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## **Country policy profile for Papua New Guinea forwards sustainable agriculture development**

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### **Abstract**

The agriculture sector remains the main stay of PNG's economy especially in the rural economy. While significant pockets of pure subsistence agriculture do exist, the livelihood of the majority of the rural population is supported by semi-subsistence agriculture which comprises traditional subsistence gardens that provide the basic needs for the family and small-scale commercial agriculture that provides the family with cash income. In terms of its direct impacts at the livelihoods of the majority of Papua New Guinea, semi-subsistence agriculture is the most important economic sector. It sustains the livelihood of the 85% of the population of the 5.1 million people residing in rural areas and engaged in a mixture of cash cropping and subsistence agriculture. About 983,767 households are engaged in food/root crops and vegetables, livestock, fishing, coffee, coconut, coco oil and rubber. Agriculture contributes about 25% to the GDP and about 29% of the population is food consumers as based on the 1996/98 survey data which is an increase of 3% over the period of 1990/92 period (FAO, 2000) which classified PNG as a low income deficit by FAO 1996. Poverty and rural development are critical issues being identified for policy adjustment in addressing sustainable agriculture development in the country. These areas are clearly reflected in the government's MTDS 2003-2007 including expansion and diversification of the sectors, poverty alleviation and food security. Some problems that contribute towards effective implementation of the policies are; lack of constitutional policy capacity within the government system, inadequate linkage and integration with various stockholders, poor agriculture extension service, market, information, poor resources allocation, inadequate research capacity, poor and inadequate skilled manpower, poor infrastructure and poor access to credit has hampered the progress of agriculture and rural development. Existing policies and strategies developed in addressing sustainable agriculture development include: Medium term Development Strategy 2003-2007

developed by the Department of National Planning and Rural Development (DNP & RD); 1996 Agriculture white paper, Draft rice policy 2003, National Agriculture Development Strategy 2002-2012, DAL Corporate Plan 1999, and the Draft Agriculture Development Policy 2003. Despite comprehensive work in policy formulation there has been limited action taken at the implementation of policies and strategies that would enhance agriculture, food security and rural development. The main line departments highly concerned by agriculture, food security and rural development are Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL), Department of Health (DOH), Department of National Planning and Rural Development (DNP & RD), Department of Education (DOE), Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the 19 Provincial Governments of PNG. A better multi-stockholder coordination of rural development support activities at national, regional and local is required to identify gaps to promote and support sustainable agriculture development in PNG.