

New Zealand – Papua New Guinea Economic Plan of Action 2025-2029

*Working together to support sustainable economic development,
and to build a modern trade and economic partnership*

In March 2025, Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Hon James Marape and New Zealand Prime Minister Rt Hon Christopher Luxon signed the *New Zealand–Papua New Guinea Statement of Partnership 2025–2029*, setting out a vision for a partnership of increased breadth and depth, where New Zealand and Papua New Guinea contribute as equal partners to bring our countries closer together; to deliver tangibly against Papua New Guinea's development challenges and opportunities; and to achieve benefits for both our peoples, our region and beyond.

The Statement of Partnership set out five priority areas for strengthened engagement:

- Partnership and Dialogue
- People and Communities
- Economic Development and Prosperity
- Peace and Security
- Environment and Planet

This Economic Plan of Action seeks to set out a pathway by which New Zealand and Papua New Guinea will work together to strengthen our trade and economic engagement, across the period 2025-2029.

In strengthening our cooperation, we will prioritise actions that deliver on the outcomes of Papua New Guinea's Medium Term Development Plan IV, with a focus on actions that support inclusive economic development (especially for women, indigenous peoples, and youth) and ensure our economies are prosperous and future-proofed.

As trade-oriented economies, we also reaffirm our support for open markets and the rules-based international trading system with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at its core, and for trade and investment policies that advance the interests of small open economies. We will continue to work together to pursue open, diversified, rules-based trade; to strengthen supply-chain connectivity; to promote investment opportunities; and to strengthen cooperation on cross-border trade facilitation matters.

Finally, we note the potential for enhanced engagement between our economies, businesses, and policymakers, in support of economic and national development, and the value of greater economic cooperation, trade and investment flows, and business linkages. We therefore seek to implement actions that will result in stronger economic connections, with a shared goal increasing annual two-way trade to one billion kina by 2030.

With this in mind, we will strive to strengthen our cooperation the following priority areas:

1. Deepening our trade and economic engagement

We will work together to increase our bilateral trade and investment flows, and to strengthen engagement between our systems on the economic policy issues that matter to us, including in priority areas such as ease of doing business, state owned enterprises, economic reform, and private sector development. Together, we seek to grow our two-way trade to one billion kina per year, and to see greater engagement between our public sector institutions on economic issues.

Subject to resourcing constraints, potential action items to take this forward include the following:

- Both sides will explore opportunities to strengthen trade and investment flows, including through market insights analysis and sharing experiences and approaches in attracting investment.

- Both sides will seek to identify key areas for investment within our respective economies, and exchange information that can be passed to our businesses on the opportunities in this regard.
- New Zealand will establish a knowledge-sharing initiative with Papua New Guinea, focused on sharing best practices for the governance of State-Owned Enterprises. This initiative will be supplemented by training and resources on areas such as establishing boards of directors, board appointment and nomination practices, and addressing governance challenges. Additionally, it will support the promotion of potential opportunities for New Zealand candidates to contribute as directors on Papua New Guinea's State-Owned Enterprise boards.
- New Zealand will identify options for providing capacity-building to Papua New Guinea on its trade negotiations capability, including by exchanging views on respective approaches to trade policy, sharing experiences from New Zealand's own Free Trade Agreement negotiations, and providing opportunities for short-term training in New Zealand where appropriate.
- Both sides will look to share lessons-learned on trade facilitation, with Papua New Guinea sharing its experiences as a signatory to the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR), and New Zealand sharing its experiences in electronic certification (including under the E-Cert certification programme).
- We will continue to engage on economic policy issues, including under the *Private Sector Development Initiative* programme (delivered by the ADB but co-funded by New Zealand), with a focus on identifying opportunities for drawing on New Zealand technical advisory support in key priority areas such as ease of doing business, regulation of financial markets and banking, state-owned enterprises, public-private sector issues, and private sector development.

2. Working together in the forums that matter

We recognise that we face an evolving geo-economic global environment with increasing strategic competition and rapid technological change. Is it therefore critical that we work more closely than ever in shared economic forums to promote open markets and support the rules-based trading system. Together, we seek to build a stronger partnership between our two countries within regional and multilateral economic forums, including APEC, the World Trade Organisation, and the Pacific Islands Forum Economic and Trade Ministerial Meetings.

Subject to resourcing constraints, potential action items to take this forward include the following:

- We will strengthen engagement and cooperation on WTO matters, especially in light of Papua New Guinea's decision to open a Permanent Mission in Geneva, including through strengthened policy exchange and greater coordination of positions on shared WTO priorities.
- We will strengthen engagement in APEC (including exploring the scope for Papua New Guinea to lead a programme of work under the *Structural Reform and Sustainable Green Growth Sub-Fund*, which was established by New Zealand in 2021) recognising that Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea can provide a unique Pacific perspective within that forum.
- In the Pacific, we will look to strengthen cooperation in the context of the *Pacific Islands Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting* (FEMM) and the *Pacific Islands Forum Trade Ministers Meeting*, as well as explore the scope for greater cooperation on regional economic platforms such as the *East New Britain Initiative*.
- Both sides will also renew our analysis on opportunities to better connect our markets, including by exploring the scope for engagement via regional trade and investment agreements.

3. Maximising labour mobility opportunities

We recognise the benefits that come from our existing cooperation on labour mobility, which helps to fill critical skill shortages in New Zealand while providing seasonal employment opportunities for workers from Papua New Guinea. We will therefore seek to strengthen Papua New Guinea's participation in and benefits from the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme.

Subject to resourcing constraints, potential action items to take this forward include the following:

- Papua New Guinea will appoint a Labour Mobility Unit Liaison Officer in its High Commission in Wellington, to support labour mobility promotion throughout New Zealand, and to engage with New Zealand immigration authorities.
- Papua New Guinea will explore the scope to arrange an inwards 'Labour Mobility Mission' for New Zealand RSE employers, to increase familiarisation of Papua New Guinea as a potential source country for RSE workers.
- New Zealand will explore the scope to provide technical support to Papua New Guinea on labour mobility, which could include technical advisory support to the Labour Mobility Unit.

4. Strengthening Cooperation in Agriculture and Fisheries

Agriculture is critical to both of our countries' economies, and to the livelihoods of our peoples. We will therefore work together to improve agricultural productivity and quality, and to identify opportunities for moving up the value chain in both agriculture and fisheries.

Subject to resourcing constraints, potential action items to take this forward include the following:

- We will work together to identify priority areas for development in Papua New Guinea's agricultural sector, including opportunities for agribusiness and agricultural trade.
- Working closely with Papua New Guinea ministers, officials, businesses, and communities, New Zealand will explore opportunities to develop a new agricultural development support programme in Papua New Guinea, building off earlier successes (such as the development of the Fresh Produce Development Agency) and existing work (including in climate-smart agriculture and biosecurity), with a goal of supporting Papua New Guinea's agricultural sector so that it has greater production, improved quality, increased resilience, and better access to markets.
- Papua New Guinea will provide New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries with a pineapple export plan, as part of the standard market access application process for imports into New Zealand.
- Papua New Guinea will engage with its exporters of coconut, taro, ginger, and yam, to ensure they are aware of market access pathways to New Zealand for these products, and to encourage an uplift in exports.
- We will strengthen cooperation in fisheries, including through an uplift in support and capacity-building from Fisheries New Zealand to the Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Agency, including support for fisheries management system processes and combatting IUU fishing.
- We will continue to work closely on biosecurity, including taking a science-based approach to decision-making on market access issues, and through continued cooperation on priority biosecurity issues (such as through an extension of the New Zealand-funded programme to prevent the spread of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle in Papua New Guinea).

5. Ensuring Inclusive Economic Development, including for youth, indigenous business, and women

Given the importance we each attach to the livelihoods of our peoples, we recognise the need to ensure that the benefits of economic development and trade are broadly shared, and that doing so can have a positive impact on economic growth and poverty alleviation, while also reducing inequality. We will therefore seek to work together to support inclusive economic growth, paying particular attention to identifying opportunities for investing in youth, indigenous and landowner groups, and women – with a goal of encouraging greater participation from these groups in our economies.

Subject to resourcing constraints, potential action items to take this forward include the following:

- New Zealand will look to arrange an 'Indigenous Business Mission', inviting Papua New Guinea landowner groups to travel to New Zealand and hear from iwi on their experiences and lessons-learned, including in terms of Māori governance models.
- New Zealand will share experiences and lessons-learned on Māori and Indigenous trade policy, and ways to strengthen collaboration with Papua New Guinea, including through the Inclusive Trade Action Group (ITAG) and the Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement (IPETCA).
- In consultation with Lae City Authority, New Zealand will develop a new support programme under this plan, centred around providing training and support to women entrepreneurs who are likely to sell goods at the refurbished Lae Market, including in areas such as entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and small business development.
- As part of its development of a refreshed New Zealand-Papua New Guinea gender programme, New Zealand will give due consideration to developing a new activity centred around women's economic empowerment.

6. Growing Business Connections

We recognise the importance of strengthening the connections between our businesses, drawing on the long-standing and enduring people-to-people connections that already exists between our two countries. To that end, we will seek to support stronger ties between our respective business peoples, including by working to facilitate trade missions and business visits in both directions, as well as greater engagement between our governments and each other's respective business communities.

Subject to resourcing constraints, potential action items to take this forward include the following:

- We will work together to strengthen government-to-business engagement with our respective business communities on the New Zealand-Papua New Guinea economic relationship, including through renewed engagement by our respective High Commissions with their host country's business council, as well as through improved information on market insights and opportunities for greater business connections.
- Where possible, we will identify 'Business Champions', to support and mentor other firms interested in exploring trade and investment opportunities between our two economies.
- We will identify key areas for investment within our respective economies, and exchange information that can be passed to our respective businesses on the opportunities in this regard.
- Papua New Guinea will seek to reinvigorate the Papua New Guinea-New Zealand Business Council, and to lead a trade mission to New Zealand for PNG exporters.
- New Zealand will work closely with the New Zealand-Papua New Guinea Business Council, to identify an opportune time for a business mission to Port Moresby and Lae.

7. Supporting private sector development across our respective economies

We acknowledge the important role that the private sector plays in driving economic cooperation and development and fostering innovation in our economies. To that end, we will work together to strengthen private sector development in Papua New Guinea, with a particular focus on maximising the opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and identifying opportunities to strengthen our firms' respective capabilities to export.

Subject to resourcing constraints, potential action items to take this forward include the following:

- We will continue to work together to ensure an enabling business environment for private sector development in Papua New Guinea, including through the *Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative* (led by the ADB, but co-funded by New Zealand), including on issues such as business law reform, competition and consumer protection, sustainable tourism, and the economic empowerment of women.

- We will continue to work together to support the development of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized enterprises in Papua New Guinea, including through an additional \$500,000 contribution from New Zealand to its *Business Link Pacific* programme, specifically tagged for expanding support to MSMEs in Papua New Guinea.
- We will work together to identify opportunities for strengthening business access to finance, including by the provision of concessional lending for small businesses, strengthening cooperation between our respective financial sectors, and supporting the development of Green Finance in Papua New Guinea.
- New Zealand will seek to arrange an initial (pilot) series of 'export readiness workshops' for Papua New Guinean producers interested in exporting to New Zealand.

Implementation

To oversee implementation of the Economic Plan of Action, we will establish a 'Trade and Economic Working Group', comprising key trade and economic officials from each side. The Trade and Economic Working Group will look to meet annually and provide a report to the New Zealand-Papua New Guinea High Level Consultations on progress under this Plan, as well as wider efforts to achieve the vision set out by our leaders within the Statement of Partnership. The specific details of the Trade and Economic Working Group, and wider implementation frameworks (including identification of streams of effort, and likely implementing agencies) will be developed in due course, for endorsement at the next High Level Consultations.