



Digital agriculture in PNG

Digital technologies have the potential to add significant value to smallholder value chain in the agriculture sector in PNG.

In its recent report on PNG, GSMA identified four main areas where digital tools can address challenges facing the agricultural sector and these are:

- Weather monitoring and forecasting
- Agricultural payment digitisation
- Digital enterprise solutions and
- Agricultural extension support.

GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide. GSMA's AgriTech programme works towards equitable and sustainable food chains that empower farmers and strengthen local economies.

Last year on August 5, the first workshop on Digital Agriculture in PNG was delivered by GSMA for Grow PNG in Lae.

This was the very first learning event for Grow PNG organised for agribusinesses, policy makers and farmers in working to develop the agriculture sector in the Markham Valley. Participants learnt about what GSMA discovered and also shared their own ideas to maximise the value of digital tools in the PNG agriculture sector.

The theme of the workshop was Emerging Opportunities in Digital Agriculture in Papua New Guinea.

A second learning event is being organised and will be on Digital Payment. Following the first workshop, there were some discussions with stakeholders which indicated some interest in mobile payments.

The workshop aims to bring together Grow PNG partners and stakeholders in the agriculture sector in Lae and Markham in Morobe Province to learn about digital payment systems, and the enabling ecosystem that make it work.

It will also describe what an ideal ecosystem is and the steps needed to set up effective Digital Payments, drawing from some of the work CMS did for Be Mobile and Micro Bank and also elsewhere in the region with similar challenges as PNG and specifically the Markham area.

The workshop will be conducted by MSC Global Consulting Ltd, a company that specialises in comprehensive strategic advice for systems, processes and tools. MSC has vast expertise in guiding policy and facilitating partnerships to develop enabling ecosystems for digital payments systems in the region including PNG.

Grow PNG Executive Director Ivan Pomaleu said the learning events are developed around ideas that would interest stakeholders to improve agricultural productivity with farmers but with strong support of the agribusinesses.

Mr Pomaleu said it is also to build capacity among the agriculture stakeholders with interest in the Markham valley.

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