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Papua New Guinea Labour Mobility Unit

swp@treasury.gov.pg

Labour Mobility Unit Operational Policy

1. Overview

This policy supports the operation of the Labour Mobility Unit of the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG). The Labour Mobility Unit (LMU) is tasked to assist in the recruitment, mobilisation, pastoral care and reintegration of workers participating in overseas labour mobility opportunities, with a particular focus on semi- and low-skilled workers.

2. Objective

The Government of PNG wants to provide significantly increased opportunities for decent and productive work for women and men of working age in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. This necessarily requires PNG citizens to have access to employment opportunities both at home and abroad.

To achieve this, the LMU is tasked with supporting the achievement of the Government of PNG's stated goals of increasing the number of workers employed overseas in the Australian Seasonal Worker Programme, Pacific Labour Scheme and Work and Holiday Maker Scheme and the New Zealand RSE Scheme to 8,000 by 2025.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the LMU Operations Policy is to provide the framework under which staff and partners of the LMU will operate to achieve the objective of the LMU.

4. Application of Policy

This policy applies to staff and management of the LMU, and partners working on labour mobility including district and provincial administrations (herein referred to as regional administrations), other government departments and private sector entities.

5. Principles and Approach

5.1 Overarching Principles

The operation of the LMU has three overarching principles:

5.1.1 Equity

The LMU will ensure equity in the selection, recruitment and mobilisation of workers. This means that nepotism, wantokism¹ and other non-equitable selection methods will not be acceptable.

The LMU will ensure the inclusion of women, and will work closely with Women in Agriculture groups throughout the country to ensure the best female workers are selected to participate.

The LMU will, to the extent possible, seek opportunities to include people living with disability in employment opportunities.

¹ See definition at 8.3.1



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The LMU will seek to provide opportunities to women and men living in remote and regional areas, particularly those with strong employment-appropriate skillsets living in areas of disadvantage and with few employment opportunities.

5.1.2 Transparency

The LMU will ensure selection and recruitment processes are transparent and conform with the policy set out in this document.

The LMU will report regularly to the Treasurer and to Parliament to ensure Parliament and the public are fully informed about the progress of labour sending from PNG.

The LMU will maintain a website providing documents and information to the public that has been approved by the Ministerial Committee for Labour Mobility.

5.1.3 Worker's rights and care

All employment through the LMU is chosen by the worker freely and fairly. Workers may refuse, without penalty, to take any position offered which they do not feel is right for themselves, their family and their community.

The LMU will work closely with partner Government agencies to ensure the care and enforcement of worker rights overseas.

The LMU will operate as a first point of contact for worker concerns, and will refer concerns as appropriate to partners including host country labour agents and other pastoral care service providers.

The LMU will take responsibility to contact workers and ensure their safety in the event of emergencies where workers are located. The LMU will take responsibility to liaise with regions and worker's families to help manage situations where worker safety is of concern.

5.1.4 Privacy and data management

The LMU and regional administration partners will ensure worker's documentation is stored privately and securely. Data on workers will only be provided to third parties of relevance, such as host country governments, at the aggregate level.

Where data is requested that identifies workers, a Data Sharing Agreement will be signed between the LMU and the third party. Workers must provide permission in writing for their data to be shared. Workers must be given full details of the use of the data and the potential for dissemination before their permission is sought.

Where required with partner governments and their representatives, regional administrations or employers, discussions regarding individuals will be on a need-to-know basis and utmost care and sensitivity will be taken in all conversations. The welfare of the worker will be the guiding principle in these conversations.



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5.2 Labour Sending Approach

PNG's approach to labour sending is to place primary responsibility with regional administrations, in close collaboration with the LMU, to select workers for consideration for employment. Labour selection and mobilisation is a shared responsibility, with key roles take by both the regional administration and the LMU.

The LMU will support regional administrations to establish and manage worker recruitment processes. It will facilitate engagement with employers and help mobilise workers for employment. It will take lead responsibility for assurance of worker's rights and care, and will assist in reintegration processes.

Regional administrations will be assisted to establish equitable, transparent and robust initial selection methods that ensure the best workers are put forward to employers for consideration.

The final selection of workers for mobilisation rests with employers. The LMU does not influence choice of workers; this is at the discretion of the employer.

6. Working with Regions

6.1 Overview and Rationale

The LMU is committed to ensuring the integrity of labour recruitment arrangements that ensure only the best workers represent Papua New Guinea overseas. This requires cooperation with regional administrations, which have the primary responsibility for short-listing workers for recruitment. The LMU provides guidance and assistance in this process, and works with employers to undertake final selection of workers. Both the LMU and regional administrations have responsibility for preparation of workers for mobilisation.

6.2 Application

This policy applies to the LMU and participating regional administrations.

6.3 Definitions

6.3.1 Definition of regional administration

A regional administration is either a District Development Administration or Provincial Administration tasked with the management of labour sending in that district or province. Different regions choose to manage labour mobility at different levels, but where districts choose to manage labour sending there cannot also be a provincial administration management responsibility.

6.3.2 Definition of initial worker selection or longlisting

Initial worker selection or longlisting is the process whereby a call is made for applicants interested in applying for work in Australia, New Zealand or another participating country. This may be for a specific role requiring a clearly defined skill set (such as a trade or other certified skill), or it may be for a generic role (such as seasonal agricultural labour).



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A vetting process is undertaken that verifies worker fitness for the role, health and character, and ensures they meet the requirements of the relevant scheme(s) (e.g. age, health and police requirements).

This results in a long list from which workers may be shortlisted for selection by employers.

6.3.3 Definition of shortlisting

Shortlisting is the process whereby workers are interviewed by third parties who have not participated in the longlisting process. This involves an intensive one-on-one interview process, worker documentation (photographs, videos) and further fitness and health checks. If successful, workers are then placed on the centrally administered shortlist for consideration by employers.

6.3.4 Definition of Work Ready Pool

The Work Ready Pool is the centrally administered database that contains details of workers who have been found suitable and ready for mobilisation should a position become available and should they be selected by an employer. To be listed on the Work Ready Pool, the candidate must have passed through both longlisting and shortlisting, and hold an NID birth certificate and a valid passport.

6.4 Roles and Responsibilities: Worker Selection and Mobilisation

6.4.1 Role of LMU - Policy

The LMU is responsible for establishing the policies and frameworks to guide the regional administration in the selection of workers. These policies must be adhered to by the regional administration to ensure the integrity of the selection process for workers. These policies include the Conflict of Interest policy, which must be strictly adhered to.

6.4.2 4.2 Role of Regional Administration – Initial Worker Selection

The regional administration is responsible for implementing the frameworks and policies set out by the LMU for initial worker selection or longlisting. This process is undertaken and funded by the regional administration. Adequate resources, both human and financial, must be provided to ensure the process is undertaken with integrity and results in a high quality outcome. Initial worker selection will be guided by the LMU requirements for workers, which may change from time-to-time.

6.4.3 Role of LMU – Initial Worker Selection

The LMU will support the regional administration with advice and other support as required, noting it is the regional administration's role to ensure adequate resourcing, both human capital and financial, to ensure the integrity of the process.

6.4.4 Role of LMU – Shortlisting

The LMU is responsible for shortlisting workers for the central Work Ready Pool. The LMU is the final authority on worker selection and cannot accept candidates that do not meet the high standards set for PNG workers. Workers selected for shortlisting are not guaranteed recruitment, however no worker can be recruited from outside the central Work Ready Pool.



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6.4.5 Role of Regional Administration – After Shortlisting

Regional administrations are responsible for securing identity documents for all workers listed in the Work Ready Pool. Once workers have been shortlisted, they should immediately obtain National ID birth certificates and passports. These costs will not be borne by the LMU. Once workers have obtained passports they will be offered to suitable employers for placement.

Regional administrations are also responsible for preparing applications for police checks and, where possible in the region, securing police checks. They are also responsible for mobilising workers to Port Moresby and ensuring workers arrive in Port Moresby at the agreed time and ready for the workplace.

6.5 Roles and Responsibilities: Pastoral Care

6.5.1 Role of LMU – Pastoral Care

The LMU will, to the extent possible, maintain a good and regular relationship with employers and workers. The LMU will provide contact phone numbers and email addresses for workers to contact should any concerns or issues arise during the placement. There are robust processes in place to manage any concerns in country, but workers should feel able to contact the LMU if they do not wish to raise concerns with their employer directly.

In the event of an unexpected return to PNG, the LMU will make all reasonable efforts to assist the worker to return home. In the event of illness or death, the LMU will work with the host Government to ensure appropriate measures are taken for repatriation and care of the individual and families.

6.5.2 Role of Regional Administration – Pastoral Care

Regions are expected to maintain contact via phone and email with their workers and report any concerns or issues directly to the LMU. It is also advisable to identify wantoks in Australia that can be contacted should workers wish to talk to someone close to their community. Contacts must be monitored and the regional administration should contact workers in the event of emergencies e.g. bushfires or other natural disaster, pandemics to ensure workers are safe and do not require assistance.

6.6 Roles and Responsibilities: Reintegration

6.6.1 Role of LMU – Reintegration

The LMU will ensure that workers are returned to their homes at the end of their placement. They will be met at Jackson's Airport and a staff member will ensure they make their flights or other appropriate arrangements are made. The LMU is not responsible for funding flights and other transport home; this is the responsibility of the individual, but the LMU can assist in making arrangements.

6.6.2 Role of Regional Administration – Reintegration

Regions will ensure that returning workers are met at their point of arrival and reach their destination successfully. They will maintain ongoing contact with the worker to ensure they can be



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quickly notified of future placements. Any change in contact details must be updated in the database and the LMU notified.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 Role of the LMU

The LMU has a critical role to play in the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of labour sending arrangements with partner countries. This process informs every part of the labour sending process and is essential to improving performance of the LMU and of PNG's workers overseas.

The LMU will have a broad remit to collect data, with the approval of workers, on issues such as remittances, living standards, workplace relations, reintegration and family welfare. At all times permission will be sought from participants prior to data collection, with the exception of that data held as part of the recruitment and mobilisation process.

The results of any studies will be presented in aggregate and will be non-identifying unless permission is secured from participants being identified.

Data will to the extent possible be sex-disaggregated. Participation of women in labour mobility is a priority for participating Governments.

8. Conflict of Interest

8.1 Overview and Rationale

The Labour Mobility Unit (LMU) is committed to ensuring the integrity of labour recruitment arrangements that ensure only the best workers represent Papua New Guinea overseas. For this to be successful, transparent and open arrangements must underpin recruitments and employers need confidence that wantokism plays no part in the selection of workers.

8.2 Application

This policy applies to all bureaucrats and consultants employed in the selection of workers for participation in labour mobility schemes. This includes all members of the LMU and participating regional administrations.

8.3 Definitions

8.3.1 Definition of wantok and wantokism

Wantok refers to relatives and close personal friends of an individual.

Wantokism refers to the practice where relatives and close personal friends of an individual are preferred for goods or services, or for the provision of goods or services, outside a transparent selection process. It may also be referred to as nepotism, and often results in underperformance and undermines the integrity of the bureaucratic system.

8.3.2 Definition of conflict of interest



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A conflict of interest is a situation where an individual or an entity has multiple interests, one of which may improperly influence the performance of that individual or entity's duties and responsibilities. A conflict of interest creates the appearance that an individual's or entity's objective judgement is likely to be compromised, biased or partial. Conflicts of interest may be real, apparent or potential:

- : Real: where a direct conflict exists between current official duties and other interests;
- : Apparent: where it appears or could be perceived that other interests are improperly influencing the performance of official duties – whether or not that is actually the case;
- : Potential: where other interests are not but could come into direct conflict with official duties.

It is essential that conflicts of interest are declared and managed effectively to ensure the integrity of labour sending systems in Papua New Guinea.

8.4 Conflict of Interest Arrangements

8.4.1 Individuals participating in recruitment processes

No employee of the LMU or a regional administration (including consultants) participating in labour sending recruitment processes may be considered for recruitment. This underwrites the integrity of the recruitment system and is immutable.

8.4.2 Wantokism and recruitment

No employee of the LMU or a regional administration (including consultants) participating in labour sending recruitment processes may put forward wantoks for consideration. If wantoks wish to participate in a recruitment, the individual must remove themselves from the entirety of the recruitment process. This underwrites the integrity of the recruitment system and is immutable.

Any employee or consultant who becomes aware of wantoks participating in a recruitment must immediately declare this in writing to the head of the LMU and remove themselves from the recruitment process.

8.4.3 Conflicts of interest and recruitment processes

Any employee of the LMU or a regional administration (including consultants) participating in labour sending recruitment processes who becomes aware of a conflict of interest regarding the recruitment, either for themselves or another participant, must immediately declare this in writing to the head of the LMU.

If the head of the LMU assesses the conflict as minor or negligible, a management plan will be put in place and the individual may resume duty in accordance with that plan.

If the head of the LMU assesses this as serious, the individual with the conflict will be removed from duty until the situation is resolved.