The European Union Remains Committed to Supporting the Fight Against Corruption in PNG

Corruption is a global, transnational phenomenon which undermines democracy, the rule of law, human rights, peace and international security and sustainable development.

The European Union (EU) remains committed to the fight against corruption within its own borders and internationally. Effective anti-corruption policies are an essential part of the enabling environment required for the Rule of Law, alongside respect for judicial independence, free and pluralistic media, transparent and high-quality public administration, and a free and active civil society. A constant commitment to prevention, maintaining a culture of integrity and the active enforcement of anti-corruption legislation, including effective prosecution of corruption crimes, is needed to keep corruption in check. This approach is also reflected in the EU’s support of the anti-corruption efforts outside of the EU.

In Papua New Guinea, an example of the EU commitment to address the above issues is the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project, which focuses on supporting anti-corruption prevention and awareness, as well as capacity building of the key anti-corruption and integrity institutions in relation to the investigation and prosecution of corruption. Launched in 2021, the project has been successfully implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); targeting both state and non-state actors. This initiative is complementary to the five-year EU-PNG Partnership for Good Governance which started in 2020 and is designed to strengthen the governance and management of the Department of Justice and Attorney General, the Royal Papua New Guinea Police Constabulary, and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), as well as revitalizing the Village Court System. Within this partnership, the EU allocated PGK100 million for actions aimed at promoting good governance and respect of the Rule of Law.

The EU appreciates that between 2020 and 2023 the PNG Government has made good progress in the implementation of the Social, Law and Order Sectors’ policies. As a result of the adopted policies, there has been a substantial increase in the anti-corruption perception index for PNG (30 in 2022 compared to 27 in 2020). Furthermore, significant steps were taken towards the ICAC’s full establishment. Whilst praising the Government for these important achievements, it is important to highlight that addressing corruption in order to eradicate it is a long endeavour; so, together with the non-state actors such as the media and the civil society, we should continue to work towards this objective.
ICAC Commemorates International Anti-Corruption Day 2023 with Public Service Managers

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 6 December 2023 — Papua New Guinea’s Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) commemorated International Anti-Corruption Day with a major awareness raising event for public servants. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was honored to brief the participants on the UN Convention Against Corruption.

This year International Anti-Corruption Day marks the twentieth anniversary of the UN Convention Against Corruption under the theme “Uniting the World against Corruption”. During the briefing for public officials, the UNODC PNG Officer-in-Charge and Anti-Corruption Adviser, Mr Graeme Gunn, emphasized that corruption has negative impacts on every aspect of society and is profoundly intertwined with conflict and instability, jeopardizing social and economic development and undermining democratic institutions and the Rule of Law.

Papua New Guinea was the first Pacific Island to ratify the Convention in 2007. Since its inception, 190 parties have committed to the Convention’s anti-corruption obligations, showing near-universal recognition of the importance of good governance, accountability, and political commitment. The General Assembly designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness of corruption and the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it.

“Preventing corruption, promoting transparency, and strengthening institutions is crucial, if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be met. UNODC, as the custodian of the UN Convention Against Corruption, is pleased to be assisting the establishment and functions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption under the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project” said Mr Gunn.

ICAC Hosts a Workshop for Papua New Guinean Journalists on International Anti-Corruption Day

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 4 December 2023 — To commemorate International Anti-Corruption Day in Papua New Guinea, Papua New Guinea’s Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) hosted a workshop for local journalists at the Hilton Hotel in Port Moresby. The workshop aimed to raise the participants’ awareness of the role of journalists in combating corruption.

Both the Commissioner of ICAC PNG, Mr. Andrew Forbes, and the Deputy Commissioner of ICAC PNG, Mr. Graham Gill, provided the participants with a thorough overview of the power and functions of ICAC in Papua New Guinea. ICAC is set to properly begin operations in the country after both Mr. Forbes and Mr. Gill, as well as the other Deputy Commissioner of ICAC PNG, Daniel Baulch, were sworn into their roles by the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea, Sir Bob Dadae, earlier this July.

As part of the activities of the workshop, UNDP Chief Technical Adviser on Anti-Corruption, Dr. Alma Sedlar, also gave a presentation on investigative journalism and corruption. The presentation provided the participants with practical guidance on various aspects of investigative journalism, such as collecting and verifying evidence and protecting the anonymity of sources. Dr. Alma Sedlar made the presentation on investigative journalism and role of journalists in investigating and exposing corruption at different levels of society also at a training titled “Verified Facts”, which the United Nations in PNG hosted for over 25 journalists in Port Moresby on 22 August.
UNODC Awareness Sessions in the Provinces of PNG

Papua New Guinea, 1 December 2023 — Throughout 2023, UNODC has visited fraud and corruption investigators across the country to conduct awareness sessions under the European Union-funded Anti-Corruption Project. UNODC engaged with officers from East and West New Britain, East Sepik, Enga, Jiwaka, National Capital District, New Ireland, Simbu, Southern Highlands, Western Highlands and Western provinces.

The visits, which primarily focused on the Provincial Fraud and Anti-Corruption Units of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, have traversed the rich diversity of Papua New Guinea. From Western Province, PNG’s home to barramundi and the Fly River where the team visited Kiunga and Ok Tedi, to New Ireland, where prosecutors and investigators from as far as Namatanai attended, to the ‘kol ples’ of the rugged vast highlands region.

Police investigators and prosecutors participated in interactive discussions on fraud and corruption which explored the impacts and types of fraud and corruption within the country. An officer from the National Anti-Corruption Directorate joined each visit to strengthen ties between national and provincial corruption fighters in law enforcement.

“UNODC in collaboration with the Bomana Police College is supporting RPNGC to deliver fraud and corruption training for investigators in the national and provincial fraud and anti-corruption units. We intend to carry out further provincial visits in the new year,” said Mr. Graeme Gunn, UNODC Officer-in-Charge and Anti-Corruption Adviser, Papua New Guinea.

Public Prosecutor Welcomes Capacity Building Efforts to Support Junior Prosecutors

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 7 November 2023 — The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reinforced its collaboration with the Office of the Public Prosecutor by bolstering capacity building under the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project.

Ms. April Dawn Cripps, an accomplished legal professional, has been introduced to the Office of the Public Prosecutor paving the way for her to play a crucial role in providing mentorship and guidance to junior prosecutors. This initiative aims to enhance capacity building within the legal framework, responding to the expressed need for specialized contributions identified during introductory meetings with the outgoing Public Prosecutor, Mr. Pondros Kaluwin.

Mr. Kaluwin emphasized the vital role of capacity building in ensuring the Rule of Law and the progress of the country. He highlighted the importance of training and upskilling junior prosecutors, recognizing them as valuable assets to Papua New Guinea.

The OPP boasts specialized units dedicated to prosecuting fraud, corruption, and money laundering, and to the recovery of assets. These units include the Serious Corruption and Dishonesty Unit, the Proceeds of Crime and International Cooperation Unit, and the General Prosecutions Unit. This collaboration represents a concerted effort to fortify legal capabilities and combat corruption effectively through prosecutions and asset recovery action.
Joint Efforts Against Corruption: Banks, Telecom Providers and Law Enforcement Unite

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 2 November 2023 — In a landmark collaboration, representatives from commercial banks, telecommunications providers, and law enforcement came together to enhance their cooperation in the fight against corruption. Facilitated by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the event, held under the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project, aimed to identify challenges in financial and corruption investigations while exploring avenues for information sharing in accordance with the law.

The gathering convened commercial banks and telecommunications representatives for roundtable discussions on the collection of intelligence resources and evidence. This marked the inaugural meeting for investigators from the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate, providing them a platform to share insights into the challenges they face during corruption investigations.

Participants included representatives from the Bank of South Pacific, Westpac Bank, Digicel PNG and Telikom. The discussions underscored the significance of collaboration and fostered ongoing partnerships.

These efforts signal a shared commitment to combating corruption and establishing a framework for sustained cooperation.

UNDP Supports the PNG Government in Finalizing its Right to Information Policy

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 31 October 2023 — As part of its efforts to support the Government of Papua New Guinea in finalizing its Right to Information Policy, UNDP supported the Department of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of National Planning and Monitoring in hosting a consultation, where key state and non-state actors involved in the country’s anti-corruption efforts were provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the latest draft of the policy.

The participants engaged in lively dialogue about the current challenges Papua New Guineans face in gaining unimpeded access to vital information, and the measures needed to ensure an open, accountable and participatory Government in the country.

The participants performed a thorough overview of the current provisions of the draft policy and were able to suggest changes to refine or expand it. In addition, the participants learned about the Government’s efforts to establish a comprehensive Freedom of Information System in the country.

The consultation also served as a continuation to a roundtable discussion, which UNDP and Transparency International hosted on International Day for Universal Access to Information on 26 September this year, where the participants discussed ways forward for building a legislative framework regarding “Right to Information” in Papua New Guinea.
UNDP Trains DPM&NEC Employees on Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Whistleblower Protection Policy

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 25 October 2023 — UNDP and the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council (DPM&NEC) hosted a training on DPM&NEC’s internal Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Whistleblower Protection policy for employees from different offices of the department.

The Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council developed and adopted the Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Whistleblower Protection policy in August 2023 to safeguard good governance and financial viability through improved management of the risks of fraud and corruption within the department. This marked the first time that a government department in Papua New Guinea had developed such an internal policy for combating corruption. UNDP provided technical support to the development of the policy through the European Union-funded PNG Anti-Corruption project.

During the 3-day training, the participants received guidance on the practical implementation of the policy. The participants learned about the types of fraud and corruption sanctioned by the policy and how violations of the policy will be investigated within the department.

“This training will give you an in-depth understanding of what this policy will mean for our department. It is the responsibility of each of us to hold each other accountable and to ensure that this policy is operationalized in an effective manner,” said the Chief Secretary to the Government, Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council, Mr. Ivan Pomaleu in his opening remarks.

The Head of Development Cooperation of the European Union Delegation to Papua New Guinea, Mr. Hans Lambrecht, stated: “The European Union wants to congratulate the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council for becoming the first Government department in Papua New Guinea to develop such a policy. It has been an honour for the EU to support the development of this policy and we look forward to continuing our joint efforts to enhance good governance in Papua New Guinea through different initiatives.”
UNDP and the Business Council of PNG Host Training to Enhance Business Integrity in the Private Sector

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 20 October 2023 — To improve understanding of the role of the private sector in fighting corruption in Papua New Guinea, UNDP and the Business Council of Papua New Guinea organized a training on business integrity in the private sector in Port Moresby.

The participants engaged in a variety of interactive sessions, where they learned about corruption risks in public procurement and whistleblower protection for representatives of the private sector. Representatives of the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council also presented their newly adopted Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Whistleblower Policy during the training. The policy was developed with UNDP’s technical assistance through the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project.

"With the increasing power of extraterritorial anti-bribery laws, corruption is a risk that no company, particularly a company that operates on a national or global scale, can afford to take. I hope this training will help you in protecting your companies against corruption and teach you how to report incidents of corruption in a safe and ethical manner," UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Nicholas Booth stated in his opening remarks.

"We recognize that corruption remains a significant challenge in our country. It undermines social cohesion, economic growth, and equitable development. It erodes trust in public institutions and hinders progress towards achieving sustainable development goals. I thank the UNDP for hosting these anti-corruption trainings, which are crucial in advocating for business continuity that is resilient in combating and reducing corrupt practices," added Ms. Carmella Gabina, the Executive Director of the Business Council of Papua New Guinea.

UNDP Prepares Public Officials to Train Their Colleagues on Investigation of Administrative Complaints

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 18 October 2023 — UNDP and the Department of Justice and Attorney General hosted a 3-day advanced training of trainers on the investigation of administrative complaints for over 30 public sector officials from key anti-corruption institutions in Papua New Guinea.

The training was a continuation of earlier trainings on investigation of administrative complaints, which the participants had joined in October 2022 and May 2023. The participants took part in interactive exercises where they learned to proactively identify potential wrongdoing in their workplaces and overcome common obstacles for conducting effective investigations of administrative complaints. The training also prepared the participants to transfer this new knowledge to their colleagues by teaching them to conduct similar trainings in their respective departments.

"Unless we have robust systems in place for investigating any wrongdoing in our public institutions, we face the risk of both citizens and public servants losing trust in our systems of governance. I hope the skills you will gain from this training will help in you in establishing a strong culture in your organizations, where justice and accountability are ensured for any misuse of power or public resources," UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Nicholas Booth, stated in his opening remarks.

"This UNDP training on investigation of administrative complaints is crucial for public sector departments because not every malpractice is a criminal offense. This training is important to uncover the administrative malpractice that can eventually lead to criminal investigations. It is also of utmost importance for enhancing integrity across the public sector system," stated Mrs. Josephine Advent Pitmuru, Deputy Secretary from the Department of Justice and Attorney General.
UNDP Strengthens Efforts to Protect Whistleblowers in Papua New Guinea

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 21 September 2023 —
As part of their joint efforts to combat corruption in Papua New Guinea, UNDP and the Department of Justice and Attorney General facilitated a total of four trainings on protection of whistleblowers in Papua New Guinea in September 2023.

The first two trainings, which were held between 4-8 September 2023 were attended by public sector officials, while the other two trainings held on 12-13 September 2023 targeted legal practitioners and members of the Papua New Guinean judiciary. All trainings intended to familiarize the participants with the Whistleblower Act 2020, which the Government of Papua New Guinea adopted in 2020 to help protect the rights and safety of persons reporting corruption and other misuses of power within public institutions.

“Whistleblowing is essential not only for detecting fraud, corruption and misconduct, but also for promoting a culture of accountability and integrity that protects the interests of the public. We look forward to continuing our joint efforts with the Government of Papua New Guinea to create an enabling environment, where whistleblowers feel safe to report corruption and other forms of wrongdoing without fear of retaliation,” UNDP Chief Technical Advisor, Dr. Alma Sedlar, stated at the end of the trainings.

“The European Union is very pleased to support this training, because we believe that whistleblowers play a crucial role in improving the welfare of society by upholding transparency and accountability,” said Ms. Isabella Ferrari, a Program Manager from the European Union Delegation to Papua New Guinea.

UNDP Consultant, Ashley Savage, training the participants.

UNDP Chief Technical Advisor, Dr. Alma Sedlar, presenting to the participants of the training.

Isabella Ferrari, a Program Manager from the European Union Delegation to Papua New Guinea during her remarks.
Digitalized File Management Systems for the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 31 August 2023 — UNODC is supporting the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate to upskill in the use of computers to assist with investigations, asset tracing and file management.

In August 2023, investigators from the Directorate and the Ombudsman Commission were introduced to how digital tools, such as Microsoft Excel, can support complex corruption investigations. The week-long training session builds on previous training sessions conducted at the Bomana Police College in February 2023.

“Technology can be an important tool for law enforcement in corruption cases. Large volumes of complex information can be recorded and analysed more efficiently to assist case progress and preparation for trial. UNODC looks forward to continuing this type of support to the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate,” said Mr. Graeme Gunn, UNODC Officer-in-Charge and Anti-Corruption Adviser, Papua New Guinea.

The Government of PNG Launches its Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Whistleblower Protection Policy

National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, 17 August 2023 — On 17 August, UNDP had the honour of joining the Department of the Prime Minister and National Executive Council (DPM&NEC) in launching its Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Whistleblower Protection policy at the APEC Haus in Port Moresby. The policy was drafted with assistance provided by UNDP through the EU-funded PNG Anti-Corruption Project to set strategic directions on preventing fraud and corruption and protecting whistleblowers in DPM&NEC.

UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Mr. Edward Vrkic, attended the launching ceremony alongside the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Hon. James Marape; Chief Secretary to Government, Mr. Ivan Pomaleu; and other high-level representatives of the Government and its development partners.

“This policy is an upfront statement that we mean business and will not tolerate corruption and illegal practices of any form in the Prime Minister’s department and henceforth in the public service,” the Prime Minister stated as he officially launched the policy.

“UNDP has been honoured to assist in the drafting of this policy and we stand ready to provide additional and ongoing technical expertise to what has been most importantly, a nationally-led initiative to address corruption. Such actions, as difficult as they may be, are the only way to ensure everyone equally enjoys lives filled with opportunity, prosperity, integrity and dignity in Papua New Guinea,” added UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Mr. Edward Vrkic, in his remarks.
UNDP Trains Government Officials to Assess and Mitigate Corruption Risks

Kokopo, Papua New Guinea, 31 July 2023 — To support selected public sector institutions in piloting corruption risk assessments at the national and subnational level, UNDP and the Prime Minister and National Executive Council Office hosted three separate workshops on corruption risk assessment and mitigation strategies for government officials from Port Moresby and East New Britain Province in July 2023.

The first two workshops were held in Port Moresby on 18-19 and 20-21 July 2023, while the third workshop took place in Kokopo on 25-27 July 2023. The participants in Port Moresby included officials from departments of the Social, Law and Order Sector, while the participants in Kokopo were from the East New Britain Provincial Government.

During the workshops, the government officials engaged in interactive sessions led by UNDP experts, where they reflected on corruption risks within their own institutions and analysed the root causes of corruption at different levels of government. Moreover, the participants learned about practical tools for identifying corruption risks and began working on corruption mitigation strategies for their respective departments.

“It is really important to focus on the preventative side of anti-corruption, because most times people don’t even know that they are engaging in corrupt activities. Especially when it comes to issues like recruitment, procurement and enabling opportunities, one often has to explain to people why some common practices are actually problematic. I think this training can be a very practical tool for us to help people in positions of authority understand what constitutes corruption, which will hopefully help us in preventing actual cases of corruption,” said Ms. Josephine Advent Pitmur, Deputy Secretary at the Department of Justice and Attorney General.

“The workshops also enable public servants to effectively progress the Sustainable Development Goals for the benefit of Papua New Guineans and support the network of non-state actors in their anti-corruption efforts,” added UNDP Chief Technical Advisor, Dr. Alma Sedlar.