

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.

Grow PNG

FIRST QUARTER 2023

Grow PNG Land Access Guide Training of Trainers(ToT) Program Launch



From Left: Australian Consul-General in Lae, Mr. Mark Foxe, Hon. Willie Simbisi, Deputy Governor of Morobe Province, and Mr. Bohage Bebinaso, Markham District DDA CEO receiving the Land Access Guide ToT manual.

Grow PNG Land Access Guide Training of Trainers (ToT) program was launched on Monday, March 13, 2023, at the Lae International Hotel by the Deputy Governor of Morobe Province, Hon. Willie Simbisi MPA, Australian Consul-General in Lae, Mr Mark Foxe who also provided the opening remarks, and Mr Bohage Bebinaso, DDA CEO of Markham district who was on hand to receive the TOT manual from the Australian Government which funded this work.

Participants from agribusinesses, development partners, landowner groups, cooperative societies, SMEs, farmer groups, and many others attended, with key representatives taking part in the plenary session moderated by Ms Sheila Harou from Wafi-Golpu Joint Venture.

Representatives from the Government such as the Department of Lands and Physical Planning from both the Momase Regional Office and Morobe Provincial Office, the Investment Promotion Authority (IPA), and the Department of Commerce and Industry also attended the launch.

The Grow PNG Land Access Guide Training of Trainers (ToT) is a deliverable work program of the Land Access Working Group from early research and documentation of land access challenges in Markham in 2020. A [Land Access Guide](#) was developed as an outcome of that work and launched by Hon. Koni Iguan MP for Markham in 2021. The guide was converted into a pilot training and is now further transformed into a full-fledged training program.

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Australian Consul-General in Lae, Mr. Mark Foxe giving his opening remarks at the Launch.



Deputy Governor of Morobe Province, Hon Willie Simbisi giving his keynote address at the Launch.

The Launch of the Land Access Guide Training of Trainers (ToT) program in Lae will ensure that selected landowners in Markham can appreciate the need to release land for commercial agricultural activity. The program targets local landowners in the Markham Valley and other parts of Morobe which are suitable for the development of agribusinesses by investors.

The Launch was attended by the Deputy Governor of Morobe Province, the Australian Consul-General in Lae, and the DDA CEO of Markham District.

Australian Consul-General in Lae, Mr Mark Foxe in his welcome remarks commended Grow PNG for being able to bring together key representatives, key stakeholders from agribusiness, development partners, landowner groups and also other significant partners. He said, to ensure the [Land Access Guide](#) is understood, we need to make more awareness and we do this by training. It is important to develop the next generation of trainers to come through, so I see great importance being placed on the benefits of this training.

The Deputy Governor of Morobe Province, Hon Willie Simbisi in his keynote address commended and thanked Grow PNG for this great initiative for its continuity in pursuing to develop a Training of Trainers package based on the Land Access Guide after its Launching in 2021. He said I am convinced that the Land Access TOT program will enable other certified trainers to carry on the training on Land Access to a wide reach. This is a way forward to encourage customary landowners to offer their land for agricultural development.

He said the provincial government aimed to make the communities become self-reliant, self-contained, self-supporting, and self-financing.

“I see the land access ToT program as a tool or mechanism that can be used to implement these strategic plans in a holistic approach through working in partnership with the wards, local level governments, districts and other stakeholders,” he said.

Simbisi said the program is sure to have a positive impact on the rural communities in Markham Valley and other parts of the province where this program would be rolled out to.

Simbisi, who is also the LLG president for Onga-Waffa in Markham, further encouraged all players in the agricultural sector, agribusiness, stakeholders, and working groups to continue to support the initiative by Grow PNG in driving this development agenda in the province.

Landowners from the Markham district appreciated and acknowledged Grow PNG and partners for the Land Access Guide ToT Program, they said this was what the landowners have been lacking for so long.

Lack of education and awareness on land lease partnerships towards reaching durable agreements between landowners and agribusiness investors has limited the opportunity for agriculture investment in the Markham Valley.

Grow PNG Stakeholder Engagement Manager-Agribusiness, Ms Ruthy Kusak said, Grow PNG will now put forward a structural framework for quality control that will continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the training program. It is important to collect evaluations and feedback to continuously improve the training program over time.



Thom Francis, a Landowner, Ward Councilor, and ILG Chairman was one of the panelists.



The panel consisted of representatives from the Government, Agribusiness, and key relevant stakeholders.

The Land Access ToT program will enable certified trainers to carry on the training to a wide reach. This is a way forward to encourage customary landowners to offer their land for agricultural development.

Landowner and ILG Chairman Mr Thom Francis said to unlock the land for agricultural development is about information sharing and more awareness. There is a gap in information and knowledge on land access at the community level.

Most Customary Landowners don't have access to relevant information in order to develop their land. To free up their land, it calls for more information and awareness. Landowners are not aware of how and why they should release their land for agricultural development and investment.

One of the reasons landowners are hesitant to unlock their land for development is also due to a lack of awareness. We need to know how and why it is important to develop our land. It has been very challenging to access information on Land Access.

“We see great importance being placed on the benefits of this Land Access Guide Training of Trainers Program”, he said.

Mr Bohage Bebinaso Markham DDA CEO who was also a panelist said, landowners are not aware of how and why they should make their land available for agriculture investment, we have to make awareness for them to realise the importance of the investment, why they should release their land and ensure they are participating in making their land available. That is, the type of information lacking and not getting to the landowners.

This Land Access Guide training has to go down to the community level and we will need support from all relevant partners including the government.

Customary landowner groups do not fully understand what is required from an agribusiness partner or an investor and likewise, the investor may rush into a land deal agreement without being fully aware of the implications that may arise even after a land deal agreement is established.

All of this information on land access has to be shared with the landowners. The district government can take the lead regarding information and awareness and be a key partner in the land access process supporting the landowners.

Grow PNG Executive Director Mr John Simango said, The Launch of this ToT program we hope will encourage customary landowners who are willing to unlock their land for agriculture development and investment. This will in turn increase landowners' participation in the economy, giving greater attention to improving smallholder households.

Grow PNG's mission is to increase smallholder household income by 20% within 8 years. We will also know that increase in income when landowners are participating in the economy by farming as a business and getting the shared benefits right across the Markham Valley.

Grow PNG is encouraged to support all key players in the agriculture sector, agribusiness, government, landowners, and key relevant stakeholders, by using the Land Access ToT program as a tool that can contribute to their efforts to unlock land for agriculture development and investment in Markham, Morobe, and Papua New Guinea.

Highlights of the Grow PNG Land Access Guide Training of Trainers Program Launch



From Left: Mr Mark Foxe, Mr John Simango, Hon Willie Simbisi, and Mr Bebinaso.



Mr Humphrey Saese, of Hore Agriculture Suppliers.



Ms Sheila Harou, from Wafi-Golpu Joint Venture was the moderator at the plenary discussions.



Mr David Duran from Rumion Farms Limited, shared learnings of Land Access in Markham valley.



Ms Ruthy Kusak of Grow PNG, gave an overview of the Land Access Work Grow PNG is doing.



Question and answer session.



Mr Rueben Yapi from No. Cocoa Exports Ltd, shared challenges and issues faced in developing Land for Agriculture.



Ms Martha Raka from Sere Jay Pacific



Mr Brian Waffi, from the Department of Commerce and Industry.



Mr Urick Kamango, from Wafi-Golpu Joint Venture.



Plenary Discussion, Mr Daroa Peter, from Investment Promotion Authority(IPA).



Mr Bill Rua, Consultant, Connect-Co Ltd.

First Pilot Training: Land Access Guide Training of Trainers (ToT) Program



The First Pilot Training of the Land Access Guide Training of Trainers(ToT) Program was held at the Huon Gulf Hotel from the 14th-17th of March 2023.

The Training was facilitated by Grow PNG with the support of Connect-Co Limited. Attendees were experienced and recognized Trainers with National Training Certificates(NTC) from agribusinesses, government, Landowners, NGOs, and Civil Societies.

The training conducted was aimed at empowering Landowners, ILG executives, cooperative society groups, agribusiness investors, and other interested parties with the skills, knowledge, and concepts required to free up customary land for agribusiness development in Papua New Guinea.

Morobe Provincial Program Advisor for Agriculture, Mr Ken Elonaga who was at the closing of the Training Program expressed his appreciation to Grow PNG and the relevant partners and participants who had successfully completed the training. He said this Land Access Guide program being piloted in Markham can be shared with other districts of Morobe as well as Papua New Guinea. This is the way forward to educating customary landowners who are willing to unlock their land for agricultural development and investment.

“Most of the Land in the valley is locked away because it’s customary. Educating our people on the skills, knowledge, and concepts of land access is very important. Awareness is key,” said one of the participants.

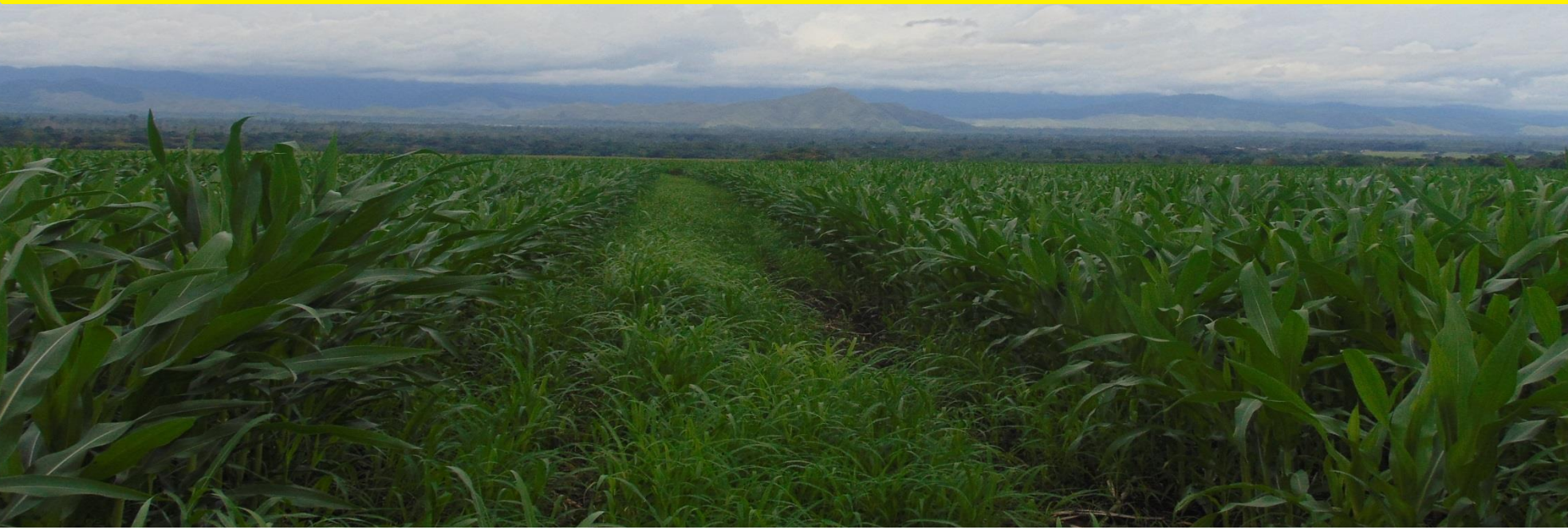
Participants who attended the training were equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver ToT Training to customary landowners and other agribusiness investors and partners willing to work with customary landowners on their land.

The Pilot Training is the first of others that will help support and build a community of Land Access Guide trainers who can share knowledge and experiences, and collaborate on promoting land access for agribusiness development in Papua New Guinea.

Grow PNG Executive Director, Mr John Simango said, the next step now is to develop a framework to guide the selection of participants who will be future trainers of the LAG ToT Training and evaluation framework of the training program's effectiveness.

Grow PNG is encouraged to promote the sustainability of the Land Access work by strengthening the structure and framework of the ToT that will guide the standards and quality of the training program.

Land Access in the Markham Valley



The Markham Valley extends to over 50,000 hectares of land that has the potential for a range of crops. The area is suitably located with road and port access to local and international markets. Less than 10% of the Markham Valley road corridor is actively cropped. The [Land access study](#) conducted in early 2020 identified that a leading cause of this underperformance is that land held by clans has not been put to productive use because of a lack of knowledge and resources to develop the land on their own.

Land Access for agriculture in Markham is largely centered around family and clan landownership. Most parts of this land mass are unused and underdeveloped for agriculture.

Family units work on their own land as smallholder farmers and earn income directly from their produce or join a group such as a cooperative or an association which is basically made up of families and clans.

Most of the family units like others throughout PNG work in agriculture to earn an income to meet needs such as school fees and necessary basic manufactured food such as rice for those who are not rice farmers, salt, sugar and soap. Many farmers grow and sell just to meet their needs and are missing out on turning their random production into a small to medium agriculture business.

Cooperatives in Markham are mostly for crops such as rice, cocoa, and oil palm for the large commercial markets. The potential for vegetables and fruits cultivation for the commercial market remains untapped and this could also happen through cooperatives and smallholders. Training and skills development for the farmers will have to be provided to ensure the farmers meet market requirements.



Unlocking Land for agricultural development and investment will bring in potential income and other benefits to the landowners to improve their livelihood, Investors' Return on Investment and Profit, and eventually generate additional revenue for the country.

Grow PNG is working through its [Land Access Working Group](#) comprising the Government, Agribusiness, and Landowners, with a range of sector stakeholders on challenges and issues in land access for agriculture development and investment in the Markham Valley.



Grow PNG through Agriculture Partnership

Land Access Models in Markham: Customary Land Lease

There are several different land access models operating by existing agribusinesses around the Markham Valley.

Hore Agricultural Supplies is one of a very few agriculture SME currently farming maize for stock feed in partnership with Farmset Limited in Lae. The farm is managed by Humphrey and Sandra Saese.

Hore Agricultural Supplies has been leasing customary land in the Wampar LLG in Huon Gulf District along the Markham Valley road corridor. Its business ventures through mutual landowner relationships highlighted the dire need for the Government to look at how best it could support local semi-commercial agribusinesses such as theirs.

Maize is being grown on the land and sold to Farmset Limited for stockfeed manufacturing. The ILG members are given group contracts to work on the land and are paid for labour.

The customary landowners are seeing the benefits of these arrangements and have shown interest in growing maize to sell through Hore to Farmset Limited.

“You have to be inclusive when dealing with landowners, you will have to be part and partial of the landowner community, how the community moves and lives, and their social culture. One important thing I learned was to be very inclusive when approaching landowners, to make them be involved in what you investing in a mutually beneficial way.

When you involve the landowners, they feel a sense of inclusion because they are participating by working on their land as well as getting income to sustain their families. It’s a mutually beneficial partnership,” said Humphrey Saese.



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.

GENERAL ENQUIRY

Email: 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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