



Grow PNG holds Digital Agriculture Awareness Workshop

Grow PNG held a Digital Agriculture Awareness workshop last week on the 16th-17th of November 2021, at the Lae International Hotel in Morobe Province. Participants attended in person and virtually in PNG, Singapore, India, and Australia, and were from various backgrounds in private sector, government agencies, civil society, farmer's groups, cooperative societies, ICT practitioners and others.

Mr Reginald Lee, Grow Asia Director of Programs, introduced the awareness workshop by connecting it to Grow Asia and Grow PNG platform 'to create a **community of practice** of business leaders, startups, investors, civil society, donors, and government **and importantly to accelerate the adoption** of digital technologies for smallholder agriculture'. The workshop brought many *insights on technologies and approaches for smallholder digital agriculture*.

Mr Mark Foxe, Lae based, Australian Consul-General in his opening remarks, acknowledged Grow PNG, also a DFAT funded program under the PNG-Aust Partnership program to have made this workshop possible, connecting speakers and participants across the region and in Papua New Guinea.

The digital agriculture awareness workshop provided information about the advent of technology in the mobile industry, financial services and inclusions, and how these are connected to agriculture, as well, drone technology in farming, and others.

The Executive Director for Grow PNG, Mr John Simango moderated the 2-days informative dialogue and, entertained speakers connecting in from different parts of the world and PNG. Speakers from within Country-PNG included United National Capital Development Fund in PNG(UNCDF) and Digicel PNG – Cell Moni, and International speakers from MicroSave Consulting in India, and Dimitra Technology of Australia presented topics on:

- Mobile Money Ecosystem
- Rural Digital Agriculture Loan
- Cell Moni Applications
- Drone Farming Technology

The workshop also provided an excellent opportunity for PNG participants to engage in the conversation. Mr Rueben Yapi, from Labuta Cocoa Cooperative Society, shared the challenges faced by rural farmers in accessing finance and making savings and how mobile technology may assist. Mr Humphrey Saese, from Hore Agricultural Suppliers, shared challenges in accessing finance, and use of technology such as drone to address Fall Army Worm (FAW) in the farms.

There will be opportunities to trial a number of digital technology applications, and drone application in farming in the near future in Papua New Guinea.

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