



Identifying the opportunities and constraints on rural women's engagement in small-scale agricultural enterprises in Papua New Guinea



KEY FACTS

ACIAR Project No. ASEM/2014/054
Duration: October 2016 to June 2020 (4 years)
Target areas: Papua New Guinea
Budget: A\$1,251,619

Project Leader
Gina Koczberski, Curtin University

Key partners

- Papua New Guinea University of Technology
- Cocoa and Coconut Institute Limited
- Oil Palm Research Association
- Coffee Industry Corporation
- CARE

ACIAR Research Program Manager
Dr Jayne Curnow

Overview

Women in rural Papua New Guinea (PNG) provide a large proportion of labour for export cash crops, subsistence food crops and fill valuable social and community roles.

They tend to spend more of their income than men on meeting the needs of their families. They also face significant socio-cultural and economic barriers to increasing their cash incomes.

Previously, most women were largely subsistence producers, marketing their surplus locally (Tier 1). However, in recent years, rural women living near town have begun growing some crops specifically for local markets (Tier 2), and many participate in export crop production (Tier 2). Some pioneering women are beginning to engage more in domestic and international markets as large-scale producers and retailers, forging new pathways that are increasing their income and status (Tier 3).

The large-scale production and trading of crops like betel nut, pineapples and European vegetables, as well as new livelihood activities like money lending and the marketing of phone credits, are attracting new types of entrepreneurial women. Although they are few in number, their successful transition from Tier 1 to Tier 3 offers model pathways for facilitating women's stronger engagement in small-scale agricultural enterprises.

Objective

The project aims to develop new knowledge of the factors behind women's low level of engagement in small-scale agricultural enterprises; identify the processes and pathways that facilitate their move into agribusiness; and pilot/scale out identified pathways for women to move from Tier 2 to Tier 3.

The project's three main objectives are to:

- Identify the enabling factors and individual characteristics associated with successful entrepreneurial rural women.
- Identify the key pathways and processes to facilitate the transition of smallholder women into successful entrepreneurs in agribusiness.
- Improve the capacity of women to engage in successful enterprises in agribusiness through better access to networks and business development services (e.g. training and information), and a more conducive policy environment.

Expected scientific results

- New knowledge on the key factors that enhance or constrain the capacity of women to manage small agricultural enterprises.
- Greater understanding of how socio-cultural factors, together with the indigenous economy, influence women's level of engagement in the market economy and female entrepreneurship more generally.
- Contributions to the growing body of research on indigenous entrepreneurship in PNG, critical for understanding the development of markets in PNG and for designing strategies to raise smallholder productivity and incomes.
- Two peer reviewed journal papers and four conference presentations.

Expected outcomes

- Women are assisted in developing their business management skills and in starting their own agricultural enterprises, have greater access to and control over income, with economic impacts on families.
- Project's economic impact likely to be scaled up by disseminating project findings, reports and policy briefs to the World Bank-DFAT-funded 'Pacific Gender Research Partnership' project.
- Improved family financial practices, ensuring that families re-invest in their productive activities and use banking services and informal financial practices effectively, strengthening their resilience to shocks.
- Broader based regional economic development.
- Greater capacity among PNG research staff.

