way to support capacity building.</p>
<p>Recognise the need for focussed support for employers, including collaborative and co-design options, and identify the best delivery modes and entities to provide this support.</p>	<p>Partially Agree. The Evaluation highlighted the need for more focused support for employers, particularly in terms of cultural competency, which is critical to the success of the SPLM Programme in ensuring a good New Zealand working experience for Pacific workers and stronger overall outcomes for individuals and communities back home. MFAT agrees that Employers require this support. The key questions, as noted in the recommendations, are how and by who this support is best delivered with a development programme not necessarily constituting the most appropriate place for it. These questions will be considered during the redesign.</p>