



# 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.

## FIRST QUARTER 2024

### Grow PNG Smallholder Engagement Coordinator Facilitates Field Engagement Visit for Zampir Horticulture Women Farmers



Rick Philip, Smallholder Engagement Coordinator at Grow PNG, spearheaded a field engagement visit to Zampir Village in the Markham Valley to explore access to finance services for women farmers involved in horticulture. Partnering with Women's Micro Bank, the initiative aimed to empower local women to access financial resources essential for enhancing agricultural productivity and livelihoods.

During the interactive session with experienced staff, the women shared their experiences, challenges, and aspirations as smallholder farmers. Discussions revolved around microloans, savings schemes, and financial literacy training, designed to empower women to manage their finances effectively and re-invest in their farming enterprises.

The visit provided an invaluable opportunity to understand the unique needs of the women farmers and tailor financial solutions to support their aspirations.

Speaking about the visit, Rick Philip emphasized Grow PNG's commitment to fostering inclusive and sustainable agricultural development. He thanked the Women's Microbank staff and highlighted the importance of partnerships with organizations like Mama Bank in providing women farmers with the resources and support needed to thrive in the agricultural sector.





# Roundtable Dialogue Charts Path for Smart Farming and Mechanization in PNG



Grow PNG's Country Director David Stewart and Country Program Manager Ruthy Kusak David took center stage at the recent Trukai Consultation Meeting focusing on the Smart Farmer Follow-up Roundtable in December 2023.

The meeting was held with industry stakeholders and key partners with senior management from Trukai. Aims to assess progress, share insights, and outline strategies for the continued success of the Trukai Smart Farmer initiative in Papua New Guinea. Country Director David Stewart, known for his visionary leadership and commitment to sustainable development, emphasized the importance of leveraging technology and innovation to empower local farmers and drive agricultural productivity.

A comprehensive overview of Grow PNG and its partnership with Grow Asia provided context for the discussions. Expectations for the meeting were outlined, focusing on engaging smallholder farmers and Integrated Land Groups (ILGs) in the Markham-Ramu Valley, with an emphasis on collaboration with SMEs to boost local production.

Trukai Industries, CEO Mr. Allan Preston, offered insights into their experience as a market leader in rice distribution. Preston highlighted Trukai's extensive investment and operational experience, underscoring their commitment to empowering local farmers through initiatives like the Smart Farmer Program.

Discussion centered on the challenges faced by smallholder farmers, including access to machinery and financing. Trukai's approach to training 1000 farmers at the village level was lauded, with attendees exploring avenues for scaling up such programs and addressing obstacles like land management and policy alignment.

Aina Davis, Rice Development Manager provided a detailed overview of the Trukai Smart Farmer Program, emphasizing its potential to transition farmers from subsistence to commercial farming. Mechanization emerged as a key gap, with stakeholders brainstorming funding models and partnerships to facilitate access to machinery and equipment.

Interactive feedback and questions highlighted the need for practical solutions and collaboration between stakeholders. The potential role of financial institutions in supporting farmer access to equipment was explored, with an emphasis on market-driven approaches and trust-building measures.

As the meeting concluded, commitments were made to follow up on action items, including graduation ceremonies and meetings with potential partners. The importance of ongoing communication and coordination was stressed, signaling a collaborative effort to drive agricultural transformation in PNG.

With a renewed sense of purpose and commitment, stakeholders departed, energized by the prospect of leveraging smart farming and mechanization to unlock the full potential of Papua New Guinea's agricultural sector. As they forge ahead, the seeds of collaboration planted at this roundtable dialogue hold promise for a more prosperous and sustainable future for PNG's farming communities.



# Grow PNG's New Country Director Explores Agricultural Innovations in Erap and PNG Women in Agriculture Development Cool Storage Facility Visit

The Country Director of Grow PNG recently embarked on a series of field visits aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Accompanied by key stakeholders and experts, the Director visited the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) in Erap and the PNG Institute of Agricultural Research (PNGWIA) vegetable cool storage facility.

At DAL in Erap, discussions centered on strategies to modernize agricultural practices and support smallholder farmers. The Director commended DAL's efforts and expressed Grow PNG's readiness to collaborate on empowering farmers and promoting sustainable practices.

The visit also included discussions on potential partnerships for capacity building and technology transfer. At the PNGWIA cool storage facility, the Director and stakeholders explored post-harvest management's importance in enhancing food security and market access for farmers. As well as the importance of understanding budgets.

The Director emphasized collaboration and innovation in driving agricultural transformation in PNG, highlighting Grow PNG's role as a catalyst for change. The visits underscored Grow PNG's commitment to engaging stakeholders across the agricultural value chain.

Looking ahead, Grow PNG aims to forge stronger partnerships and implement impactful interventions to drive sustainable agricultural development in PNG. The field visits served as a testament to Grow PNG's dedication to unlocking the full potential of PNG's agriculture for the benefit of its people.



## Grow PNG Hosts Second Gender Working Group Meeting

In a proactive step towards promoting gender equality and inclusivity in development initiatives, Grow PNG recently convened its second Gender Working Group Meeting, led by facilitators Rick and Alma. The Gender Working Group Meeting serves as a platform for stakeholders to discuss strategies to integrate gender perspectives into Grow PNG's activities, ensuring that women and marginalized groups are meaningfully included in decision-making processes and project implementation.

Facilitators Rick and Alma led the discussions, guiding participants through an agenda focused on identifying key areas where gender mainstreaming can be strengthened within Grow PNG's operations. Participants engaged in fruitful dialogue, sharing insights, experiences, and best practices from their respective organizations and sectors. The meeting provided an opportunity for cross-learning and collaboration, with participants exchanging ideas on innovative approaches to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Papua New Guinea.

The facilitators emphasized the importance of collective action in driving gender mainstreaming efforts. They highlighted Grow PNG's role as a catalyst for change, advocating for gender-responsive policies and programs that promote inclusive development and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As the meeting concluded, participants reaffirmed their commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Papua New Guinea. They emphasized the need for sustained collaboration, coordination, and advocacy to address gender disparities and create an enabling environment for inclusive development.

In closing, Grow PNG reiterated its dedication to mainstreaming gender considerations across its initiatives, ensuring that gender equality remains a central tenet of its work.





# Grow PNG Hosts Successful Markham Investor Development Forum in Lae



In a significant milestone for economic development in Papua New Guinea, Grow PNG hosted its inaugural Markham Valley Investor Development Forum at Lae International Hotel on March 4th. The forum, held under the theme "Growing the Markham," brought together key stakeholders, government officials, potential investors and landowners from the Markham District Authority to strategize and discuss investment opportunities in the region.

Country Director Mr. David Stewart opened the event, setting the stage by highlighting the importance of baseline data and development goals in driving sustainable growth in the Markham area. These discussions align closely with the ambitious targets outlined in the Government's Medium-Term Development Plan 2025, emphasizing the need for collaboration and innovation to achieve shared objectives.

The forum proved to be a platform for constructive dialogue and engagement, with attendees sharing insights, proposals, and opportunities for investment in the Markham valley. Government members present reaffirmed their commitment to supporting initiatives that would drive economic progress and improve the livelihoods of the local communities.

The participation of landowners in the event underscored the inclusive approach adopted by Grow PNG, recognizing the vital role that community engagement plays in fostering long-term, sustainable development. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, the forum set a precedent for future collaboration and partnership in unlocking the region's economic potential.

As the discussions concluded, there was a sense of optimism and collective purpose among attendees, signaling a new chapter of growth and opportunity for the Markham region. The success of the forum is a testament to the commitment of all stakeholders involved and sets a promising trajectory for realizing the development objectives set forth for the region.

With the momentum gained from this inaugural event, Grow PNG and its partners are poised to continue driving progress and building a more prosperous future for the Markham district and its residents.





# Highlights during the Markham Investor Development Forum 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2024



VIPs and The Australian High Commissioner ,Mr. John Feakes.



The Australian High Commissioner Mr. John Feakes and Morobe Governor Hon.Luther Wenge



Right: David Stewart (Grow PNG Country Director),Hon.Luther Wenge( Morobe Governor),Mr. John Feakes( Australian High Commissioner to PNG and Mr. Phil Franklin ( Mainland Holdings CEO and Co-Chair Grow PNG Advisory Council)



Right: Mark Foxe (Australian Consul Lae) ,Ivan Pomelau (Chief Secretary) ,Dr.Ora Renagi (Unitech Vice Chancellor)



Landowners and Investors at the forum



Ms. Ruthy Kusak David Grow PNG Program Manager as a moderator during the first panel discussion



Left: Hon.Koni Iguan ( Member for Markham, Deputy Speaker), Hon .Allan Bird (Governor for East Sepik). The Australian High Commissioner Mr. John Feakes and Dr.Ora Renagi (Unitech Vice Chancellor)



Panelist discussing on the topic "Actions required from landowners to attract third party investors into the Markham Valley"



# Grow PNG Country Director Shares Insights at Trukai Smart Farmer Training Closing Ceremony

Grow PNG's Country Director, Mr. David Stewart, was invited to share his insights at the Closing Ceremony of the Trukai Smart Farmer Training held at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology (PNGUoT) in Lae.

The Trukai Smart Farmer Training, a collaborative initiative between Trukai Industries and various agricultural stakeholders, aimed to equip farmers with advanced techniques and knowledge to enhance crop yields and sustainability. The event, held over several weeks, provided farmers with practical skills in crop management, pest control, market access, and the utilization of modern agricultural technologies.

Mr. Stewart's presence at the Closing Ceremony underscored the significance of understanding farming as a business.

The collaboration between Grow PNG, Trukai Industries, and the Papua New Guinea University of Technology exemplifies the concerted efforts towards promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development in the country. Such initiatives play a pivotal role in enhancing food security, alleviating poverty, and fostering economic growth in Papua New Guinea.



## Grow PNG Celebrates International Women's Day

While the world celebrated International Women's Day with events and gatherings, Grow PNG took a unique approach to commemorate the occasion, emphasizing reflection among its female workforce. With the 2024 theme "Inspire Inclusive" resonating deeply within the organization, women within Grow PNG dedicated the day to fostering inclusivity within their working environment.

Despite the absence of external celebrations or events, the women of Grow PNG seized the opportunity to connect and engage with one another on a deeper level. As a prominent working group within the organization's Gender sector, they recognized the significance of the theme and the role they play in driving inclusivity forward.

Though the celebrations may have been internal, the impact was profound, reaffirming Grow PNG's dedication to championing gender equality and inclusivity in Papua New Guinea. As the organization continues its mission to empower communities and drive positive change, the reflective spirit of International Women's Day serves as a catalyst for further progress and collaboration within Grow PNG and the wider society.



### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024!



### "INSPIRE INCLUSION"





# Advisory Council Tackles Development Challenges in a Meeting

In the Lae international Hotel Conference room, the Grow PNG Advisory Council convened to address critical issues surrounding development and intervention strategies. With a welcome address from Grow Asia's CEO Bev Postma, the meeting saw robust discussions on various agenda items.

A review of the previous meeting's minutes followed, ensuring continuity and accountability in decision-making processes. Attendees delved into a comprehensive overview of current activities and challenges, touching upon ongoing interventions such as those with Trukai, Ramu Agri Palm Oil and Cattle.

Of notable interest were reports on the Erap Women in Agriculture visit and existing data from Connect Co Ltd and the Household Income Survey. The council took stock of these reports to inform future strategies effectively. They also scrutinized current terms of reference for tender, particularly focusing on GIS and Land Mapping, and the Community Entry Awareness Program.

Budget considerations for 2024 were deliberated extensively, with an eye towards allocating resources strategically to maximize impact. Concurrently, the council assessed submissions for a new work plan, seeking to align objectives with emerging priorities.

Looking forward, the council identified potential new interventions in areas such as irrigation and equipment financing. These initiatives aim to address critical gaps in infrastructure and resource access, laying the groundwork for sustainable development.

As the meeting drew to a close, the council emphasized the importance of continued advisory board involvement in guiding strategic decision-making processes. The statement underscored a commitment to transparency and inclusivity in governance.

In concluding remarks, CEO Bev Postma reiterated the significance of collaboration and proactive engagement in overcoming development challenges. The meeting adjourned, leaving attendees energized and focused on driving progress in the year ahead.

## Grow PNG Facilitates Agri Suppliers' Visit to Trukai Smart Farmers in Markham

In a move to foster collaboration and support smallholder farmers, Grow PNG's Smallholder Engagement Coordinator Rick Philip orchestrated a visit for agricultural suppliers and stakeholders to the Trukai Smart Farmers program in Markham. The visit aimed to provide firsthand insights into the innovative initiatives empowering local farmers and to explore opportunities for partnership and support.

Accompanied by representatives from leading agricultural suppliers and stakeholders, the delegation descended met at the Marayai village and Gabmazung mission station in Markham Valley, where the Trukai Smart Farmers program has been making waves in transforming traditional farming practices. Led by the Smallholder Engagement Coordinator, the visit sought to bridge the gap between smallholder farmers and agri-input suppliers, facilitating dialogue and cooperation for the benefit of all stakeholders.

The Trukai Smart Farmer programs holistic approach to farmer empowerment, focuses on providing smallholder farmers with the necessary training, resources, and support to enhance productivity and livelihoods. As the delegation toured the program's operations, they witnessed firsthand the impact of interventions such as capacity building, access to high-quality seeds, and modern farming techniques on the lives of local farmers.

Discussions during the visit revolved around identifying areas where agricultural suppliers and stakeholders could contribute to further enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of the Smart Farmers program. By engaging directly with farmers participating in the Trukai Smart Farmers program, the delegation gained a deeper understanding of the on-the-ground realities and potential areas for support and collaboration.

As the visit concluded, both Grow PNG and the participating agricultural suppliers expressed optimism about the prospects for future collaboration. The field visit to the Trukai Smart Farmers program served as a testament to Grow PNG's dedication to fostering innovation, empowerment, and collaboration in the agricultural sector.







## Grow PNG through Agriculture Partnership

### Grow PNG Partners with Local Communities in Markham Valley to Enhance Agricultural Practices through CSIRO Project

Grow PNG recently conducted a field engagement with the Balsa Association and ILG Chairman Mr. Tom Francis and his constituents at Orori Village, Ward 23 in Markham District on March 6, 2024.

The purpose of the visit was to raise awareness about the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization) and its project aimed at improving soil and land information to enhance agricultural production and integrate land use planning in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The project, titled "Better Soil and Land Information to Improve PNG's Agricultural Production and Integrate Land Use Planning – building a Revitalized PNGRIS2," is a collaboration between various organizations including ACIAR, CSIRO, Department of Agriculture and Livestock, National Agriculture Research Institute, PNG Forest Research Institute, PNG Coffee Industry Corporation, University of Technology, and Grow PNG Ltd. Representatives from these organizations, including Mr. Elias Taia and Mr. Patrick Nimiago, presented to landowning farming communities about the importance and benefits of the project and its potential impacts on farming practices within the valley.

The awareness campaign focused on educating the community about CSIRO's objectives, research projects, and their potential impacts on agriculture, forestry, and other sectors in PNG.

Smallholder farmers are expected to gain access to valuable information on land use, management, and soil data through this initiative.



### 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 to improve incomes for smallholder farmers.

#### GENERAL ENQUIRY

Email: [info@growpng.org](mailto:info@growpng.org), Phone: 472 0448

#### ADDRESS

Grow PNG Ltd, PO Box 4425, Lae Morobe Province, Level 1, Office 2.5 Maman Anda Building, 4th Street. Top Town, Lae

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