



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Grow PNG hold consultations with agriculture stakeholders**

Grow PNG team is holding consultations with various stakeholders and partners to understand the different issues surrounding access to land and the different agriculture projects that are happening in the Markham Valley.

The team has met with some of the big agribusinesses, smallholders, church and government agencies, financial institutions and others that have an interest in the valley.

Grow PNG Executive Director Ivan Pomaleu and Working Group Coordinator Ruthy Kusak are conducting the consultation with the different partners and stakeholders.

Some of the partners the team has already met with were Trukai Industries Ltd, Outspan, some smallholder farmers, Provincial Department of Lands, ADRA, Bank South Pacific, Wafi-Golpu Joint Venture, Women In Agriculture, Morobe Provincial Program Advisor for Agriculture, Morobe provincial customary lands officer, and Morobe provincial project scientist/advisor for agriculture, environment and mining.

Chief Executive Officer of Trukai Greg Worthington-Eyre said it is crucial for a current and potential investor to know the business opportunity on the land.

“This is because investment plans can be made to cater for upcoming potential investment apart from the current or new projects in progress.”

Mr Worthington-Eyre said proper land registration and register of interest would greatly help Trukai to see the potential investment opportunity as well as information about water availability and rainfall.

Takom Farm headed by Awa Mundugan is one of the successful locally initiated cocoa project in the valley that is supported by NARI, Taiwan Technical Mission and the Commerce Department.

The farm has reached 21 incorporated land groups (ILGs) in the Markham area.

Provincial customary lands officer, Denver Utah has done tremendous work in land demarcation, ILGs, land mediation and other land related work.

Mr Utah highlighted that landowners will lose trust in projects and pull out if they think what they are supposed to get (benefits) are not met.

He said most landowners have limited understanding of agreements or contracts and these must be correctly explained to them, especially sections on benefits, line by line as written.

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

The Morobe provincial government has also identified the Markham valley as an economic zone. Major projects such as the Wawin Agriculture Park are being planned for the area.

Grow PNG is a not-for-profit organization established in Lae, Morobe Province in June 2019. Designed around the Grow Asia model which is supported by World Economic Forum and ASEAN, Grow PNG brings together business leaders, policy makers and farmers to collaboratively unlock growth in the sector and facilitate new opportunities for farming families in the Markham valley.

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