



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.

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Grow Asia signs MoU with DAL PNG

"I believe that 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, which is currently constrained by limited resources under an environment of low cash flow and funding."
- Daniel Kombuk, Secretary of DAL

Grow PNG and the Department of Agriculture and Livestock signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Grow Asia Partnership Limited on 6 July.

Grahame Dixie, Grow Asia's Executive Director and DAL Secretary Daniel Kombuk signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organisations.

The MoU covers funding of Grow PNG Limited operations; all partnerships collaborations by Grow Asia; and financial support for other Grow PNG activities including policy dialogues, learning events and working group creation and activities.

Through this understanding, Grow PNG will also contribute to Grow Asia's mandate and participate in its activities in Papua New Guinea and around the region such as workshops, skills-building and forums.

The Minister for Agriculture and Livestock is to be the Co-Chair of the Grow PNG Ltd Advisory Council.

DAL will have a representative in all Working Group composition. As and when the Working Groups are established and meetings convened, DAL has the equal opportunity as any member of the Working Group to provide leadership in the Working Groups.

Working groups are established around agriculture issues such as land access (Land Access Working Group). It will engage Grow PNG to respond to, and participate in any activities that are sanctioned by Grow PNG in collaboration with all stakeholders in Morobe and the Markham area.

Grow Asia will work closely with DAL and Grow PNG to enable and promote mutually beneficial exchange of thought leadership, knowledge management, innovation development, policy interventions and sharing of best practices. In particular: Through Grow PNG, Grow Asia will facilitate consultative event(s) annually that brings all discussions from the working group processes and its' activities to DAL and other relevant agencies for sharing and mutual exchanges, including policy



Secretary of DAL, Daniel Kombuk, (left) and Grow PNG Executive Director Ivan Pomaleu (OBE) with the signed MoU.

information.

DAL is best placed to provide strong and direct inputs to Grow Asia and Grow PNG interventions and programs on addressing the challenges of the agriculture sector. These inputs may be conveyed through the advisory council, the working groups, or through direct consultation processes and collaborations.

Secretary Kombuk said the government recognises the importance of having partnerships in the delivery of services to the rural population. Agriculture is the backbone of this country and the government would rather see impacts in the rural areas, where the bulk of the people are.

"I believe that 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, which is currently constrained by limited resources under an environment of low cash flow and funding," Mr Kombuk said.

Ivan Pomaleu, Executive Director for Grow PNG thanked the DAL for its willingness to go into partnership with Grow Asia.

Mr Pomaleu said Grow Asia is mandated through Grow PNG to

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MoU signed for agricultural development

address the United Nations sustainable agriculture goals.

“Grow PNG is keen to ensure that its work in Papua New Guinea is viewed through the lenses of government as a party to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

“Our partnership in this regard is crucial. I thank the Department of Agriculture and Livestock for coming to this point of executing the MoU with Grow Asia Partnership Limited,” he said.

Mr Pomaleu commended the Australian Government for supporting Grow Asia and through Grow Asia, Grow PNG and its program rollout along the Markham Valley. “Australia’s strong support has allowed Grow PNG to commence work in the Markham region.”

He said Australia’s commitment to the agriculture sector is also exemplified in various programs including its fight against African Swine Flu; ongoing commitment to research and development work with ACIAR; its work through IFC and ADB; some new initiatives through the Lae City Hand Up Program; and the Morobe School Gardens program.

Grow Asia is registered as an independent non-for-profit legal entity in Singapore, established by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2014.

It was established out of the WEF’s New Vision for Agriculture (NVA) Initiative, which involves catalysing multi-stakeholder partnerships on sustainable and inclusive agriculture

development.

DAL is the lead agency responsible for the management of the agriculture sector in PNG. Its mandate is to provide policy advice and technical and administrative support for optimal performance of the sector. Its partnership in this MoU includes all statutory bodies, offices and mandated programs.

“The PNG Government wants to grow the economy by growing the agriculture sector throughout the country to promote a new vision it has for agriculture,” Mr Pomaleu said.

Mr Pomaleu said in 2018 Grow Asia was invited by the PNG Government to establish a Country Partnership in the same Grow Asia model following discussions at the WEF Annual Meeting among PNG delegation, WEF and Grow Asia representatives.

In May 2019, Grow Asia, following the invitation, registered Grow PNG Ltd, a subsidiary of Grow Asia Partnership Ltd, to help build a partnership platform to help stakeholders address challenges in the agricultural sector.

Grow Asia was launched in April 2015. It serves as a multi-stakeholder platform to catalyse and coordinate action that contributes to food security and sustainable, inclusive agricultural development in the ASEAN countries. Country-led and locally driven, Grow Asia supports market-based solutions with measurable positive impacts on agriculture-sector growth, especially focusing on the development of smallholder farmers (both men and women) and environmental sustainability of agriculture.

Grow PNG, a member of a larger network

The Grow Asia network saw growth last year through working groups and farmers.

Executive Director for Grow Asia Partnership Ltd Grahame Dixie said Grow Asia’s work with its six country partnerships Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and PNG being a new country partnership is attracting interest.

Grow Asia is excited about Grow PNG Ltd, the 6th member in Grow Asia’s family of partnerships. Grow PNG is now part of a larger network of organization in Grow Asia.

“It must grow membership and we are looking very closely at what Grow PNG can do in terms of growing its membership which currently stands at around 20,” Mr Dixie said.

With 520 different partners, this means Grow Asia significantly brings together private sectors, public sectors, non-government organisations and civil societies. These different stakeholders come together and collectively design and implement projects.

“We capture learnings from across the world - the World Economic Forum, Africa, South America and other parts of the

world in this large network to help resolve problems that each individual working group members may not be able to resolve on their own,” Mr Dixie said.

Few things that emerged with growth last year are learning events and increase in the number of women participants. The network measures the participation rate of women in working group and learning using videos and the online platform.

“The network is attracting some resources from new funding sources such as Korea, Japan and China, which demonstrates that our operating model is attractive and resonate with the expectations of these donors.”

It is a special space of work which is also linking DFAT, World Bank, FAO and IFAD in a collective effort to address agricultural development and open up opportunities for farmers in an environmentally sustainable manner. Grow Asia is now an accredited Entity Associated with ASEAN – first WEF-initiated organization to achieve this status. It is a platform that brings together women and youth voices in discussions on key issues and crop specific challenges. It also works hard to identify resources and financial ideas to make the model self-sustaining.

Any organisation is welcome to become a partner of Grow PNG and its Working Groups. Partners are expected to have an interest in the country and agriculture, a commitment to supporting smallholders and rural development and an openness to partner with other organisations in a pre-competitive space.



Participants to the Grow PNG and Grow Asia Partners program held on July 16 - farmer Awa Mundugan (Takom Farms Markham) LCCI President John Byrne, Eileen Daniels (Atupan village Markham) and *Post-Courier* Lae journalist Janet Kari.

Partners discuss strategy at meeting

Understanding current supply chains, creating an avenue for farmers to get their payments through digital means and infrastructure development are important to the further development of the agriculture sector.

Partners who participated in the Grow PNG and Grow Asia Partners Program held on July 16 highlighted the need for development, greater understanding and awareness in these areas.

Lead UN Human Capital Development PNG (UNHCD) in financial Inclusion, Jagdeep Dahiya said UNHCD is introducing a new strategy on learning in the digital era.

“This is to broaden the scope of UNHCD to work not only with financial institutions but to create digital financial services for farmers. The financial services will allow them to see clearly funds inflows and outflows and margins created.” Mr Dahiya said.

This work is in digitalizing the agricultural value chain and creating an avenue for the farmers to get their payments into digital wallets/accounts and creating an equal and equitable system around the value chain.

Law and order, infrastructure and connectivity remain a big challenge for digital agriculture systems in PNG.

UNHCD’s role is to help institutions get into new channels and technologies specifically in agriculture and is testing different models. Testing of a model in partnership with Mi Bank is progressing to enable the development of another digital product or a farmer application.

Understanding supply chains and determining appropriate interventions is also important to agricultural development in the country.

“There is a need to understand the current supply chain that exist currently for cocoa, coffee and determine what interventions are appropriate under the circumstance,” Country Manager Outspan PNG Ltd, Bavaraj Mashetty said.

“Literacy and understanding of principles of business are also important to building small businesses, whether these are in agriculture or in services.” - LCCI President John Byrne

Most farmers in Morobe do not have bank accounts for digital payments to be made directly into accounts.

“Digital payments help in building a financial footprint for future financing requirements. Farmers need to learn and understand the importance of digital payments.”

Presidents of Lae Chamber of Commerce Incorporated & Tok Stret Consulting Chief Executive Officer, John Byrne talked about infrastructure to help agriculture growth.

“Infrastructure development for market access is important for agriculture development in this region. There are important opportunities which exists but road access to these fertile areas is a key challenge.”

Literacy and understanding of principles of business are also important to building small businesses, whether these are in agriculture or in services.

Executive Director for Grow Asia Partnership Ltd Grahame Dixie talked about Grow Asia’s work with its six country partnerships.

“Digital interventions is important in agriculture. We need to determine what is crucial, what works, and what types of ecosystem is required and what areas of agribusinesses requires support and investment.

Executive Director Grow PNG Ltd, Ivan Pomaleu said Grow PNG will be seeking to balance the expectations of Grow Asia and its stakeholders, while at the same time staying relevant to the needs, challenges, and aspirations of its stakeholders.

Some of the issues discussed at the partners meeting will be presented at the Grow Asia Forum to be held in mid-August.

FARMING

Featuring **RAPHAELLE PEINADO**

- Leveraging sophisticated mapping technology to accelerate the fight against deforestation.
- Previously worked in supporting indigenous people in managing waste and finding sources of income like planting cocoa.
- “If we do it the right way, cocoa is an opportunity to stop deforestation.”

Sustainability nowadays is about having the right data

Raphaelle Peinado, 31, is sustainability manager for a cocoa and chocolate company.

“I chose this career because I was interested in the impact the private sector can have on sustainable development. I started my career working in South America to tackle issues such as plastic pollution and rainforest conservation in the Amazon. One part of my work was supporting indigenous people in managing waste and finding sources of income – one of them being planting cocoa. If we do it the right way, cocoa is an opportunity to stop deforestation!”

Today, she is in charge of leveraging sophisticated mapping technology to accelerate the fight against deforestation in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria as part of the Cocoa & Forests Initiative.

“To know about the exact location and size of the farm is important for any sustainability measures. Also, it helps ensure that companies are compliant with the Cocoa & Forests Initiative’s commitment and understand where farms are to stop farming in protected and deforested regions.”

How does this work? “To start, every farmer is visited by a field agent and is interviewed on different data of the farm, such as the number of trees or the soil fertility. These are entered in a mobile app. Then, agents walk the perimeter of every farm to measure the precise area and GPS location. The technology aggregates all the geo data and compares farms against satellite imagery to assess deforestation

risk and national park boundaries.”

Mapping benefits everyone along the value chain – from the farmer to the sourcing companies implementing sustainability activities on the ground. “During my recent visit in Ghana, when we tested the tool, I asked a farmer: “How big is your farm?”. He answered, estimating “three hectares.” After polygon mapping it with our application, it turned out the farm was only one hectare. I realized that this tool can help farmers to become more aware of their own operations.”

The technology not only provides information about the exact location and size of the farm to help companies understand if there is any risk of deforestation in their supply chain. It also records data on sustainability activities taking place on the ground such as farmer training or reforestation. It can also monitor the income of a farmer. In the end, it helps to shape targeted support for the farmer.

“Sustainability nowadays is about having the right data, so it is important to have a reliable tool that gathers data which makes sense.”

The way forward is to be able to aggregate all the data and, in the near future, move away from paper. This won’t happen overnight, with a significant hurdle being the local infrastructure: internet and electricity are not always accessible. Fortunately, the app can be used offline, with data being transmitted when internet connection is established.

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

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