



PRESS RELEASE

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Grow Asia signs MoU with Department of Agriculture and Livestock 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 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 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.

CONTACT

Ivan Pomaleu (OBE)

Executive Director

Grow PNG Ltd

Email: ivan@growpng.org

Website: www.growpng.org/www.growasia.org/

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