

# Grow PNG

Supported by Grow Asia | 2020



Papua  
New Guinea



# 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, policy makers, and farmers to collaboratively unlock growth in the sector and facilitate new opportunities for farming families.

Grow PNG aims 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 goal 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, government, agribusiness, and farmers.
- Improved knowledge and information for all stakeholders to make better decisions.

# Key Strategic Focuses

## For the year ahead

### Focus Area 1

Establish an Advisory Council to provide strategic advice on issues and policy coherence of the work of Grow PNG.

### Focus Area 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.

### Focus Area 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 celebrated its one-year anniversary in May 2020. Over the past 12 months, we have achieved many successes – established our office, completed our governance requirements, and now have a full team in place.

By the end of 2019, we started several important tasks such as soil sampling in the Markham region and land access consultations. Our intention for 2020 was to focus on stakeholder engagement, roll out vital and relevant learning events, and build our profile in the marketplace through communications efforts. However, in these unprecedented times of COVID-19, we have had to review our strategy to adjust to the challenges presented to ensure we continue progressing in our work.

I am sure that all stakeholders, locally and globally, are grappling with the new realities brought upon by the pandemic. We must evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on farming and understand the extent of disruptions put upon the supply chain. Stakeholders in the agriculture sector need to address priority issues such as food security and the sustainability of the country's food supply chain. We see technology playing an important role during COVID-19 and will become more defined in the future.

Our focus remains on improving the livelihoods of farmers by 20% in the Markham region. It is a tall order but a goal that must be achieved and will be achievable when we engage different levels of stakeholders – farmers, community, agribusinesses and government. The Markham region plays a vital role in shaping the national agenda on food security and industrial growth associated with an agriculture-based employment generation.

Grow PNG is looking forward to establishing this agenda once we have the data on the Markham region and results from our land access initiative. In our view, these insights will help us evaluate the valley's potential contribution to agriculture growth in Papua New Guinea.

**Ivan Pomaleu, OBE**

Executive Director  
Grow PNG



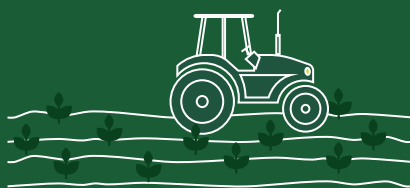
# Papua New Guinea Statistics



Total population of **8 million**



**40%** of the population below the poverty line



**68%** of the population in agriculture employment



**18%** agricultural contribution to national GDP



**87%** of the population are in the rural region



**70%** of women work in agriculture

# Grow PNG

## Governance and Structure

Advisory Council  
Government Co-chair

**Honorable John Simon**

Minister for Agriculture & Livestock  
Member of Parliament



### Grow PNG Secretariat

- Executive Director
- Working Group Coordinator
- Communications and PR 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 to medium enterprises. This will be achieved by empowering our region and equipping our people with a strong and vibrant agriculture sector, backed by the support of large businesses.”

**Honorable John Simon**

Minister for Agriculture & Livestock  
Member of Parliament

“The government recognizes the importance of having partnerships in the delivery of services to the rural population. Agriculture is the backbone of this country and if the rural people are empowered, we will solve a lot of problems. I am keen to work with more partners to expand the reach of the Department.”

**Daniel Kombuk**

Secretary of the Department  
of Agriculture and Livestock



## Secretariat Level Activities



Learning Events



Data Collection and Modelling

## Working Group



Land Access

# Secretariat Level Activities 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.

Grow PNG held its first learning event on August 5, 2019, under the theme of, **Emerging Opportunities in Digital Agriculture**. 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 insights 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.



# Data Collection and Modelling



Grow PNG began collecting data on the agriculture sector in the Markham Valley as initial investigations found this to be lacking.

In October 2019, we engaged agtech start-up Enveritas 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.

At the end of 2019, Papua New Guinea University of Technology was engaged to collect 80 soil samples along the Markham Region and conduct a soil chemical content analysis, specifically looking at nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus content, soil density, and hydrology indicators.

The dataset will be made available to the public on the Grow PNG website when all work is completed. This information will support businesses, especially Working Groups, in making more informed decisions.



# Working Group Land Access



**Grow PNG established an action-oriented Working Group to collaborate and address issues around the shared agriculture challenges and barriers to growth in the Markham Valley agricultural corridor.**

The Land Access Working Group was established and held its inaugural meeting on February 5, 2020. We had representatives from agribusinesses, PNG government, civil society, Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Grow Asia.

**The top three priorities for the Group are:**

## User Guide for Landowners and Agribusinesses


A simple guide aimed to assist both landowners and agribusinesses in forging and maintaining mutually beneficial arrangements in commercial agricultural development.

## Business Case for New Land Dispute Mechanism

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

## Land Audit Database

Contact has been made with the regional land office and the Department of Lands & Physical Planning to gather the required data and verify the landholdings vested with the ILGs. This database will complement the satellite and soil information of the Markham region to generate interest for farmers and agribusinesses.



“Landowners must be given the correct information in the first place to avoid projects coming to an impasse later on.”

**Denver Utah**

Customary Lands officer  
Morobe Province

## Partners

- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) PNG
- Australian Consulate General Lae
- Government of PNG Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- National Agricultural Research Institute
- NKW Group of Companies
- Takom Farm
- Trukai Industries Limited
- Wafi-Golpu Joint Venture
- Women In Agriculture





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