



**BALI PROCESS AD HOC GROUP
REGIONAL BIOMETRIC DATA EXCHANGE SOLUTION (RBDES) WORKSHOP
Bangkok, 23 - 24 February 2017**

Outcomes Statement

1. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) hosted the Regional Biometric Data Exchange Solution (RBDES) Workshop in Bangkok on 23-24 February 2017.
2. The workshop brought together operational immigration and foreign affairs officials from the following countries and governments, and International organisations; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, DIBP, IOM, the Regional Support Office (RSO) of the Bali Process and Biometix Pty Ltd., as well as the observers from India, Myanmar and Timor-Leste.
3. The workshop allowed technical experts and policy makers to examine the content of the Policy Framework and explore technical aspects of the RBDES. In addition to technical training on operation of the system, participants were given details to familiarise themselves with the Policy Framework around the RBDES, including privacy, data protection safeguards and user responsibilities.
4. The objectives of the event were to:
 - a. Present an overview of the RBDES technical system and Policy Framework.
 - b. Allow participants to interact with the solution.
 - c. Share examples of how biometric data exchange can be utilized.
 - d. Discuss solutions to legislative barriers associated with data sharing.
 - e. Establish relationships to strengthen regional border management capabilities.
 - f. Seek interest in participation in the RBDES Oversight Committee.
5. The event took place over two days, involved forum discussions, smaller group demonstrations and training, and hands-on interaction with the RBDES.

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Day One - 23 February 2017

6. Participants were welcomed by IOM Head of Operations (David John). The IOM set the context of RBDES within an international environment, the importance of raising regional awareness of transnational crime, and cooperation required to overcome these issues. Information and data sharing is a key priority to combatting these issues.
7. The workshop was an opportunity to explore technical aspects and understand how to promote the RBDES within local governments. RBDES is a brand new capability and it is now up to us to make this real.
8. IOM called for ongoing feedback and contact with participants.
9. The workshop was opened by IOM (Donato Colucci) and DIBP (Mark Handley), who provided an overview of the days ahead and encouraged participants to actively consider scenarios for the use of RBDES. The sessions aimed to be as collaborative as possible and encouraged discussion amongst participants.



10. The RSO (Lars Lonnback) and IOM provided regional context, for data sharing and cooperation, in regards to irregular migration and border protection; highlighting the importance of a solution like RBDES to improve data sharing for immigration outcomes and maximise the benefits of biometrics for all partners.
11. Participants received a high level technical overview from DIBP and the system vendor (Biometix Pty Ltd). Additionally, details of the Policy Framework, developed by the RSO, were provided to set the context for the development of the technical system.
The session outlined the design principles considered, the requirements that were gathered, pre-existing legislative and policy details, and the system features that were developed as a result.
12. For more information regarding the RBDES, please click the following link to watch the RBDES video brochure: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/tf4scnlaq04rx3l/AV0.mp4?dl=0>
13. Following an overview of the systems security features, the group was broken into two smaller sub-groups for the afternoon. Each group spent time focusing on one key element of the solution (Policy or Technical) prior to swapping sessions to ensure all participants were able to gain an understanding of the overall solution.
14. Smaller sessions allowed users to discuss their relevant experience in relation to the principles of RBDES. Key points discussed included:
 - a. What other sources of information are available and how does RBDES interact with these, for example, respective Border Management Information Systems or Interpol I24/7?

At present, the systems that exist for most organisations are databases of information. RBDES is not a database, but rather a tool to securely share information amongst the various systems that currently exist.
 - b. What information or details can be shared?

At present, the system is configured for fingerprint. It enables transformation of file if file types differ between participants. There is flexibility within the system to allow for many types of data to be shared - fingerprints are just the starting point.
 - c. How will differing levels of willingness to share data amongst participants be addressed?

Associated agreements will be required between participants who choose to share data. This will require commitment and efforts from participants in order to negotiate shared needs and mutually beneficial outcomes.
 - d. Are other countries (outside Bali Process) able to take part in the RBDES?

Yes. These are global issues; time will be required to allow for growth of the system and data sharing. This is a new capability existing nowhere else in the world, the RBDES was developed through the Bali Process simply as a starting point. The system is not limited to particular participants.



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Day Two - 24 February 2017

15. Following a recap of Day One the group was again broken into two smaller sub-groups. These training sessions focused on:
 - a. The policy safeguards to be observed during use of the system; privacy, law enforcement and human rights.
 - b. The operations of RBDES, sending and receiving data, administration and access to the system, and the process of bulk or multi-lateral messages.
 - c. The international legal provisions already available for those countries who signed or accepted the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols against Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons.
16. Once participants had developed an understanding of the technical system and Policy Framework, a session was conducted to understand what comes next for the RBDES; what governance will be undertaken, how the oversight committee will work, costs involved, and how to gain access to the system.
17. A discussion was held to understand the ways countries use data, where is it collected, how is it utilised, and what agencies are involved. There are many differences between government ministries, agencies and departments amongst the participants. Ongoing communication will be required amongst participants to gain full understanding of future benefits.
18. The organizers expressed thanks to all participants for interactive and collaborative discussions, and for sharing in the first of the RBDES forums.

Outcomes

19. Outcomes from the RBDES Workshop were as follows:
 - a. All participants recognised the ease of use and the added value of the RBDES as an e-platform to expedite current bilateral cooperation as well as to promote and facilitate new bilateral and multilateral agreements.
 - b. In particular, the representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, New Zealand, Philippines and Thailand showed particular interest in bilateral follow-up initiatives to further discuss details of possible system implementation; including “dry installations” to pilot the RBDES.
 - c. Countries where the VERIFIER TD&B are currently installed and used were particularly interested about the new version of VERIFIER software that ensures full operability with the RBDES. Further bilateral discussions will be tabled.
 - d. All countries recognised the urgent need to assess, and if needed harmonise, respective national legal frameworks in areas such as “data and privacy protection” and “international cooperation instruments” to ensure a quick implementation process as well as to use the RBDES at its full potential.
 - e. Representatives expressed the need to conduct a quick survey of biometric data collection and information exchange, and relevant contacts who have the authority to identify and commence bilateral data sharing negotiations. Participants agreed that IOM will circulate the questionnaire developed in coordination with the RSO and DIBP. Results will be shared with all participants.
 - f. Participants acknowledged that there were additional caseloads and scenarios for the use of RBDES and feedback could be provided through the aforementioned survey.
 - g. Representatives agreed on organizing an ad-hoc workshop to evaluate the possibility to use the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime as a legal basis to start exchanging data to fight against smuggling and trafficking.