

PACER Plus Labour Mobility Working Group Meeting (PPLMWG.05)

Wednesday, 19 January 2022 | 2.00pm Apia Standard Time

(Held virtually via Zoom)

Outcomes Summary

The PACER Plus Labour Mobility Working Group held its first meeting for the year virtually on 19 January 2021, attended by the following signatories: Australia, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa (Chair), Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs Nella Tavita-Levy, Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the Samoan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

1. Opening Prayer and Welcome

1. The Chair opened the meeting with a prayer and acknowledged those members who sent their apologies for the meeting, particularly colleagues in Tonga with the recent natural disaster and whom continue to be in the Group's thoughts and prayers.
2. The Committee adopted the agenda and noted the production of a summary of outcomes by the PPIU.

2. PLMAM Outcomes Statement

3. The PPIU presented the paper on the PLMAM Outcomes Statement which was drafted by the PPIU in close collaboration with the Government of Samoa as Host of the PLMAM with input from LWMG members. The PPIU encouraged all Participants to review and finalise the Outcomes Statement for conveyance to their respective Ministers.
4. New Zealand wanted to acknowledge non-PACER Plus Signatories/LMA Participants who participated in the PLMAM in the Outcomes Statement in paragraph 1. The PPIU advised that they would reflect this in the Outcomes Statement.
5. Samoa sought some time to convey the Outcomes Statement to their local stakeholders for their consideration and would provide feedback, if any, by the end of the month (January).
6. Samoa further proposed that the Outcomes Statement be shared widely outside of PACER Plus membership and for the PPIU to provide a snapshot of Labour Mobility activities in the Annual Plan. Australia, Niue and New Zealand supported this proposal.

Action Items:

- 1. The LMWG agreed to acknowledge non-PACER Plus Signatories/LMA Participants in the Outcomes Statement as per New Zealand's recommendation.**
- 2. The LMWG agreed to consult the Outcomes Statement with their internal stakeholders and provide feedback to the PPIU by Monday, 31 January 2022.**
- 3. The LMWG agreed for the Outcomes Statement to be shared widely and for comments to be provided by Monday, 31 January 2022 WST.**

3. Preferences for LMA Signatories

7. Samoa requested for PPIU to schedule another meeting of the LMWG to resume discussions on preferences for LMA Signatories. Samoa drew members attention to the first consultation of the LMWG in May 2021 where this matter was first raised.

- Samoa advised the Group that they are working bilaterally with Australia in finalizing the framework of the PALM scheme. They view that it is important to link all the regional Labour mobility activities and that they are reflected in the framework including preferences for those countries who have signed the LMA. Samoa would like to include this matter on the agenda for the next LMWG meeting.
8. Australia advised that the new Labour Mobility Adviser position will provide an excellent resource for PACER Plus Parties to have dialogue with PLF about what their needs or desires are and how they can leverage that LM Advisor position to provide specific support and advice to PACER Plus countries. They have, to date, a pilot with Samoa on aged care and will be looking at opportunities for new sectors that countries may be interested in. Australia is keen to have bilateral and regional conversations to make sure what is offered is of value to individual countries. There may be a tension between the regional and bilateral however the nature of the MOU cannot be changed as these are bilateral instruments.
 9. New Zealand noted that the Labour Mobility work has increased but resources remain the same. New Zealand acknowledged that Labour Mobility in the region is largely carried out through bilateral arrangements however now that the PACER Plus has entered into force, the LMWG formalized and PLMAM in place, encouraged the Group to continue finding the best way to work together and progress Labour Mobility in the region. Samoa supported this view and noted that it would be through the LMWG to take forward this conversation and find solutions.

Action Items:

- 4. The PPIU to schedule another meeting of the LMWG to resume discussions on preferences for LMA Signatories.**

4. Funding for Labour Mobility Secretariat and work

10. Samoa recalled a paper on Options and Resourcing and cost implications of Labour Mobility for PACER Plus Signatories which was tabled by Australia at the PPLMWG.01 meeting in June. Samoa wishes to resume discussions on this matter to have a clear understanding of the resources that are with the PPIU to implement Labour Mobility work for the region.
11. Australia acknowledged that the 2019 PLMAM Outcomes Statement stated that the Labour Mobility Secretariat would not be part of the 25.5million DEC Work Programme. However, much has changed since that meeting and a decision was made by Parties the following year that the PPIU would have a Labour Mobility Secretariat function. The DEC Design Document and PPIU Constitution were drafted on the basis that Labour Mobility was a core part of the Work Programme. Australia has been working under the assumption that the 25.5million Joint Funding Arrangement is inclusive of the Labour Mobility Secretariat work. If the resourcing of the PPIU is not sufficient they can look at alternative options, however since entry into force of the Agreement, Australia was under this assumption.
12. Samoa acknowledged the late inclusion of this agenda item for discussion and advised that this be discussed at the next LMWG meeting. The PPIU acknowledged that there was a window in late March/early April for the next LMWG meeting to take place however will reconfirm and call for the next meeting.

Action Items:

- 5. A discussion around resourcing options for the PPIU to implement Labour Mobility is to be discussed at the next LMWG meeting.**
- 6. The PPIU to propose a date and call the next LMWG meeting.**

6. Other Matters/Next Steps

13. No further matters were raised by the Group.

7. Closure of Meeting

14. The representative from Vanuatu, Mr Joe Pakoa Lui, offered the closing prayer.

15. The Chair closed the meeting at 3.10pm Apia Standard time.