Consultation Note

Consultation on the Policy Framework for the Regional Biometric Data Exchange Solution

At the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process, Ministers welcomed activities for the future work program on the use of biometrics in immigration systems and the exploration of possibilities of establishing a framework to facilitate the sharing of immigration-related information and intelligence.

At the Eighth meeting of Bali Process Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials, participants endorsed the *Bali Process Strategy for Cooperation: 2014 and Beyond* in which members directed the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO) to explore opportunities to expand the outcomes of existing bilateral and multilateral biometric data sharing arrangements.

Due to interest from Bali Process members to develop arrangements for biometric data exchange, the RSO has developed a policy framework for the Regional Biometric Data Exchange Solution (RBDES). The policy framework for the RBDES is inclusive, voluntary and non-binding. It aims to facilitate greater information exchange between Bali Process members in a consistent and harmonized manner that addresses the diverse domestic contexts of the membership and complies with domestic laws and international obligations.

The development of the policy framework by the RSO involved rigorous consultation with Bali Process members and stakeholders. As part of the consultative process, the Roundtable on Biometric Data Sharing for Identity Verification was held on 15-16 October 2014 in Bangkok. At the Roundtable, the Biometric Data Exchange Review Committee (the Review Committee) was established to oversight the development of the policy framework. Review Committee members included the Government of Australia and the International Organization for Migration as co-chairs, supported by delegates from the Governments of Bhutan, Indonesia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Review Committee met in Bangkok on 8-9 December 2014 and 19-20 February 2015. The Review Committee will meet again after the consultation period ends to finalize the policy framework.

As part of the consultation process, the RSO invites all Bali Process members and observers to provide written comments on the draft documents for the policy framework **by 10 July 2015**. Written consultation will provide Bali Process members and observers with an opportunity to give considered, comprehensive and whole-of-government written feedback on the policy framework. Feedback will be considered by the RSO and the Review Committee before the policy framework is finalized. Once finalized, the policy framework will be presented to the Bali Process Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials for endorsement.

Given the detailed and multifaceted nature of the documents for the policy framework, the RSO encourages Bali Process members and observers to consult broadly within your government or organization. The RSO considers that officials with responsibility for policies relating to identity verification, information sharing, privacy or data protection within the immigration context will be best placed to provide comments. When providing feedback, members are invited to:

- identify any gaps in the policy framework that should be addressed;
- identify any possible challenges in the implementation of the policy framework; and
- recommend any refinements to address identified challenges and gaps.

The draft documents for the policy framework, and other background documents, can be downloaded from the Bali Process website at http://www.baliprocess.net/regional-support-office/regional-biometric-data-exchange-solution.

Please kindly provide your written comments by **10 July 2015** via Email: info@rso.baliprocess.net; or Fax: +662 676 7337 with the subject reference "Bali Process Policy Framework for Regional Biometric Data Exchange Solution."

Should you have any concerns or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the RSO at above email or via phone: +662 343 9477.