This newsletter provides an update on the achievements of the Preventing and Countering Corruption in Papua New Guinea Project (PNG Anti-Corruption Project). The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

High cost of corruption in Papua New Guinea

In the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) 2023 Annual Report, it is "conservatively estimated" that in Papua New Guinea (PNG), “the amount lost to fraud, waste, and error” is up to 10% of government spending or at least 2.4 to 3 billion Kina per annum”. Obviously, this sum would have found a better use for the delivery of essential public services. Other non-monetary costs of corruption underlined in the ICAC 2023 Annual Report are the “undermining of the democratic process” and the likely “reduced public confidence in the Government and Rule of Law”.

Everyone has a role to play in the fight against corruption and often; potential whistleblowers are discouraged from reporting their concerns or suspicions for fear of retaliation. In this context, the importance of providing them with balanced and effective protection is fundamental to enhancing transparency and accountability. For this purpose, the EU is funding a series of trainings implemented by UNDP and addressed to the private sector, Judiciary and public servants in different public departments to gain the necessary expertise, knowledge and practical skills on whistleblower protection, in line with the PNG Whistleblower Act 2020. Other trainings are organized with EU funds by UNODC and are addressed to staff of the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Auditor General’s Office, ICAC as well as other relevant government offices to be sure that cases of corruption are properly investigated and prosecuted.

At the same time, the EU recognizes the important role that, not only state actors, but also media and civil society play in the fight against corruption and will continue supporting them with different initiatives such as during the event supported by UNDP on the Press Freedom Day on 3rd of May.

UNDP and UNODC are successfully organizing these trainings and events within the EU-funded PNG Anti-corruption project which started in 2021 and successfully targets both State and non-State actors. This initiative is complementary to the five-year (2020 – 2026) programme of collaboration between the EU and the Government of PNG, called EU-PNG Partnership for Good Governance (P4GG). The EU P4GG is implemented to strengthen the governance and management of the Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG), the Royal Papua New Guinea Police Constabulary (RPNGPC), the Independent Commission for Against Corruption (ICAC) and to revitalize the Village Court System. Within this partnership, the European Union allocated 100 million Kina for actions aiming at promoting good governance and respect of the Rule of Law.
Vilnius, Lithuania, 18-21 June 2024 - With the support of UNDP and UNODC, an official delegation from Papua New Guinea attended the 21st International Anti-Corruption Conference 2024 in Lithuania, Vilnius from 18 to 21 June 2024.

During the conference, UNDP facilitated a series of bilateral meetings for members of the PNG delegation.

The PNG delegation members briefed Mrs. Francine Pickup, UNDP Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support Deputy Director, about their satisfaction with the support provided to the PNG Government through the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project.

The PNG delegation also had bilateral meetings with the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau of Poland, the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania, the Hungarian Integrity Authority, Eurojust, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Indonesia, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Anti-Corruption Commission of Zambia.

The PNG delegation also met with the representatives of the CSOs, namely Mr. Francois Valerian, Chairman of Transparency International, and Mathias Huter, Managing Director of the UNCAC Coalition.

The members of the delegation headed by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Attorney General, Dr. Eric Kwa included the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Justice and Attorney General, Mrs. Josephine Pitmur; Mrs. Roselynn Melua and Mr. Jeffrey Murley from the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council; the Commissioner of PNG ICAC, Mr. Andrew Forbes; the Deputy Commissioners of PNG ICAC, Mr. Graham Gill and Mr. Dan Baulch; and Chairman of Transparency International PNG, Mr. Peter Aitsi.
Papua New Guinea Progresses Fight Against Corruption at the United Nations

Vienna, Austria, 17 June 2024 - An official Papua New Guinea delegation responsible for combating corruption has updated the United Nations in Vienna, Austria on the country’s progress along with exchanging best practices with international partners.

With support from UNODC and UNDP under the Papua New Guinea Anti-Corruption Project, a major project funded by the European Union, Papua New Guinea made strong contributions to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) Implementation Review Group (IRG), Working Group on Asset Recovery and Expert meeting to enhance international cooperation, at the United Nations in Vienna last week.

"Papua New Guinea aims through UNCAC to prioritize its strategic interventions and mobilize resources in addressing gaps within our preventative measures, legislative and policy framework, asset recovery, international cooperation and foster strategic partnership arrangements with key institutions and development partners domestically, regionally in the Asia Pacific region and beyond," said Dr. Eric Kwa, the Secretary of the Department for Justice and Attorney General and PNG delegation leader to the IRG.

Dr Kwa informed delegates from the 190 member States to UNCAC that PNG has established a fully functioning Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) with preventative, investigative and prosecution powers and has recently endorsed the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). Addressing corruption and building an integrity system within the country is a strategic priority of the current Papua New Guinea Government, Dr Kwa said.

Papua New Guinea continues to be an active contributor and participant to advancing regional anti-corruption initiatives such as the implementation of Teieniwa Vision under the 21 member states Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Dr Kwa said.

The delegation also received briefings on the Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative, the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities, and from the coordinator of PNG’s MOU with Open Ownership, and investigators and prosecutors from other national integrity agencies. The delegation met with the Delegation of the European Union to the International Organisations in Vienna and had bilateral meetings with the UNCAC Secretariat involved in PNG’s own UNCAC Country Review and its engagement in current Reviews of Samoa and Japan.

Mrs. Josephine A. Pitmur, Deputy Secretary, Department of Justice & Attorney General, presented to delegates on a panel on Technical Assistance on International Cooperation and Asset Recovery.

Papua New Guinea also included a civil society representative in its official delegation - Mr. Peter Atsi, Chairman, Transparency International Papua New Guinea, who will report to local civil society groups upon his return. Mr. Daniel Baulch, Deputy Commissioner, PNG Independent Commission Against Corruption, was also a member of the official delegation along with Mrs. Roselyn Melua and Mr. Jeffery Murley from the Department of Prime Minister & NEC.

The delegation identified a clear pathway forward to apply significant learnings from the conference and study visits to strengthen integrity mechanisms in PNG.
Fraud & Corruption Detection Training boosts Public Service Investigators’ cooperation

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 20 May 2024 – Key representatives from the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC), Ombudsman Commission (OC), Internal Revenue Commission (IRC) and the National Housing Commission (NHC) came together for the first time to enhance their cooperation in the fight against corruption. Facilitated by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the event, with support from the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project, aimed to identify and detect fraud when performing their duties in their agencies.

This was the first time for officers from the National Housing Commission to participate in a fraud training workshop with law enforcement. UNODC also had the opportunity with NHC and IRC to explain more of their engagement with the law enforcement agencies. Investigators from ICAC and the OC also actively participated in the workshop.

The active participation of these agencies bolsters and shows promise for public service collaboration in investigations into corruption within various government agencies in the country.

Seasoned fraud and corruption investigators, Mr. Thomas Eluh and Mr. Mathew Damaru, from the ICAC, encouraged coordinated investigations into corruption from the various integrity and law enforcement agencies.

"Fraud leads to corruption and money laundering activities, eroding significant national building efforts. Understanding what fraud is and how it leads to corruption, is the center of successful corruption investigations," said Mr. Eluh, Former Interim chairman of ICAC.

UNODC Empowers Auditors with Anti-Corruption Strategies and Tools

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 9 May 2024 - The Auditor General’s Office (AGO) has welcomed the technical support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to boost their auditing skills, under the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project.

The AGO boasts specialized areas of audit that includes Forensic Audits, National Audits, Provincial and Local Level Audits, State owned Enterprise Audits, Information Technology and Performance Audit. This reflects the AGO’s targeted approach to audit and infrastructure to mitigate corruption risks in audits.

Ms. Gillan Donnelly, UNODC Consultant, an experienced Forensic Accountant and Intelligence Expert, conducted a mentoring workshop with Audit Officers of the Auditor General’s Office. The Audit Officers who attended this training were very experienced with a great wealth of accumulated institutional knowledge, and well versed in the legal framework and technical capacity vital to their duties and responsibilities at the office of the AGO.

UNODC provided support and mentoring for the officers during that workshop and set out strategies, generic policy templates, and learning tools that would enhance their focused approach to addressing corruption in the audit space. Audit Officers discussed the differences between each jurisdiction and developing strategies to address these differences in the auditing process, while ensuring to perform their duty within their legal frameworks to accomplish their constitutional mandate.
UNODC Empowers Young Prosecutors at OPP

Ms. April Cripps has been engaged by the UNODC to provide mentoring to Junior Prosecutors in-person and through remote technical assistance. Ms April Cripps brings more than 30 years of experience in prosecution from her previous employment as prosecutor in the US, Russia and recently in Micronesia and as special Prosecutor for the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Raphael Luman as the Acting Public Prosecutor repeated the same sentiments of the former Public Prosecutor, Mr. Pondros Kaluwin in the need for continued efforts in capacity building for its young prosecutors to be abreast of technological advancements, and how it influences the conduct of investigations or the admissibility of the evidence that prosecutors will be required to present in Court.

“UNODC’s mentoring program to the Office of the Public Prosecutor is crucial to the ongoing support for the prosecutors to uphold the rule of law and dispense with justice in the criminal justice system,” said Ms. Pealiwan Koralyo, National Programme Officer for Anti-Corruption and Acting Officer-in-Charge, UNODC Papua New Guinea.

UNDP hosts a training on Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Whistleblower Protection Policy for the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council

The two-day training aimed to raise the participants’ knowledge of the basic elements and features of the policy, which PMNEC adopted in August 2023 to safeguard good governance and financial viability through improved management of the risks of fraud and corruption within the department. The participants also learned about best practices for detecting forms of fraud and corruption and creating an enabling environment for whistleblowers.

In his opening remarks to the participants, UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Nicholas Booth, stressed the need for more robust anti-corruption instruments in Papua New Guinea. “We can’t combat corruption without effective policies in every public service department that reflect on where the risks of corruption exist, what policies we need to prevent it, and help people be safe when they call out corruption when they see it,” he said.

“This training is a part of the EU PNG Partnership for Good Governance, which is a collaboration between the European Union and the Government of Papua New Guinea to support initiatives that promote good governance and the rule of law. I think it’s very important to have a policy to prevent corruption and protect the whistleblowers and would like to commend the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council for being one of the first institutions in Papua New Guinea in developing this kind of policy,” added the Mrs. Isabella Ferrari, a Program Manager from the European Union Delegation to Papua New Guinea.

After the completing the training for PMNEC officials on 6-7 May 2024, UNDP hosted the same training for over 70 officials from all other public sector departments in the country on 8-9 May 2024.
UNDP holds a training on judicial integrity and human rights for judges and magistrates

Papua New Guinea, 1-3 May 2024 -
On 1-2 May 2024, UNDP in partnership with the PNG Center for Judicial Excellence hosted a two-day training on Human Rights, Anti-Corruption, and Gender Equality for Papua New Guinean judges and magistrates. The training highlighted the importance and need for judges and magistrates in Papua New Guinea to continue demonstrating qualities that encourage anti-corruption, integrity, ethics, human rights, and gender equality in their day-to-day duties.

In the course of the training, the members of the PNG judiciary were able to gain insight on basic features and best practices of the global fight against corruption, and learn about international anti-corruption legal instruments and their relevance to Papua New Guinea. The training also highlighted the importance of human rights and gender equality for a judicial system and ways for ensuring a maximum level of personal and institutional integrity among the judiciary.

“This workshop has encouraged discussions on human rights, anti-corruption, and gender equality and provided us an opportunity to critically analyze the systems we have in place to address these issues. We must identify ways to improve our work as judges and magistrates by maintaining our independence, impartiality, and integrity. Most importantly, we must keep our people’s trust and confidence and play a critical role in building a nation based on the rule of law,” stated the Acting Chief Justice of the Supreme and National Courts of PNG, Mr. Ambeng Kandakasi, at the training.

Following this training, UNDP and the PNG Center for Judicial Excellence hosted a similar workshop for court officials on 3 May 2024. Over 20 participants from Port Moresby and other Papua New Guinean provinces attended the training.
UNODC Supports PNG Integrity Agencies in the Integrity Professional Foundations Course

The Department of Prime Minister & National Executive Council coordinated with the UNODC and representatives from PNG integrity agencies to be a part of this pilot program, including from the Office of the Auditor General, Independent Commission against Corruption, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Office of the Security Coordination & Assessment, and Department of Justice and Attorney General.

The IPF Course also brings representatives from law enforcement and integrity agencies to the training alongside civil society participants from Transparency International PNG (TIPNG). “It is crucial to understand that effective collaboration and coordination stem from a deeper appreciation of integrity systems in both the public and private sectors. Recognizing this is the first step towards addressing corruption,” said Ms. Pealiwan Koralyo, National Programme Officer for Anti-Corruption and Acting Officer-in-Charge, UNODC Papua New Guinea.

The IPF Course run by Griffith University, Australia commenced in April 2024. The course modality includes online sessions and face-to-face workshops. The first workshop was in Port Moresby in May, and the Secretary for the DJAG, Dr. Eric Kwa officially opened the workshop and launched this pilot program.

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 2 May 2023 - UNODC in partnership with Griffith University launched its first ever Integrity Professional Foundations (IPF) Course in Port Moresby on 2 May 2024.

Significant support was received from PNG national stakeholders, through the PNG EU Funded Anti-Corruption project to develop, design, and lead the IPF course. The IPF course was developed and integrated as a course with Griffith University.

This IPF course aims at strengthening the capacity of integrity officers to better appreciate integrity systems in national and international environments and promotes increased awareness of corruption and the need for coordinated corruption investigations.

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UNDP and DJAG organize a consultation on Whistleblower Act 2020

Papua New Guinea, 30 April 2024 - UNDP in partnership with the Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG) organized a ‘Consultation on the Whistleblower Act 2020’. The purpose of the consultation was to discuss and gather input from officials from key Government institutions and identify strengths, weaknesses, and possibilities for further improving of the Whistleblower Act 2020 to enable its effective implementation.

"An amendment to the Whistleblowers Act 2020 is critical at this stage. This needs to be done before the adoption of its regulation because the current legislative framework does not provide an extensive scope of protection to whistleblowers. Some practices related to the whistleblower protection included in the current Whistleblower Act 2020 have changed, and the Whistleblower Act 2020 would therefore have to be amended to be in line with the recent global standards and lessons learned," added Mrs. Josephine Advent Pitmur, Deputy Secretary at Department for Justice and Attorney General.

"UNDP PNG is supporting the Government in implementing the whistleblower protection legislative provisions and has prepared a comprehensive analysis of the Whistleblower Act 2020 with recommendations. The key objective of the consultation is to discuss the way forward, including the potential amendments of the Whistleblower Act 2020, to enable its effective implementation," stated Dr. Alma Sedlar, UNDP Chief Technical Adviser on Anti-Corruption.

The consultations were the fourth consultations related to the Whistleblower Act 2020, which UNDP and DJAG have organized through the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project. In addition, UNDP has facilitated various training on whistleblower protection for representatives of the public and private sector through the project in the last two years.
Papua New Guinea, 29 April 2024 - UNDP organized a training on developing, implementing, and evaluating national anti-corruption policies and action plans for key developers and implementers of the Papua New Guinea National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the National Ant-Corruption Plan of Action.

Over 30 key officials from Life Care PNG, Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council, Department of Justice & Attorney General, Transparency International PNG, Public Services Commission PNG and Bank of Papua New Guinea, attended the training.

Through the sessions, the participants were expected to gain a thorough understanding of the characteristics of effective anti-corruption policies and plans of action and the consequences of ineffective implementation of national anti-corruption strategies and action plans.

“I think it is very timely for us to reflect upon the importance of the National Plan of Action 2020 – 2025 (NACPA). It is an incredibly vital document, and a very significant anti-corruption action plan for the country. From ICAC’s perspective, we will be working with several agencies to see how best we can implement NACPA. Therefore, this training will be essential for us to gain your feedback and will help us to determine the best way forward,” stated Commissioner Andrew Forbes from the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

“It is crucial that national efforts to take action against corruption are aligned and coordinated. The National Anti-Corruption Plan of Action enables all actors, including civil society, to contribute towards strengthening national integrity systems. When fully implemented, the Plan of Action will not only measure progress, but more importantly, identify areas where anti-corruption efforts can be optimized and improved, in line with the national development agenda,” added Ms. Arianne Kassman, the Chief Executive Officer of Transparency International PNG.
UNDP trains personnel from the Department for Justice and Attorney General to tackle corruption

Papua New Guinea, 4-5 April 2024 - UNDP facilitated training on corruption risk assessment and mitigation plans for personnel of the Department for Justice and Attorney General (DJAG). The two-day workshop provided over 40 participants with the knowledge to best identify and evaluate corruption risks and start developing corresponding mitigation strategies within their departments and branches.

“The Department for Justice and Attorney General is committed to introducing preventive measures to prevent corruption in Papua New Guinea. This training will be a useful tool for us to assess the lessons we have learned about gaps and issues in our governance processes, and how to mitigate corruption risks within our systems practically,” added Dr. Eric Kwa, the Secretary of the Department for Justice and Attorney General.

“I am very pleased that there is a movement and commitment in Papua New Guinea to carry out corruption risk assessments and develop corruption mitigation strategies within all areas of Government. The Department for Justice and Attorney General is at the heart of the rule of law sector and is thus in an ideal position to lead the vanguard of rooting out corruption in the country,” UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Nicholas Booth, stated in his opening remarks.

Over 40 personnel from the Department for Justice and Attorney General participated in the training held in Port Moresby.

After the training, the participants continued to receive technical assistance from UNDP to develop and complete their mitigation plans.

Profile on PNG Anti-Corruption Staff

UNODC Anti-Corruption Adviser, Mr. Graeme Gunn has left the UNODC after successfully implementing the “first phase” of the PNG EU-funded Anti-Corruption Project and establishing the UNODC PNG Programme Office. Graeme joined the UNODC in 2022 and has championed the expansion of the UNODC’s mandate and programme in PNG. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

We introduce our new Team Leader, Ms. Marie Jane Fatiaki, who brings a wealth of Pacific development experience and passion for excellence to the PNG Programme Office. We are confident that under Marie’s leadership, our country programme will continue to develop and assist our stakeholders. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Marie as she joins the EU funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project and PNG Programme Office.