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Committee Wellington Regional Strategy
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Recruitment and Employment Project

Regional Migrant and Refugee Recruitment Programme

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide background information about the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) Refugee and Migrant Recruitment and Self-Employment Project.

2. Background

2.1 Strategic Context

2.1.1 The WRS Refugee and Migrant Recruitment and Self-Employment Project is one of the strategic actions in response to three base strategy documents. These are: the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS), the Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy and the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy (WRLMS). The primary strategy is the WRLMS that was jointly developed by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Department of Labour (DOL).

2.1.2 This initiative builds on the 2006/08 *Wellington Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Well-being* for refugees living and settling in the Wellington region that included Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, Upper Hutt City Council and Wellington City Council as partners “to improve access to information and services that lead to financial independence, appropriate employment and small business opportunities.”

2.2 WRS Refugee and Migrant Recruitment and Self-Employment Project

2.2.1 The WRS office is hosting this project as a partnership arrangement with MSD. It is being funded by the Ministry. Signed in April 2008, the Local Industry Partnership Agreement between the Greater Wellington Regional Council and MSD sets out the following two primary programmes of the WRS Refugee and Migrant Recruitment and Self-Employment Project:

- (a) The Local and Regional Council Refugee and Migrant Recruitment Programme will assist new New Zealanders from refugee and migrant communities who are or are not registered with Work and Income, and/or under-employed into jobs with meaningful career plans at the Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington City Council, Porirua City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Hutt City Council, Kapiti District City Council, Masterton District Council, Carterton District Council and South Wairarapa District Council.
- (b) The Self-Employment Refugee and Migrant Programme will include working with local economic development agencies, MSD (Enterprising Communities), the NGO sector and the Department of Labour to assist new New Zealanders from refugee and migrant communities who are registered with Work and Income and interested in becoming self employed. Grow Wellington and the local business development agencies will be invited to be involved with this work. The Regional Chamber of Commerce and Employers Manufacturers Association (Central) will also be involved.

The pilot project will run for a 12 month period.

2.3 Main Components

2.3.1 The initiative has the following four (4) components:

- (a) Project Co-ordination

The Project Coordinator (Joy Sipeli) will co-locate within the Wellington Regional Strategy project office (in Greater Wellington). She will be supported by an administrator. The Project Coordinator will work with organisations to conduct skill assessments and verification of applicants' credentials, database entry and maintenance; publicity through appropriate media and NGOs to attract applicants to the programme.

- (b) Pre-Post Employment Support

The project will provide employer and employee cross cultural training in the workplace, in-work support and mentoring and employee family case management support where appropriate. The need for on-going mentoring and training after the completion of the project will be investigated and options identified.

- (c) Establishing a Steering Committee

It is envisaged that this project will utilize the existing WRS SORT (Senior Officials Resource Team), although membership will reflect the human resources focus of the project. Existing forums such as the Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan Governance Group will provide advice as required. It is envisaged the establishment of the Regional Settlement Strategy governance group will be a conduit for

advice. Project management and liaison with key stakeholders and partners, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and general communications will be reported through SORT.

(d) Self employment

This initiative will coordinate the provision of resources (information, training, access to funds, business plan preparation) on behalf of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs who would like to start their own business. Similarly, this project will assist groups of refugee and migrant entrepreneurs who wish to work together to create co-operative businesses, funding for which potentially could be accessed through or the Ministry's Enterprise Allowance funds. The Co-ordinator will need to work with external providers and organisations to identify the appropriate support.

The project outputs are set out in **Attachment 1**.

2.4 Target Group

2.4.1 The target group for this project will be refugee and migrants that are:

- (a) under employed (which can include those participants that are not in receipt of main benefit from the Ministry);
- (b) employed in receipt of a main benefit from the Ministry of Social Development;
- (c) seeking opportunities to secure permanent employment within local and regional councils;
- (d) or seeking self-employment opportunities.

2.5 Outcomes

2.5.1 The outcomes expected for participants and the project in general are:

- (a) Sustainable employment through career support and planning within the local and regional councils in the Greater Wellington region are achieved
- (b) Relevant skills and a better understanding of the importance of skills training and are more marketable to the labour market are gained
- (c) Any skill deficiencies experienced are identified at the initial assessment stage and are addressed. This can include facilitating other interventions by third parties who have skills and experience to achieve positive outcomes for the participant
- (d) Meaningful Career Pathway Plans are provided, leading to career opportunities within a specific industry or area within local/regional councils

- (e) The number of jobs that provide opportunities to increase potential and enhance productivity in the workplace are maximised by addressing skill and labour shortages
- (f) Persistent disadvantage in the labour market is minimised and the sustainability of employment enhanced
- (g) A flexible, highly skilled workforce that is responsive to the needs of the labour market and an innovative economy is developed
- (h) Participation in employment, earning and quality of employment for disadvantaged groups is improved
- (i) An inventory database is developed that will capture evidence based information on refugee and migrant skills, experience and qualifications. Other important data indicators may also be captured.

3. Comment

3.1 Financial Implications

Employment vacancies that routinely occur in local and regional councils will not require new investment. Where any work requires new investment, the project expects that Councils will fund this through their respective budget processes as appropriate. MSD will be able to assist with training costs

The self-employment component of the project will assist refugee and migrant entrepreneurs who may either choose to work together to create co-operative business or operate as sole traders. Funding for this can be accessed through MSD Enterprise Allowance funds.

3.2 Stakeholder Management Implications

In order to achieve the project's expected outcomes for the recruitment programme into local and regional councils, collaborative working relationships will be crucial between councils' Human Resource personnel, communication divisions, Information Services, and refugee and migrant communities/networks. Engaging with councils' human resource managers is a priority action early in the project establishment phase.

The self-employment component of the project means that facilitating communications about the project (between teams from MSD's Work and Income, economic development agencies, and relevant council units) is also a priority action early in the project establishment phase.

Wherever possible, the project will work to complement existing refugee and migrant employment and self-employment development programmes.

3.3 Strategic Implications

Discussions have occurred with the State Services Commission (SSC) and they have indicated their willingness to consider a broader initiative within the Wellington region public sector if this pilot proves successful.

The project outcomes complement the development areas included in the Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy, currently in Cabinet approval processes for public release.

The project demonstrates the Greater Wellington region's increasing leadership in local and central government partnerships that promote and de-stigmatise newcomer settlement strategies.

3.4 Human Resource Implications

Recruitment processes under this initiative will run the risk of perceptions that project participants would receive "special treatment" above other "non-project" potential candidates. A draft Relationship Protocol Agreement has been developed which formalises the project partners' working relationships/responsibilities that will help to mitigate negativity that would prove adverse to the success of the project.

3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation Implications

Formal review of the project will take place at the end of 12 months. If demonstrated to be successful, MSD will consider the future of the project approach and its applicability to sectors outside local government. Continuation of the project or something similar for local government will also be considered.

4. Communication

Preliminary planning has commenced for a launch event for the project. This is likely to involve local and regional council representatives from Human Resource, and Communication divisions, and others involved in the project's development, including representatives from the Ministry of Social Development (Work and Income) and newcomer communities.

Project management and liaison with key stakeholders and partners, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and general communications will be reported through SORT to the Chief Executive's Group and other community forums.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

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Attachment 1: Project Deliverables