



# Grow PNG

2021



GrowAsia

Papua  
New Guinea



Grow PNG

# Grow PNG

Launched in 2019, Grow PNG is based in Lae, Papua New Guinea, the gateway to the Markham Valley agricultural corridor.

The corridor is on a pathway to rapid agricultural sector expansion driven by a range of crops including palm oil, cocoa, rice, cassava, and sorghum. Much of the corridor's agricultural potential remains untapped, but a growing local population, investment in infrastructure, growth in the mining sector, and demand from Asia creates opportunities and scope for development.

Grow PNG brings together business leaders, policymakers, and farmers to collaboratively unlock growth in the sector and facilitate new opportunities for farming families.



## Our Vision

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Grow PNG's vision is to accelerate the growth of the agriculture sector in the Markham Valley by enabling smallholder households to increase their income by 20% within eight years.

### **This vision can be achieved through:**

- Effective Working Groups addressing collective challenges, unlocking growth through policy changes, new partnerships, and new business models.
- Stronger partnerships and increased trust between civil society organizations, government, agribusinesses, and farmers.
- Improved knowledge and information for all stakeholders to make better decisions.

## Key Strategic Focuses for the Year Ahead

1

Continue ongoing stakeholder and partnership engagement through Working Groups.

2

Promote gender equality by highlighting the challenges faced by women in agriculture and ensuring gender-neutrality when engaging in work programs and sharing outcomes.

3

Build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones through consultations, learning, networking events, and information-sharing to achieve the goals of Grow PNG.



# Executive Director's Message

Grow PNG accomplished several important workstreams aligned to its vision in 2020. These include the development of a [Land Access Guide](#) launched in February 2021; establishment of the Grow PNG Advisory Council, and establishment of the SME Working Group. Grow PNG also conducted the [Household Income Baseline Survey for Markham District](#), and organized and hosted three learning events.

Having to adjust to the challenges brought on by the pandemic, we had to review our work strategy to ensure continued progress in our mission. It is important to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on farming, and understand the extent of disruptions on the supply chain. Priority issues such as food security and sustainability of the country's food supply chain require collaboration between stakeholders in the agriculture sector and at different levels of government.

Looking forward, we are increasing our investment into activities that will specifically target the female population in the Markham Valley and provide support for women who depend on agriculture for their income. We intend to identify and document examples of existing gender inclusion practices and for these case studies to be disseminated among partners, encouraging greater attention to gender inclusion. We will also continue to support our Working Groups, particularly through raising awareness of the Land Access Guide.

Improving the livelihoods of farmers in the Markham region by 20% remains our focus. It is a tall order but a goal that can be achieved by engaging different levels of stakeholders – farmers, community, agribusinesses, and government. The Markham region plays an important role in shaping the national agenda on food security and industrial growth associated with an agriculture-based employment generation. Grow PNG supports this agenda through some of the work it has accomplished, such as the [Markham Valley Land Map](#), household income survey, land access consultation, and land access guide. These insights will help us evaluate the Valley's potential contribution to agriculture growth in Papua New Guinea.

Warm regards,

**John Simango, ML**  
Executive Director  
Grow PNG



# Papua New Guinea Statistics

**Population**  
Millions

**8**

**Population  
below the  
poverty line**

**40**%

**Population  
in agricultural  
employment**

**68**%

**Agricultural  
contribution to  
national GDP**

**18**%

**Population in  
the rural region**

**87**%

**Women working  
in agriculture**

**70**%

# Grow PNG Governance and Structure

## Advisory Council Government Co-chair

Honorable John Simon  
Minister for Agriculture & Livestock  
Member of Parliament

## Private Sector Co-chair

Phil Franklin  
Chief Operations Officer  
NKW Group

## Grow PNG Secretariat

- Executive Director
- Working Group Coordinator
- Gender, Communications and M&E Officer
- Office Manager

Grow PNG's objective to accelerate the growth of the agriculture sector in the Markham region is consistent with ours. We want to build our country by helping our farmers grow into small and medium enterprises. This will be achieved by empowering our people through the development of a strong and vibrant agriculture sector, backed by the support of large businesses. **||**

**Honorable John Simon**  
Minister for Agriculture & Livestock  
PNG Government

Grow PNG aims to identify and record key issues affecting sustainable economic development in agriculture – such as infrastructure and market access – that can be collaboratively addressed through partnerships with government and agriculture stakeholders. **||**

**Phil Franklin**  
Chief Operations Officer  
NKW Group

## Secretariat-level Activities



**Learning Events**



**Data Collection and Modelling**



**Gender Mainstreaming**

## Working Groups



**Land Access**



**SME**



## Secretariat Level Activities



Learning Events

# Learning Events

Learning events, hosted in Lae, provide new insights for business leaders and potential Grow PNG partners. Themes are set in consultation with business leaders and provide opportunities to test potential ideas for Working Groups, by gauging interest in issues that matter to our partners. The events provide an excellent opportunity to leverage Grow Asia's extensive network, by identifying speakers from other countries to share expertise, learnings, and technical best practices with Grow PNG.



### Emerging Opportunities in Digital Agriculture

Grow PNG held its first learning event on 5 August 2019. We reviewed the digital agriculture landscape and global best practices to identify opportunities to leverage digital tools as a key driver in agricultural development. This workshop provided stakeholders with an insight into how technology can solve some of the Valley's growing agriculture problems. It also discussed how the structural environment can be tailored to embrace emerging technological opportunities in agriculture.

### Digital Awareness Workshop

The workshop was held on 24 September 2020. It aimed to provide information to partners and stakeholders about the changing environment brought on by COVID-19, and why it is important to adjust to the changes either in technology or communication in both personal and work environments.

### SME Funding Information Session

In July 2020, the PNG Government announced a K200 million (USD 60 million) SME funding to help small businesses struggling in the wake of the global pandemic. The subsidized business loans would be provided through the Bank of South Pacific (BSP) and National Development Bank (NDB). Following the announcement, Grow PNG organized the inaugural awareness event on 23 October 2020, supported by the Lae Chamber of Commerce (LCCI). The SME information session gathered representatives from the Department of Commerce and Industry, SME Corporation, Investment Promotion Authority, and BSP to explain the government's rationale behind the aid and the banking requirements to access the funds.



## Secretariat Level Activities



# Data Collection and Modelling

## Markham Valley Land Map

Grow PNG engaged agri-tech start-up Enveritas in 2019 to analyze satellite data in the Markham area. The information captured included weather (annual rainfall, monthly temperatures), terrain (slope, elevation), soil, and other variables that can guide crop selection, planting investments, and agronomic management in the region.

Papua New Guinea University of Technology was also engaged to collect 80 soil samples in the Markham region and conduct a soil chemical content analysis, specifically looking at nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus content, soil density, and hydrology indicators.

The [data set](#) is available to the public on the Grow PNG website. This information will support businesses, especially Working Groups, in making more informed decisions.



## Markham Household Income Baseline Survey

Grow PNG engaged the Markham Students and Staff Association to conduct a Baseline Household Income Survey covering three districts of the Markham Valley: Umi-Atzera, Onga-Waffa, and Leron-Wantoat.

The primary objective of the survey was to appreciate and understand the income levels of agricultural activities in Markham while also identifying market access problems faced by farmers. Information such as how much the farmers earn for different crops like banana, watermelon, and peanuts; the distance they travel to a market; which markets they sell their produce to, and availability of space at the markets were analyzed by the survey team.

The report also uncovered opportunities for development of crops that are currently either underdeveloped or needs redeveloping, which have the potential for large-scale commercial market, such as rice and peanuts. The [report](#) is available on the Grow PNG website.

The report has been shared with partners and stakeholders such as Markham politicians and district authorities, agribusinesses, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and interested organizations. Political leaders in the area intend to use the information to support their district and ward development plans for effective service delivery.

## Secretariat Level Activities



Gender  
Mainstreaming

# Gender Mainstreaming

Grow PNG will focus on supporting its partners' programs and practices for the female population in the Markham Valley and provide support for women who depend on agriculture for an income. It will help partners improve or enhance their own programs by generating awareness, facilitating knowledge-sharing, training, and sharing tools about gender mainstreaming and inclusion.

### Upcoming plans include:

- Gender Training/Workshop(s) focused on challenges and opportunities for women farmers. Specific topic and modality will be explored based on partner needs, interest, and feedback.
- Identify and document examples of existing gender inclusion practices. These case studies will be distributed across the Grow PNG and Grow Asia network, with a focus on sharing strategies among partners and encouraging greater attention to gender.



Grow PNG established action-oriented Working Groups to collaborate around shared agriculture challenges and barriers to growth in the Markham Valley agricultural corridor.



# Land Access

The Land Access Working Group was established and held its inaugural meeting on 5 February 2020. We had representatives from agribusinesses, PNG government, civil society organizations, DFAT, and Grow Asia.

## The top three priorities for the Group are:

### Land Access Guide for Landowners and Agribusinesses

The Guide aims to assist both landowners and agribusinesses in forging and maintaining mutually beneficial arrangements in commercial agricultural development. Awareness training and capacity-building opportunities are planned as follow-ups to the rollout of the Guide.

### Business Case for New Land Dispute Mechanism

An alternative dispute resolution mechanism that will support the authorities of Incorporated Land Groups (ILGs).

### Land Audit Database

This database will complement the satellite and soil information of the Markham region to generate interest from farmers and agribusinesses for partnership in agricultural investment.

# SME

## The SME Working Group was established in 2020 and held its first meeting on 29 September.

Its objective is to identify existing farmer groups by priority crops, and assess and establish an understanding of growth opportunities, constraints, and gaps in the skills and capacity of farmer groups. After undergoing capacity training, which will be facilitated by training service providers, farmer groups will be linked with agribusinesses to boost access to markets and encourage partnerships.

This model will inevitably build up crop-specific activities, which may subsequently result in the possible establishment of crop-specific Working Groups.

# Partners

## Advisory Council

- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) PNG
- Australian Consulate-General Lae
- Department of Agriculture and Livestock
- NKW Group
- Office of Onga-Waffa LLG President, Markham/Deputy Morobe Governor
- PNG Women in Agriculture Development Foundation (PNG WiADF)
- Ramu Agri Industries

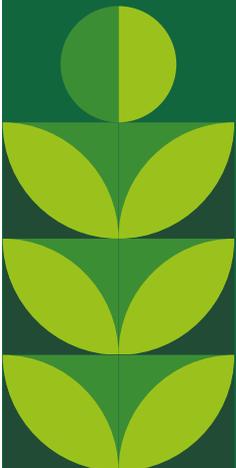
## Working Group Member List

### Land Access

- Anis Foundation
- Australian Consulate-General Lae
- Chingwam Rice and Growers Cooperative Society
- Department of Agriculture and Livestock, Erap
- Fresh Produce Development Agency
- Jungrik Business Group
- Markham District Administration
- Morobe Primary Producers Association
- NKW Fresh
- PNG Civil and Identity Registry
- PNG Women in Agriculture Development Foundation (PNG WiADF)
- Ramu Agri Industries
- Takom Cooperative Society
- Trukai Industries Limited
- Wafi-Golpu Joint Venture

### SME

- Agri Agro Cooperative
- Agmark Niugini Coffee
- Australian Consulate-General Lae  
BSP Lae SME Business Centre
- Cocoa and Coconut Industry Corporation
- Division of Commerce, Mutzing Station,  
Markham District
- Innovative Industrial Ltd
- Investment Promotion Authority
- Markham Organic Cocoa Cooperative
- Markham Women in Agriculture
- Markham Youth in Agriculture
- Nakama Agri Business Group
- National Agricultural Research Institute
- Office of the Morobe Provincial Program  
Advisor for Agriculture
- Outspan PNG Limited
- Soncorp Business Group
- SP Brewery



[www.growpng.org](http://www.growpng.org)

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