



OUTCOME REPORT FOURTH RSO BORDER FORUM COOPERATION BEYOND BORDERS

19-20 NOVEMBER 2025



REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE
THE BALI PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Support Office of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (RSO) was established in 2012 to provide technical support to Bali Process Members and to strengthen practical cooperation on refugee protection and international migration, including people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime, and other components of migration management in the region. Within this mandate, the RSO Border Forum serves as the RSO's flagship annual operational capability-development platform, convening frontline, liaison and policy officials to examine route-based risks, strengthen cooperation, and exchange practical responses to border-management challenges.



The fourth RSO Border Forum, Cooperation Beyond Borders, held on 19–20 November 2025, used scene-setting panels, capability-building workshops and group discussions to examine evolving migration routes and modus operandi, and to assess emerging border-security risks across the Bali Process region. Through participatory methods including role-plays, case studies and joint problem-solving, 140 delegates worked together on realistic situations drawn from their border posts. This allowed delegates to map where systems currently enable cooperation and where they stall across the full route of travel, from check-in and boarding gates through transit points to final arrival or interdiction. The Forum convened senior border management, law enforcement, and policy officers from 35 Bali Process Member and Observer States and organisations.



FOREWORD

Border management across the Bali Process region is becoming more complex, more interconnected and more time sensitive. Member States are managing faster route shifts, increasingly sophisticated document and identity fraud, and trafficking for forced criminality. These trends are intensifying operational pressure driven by high traveller volume, fragmented information sharing, and uneven system capability across air, land and maritime borders.

The Fourth RSO Border Forum provided an operational platform for Member States and partners to review route-based shifts since the Third Forum and identify practical actions to strengthen border responses. The Forum focused on translating route-based analysis and frontline experience into practical cooperation priorities, including inter-agency information flow, addressing capability gaps, and identifying operational countermeasures that can be applied within existing mandates and systems.

A central finding of the Forum was that criminal networks are adapting faster than many border systems can respond. Delegates reported route displacement following strengthened enforcement action, new transit points (notably in the Pacific), more complex combinations of genuine and fraudulent documents, and increasing cases in which victims of trafficking for forced criminality may also appear as offenders. Delegates also flagged delays in operational information flow within agencies, between agencies, and across borders as major barriers to timely intervention.



Delegates further emphasised the need to integrate cybercrime, financial intelligence, and regulatory perspectives into border responses, particularly in addressing scam-centre trafficking and document fraud networks that operate across multiple jurisdictions.

As Co-Managers of the RSO, we welcome the practical, candid and solutions-oriented engagement demonstrated through the Forum. We also extend our appreciation to the RSO team, facilitators and moderators and to Member State agencies and partners, including international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and aviation and maritime cooperation mechanism whose workshop delivery and technical contributions ensured the Forum remained grounded in operational reality and practical solutions. The RSO Border Forum reinforces the RSO's role as the Bali Process' operational capability-development platform in that helps translate regional priorities into practical recommendations, relationships and tools for Member States. The outcomes of the Fourth RSO Border Forum will inform the Fourth RSO Constructive Dialogue in January 2026 and contribute to shaping the next RSO Work Plan. We encourage agencies to carry these insights forward and continue strengthening practical, route-based cooperation across the region.



A black handwritten signature of David Scott.

David Scott
RSO Co-Manager (Australia)



A blue handwritten signature of Fuad Adriansyah.

Fuad Adriansyah
RSO Co-Manager (Indonesia)

ROUTE BASED ASSESSMENT OF MOVEMENT AND TACTICS

A core methodology of the Fourth Border Forum was the comparative route analysis. Delegates revisited trafficking and smuggling route maps developed at the Third RSO Border Forum, testing these against current observations. This approach allowed delegates to identify which routes remain active, where criminal networks have adapted, and what operational pressures these shifts create at different points of the journey.



Figure 1. Key Trafficking Routes Identified at the Third RSO Border Forum

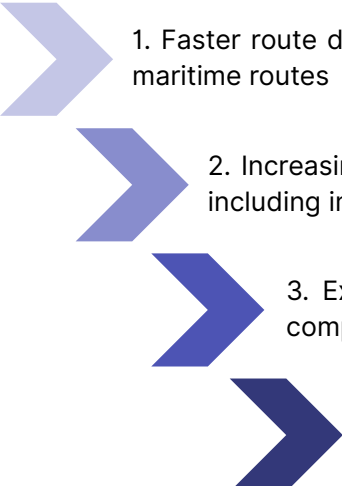


Figure 2. Key Smuggling Routes Identified at the Third RSO Border Forum

CONTINUING PATTERNS	NOTABLE SHIFTS SINCE THE PREVIOUS FORUM
<p>Maritime routes in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal Rohingya movements continue, with high mortality risks. Smugglers and armed groups influence departure points and timing. 	<p>Broader range of source countries for trafficking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional flows now extend beyond South and Southeast Asia, with more movements involving Ethiopia, Kenya, Syria, Iran, Japan and the Republic of Korea.
<p>Air-led routes to Europe and North America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travellers continue to use transit hubs in Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Beijing and parts of Latin America. Common tactics include travelling with genuine visas paired with forged supporting documents, boarding-pass swaps and withholding documents on arrival. 	<p>Changes in trafficking routing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movements from Mongolia through Viet Nam, Hong Kong or Beijing toward Cambodia or Myanmar have also grown.
<p>Routes toward Australia and New Zealand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct smuggling attempts appear to have decreased in some contexts. Networks now use more distant staging points and rely heavily on document manipulation in third countries. Several Pacific locations are increasingly used as transit points. 	<p>Evolving tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networks increasingly use combinations of genuine and forged documents, including documents for children. Artificial intelligence generated visa artefacts, substituted photos and misuse of pilgrimage travel are in use.
<p>Forced-criminality trafficking in the Mekong sub-region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victims often enter through airports and then move overland into scam compounds in Myanmar, Laos or Cambodia. Some are later sold into other forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. 	<p>Operational pressure points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auto-gates support efficient processing but reduce officer-traveller interaction time, which limits opportunities to observe behavioural indicators. Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems add value where implemented. Differences in privacy rules and system compatibility continue to affect consistent use of API and PNR.
<p>Technology as a mixed influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automation and smart gates reduce officer-traveller interaction time, which limits opportunities to identify victims or impostors at the primary inspection point. 	<p>Increased use of Pacific transit points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiji and other Pacific jurisdictions are now appearing more often as transit hubs rather than primarily destination points. The Maldives was also noted as a possible under detected transit location.
<p>Flexible transit patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thailand and Malaysia continue to be central transit hubs for multiple route types. 	<p>Shifts in scam centre trafficking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thailand and Kuala Lumpur remain major gateways to Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia Facilitators increasingly move victims into smaller residential compounds. Some victims are later transferred into sexual exploitation markets.
	<p>Sector linked exploitation remains stable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mining, fishing and logging sectors continue to attract irregular workers who later overstay and become vulnerable to exploitation.

OPERATIONAL PRESSURES AFFECTING BORDER MANAGEMENT

The delegates discussions at the Forum confirmed that border risk in the region is now more dynamic and layered than in previous years. Key pressures include:

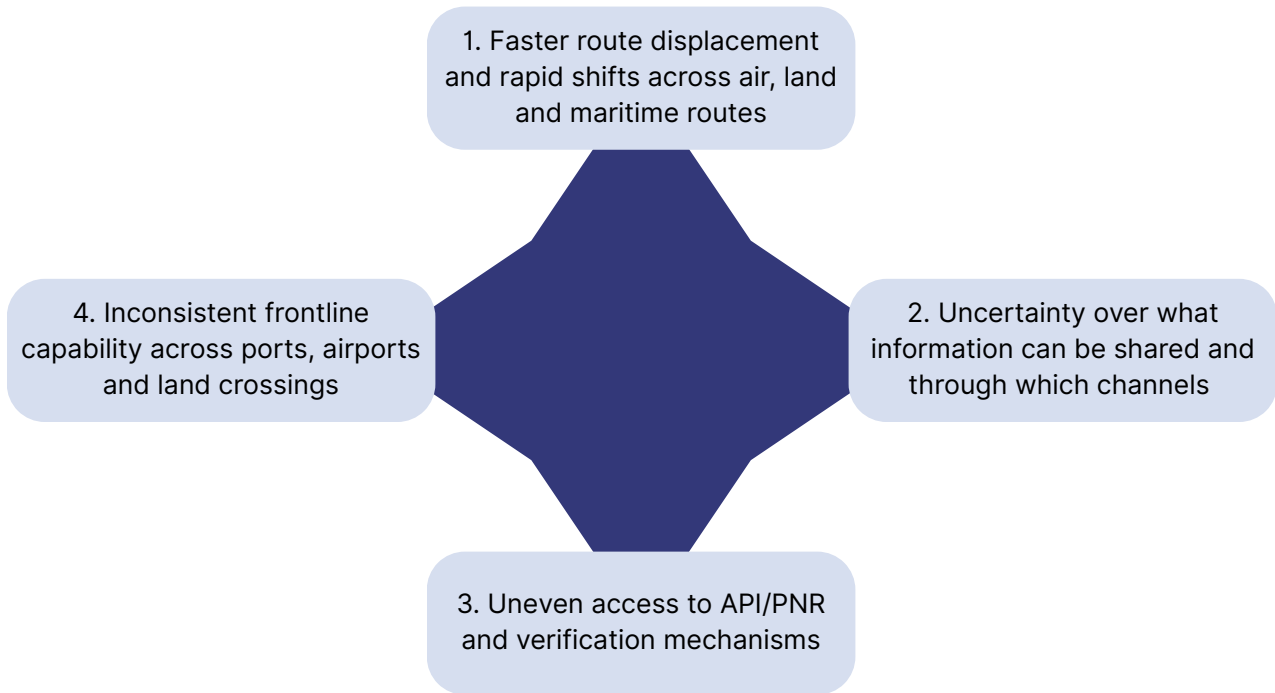
- 
1. Faster route displacement and rapid shifts across air, land and maritime routes
 2. Increasingly sophisticated document and identity manipulation including impostor travel using genuine documents
 3. Expansion of trafficking for forced criminality linked to scam compounds and online recruitment
 4. Operational constraints caused by fragmented information-sharing, uneven system access and high volumes of travellers

Automation and e-gates, while supporting faster processing can reduce opportunities for frontline officials to observe behavioural indicators, identify vulnerable travellers, or intervene early when suspicion or concern arises. This was reinforced in Workshop D (trauma-informed interviewing), which highlighted how reduced time, privacy and officer-traveller interaction increases the risk of misidentifying victims—particularly in forced-criminality cases. This strengthens the importance of upstream risk management including API and PNR, intelligence sharing and liaison channels to define escalation pathways when red flags emerge.

Cross-border movements are not new, but the Forum highlighted that routes are increasingly interdependent across jurisdictions. Smuggling and trafficking facilitation often involves multiple transit points, allowing networks to exploit delays or disconnects between source, transit and destination point responses.

Delegates emphasised that effective intervention relies not only on national controls but also on timely cooperation across transit points. Including airport, maritime routes and emerging locations. Workshop C (adversary role-play) illustrated how quickly networks shift departure points, handover locations and facilitators when enforcement pressure changes, reinforcing the need for earlier, route-based coordination and intelligence-led tasking rather than late-stage interdiction.

The Forum further identified structural constraints that limit timely operational action in the forms of:



Workshop B (practical protocols for cooperation) directly highlighted these constraints, concluding that the core issue is often fragmentation and inconsistent use, not because of the lack of tools, and that low-cost standardisation (focal points, common templates/definitions, and 24/7 operational contacts) can materially improve time-critical cooperation.



Picture 1. Panellist Members representation (L-R): Department of Home Affairs, Australia, Directorate General of Immigration, Ministry of Immigration and Correction, Republic of Indonesia, Ministry of Immigration, Fiji, Department of Immigration and Emigration, Sri Lanka and the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process.

MEMBER STATES PERSPECTIVES ON SHARED CHALLENGES

The country perspectives below illustrate the diversity of routes and risks reported at the Forum from delegates, while also showing recurring regional themes such as route displacement, document fraud, forced-criminality trafficking, maritime vulnerability, and growing pressure on frontline decision-making.



AUSTRALIA

Australia noted rising arrivals of large groups of Sri Lankan and Indian travellers, linked to more complex organised crime-enabled movements. Delegates also reported cases where individuals trafficked into scam compounds were later moved into other forms of exploitation, showing how routes and harms shift quickly.



BANGLADESH

Bangladesh reported continued movement from Bangladesh to Indonesia via northern Sumatra, which remains difficult to manage due to dispersed maritime landing points. The Dhaka–Bangkok–Cambodia route is still active. Dhaka–Iran movements have declined, while newer pathways via Türkiye or Dubai toward Russia are increasing.



CHINA

China highlighted significant movement of its nationals transiting Thailand to scam centres in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. Consular caseloads continue to grow as victims escape and request assistance.



INDONESIA

Indonesia described shifting smuggling tactics, with syndicates using land, sea and air routes, including flows from Bangladesh and Myanmar through the Indonesian province of Aceh toward Malaysia. Smugglers have moved away from heavily monitored island transit points toward more distant routes. Indonesia also observed ongoing entries into Malaysia and Thailand for employment through tourist pathways, detected at airports and checkpoints.



MALAYSIA

Malaysia remains a key transit country. Delegates noted continued Andaman Sea arrivals to Malaysia, including seasonal Rohingya boat movements, and observed that stronger enforcement often drives route displacement and diversification.



MONGOLIA

Mongolia reported sustained use of routes linked to cyber-scam operations, including Mongolia–China–Myanmar/Bangkok. Delegates noted shifts toward alternative pathways into Cambodia and Myanmar, supported by visa-free entry to Bangkok or transit through Hong Kong and Beijing. Mongolia also reported detections of its nationals in forced labour in Cambodia and increased Russian migration into Mongolia. Movements along the Mongolia–Viet Nam–Cambodia route are becoming more common as Bangkok–Cambodia movements decline.



NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand reported trafficking cases involving Vietnamese nationals using fake visas, including cases ending in forced criminality such as cannabis cultivation. Additional cases linked to Thailand and China involved labour and sexual exploitation.



PAKISTAN

Pakistan described misuse of pilgrimage travel to Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia for trafficking, with travellers diverted into begging or onward movement. This has prompted tighter restrictions on land-route pilgrimage travel.



SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands reported persistent routes through the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia via Papua New Guinea. These movements are often linked to recruitment into mining, fishing and logging, followed by overstays.



SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka noted daily trafficking activity involving India, continued onward smuggling using land routes into Malaysia, and recent maritime arrivals of Rohingya to Sri Lanka. Direct smuggling attempts to Australia are now significantly reduced due to strong cooperation and awareness-raising activities, while noting emerging vulnerabilities in third-country transit locations.



THAILAND

Thailand highlighted pressure from outward movements linked to scam-centre recruitment and described difficulties identifying victims amid heavy tourism flows. Delegates also noted increasingly complex routes through Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, including looping pathways used to evade detection.



VIET NAM

Viet Nam reported movements originating from Myanmar that are facilitated by border communities along land-border corridors in the sub-region. Delegates also noted that weak face-to-passport checks by some aircraft operators/carriers create vulnerabilities, requiring stronger engagement with airports and airlines.

KEY OUTCOMES AND ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY OUTCOMES	
Shared route picture updated (Third vs Fourth Forum)	Delegates validated which routes remain active and identified where networks have shifted, diversified, or dispersed routes (including emerging transit dynamics in the Pacific and evolving air/maritime pathways).
Clear articulation of evolving modus operandi	Participants consolidated priority tactics affecting borders now, including hybrid document/identity manipulation (impostor travel, substituted photos, altered visas, boarding-pass swaps) and maritime dispersion tactics that complicate detection.
Forced criminality elevated as a mainstream operational issue	Delegates agreed trafficking into scam centres is now a region-wide disruptor, creating complex screening and due-process dilemmas where individuals may appear as both victims and offenders.
Consensus that information flow is the critical bottleneck	Across sub-regions, delegates identified fragmented interagency and cross-border information-sharing as the main barrier to timely operational action, with a strong push to institutionalise cooperation beyond personal relationships.
Practical countermeasures and tools prioritised	The Forum surfaced a set of implementable actions such as strengthened focal-point networks, common templates/definitions, 24/7 operational contacts, clearer escalation pathways, and improved operational use of advanced passenger information (API)/ passenger name record (PNR) and watchlists.
Safeguards highlighted for automation and integrity risks	Delegates underscored that automation/e-gates can reduce “human visibility” without safeguards, and that insider risk/corruption must be treated as a strategic border vulnerability requiring integrated controls (oversight, access management, vetting, reporting channels, rotation).
Operational capability strengthened through scenario-based learning	Workshops produced concrete takeaways for airports and border environments, including end-to-end handling of fraudulent document cases, trauma-informed interviewing practices, and crisis-response approaches for challenging security environments.
Stronger networks and RSO value-add reinforced	The Forum strengthened cross-border professional connections and reinforced the RSO’s role as a neutral operational convenor that translates frontline realities into shared priorities, practical cooperation mechanisms, and inputs for the 2026 Constructive Dialogue and the next RSO Work Plan.

These recommendations consolidate recurring priorities identified across plenaries, group work and workshops. They are intended to inform:

1. Member State actions within existing mandates and systems and
2. Future RSO support through capability-building, convening platform and practical tool development.

ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS	
Enable timely operational information-sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create predictable liaison channels and focal-point networks along major routes, including Pacific and South Asian hubs. Agree on simple operational parameters for sharing red flags, modus operandi and anonymised trends. Strengthen use of existing liaison networks for quick alerts. Promote non-sensitive trend data to support shared risk analysis. Develop clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) for time-critical sharing.
Integrate responses to converging cyber/fraud and trafficking/integrity risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring border, law-enforcement, financial and tech partners together to map shared risks. Support cooperation on digital evidence, online recruitment patterns and scam-centre trafficking. Embed corruption and insider-risk mitigation in border-security planning. Develop task-force models combining border, cyber and financial expertise. Integrate scam-compound scenarios into screening and contingency planning.
Improve identification and referral of victims of forced criminality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate trauma-informed interviewing into standard training. Adjust SOPs to allow protective referrals when indicators appear. Strengthen cooperation between border agencies, referral mechanisms and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
Strengthen frontline capability through realistic, targeted training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority roles needing specialised training (e.g., document examiners, interviewing officers, maritime coordinators). Build modular, scenario-based training packages drawn from Forum workshops. Encourage mixed-country participation to strengthen cooperative habits. Prioritise training on scam-centre victims, complex transit-zone cases and child-protection risks.
Strengthen cross-border responses for missing migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regional focal-point networks on missing migrants and unidentified remains. Create clear SOPs distinguishing missing from deceased cases. Explore frameworks for sharing ante- and post-mortem data in line with privacy standards. Link missing-migrant work with civil registration and legal identity efforts.

FROM FORUM INSIGHTS TO REGIONAL ACTION

The Fourth RSO Border Forum highlighted evolving challenge facing the Bali Process region. Addressing this gap will require moving beyond episodic cooperation toward more systematic forms of regional capability development and operational coordination.

For the RSO, this reinforces the importance of its role as the Bali Process' practical and technical arm. The Forum demonstrated the value of the RSO's comparative approach—bringing together frontline insights. The findings of the Fourth Border Forum have informed the Fourth Constructive Dialogue in January 2026, and will set directions for future RSO engagement across the Bali Process region.

First, Member States highlighted the need for more consistent operational information flow across borders and agencies. While multiple platforms and liaison mechanisms already exist, their use remains uneven and often dependent on personal relationships. Future RSO activities will therefore focus on strengthening practical cooperation pathways so that time-critical information can move more predictably across jurisdictions.

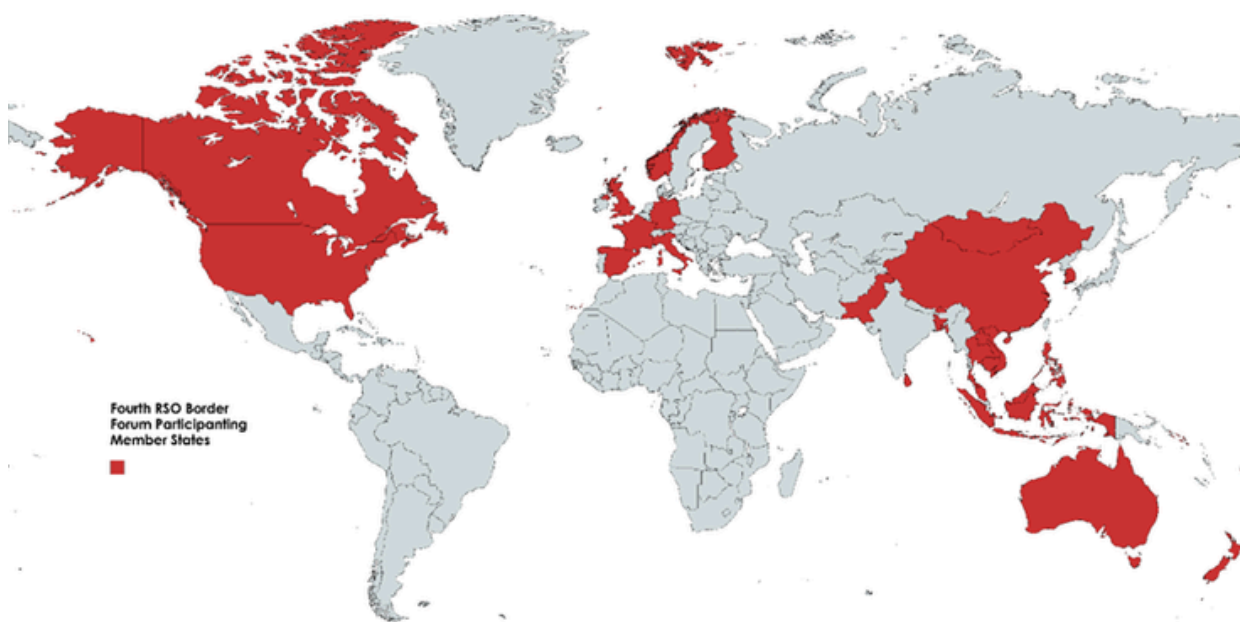
Second, the Forum confirmed that border risks are increasingly shaped by developments beyond the immediate border environment. Technology-enabled trafficking, document and identity manipulation, and cyber-facilitated recruitment are converging with traditional smuggling routes. The RSO will support a more integrated approach through closer collaboration between border authorities, law enforcement, cybercrime investigators and financial-crime specialists.

Third, the Forum reinforced the importance of strengthening frontline operational capability and institutionalising it. Building on extensive expertise and partnership throughout the region, the RSO will continue to develop practical training tools and peer-learning platforms that support officers working across air, land and maritime borders.

Finally, many operational successes continue to rely on trust, familiarity and informal communication between counterparts. By maintaining convening platforms such as the Border Forum, alumni engagement and technical workshops, the RSO can help transform these relationships into more institutionalised cooperation mechanisms that endure beyond individual postings.

Taken together, the Fourth Border Forum underscored that strengthening regional responses to people smuggling and trafficking in persons is not only a matter of new tools or policies. It also requires more connected systems, stronger operational habits of cooperation and sustained investment in capability development. Through its convening role and practical support to Member States, the RSO will continue working with partners across the Bali Process to translate these priorities into concrete action in the years ahead.

PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT



The Fourth RSO Border Forum was attended by Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Canada, China, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States of America and Viet Nam.

Organisations represented include the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking, Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, Freedom Collaborative, Global Initiative Against Transnational Crime, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre, Torii International and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The Forum also benefited from the participation of RSO Alumni and liaison-network practitioners, whose operational experience strengthened peer exchange and practical problem-solving across sessions.

GLOSSARY

ALO	Airline Liaison Officer
API	Advanced Passenger Information
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
GI-TOC	Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime
ICE	Immigration Control Expert
IFC Singapore	Information Fusion Centre Singapore
INTERPOL	The International Criminal Police Organization
IOM	The International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OHCHR	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PIDC	The Pacific Immigration Development Community
PNR	Passenger Name Record
ReCAAP ISC	The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia - Information Sharing Centre
RISP	Reporting and Information Sharing Platform
RISP	Regional Information Sharing Platform
RSO	Regional Support Office of the Bali Process
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

ANNEX: WORKSHOP OUTCOMES AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Forum’s workshop programme was designed to translate high-level trends into operational learning, practical countermeasures and recommendations relevant to Bali Process Member States. Each workshop addressed a specific system gap raised by delegates and generated outputs that can inform national practice, regional cooperation, and future RSO support.

Workshop A: Crossroads of Corruption and Crime



Delegates across the Forum identified corruption and trusted-insider facilitation as recurring enablers of smuggling, trafficking and aviation-security breaches. The workshop was delivered to examine how insider access is exploited in airport and border environments, and to identify organisational countermeasures beyond ad hoc disciplinary responses.

Participants highlighted that “insider risk” (i.e., the risk that staff or authorised personnel misuse their privileged access intentionally or unintentionally) is often under-addressed in border and aviation

security planning. Through case-based discussion, delegates identified vulnerabilities across baggage handling, passenger screening, access control, immigration processing, information technology systems and contractor roles. The workshop reinforced that insider-enabled risk is not only a personnel issue, but a system design, oversight and security-culture issue.

Recommended countermeasures raised by participants:

- Stronger internal oversight with authority to act on misconduct,
- confidential reporting mechanisms,
- role rotation in high-risk positions,
- and practical training that builds a security-focused workplace culture.

Delegates expressed strong interest in further RSO support on insider-risk management and anti-corruption measures, including peer exchange, practical training

and applied countermeasure design relevant to Member State operational contexts. The workshop reinforced the importance of integrating integrity safeguards into broader border-security capability development under the Bali Process. Delegates requested further peer exchange on insider risk management and practical approaches for national implementation. The workshop was co-delivered by the RSO and the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs.



Workshop B: Practical Protocols for Inter-Agency Cooperation

A recurring issue raised by Member States was that multiple information-sharing mechanisms exist, but information often does not move in ways that support timely operational action. This workshop was delivered to examine how agencies can improve practical, predictable cooperation along routes without waiting for entirely new systems



Delegates emphasised that the region's core problem is often fragmentation and inconsistency in use, rather than a total absence of tools. Delegates noted that existing systems and platforms are frequently underused, poorly connected to one another and constrained by unclear sharing rules or overly dependent on personal relationships.

Delegates also highlighted barriers including legal ambiguity, institutional risk aversion, language differences, unclear incident definitions, and limited operational access to timely information at the frontline. As a result, even where information exists, it may not be translated into action quickly enough.

Recommended countermeasures raised by participants:

- Prioritise connecting and standardising existing systems before creating new platforms
- Develop simple shared incident templates and common definitions to reduce ambiguity
- Establish focal-point directories and 24/7 operational contact pathways
- Use non-sensitive trend data (e.g., routes, vessel types, modus operandi) to build shared risk pictures while personal-data issues are being addressed
- Regular multi-agency and cross-border engagement to maintain trust and familiarity between counterparts.

Delegates underscored the value of the RSO's neutral convening role in helping map, align and standardise practical cooperation mechanisms, including templates, SOP concepts and focal-point arrangements. This is directly relevant to the Bali Process objective of strengthening practical regional cooperation.

The workshop was co-delivered by Fiji Immigration, UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), IOM's Regional Information Sharing Platform (RISP) and ReCAAP ISC (The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia – Information Sharing Centre).

Workshop C: Understanding Smuggling Tactics — Anticipatory Approaches

Border agencies often respond to smuggling incidents after movement is already underway. This workshop was designed to help participants analyse smuggling operations from an adversary perspective, identify procedural blind spots, and strengthen anticipatory responses.

Through adversary-based role play and planning, delegates observed how quickly smuggling networks can adapt routes, departure points, facilitators, handover arrangements and contingency plans when enforcement pressure increases. Participants identified that inconsistent coastal surveillance, uncoordinated patrol patterns, and delayed cross-border intelligence-sharing can create exploitable seams, resulting in late interdiction rather than earlier disruption.



Recommended countermeasures raised by participants:

- Earlier information exchange on suspicious movement and facilitators
- More coordinated inter-agency and cross-border patrol tasking
- Integrating adversary-thinking exercises into national training programmes to expose procedural vulnerabilities
- Using scenario-based planning to test how smugglers may react to policy or operational changes

Delegates strongly supported the use of adversary-based methods in future RSO and national training. The workshop demonstrated that understanding smuggler decision-making can improve operational anticipation, not only incident response.

The workshop was delivered by the RSO Counter People Smuggling team.

Workshop D: Trauma-Informed Interviewing for Better Victim Identification

Delegates reported that trafficking victims especially in forced-criminality and scam-centre cases are often misidentified as offenders, irregular migrants, or uncooperative travellers. The workshop aimed to strengthen frontline interviewing to improve victim identification and reduce re-traumatisation and misclassification.

Participants and facilitators noted that border interviews are often the key moment determining whether someone is referred for protection or routed into enforcement. Delegates examined how trauma can affect memory, behaviour, disclosure, and communication, and how inconsistency, silence, hostility, confusion, or apparent calm may signal trauma, fear, or coercion rather than deception.



The workshop also underscored overlapping roles in scam-centre cases, where individuals may be victims, coerced participants, witnesses, and alleged offenders simultaneously. Participants warned that narrow approaches, time pressure, lack of privacy, and unclear referrals increase risks of wrongful criminalisation and missed protection.

Recommended countermeasures raised by participants:

- Slowing the pace of interviews where possible and using open-ended, non-judgmental questions
- Reducing unnecessary repetition and explaining process steps clearly
- Improving privacy and interview conditions to support disclosure and safety
- Embedding trauma-informed interviewing principles into routine training for border, immigration, police and consular officers
- Linking interviewing practice to clear operational referral pathways so officers know who to contact and what action to take when indicators appear
- Reviewing standard operating procedures so frontline officers are supported to trigger protective responses, not only enforcement actions.

The workshop reinforced that victim identification is both a protection issue and an operational issue: better identification supports protection outcomes and can improve intelligence and investigations into trafficking networks. Delegates highlighted the importance of continued RSO support on practical tools, training and indicators for forced criminality and complex victim/offender profiles. The workshop was led by the RSO Countering Trafficking in Persons team with experts from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Torii International and Blue Dragon Children's Foundation.

Workshop E: Border Management in Challenging Security Environments

Delegates identified a major gap between traditional border-management models and the realities of large-scale online scam operations, trafficking for forced criminality, and sudden mixed-profile movements across conflict-affected border zones. This workshop was delivered to examine operational implications and identify crisis-response and prevention measures.

Participants examined how industrial-scale scam operations and criminal enclaves in parts of mainland Southeast Asia are creating converging risks involving trafficking, forced criminality, online fraud, money laundering, violent crime and cross-border movement. Scenario-based exercises highlighted practical challenges faced by States during



sudden influxes from scam-compound areas, including limited budgets and surge capacity, unclear mandates, difficulty distinguishing victims from offenders, screening and registration under pressure, and humanitarian, medical and protection needs alongside security concerns. A key takeaway was that these are not border-control-only problems and require broader national and regional coordination.

Recommended countermeasures raised by participants:

- Whole-of-government coordination models at border hotspots
- Clear command structures and integrated reception/screening/registration procedures
- Strengthened intelligence-sharing on scam-related routes, facilitators, actors and financial flows
- National anti-scam task-force models combining border, law enforcement, cyber and financial expertise
- Integration of scam-trafficking scenarios into national contingency planning and exercises
- Approaches that account for mixed victim/offender profiles and the complexities of forced criminality

The workshop highlighted the need for border systems that can manage complex security and protection environments while coordinating with wider criminal justice, cyber and financial actors. This aligns with the RSO's role in supporting integrated, route-aware capability development across the Bali Process.

The workshop was delivered by the RSO Technical Expert consultant.

Workshop F: Strengthening Transnational Cooperation for the Search and Identification of Missing Migrants

Delegates reported that national systems are often better developed for post-recovery procedures than for cases in which migrants are missing, unconfirmed dead, or unidentified across borders. This workshop was delivered to examine operational, legal and coordination gaps and identify practical cooperation options.



Participants highlighted that many systems remain reactive and are primarily activated after remains are recovered. In contrast, cases involving missing persons without confirmation of death often face unclear responsibilities, limited procedures, and weak cross-border coordination. Delegates also identified limited forensic capacity, incomplete civil registration and legal identity systems and privacy/data-protection constraints that slow or prevent sharing of ante- and post-mortem data needed for identification.

Participants noted that, in the absence of a dedicated global mechanism for missing migrants, many authorities rely on bilateral contacts, embassies and ad hoc personal networks—leading to inconsistency and delays for families seeking answers.

Recommended countermeasures raised by participants:

- Establish regional focal-point networks for missing-migrant and unidentified remains cases, with clear role descriptions and contact pathways
- Develop frontline-oriented SOPs that clearly distinguish “missing” and “deceased” case handling, including when and how to engage foreign counterparts
- Strengthen legally sound frameworks for sharing ante- and post-mortem data in line with privacy requirements in line with INTERPOL’s framework
- Integrate missing-migrant scenarios into training and simulation activities
- Link identification efforts with civil registration and legal identity strengthening.

The workshop identified a clear opportunity for the RSO to support practical cooperation mechanisms, standard operating procedures refinement suggestions and capacity-building that improve dignified, timely and coordinated responses for missing-migrant cases across the region.

The workshop was led by the RSO Irregular Migration and Regional Priorities team with IOM’s Missing Migrants Project and The International Criminal Police Organization’s Disaster Victim Identification (INTERPOL DVI) unit.



Workshop G: Closing the Loop on Fraudulent Travel Documents in Aviation

Delegates consistently identified fraudulent travel documents, impostor travel and transit-zone incidents as daily operational challenges that are becoming more sophisticated and more difficult to manage under time pressure. This workshop was delivered to strengthen end-to-end case handling and cross-actor coordination in airport environments.

Using multiple scenarios, participants examined cases involving counterfeit passports, altered visas, impostor travel using genuine documents, child-protection concerns and undocumented passengers. Delegates highlighted recurring operational constraints in airport



settings, including inconsistent procedures in transit zones, limited access to real-time verification support and liaison channels, communication gaps across shifts and agencies and pressure to make decisions quickly while preserving evidence and safeguarding vulnerable travellers.

The workshop reinforced that document-fraud cases are not only about detecting false documents; they are also opportunities to identify facilitators, routes, trafficking indicators and wider criminal networks.

Recommended countermeasures raised by participants:

- Refine SOPs for fraudulent-document cases, including transit-zone incidents, cases involving minors, and undocumented travellers
- Expand scenario-based training that mirrors real airport time pressures and coordination demands
- Improve use of available API/PNR, CCTV and booking data to identify facilitators and route patterns (not only individual passengers)
- Strengthen access to liaison contacts and verification pathways during time-critical incidents
- Share newly identified modus operandi across airports and jurisdictions quickly to prevent repeat exploitation.

The workshop reinforced the need for sustained operational cooperation between immigration authorities, airlines and liaison networks. It also underscored the importance of feeding case learning back into standard operating procedures, training and route-based alerts so that repeat methods can be identified and acted on consistently across shifts and airports.

The workshop was delivered by the RSO Border and Migration Management team with support from aviation and liaison-network partners, including Immigration Control Experts (ICE) and Airline Liaison Officers (ALOs).





REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE
THE BALI PROCESS

Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO)

27th Floor Rajanakarn Building
3 South Sathorn Road, Sathorn,
Bangkok 10120, Thailand
Tel. +66 2 343 9477
Fax. +66 2 676 7337
info@rso.baliprocess.net

For further information on the Bali Process
and the RSO please visit:

www.rso.baliprocess.net



www.facebook.com/baliprocessrso



[www.linkedin.com/company/
regional-support-office-of-the-bali-
process](http://www.linkedin.com/company/regional-support-office-of-the-bali-process)



www.x.com/baliprocessrso