Bali Process Workshop
on

"Enabling Electronic Authentication of
Travel Document Information"

Holiday Inn Hotel, Wellington, New Zealand
20-22 August 2007

Co-Chairs' Final Report

The Bali Process Workshop on Enabling Electronic Authentication of Travel Document Information was convened in Wellington on 20-22 August 2007. The workshop was hosted by the Governments of New Zealand and Australia.

The workshop was co-chaired by Mr Arron Baker of the Department of Labour: New Zealand Immigration and Mr Ian Russell of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The workshop was attended by participants and observers representing:

Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, Cook Islands, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kiribati, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, People's
 Republic of China, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu, Vietnam, United Kingdom; and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and INTERPOL.

The workshop was supported by funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the European Commission and the New Zealand Pacific Security Fund.

Workshop Context, Content and Objectives

This workshop is the third in a series of Bali Process Lost & Stolen Passport Information Sharing Workshops.

The 2004 workshop focused on legislation, while the 2005 workshop focused on domestic interagency barriers to electronic exchange of information on lost and stolen passports.

The 2005 workshop focused on assisting Bali Process members to enhance their domestic legislation, policies and institutional frameworks to support the verification of information, beginning with the electronic verification of the authenticity of travel documents.

The objective of the third workshop was to:

1. provide participants with detailed information on emerging systems such as the APEC Regional Movement Alert System (RMAS) and INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Document system (INTERPOL MIND/FIND);

2. provide participants with detailed information on the various arrangements in place to support the operation of these systems;

3. share information on Memoranda of Understanding and legal frameworks for linking border management and passport information systems within countries and internationally;

4. document potential approaches to integrating border management systems with passport verification and alert systems; and

5. create a resource of technical materials, contact points and capacity building opportunities to assist participants in advancing border management and passport authentication systems to better combat trans national crime – in particular people smuggling and people trafficking.

The workshop hopes to facilitate increased participation by Bali Process members in bilateral and multilateral electronic travel document verification systems such as APEC's Regional Movement Alert System (RMAS) and INTERPOL's MIND/FIND for the sharing of lost and stolen passport data.

Workshop Sessions

On the first day of the workshop presentations were made on:

*   Results of the pre-workshop survey on current practices on the sharing of information on lost, stolen or non-genuine travel documents and barriers to the sharing of such information (New Zealand)

*   Regional Movement Alert System (RMAS) – the history of RMAS, the development of the Multi Lateral Framework (MLF), its current status and its future prospects (Australia)

- INTERPOL Lost and Stolen Passport System (MIND/FIND) – current and future direction (NTERPOL)

- Pacific Region Immigration Identity Project (PRIIP) (New Zealand)

- New Zealand's e-Passports, Department of Internal Affairs/Department of Labour Partnership (RMAS, APPSO, APP, Identity Management) (New Zealand).

The co-chairs noted and thanked Pakistan and Sri Lanka for the country update papers presented to the workshop.

Participants noted that increased collaboration on border security and passport systems will help identify and prevent the use of non-genuine passports in people smuggling and trafficking.

Discussion based on the presentations confirmed that significant progress has occurred since the last workshop in both global and regional electronic travel document verification solutions, in particular the APEC RMAS and INTERPOL's MIND/FIND systems.

This progress now offers practical solutions for participating states to consider the opportunities and implications of these new systems to more effectively verify the authenticity of travel documents.

The real and diverse issues many participants have to face before considering joining such systems were also noted in discussion, and confirmed by the experts working groups' findings.

Some participants noted that simpler, less costly solutions may be more attractive in the short term.

Three groups comprising experts from the conference worked in specialist workshops to discuss and report on the following areas:

- **Group A** reviewed Information and Communications Technology (ICT) activity in their economies and plans for future border management and passport information systems. The group also considered possible future approaches to improve border management considering developments such as APEC RMAS & INTERPOL's MIND/FIND systems

- **Group B** reviewed bilateral and multilateral information sharing Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) and legal framework issues associated with passport information sharing arrangements involving linking border management and passports systems

- **Group C** discussed 24/7 Operations Centres created to respond to passport alert hits. The group considered the experience of 24/7 border operations centres established since the last workshop to support RMAS and INTERPOL MIND/FIND operations.

Group A

Working Group A addressed the integration of travel document status and authentication tools into existing border management tools based upon the conference presentations on the Regional Movement Alert System (RMAS) and the INTERPOL Stolen and Lost Travel Document Database. The value of each was acknowledged.

Within the working group broad discussion on the integration of such tools led to the identification of a number of challenges:

- The communication flow of information between all key stakeholders (border control, enforcement agencies, national crime bureaus, and document issuance agencies) needs to be improved

- The willingness to engage with the processes associated with each system is a greater barrier than the technological challenges (for example submitting information to INTERPOL on a regular basis)

- Cost of dedicated telecommunications (fixed line)

- Integration of RMAS and INTERPOL into legacy border systems

- There are more stakeholders at the border than just immigration or police agencies, which requires a whole-of-Government approach to the application of data

- Airlines may be reluctant to provide information due in part to diverse domestic legislative requirements, and lack of international standards.

Recognising these challenges, the working group looked at ways to move all participants to a position where they are able to contribute data and access it in a timely and effective manner.

Specific recommendations included:

a) the establishment and maintenance of relationships between National Crime Bureaus and appropriate immigration/travel document issuance agencies;

b) regular submission of data to INTERPOL; and

c) using information from RMAS, INTERPOL and other tools throughout the border management processes.

Group B

Initial discussions in Group B identified that the different participants' systems for collecting and holding passport information were at various stages of sophistication, from manual records through to advanced e-passports. Furthermore, the responsibility for the issuing of passports and the responsibility for border control usually sits with separate agencies, which increases the complexities around the management of information.

Participants noted that requests for information to be shared internationally were mostly channelled through consulate offices rather than directly through immigration or border control agencies. There was a lack of ability and capability to share passport information in a systemic way.

There was an awareness of the INTERPOL processes and support for using these processes but there was variable uptake of the opportunity to do so. Participants noted information sharing through INTERPOL for law enforcement purposes was engaged in readily and without domestic impediment.

The discussion encouraged participants to build closer relationships and formalise systems between their passport and border control agencies domestically. Also encouraged was the setting up of direct border control agency to agency relationships for dealing with individual law enforcement and passport verification inquiries internationally.

Participants noted generally more familiarity and comfort with case by case law enforcement collaboration than systemic sharing of information for border security purposes.

Group C

The group acknowledged the progress made by some participants to electronically authenticate travel document information, and a number of projects underway to build capacity in this area.

There was general consensus amongst the group on the value of real time verification of passports, and the 24/7 model to support such verification. At the same time, the group recognised the capacity and resource constraints for many participants in adapting such models.

The group also identified the need for a greater appreciation of the benefits of closer alignment between agencies on real time information sharing, and increased cross-agency cooperation and coordination.

Major obstacles to adopting 24/7 models included:

- 24/7 centre establishment costs

- Staffing and language skills requirements

- Ongoing commercial connection and operational costs.

Participants noted that the need for 24/7 centres would have to be subject to a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate whether the potential benefits would justify the resources required.

Participants were encouraged to use their existing systems to further increase their capacity and capability to share information on a real time basis nationally, regionally and/or globally, as their specific circumstances permit.

The Group:

a) Noted participants' wide ranging technical capacity and resources to electronically authenticate travel document information;

b) Welcomed the opportunity to consider using existing systems to enhance the capacity to verify travel document information in real time; and

c) Encouraged participants to consider RMAS, INTERPOL's MIND/FIND as well as other models, including smaller-scale operations, for the effective and secure real time authentication of travel document information. A possible initiative would be the development of a model specifically targeted towards the needs of small and/or other Bali Process countries seeking expertise in this area. Funding and appropriate practical assistance from Bali Process countries in support of such an initiative would be welcome.

Workshop Conclusions and Recommendations

The workshop endorsed the findings of the experts working groups to support, facilitate and progress the development of effective regional arrangements for secure electronic identification of lost, stolen and non-genuine travel documents, and complement relevant work being done in other fora.

The workshop noted the non-binding nature of the Bali Process and its recommendations.

Follow-up

Participants agreed, in view of the progress made, the significant developments between this workshop, and potential for further progress, that the Bali Process

Steering Group be asked to consider a further workshop at an appropriate future point.

Web-based resources

The workshop agreed that the following information will be posted on the Bali Process website after the conclusion of the workshop:

- Workshop agenda
- Opening statements
- Delegate list
- Workshop presentations
- Workshop resource materials
- Working group reports
- Workshop closing statement of the co chairs
- Conference group photograph.

Appreciation

The workshop recorded appreciation for the hospitality of the Government of New Zealand for hosting the workshop, and for the Australian and New Zealand co-chairs.

The participants requested the co-chairs formally and sincerely thank the European Commission, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the New Zealand Pacific Security Fund for the financial support that made the workshop possible.

The workshop also recorded appreciation for the guidance provided to the meeting by the co-ordinators and moderators, and the assistance provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Workshop Secretariat.

Mr Arron Baker   Mr Ian Russell
New Zealand   Australia

Wellington, New Zealand

22 August 2007

Attachments

1 – Workshop Programme
2 – Workshop Attendees