

# AGRI PARTNERSHIPS

Bringing together business leaders, policy makers and farmers to collaboratively unlock growth in the agriculture sector and facilitate new opportunities for farming families in the Markham valley.

Grow PNG

FIRST QUARTER 2022

## Gender Mainstreaming Pilot Training, Mutzing, Markham District



Landowners and smallholder farmers of the Umi-Atzera LLG after the three-day training at Mutzing, Markham District

Grow PNG is also focused on promoting gender equality by highlighting the challenges faced by women in agriculture and ensuring gender-neutrality when engaging in work programs and sharing outcomes.

Grow Asia and our Country Partnerships—including Grow PNG—seek to embed a gender-inclusive approach at the farmer level, between partners, and within our own organization as part of Grow Asia’s Gender Mainstreaming strategy.

To support raise awareness on gender mainstreaming and encourage gender-inclusive practices at the farmer level, Grow PNG conducted a three-day Gender mainstreaming training with the support of the PNG Women in Agriculture Development Foundation(PNGWiADF). The training was the first in a series that will be conducted in Markham.

Twenty-two landowners and smallholder farmers from the Umi-Atzera LLG in Markham District were the first group of participants to complete the training on the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> of February 2022. Among the participants were eleven female farmers.

The three-day training provided an excellent opportunity for the farmers to better understand gender equality and the impacts of gender inequality, the relationships between men and women in farming, how resources are shared, what activities they do, and the constraints they face relative to each other.

Australian Consul-General to Lae, Mark Foxe, who was at the opening said, “Women in Papua New Guinea play a central role in agriculture. However, rural women are challenged by their multiple responsibilities, making it harder for women to access opportunities to enhance their economic productivity. Creating opportunities for women at all levels contributes to economic development and growth. Not only for women themselves but for their families and the broader community.”

He said the Australian Government is committed to supporting women to access opportunities and resources to reach their full potential. He is happy that, through Grow PNG, opportunities are being delivered for women who depend on agriculture for an income in the Markham valley.

The training was acknowledged by the landowners and farmers as very important because there is a lack of understanding among both men and women, especially when participating in their roles and responsibilities at the household and farming level.

Most farmers shared their experiences on how mainstreaming gender is a key factor in any farming community.

Following were a few highlights from the farmers;

A female rice farmer said, "After this workshop, I can go home and make awareness to my family on working together and sharing responsibilities. We can now allow time for each member to run the Solar Rice Mill which has been sitting in our shed for a while now.

I am very grateful to receive this training. It will now ease the burden for me as a mother and farmer because my family will now share responsibility for our farm activity. I now clearly see why gender equality is a key that can improve our farming and ultimately our livelihood."

A male cocoa farmer said, "I felt that I was too selfish and greedy throughout my past life. This training has changed my mindset in having some recognition of the values and importance of women, girls, and disabilities.

I understand now why gender equality is important if my family wants to achieve our dream to have a proper permanent house. I can now go home to my family and share with them what I have learned from this training. So we can work together and share responsibilities and improve our farming and ultimately our cocoa production."

One of the farmers shared his story as part of a lesson learned; He said, "At the end of the day I have failed as a person when it comes to decision making on money. I have never in my life done roles that women do because I value my culture as my comfort zone. However, at the end of the day, I always find myself as someone with empty pockets(no money) with no initiative to work hard to earn. My wife does the house chores, gardening, and selling at the market to support our family.



Group discussion on roles and responsibilities at the farm level

One day, we had some money and I gave K50 to my wife to purchase foodstuff and buy other basic necessities. I had K700 on hand, just after 3 days I had nothing left because I spent it unwisely.

During that time, my son accidentally fell and broke his arm while playing on the field. We ran to the hospital, and the nurse came and asked for a medical fee. I looked at my wife with guilt on my face. In no time, my wife opens her purse and removed K20, and gave it to the nurse.

Thereafter, I asked her about that K20 and she responded that it was from the K50 budget I gave her. I then realize that women are top accountants in every home.

I changed from then on, and now I am a happy person because my wife and I together make the decision on our family budget."



Farmers presenting an activity on Gender roles

Markham District DDA CEO Bohage Bebinaso who was at the closing of the training said, "such training is needed to develop and change people's mindsets to think positively about how they can work together to develop themselves and their communities.

Gender inequality at the household level is an issue affecting agriculture production not only in Markham but everywhere in PNG". He further thanked Grow PNG for the training that is being delivered for farmers who depend on agriculture for an income.

Grow PNG Executive Director John Simango also made similar statements and said, Grow PNG will focus on supporting its partners' programs and practices that target the female population in the Markham valley and provide support for women who depend on agriculture for an income.



The facilitator explaining a topic at the training



## First RoundTable meeting on Oil Palm Development Prospects in the Markham valley



ILG representatives listening to Ramu Agri Industries Limited at the roundtable meeting

Grow PNG continues to make inroads in connecting landowners and smallholder farmers to agribusiness markets in the Markham Valley. On February 3, Grow PNG facilitated a roundtable meeting between representatives of Ramu Agri Industries Limited (RAIL), Markham District Development Authority, Morobe Provincial Administration, and leaders of 21 Incorporated Land Groups (ILGs) in the Umi-Atzera LLG, Markham District.

The purpose of initiating the meeting between MDDA, its 21 registered incorporated Land Group in Umi-Atzera LLG with Ramu Agri Industries Limited is to discuss possible Oil Palm development prospects. From the Grow PNG Land Access Work with MDDA and the 21 registered ILGs in Markham, they appear interested and wish to explore possibilities in two main areas;

1. Possible options to revive the existing Developed Oil Palm plantation near Mutzing Government Station and, This work is a continuity of previous work that was done some 10 years back in registering the 21 ILGs, and the planting of the current estate supported by the Provincial Government and Markham District Development Authority.
2. Consider the possibility of new Agribusiness development opportunities in Cocoa, Grain, Cattle, Sugar, and Oil Palm on new land now made available by the 21 ILGs through the support of the MDDA.

Grow PNG's role is to facilitate the meeting discussion and seek possible partnerships to develop this prospect.

Markham DDA CEO, Mr Bebinaso, thanked Grow PNG for bringing together key stakeholders and connecting Ramu Agri Industries Limited, the giant oil palm developer in Markham, to the 21 Incorporated Land Groups to start the dialogue to develop oil palm on their land.

The roundtable meeting provided a great opportunity for the landowners to engage with the developer (RAIL) to identify what they are required to do in order to develop their land for Oil Palm.

Mr Ruari Macwilliam, General Manager of Ramu Agri Industries Limited, said there are processes and steps involved in developing land for oil palm. An important point that he made was the adherence to International Oil Palm Standards and rules, or what is termed, the “Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil” (RSPO).

RAIL made it clear to the landowners at the meeting that oil palm development has to be in adherence to RSPO. This is towards sustainable agriculture development goals and market requirements.

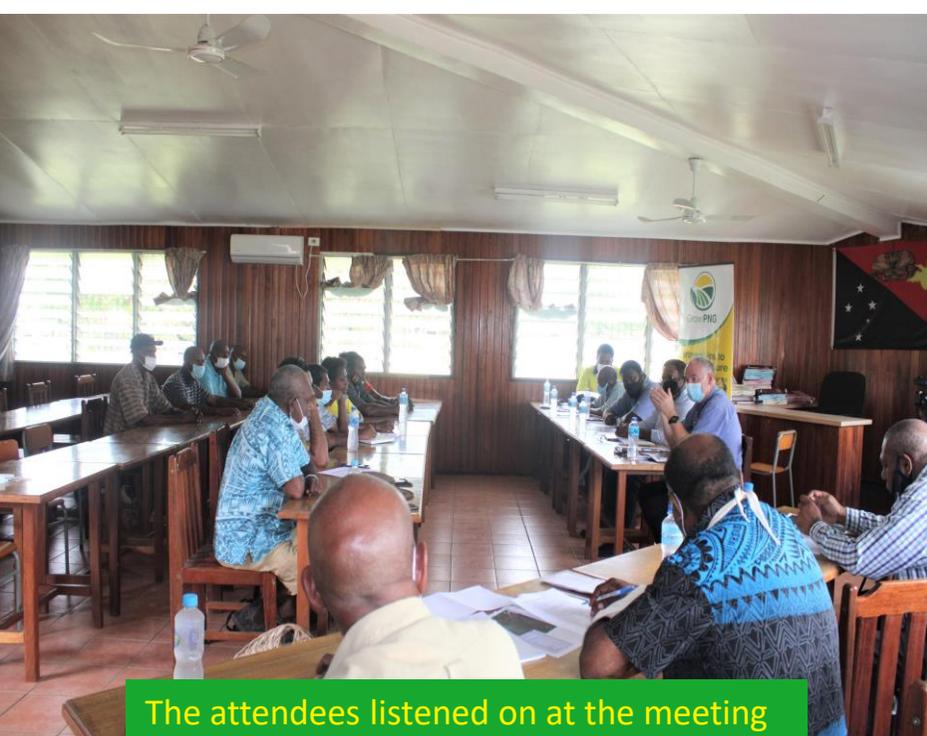
They are looking forward to receiving the documents for the preparatory work from the ILG Landowners, with support from Markham District Development Authority and the Provincial Administration.



General Manager for RAIL, Mr Ruari Macwilliam

A spokesperson representing the participants said, “We have been waiting for this time to come again where we the landowners will be relieved from doubts about reviving the existing oil palm on our land. We are now happy that this meeting is a start to say we are ready to work with the support of Markham DDA to meet the requirements mentioned by RAIL.”

Mr Bebinaso said he is happy that RAIL has shown interest in this engagement. The Markham DDA will support the landowner in completing all the required processes before the next meeting.



The attendees listened on at the meeting

Mr John Orebut, Morobe Provincial Administration Special Project Coordinator representing the Provincial Administrator, spoke about the 21 ILGs' land titles that are now with the Provincial administration that these title documents are there for safekeeping and will be transferred to the ILGs once all formalities are in place.

Grow PNG Executive Director John Simango said, "We are happy with the outcome, as it is a culmination of our earlier work on land access training and the launch of our Land Access Guide on February 17, 2021. Twelve months later, the fruit of this work has started to emerge, and it's a long way off yet, but the journey has commenced.

A way forward is now found to start preparatory work for the next dialogue in March 2022.



ILG Representatives, RAIL, Markham DDA, Morobe Provincial Government and Grow PNG



## Sustainable Agriculture Development: Presentation of EOI by the 18 ILGs of Umi-Atzera LLG, Markham District



An ILG chairman presenting his Expression of Interest (EOI) to Ramu Agri Industries Limited at the meeting

Eighteen Incorporated Land Groups (ILGs) of the Umi –Atzera LLG in the Markham District presented their Expression of Interests (EOI) to Ramu Agri Industries Limited (RAIL) on March 31, in a roundtable meeting facilitated by Grow PNG.

The EOIs will now pave the way for RAIL to commence preliminary work on the parcel of land now offered for oil palm development. This was an agreement researched in the first roundtable meeting held in February 2022.

The ILGs together with the support of the Markham District Development Authority have expressed their interest to look into reviving the existing Oil Palm which is already on their Land and opportunities for possible partnership with RAIL.

Markham District Development Authority (MDAA) supported each of the 18 ILGs to carry out the consultation process within their respective clans and tribes, which culminated in the agreement and handing over of the initial documents.

Landowners who presented their EOI at the meeting have longed to see such promising engagement for oil palm development. It's good to see a start with positivity although it will be a process with steps involved.

“We have the land and we are happy to partner with Ramu Agri Industries Limited to develop oil palm on our existing blocks. This meeting has given us again hope to develop oil palm on our land but this time to invest in a more sustainable approach. With the clarity given by RAIL, we will play our part to meet the requirements of RSPO.” This was a remark made by the spokesperson of the 18 ILGs who were present at the meeting.

Mr Ruari Macwilliam, General Manager of Ramu Agri Industries Limited, thanked each chairperson for coming forward and choosing RAIL as a partner in developing oil palm on their land. An important point that he made was the adherence to international oil palm standards and rules, or what is termed, "RoundTable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)". He assured the ILGs that RAIL is happy to commence work with them and that they will do so while following RSPO standards.

Mr Macwilliam also mentioned other possibilities in livestock, cocoa, grains, and vegetables, which each ILG should also consider, and not give up all their land for palm oil, as this is also adherence to RSPO standards.

On hand to witness and support the event was the Hon. Koni Iguan MP, member for Markham and Deputy Speaker of the PNG National Parliament. He was happy that this second roundtable turned out to be a successful one, with 18 ILG's now offering their land for development.

He stated that this was something he began many years ago and seeing how it has progressed this far is very satisfying.



Hon Koni Iguan MP, Member for Markham talking to the 18 ILGs

He commended the 18 ILG Chairmen and gave his assurance to the ILGs and RAIL to support them if he does return after the elections. He also thanked Grow PNG for facilitating this process.

Mr Bohage Bebinaso, Markham District CEO said he is happy that RAIL has shown interest in this engagement. Likewise, he commended the 18 ILG chairpersons for the decision they had made to offer their land for development. He commits his Markham District Administration team to continue supporting this process until we receive the final outcome.



18 ILG representatives at the meeting

Mr John Orebut, Morobe Provincial Administration Special Project Coordinator representing the Provincial Administrator, was also happy with the successful outcome of this round table dialogue. He also spoke about the 18 ILGs' land titles now with the Provincial administration and assured the ILGs that these title documents will be transferred to the ILGs directly in a few weeks' time.

Grow PNG Executive Director John Simango who chaired the meeting, was pleased to see the support from the ILGs, RAIL, District, Provincial Administration, and MP Koni Iguan. He said that the momentum is building to shape a success story, and he is looking forward to seeing the fruits of this work emerge soon.

All parties agreed to the next meeting in May 2022.



18 ILG representatives, RAIL, Markham DDA & MP Koni Iguan, Morobe Provincial Government and Grow PNG

# Happy International Women's Day

Grow PNG as a partner in Sustainable Agriculture, on March 18, 2022, celebrated the milestones and achievements of aspiring women, especially those who are involved directly and indirectly in Agriculture.

In the last two months, we have shared inspirational stories of women in agriculture. It is important their stories are captured and told, so the faces behind the stories are recognized, and their successes amplified across the agriculture sector. These inspirational stories will empower and advance gender inclusion practices in agriculture development in Papua New Guinea.

## Meet these wonderful women and their stories



### Degree or not, land is Life!

*"Women should not limit themselves because of their educational background when it comes to agriculture. Whether it be a degree or no degree, we have land to create many opportunities."*

**Malinda Marvin**  
Agriprenuer



### "I turned to the land for my future."

*In encouraging other women to do the same Pamela says, "If women are unable to continue their education, they should return back to their land, and work on their land. Land is life, and we must go back to our land."*

**Pamela Ben**  
Lead Farmer-Fresh Produce Development Agency



### The Garden to Table Dream

*"We must have Papua New Guinea indigenous food menus in our hotels, restaurants, and homes".*

**Kwina Ambang**  
Advocate-Owner of Miles Lodge, Lae



You can read more about the stories of these women here: [Inspire Her](#) | [GrowHer](#)

## "Gender Equality Today for a sustainable Tomorrow"

Why do you think societal values and beliefs should also be considered when we are talking about gender equality?

*I strongly support Gender Equality. We live in a patrilineal and matrilineal society where equal participation of both females & males must be considered. When people are made aware and understand why gender equality is important then they can apply it to their daily lives.*

**Anita Kehali**  
Office Manager



Do you think equal participation in agriculture activities is important for improving production at the farm level?

*I always believe in working together for the better. It applies to all aspects of life. If a farmer is able to work together by sharing roles and responsibilities with his wife and family effectively in any farming or processing activity, it can gradually improve the productivity and quality of their farm.*

**Alma Lance**  
Gender, Communication, and Events

Why do you think gender equality can have an impact on sustainable agriculture development in Papua New Guinea?



*Gender equality along the agriculture value chain can have an impact on sustainable agriculture development in Papua New Guinea, when men and women understand and participate in each of their roles from farm to market. Women may not be able to perform hard labor duties that would require strength and lifting weight such as digging, plowing, and carrying loads that men can do. Women can perform lighter roles such as weeding, planting, harvesting, and selling to manage their sales income.*

**Ruthy Kusak**  
Agribusiness Stakeholder Engagement Manager

*"In Papua New Guinea, women farmers play a central role in agriculture, yet are challenged by the burden of care and reproductive work within the family and community."*



Grow PNG is focus to promote gender equality by highlighting the challenges faced by women in agriculture and ensuring gender-neutrality when engaging in work programs and sharing outcomes. To read more about our reflections on women in Agriculture [Women in Agriculture: Reflections from Papua New Guinea \(growasia.org\)](https://growasia.org)

What can you say about this 2022 International Women's day theme: "Gender Equality Today for a sustainable Tomorrow"

Gender equality starts with ourselves. When we start being responsible and change the way that we are talking to ourselves, we can also change the beliefs about ourselves.

Our support systems have to be strengthened. We need our men to work and walk with us. To believe in us. To allow us the opportunity to be what we really want for ourselves. That is what we need to break in order to stop the bias. Nurturing and Mentoring younger women should be our primary vision. Sustaining our beliefs and values for a better society should begin by us sharing our experiences, and allowing the young women to take the baton and run with it. We can't blame the men all the time too.

Sometimes, we need to take stock of our own actions. We should ask ourselves, if we are on the right path, or if we need assistance in some areas. It's okay to make mistakes. This world is full of wise people because a lot of mistakes were done to set us on the right course. No one is perfect!

Diane Mandui Mirio is the founder of NKW (Nara Kain Wei) Community Training and Consultancy. Grow PNG was happy to engage her service as an upcoming woman leader on our GrowHer story series of Inspirational women.

Diane is also a gender rights advocate, who believes that together we can create a conducive environment, if only we work as one. "I always believe in the power of one."

## Our everyday inspiring woman





## Grow PNG through Agriculture Partnership

### Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture Value Chains

Source: [Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Value Chains in Southeast Asia | Grow Asia Exchange](#)

In 2020, Grow Asia established a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, in response to our partners' interest and recognition of the important role of women in agricultural value chains. As a Multi-Stakeholder Partnership, Grow Asia's approach targets deeper engagement and understanding of the value of gender mainstreaming among our partners. The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is online at [www.growasia.org/gender](http://www.growasia.org/gender).

Globally, women smallholders face barriers to empowerment due to a lack of access to and control over resources and time allocation. Southeast Asia (SEA) poses an individual set of challenges and opportunities for women in agriculture. Fundamental barriers for women in Southeast Asia include:

- Barriers related to pervasive cultural and social norms limiting women's agency and voice
- Limited access to resources and finance
- Lower educational and technical knowledge levels

These barriers vary greatly in nature, and consequently, a one-size-fits-all approach would fail. Achieving greater gender equality for women in agricultural value chains in SEA requires a locally-relevant, multi-sectoral approach. Therefore, the identification of challenges and development of interventions should be based on the expertise of Grow Asia's 520+ partners and contextualized across their six Country Partnerships, which include 46 public-private-producer Working Groups driving market-based smallholder farmer interventions.

Grow PNG as the 6<sup>th</sup> country partnership focus on promoting gender equality by highlighting the challenges faced by women in agriculture and ensuring gender-neutrality when engaging in work programs and sharing outcomes.

Grow PNG Executive Director, John Simango said, we intend to identify and document examples of existing gender inclusion practices and for these case studies to be disseminated among partners and encourage greater attention to gender inclusion.

Read more about Grow PNG's focus on Gender Mainstreaming [Gender Mainstreaming | Full Site \(growpng.org\)](#)

### How We Work

Building Trust & Partnerships

Improving Knowledge and Information

Facilitating Working Groups



AGRI PARTNERSHIPS is a quarterly newsletter produced and published by Grow PNG.

It aims to communicate and create awareness about the work of Grow PNG and its partners.

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