



Migration Governance Overview: Tuvalu

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In 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed a [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#) to help countries define what “well-managed migration policy” might look like at the national level. The MiGOF was welcomed by IOM member states in the same year. The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) were developed to assist countries operationalize the MiGOF by using a standard set of approximately 90 indicators which could be applied across six key policy domains.

The MGI ¹ is a tool based on policy inputs, which offers insights on policy levers that countries can use to develop their migration governance. It is not intended to function as a measurement of outcomes related to migration policies and institutions, but operates as an input-based benchmarking framework that offers insights on policy measures that countries can action to strengthen migration governance. The MGI is not meant to rank countries on the design or implementation of migration policies, but rather to be a framework to help countries in the assessment of the comprehensiveness of their migration policies, as well as to identify gaps and areas that could be strengthened. The MGI aims to assist countries when advancing the conversation on migration governance by clarifying what “well-governed migration” might look like in the context of the [SDG Target 10.7](#).

This country Overview summarizes the well-governed areas of Tuvalu’s migration governance structures, as well as the areas with potential for further development, as assessed by the MGI.

¹ The MGI initiative is a policy-benchmarking programme led by the IOM and implemented with the support of the Economist Intelligence Unit and financed by member states.

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Key findings

I. Adherence to international standards and fulfilment of migrants' rights

International conventions ratified

The table below follows a standard format and looks at the ratification of specific international conventions. The list of conventions covered is by no means exhaustive.

Convention name	Ratified
International Labour Organization (ILO) Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	No
United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	Yes (1986)
United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954	No
United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961	No
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	No
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	Yes (1995)
United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990	No
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime -Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children -Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air	No
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Yes (1999)
Convention of Law of the Sea	Yes (2002)

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Generally, immigrants have access to primary and secondary education, as education is compulsory for children aged 7–15 years and is paid for by the Government in most cases. An exception are the children of migrants employed by the Government or a foreign institution. The Education (Compulsory Education) Order from 1984, revised in 2008, is a key piece of legislation in this area. Tuvalu, furthermore, offers free healthcare to all citizens.

Family reunification permits are available according to the Immigration Regulations of 2014. However, the conditions for these could be specified more clearly.

Permits to enter and reside in Tuvalu are granted for one year, and they can be extended. There is a path to citizenship, in which immigrants are able to become citizens after seven years of residency according to the Citizenship Act of 1979, revised in 2008.

Areas with potential for further development

There are formal national provident fund benefits of which are only available to citizens.

Public-sector employment is accessible only to nationals, and there are restrictions on accessing private-sector employment and self-employment. Some professions are reserved only for Tuvaluans.

2. Formulates policy using evidence and whole-of-government approach

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour has responsibility for the design of migration policy. The Tuvalu Customs Revenue and Border Protection Service is in charge of migration policy

enactment. In addition, the interministerial Development Coordinating Committee meets every two weeks and looks at a variety of issues including migration.

National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016 to 2020 has the goal of mitigating the adverse impacts of internal migration and urbanisation and capitalising on opportunities offered by migration and urbanisation.

The Tuvalu National Labour Migration Policy (2015) provides a migration strategy and aims to ensure that the Government has a cohesive policy framework. The Immigration Regulations of 2014, under section 18 of the Immigration Act, set out the requirements and conditions for entry and residence in Tuvalu, and outline the application process for entry and residence permits.

Areas with potential for further development

The country does not have an institution or body tasked with coordinating efforts to engage with its diaspora population.

Tuvalu has a draft Migration Policy that is being revised to align with the National Climate Change Policy. There is no specific national legislation regarding emigration.

Although the Tuvalu Central Statistics Division publish migration data on an annual basis, available migration data is limited to visitor arrivals. The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016–2020) does contain some information on migration including migration influenced by climate change.

3. Engages with partners to address migration and related issues

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Tuvalu participates in regional consultative processes. The country is a member of the [Pacific Immigration Directors Conference](#) (PIDC), which is a forum for immigration agencies in the Pacific to discuss and foster cooperation with the aim of strengthening systems throughout the region. It has 23 participating states and meets annually.

Additionally, the Pacific Labour Arrangement has been established as part of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus between Tuvalu (and a number of other Pacific countries), Australia and New Zealand. The Agreement complements the existing schemes and aims to increase the benefits of the labour-sending countries, as well as establish the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting to discuss further initiatives, such as the upcoming Australian Pacific Labour Scheme.

Tuvalu is also a member of the [New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer \(RSE\) scheme](#), [Australian Seasonal Worker Programme \(SWP\)](#) and the [Australian Pacific Labour Scheme](#) which allow seasonal agricultural workers and semi-skilled workers to work in New Zealand and Australia, respectively, and are governed by memorandums of understanding.

The country has developed a Special Portability Agreement with New Zealand (and 21 other Pacific countries) with regard to pensions, which allows those who qualify for New Zealand pensions to continue to receive these from Tuvalu.

Tuvalu is a participating state in the [Global Forum on Migration and Development](#) and a member of the IOM.

Tuvalu participates in multilateral fora such as the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Tuvalu has proposed a UN resolution to create a legal framework for people displaced by climate change.

Tuvalu is one of 43 nations on the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

Areas with potential for further development

Collaboration with civil society, the private sector and the diaspora in agenda-setting and implementation of migration-related issues is limited. So far, there have been limited initiatives, such as a workshop addressing migration with non-governmental organizations and the Government.

4. Advances the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Tuvalu participates in international schemes with common qualification frameworks, such as the [Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards \(PRQS\)](#), whereby if a course is included on the Register it is recognized across the region. In addition to the [PRQS](#) there is the [Pacific Qualifications Framework \(PQF\)](#) which serves as a meta-framework for countries that do not have qualifications authorities. These countries are able to benchmark their national qualifications to the [PQF](#).

Tuvalu is a member country of the [University of the South Pacific \(USP\)](#) and hosts the campus for computing and social sciences. [USP](#) is open to international students, although they may face higher fees.

Areas with potential for further development

There is no national assessment for monitoring labour market demand for immigrants or domestic labour supply and the effects of emigration. Tuvalu has no labour migration information system and relies on receiving countries for data on labour migrants.

There is currently no programme for managing labour immigration into the country, nor are there different types of visa to attract specific labour skills.

The Government is not involved in developing formal remittance schemes.

5. Effectively addresses the mobility dimensions of crises

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

The Government has a strategy with specific measures to provide assistance to immigrants during crisis and post-crisis phases in the country. Tuvalu has a national disaster committee mandated to provide support to all people at times of crises. The National Disaster Relief Coordination Unit (NDRC) under the Climate Change and Disaster Policy Unit is responsible for incorporating disaster risk reduction into sector policies and programmes.

Tuvalu has established a local financing mechanism called the Survival Fund (TSF) to finance recovery and rehabilitation from climate change impacts and natural disasters.

The Government has a national Disaster Risk Reduction strategy with specific provisions for addressing the displacement impacts of disasters. The [National Climate Change Policy](#) and the [National Strategic Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management](#) are currently under revision to align with the draft National Migration Policy. The Government is seeking the establishment of an international legal framework allowing for the re-establishment of Tuvalu within another country in the event that present-day Tuvalu becomes uninhabitable due to the effects of climate change. This includes an expansion of the Special Pacific Access

Category (resident visas for New Zealand) and establishing professional training programmes in key identified occupations to allow for employment in neighbouring countries if climate change migration is necessary.

The national development strategy has measures regarding displacement. The Tuvalu [National Strategy for Sustainable Development](#) contains strategies for dealing with internal climate-induced migration.

Areas with potential for further development

There is limited communication systems in place to receive information on the evolving nature of crises and how to access assistance. The climate change and national disaster committees were established to address these issues. They still operate on an ad hoc basis; formalizing the system is an ongoing process.

There is no policy to accommodate the return of migrants who have fled the country during times of crisis.

Tuvalu has not implemented measures to make exceptions to the immigration procedures for immigrants whose country of origin is experiencing crisis.

6. Ensures that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Tuvalu has legislation on trafficking in persons and human smuggling under the Counter Terrorism and transnational Organised Crime Act of 2009.

The Tuvalu Customs Revenue and Border Protection Service is tasked with customs and border security. Staff receive training in the country and abroad. A basic operational mechanism is in place and is managed by the Immigration Division to monitor visa overstays.

The Immigration and Customs agency is responsible for combatting human trafficking. However, to date there is no strategy addressing this topic in a comprehensive way.

Areas with potential for further development

There is no website clearly outlining visa options. Neither is there a formal system for applying for specific visa types prior to arrival. Visas can be obtained only on arrival for visitors from countries with a reciprocity agreement.

Tuvalu has no border information management system.

There is no formal governmental programme or dedicated policy focused on attracting nationals who have migrated from Tuvalu. Neither is there a formal government programme that focuses on facilitating migrant reintegration in Tuvalu.

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