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<td>Australia-Pacific Training Coalition</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>AUD</td>
<td>Australian dollar</td>
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<td>BLA</td>
<td>Bilateral Labour Agreements</td>
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<td>COFA</td>
<td>Compacts of Free Association</td>
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<td>DESSFB</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Australia</td>
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<td>DHA</td>
<td>Department of Home Affairs, Australia</td>
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<td>DIIS</td>
<td>Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Australia</td>
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<td>DLIR</td>
<td>Department of Labour and Industrial Relations, Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>FICs</td>
<td>Forum Island Countries</td>
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<td>Federated States of Micronesia</td>
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<td>FWO</td>
<td>Fair Work Ombudsman, Australia</td>
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<td>ILMS</td>
<td>International Labour Migration Statistics</td>
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<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>INZ</td>
<td>Immigration New Zealand</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
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<td>LMAP</td>
<td>Labour Mobility Assistance Program, Australia</td>
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<td>LMU</td>
<td>Labour Mobility Unit</td>
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<td>MEPIR</td>
<td>Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Fiji</td>
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<td>MFAT</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand</td>
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<td>MIC</td>
<td>Ministry of Information and Communications, Tonga</td>
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<td>MIRAB</td>
<td>Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy</td>
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<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>MPP</td>
<td>Ministry of Pacific Peoples, New Zealand</td>
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<td>MSG</td>
<td>Melanesian Spearhead Group</td>
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<td>NAWPP</td>
<td>Pacific Microstates - Northern Australia Worker Pilot Programme, Australia</td>
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<td>NLMP</td>
<td>National Labour Migration Policy</td>
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<td>NZD</td>
<td>New Zealand dollar</td>
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<td>PAC</td>
<td>Pacific Access Category, New Zealand</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACER</td>
<td>Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations</td>
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<td>PICs</td>
<td>Pacific Island Countries</td>
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<td>PICTA</td>
<td>Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>PIFS</td>
<td>Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</td>
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<td>PLMAM</td>
<td>Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting</td>
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<td>Pacific Labour Scheme, Australia</td>
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<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>PQF</td>
<td>Pacific Qualification Framework</td>
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<td>PSWPS</td>
<td>Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme, Australia</td>
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<td>RMI</td>
<td>Republic of the Marshall Islands</td>
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<td>RSE</td>
<td>Recognised Seasonal Employer (scheme), New Zealand</td>
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<td>Skills Movement Scheme</td>
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<td>Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment</td>
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<td>Seasonal Worker Programme, Australia</td>
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<td>TIS</td>
<td>Trade in Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>TMNP</td>
<td>Temporary Movement of Natural Persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and vocational education and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</td>
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<td>UNESCAP</td>
<td>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</td>
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<td>UNTFHS</td>
<td>United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security</td>
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<td>USD</td>
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Executive Summary

The importance of decent work and well-managed migration is recognized in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Linked to the SDGs, the Global Compact for Migration provides a comprehensive guideline for safe and orderly migration in its 23 objectives, including a number of references to Decent Work and Labour Migration.

There is a long history of migration in the Pacific Islands region. In the past, migration flows have consisted mostly of permanent migration to New Zealand, the United States and Australia, which created large Pacific diasporas in these countries. More Cook Islanders and Samoans currently live permanently in the Pacific Rim than in their island homes. New Zealand grants residence to 1,100 Samoans annually under the Samoan Quota Resident visa as well as to 250 Fijian and Tongan citizens and 75 of I-Kiribati and Tuvaluan citizens under the Pacific Access Category (PAC) Resident visa. Cook Islanders, Niueans and Tokelauans are New Zealand citizens with full residential and work rights. Additionally, Palau, the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) have open access to the United States, having signed the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

Over the last decade, seasonal labour migration opportunities for Pacific Island countries (PICs) have emerged, with the launch of New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme in 2007 and Australia’s Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) in 2012 (which followed a 2008-2012 pilot). These schemes are designed to fill seasonal labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries (with other industries such as the broader agriculture industry and accommodation recently added to the SWP). In the 2017-18 season, a total of 9,673 Pacific Islanders arrived in New Zealand on the RSE visa and 8,457 SWP visas were granted to workers from PICs. The RSE, open to nine PICs, is currently capped at 12,850 while the SWP was opened to all PICs and uncapped in 2015. The SWP initially had modest worker numbers due partly to the wide availability of backpackers as largely unregulated agricultural labour in Australia. More recently, with reforms of the SWP and a decline in the reliance on backpackers as a result of greater awareness of and measures to prevent farm worker exploitation, the number of SWP participating workers has rapidly grown. The RSE and SWP have become major labour mobility avenues for PICs, but the greatest beneficiaries have been Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa, while PNG, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu have had fewer opportunities. Access has been uneven within PICs as well. It is estimated that only 11.5% of the RSE and SWP participating workers in 2013-14 were women. Remote and rural communities may also be disadvantaged in accessing information and infrastructure needed for participation.

The main temporary labour migration pathway to New Zealand for Pacific Islanders is the Essential Skills visa. In 2016, under New Zealand’s Canterbury Reconstruction Pilot, carpenters from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga were employed to work in the Christchurch rebuild, leading to a new Pacific Trades Partnership initiative, which currently recruits trained Pacific Island carpenters for short-term employment in New Zealand’s construction industry. Australia’s new Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) was launched in 2018 to fill low- and semi-skilled jobs in rural and regional Australia. The scheme, which builds on the SWP and the Pacific Microstates - Northern Australia Worker Pilot Programme (NAWPP), is uncapped, and open to citizens of nine PICs and to all sectors and industries.

Labour migration flows from PICs have become more diverse in recent years with the inclusion of non-traditional destination countries. These include a small but consistent flow of Tongans, Fijians and other Pacific Islanders to Japan as students and rugby players. Fijians, with their long history of serving in the British Army and as peacekeepers in various UN missions, have also been attracted to private

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1 This paper uses the term Pacific to refer to people from Pacific Nations, as this language is commonly used in reports. However, it is important to acknowledge that this term is a pan-ethnic construct and therefore obscures the diversity and distinctiveness of each Pacific Nation (Anae, 1997).
military and security work in the Middle East and other high conflict areas since around the early 2000s.

There has also been increased intra-Pacific labour migration. Since Fiji has the most advanced education and skills training systems in the Pacific Islands region, Fijians have found employment in several PICs and in various occupations including as teachers, nurses, skilled trades people, in various managerial positions as well as in the tourism and hospitality industry. While all PICs are destination countries for some skilled, professional and managerial workers, the largest numbers of foreign workers are employed in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Fiji while the proportion of migrant workers in terms of the local labour force is largest in Palau and the Cook Islands. In PNG, the majority of foreign workers are from Australia and other developed countries, as well as from various Asian countries. This suggests that PICs have not been able to take advantage of opportunities there, with the exception of a relatively recent labour flow of Fijians into PNG including as hospitality and tourism workers. The Forum Island Country (FIC) governments have indicated interest in exploring greater opportunities for intra-regional labour mobility.

Notably, labour migration opportunities have been unevenly distributed among PICs. Melanesian countries (except Fiji) and the atoll states have had few migration outlets. The main overseas employment opportunity for Kiribati and Tuvalu in recent decades has been as seafarers on German merchant ships and Asian fishing boats; however, seafarer numbers have declined in the wake of the global economic crisis. Among PICs, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji have the largest proportion of their population living overseas, whereas less than 10% of the population of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu lives overseas.

One new form of migration, which has emerged in the Pacific Islands region in recent decades and is likely to become more prominent in the future, is climate change induced migration. As an atoll nation, Kiribati is one of the most affected countries. In the context of the projected loss in habitable land due to climate change, the lack of migration opportunities has serious implications.

There are several barriers to optimizing labour migration opportunities for PICs. First, there is a lack of skills and qualification recognition to facilitate migration: for instance, training at Australian and New Zealand standards is not sufficient to gain skilled migrant entry into Australia or New Zealand. Second, the geography and remoteness of some PICs, which entails not only higher travel costs but limited availability of relevant information, results in uneven access to migration opportunities. Third, the existing trade agreements, namely the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), have not made significant impact on maximising migration opportunities. As for the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus, while regional labour migration was a core component of free trade negotiations, in the end, a non-binding side-arrangement on Labour Mobility was agreed on with the aim of strengthening labour migration cooperation between the Parties. Fourth, while many employers in labour-receiving countries use employment agents to recruit workers, few agencies have offices in PICs and few people from Pacific Islands have registered in their databases, which limits their chances of being recruited. Fifth, PICs have not had a chance to build networks and a good reputation in major destination countries other than Australia and New Zealand, which disadvantages them against workers from other countries. Finally, within the region, skill shortages exist largely in the same areas across most PICs, which limits the scope for meeting skill shortage needs with intra-Pacific labour migration.

Labour migration has brought considerable development benefits to PICs including: employment; remittances that support households and services provided in communities; increased education and skills development. Remittances are arguably the main economic benefit of migration: in 2018, remittances into ten PICs (Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) amounted to USD 689 million, with Fiji receiving the largest sum, followed by Tonga and
Samoa. Due to the huge out-migration flows particularly from Polynesia, the smaller island states have been characterised as MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) states.

One of the major costs of permanent migration in PICs is skill loss. Permanent migration of skilled workers has entailed negative effects of brain drain, especially in the Polynesian countries and Fiji. The migration of nurses and doctors from PICs is a growing concern and has affected the provision of health services in many PICs, and other areas including the construction industry, tourism management and a range of professional services, have reduced capacity.

Skill loss is less severe in the case of temporary and seasonal migration. Temporary and seasonal schemes are also known to have better economic impacts for sending countries in general. However, gaps may be identified in the end-to-end processes of seasonal/temporary migration. For instance, under the RSE and SWP, the arrangements for pre-departure training differ greatly between PICs, which may result in considerably different degrees of preparedness of their workers. Recruitment regulations similarly differ between PICs, with private recruitment agents partly involved in the process. Unfair worker selection practices have been pointed out in some cases. Upon seasonal/temporary workers’ return to their own countries, currently little or no reintegration support is provided for them.

While the focus of the temporary and seasonal migration schemes has often been on economic benefits for participants and their communities and countries of origin, the social implications of these schemes, which are different from those of permanent migration, warrant close attention. The social and health impacts of seafaring have been researched for Kiribati and Tuvalu, but those of seasonal and temporary migration to Australia and New Zealand are less well understood. For instance, the protection of the rights of seasonal and temporary migrant workers needs to be scrutinised, especially given that the existing seasonal/temporary migrant visas available to people from Pacific Islands are tied to specific employers. Indeed, concerns have been raised about the working conditions and pastoral care of seasonal workers under both the RSE and SWP. Cases of exploitation of RSE and SWP participating workers have been highlighted by researchers and the media, prompting both the Australian and New Zealand governments to begin to take measures to address them. Some seriously harmful working conditions and physical and psychological impacts have been documented in the case of Fijian private military and security personnel. Relatedly, greater information is needed on the flows and impacts of the migration of Pacific Island peoples working as domestic workers, since migrant domestic workers are known to be particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Finally, studies have identified broader impacts of the absences of seasonal and temporary workers on their communities, ranging from the loss of able-bodied young men for community work to marital dissolution, family abandonment and cultural transgressions.

In this context of multiple benefits as well as challenges – which Underhill-Sem et al. (2019) describe as “quadruple win-loss” of labour mobility – state and non-state actors have taken up initiatives for partnerships and regional cooperation to maximise the benefits of labour mobility and monitor its impacts. Examples include the establishment of the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM), which provides FICs with an opportunity for high-level regional cooperation not only in strengthening the existing mobility schemes and exploring new opportunities with Australia and New Zealand, but also enhancing intra-Pacific labour migration. The Fiji Volunteer Scheme is an example of a successful intra-Pacific labour migration initiative. Non-governmental stakeholders, such as seasonal labour employers and regional training institutions such as the Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), may also play increasingly important roles in improving the existing migration schemes like the RSE and SWP and facilitating new ones such as the PLS.
The following recommendations emerge from the above:

**Improving labour migration governance**

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

- Since it is in the interest of PICs as countries of origin to ensure safe migration and fair work for their migrant workers, it is recommended that they consider signing and ratifying the ILO conventions governing labour migration.

- PICs that have not developed national labour migration policies could learn lessons from the experiences of Kiribati, Samoa and Tuvalu with developing and implementing their policies, and based on the lessons learned, start a process of developing their own national labour migration policies.

**Improving existing temporary and seasonal schemes**

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

- Pacific Island governments could lobby for including opportunities to change employers for seasonal and temporary workers in Australia and New Zealand with the view of reducing their dependence and vulnerability. There are examples of good practices in the world.

- Pacific Island Governments could lobby for formalising the right of seasonal workers to join unions and collective bargaining mechanisms. These mechanisms would allow for greater employment protection and allow workers to negotiate some aspects of working conditions in the same way that permanent residents and citizens can, so that migration does not undercut wages or working conditions. The Kiribati and Tuvalu government could lobby for the consideration of vulnerability to climate change or natural disasters in the selection process for the RSE, SWP and Pacific Labour Scheme, giving workers from these countries a small advantage.

- In regards to women participation in seasonal work schemes, the other PICs could try to understand and replicate good practices from Kiribati in order to increase the proportion of women under the schemes.

- In regards to improving labour governance in origin countries, research studies could determine what kind of reintegration assistance for returned workers would be most useful (such as in the form of training, micro-credits, savings schemes or others) to assist them to build sustainable livelihoods in their island countries without the need to return to Australia or New Zealand for many seasons. This would then limit the negative social impacts of repeated absences on themselves and their families, and would create opportunities for newcomers.

**Moving to new destination countries and into new occupational areas**

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

- PIC governments would not wish to promote labour migration in skilled occupations where there is a shortage in the country and where the emigration of skilled human resources or “brain drain” can have a negative development impact e.g. scientists, engineers, technicians, skilled tradespersons, teachers, doctors, nurses.
• PIC governments in collaboration with social partners, in the framework of a national labour migration policy or national employment policy, may deliberate over an overseas employment strategy.

• After determining the preferred levels and types of labour migration, Pacific Island governments could become more active in gathering and disseminating information on potential labour migration opportunities in non-traditional destinations and new occupational areas. They could proactively negotiate Bilateral Labour Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding with potential destination countries.

• After identifying overseas employment opportunities, governments may consider aligning education and training curriculum and standards with countries of destination.

Recommendations to ILO:

• Given its global experience, the ILO could provide important technical support to PIC governments in their identification of overseas employment opportunities and the negotiations with destination countries.

• The guide on overseas employment for I-Kiribati is good practice and similar guides could be developed either for individual PICs or for the region as a whole. Guides could focus on skilled work, as in the case of Kiribati, or could also include semi- and low-skilled work.

Increasing understanding of the social impacts of migration

Recommendations for the ILO:

• Given the lack of understanding of the social impacts of seasonal and temporary migration on migrants, their families and their communities, the ILO could commission research into this area.

• The particularly severe impacts of the migration of Fijian private military/security officers also warrants in-depth research that could be organised by the ILO.

• Given ILO’s expertise in working in the area of protecting women migrant domestic workers including through legislation and policy advice, a first step would be to conduct a comprehensive research study on migrant domestic workers from the Pacific region as there currently is little knowledge about them.

Collecting consistent labour migration data to ensure evidence-based policy-making

Recommendations for the ILO:

• Using the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) template of the ILO and its global data-base, and replicating the process of technical support and focal points in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, it is recommended that ILO develop a database for the Pacific region.

• In addition the ILO could provide technical support to line ministries in the PICs (Labour, Immigration) to enable them to make better use of the data that is collected by these ministries.

Increasing intra-Pacific labour migration and localising selected positions

Recommendation for the ILO:

• The ILO could commission research into the labour markets of the main Pacific migrant receiving countries (Cook Islands, Palau, PNG) to explore opportunities: a) for localisation; and
b) for Pacific peoples from neighbouring countries taking up these positions rather than migrants from more distant countries.
1. Introduction

The importance of decent work and well-managed migration is recognized in the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and decent work for all. Target 8.8 is to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environment for all workers, including migrant workers and in particular women migrants. SDG 10 aims to reduce inequalities within and among countries. Target 10.7 is to facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Linked to the SDGs, the Global Compact for Migration provides a comprehensive guideline for safe and orderly migration in its 23 objectives, including a number of references to Decent Work and Labour Migration. Two of the objectives center around labour mobility -

Objective 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.

Objective 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies

The Pacific Islands region has long been characterised by large migration flows. Tens of thousands of Pacific peoples have permanently resettled in the Pacific Rim and sizeable Pacific diasporas are found in New Zealand, the United States and Australia. The United States and New Zealand grant permanent residence rights to the residents of selected Pacific Island countries (PICs). In some smaller PICs, the overseas population far outnumbers the population in the island home. Over the last decade, new temporary and seasonal labour mobility opportunities have opened up through New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and Australia’s Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP). These schemes attempt to fill seasonal labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries. More recently, other industries (such as hospitality, aged care, fisheries) have also been opened up for Pacific peoples.

Labour migration flows have become more geographically diverse – with new flows directed at non-traditional destination countries such as Japan and increased intra-Pacific migration – and in terms of occupational groups such as nurses, teachers, caregivers, rugby players and security personnel. In some countries like Kiribati, labour migration has become an increasingly important climate change adaption strategy.

Labour migration has brought considerable development benefits to PICs in the form of employment, remittances that support households and services provided in communities, increased education and skills development, to name just a few. At the same time, there are concerns about the social impacts of temporary labour mobility where one family member is absent for considerable amounts of time, and violations of the rights at work and general human rights of labour migrants in destination countries.

At the ILO’s High Level Tripartite Forum on Climate Change and Decent Work in the Pacific Islands Countries in PNG on 24-26 July 2019, the current state, challenges and future strategies for Labour Mobility in the Pacific will be discussed. This Working Paper will serve as a starting point for discussion at the Forum on labour mobility.

The Working Paper begins with the overview of major labour migration flows in the Pacific Islands region, providing an overview and statistical summary of permanent, temporary and seasonal labour
migration flows and a discussion of the economic impacts of migration (Chapter 2). The focus of
Chapter 3 is on the seasonal and temporary labour migration schemes, opportunities for intra-Pacific
migration, and barriers to labour migration. In Chapter 4, the protection of the rights of seasonal
labour migrants in destination countries and the often precarious situation of seafarers and
military/security migrants are discussed, followed by a summary of social issues especially in
temporary migration. Chapter 5 provides an overview of existing partnerships and initiatives in the
space of labour migration in the Pacific. In the final chapter, the successes and challenges of labour
mobility in the Pacific are discussed and recommendations are made to Pacific Island governments
and to the ILO to improve the rights of migrants and increase the development benefits for Pacific
Island countries.

The Working Paper is based on a comprehensive desk review of available documents, publications and
statistics.
2. Overview of major labour migration flows in Pacific Islands region

The Pacific Islands region has long been characterised by substantial migration flows. In the past, they have mostly consisted of permanent migration flows directed to the Pacific Rim. Recent years have seen an increased diversification of migration flows and increasing temporary and seasonal labour migration. Labour migration opportunities have been unevenly distributed between PICs with the large Melanesian countries of Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, as well as Kiribati, which is already affected by adverse climate change impacts, having few migration outlets.

In general, migration is primarily a response to real and perceived inequalities in incomes, education, training, socio-economic opportunities and health care (Voigt-Graf, forthcoming 2019) as well as demand for skills and labour in destination countries. With the exception of countries with high emigration rates (Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji), population growth remains high across the region, increasing migration pressures. Climate change and environmental degradation have further increased migration pressures, especially in the atoll states of Kiribati and Tuvalu. The presence of relatives overseas is also a factor, particularly when permanent migrants make decisions about destination countries.

In this Chapter, an overview of different types of labour migration is presented with a focus on permanent migration to the Pacific Rim, to new destinations, and migration into the Pacific Islands, together with a statistical overview. Chapter 3 focuses on temporary and seasonal labour schemes and intra-Pacific migration.

a) Overview of different types of labour migration

Permanent migration to the Pacific Rim

Migration has been significant in Pacific Island development over the last decades, particularly for the smaller island states of Micronesia and Polynesia. The population balance of some of the smaller PICs has been shifted to the Pacific Rim. Today, more Cook Islanders and Samoans live permanently in the Pacific Rim than in their island homes, and Auckland (New Zealand) is deemed to be the largest Polynesian city in the world.

The Pacific Islands region can be divided into three cultural regions: Melanesia, which includes four ILO member states (Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu); Polynesia, which includes four ILO member states (Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu); and Micronesia, with three ILO member states (Kiribati, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands).

In post-colonial times, several PICs have continued to maintain close relationships with either New Zealand or the United States and they have resulted in special residency and work rights. Cook Islanders, Niueans and Tokelauans are New Zealand citizens with full residential and work rights in New Zealand. Cook Islands records a resident population of about 20,000 compared to some 62,000 Cook Islanders in New Zealand (see Table 2 below). New Zealand’s immigration policy recognises the special relationship between New Zealand and Samoa and the Pacific Access Category (PAC) countries of Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji. Each year, up to 1,100 Samoan citizens are granted residence in New Zealand under the Samoan Quota Scheme via a lottery, while up to 250 Tongan and Fijian citizens and 75 Kiribati and Tuvaluan citizens are selected by ballot to be considered for residence in New Zealand under the PAC scheme. With these visas, migrants can include their partner and dependent children aged 24 and under (INZ, 2019a). Migrants or their partner must have a job offer (skilled or unskilled
work) from a single New Zealand employer. Samoans are the largest group of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, comprising some 144,000 persons in 2013 (see Table 2 below).

With the partial exception of Fiji citizens who have had migration opportunities through skilled migration and family reunion schemes in Australia and New Zealand and elsewhere, New Zealand’s scheme is currently the best opportunity for many citizens of Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tonga to permanently migrate overseas.

The Compacts of Free Association (COFA) between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and Palau allow citizens of the freely associated states to live and work in the United States with some restrictions. Under the COFA, the per capita development assistance for these three small countries is very large, each receiving more than US$1,000 per capita per year (ILO, 2017b). There has been significant out-migration from these countries, which is likely to continue due not only to economic pressures but also to increasing impacts of climate change. From 2005 to 2009, roughly 56,000 migrants or nearly a quarter of all citizens of these countries were estimated to be living in the US areas. Approximately 58% of these migrants lived in Hawaii, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (US Government Accountability Office, 2016). While accurate data are not available, the Marshallese population in the United States is reported to have increased in the last decade by over 300%, from 7,000 to 22,000, and now accounts for nearly one-third of the RMI population worldwide (Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, 2015). The COFA migrants are legally allowed to work in the US and pay taxes, but are currently not eligible for many federal benefits (such as the federal Medicaid programme).

Like New Zealand and the United States, Australia is linked to the Pacific Islands region through a special historical and political relationship and close geographical proximity. However, this is not reflected in any special permanent migration arrangements. Australia’s migration programme is largely built around skilled migration and few people from Pacific Islands (with the exception of Fiji citizens) have had opportunities to meet the skills requirements. Since New Zealand residents are entitled to live and work in Australia (and vice versa) through the Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement, a significant number of New Zealand citizens from Pacific Islands have migrated to Australia after obtaining citizenship in New Zealand.

Melanesian countries (except Fiji) and the atoll states have had few migration outlets, except Kiribati’s and Tuvalu’s small allocations under the PAC scheme. The main overseas employment opportunity in recent decades has been as seafarers on German merchant ships and Asian fishing boats. In the wake of the global economic crisis, seafarer numbers have declined and there is currently an oversupply of trained maritime workers in both countries.

**Statistical overview of Pacific migrations**

Table 1 shows the number of Pacific migrants by major destination countries in 2017. The number of migrants differs from the number of Pacific peoples abroad because the latter also includes the

---

2 The lottery winners have six months to secure a job in New Zealand in order to stay in New Zealand. If they fail to find a job, they have to leave New Zealand. The PAC scheme is a self-funded scheme and many workers draw on their pension funds to meet their expenses. According to the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the number of successful PAC applicants from Kiribati including both visa applicants and their dependents who were able to secure a job offer was 61 in 2013-14 and 69 in 2014-15, indicating that I-Kiribati are unable to fill the already low quota of 75 per year (Voigt-Graf and Kagan, 2017).

3 The Compact between the United States and Palau is up for renewal in 2023 and with RMI and FSM in 2024.

4 Please note that this increase is not reflected in Table 1 below.
overseas-born subsequent generations. As such, the number of migrants from the Cook Islands in New Zealand is less than 14,000 even though the Cook Island community in New Zealand numbers some 62,000. In New Zealand, the largest migrant groups from the Pacific are from Fiji and the three Polynesian countries of the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga. In Australia, the largest migrant groups are form the same four countries. This is noteworthy because Australia is geographically and historically closer to Melanesia but this is not reflected in migrant numbers. The United States and Canada also host a considerable number of Fijian migrants. Since the 1990s, care giving has become an important source of employment for Fijians seeking opportunities abroad. In the United States, some of these migrants are “undocumented” in the sense that they enter on a “visitor’s visa” with no work rights.

Table 1 shows that Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada are home to the majority of Pacific Island migrants. In Europe, the former (and present-day) colonial powers of France and the United Kingdom have attracted modest numbers of migrants from Pacific Islands. In Asia, India hosts the largest number of migrants from Pacific Islands. Intra-Pacific migration flows are briefly summarised below.

### Table 1: The number of Pacific migrants by major destinations, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific origin countries</th>
<th>All countries</th>
<th>Major destination countries</th>
<th>Other destination regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>22,249</td>
<td>8,372</td>
<td>13,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>215,120</td>
<td>75,575</td>
<td>56,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>4,903</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>1,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>7,504</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>2,598</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>117,511</td>
<td>27,408</td>
<td>54,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>3,913</td>
<td>2,466</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>60,258</td>
<td>12,354</td>
<td>23,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>3,546</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>8,785</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

5 Some figures recorded in the UNDESA database are difficult to explain such as the number of 944 Tongans in Guinea (West Africa), 184 Palauans and 440 Samoans in Greece, 104 I-Kiribati in Brazil, 287 Tongans in Chile and 221 ni-Vanuatu in Colombia. Some of these figures might be erroneous.

6 UNDESA estimates of international migrants are derived from Census data and define international migrants as persons who change their usual place of residence. As such, the estimates include seasonal workers.
Figure 1 shows that Samoa, Tonga and Fiji have the largest proportion of their population living overseas while the share of emigrants is under 10% in the case of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

**Figure 1: Percentage of emigrants by population, 2015**

Temporary and seasonal labour opportunities in Australia and New Zealand

In addition to permanent migration flows, seasonal and temporary migration opportunities for people from Pacific Islands have opened up over the last decade under New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and Australia’s Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), which attempt to fill seasonal labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture industries. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, together with more recent opportunities for temporary labour migration introduced by the Australian and New Zealand governments.

Pacific Peoples in Australia and New Zealand

Table 2 shows the number of Pacific peoples in New Zealand at the time of the 2013 Census. In the Census, people stated the ethnic group or groups they belonged to. They could select ethnic groups from a list or write additional ethnicities, and hence could be counted in more than one group.

As Table 2 shows, many New Zealand-born descendants of migrants identified with the ethnic groups of their parents or grandparents. For instance, of the 62,000 Cook Islanders in New Zealand, 77% were born in New Zealand. Hence, only a minority of them were actually migrants. The largest Pacific communities in New Zealand were represented by Samoan, Cook Island Māori and Tongan ethnicities. The large number of New Zealand-born members of these groups indicates that migration has been
going on for long enough to establish a sizeable overseas-born generation. The smallest ethnic groups of Pacific Island descent were from Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Table 2: Pacific Island Ethnicities in New Zealand, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>% born in New Zealand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Island Māori</td>
<td>61,839</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>14,445</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian Indian</td>
<td>10,929</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-Kiribati</td>
<td>2,115</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>23,883</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinean</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>144,138</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islanders</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>60,336</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvaluan</td>
<td>3,537</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni-Vanuatu</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Australian Census data shows both birthplace and ancestry. Table 3 shows an increase in the number of Pacific peoples from all countries, for which data is available, and for both birthplace and ancestry between 2011 and 2016. For Samoans, Cook Islanders and Tongans, ancestry numbers are larger than birthplace numbers, indicating the presence of an Australian-born generation among these migrant groups. This is different for Fiji and PNG where ancestry numbers are smaller than birthplace numbers. In PNG, this is likely related to the fact that many Australians were born in PNG, particularly before PNG’s independence in 1975, and these are counted as born in PNG but not of PNG ancestry. In the case of Fiji, it is possible that some Indo-Fijians who were born in Fiji have not indicated Fiji ancestry in the Census.

Table 3: Pacific Island Ethnicities in Australia, 2011 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>6,832</td>
<td>6,091</td>
<td>22,230</td>
<td>16,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>61,480</td>
<td>56,980</td>
<td>50,510</td>
<td>39,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>28,812</td>
<td>26,784</td>
<td>18,799</td>
<td>15,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>24,026</td>
<td>19,095</td>
<td>75,755</td>
<td>55,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>9,964</td>
<td>9,209</td>
<td>32,698</td>
<td>25,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Id.community. Australia Community Profile. Available at: https://profile.id.com.au/australia/birthplace
Non-traditional destination countries
Migration flows for Pacific peoples have become considerably more diversified in recent years with the inclusion of non-traditional destination countries. Among the non-traditional destination countries of Pacific Islands migrants are some Asian countries. For instance, there has been a small but consistent flow of Tongans, Fijians and other Pacific peoples to Japan, which largely consists of students and rugby players (see e.g. Esau, 2007; Kanemasu and Molnar, 2013 and 2014). Fijians also have a long history of serving in the British Army and as peacekeepers in various UN missions. Employment in private security companies has lured thousands of Fijians to countries like Iraq (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017).

Intra-Pacific mobility and labour mobility into the Pacific Island region
Traditionally the main focus in analysing labour mobility in the Pacific has been that of Pacific peoples moving to the Pacific Rim. The substantial intra-Pacific movements as well as considerable labour migration into PICs have received less attention from researchers and policy makers. Intra-Pacific migration is discussed in Chapter 3 while an overview of labour mobility into PICs is provided here.

While all PICs are destination countries for some skilled, professional and managerial workers, the largest numbers of foreign workers are employed in PNG and Fiji (see Table 4), while in Palau and the Cook Islands the number of migrant workers is highest in relation to the local populations. Since few Papua New Guineans have had an opportunity to migrate overseas while large numbers of migrant workers are in PNG, the country is primarily a migrant-receiving country.

In PNG, the majority of foreign workers are from Australia and other developed countries, as well as various Asian countries, particularly the Philippines and China. In May 2015, the total number of active work permits held by non-citizens in PNG was 41,096, only 511 of which were held by Pacific Islanders (Voigt-Graf, 2016b). PNG has witnessed an enormous increase in the number of foreign workers since 2005, which was partly due to the increased demand for skilled workers during the construction of the LNG project. Numbers have dropped since their peak in 2012. The industries most reliant on non-citizen workers are construction and infrastructure; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and mining. Most non-citizens work as managers, technicians and skilled trade workers (Voigt-Graf, 2016b).

In Palau and the Cook Islands, most migrant workers are employed in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Table 4: Number of migrants in Pacific Island countries, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>4,213</td>
<td>2,109</td>
<td>2,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>13,911</td>
<td>7,508</td>
<td>6,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>3,022</td>
<td>1,594</td>
<td>1,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>3,292</td>
<td>2,016</td>
<td>1,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia (Fed. States of)</td>
<td>2,785</td>
<td>1,489</td>
<td>1,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>4,988</td>
<td>2,831</td>
<td>2,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>32,389</td>
<td>20,558</td>
<td>11,831</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Climate change and migration

Recent years have seen increased migration due to climate change. In the Pacific, climate change can cause a reduction in land, livelihood or habitat security for some communities (UNESCAP, 2014).

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) identified five so-called hotspots that are likely to become source areas for climate change-related migrants (UNESCAP, 2014). These are urban areas; urban atolls; non-urban atolls; coastal, delta and riverine communities; and communities prone to drought. While it is impossible to estimate the number of people likely to be involved in climate change-related migration, it is evident that the impacts of climate change on migration will differ between countries and places.

According to UNESCAP (2014), climate change is likely to increase the demand for both internal and international migration opportunities where migration initially follows current patterns towards labour market opportunities both internally, leading to increased urbanisation, and internationally towards the Pacific Rim. Voluntary migration can enhance the adaptive capacity of the migrant-sending community through the generation of remittances, reduced population pressure, and in the case of circular migration, the transfer of knowledge and skills. At the same time, the economic costs (loss of livelihoods and economic viability of communities) and the social, cultural and psychological costs (loss of tradition, language, identity) can be high. In this regard, Fornale (2017) warns that the persisting challenges in using existing or emerging forms of labour mobility to address the effects of climate change may result in tools with only a limited ability to absorb the human rights implications for those who are marginalised.

As an atoll nation, Kiribati is one of the most affected countries in the Pacific. Findings from a 2015 household survey in Kiribati (United Nations University, 2016), which included 377 households with 2,799 individual members, suggest that only 1.3% of the people had migrated internationally, including seafaring, for more than 3 months in the last 10 years. Almost 8% of the people migrated internally within Kiribati in the last 10 years. Importantly, climate stressors were the second most important (23%) motivation for migration after work (41%), and were more important than education (19%). Nine percent of the respondents reported that they had attempted to migrate but were unable to do so. In 80% of cases, this was due to lack of funds. As many as 94% of all households had been impacted by a natural hazard in the 10 years preceding the survey, with 81% of the people saying that they had been affected by sea level rise. When asked if they would need to migrate in the case of environmental changes, more than 73% of the households said that migration would be a likely response if either agricultural production became more difficult, sea levels rose, or flooding or saltwater intrusion worsened. The lack ofmigration opportunities is serious in light of the projected loss in habitable land due to climate change. The Government of Kiribati adopted the “National Labour Migration Policy” in 2015 which recognises the important role of international labour migration in...
addressing the lack of employment opportunities in Kiribati and acknowledges permanent relocation of some citizens as part of Kiribati’s climate change adaptation strategy.

**b) Economic impacts of migration**

Due to the comparatively small population bases of most PICs, particularly in Polynesia and Micronesia, migration from many PICs has been enormous proportionate to their home population sizes. The negative and positive impacts of migration therefore are potentially more pronounced in PICs compared to other regions of the world. The World Bank has argued in its Pacific Possible series that expanding labour mobility has the potential to bring enormous development benefits to PICs and is vital for the future of the Pacific region, not only to alleviate population pressures and unemployment in PICs but also because the advanced countries in the Pacific Rim will increasingly need migrants to fill gaps in their domestic labour markets, especially in sectors that struggle to attract domestic workers, such as aged care (Curtain et al, 2016).

**Remittances into and out of the Pacific**

Remittances are arguably the main economic benefit of migration. In 2018, remittances into the ten PICs included in Table 5 amounted to USD 689 million, albeit with large variations between countries. Fiji received the largest sum, followed by Tonga and Samoa. In Tonga, remittances were worth more than 35% of GDP; while being a mere 0.02% in PNG. Remittances have raised living standards of many households. Studies in PICs show that remittances and migration have led to increases in household income, assets, savings, educational attainment, and knowledge sharing, while there is less evidence of remittances being used for productive investments.

**Table 5: Remittance flows into Pacific Island countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>8.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>131</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>35.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: No data for the Cook Islands is available.

Due to the huge out-migration flows particularly from Polynesia, the smaller island states have been characterized as MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) states. The MIRAB model suggests that external sources of financing that do not leave a residue of debt are the key to economic performance of small islands. MIRAB states depend on Migration, which stimulates substantial Remittance flows. Alongside remittances, Aid is a significant source of income, and these sources have contributed to the emergence of an urban Bureaucracy (Bertram and Watters, 1985). In many Polynesian countries, remittances represent the main source of foreign income and reach levels rarely found in other parts of the world.

It is also important to emphasise that monetary remittances are only part of the overall remittances as contributions in kind in the form of consumer goods sent by family members overseas are not counted in the official statistics.

Given the migration flows into the Pacific Islands including professionals and skilled workers from Asia, Australia, New Zealand and various other countries discussed above, it is not surprising that substantial sums of money are transferred out of the Pacific Islands region in the form of remittances. Figure 2 shows the main countries that received remittances sent from PICs in 2017. Overall, an estimated USD 121 million was transferred out of the Pacific Islands. Receiving USD 35 million in remittances, Australia was the largest recipient. About half of the remittances received by Australia (USD 17 million) was transferred from PNG, while in return only USD 3 million was sent from Australia to PNG. This makes Australia a net remittance recipient from PNG. It is caused by the large expatriate community of Australians working in PNG.

Figure 2: Main remittance receiving countries from PICs, 2017, in million USD

Impacts on skills
With long-term migration opportunities in metropolitan states largely targeting skilled workers, permanent migration flows from the Pacific have consisted of professionals and technical workers from various sectors including health (Connell, 2009) and education (Iredale et al., 2015). The negative effects of skill loss or brain drain are particularly obvious in PICs experiencing high rates of permanent migration, i.e. the Polynesian countries and Fiji. The migration of nurses and doctors from PICs is a growing concern and has affected the provision of health services in many PICs. The migration has come at a considerable cost to the island states because of the high costs of training and the reduction in the effectiveness of health care (Connell, 2009). In sports, the loss of some of the best rugby players abroad (who contribute to the success of the national teams of Australia and New Zealand, and company teams in Japan) has meant that both national and regional teams in the Pacific do not have their best representative sides (Esau, 2007).

While education and health services have declined, other areas such as the construction industry, tourism management, and a range of professional services have reduced capacity. PICs are also characterised by a shortage of competent tradespersons. Island countries have sought to attract personnel in these areas from other countries with mixed success and frequently at considerable cost. The impact of migration is particularly damaging because it is often unpredictable and happens with the employer having no notice that the workers are planning to leave. Moreover, migration represents a loss of public investment in human capital through public expenditure in the health and education sectors.

There is no evidence that the emigration of professionals and skilled workers including teachers and health workers and the resulting shortage of staff in these areas has led to a substantial increase in wages or working conditions. Instead, skilled workers have often been replaced by labour migrants from other countries, such as Indian doctors and Filipino handymen in Fiji.

While skill losses are mostly associated with permanent migration, they are less severe or non-existent in the case of temporary and seasonal migration. In temporary and seasonal migration, some migrants return with new skills acquired overseas, potentially resulting in skill gains if these skills are useful in their home communities. For instance, general pruning skills that workers might acquire in Australia or New Zealand might be transferable to their home countries, whereas apple picking skills may not be. Some seasonal workers acquire new qualifications while in Australia or New Zealand such as licenses to operate forklifts or similar equipment. Whether or not returnees can use these skills in their home countries depends on the local economy to which they return.
3. Existing labour migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders

Over the last decade, new labour migration opportunities for Pacific peoples have opened up, with New Zealand and Australia introducing schemes to fill labour shortages in targeted industries and sectors. These – especially the seasonal migration schemes – have become major labour mobility avenues for PICs. This Chapter discusses the opportunities and challenges of these schemes. It also outlines intra-Pacific migration flows and key barriers to Pacific labour migration.

a) Existing seasonal and temporary labour mobility schemes

Seasonal (RSE) and temporary migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders: New Zealand

In 2007, New Zealand launched the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme to fill seasonal labour shortages in its horticulture and viticulture industries. Under this scheme, employers can apply for RSE status and fill vacant seasonal positions for which there are no New Zealand applicants. The annual cap has grown from the initial 5,000 to 12,850 in 2019 (INZ, 2019b). Unless employers can demonstrate pre-established relationships with workers from other countries, they may only recruit workers from nine PICs (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). The scheme allows seasonal workers to stay in New Zealand up to 7 months in any 11-month period, while citizens of Tuvalu and Kiribati who also live there can stay an extra 2 months. Workers may be re-employed in subsequent years, either with the same or a new employer.

Evaluation studies have found the RSE to be a generally successful seasonal labour migration scheme. In addition to significant benefits for the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries and the New Zealand economy identified by a study conducted by the New Zealand Department of Labour (2010), a World Bank study, based on surveys in Tonga and Vanuatu (which make up about 70% of the PIC workers under the RSE), found multiple positive development impacts on the sending households (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). These include increased incomes, increased household savings, increased ownership of durable goods and an increase in subjective standards of living for participating communities. For instance, the median after-tax income earned in New Zealand by the migrants was approximately NZD 12,000, with an average of NZD 5,500 remitted or transferred in savings. There was an over 30% rise in the per capita income of participating households relative to the comparison groups, while per-capita expenditure and savings also rose (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). At the regional level, it is estimated that RSE participating workers have remitted a total of NZD 34-41 million each year since 2008 (MFAT, n.d.). The scheme has been described as “a model for a compassionate migration policy – bringing workers to New Zealand in a so-called triple win for employers, employees and states” (Winters, 2016: 13-14).

The main temporary migration pathway for Pacific Islanders is the Essential Skills visa. In 2016, under New Zealand’s Canterbury Reconstruction Pilot, 24 carpenters from Fiji (13), Samoa (10) and Tonga (1) were employed to work in the Christchurch rebuild. The carpenters were employed on an Essential Skills visa for an initial one-year trial period (MFAT, n.d.; ILO, 2017b). As a result of onsite training and skills assessment during the programme, the recruits were awarded with a certificate in New Zealand Level 4 Carpentry (Tradestaff, 2017). Building on the success of the Canterbury Reconstruction Pilot, a new Pacific Trades Partnership initiative is currently in place, which recruits trained Pacific Island carpenters for short-term employment in New Zealand’s construction industry. The initiative initially focuses on the recruitment of carpenters from Tonga and Samoa with a view to providing work placements for 40-50 Pacific Island workers (MFAT, 2018; MIC, 2018). Additionally, there is an ongoing labour mobility fisheries pilot, which offers opportunities for graduates of the Pacific marine training centres to work on New Zealand fishing vessels (MFAT, n.d.)
Future temporary migration opportunities may be found in New Zealand industries with significant skills/labour shortages. Dairy farming is a recognised skills shortage industry with chronic staffing recruitment and retention issues (Callister and Tipples, 2010), which already employs approximately 27,800 migrant workers (Tipples et al., 2010). Similarly, the construction industry, which employs over 245,000 people or about 10% of the national labour force (INZ, 2019c), faces severe skills shortages. It has one of the lowest vacancy fill rates in New Zealand (Lobo and Wilkinson, 2008) and has consequently seen a rapid increase in migrant workers on temporary skills visa since 2011 (Lamm et al., 2017). Finally, migrant workers have already been employed to meet labour shortages in the care industry, with the largest proportion being from PICs (Callister et al., 2014). Further opportunities are expected in this industry given the rapid ageing of the New Zealand population (Callister et al., 2014). These industries may offer PICs avenues for enhancing their access to temporary labour migration, although issues of working conditions and worker exploitation in these industries also require close examination if they are to become viable migration options for PICs.

Seasonal (SWP) and temporary (PLS) migration opportunities for Pacific Islanders: Australia

The Australian Government implemented the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (PSWPS) from 2008 to 2012. The PSWPS was largely modelled on the success of New Zealand’s RSE scheme. It had a total cap of 2,500 workers although there were just 1,623 arrivals over the duration of the pilot. In 2012, the PSWPS was subsumed by the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), which initially allowed workers from eight PICs and Timor-Leste to work in the Australian horticulture industry for up to six months. In 2015, the scheme was opened to all PICs, and the annual cap, which was initially 12,000, was removed, allowing employers to determine the number of workers to be recruited (World Bank, 2017). From November 2018, the maximum duration of employment in Australia is nine months per year, while previously only workers from Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu could be employed up to nine months. The scheme was subsequently expanded to the broader agriculture industry and the accommodation sector (in selected locations) as well as trials in the aquaculture, cotton and cane sectors. A 2017 World Bank study found that the SWP had delivered approximately AUD 144 million in net income gains to the region since 2012. The study also estimated that over the six-month employment period the average PIC seasonal worker remitted approximately AUD 2,200 and transferred AUD 6,650 in savings home (World Bank, 2017; see Voigt-Graf, 2017 for impacts on Papua New Guinea).

Seasonal worker numbers have been considerably higher in the RSE than in the SWP (Table 6). However, with the removal of the annual cap and several other reforms (Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2016), the SWP arrivals have rapidly grown in recent years (Howes and Curtain, 2019). It is estimated that the SWP numbers may soon exceed those of the RSE (which is currently capped at 12,850) (Howes, 2018). In addition, while the SWP has had to compete with the availability of backpackers as a primary source of seasonal labour, the reliance on backpackers has been diminishing in recent years due to a comprehensive crack-down on illegal labour practices, which renders cheap unregulated labour less available and attractive to employers. Thus, “something of a revolution in the horticultural labour market” may be taking place, with potentially significant implications for seasonal labour migration opportunities for PICs (Howes and Curtain, 2019).

A new temporary migration pathway for Pacific Islanders has opened up recently. In 2015, the Australian Government released Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia (DIIS, 2015), from which the Pacific Microstates - Northern Australia Worker Pilot Programme (NAWPP) emerged. Through the programme, approved employers who are unable to fill positions from the Australian labour market can recruit workers from Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu. The
programme provides the opportunity for a total of 250 citizens over five years to access a two-year microstate visa, with the option of applying for a third year. The microstate visa permits migrants to work in lower-skilled jobs in Northern Australia in non-seasonal occupations in any industry, such as tourism and hospitality. Subsequently, in July 2018, the Australian Government launched a new Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), which builds on the NAWPP and the SWP. The PLS initially allowed 2,000 citizens from Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu access to the scheme, but it has since been uncapped and opened to citizens of nine PICs (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) and Timor-Leste (DFAT, 2019a). Under this scheme, workers can take up low- and semi-skilled jobs in rural and regional Australia for up to three years. The scheme is open to all sectors and industries but initially focuses on: the accommodation and food services industry; health care and social assistance industry; and non-seasonal agriculture, forestry and fishing industries. Notably, the scheme does not allow workers to bring their families to Australia, which has been pointed out as a potential source of social costs (Howes, 2018).

Distribution of seasonal migration opportunities across PICs

In the 2017/18 season, over 17,000 Pacific seasonal workers travelled to New Zealand and Australia under the RSE and the SWP (Table 6). Vanuatu (7,793) and Tonga (4,689) provided by far the largest numbers. In Tonga, the number of SWP and RSE participating workers is reported to have reached 13% of the eligible sending population (those aged 20-45) (Howes, 2018). Larger PICs have better resourced Ministries or Departments of Labour to promote their workers, better end-to-end processes and cheaper air linkages to Australia and New Zealand (ILO, 2017b). As such, it is not surprising that they have been more successful than other PICs such as Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu. Some countries have also benefitted from a so-called first- and second-mover advantage. For instance, Vanuatu had an initial advantage in the RSE due to employers’ desire to recruit from a country without a large diaspora in New Zealand as an attempt to reduce absconing (Curtain, 2018; ILO, 2017a) as well as their preference for returning workers (Maguire and Johnson, 2017).

Among the countries that have largely “missed out” on the temporary labour mobility schemes is PNG. In 2017-18, PNG’s share of the seasonal work in Australia and New Zealand available to PICs was just 1% (and less than 0.01% of its population aged 20-45 years) (Curtain, 2018). This has been attributed to the absence of recruitment intermediaries with strong connections in both sending and receiving countries, absence of direct recruitment by employers, and mismatch between selected workers and required attributes (Curtain, 2018; see also ILO, 2017a). Participant numbers from countries with otherwise few migration outlets (Kiribati, Tuvalu, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) have been much larger in New Zealand (although there has recently been a rise in the number of I-Kiribati and PNG workers in Australia). The RSE thus provides workers from these otherwise disadvantaged countries valuable opportunities to work overseas.

It may also be noted that seasonal labour mobility does not hold equal significance to all PICs. In the case of Fiji, for instance, temporary migrants on Essential Skills visas in New Zealand and Australia and other professional migrants elsewhere greatly exceed seasonal workers (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019). In addition, as noted above, there are a growing number of Fijian migrants to non-traditional destinations, such as those participating in the United Nations peacekeeping forces, security personnel in the Middle East, and sports people. Fijian rugby players, for instance, emigrate often temporarily but sometimes permanently to New Zealand, Australia, Europe and elsewhere; 450 athletes were estimated to be involved in foreign competitions in 2011 (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2013).
### Table 6: Number of seasonal workers under RSE and SWP by country of origin, 2012-13 to 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>247</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>364</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>1,137</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1,238</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1,690</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>1,878</td>
<td>527</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>1,573</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,538</td>
<td>1,497</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>1,687</td>
<td>2,624</td>
<td>1,822</td>
<td>2,691</td>
<td>1,899</td>
<td>2,790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>2,829</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3,070</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>3,435</td>
<td>3,726</td>
<td>1,198</td>
<td>4,171</td>
<td>2,149</td>
<td>4,445</td>
<td>3,348</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All PICs</strong></td>
<td>6,187</td>
<td>1,453</td>
<td>6,524</td>
<td>1,940</td>
<td>7,286</td>
<td>7,863</td>
<td>4,262</td>
<td>9,038</td>
<td>5,689</td>
<td>9,673</td>
<td>7,543</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Challenges and good practices in regard to migration cost, recruitment, access for women**

“Quadruple win-loss” of seasonal labour mobility

A recent study by Underhill-Sem et al. (2019) reviews the often-cited “triple-win” concept of seasonal labour mobility (Ramasamy et al., 2008) whereby migrants, the sending country, and the receiving country are all deemed to benefit. Focusing on data from Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga, the study argues that a “quadruple win-loss” framework offers a more nuanced analytical lens for understanding the multifaceted nature of contemporary labour mobility in the Pacific region. Multiple benefits as well as shortcomings are emerging and thereby present a more complex picture of seasonal labour mobility, although the study observes that the benefits still outweigh the shortcomings (Table 7).
Table 7: “Quadruple Win-Loss” Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Wins/Loses?</th>
<th>Economic Imperative</th>
<th>Demographic Imperative</th>
<th>Political Imperative</th>
<th>Development Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country of Destination</td>
<td>Improved viability of horticulture / viticulture sector.</td>
<td>Responsiveness to shortage of readily available unskilled labour in rural areas.</td>
<td>Consolidation of historical relationships with Pacific neighbours. Responsiveness to internal employer demands.</td>
<td>Improved rural development in New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Worker (including family)</td>
<td>Increased income, though only seasonal. Opportunity for training. Opportunity cost of work not done at home.</td>
<td>Reduction of tension with underemployed young people in home village.</td>
<td>Offers chance of being a good employee to ensure continued seasonal work for self or community. Shift in leadership structures.</td>
<td>Provides personal empowerment, work experience, community leadership and local business development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillary Services</td>
<td>Increased revenue from services such as transport, accommodation, food suppliers.</td>
<td>Increase in employment opportunities for rural New Zealanders (skilled and low skilled). This also applies under the first row - country of origin. “Reciprocal” international trade and employment agreements for the mutual benefit of both New Zealand and Pacific countries.</td>
<td>Increased pressure on Labour Sending Units especially linked with increasing complexity and diversity of temporary employment opportunities overseas.</td>
<td>Development of services in rural New Zealand to support RSE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Underhill-Sem et al., 2019

The economic returns of seasonal and temporary migration haven been widely recognised, but there are also costs to these types of migration. Concerns have also been expressed over the working conditions and welfare of participating workers, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Among the less publicised “losses” of seasonal and temporary labour migration are social impacts on sending households and communities. For instance, the age and gender composition of seasonal workers is highly skewed towards men aged 20-39 years, which is likely to impact on domestic labour markets as well as on sending households (Bedford and Ingram, 2018). Related impacts include:
“marital dissolution or family abandonment, domestic violence, poor nutrition of workers and/or those who remain at home, disciplinary problems with children, cultural transgressions, and extreme emotions felt by workers and those who remain at home” (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019: 36; see also Maclellan and Mares, 2006). In this regard, the fact that the new PLS, under which workers may remain in Australia for up to 3 years, does not allow them to bring their families may exacerbate some of the social costs if appropriate measures are not taken.

**Competition with backpackers in Australian seasonal labour market**

The number of Pacific seasonal workers under the SWP has been growing but remains small in the context of the Australian horticulture industry’s annual workforce, which stands at 75,000 – 175,000 (Doyle and Howes, 2015). The limited access has been due, among other things, to the availability of other foreign workers, especially backpackers (Bedford et al., 2017; Doyle and Howes, 2015; Hay and Howes, 2012). Until recently, employers preferred backpackers as a more flexible, much less regulated option; employment of backpackers does not require government approval or reporting, whereas stringent approval and reporting requirements are imposed on the SWP. This is despite a 2013 study by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences indicating that Pacific seasonal workers were on average 22% more efficient than backpackers (Doyle and Howes, 2015). As noted earlier, more recently, there has been a decline in the reliance on backpackers as a result of greater awareness of and measures to prevent farm worker exploitation, which are transforming the horticultural labour market into a more regulated one. The seasonal worker-backpacker ratio has changed from 1:23 in 2013-14 to less than 1:4 in 2018-19 (Howes and Curtain, 2019). At the same time, from 1 July 2019, Working Holiday Maker visa holders who carry out 6 months of specified work in regional areas while on their second visa may be eligible to apply for a third visa, making it possible for them to spend up to 3 years in Australia (DHA, 2019). With the 2018 lifting of the maximum period of employment with one farmer from 6 months to 12 and the pre-existing rule that any employer limit restarts on a visa extension, backpackers can now work for the same farmer for up to 3 years (Howes, 2019b). These changes may pose new threats to SWP numbers.

**Recruitment: distribution of seasonal labour mobility opportunities within sending countries**

The RSE and SWP participating countries have different worker recruitment mechanisms, such as recruitment from a work-ready pool, recruitment via agents, and direct recruitment by employers. Depending on the mechanisms employed and challenges faced in recruitment, seasonal work opportunities may not be equally accessible within each country. For instance, in Tuvalu, 60% of the SWP workers who participated in the 2017 World Bank study felt that migrating internally to Funafuti was a critical factor in improving their chances of selection. Forty-three percent of the I-Kiribati participants and 26% of the Ni-Vanuatu participants felt similarly about internal migration (World Bank, 2017). In PNG, a recent study (Curtain 2018; see also Voigt-Graf, 2017) reports that many applicants for the work-ready pool are drawn from urban areas although the program website states that applicants must be from rural areas. Seasonal workers from most PICs are also more likely to be in formal sector employment prior to participation than national averages. Furthermore, remote communities in many PICs which still rely on newspapers and the mail service as their primary source of information face barriers in accessing relevant information about the programme (World Bank, 2017; Voigt-Graf, 2017). Limited participation by women in many PICs has also been highlighted widely (see below). Thus, ensuring greater access to seasonal labour mobility opportunities for rural and
remote communities, women, and other communities who have thus far tended to miss out on the schemes is an urgent task.

Relatedly, reliance on the re-engagement of previous years’ workers in the RSE and the SWP has been debated by commentators. Some have observed that the predominance of return workers may be rendering these schemes unequalising in the Pacific (Winters, 2016). Regular migrants with advantageous access to migration opportunities may become an elite within their communities, while others are unable to access such benefits provided by work abroad (Cameron, 2009). It has also raised concerns that “what was meant to be a temporary migration program is becoming, de facto, a permanent one” (Howes, 2018). On the other hand, Australian data shows that, on average, workers participate in the SWP for fewer than four seasons, which has been described as a “reasonable outcome” for the SWP (Howes, 2018). Furthermore, under the RSE, many Pacific workers are recruited by return workers who operate as informal agents, which has worked favourably in increasing recruitments from countries like Samoa and the Solomon Islands (Curtain, 2018).

Access for women

Limited access for women to seasonal labour mobility opportunities has remained a challenge, although there are significant subregional differences. In 2013-14, only 11.5% of the workers who participated in the RSE and SWP were women (Ball, et al., 2015; see also Chattier, 2015; INZ, 2015). A World Bank study provides similar data and also points out that female workers in the SWP earn slightly less than men, although they remit more than men (World Bank, 2017). This is despite them having a higher mean level of education than their male counterparts (World Bank, 2017). Cultural norms and perceived vulnerabilities in terms of safety and wellbeing have been pointed out as possible contributing factors (Bailey, 2013; Ball et al., 2015). Employer demand for workers with particular attributes also contributes to gender disparity, as women are prohibited from undertaking specific types of work in some cultures (Ball et al., 2015). There are also examples of good practice in enhancing women’s participation. The Kiribati Government has a dedicated RSE Unit, which has made considerable effort to secure new employers, especially for women. As noted by Underhill-Sem et al. (2019), a distinctive feature of Kiribati’s RSE workforce is a high proportion of women. Since 2011, women have comprised almost half of the country’s seasonal workers in New Zealand every year, and in some years more than half. This is attributed largely to special support given by the RSE Unit as well as employer preferences, and is particularly significant in light of the fact that Kiribati’s temporary migration has in the past been dominated almost entirely by men (Kagan, 2016).

b) Opportunities for intra-Pacific mobility

Given the demand-driven nature of the RSE and the SWP, regional labour markets need to be considered for migration opportunities. Despite an absence of reliable data, intra-regional migration flows are known to already exist. Before seafarer employment began in the late 1960s, much of Kiribati’s overseas labour migration was to other PICs such as Nauru (phosphate industry), Vanuatu (copra industry) and Fiji (students finding work) (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019). Workers from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga have also been known to migrate within the region (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019).

Since Fiji has the most advanced education and skills training systems in the Pacific region, Fijians have been able to find employment in several PICs and in various occupations and industries. Table 8 shows that Fijians have moved to the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and other countries where they work in various skilled and semi-skilled occupations. Fijian citizens have been
known to be working as domestic help and in the hotel industry in the Cook Islands, and also as nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers, pilots, mechanics, electricians and technicians in the FSM, Guam, Kiribati, RMI and Vanuatu (Rokoduru, 2006). Since the retirement age was lowered to 55 in Fiji’s public service in 2009, many retirees have also looked for opportunities abroad, for instance, under the Fiji Volunteer Scheme (Pacific Dialogue, n.d.). More recently, Fijians have been known to migrate to PNG as security officers; in 2017, 42 Fijian security personnel were hired to provide security at the closure of the immigration detention centre on Manus Island (Chanel, 2017). Simultaneously, Fiji attracts a considerable number of migrants from other PICs. Some come to Fiji to study at the regional University of the South Pacific, while others are employed by one of the many regional and international organisations based in Fiji.

It is noteworthy that the colonies and dependent territories which continue to exist in the Pacific region also attract considerable numbers of migrants from neighbouring countries. These flows include Palauans in Guam, ni-Vanuatu in New Caledonia, and Samoans and Tongans in American Samoa.

On the other hand, the Skills Movement Scheme (SMS) under the sub-regional Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) comprising Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, which was introduced in 2012, has attracted few workers to move to SMS member countries due to a number of reasons including a low level of awareness of the SMS among recruitment agencies and companies (Voigt-Graf, 2016a). This is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### Table 8: Intra-Pacific migration flows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Cook Islands</th>
<th>Fiji</th>
<th>Kiribati</th>
<th>Marshall Islands</th>
<th>Pala</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>Sam</th>
<th>Solomon Islands</th>
<th>Tonga</th>
<th>Tuvalu</th>
<th>Vanuatu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melanesia</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>1,064</td>
<td>1,40</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>5,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
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Greater opportunities for intra-regional labour migration are expected to emerge in the future. For instance, there will likely be increasing shortages of labour to care for older populations in PICs with a history of heavy emigration, such as the Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019). There is regional interest in exploring the PIC labour markets, as demonstrated by the first and second Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM) which agreed that discussions on intra-Pacific labour mobility opportunities should continue with a view to introducing mechanisms to bring them to fruition (PIFS, 2018).

c) Barriers to labour mobility
There are multiple barriers that prevent individuals from migrating abroad for employment purposes. In this section, some factors including skills recognition, geography, gender and trade agreements, are discussed. This is followed by a section on the barriers to increased intra-Pacific labour migration.

Skills and qualification recognition
The existence of a regional qualification framework through which skills and qualifications obtained in one country can be assessed in another country through benchmarking against appropriate international standards and qualifications is an important step towards skilled labour migration.

In the Pacific region, the Pacific Qualification Framework (PQF) was developed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) and includes school education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), tertiary or higher education, and community-based training (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2011). The PQF is aligned with the national qualification frameworks in Australia and New Zealand.

At the country level, Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu have made progress in their development of national qualifications agencies and national qualifications frameworks aligned with the PQF. The Cook Islands is aligned with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The Northern Pacific Countries including Palau and Marshall Islands seek accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges of the United States. Kiribati and Tuvalu continue to work with SPBEA to explore options most appropriate for their needs, and may adopt the PQF as their qualification framework.

One challenge that has to be addressed if labour migration is to be facilitated is that having internationally recognised qualifications is often a necessary but not sufficient condition for gaining entry to a country. For instance, if people from Pacific Islands receive training at Australian and New Zealand standards (which the PQF is aligned with), this is often not sufficient to gain entry into Australia or New Zealand under their respective skill migration programmes. Australian and New Zealand employers usually look for migrants not only with Australian or New Zealand qualifications, but with high-level English language skills, coming from comparable high-quality education systems, who have the right workplace skills to easily and quickly fit into the workplace.
Geography and remoteness

Another barrier resulting in unequal access to migration opportunities is linked to geography and remoteness, associated not only with higher travel costs (in a region with already high travel costs) but often with a lack of access to information about migration opportunities.

Kiribati, for instance, has faced competition from the larger PICs in the RSE and SWP schemes, which not only have better resourced Departments of Labour and better end-to-end processes, but also cheaper air linkages to Australia and New Zealand. For employers, the additional costs of bringing seasonal workers from Kiribati to Australia or New Zealand are often prohibitive and mean that workers from Kiribati are disadvantaged, compared to workers from other countries.

At the same time, distance disadvantages potential participants within a country. In PNG, for instance, most participants in the SWP are either from the capital city Port Moresby or the neighbouring province (Voigt-Graf, 2017). Few Papua New Guineans in other provinces are even aware of the existence of the SWP scheme, let alone have the means to pay for their pre-departure costs (in terms of travelling to Port Moresby to apply for their visa, undergo medical and police checks and participate in pre-departure training).

For intra-Pacific migration, the high intra-regional travel costs mean that it is often cheaper for employers to bring in workers from outside the region (such as from the Philippines to Palau) than to bring workers from Pacific Islands to Palau.

Trade agreements and bilateral schemes

In 2001, Pacific Island Countries signed the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) in order to promote regional integration among the 14 Forum Island Countries (FICs). In the same year, the FIC Trade Ministers decided to broaden the scope of PICTA to cover trade in services, including a scheme for the temporary movement of natural persons (TMNP). In March 2009, a framework for a TMNP scheme was developed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). In 2012, the PICTA Trade in Services (TIS) Protocol was opened for signature. It has since been signed by 10 FICs, with four ratifications completed to date by Samoa, Tuvalu, RMI and Nauru. Once completed, it can be expected that skilled labour mobility within the Pacific region will be facilitated.

Negotiations on Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus between the FICs on one side and Australia and New Zealand on the other commenced in 2009 and concluded in April 2017. The agreement aims to foster economic integration through increased trade and investment. Regional labour mobility was a core component of discussions surrounding the free trade negotiations. While the FICs had initially argued for the inclusion of a chapter on low-skilled labour mobility in the Agreement, the Parties later agreed to deal with low-skilled labour mobility in a side-arrangement on labour mobility outside of PACER Plus. The binding agreement on labour mobility in PACER Plus is provided in the “Movement of Natural Persons” chapter, where Australia’s and New Zealand’s schedules are essentially limited to highly skilled professionals.

The non-legally binding Labour Mobility Arrangement aims to enhance and improve the existing labour mobility schemes (SWP and RSE) to maximise their development benefits (Kautoke-Holani, 2018). It establishes the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM) which is a mechanism to advance the areas of cooperation identified in the Arrangement. As evidenced by the first and second PLMAM in 2016 and 2018, the meetings provide an opportunity for the FICs to continue to lobby for increased labour market access for low-skilled and semi-skilled workers and to enhance further regional cooperation.
Eleven countries have signed PACER Plus and the accompanying Labour Mobility Arrangement (Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu). The two largest Pacific Island economies, Fiji and PNG, have not signed PACER Plus. New Zealand and Australia ratified PACER Plus in late 2018. The Agreement will enter into force after 60 days when eight countries have ratified it. However, the entering into force of PACER Plus is not expected to impact on labour migration as the Labour Mobility Arrangement is already being implemented.

The Skills Movement Scheme (SMS) under the sub-regional Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) comprising Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu was introduced in 2012 and allows 400 workers from each of the members to work in another MSG country. The overall objective is to facilitate the temporary movement of skilled MSG nationals within the region for the purpose of taking up employment. Procedures and administrative mechanisms have been established and the MOU provides for the recognition of certain qualifications awarded in the MSG countries. The four participating countries in the SMS have identified occupations for which they admit workers from the other countries, a numerical cap, required qualifications, the maximum duration of employment and any additional commitments. The MSG Secretariat coordinates and monitors the implementation of the MOU and makes information accessible on its website. However, few workers have moved under the SMS. The only evidence that could be found was for some teachers and nurses from Fiji who have moved to Vanuatu under the SMS (Jayaraman, 2016). The low uptake is due to a number of reasons, including the private sector not having demanded any workers under the scheme, and the low level of awareness, especially among recruitment agencies and large companies (Voigt-Graf, 2016a).

Overall, with the exception of the seasonal and temporary schemes in Australia and New Zealand, the labour migration of Pacific peoples has largely occurred on an individual basis, rather than under the PICTA or MSG SMS. For instance, the movement of Pacific labour migrants to PNG has not occurred under any of the regional schemes or under a bilateral agreement, nor has the migration of other occupational groups such as that of Fijian caregivers to the United States or of Fijian security personnel to the Middle East.

In the case of PICs, few countries have negotiated BLAs/MoUs with labour-receiving countries. One exception is Kiribati that signed an MoU on Labour Cooperation with Taiwan, China in 2007. According to the MoU, Taiwan permits the employment of I-Kiribati in Taiwan in certain roles (manufacturing workers, construction workers, domestic helpers, caretakers and crews on ships or fishing boats). Taiwan also welcomes vocational trainees and undertakes to protect female labourers from sexual exploitation and physical abuse. However, no labour migration from Kiribati to Taiwan, China has taken place under this MoU.

Recruitment agencies

Many employers in particular labour-receiving countries use recruitment agents to recruit workers. This is as much the case with large mining companies in PNG as it is with households in the Middle East looking for domestic workers. Some recruitment agencies operate internationally with offices in major labour-sending and labour-receiving countries. Alternatively, recruitment agencies in labour-receiving countries cooperate with recruitment agencies in sending countries. Few such agencies operate in any of the PICs outside of PNG. In PNG, recruitment agencies often source migrant workers through established channels such as from the Philippines where some maintain sub-offices, while not looking in the neighbouring PICs. Few Pacific Islanders have registered in the databases of
internationally operating recruitment agencies and therefore have little chance to be recruited through an agency.

**Size and reputation of migrant community**
Workers from countries with a sizeable number of migrant workers, such as workers from the Philippines and China in PNG, have developed networks along which additional workers are recruited. For instance, employers already employing Filipino workers frequently use their existing Filipino workforce to recommend additional workers. Filipinos in particular have gained a reputation among employers in PNG as being competent, qualified, hard-working and relatively affordable. Filipinos are therefore often the first choice, especially for technical and trade workers. Fijians and other Pacific Islanders have not been able to establish similar networks or a similarly good reputation.

The fact that ni-Vanuatu and Tongans are very successful in the seasonal work schemes in Australia and New Zealand is partly linked to their first-mover advantage. Workers from these two countries participated from the beginning and have thus had the opportunity to build a good reputation among employers. Workers from other PICs have been at a comparative disadvantage. Looking beyond the seasonal work schemes, Pacific Islanders have not had a chance to build networks and a good reputation in any of the major migrant destination countries outside of Australia and New Zealand.

**Barriers to intra-Pacific labour migration**
Most PICs have small populations and workforces. Their labour markets are characterised by skill shortages particularly in the technical and trade areas. Since skill shortages exist largely in the same areas across most PICs, there is generally limited capacity to supply skills from within the region.

Despite the existence of regional institutions and trade agreements, the economies of the PICs are not closely integrated with each other. Instead, they mostly rely on trade with and investments from the Pacific Rim countries. It is widely acknowledged that increased trade and investment flows between countries lead to increased labour mobility between them. In PNG which hosts the highest number of labour migrants of all PICs, this is also the case. Many foreign-owned companies in PNG employ workers from the countries where their headquarters are located. Many overseas contractors from Australia, China, the USA or other countries that work on specific projects in PNG bring part of their workforce from these countries.

The gradually growing economic links between PNG and Fiji is the main exception to a lack of economic links between PICs. As the largest economies and the two most populous countries in the region, PNG and Fiji have taken regional leadership roles. There has been growing PNG investment in Fiji, particularly in the tourism industry. There have also been some notable Fijian investments in PNG. It is possible that these investments have already impacted the flow of labour and there is potential for more labour migration in the future. One relatively recent labour flow is that of hospitality and tourism workers who have moved from Fiji to PNG which can be linked to Fiji’s developed tourism industry and the existence of good hospitality and tourism training in Fiji, as well as increased economic links between Fiji and PNG.
4. Employment and working conditions of labour migrants in destination countries

As discussed in Chapter 3, seasonal and temporary labour migration is known to offer some significant economic benefits for migrants as well as their households, communities and countries of origin. At the same time, the protection of the rights of seasonal and temporary labour migrants in destination countries and the social impacts of their absences are issues of critical interest to PICs. This Chapter discusses these with particular attention to the RSE, SWP, seafaring and private military/security labour migration as well as to the role of labour-sending countries in ensuring safe migration and fair work for their migrant workers.

a) International Labour Standards

In principle, international labour standards cover all workers irrespective of nationality and immigration status unless otherwise stated. Applicable international labour standards include ILO Fundamental Rights Conventions (widely ratified), Governance Standards, Instruments of general application, Instruments with express provisions on migrant workers, and Instruments on labour migration and protection of migrant workers. Table 9 shows the status on ratification against key instruments in the PICs and Australia and New Zealand. In addition to ILO Conventions, Protocols and Recommendations, there are two non-binding frameworks specific to effective labour migration governance. These are the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006) and the ILO Fair Recruitment Principles and Operational Guidelines (2016). In November 2018, guidance was provided by the ILO on Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs. The ILO Fair Recruitment Principles underscore that no recruitment fees and related costs should be paid by workers. This section outlines the status of the protection of migrant workers in the cases of the existing seasonal labour mobility schemes (RSE and SWP) and temporary labour migration (focusing on I-Kiribati seafarers and Fijian security personnel).

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Ryszard Cholewinski, Introduction to the ILO System-Core Labour Standards Relating to Migrant Workers, power-point presentation at Capacity Building Program on Human Rights and Migrant Workers in Qatar Doha, 23-26 September 2018, ILO.
Table 9: Ratification of ILO Conventions by Pacific Island countries, Australia and New Zealand

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Table 9: Ratification of ILO Conventions by Pacific Island countries, Australia and New Zealand

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<td>C118 - Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962</td>
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<td>C157 - Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982</td>
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<td>C181 - Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997</td>
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</table>
Seasonal migrant workers: experiences of RSE and SWP participating workers

The two seasonal labour mobility schemes (RSE and SWP) have regulatory provisions for the protection of migrant workers. In terms of wages, under the RSE, seasonal workers are entitled to the same minimum rights as permanent employees, including at least the minimum adult working wage (INZ, 2019), and similarly, SWP participating workers are covered by the minimum entitlements under the National Employment Standards (World Bank, 2017). As noted earlier, the World Bank evaluation of the RSE indicated generally positive socio-economic benefits for participating workers, households and communities (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). Nonetheless, it needs to be noted that an earlier study (Bedford et al., 2010) highlighted potential vulnerabilities in the RSE design, such as the minimum remuneration provision (payment for no less than 240 hours of work at the per hour rate), which translates into only six weeks (at 40 hours per week) of minimum work. For the Tuvaluan RSE participants in the study, the costs of participation and returns from earnings were not always balanced: some in fact returned home with very little money, or in debt. Similarly, although on average, 78% of the SWP participants in the 2017 World Bank study felt that their net earnings met their expectations, less than half of the workers from PICs other than Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu felt the same. The changes made to the SWP in 2015-16 included the removal of the (previously 14-week) minimum stay requirement, while still requiring that workers receive a net financial benefit of at least AUD 1,000 and a minimum average of 30 hours’ work per week (Maclellan, 2017; Union Aid Abroad, 2017). Many SWP workers who participated in a tracer study in PNG reported not receiving sick pay, which reduced their income or forced them to work despite being sick (Voigt-Graf, 2017). Additionally, many seasonal workers struggle to access their accrued superannuation in Australia, which has been noted by the second PLMAM (PIFS, 2018). According to the World Bank’s 2017 study, there is an estimated AUD 11.4 million in superannuation contributions that SWP participating workers have not been able to access (World Bank, 2017). Thus, while the “bigger picture” points to significant income gains for participating workers and households, there may also be considerable variations among countries and individual cases on closer examination.

A similar situation appears to exist in terms of pastoral care. Under the RSE, employers are required to: provide a work induction programme; ensure access to suitable accommodation at a reasonable cost; provide information on medical insurance, banking services and money transfers; provide transport to and from work; make occupational health and safety provisions; and provide opportunities for recreation and religious observance, among other things (INZ, 2019d). Similar employer requirements exist in the SWP (DESSFB, 2018). Under both schemes, employers must attain Recognised Seasonal Employer/Approved Employer status, which makes them liable to government monitoring for compliance. However, since the responsibility of pastoral care provision lies with employers rather than the government, monitoring may pose challenges (Bedford et al., 2010). In the case of New Zealand, when the RSE started in 2007, six labour inspectors and six compliance officers...
were responsible for monitoring and supporting up to 5,000 workers. Ten years later, no additional labour inspectors or compliance officers had been employed, although there were now over 9,000 seasonal workers (Lees-Galloway, 2017).

Seasonal workers also lack collective bargaining mechanisms to negotiate working conditions (First Union, 2019). There is no centrally collected data regarding the union membership among RSE and SWP participating workers. However, it should be noted that horticulture and viticulture as a whole have a very low level of unionisation: the union density in the broader agriculture, forestry and fishing industry grouping was 1.9% in Australia in 2016, and 4.7% New Zealand in 2019 (Parliament of Australia, 2018; New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, 2019, personal communication, 26 June). According to Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA (2019, personal communication, 26 June), an Australian national union with a focus on unionising seasonal workers has a membership of 1,046 across Timor Leste (about 200 members) and Vanuatu (remaining members). In New Zealand, the union membership among seasonal workers is estimated to be minimal. Commentators, unionists and the media have highlighted cases of seasonal migrant workers being pressured not to join a union (Lewis, 2017; Maclellan, 2017; Brooks, 2018; RNZ, 2018a, 2018b). Furthermore, the requirement for employers to attain Recognised Seasonal Employer/Approved Employer status binds workers to specific employers, since their visa cannot be transferred to new employers. This in turn creates fears amongst workers that actions against their employers will lead to the cancellation of their visa by the employers, rendering them vulnerable to exploitation (Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2016; Union Aid Abroad 2017; Maclellan, 2017; Mildura Independent, 2017).

Indeed, researchers and the media (Braae, 2018; Doherty, 2017; McKenzie and Toscano, 2017; RNZ, 2018c; Stringer, 2016, 2017) have documented cases of worker exploitation. Despite the RSE’s positive reputation, there have been reports of RSE participating workers being subjected to underpayment (non-payment in some cases), unverified pay deductions, denial of toilet breaks, and verbal and physical abuse by employers and “gang masters” (Stringer, 2016, 2017; Lees-Galloway, 2017). Relatedly, concerns have also been raised about dangers of human trafficking: 2016 saw the first human trafficking conviction in New Zealand, which involved the trafficking of Fijian workers (Stringer, 2017; see also Braae, 2018). The New Zealand government itself has recognised an “increasing number of Pacific Peoples being victims of human trafficking and worker exploitation in New Zealand” (MPP, 2019). There are similar reports concerning the SWP in Australia. The National Union of Workers has reported cases of exploitation such as: unlawful deductions from seasonal workers wages; working excessively long hours without proper compensation/overtime, or a guaranteed hourly rate of pay; overcrowded accommodation and unreasonable above-market rate charges for accommodation and transport; racism and discrimination at work; and employer non-compliance with pre-departure and on-arrival briefing requirements (Joint Standing Committee on Migration, 2016; see also Maclellan, 2017). Indeed, worker exploitation has been identified as a widespread problem across the Australian horticultural industry, which relies heavily on backpackers and has a low level of unionisation (Berg and Farbenblum, 2017; Maclellan, 2017). Fair Work Ombudsman’ Harvest Trail Inquiry (which started in 2013) has recently highlighted widespread employer non-compliance, with inspectors recovering more than AUD 1 million in unpaid wages for over 2,500 workers (FWO, 2018). It should be noted that, in comparison with backpackers, seasonal workers under the SWP face specific vulnerabilities and challenges in exercising their labour rights due to their visa conditions discussed above (Union Aid Abroad, 2017; McCarthy, 2018).

Both the New Zealand and Australian governments have begun to take measures to address these issues. In February 2017, the New Zealand government introduced new measures for worker protection. Employers found to exploit migrant workers are now banned from recruitment for
between six months and two years (Stringer, 2017). The 2018 RSE Employers’ Conference included discussions of worker exploitation (Horticulture New Zealand, 2018). In addition, the New Zealand government is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the RSE scheme (Sepuloni and Lees-Galloway, 2018). The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has been directed to undertake in-depth research on temporary migrant worker exploitation. Other initiatives include increasing the number of labour inspectors (Lees-Galloway, 2018). The Australian government has accepted the recommendations of the Migrant Workers’ Taskforce (Howes and Curtain, 2019) and will establish a monitoring and reporting program to ensure compliance with immigration and employment relations laws. It has also announced the establishment of the Pacific Labour Facility, which will provide support services for Pacific workers in Australia as well as support their reintegration into home communities and economies (DFAT, 2019b). At the private sector level, Queensland-based industry association Growcom (2019) has developed Fair Farms Initiative to enable growers to demonstrate fair and responsible employment practices. Furthermore, major Australian supermarket chains now have responsible sourcing policies in place (Howes and Curtain, 2019).

Temporary migrant workers: experiences of seafarer and military/security migrants

There is limited documentation of the working conditions and welfare of Pacific Island temporary migrant workers. A few existing studies, however, identify challenges (alongside socio-economic benefits) that may be experienced by I-Kiribati seafarers and Fijian private military and security labour migrants.

In Kiribati, seafarers remain the largest group of migrant workers (750 at the end of 2015) (Kiribati government, 2015). While the migrant numbers and remittances have declined, seafaring remains Kiribati’s primary labour mobility opportunity and source of income: (AUD 7.6 million in 2016; AUD 5.6 million in 2014; AUD 12.5 million in 2002) (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019), with well-developed training and recruitment arrangements. Consequently, reviving the demand for I-Kiribati seafarers is a key priority of the Kiribati government (2015). Nevertheless, as indicated by ILO (n.d.), Pacific seafarers can be vulnerable to exploitation if the migration process is left unregulated. Research has raised concerns about I-Kiribati seafarers’ working conditions and their health & safety implications. Key issues identified include: exceptionally lengthy work periods at sea; frequent security controls and speedy turnarounds leading to sleep deprivation; and decreased shore time with problematic implications for physical and emotional health (Borovnik, 2011, 2012). These pose particularly significant challenges in light of community dependence on seafaring incomes and low social protection (Borovnik, 2011, 2012). In this context, protecting the rights of I-Kiribati temporary and seasonal workers is one of the four major objectives of the Kiribati Government’s National Labour Migration Policy (2015), which outlines strategies such as: identifying and strengthening areas related to the protection of migrant workers in existing legislation; ensuring that recruitment processes are fair and safe; providing pre-departure preparation; and ensuring decent work standards for migrant workers are adhered to including in the areas of minimum wage, OHS and social security.

With its international reputation for soldiery established through participation in UN peacekeeping operations and recruitment into the British Army, Fiji became a major source of private military and security labour in the early 2000s. Thousands of ex/current disciplinary force personnel and unemployed men have since been contracted by transnational military and security companies to work in Iraq and other high-conflict areas, many engaging in armed services such as convoy security, security escorts and personal security details (Maclellan, 2006; Maclellan and Mares, 2006; Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). While no official record exists of the exact scale of this migration, well over 1,000 military/security personnel are estimated to have migrated annually between 2006 and 2011, which
is more than the number of the peacekeeping troops that Fiji sent during the period (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). In addition to the financial precariousness of this largely unregulated labour migration, research indicates that it exposes migrant workers to extreme physical risks and life-threatening situations, with serious physical and psychological repercussions. Twenty-nine Fijian private military/security personnel died in Iraq between 2000 and 2016 and many more returned with injuries (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). They are typically insured for death but not injury, and therefore not entitled to compensation or continuing medical treatment. Reported psychological impacts include: impulsive fast driving; flashbacks; anxiety; extreme alertness; sleeping difficulty; anger management problems; and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017). No counselling or other psychological support is provided by employers once they return to Fiji. These point to private military and security work as one of the most consequential forms of temporary labour migration experienced by Pacific Islanders.

b) Role of origin countries
Labour sending countries have an important role in making migration safe through a variety of measures. The role of pre-departure orientation, regulation of recruitment and reintegration assistance are summarised here, focussing on the seasonal work schemes with Australia and New Zealand.

Pre-departure orientation
The importance of pre-departure training in order to mitigate the negative social impacts of temporary and seasonal labour migration schemes is widely known. Workers who are aware of their employment conditions, their rights at work, their human and gender rights as well as their responsibilities are less likely to experience abuse and rights violations. Under the RSE and SWP, participating Pacific countries are responsible for pre-departure briefings to help workers prepare for overseas work. In general, the pre-departure orientation includes matters such as employment conditions, climate, clothing and footwear requirements, taxation, insurance, remittances and budget advice, and emergency contact information. The Australian and New Zealand government have prepared pre-departure resources for workers, including a “Get Ready Pack” for the RSE (available at https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/rse-get-ready-booklets), and the “Working and Living in Australia – Pre-departure guidebook” for the SWP (available at https://docs.jobs.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/jsb19-0047_swp_pre-departure_guidebook_acc.pdf).

The arrangements for pre-departure training for the seasonal work schemes in New Zealand and Australia differ between PICs (ILO, UNESCAP and European Union, 2014). In some PICs, training is provided by recruiting agents, while in others, government departments provide the training.

In the case of Solomon Islanders moving to New Zealand under the RSE, for instance, the recruiting agents are responsible for selecting the workers and arranging their pre-departure training. The Labour Mobility Unit (LMU) within the Department for External Trade, which oversees Solomon Islands’ participation in the seasonal worker programmes of Australia and New Zealand, is involved in monitoring pre-departure training, but the responsibility rests with the recruitment agents (for more information, see http://www.mfaet.gov.sb/external-trade/labour-mobility.html).

In Tonga, the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts the mandatory pre-departure training of workers for both schemes. It includes practical training to meet the identified skill needs of workplaces, and
training on generic living, learning, employment and leadership skills (for more information, see Tongaworks website at http://www.tongaworks.org/index.html).

While in most PICs, pre-departure training is confined to one or two days, PNG used to require workers to attend a three-week preparation programme organised by the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR) in Port Moresby, which was later shortened to two weeks due to limited funds. This is also a reason for the deterioration of the quality of training over recent years. As a result, workers today arrive in Australia less prepared than in the past. During interviews with returned workers in 2017, participants identified that the main problem with pre-departure training in PNG was that accommodation was not provided for participants from outside of Port Moresby (Voigt-Graf, 2017), resulting in considerable expenses, security concerns and disadvantages compared to participants from Port Moresby.

Overall, whether conducted by recruiting agents or by government departments, pre-departure training is an important tool for preparing workers for their overseas work and to reduce their vulnerability abroad.

Regulation of recruitment

Recruitment regulations differ between the PICs. In many PICs, private recruitment agents are involved in the process and the government provides licenses for recruitment agencies. Some Labour Departments maintain work-ready pools of prospective seasonal workers that have been pre-selected based on fulfilling general requirements such as citizenship and age.

In Solomon Islands, the LMU is responsible for licensing, coordinating and managing a team of recruiting agents and maintains a registry of recruiting agents (for more details, see http://www.mfaet.gov.sb/external-trade/labour-mobility.html). In Vanuatu employers can either hire directly or through an agent. Direct recruitment is facilitated by the Vanuatu Department of Labour which maintains a work-ready pool of workers (for more information, see Department of Labour website at https://dol.gov.vu/). In contrast, all recruiting in PNG is done through DLIR which maintains a work-ready pool.

One concern about the recruitment process concern unfair worker selection practices. These have been raised in various countries including Vanuatu where agents, labour hire companies and employers in Australia and New Zealand have been accused of recruiting through family and community networks in particular regions of Vanuatu (Bailey and Rereman, 2019).

In PNG, the SWP was initially promoted through the media but there has subsequently been no promotion. Therefore, most seasonal workers who participated in a 2017 tracer study had found out about the SWP through relatives or friends, many of whom in turn had personal connections within DLIR. Given the small numbers of seasonal workers in PNG, the public is largely unaware of existing opportunities (Voigt-Graf, 2017), and as such is excluded from applying.

Both Australia and New Zealand prohibit the charging of recruitment fees to workers. Fiji is one of three countries in Asia and the Pacific that has ratified ILO Convention 181 that in principle prohibits the charging of recruitment fees and costs to workers. Vanuatu permits the charging of recruitment fees from employers or workers, and this may give rise to higher migration costs for workers. A

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mapping of legislation on recruitment fees and costs in the region, and further, migration cost surveys would be very useful to do.

**Reintegration support**

There is currently little or no reintegration support provided for returned seasonal workers, although this is an area that could potentially provide wide ranging benefits for migrants and their families. The separation of migrants from their families for several months can have serious consequences, in the worst case leading to the breakup of families. Similarly, there is little support for educating returnees on how to make the best use of their resources, whether these be in the form of investments, savings for retirement or others.

Asked about which reintegration assistance they would find useful, Papua New Guinean returnees would find training in business skills, access to loans to start a business, and training in agricultural skills including how to use the skills learnt in Australia in the PNG context most useful. Moreover, some workers learn useful workplace skills overseas, such as operating a forklift, a tractor or other heavy equipment, but find it hard to transfer these skills back to their own countries (Voigt-Graf, 2017). With the right reintegration support, these skills could be used in the PICs which would benefit not only the returned workers but also their countries’ economies.

The lack of reintegration support sometimes leads to a situation where workers try to return to Australia or New Zealand for as many seasons as possible in order to maximise their personal economic benefits (see e.g. Voigt-Graf, 2017). Since the number of seasons that workers can participate in the RSE and SWP is unlimited and many workers return several times, opportunities for newcomers are more restricted than they would otherwise be.

c) Social issues

There is a lack of comprehensive data on the social costs of seasonal and temporary labour migration in PICs. However, existing information suggests that, just as there are variations in working conditions and pastoral care provisions, social impacts of seasonal/temporary migration also vary depending on participating countries and communities and the type of migration undertaken.

While a tracer study of SWP participants in PNG did not identify significant adverse impacts on family life or relationships (Voigt-Graf, 2017), the World Bank’s RSE evaluation listed concerns of community leaders in Vanuatu and Tonga. These are related to the loss of able-bodied young men for community work, loss of contributions to church or family, alcoholic consumption, and family separation, for example (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014). In the case of Tonga, as noted in Chapter 3, the number of SWP and RSE participating workers is reported to have reached 13% of the eligible sending population (those aged 20-45; Howes, 2018). Such a significant loss from the younger male working population is expected to impact families and communities, which has been noted by the Tongan authorities (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019). The absences of family members also necessitate significant adjustments towards promoting “economic activities, social responsibilities and engagement, and cultural maintenance and cohesion” at family and community levels (Underhill-Sem, 2019: 36).

Greater impacts may be experienced by I-Kiribati seafarers’ families and communities due to their longer and repeated absences. Seafarers take up contracts that separate them from their families for up to two years at a time to maximise social and economic benefits. Many circulate between their employment on ships and home for more than ten years (Borovnik, 2007). This inevitably has implications for families and communities. Community members, especially the elders and government workers involved in social matters, have expressed concerns about seafarers’ spending
habits upon returning home. Community members have reported that returning seafarers’ use of their earning can be reckless, celebrating for too long, spending money more on immediate and individual enjoyment rather than for the long-term benefit of a family and community, spending little time with families and not adjusting back to the usual community lifestyle after long absences, which has put strains on their family and community relationships (Borovnik, 2007: 245). I-Kiribati seafarers’ experiences may have important implications for Australia’s new Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), which does not allow workers to be accompanied by their families and therefore may separate them for up to three years. If workers are re-engaged for a second or third time, their separation may extend to six or nine years (Howes, 2018), potential impacts of which warrant close attention.

In the case of Fijian private military and security labour migration, the effects of untreated psychological trauma (and in some cases physical injuries) borne by migrant workers are felt by families and communities, although there is an absence of systematic research on this issue. Combined with financial insecurities and workers’ long-term absences, these have in some cases resulted in marriage/family breakdown (Kanemasu and Molnar, 2017; Maclellan and Mares, 2006). Given the potentially extensive scale of this type of migration, further research is needed to identify its impacts at community and societal levels.
5. Existing partnerships and regional cooperation on labour mobility

Having outlined the major patterns and flows of migration from/into the Pacific as well as their opportunities and challenges, this chapter discusses examples of existing (and some new) stakeholder partnerships and initiatives in the area of labour mobility, as a pointer to future scope for regional cooperation.

a) State and non-state actors

State and non-state actors play key roles in enhancing partnerships and regional cooperation around labour mobility. While relevant initiatives may be found in various forms, there are some notable examples of governments and non-government stakeholders developing forums for cooperation to maximise the benefits of labour mobility and monitor its impacts. For instance, at the regional level, the establishment of the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM), pursuant to the Labour Mobility Arrangement of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus, provides FICs with an opportunity for high-level regional cooperation not only in strengthening the existing mobility schemes and exploring new opportunities with Australia and New Zealand, but also enhancing intra-Pacific labour mobility (Morgan, 2016). A recent development in this area is the proposal raised at the 2018 PLMAM to establish a regional secretariat for labour mobility initiatives with clear mandates and responsibilities (PIFS, 2018). Importantly, in addition to maximising labour mobility opportunities within and beyond the region, such an initiative could also provide an avenue for more effectively addressing issues of the labour rights of seasonal workers.

An example of a successful national government initiative to boost intra-Pacific labour through partnerships is the Fiji Volunteer Scheme (administered by the Fiji Volunteer Services of the National Employment Centre), whereby teachers and nurses who are nearing (or after) retirement age are placed as professional volunteers in other PICs such as Vanuatu, Tuvalu, RMI and Nauru to prolong their working life and share their skills and experience within the region. While the volunteers are remunerated in fees and/or kind, and the Fiji government may also receive remuneration, the scheme supports PICs in addressing their skills shortages in health, education and other key areas: it is intended to serve as a “win-win” for all parties (Pacific Dialogue, n.d.). Most recently, in late 2018, Tonga’s Minister for Education and Training met with Fijian officials to study the legislative and operational framework of the Fiji Volunteer Services with a view to establishing a similar scheme for retired teachers in Tonga (MEPIR, 2018).

Beyond the region, among New Zealand’s stakeholder forums for maximising the potentials of the RSE is the annual RSE Employers’ Conference, which brings together most of the accredited RSEs, ancillary service providers (e.g., health insurance providers), Pacific labour liaison officers based in New Zealand, and representatives of key government agencies to discuss issues relating to their labour needs and the development of their businesses (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019; see also Horticulture New Zealand, 2018). The Conference offers an important opportunity for members of marketing and recruitment teams to network with employers and discuss possible opportunities for employment of workers. Furthermore, the employment services sections of PICs may utilise the forum to advance a more nuanced and proactive approach to ‘selling’ the unique qualities of their workers (Underhill-Sem et al., 2019).

Existing stakeholder partnerships may also be strengthened in line with new developments. An example is the Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and managed by TAFE Queensland, which is likely to play a more active role in enhancing labour mobility. In APTC Stage 3 (mid-2018 to mid-2022), there is a renewed emphasis on labour mobility in light of the new opportunities opening up with the launch of the Pacific Labour
Scheme (PLS). In this latest phase of APTC, supporting APTC graduates seeking work overseas will receive a much higher priority, with a focus on a better gender balance. APTC students are to choose between the domestic track or the labour mobility track, and eligible students in the latter group will be provided with necessary additional training. Further support to meet migration requirements will also be provided (Curtain, 2017; DFAT, 2017). APTC is also expected to work in partnership with the new Pacific Labour Facility (see below) to support PICs to increase the quality and preparedness of SWP and PLS workers. In February 2019, eleven I-Kiribati APTC graduates became the first I-Kiribati nationals to participate in the PLS, having received refresher training from APTC to work in the aged care sector in Australia (APTC, 2019).

At the international level, in December 2016, ILO’s constituents from the Arab States and Asia-Pacific adopted the Bali Declaration which calls for enhancing labour migration policies based on relevant international standards that recognise labour market needs, promote fair recruitment, provide adequate protection to all migrant workers and redress employer-employee relationships impeding workers freedom of movement, their right to terminate employment or change employers, taking into account contractual obligations.

b) Development cooperation projects

The RSE and SWP have been supported by capacity-building projects funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), respectively. New Zealand’s Strengthening Pacific Partnerships project is aimed at strengthening PICs’ capacity to participate in the RSE though providing technical assistance for labour export capability and skills development, improving regional cooperation, measuring the economic benefits of RSE, and facilitating labour mobility opportunities in new sectors. Australia’s Labour Mobility Assistance Program (LMAP), run by a private firm (Cardno), had the specific purpose of supporting SWP participating countries to increase the number and quality of workers and increasing the benefits to workers and their communities by working with PICs’ Labour Sending Units over 3 years and 4 months (Cardno, n.d.).

In July 2018, the Australian government established a new Pacific Labour Facility, which took over from LMAP to connect Australian employers with Pacific workers and support the administration of the PLS (and SWP). The Facility, which has an AUD 16 million budget and is operated by a private company (Palladium International) (The Guardian, 2018), is mandated to “increase the quality of training and supply of workers; promote the Scheme with Australian employers; provide pastoral care services for workers in Australia; support the return of Pacific workers to their local communities and economies, and monitor the social and economic impacts of the labour mobility arrangements” (DFAT, 2017). Much of the support targets both PLS and SWP, which includes strategies to increase access for women and people with disabilities, working with APTC and TVET institutions to link workers with employers, and establishing a 24/7 telephone information hotline for employers and workers (DFAT, 2019). It may also be noted that the involvement of the private sector in aid programmes has been widely debated and often questioned (Howes, 2019a; Pryke, 2018).

In the area of climate change and migration, a new regional project, implemented by UN agencies including the ILO, has recently been launched. In March 2019, a three-year project, Enhancing Protection and Empowerment of Migrants and Communities Affected by Climate Change and Disasters in the Pacific Region, commenced. Funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), the project will target Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu, RMI and Vanuatu, with main objectives to “support a regional human security-based response to climate change and disaster-related migration,
displacement and planned relocation, ensure that migrants and communities benefit from safe labour migration where appropriate, and contribute to the evidence-base of good practices in these areas” (IOM, 2019a; UNTFHS, 2019).

6. Conclusion and recommendations

a) Summary of successes, problems and challenges to Labour Mobility in the Pacific

The lack of domestic employment opportunities and labour demand in Pacific Rim countries have been the main drivers for migration, with climate change and environmental degradation becoming increasingly important factors. In the past, migration flows have mostly consisted of permanent migration flows directed to the Pacific Rim. Pacific diasporas have continued to grow in the main destination countries – New Zealand, the United States and Australia – with an increasing proportion of the overseas-born section of these communities. Over the past decade, labour migration of Pacific Islanders has generally increased but patterns vary between countries and sub-regions. The more populous Melanesian countries of PNG and Solomon Islands and the atoll countries of Kiribati and Tuvalu have few migration outlets. The lack of migration opportunities has exacerbated the youth bulge and youth unemployment in these countries. Some countries like Vanuatu not previously involved in labour migration are now sending considerable numbers of seasonal workers abroad.

Similar to the permanent migration opportunities, from which particularly the Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji, Palau and Marshall Islands have benefitted through special access arrangements with the United States (Palau, Marshall Islands) and New Zealand (Cook Islands, Samoa) and skilled migration opportunities (Fiji), temporary and seasonal opportunities under Australia’s SWP and PLS and under New Zealand’s RSE are also unequally distributed. Tonga and Vanuatu have done particularly well while workers from PNG, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu have had few opportunities. This is particularly unfortunate given that these are the countries most adversely affected by either the impacts of population growth, youth unemployment or climate change or, as in the case of Kiribati, all of these.

Intra-Pacific labour migration is small but growing, and there is potential for it to grow. There is also considerable migration of professional and technical workers from Australia, New Zealand and various Asian countries into the region. There is therefore some room to create employment opportunities for Pacific Islanders at home through localisation of jobs.

In countries with large permanent emigration, the loss of skills (brain drain) resulting from the emigration of skilled workers is a concern, particularly in Fiji. An advantage of temporary and seasonal schemes is that skills are not permanently lost. On the contrary, many seasonal workers return with new skills (although these are not always useful in their home country). Since the seasonal work schemes involve low skilled work, they primarily target low skilled workers. In their case, it is less the lost skills and more their working power that might be missed in their households, villages and communities. The extended schemes for hospitality workers, caregivers and construction workers on the other hand target skilled workers and could result in a loss of skills that are also needed in the Pacific Islands.

Migrant remittances have increased to high levels in many countries (particularly Samoa and Tonga) and are crucial to the maintenance of consumption levels and social welfare. Migrant remittances generally reduce the proportion of the population in poverty. The future sustainability of remittance
flows is in doubt in countries where most remittances are sent by permanent emigrants such as Samoa and the Cook Islands because the commitment of second or third-generation migrants to their families and communities in the islands weakens. This is an area where temporary and seasonal labour migration generally does better because many labour migrants who return home after a few months tend to spend little and save much of their overseas earnings in order to send remittances and take money and consumer goods (including clothing, shoes, electronic goods and household appliances) back home. It is important to note that while the eleven Pacific member states of the ILO received USD 689 million in remittances in 2018, a substantial sum of USD 121 million was transferred out of the region by foreign workers, Australia being the main beneficiary country.

All PIC governments are committed to increasing their number of labour migrants in order to ease local labour market pressures, increase remittances and skills transfers. With labour migration opportunities being increasingly for seasonal and temporary work, the risk of brain drain and declining remittances are lower than under permanent migration schemes. While temporary and seasonal schemes generally have better economic impacts for sending countries, they come with sometimes severe negative social consequences as a result of prolonged absences of family members. The social and health impacts of seafaring have been researched for Kiribati and Tuvalu but are less well understood for seasonal and temporary workers in Australia and New Zealand. In addition, there have been instances of violations of the work rights and human rights of seasonal workers in both Australia and New Zealand. Since the schemes in Australia and New Zealand are employer driven, there is no guarantee for numbers to continue to grow as they have in recent years. Employers are the key stakeholders in these schemes as “admission gatekeepers” (Fornale, 2017) and potential Pacific workers do not have the opportunity to apply independently under any of these schemes. In addition, as few women participate in the schemes, the schemes have a negative impact on gender parity and women’s economic empowerment through employment.

In the following section, some major activity areas to support fair labour migration in the Pacific are proposed. Specific recommendations for Pacific Island governments and the ILO are included, where applicable.

b) Proposed activities to support fair labour migration in the Pacific and recommendations for PIC governments and the ILO

*Improving labour migration governance*

There are several international treaties and conventions governing the protection of migrant workers. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is a United Nations multilateral treaty governing the protection of migrant workers and families which came into force in 2003. In December 2018, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was adopted by the majority of UN Member States and formally endorsed by the UN General Assembly. The GCM includes a section on migrants who cross borders because of natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation and other precarious situations.

As a standards and rights-based organisation, there are several ILO conventions and recommendations governing international labour migration (including C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949; ILO R086 - Migration for Employment Recommendation
(Revised), 1949; ILO C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975; ILO R151 - Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975).

ILO’s strategy in improving labour migration governance is guided by these conventions and the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006). It focuses on the following: providing constituents with country-specific advisory services to design and promote fair and effective migration policies; technical assistance to implement policies and operational mechanisms to protect workers’ rights; support for developing and facilitating harmonized labour migration data collection; improved governance of labour mobility at the regional level; tripartite dialogue; and support for the most vulnerable migrant workers in sectors with a strong foreign labour presence, such as agriculture, construction and domestic work.

In December 2016, ILO’s constituents from the Arab States and Asia-Pacific adopted the Bali Declaration which calls for enhancing labour migration policies based on relevant international standards. In early 2019, the ILO developed non-binding ILO general principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment. The objective of these is to inform the current and future work of the ILO and of other organisations, national legislatures, and the social partners on promoting and ensuring fair recruitment. The primary sources for these principles and guidelines are international labour standards and related ILO instruments.

While PICs have adopted the GCM, none of the ILO Pacific member states have ratified the relevant conventions on labour migration (C097, C143). As such there is scope to improve labour migration governance through the adoption of international standards and conventions, in particular the fundamental conventions, instruments with express provisions on migrant workers, and the labour migration specific conventions.

Only three PICs have adopted National Labour Migration Policies. In 2015, Kiribati, Samoa and Tuvalu adopted national labour migration policies which set out protection principles for migrant workers, outline the responsibilities of the government in ensuring effective support for migrants, and develop strategies to increase safe labour migration.

Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:

Since it is in the interest of PICs as countries of origin to ensure safe migration and fair work for migrant workers, it is recommended that they consider signing and ratifying the ILO conventions governing labour migration and ILO conventions with express provisions on migrant workers.

Along the lines of the ILO Fair Recruitment General Principles and Operational Guidelines, it would be useful to map legislation on recruitment fees and related costs and consider alignment with the guidelines.

PICs that have not developed national labour migration policies could learn lessons from the experiences of Kiribati, Samoa and Tuvalu with developing and implementing their policies, and based on the lessons learned, start a process of developing their own national labour migration policies.

Recommendations for ILO

Provide technical assistance in the review and development of policies and laws, and capacity building training in labour migration governance and protection of migrant workers.
Improving existing temporary and seasonal schemes

Research has found that migrant workers are more likely to be exposed to forced labour and exploitation when their employer yields power over them with respect to the right to remain and work in the country. As such, stringent restrictions on job changes for admitted migrants result in an imbalanced employer–employee relationship that may lead to abuses (ILO, 2019). The residence and work rights of seasonal and temporary workers in Australia and New Zealand are bound to the workers’ continued employment with the employer who sponsored them (in New Zealand, employers can together sponsor a Pacific worker who can then be transferred between these employers). While the situation in regards to rights violations at work in Australia and New Zealand cannot be compared to the situation in some other migrant receiving countries in severity and frequency, the very fact that they do occur is alarming and should be sufficient cause to look into ways to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers.

The ILO report (2019) includes some good practices from around the world. In Canada, for instance, all foreign workers with temporary permits are allowed to change employers. Authorities and current employers cannot deport and penalise them for looking for another place to work. Sweden, which is one of 23 countries that have ratified Convention No. 143, has made its laws on labour market access for migrant workers consistent with international standards. This means that even though work-based immigration is employer-driven, work permits become fully portable after two years and a temporary visa can be converted into permanent residence in Sweden after four years. Even during the first two years, a foreign worker may change employers without having to leave the country, if the new employer applies for a new work permit on the worker’s behalf (ILO, 2019).

The Australian and New Zealand governments regard the seasonal and temporary work schemes as contributing to the development of PICs (in addition to filling labour shortages in their labour markets). Both governments have started to take some actions to address seasonal worker exploitation as discussed in Chapter 4. In addition to these efforts, it is suggested that they look into global practices and consider reducing the vulnerability of Pacific workers by making the relationship between the employer and the migrant workers less imbalanced.

Some suggestions on how to increase participation of workers from countries that have so far largely missed out (PNG, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu) are discussed above. One strategy to assist the atoll countries of Kiribati and Tuvalu who are most threatened by climate change and at the same time have higher transport costs to Australia and New Zealand would be to factor vulnerability to climate change or to natural disasters into the selection process for the RSE, SWP and PLS. Alternatively, it may be time to accept that Australia and New Zealand need to give preferential access to Kiribati and Tuvaluan migrants (Kagan, 2015, see also Kelman 2015).

Another weak area of the seasonal schemes is their gender imbalance. As discussed in Chapter 3, Kiribati has achieved a large proportion of women participants while in most countries, women make up only a small proportion of seasonal workers.

There are several areas in which Pacific Island government can contribute to reducing the vulnerability of their workers including through improved pre-departure training and increased reintegration assistance for returnees.
**Recommendations for Pacific Island governments:**

Pacific Island governments could lobby for including opportunities to change employers for seasonal and temporary workers in Australia and New Zealand with the view of reducing their dependence and vulnerability. There are examples of good practices in the world.

Pacific Island Governments could lobby for formalising the right of seasonal workers to join unions and collective bargaining mechanisms. These mechanisms would allow for greater employment protection and allow workers to negotiate some aspects of working conditions in the same way that permanent residents and citizens can, so that migration does not undercut wages or working conditions.

The Kiribati and Tuvalu government could lobby for the consideration of vulnerability to climate change or natural disasters in the selection process for the RSE, SWP and PLS, giving workers from these countries a small advantage.

In regards to women participation in seasonal work schemes, the other PICs could try to understand and replicate good practices from Kiribati in order to increase the proportion of women under the schemes.

In regards to improving labour governance in origin countries, research studies could determine what kind of reintegration assistance for returned workers would be most useful (such as in the form of training, micro-credits, savings schemes or others) to assist them to build sustainable livelihoods in their island countries without the need to return to Australia or New Zealand for many seasons. This would then limit the negative social impacts of repeated absences on themselves and their families, and would create opportunities for newcomers.

Pacific Island governments could monitor migration and recruitment costs paid by workers. Recruitment cost borne by worker as proportion of earnings is an SDG indicator.

**Recommendations for ILO**

Provide technical assistance for carrying out migration and recruitment cost surveys and support research on employment and working conditions.

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**Moving to new destination countries and into new occupational areas**

Given that the RSE, SWP and PLS are demand-driven, and therefore subject to constraints on the number that will be recruited each year, it is important that other possible regional markets are considered as an outlet for all skill levels of Pacific workers. Many Pacific Islanders have looked for and found opportunities on an individual basis (Fijian security officers and Pacific rugby players were mentioned earlier). However, there is potential for Pacific Island governments to become actively involved such as by dissemination information about opportunities and negotiating access through Bilateral Labour Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with destination countries. Kiribati, for instance, has signed an MoU with Taiwan that opens the possibility of labour migration in specific occupation areas but no movement has taken place.

A first step would be for instigating a dialogue involving the social partners over the type of labour migration that is desirable in PICs. The debate should take into account the economic benefits for the migrants, communities and sending countries, as well as the potentially adverse social and economic impacts of migration.
Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages associated with labour migration, PIC Governments can then make informed decisions on the desired level of migration. Moreover, strategies have to be developed to ensure migrant workers’ rights overseas, especially as these are threatened by increasing competition among labour sending countries. Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM) is currently the best forum for high-level regional discussions on labour migration and could be used to discuss fundamental issues including the overall desired level of migration.

At present, national development strategies in the PICS do not pay sufficient attention to the issue of international migration and there is a need for institutional strengthening to address this.

Generally, however, awareness among governments about potential opportunities in non-traditional destinations (Canada, Taiwan, Korea, Japan and others) and in a variety of semi-skilled and skilled occupations (aged care, hospitality and tourism, trades-based occupations including in construction) has increased. This information has to be disseminated to potential job seekers. A good example in this regard is a guide on finding overseas employment for I-Kiribati graduates that was developed by the ILO (2015) and provides basic information that will help understand young I-Kiribati some of the steps that are required to find a job overseas. The focus of the Guide is on skilled migration, particularly to Australia and New Zealand, where the rules of immigration can be complicated. The Guide also provides information on labour migration to the Cook Islands, PNG and Taiwan, where there may be job opportunities for I-Kiribati workers.

After identifying overseas employment opportunities, training efforts have to be concentrated in areas of overseas labour demand including hospitality/tourism, aged care and construction. Adopting educational and training standards that are in line with those of the main destination countries and introducing internationally recognised qualifications are important steps that could increase migration opportunities. Skills training for export should be focussed on skill areas that are also potentially useful at home, so that when migrants return home, their skills can be used.

**Recommendation for Pacific Island governments:**

PIC governments would not wish to promote labour migration in skilled occupations where there is a shortage in the country and where the emigration of skilled human resources or “brain drain” can have a negative development impact e.g. scientists, engineers, technicians, skilled tradespersons, teachers, doctors, nurses.

PIC governments in collaboration with social partners, in the framework of a national labour migration policy or national employment policy, may deliberate over an overseas employment strategy.

After determining the preferred levels and type of labour migration, Pacific Island governments could become more active in gathering and disseminating information on potential labour migration opportunities in non-traditional destinations and new occupational areas. They could proactively negotiate BLAs/MoUs with potential destination countries.

After identifying overseas employment opportunities, governments may consider aligning education and training curriculum and standards with countries of destination.

**Recommendation to ILO:**
Given its global experience, the ILO could provide important technical support to PIC governments in their identification of overseas employment opportunities and the negotiations with destination countries.

The guide on overseas employment for I-Kiribati is good practice and similar guides could be developed either for individual PICs or for the region as a whole. Guides could focus on skilled work, as in the case of Kiribati, or could also include semi- and low-skilled work.

**Increasing understanding of the social impacts of migration**

The social impacts especially of temporary and seasonal migration are not as well understood as the economic impacts and require research.

A particular case is that of Fijian private military/security labour migration, where the negative social and psychological effects are often particularly severe and where further research is needed to identify its impacts at community and societal levels.

Another group of migrant workers that is particularly vulnerable are migrant domestic workers. Their rights at work and their general human rights are frequently violated for a number of reasons including the isolation of their workplaces, the lack of inclusion of domestic work under labour legislation in most destination countries and the low level of education of domestic workers. Although the number of Pacific Islander migrant domestic workers is small in comparison to the number of migrant domestic workers in other parts of the world such as migrants from Africa and Asia moving to the Middle East, given potential violations of their work rights and human rights, it is important to gain a better understanding of the flows of migrant domestic workers. Very limited research has been done on migrant domestic workers from the Pacific and very little information can therefore be found. It appears that most Pacific migrants in domestic work are caregivers. These include flows from Fiji to the United States (which include undocumented migrants who have overstayed their visas), and intra-Pacific flows such as from Fiji to Cook Islands.

The area of domestic work merits particular attention because it is one of few areas where women can find employment and migrate independently. As such, it is important to understand more about these flows and whether there are cases where the rights of women migrants have been violated.

**Recommendations for the ILO:**

Given the lack of understanding of the social impacts of seasonal and temporary migration on migrants, their families and their communities, the ILO could commission research into this area.

The particularly severe impacts of the migration of Fijian private military/security officers also warrants in-depth research that could be organised by the ILO.

Given ILO’s expertise in working in the area of protecting women migrant domestic workers including through legislation and policy advice, a first step would be to conduct a comprehensive research study on migrant domestic workers from the Pacific region as there currently is little knowledge about them..
Collecting consistent labour migration data to ensure evidence-based policy-making

According to the ILO, ensuring accurate data on aspects of labour migration, including flows of migrants and the cost of recruitment and sending remittances, is an important mechanism for devising and implementing targeted policies to protect the rights of migrant workers. In December 2014, the ILO launched the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) database for the ASEAN region; gathering together all official government data sources on international migrant workers within the region, as well as on countries’ nationals living or working abroad. In the PIC region, a lot of migration data is available but this is not necessarily stored centrally. For instance, PNG’s DLIR maintains a huge database on migrant workers (work permit holders) in PNG but this data is not publicly available. Similarly, the immigration departments of many PICs gather data on arrivals and departures but this data is not available to researchers and is often not analysed adequately.

Therefore, at present one of the most limiting factors in migration data management is analysis and reporting. There is a substantial amount of collected data that is not analysed, and few reports are compiled from this data. If all this data was analysed and published, the overall understanding of migration flows in the region would be enhanced.

Recommendation for the ILO:

Using the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) template of the ILO and its global data-base, and replicating the process of technical support and focal points in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, it is recommended that ILO develop a database for the Pacific region.

In addition the ILO could provide technical support to line ministries in the PICs (Labour, Immigration) to enable them to make better use of the data that is collected by these ministries.

Increasing intra-Pacific labour migration and localising selected positions

At present, many skill gaps within the Pacific region are filled by foreign workers from outside the region with a particularly large foreign workforce in PNG, Palau and the Cook Islands. This indicates that other PICs have not been able to take advantage of opportunities where they present themselves within the region itself. If more training was directed into areas of demand (tourism/hospitality, mining, construction, forestry), Pacific Islanders would be in a better position to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves within the region.

In addition, there is some potential to replace foreign workers within the region either by local workers or by workers from other PICs, although this has to be done with a high degree of caution to ensure that the quality of work does not suffer. In Palau, limiting the presence of foreign workers has become a key component of Palauan labour law (ILO, 2017b). In 2014, 4,330 foreign workers accounted for 41.7% of total employment in Palau.

In PNG, the Work Permit System has functioned well even during the height of the LNG construction and employers were able to import skilled workers, and the LNG priority line within DLIR for work permit applications meant that the process was relatively quick (Voigt-Graf, 2016b). However, the Work Permit System does not achieve its stated objective of ensuring skills transfer from non-citizens to Papua New Guineans. Moreover, breaches of work permit regulations (such as migrant workers working in different positions than those specified in their work permits) are widespread and are particularly rampant in remote locations especially in the logging and mining industries (see Voigt-Graf, 2016b).
**Recommendation for the ILO:**

The ILO could commission research into the labour markets of the main Pacific migrant receiving countries (Cook Islands, Palau, PNG) to explore opportunities: a) for localisation, and b) for Pacific peoples from neighbouring countries taking up these positions rather than migrants from more distant countries.
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Relevant national policies and international conventions

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
ILO C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)
ILO R086 - Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86)
ILO C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)
ILO R151 - Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151)
C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)
ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, 2006
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
ILO General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and Definition of recruitment fees and related costs, 2019
Kiribati National Labour Migration Policy, 2015
Samoa Labour Migration Policy, 2015
Tuvalu National Labour Migration Policy, 2015
DECENT WORK AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT